

Washington State farmers selling directly to the end consumer, restaurants, or grocery stores, may sell most produce without product inspection or licenses. However, inspection and licensing requirements apply for selling specific products in Washington State.

This fact sheet includes information:

- standards for grades and packs;
- inspection requirements for fruits and vegetables;
- sampling; and
- Good Agricultural Practices.

Standards for Grades and Packs

Fruits and vegetables are inspected to assure uniformity and compliance with standards for grades and packs, these are set by the federal or state government for each type of commodity. Grading standards include attention to maturity, soundness, shape, size, color, and freedom from pest or mechanical injury. Packaging standards include attention to size, dimension, and labeling of containers used. Contact the WSDA Fruit and Vegetable Field Inspection Office to locate field offices, or for detailed information on inspection. Fees for inspection vary for each commodity.

Inspection Requirements for Fruits and Vegetables

To assure standard quality, inspection is required for certain fresh fruits and vegetables sold in Washington State (WAC 16-461). **Fresh apricots, Italian prunes, peaches, cherries, apples, pears, potatoes and asparagus must be inspected by WSDA unless exempt from inspection** (detailed below).

Exempt products must still meet grade standards. **Farmers selling any amount of these products for resale (e.g., direct to grocery stores) must have their product inspected.** Farmers selling these products direct to restaurants and Institutional food services may or may not require inspection.

Produce sold direct to the end consumer is **exempt from inspection** when meeting the two following criteria:

1) Farmers Markets and Produce Stands

Producers can sell up to 2,000 pounds per day of each product (commodity), or 6,000 pounds/day of a combination of pears, peaches, apples, apricots, potatoes, asparagus, or Italian prunes without inspection. **Cherries are not included in this exemption.**

This exemption applies to farmers markets within the state, or fruit and produce stands within the same zone of production. Zones of production are:

Zone 1: All counties west of the Cascade Mountain Range;

Zone 2: All counties east of the Cascade Mountain Range and Skamania County: (Adams, Asotin, Benton, Chelan, Columbia, Douglas, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Kittitas, Klickitat, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Skamania, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, Whitman, and Yakima).

Apples grown in Grant County can be sold at a fruit stand in any Eastern Washington county, or sold in a farmers market anywhere in the state without inspection.

2) Consumer Limits

Limits are placed on total amounts sold to each consumer for specific commodities. For instance: a farmer can sell a total of 500 pounds of apples, per day, to any one consumer. Limits (per consumer, per day) for commodities are as follows:

Pears, peaches, apples, apricots, and potatoes: 500 pounds
Asparagus: 250 pounds
Italian prunes: 350 pounds
Sweet cherries: 100 pounds

Containers of apricots, Italian prunes, and sweet cherries sold to consumers must be marked “not for resale.” Inspection is available for other fruit and vegetable crops to assure quality, but is not mandatory.

Sampling

Farms that offer individual samples of sliced fruits and vegetables must follow serving guidelines set by the local county health department. Farms must follow food safety guidelines, but may not be required to obtain a *Retail Food Service Establishment* license from the County Health Department. Contact the local county Health Department for further information. See Licensing Fact Sheet for a listing of Health Departments.

Good Agricultural Practices

Unprocessed fruits and vegetables can be at risk for microbiological contamination during production and harvest. The USDA, FDA and CDC developed the Good Agricultural Practices. These guidelines are the standard for safe harvesting and handling procedures. Farmers can learn more about Good Agricultural Practices (GAP's) from: *Produce Safety From Production to Consumption: 2004 Action Plan to Minimize Foodborne Illness Associated with Fresh Produce Consumption* at www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/Product-SpecificInformation/FruitsVegetablesJuices/FDAProduceSafetyActivities/ProduceSafetyActionPlan/ucm129487.htm

For more information in Washington and to find out more about GAP inspections, contact WSDA Fruit and Vegetable Inspection, call (360) 902-1833 (Olympia), (509) 225-2642 (Eastern Washington), or email [jqigley@agr.wa.gov](mailto:jquigley@agr.wa.gov), or go to <http://agr.wa.gov/Inspection/FVInspection/GAPGHP.aspx#Contact>.

Recommended Fact Sheets: Food Processing, Licensing

For further assistance or to make suggestions on how to improve this fact sheet, please email smallfarms@agr.wa.gov or call (360) 902-2057 or (360) 676-2059.