



# Produce Safety NEWSLETTER

May 28, 2021

## PROGRAM UPDATE

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) Produce Safety Program is continually working to verify all farms throughout Idaho. If your farm has not been verified, please begin the process of doing so by filling out our verification form on our website by [clicking here](#). The verification form can be mailed, emailed, or faxed to the contact information provided on the form. Once ISDA has been able to verify your farm's information, we will send you a corresponding letter based on your farm's status with regard to the Produce Safety Rule for your records. Even farms that know they are currently not covered should verify their farms status with ISDA. By doing so, ISDA will be able to issue an official letter for record, issue correspondence to specific farms in the event of a rule change that may impact certain farms, or remove farms from future contact lists.

## INSPECTION UPDATE

As of January 2021 Very Small Farms (\$25,000 - \$250,000 – monetary value based off average annual produce sales over three year period) became eligible for inspection. ISDA Investigators will be reaching out to farms to begin scheduling Produce Safety Inspections for 2021. We are still offering On-Farm Readiness Reviews (OFRR), and we are offering the free service remotely, which will consist of working through the OFRR manual, answering any questions you may have and providing educational feedback. The walk around portion of the OFRR will be scheduled at the completion of the remote portion. We are available to do both portions of the OFRR on-site if requested. ISDA conducts this free service in collaboration with the University of Idaho to better acquaint growers to the Produce Safety Rule. This review is confidential, non-regulatory, strictly educational and voluntary. Please contact us by calling (208)332-8502 or by [clicking here](#) to schedule your On-Farm Readiness Review today!

## NEW EDUCATIONAL VIDEO

Our eighth and final educational video as part of our Idaho Produce Safety Series has been completed and is available for your viewing. These videos are intended to allow people to educate themselves on the key requirements of the Produce Safety Rule, and can be used to train your employees. The latest educational video covers various topics throughout Subpart I – Domesticated and Wild Animals, and is currently only available in English. The videos are available on flash drives upon request, YouTube, and our website. The latest educational video can be viewed by [clicking here](#).

## PRODUCE SAFETY ALLIANCE (PSA) GROWER TRAINING

The Produce Safety Rule requires at least one person from the operation to attend the training. ISDA will be conducting PSA Grower Training courses again in the fall and winter. However, if your operation needs the training now, there are remote and online courses currently taking place. Please visit the PSA website for more details by [clicking here](#).

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

University of Idaho in collaboration with ISDA's Produce Safety Program recently completed a webinar series based on inspection observations in Idaho. Six webinars have been designed to prepare growers for successful inspections in Idaho. The webinar series, additional information and resources regarding the Produce Safety Rule can be viewed on the University of Idaho's website by [clicking here](#).

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## QUALIFIED EXEMPT FARMS

Farms previously verified to be Qualified Exempt from the Produce Safety Rule are still under the guidance issued by FDA regarding COVID-19. FDA recognizes the need for qualified exempt farms to shift food sales from not just qualified end users, but to all available buyers during the COVID-19 public health emergency. This shift in sales has the potential to help reduce food shortages, food waste and help support both farms involved and the U.S. economy. In order to support affected qualified exempt farms for the duration of the public health emergency, under the circumstances described in the guidance, FDA does not intend to enforce the criteria for sales to qualified end users when determining eligibility for qualified exemption. Instead, sales from 2017, 2018 and 2019 will be viewed for 2021. In addition, all farms that are qualified exempt should be renewing their exemption with ISDA annually by filling out a [verification form](#) or by calling the Idaho State Department of Agriculture's Produce Safety Program.

All Produce Safety forms can be found on ISDA's website by [clicking here](#).

See §112.5 of the Produce Safety Rule to view requirements regarding farms eligible for a qualified exemption and associated modified requirements. Please contact ISDA to help officially determine the status of your operation under the Produce Safety Rule.

As of January 1st, 2020, all qualified exempt farms must follow Qualified Exemption Labeling Requirements. Labeling requirements can be found in the Produce Safety Rule under §112.6.

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## BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY WATER STUDY

Boise State University's (BSU) Department of Geosciences is conducting a water study and is looking for irrigators throughout Ada and Canyon Counties that would be interested in having BSU take their baseline dataset samples. There would be no cost for participating in this study. Interested farms should contact Kendra E. Kaiser PH.D at (919)724-9731 or by email at [kendrakaiser@boisestate.edu](mailto:kendrakaiser@boisestate.edu)

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## MEET THE INVESTIGATORS



### **Greg Blahato, Produce Safety Agricultural Investigator, Sr., ISDA**

Greg Blahato joined the Idaho State Department of Agriculture in August of 2018 as a Shipping Point / CAIP Inspector with Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (FF&V). In addition to inspections with FF&V, Greg has conducted seed field inspections for the Plants Division and conducted surveys and sampling for the Invasive Species Department. Prior to starting his career with ISDA Greg worked in retail management and served in the US Army. Greg holds commissions and certifications with FDA and PSA, and has multiple years of experience conducting regulatory inspections with ISDA.

**Contact:** (208)332-8603, [Greg.Blahato@isda.idaho.gov](mailto:Greg.Blahato@isda.idaho.gov)



### **Lacy Phelps, Produce Safety Agricultural Investigator, Sr., ISDA**

Lacy Phelps joined the Idaho State Department of Agriculture in February of 2020. She brings with her years of experience in the food service industry, including restaurant management and food safety management. Lacy's previous positions required her to lead and train personnel on how to meet food safety regulations and maintain overall health and cleanliness. This has prepared her for her role as an Agricultural Investigator, Sr and as a trainer for the Produce Safety Alliance. She holds commissions and certifications with FDA and PSA. Lacy graduated from California State University, Sacramento with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications.

**Contact:** (208)332-8679, [Lacy.Phelps@isda.idaho.gov](mailto:Lacy.Phelps@isda.idaho.gov)

All Produce Safety News and Updates can be found by [clicking here](#).

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