

# STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR MICHIGAN PRODUCE

IT CAN BE HELPFUL TO  
WORK ON YOUR SOPS  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  
THE FARMER OR  
DISTRIBUTOR TO  
DETERMINE HOW YOU  
WILL RECEIVE THE  
PRODUCE.

Consider writing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for procuring and receiving whole, fresh local produce. Whether you work directly with farmers, food hubs or specialty distributors, your receiving process may look very different than it does with your broadline distributors. You may want your SOPs to be specific to different kinds of local produce or focus on high-risk produce, such as melons, tomatoes, salad greens, etc.. Existing district policies on sourcing, such as farm or distributor food safety practices, help to inform your SOPs.

Here are some questions to discuss with your suppliers that will impact your planning and receiving procedures:



**WASHING:** Do your suppliers have the capacity to bring you products that have been pre-washed? Would you prefer they brush off visible soil? Would you rather do all of the washing in your kitchen?



**PACKAGING:** How will the different types of produce be packaged (type of package, units, etc.)? Consider if this packaging will meet your needs.



**RECEIVING:** If the described packaging is not something you are familiar with, how does it change your receiving procedure?



**QUALITY:** What quality specifications do you have? Perhaps smaller apples for small hands or misshapen root vegetables for soups are OK as long as it meets the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP) serving requirements? As a team, you will need to decide what's OK and what's not, and ensure your suppliers are aware of your expectations.



**SUBSTITUTIONS:** Are substitutes acceptable? For example, if there is a crop failure for one type of leafy green, but another is available, could you make the switch?





## **DEFINITIONS OF UNPROCESSED PRODUCE**

**For farms:** According to the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), unprocessed produce means whole and uncut. Washing is not considered processing, and produce may or may not have been washed by the farm before it arrives in your kitchen. Due to food safety regulations, once a fruit or vegetable has been cut (other than any cutting required to harvest), it is considered processed and the vendor needs to have a food processing license from MDARD.

**For school food service programs:** According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), unprocessed produce includes produce that has been washed, cut and in some cases had minimal additives applied to retain color. When speaking with farmers, it may be useful to be aware of that difference in definition.

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## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

More guidance on developing SOPs and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) plans for school food service can be found at:  
[www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Food\\_Safety\\_HACCPGuidance.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Food_Safety_HACCPGuidance.pdf)