

Weather events

If you're a grower or primary processor of leafy vegetables and melons, you need to make sure produce that might have been damaged or contaminated from weather events is disposed of or treated so it is safe to eat.



Horticulture
InfoBite

What are weather events?

Weather events include drought, dust storms, floods, strong winds and hail storms, which can all contaminate produce.

What are the requirements?

Primary producers and primary processors of leafy vegetables and melons must take appropriate action to ensure that produce affected by a weather event is not unacceptable and is safe to eat.

This means you need to understand the food safety risks, and what to do with your produce after these events, to prevent unsafe produce entering the food supply.

These requirements are under primary production and processing standards for [leafy vegetables](#) and [melons](#).

Does this apply to me?

In the Standards:

- A **primary producer** is a business that grows and/or harvests leafy vegetables or melons.
- A **primary processor** is a business that does any of the following with leafy vegetables or melons: washing, trimming, sorting, sanitising, storing, combining, packing, and transporting between packhouses.

Getting it right – reducing your risk

As best practice, things you can do to prepare for, or respond to, weather events include:

- Ensure your fields have good drainage, so water does not pool around produce.
- Use wind breaks and other shelter to reduce dust and dirt blowing onto produce and equipment.
- During droughts and floods the water quality can go down, so monitor your water sources more closely and more often during these times.
- Do not harvest produce that has been touched by flood water, because flood waters contain contaminants (e.g. sewage, chemicals, harmful bacteria and physical hazards).
- Inspect produce harvested or received after storms and remove, treat or divert (away from fresh consumption) any that is likely to be unsafe.
- Adjust procedures for produce washing and sanitising after storms, because produce is more likely to be contaminated with soil and dust.

Need more information?

- Contact your state/territory [food regulatory authority](#)
- [Primary Production and Processing Standards \(Chapter 4\)](#)
- [Fresh Produce Safety Centre – Guidelines for Fresh Produce Food Safety 2022](#)