

Executive Summary

The *Fundamental Guidelines for Fresh Produce Food Safety* provide a comprehensive, science-based framework for managing food safety risks in the fresh produce industry. The scope includes production, harvest and post-harvest handling of fresh produce (i.e. fruit, vegetables, herbs and mushrooms).

The Fundamental Guidelines aim to support businesses in implementing good practices that safeguard consumer health, protect the business and industry from food safety incidents, and support compliance with regulations and food safety standards. They are generic in nature so are applicable to all fresh produce categories and can be used by all businesses regardless of their scale or complexity. They do not cover extensive processing activities, which typically introduce risks beyond those associated with whole, fresh produce.

The Fundamental Guidelines are based on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles to address physical, chemical (including allergens) and microbiological hazards. Rather than prescriptive standards, they provide practical information and insights on hazards identification, sources of contamination, risk assessment, good practice and continuous improvement.

The Fundamental Guidelines have been developed by the Fresh Produce Safety Centre (FPSC) through extensive scientific review and industry consultation. They have also been developed in alignment with food safety regulations and standards. The Fundamental Guidelines are voluntary and therefore do not impose obligations, though food safety standards or regulations may refer to elements within this document. Businesses are required to comply with relevant food safety regulations, food safety standards and assurance programme requirements.

These Fundamental Guidelines are accompanied by *Quick Guides for Fresh Produce Food Safety* which provide a user-friendly summary for day to day use by growers and team members. The Quick Guides enable rapid identification of key hazards and practices for each management area. They have been developed using the same structure as these Fundamental Guidelines so users can easily find more information on a topic.

Key Updates in 2025:

- New chapters on Managing Critical Incident and Recalls, as well as Food Safety Culture
- Additional Appendices:
 - » Appendix 02: Food Safety Regulation and Assurance Programmes
 - » Appendix 04: The Use and Significance of Faecal Indicator Bacteria
- Enhanced guidance on water quality criteria and microbial testing protocols
- Updated content and layout for improved usability
- Updated visuals including refreshed images, figures and decision trees
- Development of complementary Quick Guides for Fresh Produce Food Safety.

