

# Animals and pests

If you are a grower or primary processor of leafy vegetables or melons, you must control animals, vermin and pests to minimise their presence and the risk of contaminating produce.



Horticulture  
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## What are animals and pests?

Animals, vermin and pests include livestock, pets and working dogs, rats and mice, birds, wild animals (e.g. kangaroos, possums and deer), flies, cockroaches and other insects.

Animals and pests are known to carry harmful microorganisms that can contaminate produce and make it unacceptable. They can directly contaminate crops through their faeces and urine, hair/feathers or carcasses left on growing sites. They can also indirectly contaminate crops through contaminating buildings, equipment and inputs such as water.

## What are the requirements?

Primary producers and primary processors of leafy vegetables and melons must do all they reasonably can to minimise the presence of animals, vermin and pests in growing sites, premises and equipment, to ensure they do not make their produce unacceptable.

This means you need to consider how animals, vermin and pests could get in or on your produce, and then work out what you will do to minimise their presence or prevent their access.

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

Things you can do to reduce the risk of animals contaminating your leafy vegetables and melons include:

- Regularly assess risks of the growing site, buildings and equipment, including evidence of wildlife or pest incursion.
- Protect and maintain growing sites to discourage animals from entering (e.g. by using fencing, and limiting surface water and produce waste in the area).
- Regularly look for animals and pests, and especially just before harvest. If they are seen in growing sites, decide whether produce is safe to harvest from those areas.
- Use a pest control plan for your buildings (e.g. use approved baits and traps to reduce rats and mice around the outside of the building, and record details).

## 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](#)