







## **GAPs (Good Agricultural Practices) Fact Sheet**

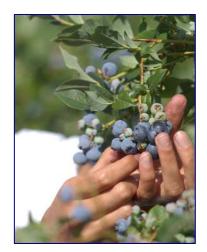


BC berries are grown, harvested and handled under a wide range of conditions, using various agricultural inputs and technologies. Although BCgrown berries have never been known to be the

source of food borne illnesses, growers should be using GAPs, as a tool to improve food safety practices on farm and to reduce the risk of physical, chemical, or microbial contamination of berries during growing, harvesting and handling. GAPs help growers meet the escalating demand of buyers requiring third party audits of grower food safety practices as a condition of purchase.

Incentives for growers to adopt GAPs may include minimizing the probability of contamination thereby reducing drops in sales, damage to reputation and financial loss. As many of these benefits only ensue in the event of an outbreak, one immediate benefit to a documented food safety program may be broader market access and a competitive edge when competing in an oversupplied market as more buyers demand GAPs to reduce the chance that their business is associated with an outbreak.





GAPs are practical and reasonable principles that can be implemented on farms to reduce the risk of foodborne pathogens on berries. There are 5 major areas of consideration that all berry producers should be aware, these include agricultural water quality, pesticide application, manure application, adjacent land use and worker hygiene and picking practices. Growers need to be aware of the contamination problems that can occur and need to take steps to protect consumers, families, businesses and their livelihoods. There is no way to guarantee that berries are contamination free, but implementing GAPs can minimize the risk of contamination.

While all growers are affected by general loss during an outbreak, it has been proven in cases of outbreak linked to other fresh produce, that growers with an

implemented food safety program had higher volumes of sales. Similarly, it was shown that growers not complaint with GAPs had sales decline to about half the normal volume and demand for other products grown by the producer also decreased by about 30%.<sup>1</sup>

Record keeping is a key element of GAPs. Documenting any training, water tests, manure use and pesticide application may provide important data that indicates appropriate action and due diligence occurred during berry production.



## References:



Changing Structure of Global Food Consumption and Trade:

http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/reports/erssor/international/wrs-bb/2001/wrs011.pdf

Food Safety Begins on the Farm:

http://www.sfc.ucdavis.edu/pubs/articles/foods afetybeginsonthefarm.pdf#search=%22Food% 20Safety%20Begins%20on%20the%20Farm% 20Cornell%22

International Trade and Food Safety: Economic Theory and Case Studies: <a href="http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/aer828/aer828g.pdf">http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/aer828/aer828g.pdf</a>

<sup>1</sup>The Economics of Food Safety: The Case of Green Onions and Hepatitis A Outbreaks:

http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/reports/erssor/specialty/vgs-bb/2004/vgs30501.pdf

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