



RUOKAVIRASTO
Livsmedelsverket • Finnish Food Authority



Operations in Connection with Primary Production Selling of Foodstuffs and Further Processing of Vegetable Products



**Guide for
Small and
Medium-sized
Businesses**





Operations in Connection with Primary Production Selling of Foodstuffs and Further Processing of Vegetable Products – Guide for Small and Medium-sized Businesses
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Introduction of the Guide

This guide provides you with information you will need when you begin selling foodstuffs and/or small-scale further processing of vegetable products.

You will also receive information on how to run things properly, for example, with regard to hygiene and other regulations.

It is important that you know in advance what to do in each phase and how to manage the operations of your company properly. If you do, everything will go well and both the customers and food inspector will be happy.



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This guide has been divided into six sections.

- **Section 1, Setting Up.**
Section 1 is a summary of information needed when expanding your primary production operations.
- **Section 2, Premises.**
Section 2 contains information about the requirements associated with appropriate premises.
- **Section 3, Operations.**
Section 3 contains requirements for operations.
- **Section 4, Staff.**
Section 4 contains requirements for staff.
- **Section 5, Own-check plan.**
In section 5 you will find information about own-check activities. This information helps you to create an **own-check plan** for your meat establishment.
- **Section 6, Terminology.**
Some words in the text have been **underlined**. You will find explanations for them in section 6.

This guide does not contain general information on setting up and running a business. Links to such information are provided on the web page www.ruokavirasto.fi/en/operatorguidance. The requirements of producing and selling of alcohol products, on which small breweries and vineyards need guidance, are not included in this guide.

If you are setting up a restaurant, cafe, catering service or other service activity in conjunction with your farm, you can find relevant information about this in the guide for setting up a restaurant. Setting Up a Restaurant - Guide for Small and Medium-sized Businesses can be found on the Finnish Food Authority's website.

You will receive information on these topics, among others:

- ▶ How can you ensure that the premises are suitable your operations?
- ▶ How should you notify the authorities of your plan?
- ▶ What requirements are there for the premises?
- ▶ What else is required of you?
- ▶ What kind of competence is required from you and your staff?
- ▶ What is the own-check description?
- ▶ What is the own-check plan?



Section 1, Setting Up

In this section you will learn

- ▶ What do you need to keep in mind when expanding your primary production operations?
- ▶ Will you need to file a food establishment notification or change to the primary production notification?
- ▶ How can you ensure that the premises are suitable for your operations?
- ▶ What kind of competence is required from you and your staff?
- ▶ What else is required of you?
- ▶ What is the own-check plan or description of own-check?

Primary production or a food establishment business?

In addition to the production, raising and cultivation of **primary production** products, primary production includes harvesting, grain drying, milking and other animal-related production before slaughter. It also includes hunting, fishing and gathering wild produce. In addition to these, primary production includes the storage of products at the farm and, to a large extent, the delivery of products to the next processing location.

You can deliver vegetable products and honey to, for example, a packing plant, shop, service establishment, wholesaler, mill, bakery or food plant.

In addition, you may expand your operations, such as by opening a shop at your farm or processing the foodstuffs you produce.

Within certain limits, you can carry out such operations as a primary producer but, in certain cases, you will need to file a **food establishment notification** of your operations.

The food establishment notification is filed with the municipal **food control authority**.

If the operations can be carried out as primary production, filing a change to the **primary production notification** with the municipal food control authority will suffice.

What difference does it make whether your operations constitute primary production or is a food establishment business?

The greatest difference between these classifications is in the own checks requirements. An actively implemented and monitored **own-check plan**, like the one needed for food establishments, is not required for primary production.

Describing the ways of managing the risks related to your operations will be a **sufficient description of own checks** in primary production. For consumer sales, for example, you need to describe the principles of cleaning your storage area and sales premises, along with what information you will provide to customers about the food and how. Risk-management methods require very little recording of measures.

For food establishments, on the other hand, an own-check plan is required. You will learn more about the own-check plan in the Own-check system section.

You are selling food on your farm – will you need to file a food establishment notification?

Consult the diagram on Annex 1 to see when your operations will be classified as primary production and when you will need to file a food establishment notification.

When is a food establishment notification required for direct sales?

Direct sales means selling products produced by yourself directly to consumers.

If you are selling primary production products directly and the sales volume exceeds the amount specified in the **Low-Risk Decree**, you will have to file a food establishment notification on the sales.

All activities related to the actual production of products is still primary production, even if you would have to file a food establishment notification for consumer sales.

What do you need to take into account when selling products to consumers at the market?

You can also sell vegetable products, mushrooms and honey you have produced as primary production at the market. If the volume of direct consumer sales remains

below the threshold provided for in the Low-Risk Decree, you can sell your products at any market in Finland without notifying the local supervisory authorities.

If you were required to file a food establishment notification of the sales, however, and you are selling the products at a market outside your municipality of residence, you will have to notify the local food control authorities of the sales. You must notify the authorities at least four days before the sales event. Such sales are considered to constitute mobile food establishment operations.

You will need to take this into account when filing the food establishment notification with the food control authorities of your municipality of residence.

If you visit the market regularly, such as every other Tuesday, a single notification will suffice.

What else do you need to know about outdoor sales?

Instructions for selling products at markets can be found in **Finnish Food Authority's** outdoor sales guide (in Finnish). A link to the guide is provided on the same web site with the link to this guide.

The protection requirements for the furniture and products needed for outdoor sales are determined by the risks involved in the operations. If you are only selling vegetable products **prepared for sale**, you can sell them directly from the trunk of your car if you like.

At a market, you may need to protect the point of sale from birds, at least from above and sometimes also from the sides.

How can products be delivered directly to consumers?

Direct sales are often managed through **REKO food rings**. In REKO, consumers order

the product or products in advance from the producer, with the products changing hands at an agreed-upon location at an agreed time. This is called a handover and does not constitute a sales transaction, so even if the seller has a food establishment, the local food control authority does not have to be notified of the handover location and time.

The delivery can also take place through different channels, such as Matkahuolto or the post.

Selling self-produced vegetable products on your farm

You are free to sell the following directly to consumers as primary production:

- up to 50,000 kg of self-grown leaf vegetables per year (lettuce, spinach, cabbage, herbs and shoots – but not sprouts); and
- up to 100,000 kg of other self-produced vegetable products (potatoes, carrots, tomatoes, cucumber, onions, strawberries, apples, etc.).

You can sell the primary production products

- directly from the farm; or
- as door-to-door sales; or
- at a market; or
- you can deliver the products against orders placed by consumers through a mutually agreed channel (such as REKO sales).

Selling products of other farms on your farm or at the market

In addition to your own produce, you can sell low-risk primary production products of other producers to consumers (principally vegetable products, mushrooms and honey produced by others) for a total of EUR 10,000 without having to file a food establishment notification.

When selling honey

You are free to sell honey produced and packed by others. In addition, if your farm has beehives, you can sell a maximum of 2,500 kg of self-produced honey to consumers as primary production each year.

You will have to file a primary production notification of your honey production to the food control authority of the municipality in which your honey extractor or operation is located. The notification form is available on the website of the municipality.

Finnish Food Authority's website contains information on how to register as a beekeeper and how to report the locations of the hives to the agricultural authority.

This registration is mandatory.

If you sell more than 2,500 kg of your own farm's honey to consumers per year, you must also file a food establishment notification of the selling with the municipal food control authority.

Would you like to pack vegetable products, mushrooms or honey?

You may operate a packing plant on your farm. In this case, the packing operation constitutes primary production, provided that you only process vegetable products, mushrooms or honey produced by yourself, and the nature of the products does not change in packing them or preparing them for sale.

You can also sell your packing service to other producers, as long as the packed products are returned to their farms of origin.

A packing plant is a **food establishment** if

- it operates as a **cooperative**; and/or
- it is not located on a farm; and/or
- you buy products of other producers for packing and marketing.

If you sell meat, keep the following principles in mind:

1. Selling meat always requires a food establishment notification.
2. As a rule, meat sold to consumers must have been inspected at a slaughterhouse.
3. If you market self-produced meat, you either have your own slaughterhouse at the farm or take the meat of animals you have raised back from the slaughterhouse for sale. However, you may slaughter small quantities of poultry and rabbit meat yourself, without having it inspected.
4. When you store, sell and possibly deliver to customers inspected fresh or frozen and prepacked meat that has been handled at the cutting plant
 - if you do not open the packages or process non-prepacked meat, your operations are not limited by the quantity thresholds specified in the Low-Risk Decree.

In some cases, meat can be exempted from the inspection obligation.

■ **Deer meat**

You can buy deer meat with the skin and fur on directly from a hunting club if your point of sale is equipped with facilities for skinning and cutting the meat hygienically. You can buy uninspected, cut deer meat for sale from a hunting club or hunter if they have notified their local **supervisory authority** of their operations.

■ **Hare and game bird meat**

The same rules apply to caught hares and game birds as to the meat of deer animals. The Hunting Act prohibits the sale of certain species of wild grouse, such as capercaillie.

■ **Poultry and rabbit meat**

You may sell uninspected poultry or rabbit meat from animals you have raised

and slaughtered. You can also buy such meat directly from other producers and sell it. Selling meat requires a food establishment.

If you sell self-produced and uninspected poultry or rabbit meat, thresholds for your production have been specified in the Low-Risk Decree. You may produce 40,000 kg of poultry meat and a quantity of rabbit meat corresponding to 20,000 rabbits per year. If you exceed these quantities, the animals must be slaughtered at an approved slaughterhouse.

Sale of eggs

You can only buy eggs for sale directly from other farms, without **grading** and X-ray scanning, if your point of sale is located in one of the exemption areas. If it is not, you may only sell grade A eggs processed at a packing plant. This restriction does not apply to self-produced eggs.

You may sell up to 20,000 kg of eggs produced at your own farm to consumers each year, or an unlimited quantity of eggs if you file a food establishment notification on your sales operation. Participation in the Salmonella control programme is mandatory.

The exemption area for egg sales consists of the regions of Lapland, Northern Ostrobothnia, North Karelia, Northern Savonia and the Åland Islands.

Sale of raw milk

As a milk producer, you can sell your **raw milk** and **colostrum** directly to consumers on your farm. Colostrum can be sold either fresh or frozen.

You may sell 2,500 kg of each type of milk per year as primary production. If you open a food establishment selling raw milk on your farm, there is no limit on the quantity of raw milk you may sell to consumers in your

establishment. In such cases, you must comply with the requirements of the Decree on the sale of raw milk. More information (in Finnish) on the conditions for the sale of raw milk is available on the website where the link to this guide is found.

If your farm does not produce milk, you can purchase frozen **colostrum** produced on another farm and sell it, provided that you have a food establishment.

Selling fish

You may buy non-gutted fish from a professional fisherman and sell it. Purchasing salt-water fish directly from a fisherman requires you to register as a first-purchaser of fish at a **Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centre)**.

If you purchase professionally fished salt-water fish for resale to your customers, read the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's guide (in Finnish) at <http://kalat.fi/kaupallinen-kalastus>.

Your farm can be located by the sea or on the lakeside and you fish as a hobby. You would like to sell the catch in your shop. You must register with the local food control authority as a fisherman in addition to other lines of primary production; and in the register of commercial fishermen maintained by the ELY Centre.

If you are fishing in the sea, your vessel will also need to be registered. Marine fishing is subject to the additional requirement that the first purchasers of fish must register with the ELY Centre. In this case, when you are both the fisherman and first purchaser, contact the ELY Centre to ask how the registration should be performed.

At what conditions may fishermen deliver gutted fish to you?

Fishermen may deliver gutted fish to you for sale if they have an approved fish processing establishment.

However, if the fisherman only operates a food establishment that requires notification, restrictions apply to the delivery amounts and delivery area of gutted fish. The quantity depends on how much gutted fish the fisherman sells directly to consumers and how much to other businesses or restaurants. The delivery area consists of the local region.

If you have a fish pond

If you have a fish pond in which you farm fish and either catch them yourself for sale or let customers catch their own fish, you need to register as a fish farmer with your local food control authority.

A fish pond also requires registration in the aquaculture register. The register is maintained by the ELY Centre by mandate of Finnish Food Authority.

In addition, if you produce more than 2,000 kg of fish per year, your pond will require a health certificate. The health certificate is granted by Finnish Food Authority.

Sales of other products and organic products

You can sell 5,000 kg of eggs of other birds than chicken as primary production per year. If you exceed this threshold, you will have to file a food establishment notification for the sales.

You may also purchase eggs of other birds (than chicken) directly from other producers and sell them.

Wild produce can also be bought directly from the gatherer.

If you sell **organic products**, your operations will be subject to control of organic origin in addition to regular food control.

You process vegetables from your own crop – will you need to file a food establishment notification?

Do you make products such as jam, juice, salads, grated salads, pickles, sour dairy products, flour, hulled grain or flakes, bread or other baked goods or casseroles?

If the production is small-scale and low-risk, you can make these products without filing a food establishment notification.

Your activity no longer consists of primary production, however, as the nature of the products changes. From the diagram on the Annex 2 you can see when you will need to file a food establishment notification and when it will not be necessary.

Will you need to file a food establishment notification on the production?

If the processing of products of primary production will change the nature of the products, a food establishment notification is normally required.

If the processing is low-risk, it is permitted up to the value of EUR 10,000 without a food establishment notification, provided that the processing is carried out in connection with another business, such as primary production. The monetary limit is the Tax Administration's view on what constitutes a livelihood.

Low-risk processing includes:

- the processing of grain and its milling into hulled grain, flour or flakes;
- baking bread, marble cake and cookies;
- making honey products by flavouring honey; and
- freezing or deep-freezing berries.

What does production for marketing trial purposes mean?

If the processing only involves a moderate amount of risk, the operation can be tested for marketing trial purposes in connection with other operations, without filing a food establishment notification. Such processing includes making jam or juice, for example.

When you begin producing your product regularly, you will need to file a food establishment notification. The maximum duration of marketing trials is one year, and the notification must always be filed within a year of starting operations.

Suitable premises

You will not necessarily need sales premises for the sale of primary production products directly from the farm. You can sell the products directly from storage, even if their sale requires a food establishment notification.

If you want to arrange the sales in a dedicated sales area, however, you should carefully design and build the area according to the needs of your business.

The baseline requirement is easy to clean, durable and non-toxic materials and structures. If you only sell non-prepacked, soil-covered root vegetables, such as potatoes and carrots, however, you may sell them from wooden bins. Wood is also a suitable material for washed root vegetables that will be cooked or peeled before eating.

Please remember that, in most cases, wood is too porous and absorbs dirt and water too readily for use with foodstuffs.

Always choose materials with product safety and ease of cleaning in mind.

If you decide to expand the operations of your farm from primary production to selling meat,

the first requirement is to have a sufficient amount of cold storage space for the meat.

If you cut the meat in the kitchen of your residence on the farm, do it separately from other cooking. Always clean the kitchen between activities.

Use clean utensils and wash your hands often enough. Make sure that the **cold chain** remains unbroken.

You can ask the **food inspector** to confirm that your premises are suitable for their intended purpose.

If you would like to sell your products outside the farm and are acquiring retail premises for the purpose, check with your municipal **building supervision authority** to confirm that the premises have been designed for your intended purpose.

When you are thinking about whether the premises are suitable for your intended purpose, the minimum consideration is whether or not your business can be sensibly run on the premises. Find out whether or not there are enough water fixtures and storage space on the premises. If you think you would like to expand your product selection at a later date, choose sufficiently large or modifiable premises from the start.

Also consider whether the processing of food could require a large and expensive surface renovation.

The **food inspector** and advisory organisations will be able to advise you on these matters. Information on advisory organisations is available via the links on our website.

The Premises section of this guide also contains additional information on the requirements for premises.

Design the processing premises so that the following will be easy to implement:

- Do not allow animals, customers or other external parties onto premises where food is processed.
- Do not process food products close to the front doors. Above all, this should be avoided if people use the door during processing.
- Place food preparation and processing areas so that passage through them, for example, from outside to the dressing room or food storage, is minimised.
- Store non-food products so that they will not leave smells or taste in foodstuffs. Also ensure that they will not pose a danger if they break.
- Remove any unnecessary items, such as furniture, devices and utensils no longer being used, from the premises since they collect dust. They can also cramp the spaces and make cleaning more difficult.

If you are acquiring new premises for sales or processing

The municipal building supervision authority approves the use of premises or a property as, for example, a restaurant, shop, office or industrial facility. The intended use of premises is specified in their building permits, and the premises may not be used for other purposes than those approved in the **building permits**. If you require further information, see the guide on setting up a restaurant.

Requirements for personnel

Food establishments can set requirements for personnel. Depending on the nature of the work, personnel may need:

- A hygiene passport
- Protective clothing
- **A health certificate**

Persons who **process perishable foods** professionally must have a **hygiene passport**

and wear appropriate protective clothing. A hygiene passport is a certificate of competence for demonstrating familiarity with **food hygiene**.

If necessary, the employees must also be able to reliably demonstrate that they do not have **salmonella** infection.

The purpose of all these requirements is to ensure the safety of foodstuffs. These personnel requirements will be discussed in more detail in the Staff section of this guide.

There are less requirements for primary production personnel:

- No hygiene passport is required.
- A health certificate is only required if the farm sells raw milk. You must nevertheless verify that personnel who process food are in a good state of health. You should also provide your staff with training on health risks.
- There are no requirements on the use of protective clothing either; the operator must assess their need.

What aspects of own-check system should you consider when setting up your operation?

Operating a food establishment requires an own-check plan. A **description of own-check** is sufficient for primary production.

If you sell products of primary production at quantities below the threshold specified in the Low-Risk Decree, the own-check description requirement does not apply to producers of vegetable products, mushrooms, honey and eggs of chicken or other birds.

The own-check plan or description of own-check can be substituted with a best-practice guide for your line of food business

If the line of food business has drawn up

a best-practice guide, you can follow that instead of drawing up an own-check plan or description of own-check.

There are best-practice guides suitable for the primary production of fresh vegetables. The Laaturaha guide and IP-Kasvikset certificate cover the production of vegetables (in Finnish).

There is a best-practices guide for honey producers published by Suomen Mehiläishoitajain Liitto (the Association of Finnish Beekeepers, in Finnish) and one for producers selling raw milk, published by the Finnish Association for Milk Hygiene (in Finnish).

Summary

If you decide to expand the operations of your farm from primary production to selling foodstuffs or further processing

- ▶ Find out the restrictions on your operations, such as what can be performed as primary production.
- ▶ Make the required notifications, either a food establishment notification or change to the primary production notification.
- ▶ Draw up an own-check plan or expand your description of own-check to cover the risk management of the products you will be selling.
- ▶ Make sure that the required personnel have hygiene passports, protective clothing and health certificates. These will be needed by persons who, for example, make jam or handle meat or other perishable foodstuffs in a food establishment.



Section 2, Premises

In this section you are introduced to the requirements for appropriate premises and how they contribute to food safety and hygiene. Your premises requirements depend entirely on your operations.

Food sales premises

Your space and sales furniture needs will largely be determined by the products you will sell and the scope of your operations.

Locate food storage areas so that employees will not have to pass through them, for example on their way to the break room.

Remember to keep ready-to-eat food separate from, for example, foodstuffs that require cooking and dirty root vegetables.

Food processing, production and storage facilities

When processing and storing food, it is vital to ensure that the foodstuffs are protected from dirt, harmful **bacteria**, **viruses** and harmful substances. This requires adequately sized facilities that enable the different functions to be placed in a sensible manner.

For example, the facilities must be designed to permit the separation of cooked and uncooked foodstuffs. To keep the goods

separated during storage, you can use, for example, separate refrigerators, storage containers, or spaces, or spaces separated by partitions.

You must also be able to segregate allergens. They must be kept separate from each other as well as from food they are not intended for.

A list of substances and products that cause **allergies** or **intolerances** is provided in the “Food information management” section of this guide.

Examples of foods to be kept separate from each other

- Keep unpacked unprocessed meat preparations and fishery products separate from ready-to-eat foods. Ready-to-eat foods include all foods that are intended to be eaten as such, for example salads and gravad (cured) and smoked fish.
- Keep raw poultry meat separate from other foods.
- Keep unpacked unprocessed meat preparations separate from unpacked unprocessed fishery products. Unprocessed meat preparations include, for example, fresh and marinated meat and uncooked sausages. Unprocessed fishery products include, for example, fresh fish and live crayfish.

- Store and handle soil-covered root vegetables in a place reserved and equipped for this particular use.
- It is allowed to gut fish and to skin, pluck, or gut wild game and game birds in connection with sales. These measures shall be carried out in a place reserved and equipped for this particular use. You can gut, skin, and pluck, for example, on a table or surface reserved for the use, or in a separate room. Reserve a waste bin with lid as well as the ability to wash hands and work equipment and to rinse fish in the immediate vicinity of this place. Clearly separate these actions from other activities and thoroughly clean the handling site after use.
- Keep ingredients and products that cause allergies and intolerances separate from each other and from foods they are not intended for. Significant work stages to consider with regard to separation of foods and handling of **cross-contamination** are for example: purchasing and accepting ingredients, labeling, storage and handling of foodstuffs, planned order of work and cleaning.

Water fixtures and sinks

You should consider the need for water fixtures when planning the facilities, since retrospective changes are both difficult and expensive to implement.

Depending on the nature of your operations, you may require several water fixtures.

You may need separate water fixtures for washing hands and foodstuffs, along with a suitable number of fixtures for utensil and dish washing.

However, you can use the same water fixture for different purposes at different times, provided that you clean the area between uses.

Also note that if you, for example, process meat and make jam at the same time in your facilities, you will need dedicated water fixtures for each type of operation.

Advice from the food inspector and advisory organisations

If you need advice on the number and locations of water fixtures, you can ask the food inspector or an advisory organisation for assistance when you are planning the premises.

Number and placement of hand-washing points

A sufficient number of hand-washing points must be reserved for washing hands. They must be placed sensibly with regard to operations. The hand-washing points must be located close to the food-processing areas.

What equipment is needed at hand-washing points?

- Running hot and cold water is required at an appropriate hand-washing point.
- Liquid soap is part of a well-equipped hand-washing point.
- Disposable towels are appropriate for a hand-washing point. In this case, a bin will also be required.
- A roller towel is also a good choice for a hand-washing point.
- The hand-washing point must also be clean. It must not be cluttered with unnecessary things.

A dirty cloth towel is not appropriate for a hand-washing point. Cloth towels can be used if everyone has their own towel that is replaced on a daily basis.

Sufficient water supply and cleanliness

All sinks and washing equipment must have a sufficient supply of both hot and cold water. The sinks and cleaning equipment must be kept clean and **disinfected** when necessary.

Cold storage facilities for foodstuffs

Different foods require different storage temperatures. Therefore, you will need a number of storage spaces, and their temperature must be monitored with measuring equipment or thermometers.

Foods that require cold storage should not be left at higher temperatures, even for a short time. Only take the required amount of such food out of cold storage for preparation.

The cold chain may not be broken at any time. Also keep the cold chain in mind during delivery, acceptance of deliveries and transfer to cold storage facilities.

Choose the appropriate storage temperature for vegetable products – specific rules apply to sprouts

As a rule, no temperature requirements have been specified for vegetable products. Choose the storage temperature and other conditions most appropriate for the storage of each product.

Sprouts are an exceptional product. These guidelines do not apply to them. Sprouts spoil extremely easily, so they need specific guidelines for their production.

Salads and grated vegetables require cold storage

Fresh products, such as prepared salads and grated vegetables, are perishable foodstuffs. They require cold storage, even if their ingredients would not.

Lettuce leaves are difficult to wash clean if they have been contaminated with, for example, soil or the faeces of wild animals during cultivation. If you intend to process self-grown ingredients, you need to understand the risks involved with the ingredients, processing methods and end products.

Examples of food storage temperature limits in a restaurant

- Fresh fish and boiled crayfish: no more than 2 °C (Celsius)
- Cold-smoked and cured fish: 0–3 °C
- Smoked fish packaged in a protective atmosphere or vacuum: 0–3 °C
- Minced meat and liver: at most 4 °C
- Chopped vegetables and sprouts: at most 6 °C
- Raw milk: at most 6 °C
- Convenience foods, raw or marinated meat, cream and cheese cakes and pastries: at most 6 °C
- Yoghurt, sour cream and most cheeses: at most 8 °C

What do you need to know if you freeze or deep-freeze meat or meat products?

1. Start **freezing** or **deep-freezing** as soon as possible after the preceding work stage.
2. Store and transport frozen and deep-frozen meat at temperatures of -18 °C or below.
Exception: frozen (but not deep-frozen) poultry meat for sale can be stored and transported at -12 °C or below.

What do you need to know when thawing meat or meat products?

1. Thaw frozen and deep-frozen meat and processed meat at temperatures that do not pose a health risk. It is safest to thaw the products in a refrigerated area.
2. You should drain the thawing fluids into a sewer. They must not create a risk of **contamination** to other food products.
3. Minced meat and raw meat preparations may not be frozen again after being thawed.

Fill the cold store or refrigeration appliance correctly!

Do not overfill the cold store or refrigeration appliance. When you fill the cold store or appliance correctly, the air will circulate as intended and keep the food at the right temperature.

Waste storage facilities

A waste bin must be placed close to the food-processing area. Spoiled foodstuffs and other waste must be kept separate from other operations and foodstuffs. Waste must be taken out sufficiently often, at least once a day.

Waste storage areas must be planned and managed so that they can be kept clean at all times. Waste bins located outside must be enclosed to prevent the waste from attracting **pests**.

Other premises

As a rule, there are no requirements for staff dressing rooms or toilets or for the storage of cleaning equipment at primary production facilities.

On food establishments, dedicated dressing rooms and toilet facilities must be provided for employees, preferably on site or at least in the vicinity. Cleaning equipment must be stored hygienically.

If you require further information, see the guide on setting up a restaurant.

Summary

If you decide to expand the operations of your farm from primary production to selling foodstuffs or further processing of vegetable products, consider the suitability of premises for your business in advance.

- ▶ Are the premises sufficiently large to enable the hygienic placement of functions?
- ▶ Is there a sufficient number of separate storage facilities for different foodstuffs?
- ▶ Is there a sufficient number of water fixtures and sinks?
- ▶ How do you store your cleaning equipment in a proper way?
- ▶ Is smoking arranged in an appropriate way?



Section 3, Operations

In this section you will learn

- ▶ What must the surfaces of your establishment and its workbenches be like?
- ▶ What materials are permitted in dishes, tools and packaging?
- ▶ How will you ensure the safety of water?
- ▶ Why do you need to know the origin of raw materials and the destination of finished products?
- ▶ What information must be on the food packages?
- ▶ What should be taken into consideration when transporting foods?

Cleaning and cleanliness of surfaces and equipment

The surface materials of the facilities, utensils and appliances must be non-toxic and easy to clean. If necessary, such as in food-processing premises, the materials must be able to withstand washing with water and mechanical cleaning, such as with a brush, and also possible disinfection.

Materials that do not have a smooth, water-repellent and hard surface absorb dirt and

odours and cannot be kept clean in practice. Such materials are not suitable for food preparation, processing or storage facilities, in which cleanliness is particularly important.

Broken and rusty surfaces are also difficult to clean. This is why you should favour durable and rustproof materials. The condition of the surfaces must be monitored and broken surfaces repaired or replaced.

Concessions on surface materials

The quality requirements for surface materials are not that strict in all circumstances. The storage of soil-covered root vegetables, such as potatoes and carrots, in connection with sales and milling grain are good examples of operations where the surface materials do not necessarily need to be washable with water.

Plastic cutting boards

Plastic cutting boards are convenient because they are easy to keep clean.

When grooves appear on the boards, they need to be replaced or ground smooth.

Wooden processing surfaces are only suitable for dry foodstuffs and baking

The use of wood as a surface material should be avoided, particularly on premises where meat is processed. Wood is a porous material and can absorb water, dirt and detergents and remain damp for a long time.

Wooden processing surfaces are suitable for dry foodstuffs such as bread and other bakery goods. Wood is also an acceptable material as a baking surface.

Cleaning the premises

Premises, devices and utensils used in food production must be cleaned carefully, at least at the end of each day or shift. If necessary, the premises must also be disinfected.

Surfaces and utensils that come into contact with food must be kept as clean as possible during the working day.

Food-processing areas, equipment and utensils must always be cleaned in a manner that does not damage the food.

Only use clean cleaning equipment

Cleaning equipment must be cleaned or changed frequently enough.

If this is neglected, they will spread dirt, bacteria and viruses between surfaces.

Dedicated cleaning equipment for premises in which food is prepared or processed

Food preparation and processing premises need their own cleaning equipment. The equipment may not be used to clean other premises. This prevents the spread of bacteria and viruses that cause **food poisoning** through the cleaning equipment.

Toilet facilities also require their own cleaning equipment.

Disposable cleaning equipment can be a safe solution for cramped premises in which it is difficult to set apart an appropriate storage area for cleaning equipment.

Do not forget the ceiling and other high surfaces

Dirt, harmful bacteria and viruses may contaminate unprotected foodstuffs and

processing surfaces from many places and for many reasons.

Dirt, bacteria, and viruses may originate from, for example,

- human hands
- the air, or
- high surfaces, such as the ceiling or shelves with flaky paint or **mould**.

For this reason, unprotected food should not be processed in premises whose high surfaces are in poor condition.

Sufficiently effective ventilation

The ventilation in food premises must be powerful enough to prevent humidity from accumulating in the structures, leading to the growth of mould. Mould can easily enter foodstuffs, either directly or via the processing surfaces.

Dripping moisture from roof structures can **contaminate** food and processing surfaces.

Efficient ventilation also removes heat, which is important for the operation of refrigeration equipment. Different activities require different kinds of ventilation.

Dehumidification

Water frequently condenses on the cold surfaces and refrigeration equipment of refrigerated areas. This is called condensed water or condensation. The dripping of condensation into food must be prevented, for example with **condensation basins** and drainage pipes. Alternatively, the surfaces must be dried often enough to prevent water from dripping.

Moisture left by washing must also be prevented from dripping into food.

Pests must be kept from food premises

Pests, such as rats, mice, cockroaches, flies and silverfish bring dirt, bacteria and viruses with them. It is important to prevent pests from entering premises where food is processed.

The dirt, bacteria and viruses carried by pests frequently originate from outside or from the sewers. They can cause food poisoning if allowed to contaminate foodstuffs.

Materials suitable for use with food

All materials coming into contact with food must be suitable for use with food and for their intended purpose. This ensures that harmful chemicals will not migrate from the materials into the food.

In the industry, we talk about 'contact materials'. This refers to all materials that come into contact with foodstuffs, such as work surfaces, dishes, utensils, appliances and packaging materials.

How do I know whether a material is suitable for use with food?

The purpose of use of the material can be indicated by its trade name, such as cheese film, coffee cup, food plate, frying pan, bread bag or baking surface. If the package or item bears the **wine glass and fork symbol**, it is suitable for use with food.



Wine glass and fork symbol

What other, specific restrictions have been issued?

The use of a material can be subject to further restrictions regarding, for example, the temperature, fat content, acidity or usability period of the food. In such cases, the wine glass and fork symbol may not be sufficient by itself to tell what kind of contact the material is suitable for.

What will I do if a product's purpose is not indicated by its packaging or instructions?

If the purpose or conditions of use are not indicated by the trade name or instructions in the package of a contact material, you should confirm them from the supplier.

Especially fat content, heat and acidity can contribute to the migration of harmful chemicals from materials to foodstuffs. For this reason, it is important to use materials according to instructions and only for the purposes for which they are intended.

How can you ensure that the material is suitable for your purposes?

As a rule, the wine glass and fork symbol is a sufficiently clear indication of a product's suitability for use with food.

When you buy products from a **wholesaler**, the product's trade name can indicate the purpose of the item or material. Such trade names can include a grill bag, meat wrap or marinade bowl. If the purpose of use is not clear, it should be checked from the wholesaler. In this case, for example, additional information obtained by e-mail will be sufficient.

If you buy your materials/articles directly from manufacturers or importers, request them to provide **compliance documents** that include instructions.

Which dishes can be put into a microwave oven or microwave?

Materials such as ceramics and glass are suitable for **microwaving**. However, ceramic dishes with gold inlays are not suitable for use in a microwave. Plastic dishes may be used in microwaves only if they bear markings that indicate suitability for microwaving. Dishes containing metals may not be put into a microwave.

Why can't you put any plastic dish or bowl into a microwave?

If a plastic dish does not have a marking that indicates suitability for microwaving, it should not be used to heat food in a microwave. It is common for food to be heated unevenly in the microwave. In this case, the plastic can soften and cause substances to migrate into the food.

Protect foodstuffs from aluminium

Do not prepare or store acidic foods, such as juices, in aluminium dishes. Steel utensils must not be used with aluminium dishes, since steel is harder and scrapes off aluminium which is then transmitted into the food in the dish. Aluminium foil may not be used to protect steel dishes because the steel will make holes in the aluminium, leaving traces of it in the food.

Opened tins

When you have opened a metal tin, transfer the contents to another container for storage.

Why?

An opened tin will come into contact with oxygen. That can cause tin or other metals to come off into the food.

Choose appropriate disposable gloves

Vinyl plastic disposable gloves are not always suitable for the processing of fatty foods. Regular vinyl gloves, for example, are thus not suitable as general-purpose gloves for working with food. If the glove package does not

indicate which foods the gloves can be used with, confirm this from the supplier.

Water source

Most companies use water from the public utility network. The waterworks monitor the quality of public water. If you use water from your own well or another water source or install water filters on taps, you must take samples of the water. Alternatively, you may use the water-quality monitoring services of the health protection authorities in your own-check activities.

Water in primary production operations

If your primary production operation involves washing and selling parts of vegetable produce intended for use as food, you must comply with the water requirements set forth in the Primary Production Decree.

However, if your primary production operations are small in scale and your sales and delivery volumes remain below the thresholds specified in the Low-Risk Decree, you are not required to have the water quality inspected.

Products for sale

It is likely that your sales operations will focus on the produce of your own field, garden or animals, or on natural produce you have picked or caught (e.g. berries, mushrooms and fish). You can also purchase the produce of others for resale.

If you file a food establishment notification of your operations, there are fairly few restrictions on your business. Food of animal origin is nevertheless subject to certain restrictions.

Take care of the cold chain and remember to wash your hands

The requirements on structures and operations increase with the potential food

hygiene risks related to the products you are selling.

The cold chain must be kept as unbroken as possible for products that require cold storage. Take this into account in all of your operations.

If you handle ready-to-eat or perishable non-prepacked foods in connection with sales, you must be able to wash your hands conveniently.

The restrictions on consumer sales are listed in Section 1, Setting up

With regard to vegetable produce and honey, the restrictions concern the sales method; i.e. whether you may sell them as primary production or will need food establishment.

In addition, food of animal origin is often subject to requirements that may feel like restrictions.

The restrictions apply to the following food products:

- Raw milk and colostrum
- Eggs
- Meat
- Fish

Most of the restrictions are explained in Section 1, Setting up.

Consider the harmful substances contained in natural products

When selling natural products, please remember that some plants and mushrooms contain substances harmful to human health.

The harmful substances occurring naturally in food can be mitigated by choosing the right raw materials or processing them appropriately (for example, processing false morels). Additional information is available from the links provided on the same web page with the link to this guide.

In some cases, however, the processing of foodstuffs, such as by drying, can actually increase the concentration of harmful substances.

Gather natural produce from clean areas

Harmful substances not naturally occurring in plants or mushrooms can accumulate in them from the environment.

When gathering plants and mushrooms, take account of any local factors that could be harmful, such as near-by roads or factories or the use of pesticides.

If the plants or mushrooms have been picked in a clean area, they are safe to use in this respect.

Assistance from the natural herb guide

Arktiset Aromit ry has drawn up a good practical guideline for natural produce entrepreneurs, titled Luonnonyrttiopas (Guide to Natural Herbs, only available in Finnish). The guide discusses the picking, sales and use of herbs growing naturally in Finland, along with the legislation related to such activities.

Finnish Food Authority has evaluated the guide's sections related to the use of herbs as food. The guide to natural herbs can be purchased from the online shop of the Finnish National Agency for Education, <http://verkkokauppa.oph.fi/>.

Storage and sales of fish

Ungutted fish weighing more than 500 g may be stored and sold for two days, including the day of accepting the delivery. The fish must be gutted on the day after accepting the delivery if you want to continue selling them. This requirement applies equally to self-caught and purchased fish.

Foods that are uncommon or unknown in Finland

You may sell a plant or animal product whose use as food is not known in Finland. In that case, before starting to sell the product, you must find out whether or not it has been used as food in another EU Member State.

If the product has not been used as food, selling it may require a **novel food authorisation**. More information is available via the links on our website. You can also contact your municipal food inspector.

Purchasing raw materials for further processing

The majority of raw materials you use in the production of your food naturally originate from your own field and garden. They can also be natural products you have gathered (such as berries or mushrooms). You may need to buy some ingredients from nearby farms or a wholesaler.

You are free to use the produce of your own field and garden for food production. However, the purchase of raw materials for food production may be subject to certain restrictions.

Vegetable products as raw materials

There are no restrictions on the use of self-grown vegetable products for **further processing**. You can also purchase vegetable raw materials from other farms.

Seeds used for growing sprouts are subject to strict microbiological requirements and requirements related to production conditions, which are not discussed in this guide.

Natural products as raw materials

When using natural products, such as plants and vegetables you have picked, as raw materials for products, follow the

same guidelines that apply to their sale to consumers. The guidelines can be found under the header “Products for sale” in this section.

You can also purchase the natural products you need as raw materials directly from their gatherer.

Honey as a raw material

You may want to replace sugar with honey in certain situations. Honey is classified as a food product of animal origin. Regardless of this, there are no restrictions on purchasing honey.

You may use honey produced by your own beehives for food production. See the instructions on beekeeping in Section 1 “Setting up”.

You can also purchase honey directly from another producer.

Chicken eggs as a raw material

You may not purchase chicken eggs directly from another farm. The eggs must be **graded** and X-ray scanned at a packing plant process.

You can only use grade A eggs as a raw material, unless you have produced the eggs yourself and use them for a food that is heated sufficiently during preparation.

Eggs of other birds as a raw material

Eggs of other birds than chicken can be bought directly from the producer. You are also free to use self-produced eggs of other birds as a raw material.

Raw milk as a raw material

If you are a milk producer, you can use raw milk produced at your own farm in the production of food.

If your farm does not produce milk, you can purchase raw milk directly from a dairy facility or as packaged retail products. If you use the milk for food that is heated during

preparation, such as buns or pies, you can also buy raw milk directly from other milk producers.

Meat and fish as raw materials

Purchasing meat and fish for use as raw materials has been discussed under “Setting up”, with additional information on buying fish for sale presented in this section. You can follow these instructions if you produce small quantities of food with raw minced meat, such as cabbage casserole or cabbage rolls.

The guidelines are also applicable to meat or fish casseroles and pies made with raw meat or fish.

Foods that are uncommon or unknown in Finland as raw materials

You may process a plant product whose use as food is not known in Finland. In that case, you must find out whether or not it has been used as food in another EU Member State. If the product has not been used as food, its use may require a novel food authorisation.

Additional information on novel foods is available on Finnish Food Authority’s website. You can also contact your municipal food control authority or health inspector.

Acquisition of organic raw materials

If you advertise the production of organic products, your preparation facility will be subject to control of organic origin in addition to regular food control.

Traceability

It must be possible to trace the origin of foodstuffs and their ingredients. **Traceability** means that you will need to be able to demonstrate from where ingredients and other products were purchased and where the finished products were delivered. You must also know the purchase and delivery times of ingredients and products.

Efficient tracing enables the effective limitation of issues related to food safety. For example, poor-quality ingredients or ingredients that cause food poisoning can be removed from the food chain when their origin or place of delivery is known.

The better you are able to connect the information of ingredients you have purchased and food you have delivered, the better you will be able to limit financial losses and health hazards in the event of an incident.

Food information management

The law requires you to declare certain information on your foodstuffs. You are responsible for the accuracy and sufficiency of the information if the food is sold under your name or your company name.

Food is divided into non-prepacked and prepacked foods.

Non-prepacked foods

Non-prepacked foods are

- served to consumers for immediate consumption or,
- to make sales quicker and easier, packaged for immediate sales, such as sandwiches or pies, or
- food packaged by the consumer or
- food packaged at the request of the consumer.

At the retail level the information of non-prepacked foods must be declared in writing, on a visible and legible brochure or board or in another clear manner.

The information can also be provided verbally, provided that you clearly indicate that the information is available upon request. An exception to this is products with a high salt content for which information must always be provided in writing.

As the operator of the business, you are then responsible for the information and its accuracy.

What information on non-prepacked foods must be declared to customers in connection with sales

1. Name of the food

You must state the name of the food. For example, rye bread, strawberry jam. The trade name alone will not suffice.

2. The country of origin must be indicated if necessary

The food's country of origin, or the country in which the food was manufactured or produced, must be indicated if omitting the information could mislead the consumer. The country of origin must be declared for products such as beef, poultry, pork, mutton and goat meat, honey, fish, fruit and vegetables. The country of origin must also be declared on the delivery batch documentation of the above-mentioned non-prepacked foods, such as the covering letter. The most precise batch-specific information on the country of origin is required for beef.

3. Substances and products that can cause allergies or intolerances

You must be able to notify customers of the presence of substances and products that can cause allergies or intolerances, listed in the food information regulation. A list of such ingredients and products is provided on the following pages.

4. Ingredients

You must inform the customer of the product's ingredients also when selling non-prepacked products.

5. Instructions for storage and use if necessary

If necessary, you must notify the customer of the instructions for storage and use also when selling non-prepacked products.

6. In certain cases, the amount of fat and salt

Customers must be notified of the fat and salt content of cheeses, sausages and cold cuts. The salt content of bread must also be declared. Such products must also be labelled with an **extra salt content marking** if necessary. You are not required to declare this information, however, if you only produce small quantities of such products and deliver them directly to the end consumer or a local retailer that will deliver the products directly to end consumers.

7. Matters required by special legislation

When selling non-prepacked food, you must equip it with the markings required by special legislation if required. Such legislation applies to, for example, raw milk, honey, products of fishing and aquaculture, vegetables, jam and juice. Additional information is available from the links provided on the same web page with the link to this guide.

Customers must always be notified of the following substances and products that cause allergies or intolerances

- cereals containing gluten, i.e., wheat, barley, rye, oats and products made of these cereals;
- crustaceans and crustacean products;
- eggs and egg products;
- fish and fish products;
- peanuts and peanut products;
- soy beans and soy bean products; and
- milk and dairy products.
- nuts and nut products;
- celery and celery products;
- mustard and mustard products;
- sesame seeds and sesame seed products;
- sulphur dioxide and sulphite in concentrations of more than 10 mg/kg or 10 mg/l;

- lupin and lupin products; and
- molluscs and mollusc products.

Prepacked foods

You must label the packaging of food sold or delivered prepacked.

Prepacked food refers to food that has been completely or partially enclosed in a package before sale, and the contents of the package cannot be changed without opening or breaking the package.

However, food that has been packed on site for immediate sale in order to make sales faster and more convenient is not considered prepacked. Such food includes bread and pies, for example.

Packages must contain the following information:

- Name of the food
- List of ingredients if necessary
- Ingredients that can cause allergies or intolerances (a list is provided on the following pages) must be printed in bold in the ingredient list
- The quantities of ingredients or ingredient groups highlighted on the label, such as the quantity of blueberries in blueberry pie or minced meat in a minced meat pizza
- The amount of food contained in the package
- **Date of minimum durability, best before date or use-by date**, and the date of freezing if applicable
- Special storage and/or use conditions, if required
- Instructions for use, if required
- The producer's name or company name and address
- If necessary, the food's country of origin or place of departure

- Nutritional values, if required. Nutritional values will not be required if, for example, your farm produces small quantities of food products delivered directly to the end consumer or to a local retailer for sale. Neither are the values required for unprocessed products, such as vegetables and berries prepared for sale.
- A batch ID identifying the food products belonging to the same batch
- An identification mark for food of animal origin
- An extra salt content marking if required
- Any other markings required by special legislation. Special legislation applies to products such as beef, poultry, pork, mutton and goat meat, along with honey, fish, vegetables, jams and juices.

When labelling your products, make sure that:

- The information provided on your food products are accurate and sufficient. They must not be misleading.
- The labels are legible, noticeable and clear. The minimum size of a small x is 1.2 mm.
- The goal is for a person with normal eyesight to be able to read the label without effort or the use of aids, like reading a newspaper or book.
- All the necessary markings are present on the package. The required markings include those provided for in the EU **food information regulation** and those required by special legislation where applicable.
- The markings have been made in accordance with statutory requirements. For example, **additives** have been indicated with both their group name and the name or E code of the additive.
- Compulsory labelling is in both Finnish and Swedish. Labels in one language are sufficient for products sold in monolingual municipalities.

These allergy- and intolerance-causing substances and products must be emphasised

- cereals containing gluten, i.e., wheat, barley, rye, oats and products made of these cereals;
- crustaceans and crustacean products;
- eggs and egg products;
- fish and fish products;
- peanuts and peanut products;
- soy beans and soy bean products; and
- milk and dairy products.
- nuts and nut products;
- celery and celery products;
- mustard and mustard products;
- sesame seeds and sesame seed products;
- sulphur dioxide and sulphite in concentrations of more than 10 mg/kg or 10 mg/l;
- lupin and lupin products; and
- molluscs and mollusc products.

Also check that the labels and other information provided on the food correspond to the product:

- the recipes/production methods/finished products are consistent;
- the name of the food is correctly formulated;
- all ingredients used have been indicated in the ingredient list;
- **compound ingredients** have been correctly itemised in the ingredient list;
- ingredients that can cause allergies and intolerances have been indicated;
- the ingredients are stated in the correct order;
- the amounts of ingredients, such as meat content, are correct;

- salt content has been calculated and determined using sodium (salt = sodium × 2.5). This formula takes account of both the sodium contained naturally in the ingredients and sodium from added salt.
- the origin of the food is stated correctly; and
- the use of claims (e.g., lactose-free, gluten-free, milk-free or additive-free) is justified.

Production of food for special diets

When you prepare gluten-free, lactose-free, milk-free or other similar food, you must know the ingredients that cause these allergies or intolerances.

For example, a milk-free food product may not contain milk or products made of milk, such as cheese, curds or butter.

What information is required on food products sold via distance selling?

The same information requirements apply to non-prepacked and prepacked food sold via distance selling than to food sold in shops.

For example, before concluding the sale, you must provide the same information on prepacked food than in conventional commerce, with the exception of variable information.

For prepacked food, such information consists of the period of minimum durability or use-by date, date of freezing and batch number. This information must be declared to the buyer at the moment of delivery.

What is distance selling?

A means of distance communication refers to a device that can be used to make an agreement between an entrepreneur and consumer without the parties physically

meeting. Commerce via means of distance communications includes e-commerce and mail-order selling.

What if I only advertise my products online?

If you only use the internet to advertise food and customers cannot order your products online, the activity consists of marketing. In that case, you do not need to provide the information required in connection with sales.

Such marketing is evaluated according to the general marketing provisions in the Food Act and Consumer Protection Act.

How do I need to provide the information in practice?

You must provide the mandatory food information either in the distance-sales support materials, such as the online shop's home page, or by another appropriate method. The most important thing is to clearly indicate where the information can be found. You must provide the information both in Finnish and Swedish before the consumer decides on the purchase.

The customer may not incur additional costs from obtaining the information.

More information on food information

More information on the management of food information is available in Finnish Food Authority's Food information guide for small and medium-sized businesses.

Composition and recipe management

Composition and recipe management applies to all food products you sell, whether prepacked or non-prepacked.

You are usually required to have written recipes for all products you make, such as jam, juice, pickles and bread, stating the names and amounts of ingredients used for each product.

The recipe must correspond to the food information. When you change ingredients or recipes, you must update the recipes and labels accordingly. You must keep your recipes up to date.

Comply with requirements when creating recipes

When planning recipes, you need to take into account the requirements of food legislation regarding, among other things, additives, salt and other substances potentially added to your products. By calculating from the recipe and, if necessary, own-check inspections, you can make sure that you do not exceed the maximums for additives in your products, for example.

Only use additives and other **food improvement agents** (flavourings and enzymes) that are permitted for your products. The amounts of some food improvement agents have been limited. Further information is available from Finnish Food Authority's website.

Keep your recipes up to date

You will need to make changes to your recipes in the event of changes to the law or composition of your product, or when changing raw material suppliers, for example.

In order to be able to keep your recipes up to date and accurate, it is important to always obtain accurate, up-to-date product information or specifications from your raw material supplies.

When you make changes to recipes, make sure that the information about the changes is conveyed through all the handling and labelling phases, i.e., throughout the food chain.

Remember all of these steps:

- acquisition of raw materials
- labelling
- data systems
- consumer and customer information.

Manage your production process

Production process management includes, for example,

- following the recipe;
- the correct dosage of ingredients (such as salt and additives);
- preventing the contamination of products with foreign **allergens**; and
- ensuring that the right products are packaged in the right packages.

Your measures and scales can be manual or automatic. Make sure that you use them correctly.

Food transport

If you deliver food to customers, you must make sure that its safety is not compromised during delivery.

The means of transport and containers must be clean and they must protect the food from dirt, harmful bacteria and viruses and other harmful substances.

Food must also be maintained at a safe temperature during transport. Foods requiring cold storage must be transported refrigerated and food delivered hot must be transported so that it will not cool.

More information on transportation temperatures of foodstuffs is available on the website where the link to this guide is found.

Summary

When you start selling foodstuffs or further processing of vegetable products, remember the following:

- ▶ Surfaces and utensils must be clean, intact and easy to clean.
- ▶ Make sure that materials that come into contact with foodstuffs are suitable for your purposes.
- ▶ Keep pests away from the premises.
- ▶ Do not break the cold chain.
- ▶ Follow the regulations issued on the purchase of foodstuffs.
- ▶ Ensure the traceability of food and raw materials and keep their documentation.
- ▶ Provide accurate and sufficient information on foodstuffs.
- ▶ If you transport food, maintain the correct temperature during transport.



Section 4, Staff

In this section you will learn

- ▶ What is required from the staff?
- ▶ Who needs a hygiene passport?
- ▶ How should the state of health of employees be examined?
- ▶ What kind of protective clothing is needed?
- ▶ When and how to wash your hands?

The basic requirement for primary production is that personnel who process food should be in a good state of health. Personnel who handle raw milk at dairy farms that sell raw milk to consumers are subject to additional requirements. They must obtain a health certificate. You should also provide your staff with training on health risks.

Staff who handle non-prepacked, perishable foodstuffs in a food establishment must have a hygiene passport, protective clothing and, in most cases, a health certificate.

In certain cases, the use of protective clothing can be a good way to ensure hygiene in primary production.

A hygiene passport

Personnel processing perishable foodstuffs must demonstrate an adequate working knowledge of food hygiene. This can be demonstrated by a hygiene passport received through a competence test or as part of a food industry degree.

The employer must ensure that all persons who process perishable foods have a hygiene passport. The hygiene passport must be obtained no later than three (3) months from the start of employment.

Competence tests are organised and hygiene passports issued by competence testers approved by Finnish Food Authority.

Employees' state of health

Persons who process food that will be served unheated, such as salads, must provide a health certificate or, in practice, proof that they do not carry **salmonellosis**. Also persons who handle non-prepacked meat must provide a health certificate.

The aim is to find carriers of the **salmonella infection** and to prevent the spread of salmonella through food-processing personnel.

If the employee only works the cash register, a health certificate or salmonella test will not be required.

What is salmonella?

Salmonella is an intestinal bacterium that can be transmitted through contaminated food or water and causes food poisoning.

The symptoms of a salmonella infection or salmonellosis can include

- nausea;
- abdominal pain;
- diarrhoea;
- fever; and
- headache.

How does salmonella spread?

Salmonella is most commonly transmitted through raw or poorly cooked poultry or pork, or through raw milk and vegetables.

Salmonella can also spread through foodstuffs contaminated by an infected worker.

Health examination at the start of employment

New employees whose duties so demand must undergo a health examination at the employer's occupational health care provider. This ensures that the person will not pose a risk of infection at work. If necessary, a **Salmonella test** will also be taken.

Salmonella tests should also be taken immediately if there is cause to suspect a Salmonella infection. For example, if the employee has been travelling abroad and manifests symptoms of a stomach disorder.

Employees with a stomach disease are not permitted to process food. In addition to Salmonella, many other bacteria and viruses can also cause stomach disorders.

More information on stomach disorders transmitted through food is available on the website where the link to this guide is found.

Health examination guideline

By virtue of the Infectious Diseases Act, the National Institute for Health and Welfare has issued guidelines for the health examination (in Finnish): www.thl.fi/fi/web/infektioaudit/-/paivitetyt-ohjeet-tuberkuloosi-ja-salmonellatartuntojen-torjuntaan.

Protective clothing

Employees who process food must wear protective clothing. The recommended protective clothing includes an appropriate uniform, hat or other headgear and work shoes. The purpose of protective clothing is to prevent the contamination of foods being processed.

The use of protective clothing can be a good way to ensure hygiene in primary production.

Protective gloves

Employees can also wear protective gloves. Protective gloves are intended to protect food from dirt and harmful bacteria and viruses, which may spread through the hands of employees.

When must protective gloves be used?

Protective gloves must be used at least by employees with

- artificial nails;
- jewellery; or
- cuts on their hands.

Personnel who use protective gloves must change them often enough and wash their hands sufficiently often.

There are different kinds of protective gloves. You will need to select gloves appropriate for your purpose. The processing of fatty foods requires different protective gloves than processing dry food.

Working at the cash register and unprotected food

Working at the cash register and processing non-prepacked foodstuffs is not a good combination.

If you nevertheless have to both process food and work at the cash register, be especially careful about washing your hands and changing protective gloves.

What is the principal rule regarding the use of jewellery?

Employees working with food, especially ones processing non-prepacked foodstuffs, should not wear jewellery. The use of jewellery can be allowed, however, if they are covered with protective clothing.

Washing hands

Hands have their own natural bacteria and can pick up bacteria from dirty surfaces. Some bacteria are harmless, but others may cause food poisoning.

For the prevention of food poisoning, it is essential to wash the hands sufficiently often when processing foodstuffs.

Wash your hands carefully:

1. always before starting work;
2. during work if necessary;
3. between work stages, for example, after processing ingredients and soil-covered, dirty or spoiled food;
4. after visiting the bathroom;
5. after handling money;
6. after smoking; and
7. after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.

A cut on your hand? Follow this procedure:

1. Protect the wound with, for example, a plaster.
2. Wear protective gloves.

When you use protective gloves, you prevent the spread of bacteria from the wound to non-prepacked food.

Summary

Employees who handle non-prepacked foodstuffs in a food establishment

- ▶ must demonstrate the ability to handle them hygienically. This is demonstrated with a hygiene passport.
- ▶ must provide a health certificate at the start of employment and whenever necessary thereafter. The certificate demonstrates that the employee does not carry Salmonella or other infectious diseases.
- ▶ must wear protective clothing. The recommended protective clothing includes an appropriate uniform, hat or other headgear and work shoes. Protective gloves are used if necessary.

These requirements should be taken into consideration in primary production as well, and you should consider appropriate practices to minimise risks.

Follow the instructions on hand-washing.



Section 5, Own-check system

In this section, you will be introduced to the own-check system.

- ▶ What is the own-check description?
- ▶ When will you need an own-check plan?

What is the own-check system and what is it needed for?

As an operator in the food industry, you are responsible for the safety of your food. In addition, you must ensure that accurate and sufficient information is provided on your food.

In practice, you will ensure this through own-check activities. The own-check system is your own system. In it, you plan in advance how to manage the risks posed by your operations and how to correct any mistakes if necessary.

Through own-check activities you can ensure, for example, that the foodstuff storage, heating and cooling temperatures and times are appropriate. In addition, you can ensure that food is processed hygienically at every stage.

Through own-check activities, you can also ensure that your customers obtain the required information on food ingredients that can cause allergies or intolerances.

Own-check activities are mandatory, but a well-designed own-check system will also provide direct benefits to you:

- It reduces the likelihood of food poisoning.
- It helps keep customers happy.
- It reduces the need for paid official supervision.
- It will reduce waste and errors.
- It will help prevent extra costs.

It is sensible to incorporate the own-check system as part of the company's quality system.

A description of own-check is usually required for primary production

A description of own checks is required for primary production. In some cases, however, the requirement can be waived.

The own-check description refers to describing the farm's practices that have an impact on food safety. The regular recording of procedures is not required.

The own-check plan requirements include many risk management methods that can also be used in the own-check descriptions of primary production.

When is it not necessary to make the own-check description

You are exempt from the own-check description, if

- your production is small in scale and
- you sell vegetable products, mushrooms, honey or eggs of chickens or other birds and
- you do not sell your products to wholesalers or for further processing.

Small-scale production means that you sell your products directly to consumers, and the amount of products you deliver to local retailers remains below the threshold specified in the Low-Risk Decree.

If these conditions are met, you do not need to have the quality of your water inspected either. You are not required to carry out water inspections even if you are using your own water source and irrigate ready-to-eat products, such as strawberries or lettuce, by **overhead watering** or wash parts of vegetable products intended for food before sale.

Where to obtain a guideline for best practices in primary production?

There are best-practices guides for primary production, which can be used in place of the own-check description. You can use the parts of the best-practices guide that are suitable for your operations and supplement it according to your needs.

The Laatutarha guide, published by Puutarhaliitto (the Finnish Garden Association, only available in Finnish) and evaluated by Finnish Food Authority, is available for the primary production of vegetable products. The guide can be downloaded freely from Puutarhaliitto's website.

There is a best-practices guide for honey producers published by Suomen Mehiläishoitajain Liitto (the Association of Finnish Beekeepers, in Finnish) and one for

producers selling raw milk, published by the Finnish Association for Milk Hygiene (in Finnish).

The guides are free to download from the websites of the associations.

When will you need an own-check plan?

If you sell products in a food establishment or mobile food establishment or engage in the further processing of vegetables, you must draw up an own-check plan before starting operations.

In the plan, you must describe your operations at a level of detail that permits you to manage the food hygiene risks related to your operations.

Your own-check plan must be available for inspection at the start of operations and in connection with inspections of your food establishment.

Where can you get help with drawing up the sales own-check plan?

You can find materials for drawing up the plan in this section and on the websites of many food control authorities.

For example, an own-check plan template for selling food (in Finnish) drawn up by the City of Helsinki Environment Centre can be found at <http://www.hel.fi/www/Helsinki/fi/asuminen-ja-ymparisto/elintarvikevalvonta-ja-ymparistoterveys/huoneistot/oma/>.

Your business includes the further processing of vegetables – Where can you get help with drawing up the own-check plan?

The Working group for hygiene in fresh-cut vegetable processing industry has drawn up a best-practices guide (in Finnish) to provide companies that cut fresh, ready-to-eat vegetables with practical help and a template for drawing up an own-check plan.

The purpose of the guide is to help companies manage the risks involved in their operations and provide guidance in the interpretation of legislation.

The best-practices guide is available at <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-326-09-2>.

What must the own-check plan include?

The own-check plan covers all work stages essential to food safety. You must also indicate how and through what measures you will manage risks.

Work stages essential to food safety can include:

- the purchase and acceptance of foodstuffs;
- storage;
- cooking and heating; and
- cooling.

Risks include everything that can compromise product safety and the management of conditions. Once you have identified the risks, you can think about means and measures for their management.

What do you need to take into account in the own-check plan?

The contents of the own-check plan are always dependent on the extent and nature of operations. The most challenging preparation methods in terms of food hygiene require a more detailed description in the own-check plan.

In some cases, the plans can be very simple, such as work instructions. In such cases, it is not always necessary to present the plans in written format.

In companies with one or two employees, for example, all parts of the own-check plan do not need to be drawn up in writing.

It will suffice if you can describe your procedures verbally.

The own-check plan may be drawn up partially or entirely in electronic format.

You can sign an agreement with another company for parts of the own-check plan

Some sections of the own-check plan, such as “Pest Control”, can be managed through an agreement with another company. Even in such cases, however, the responsibility for compliance with the law remains with you.

Lightening/reducing own-check activities

In some cases, own-check activities can be lightened/reduced. Examples:

- The temperatures of the supplier’s products have consistently complied with regulations. In this case, you can decide to measure the temperature of this supplier’s products less frequently.
- The results of purity samples taken from surfaces have been good for a long time. In this case, you can reduce the sampling frequency.

When you have drawn up the own-check plan:

- Keep the own-check plan up to date.
- Update the own-check plan after significant changes in your operations.

How will the realisation of the own-check plan be monitored?

The implementation of own-check activities should be monitored and recorded. In some cases, it may be to your benefit if you can demonstrate through own-check records that you have acted correctly. Such situations include, for example, suspected cases of food poisoning and customer complaints. You will be able to demonstrate that the products have been prepared and stored in compliance with requirements.

In your own-check plan, you will specify the frequency of recording the various aspects. For some parts, it can be quite sufficient to only record **deviations** and the measures taken to correct the situations.

Examples of record-keeping

For example, you need to check the cleanliness of the premises and surfaces each day. In terms of recording these cleanliness inspections, it is usually enough to note any dirty surfaces and the fact that they were washed again.

You should monitor and record the storage temperatures of foodstuffs on a regular basis.

Own-check records must be archived

You must archive the records of your own-check activities so that the **inspector** can inspect them. The records may be kept entirely or partially on a computer, or you can note the records down on paper.

The records must be stored for at least one year from the date of having sold the food or processed it as a raw material. In the case of food marked with a **period of minimum durability**, you must store the records longer. In such cases, the own-check records must be stored for a minimum of one year from the end of the period of minimum durability.

Responsibilities

Employees must be familiar with the instructions and methods related to their own tasks and with an impact on food safety. These instructions and methods must also be complied with. Every employee is responsible for the safety of food.

You must appoint a person responsible for the own-check system. The person must have the knowledge and skills required by the task. This person must be familiar with the operations of your business and with the own-check system.

The own-check plan and the authorities

An inspector will check the own-check plan. This is usually done during the first inspection visit. Later on, the inspector will assess during regular inspections whether your own-check system is functional and well implemented.

You must ensure that the inspector will be able to inspect the own-check plan and the bookkeeping in connection with the inspection. If this is not possible during the inspection, the own-check plan and books must be delivered to the inspector within a reasonable time after the visit.

More information on official supervision is available via the links on our website.

Summary

- ▶ You are responsible for the safety of food that you produce and serve.
- ▶ You are also responsible for ensuring that customers receive accurate information about your products, such as with regard to ingredients that can cause allergies.
- ▶ The own-check system is a way of ensuring the safety of food.
- ▶ In the own-check plan, you will consider and plan in advance how to manage the risks in your operations and rectify any mistakes.
- ▶ The inspectors will also monitor the functioning and implementation of your own-check activities.

5.1 Content of the Own-check Plan

Observe these minimum considerations that need to be taken into account in the own-check plan.

Monitoring the health of employees

At the start of employment and whenever required after that, you need to ensure that employees who process food are free of salmonella infection.

The own-check plan must specify how records of tested personnel are kept and where those records are stored.

The actual health information of the personnel does not have to be stored at the workplace. The information can be managed by, for example, the occupational health care provider.

Orientation, guidance and training

Employees require orientation in subjects such as **work hygiene** and the requirements for protective clothing and own-check activities.

Plan the following:

- How to introduce employees to hygienic working methods and own-check activities?
- How to record orientation and training?
- Who will be in charge of orientation?
- What kind of protective clothing will the employees wear?
- Where will the protective clothing be stored and how will it be washed?

Ensuring the hygiene competence of personnel

The employer must ensure that personnel who process non-prepacked, perishable food hold hygiene passports.

How and where are records kept of hygiene passports?

The records can consist of:

- copies of the hygiene passports; or
- a list of persons who have presented you original hygiene passports.

In small companies, it can suffice for the employees to present their original hygiene passports to the inspector.

Purchasing raw materials

Purchasing raw materials that involve special restrictions should be discussed in the own-check plan.

Acceptance inspections of raw materials

Plan the following:

- How often will you conduct acceptance inspections?
- How will you monitor the temperatures of refrigerated and frozen deliveries? They are worth monitoring.

Any special arrangements for the use of premises

Separation in time means that different operations are performed in the same premises, but at different times. The premises must be washed carefully between different operations.

Make plans for the careful management of separation in time and washing the facilities and appliances.

Separation

Where necessary, ensure the isolation of different foodstuffs or ingredients during all work stages.

Plan how to avoid **contamination** when purchasing, accepting, labelling, storing and processing foodstuffs and ingredients.

Examples of separation

- How can you avoid contaminating cooked and other ready-to-serve foods with raw or soil-covered foodstuffs?

- How will you keep substances and products that can cause allergic and intolerance reactions separate from each other and from food for which they are not intended?

A list of substances and products that can cause allergies or intolerances is provided in the “Food Information Management” section.

Also take into account the order of work and cleanliness of premises, appliances and utensils.

Plan the following:

- Will the processing premises have dedicated work stations and tools for foodstuffs that must be separated completely? Or will you use the same utensils and work stations and clean them between different applications?
- Will you also prevent contamination through the division of duties and work instructions?

Temperature management

Plan the following:

- How will you monitor the temperatures of food and its storage facilities?
- What will you do in the event of problems with temperature management?
- From where will you measure the temperatures?
- How often will you take the measurements?
- How often will you record the results?
- What will you do if the temperature is not within the limits specified by law?

At a minimum, confirm the temperatures during these work stages

- When accepting food deliveries
- During cold storage and other storage

Traceability

How will you demonstrate the traceability of food and its ingredients

- from where and when was it acquired; and
- to where and when was it delivered?

How will traceability information, such as delivery lists and purchase receipts, be stored?

Please remember that traceability also applies to materials and supplies such as dishes, utensils and packaging materials.

Composition and recipe management

Plan how to ensure that:

- your recipes and product compositions are correct and in compliance with legislation. For instance, make sure that you are only using additives permitted for your product;
- your doses are correct;
- your recipes are kept up to date;
- you obtain sufficient and up-to-date information from your raw material suppliers;
- information on recipe changes is conveyed through all handling and labelling stages;
- the correct amount of food is packaged; and
- the right products are packaged in the right packages.

How to ensure that the customer gets the right information

How will you ensure the accuracy of the information you provide to customers about foods and foodstuffs?

How will you provide information on non-prepacked foodstuffs?

If you sell prepacked foodstuffs, how will you ensure that:

- the labelling and other food information is in compliance with legislation, i.e., your products are correctly labelled; and

- the markings and information on your products correspond to your actual recipes.

Withdrawals

Withdrawal means that food products that are found not to comply with the requirements for the safety of foodstuffs shall be withdrawn from the market.

Your own-check plan should include a plan for the possibility of withdrawals:

- Preventing the entry of defective product batches to the market.
- Withdrawing delivered product batches from the market.
- Preventing withdrawn batches from being mixed with other raw material or product batches.
- Act according to Finnish Food Authority's withdrawal instructions and contact the establishment's inspector.

Suspected cases of food poisoning

If you receive customer complaints of food poisoning from food you have prepared, you must notify the local food control authority of them.

Record the contact information of the food inspector in the own-check plan.

Management of packaging and contact materials

Plan the following:

- From where will you acquire your materials?
- How will you confirm the materials' suitability for use with food?
- How will you make sure that the materials will be used according to their instructions?
- Where will you store certificates of suitability for use with food or **declarations of compliance**?

- How will you ensure the traceability of packaging and contact materials?

Cleaning of premises and appliances

Plan the following:

- How will you ensure the cleanliness of premises, appliances and utensils?
- How often will each area, appliance or utensil be cleaned?
- Who will do it?
- What tools and materials will be used for cleaning?
- Where will the cleaning equipment be stored?

If the cleaning is handled by an external company, ask them to provide this information.

Water quality

You may be required to take **microbiological samples** from the water you use. If you use water from your own well or another water source or install water filters on taps, you must take samples of the water.

Plan and record how often you will take samples, what analyses will be performed on the samples and which laboratory will conduct the analyses.

Sampling plan

You may be required to take microbiological samples from both the food you produce and the surfaces and equipment coming into contact with it.

By taking samples, you can make sure that the quality and safety of your food and hygiene at your establishment are at an acceptable level.

Plan and record how often and from where you will take samples and what analyses will be performed on them.

Send the samples to a laboratory for analysis. You can analyse **surface cleanliness samples**

yourself, which indicate the general level of cleanliness.

More information on sampling requirements is available on Finnish Food Authority's website (Microbiological Criteria Decree application instructions for operators, in Finnish).

Shelf-life tests

The shelf lives of products or product groups can be determined with shelf-life tests. The results of these tests indicate the use-by dates or best before dates of your products.

Make plans for conducting shelf-life tests in your own-check plan. You can declare the shelf life of some products on the basis of publicly available research data.

If you manufacture or produce perishable foodstuffs and assign them a shelf life of at most four days, you do not need to perform shelf-life tests.

Maintenance of premises and appliances

Plan the following:

- How will you take care of the functionality and maintenance of premises, appliances and utensils?
- Who will be responsible for it?
- What scheduled maintenance or inspections will be performed?
- What will you do in case of problems?

Foreign object risk management

Plan the following:

- What kind of light bulbs will you choose for the facility? Will you choose lamps and bulbs that will not spoil the food if they break?
- What will you do if a glass container breaks during food processing?
- How will you prevent humidity and the flaking of paint in order to avoid flakes of paint ending up in the food?

Pest control

Plan the following:

- How will you prevent pests such as rats, birds and cockroaches from entering the premises?
- What will you do if pests do find their way into the premises?

Waste management

Append the following reports to your own-check plan:

- How will you handle waste?
- Where will you collect different types of waste?
- How often will you empty and wash the bins?
- Who will do it?

Food transport

If you transport food yourself, plan the following:

- How will you ensure the safety of foodstuffs during transport?
- What means of transport will you use?
- How will you package the food for transport?
- How long will the deliveries take?
- How will you manage temperatures during transport?
- What will you do in case of problems?

If another company is responsible for your deliveries, the above-mentioned points can be addressed in that company's own-check plan.

Organic products and import

If your selection includes organic products, your own-check activities will entail special requirements with regard to organic production. If you import animal products such as meat or cheese, it will entail special requirements on your own-check activities.



Section 6, Terminology

Some words have been bolded in the text.
These words have been explained in this section.
Terms are listed in alphabetical order.

Additives

Food additives are substances that are not usually consumed as actual food. They are added to foodstuffs for reasons such as guaranteeing the shelf-life of the product or modifying its colour.
The use of additives must comply with the requirements of EU legislation.

Allergen

An allergen causes an allergic reaction. Allergens include, for example, pollen, mould spores, pharmaceutical substances (such as penicillin), foodstuffs (such as peanuts, fish, egg whites and milk).
Almost any food can cause an allergic reaction.

Allergy

In food allergies, an ingredient of the food causes an allergic reaction. This can manifest as a rash, abdominal pain, diarrhoea, itching of the mucous membranes of the mouth and throat, swelling of the pharynx or nasal discharge. In severe cases, the allergy may be life-threatening and requires immediate treatment.

The most common allergies in children are to milk, cereals, nuts/seeds, eggs and fish.

In adults, the symptoms are often caused by intolerance of certain root vegetables, fruits and spices. Typical causes of food allergies in adults also include nuts and fish. Any food can cause an allergic reaction if the person has become oversensitive to the food or one of its ingredients.

Bacteria

Bacteria are small organisms or microbes. Some bacteria are harmful to humans, while others are useful. Bacteria are present almost everywhere: in waters, in the soil, on people's skin and in the intestinal tract. Some bacteria are unpleasant or even dangerous, since they cause diseases.

Best before date

See "Date of minimum durability".

Building permit

All new buildings and major renovation projects require a permit. This permit is called a building permit. In the first instance, the permit is applied for through the electronic permit service, but can also be applied for in writing from the building supervision authority of the municipality in which the building is located.

Building supervision authority

Municipal building supervision authorities grant building and minor construction permits and have a role in the supervision of construction work. They also provide assistance and guidance for building and repairs. Every municipality has a building supervision authority.

Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment

The Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment are responsible for the regional implementation and development tasks of the central government in Finland. There are 15 Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, and they are referred to with the abbreviation ELY Centre. More information about your local ELY Centre is available at the address www.ely-keskus.fi.

Cold chain

The cold chain means keeping the temperature of food sufficiently low for the entire duration of transport from the place of production, through the point of sale all the way to the consumer's refrigerator. An unbroken cold chain is one of the most important factors in safe food production and self-monitoring checks.

Colostrum

When a cow has given birth to a calf, it will produce colostrum for a few days. Colostrum is usually sold frozen since it is highly perishable.

Compliance documents (of contact materials), declarations of compliance

These are documents that indicate the purpose of use for which materials and articles are suitable and which statutory requirements they comply with.

Compound ingredients

Compound ingredients refer to food products used in the manufacture of other foodstuffs. A compound ingredient consists of more than one ingredient. For example, a chicken fillet roll containing the following compound ingredients: garlic cream cheese and herb pesto.

Condensation basins

Water condensating on cooling devices and in chilled rooms can be disposed of in a controlled manner with the help of condensation basins.

Contaminate, contamination

Food is contaminated when it contains a substance harmful to humans or a cause of food poisoning or spoilage. Contamination can take place directly from one food or ingredient to another. It can take place through dirty utensils and surfaces, the air or the hands of employees. Vegetables can be contaminated during cultivation by coming into contact with contaminated irrigation water. Airborne contamination as a result of coughing or sneezing is also possible.

Cooperative

Working in a cooperative is working together with other producers.

Cross-contamination

Cross-contamination means that microbes are transferred from one foodstuff to another through direct contact or through a medium for ex. through hands, utensils or equipment.

Date of minimum durability

The date of minimum durability or best before date refers to the date until which the food, properly stored, retains its typical characteristics, such as taste or colour. Products can be sold or used even after this date, provided that its quality has not deteriorated materially.

Declarations of compliance

See "Compliance documents".

Deep-freezing

Deep-freezing refers to the preservation of food products by freezing them as quickly as possible. Food is usually deep-frozen with an appliance specifically designed for the purpose. As a rule, food products cannot be deep-frozen with other, less powerful equipment, such as household freezers or other devices intended for the storage of frozen food.

Deep-freezing stops or significantly slows the the growth of micro-organisms that spoil food. After deep-freezing, all parts of the product must be maintained at a temperature of -18 °C or lower.

Description of own-check

A description of own-check activities is a description involved with primary production and its premises in which activities significant to the safety of food production are included.

Deviation

A deviation can be, for example, an overly high temperature in a refrigeration appliance. Through your own-check activities, you can ensure that you will notice deviations and can rectify the situation. This may mean, for example, fixing the refrigeration appliance and disposing of the foodstuffs if the deviation has lasted for a long time.

Disinfection and disinfectants

Disinfectants are used to kill microbes, clean surfaces and both human and animal hygiene.

Food companies use disinfectants for purposes such as cleaning facilities and equipment after they have been washed with detergent. In addition, disinfectants are used to clean the hands after washing them with soap.

Extra salt content marking

If the salt content of a foodstuff is over a certain limit, a warning for high salt content is obligatory. The marking is obligatory for packed foods and also for some unpacked foodstuffs such as

1. cheeses
2. sausages
3. meat products used as cold cuts and
4. bread.

Finnish Food Authority

- promotes, monitors and studies the safety and quality of food; the health and wellbeing of animals; plant health; fertiliser products, animal feeds and plant protection products that are used in agricultural and forestry production; and propagating materials i.e. seeds and planting materials.
- is responsible for the use of the funds provided by the European Union's agricultural guarantee and rural development funds in Finland, operates as the EU's paying agency and monitors the implementation of EU and national grants – farming subsidies, project, entrepreneurship and structural subsidies as well as market subsidies.

In addition, the Finnish Food Authority develops and maintains the information systems used in rural business administration, develops online services, maintains and develops the registers used in the field, and also produces information management services for the agencies and departments that operate under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry as well as other public authorities.

Food control authority, food inspector, supervisory authority

The municipal food inspector can be a veterinarian, a health inspector or other municipal food inspector. Food inspectors work for food control authorities, which can include, for example, environmental centres.

The purpose of food control is to ensure the safety of food and ensure that it has been labelled with the correct information.

The majority of food control is performed by the municipalities. Smaller municipalities have organised their food supervision jointly through dedicated co-management areas. Finnish Food Authority is responsible for the monitoring of slaughterhouses and facilities connected to them and for meat inspections.

Food establishment notification

A food establishment, such as a restaurant, is required to file a notification of starting business operations. A notification is also required for any material changes, suspension or termination of operations and when the operator changes. The notification is filed with the food control authority of the municipality in which the establishment is located.

A written or electronic notification must be filed no later than four weeks before the start of operations or any material changes to them. Additional information is available from the municipal food control authority.

Food hygiene

Food hygiene refers to all measures intended to ensure the safety, healthiness and purity of foodstuffs from primary production to consumption, in other words, from the field to the table.

Food improvement agents

Food improvement agents refer to additives, flavourings and enzymes used in food products.

Additives and enzymes can be added to food to improve its shelf-life or structure, among other things. Flavourings can also be used to improve or change the smell and taste of food.

The use of food improvement agents must comply with the requirements set for additives, flavourings and enzymes in EU legislation.

Food information regulation

The food information regulation refers to the regulation of the European Union on the provision of food information to consumers. The food information regulation specifies the consumer information that must be stated on the food's packaging or otherwise conveyed to the consumer.

The official title of the regulation is Regulation (EU) NO 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

Food inspector

See “Food control authority”.

Food poisoning

Food poisoning is a condition contracted from drinking water or food. What is normally called food poisoning is an intestinal infection contracted from food. Typical symptoms include diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting and stomach ache.

In the worst case, food poisoning can lead to death.

Foreign object risk

Foreign object risk refers to the risk of objects or materials, such as glass, metal or jewellery worn by employees, being left in the food.

Freezing

Freezing refers to a less powerful freezing method than deep-freezing, such as one taking a considerably longer time.

Further processing

Primary products are further processed into foodstuffs.

Graded, grading

Eggs are graded ie. checked at the packing establishment. Shops and supermarkets can only sell grade A eggs.

Health certificate

A certificate of a person’s state of health and suitability to work with foodstuffs given by the healthcare personnel.

Health examination, salmonella test

If necessary, the employees must be able to reliably demonstrate that they do not have salmonella infection. A new employee’s health must therefore be examined at the start of employment. If necessary, a salmonella test will also be taken.

Hygiene

Hygiene refers to the promotion and maintenance of health. In food companies, good hygiene ensures that disease-causing microbes, dangerous chemicals or other factors that can cause diseases do not end up in food. Good hygiene includes, for example, washing one’s hands and surfaces.

Hygiene passport

The hygiene passport is a certificate of competence. It proves that you know how to process food hygienically. You will need a hygiene passport if you process perishable, unpackaged foodstuffs in, for example, cafés, restaurants, institutional kitchens, food shops or bakeries.

Intolerance (food intolerance or food hypersensitivity)

Food hypersensitivity that does not fulfil the criteria of an allergy is called food intolerance. Lactose intolerance, for example, is caused by the inability of the body to digest milk sugar, i.e., lactose.

In coeliac disease, on the other hand, a protein contained in rye and barley, gluten, causes an inflammatory reaction in the mucous membrane of the small intestine, which interferes with the absorption of nutrients.

Low-Risk Decree (number 1258/2011)

This is Finnish national legislation. It defines the amounts of own produce which can be sold with alleviated requirements.

Microbes

Microbes refer to micro-organisms that are not visible to the naked eye. Microbes include bacteria, viruses, fungi or moulds, yeast, along with parasites or protozoa, tapeworms and nematodes. The growths caused by moulds and yeast on the surface of food can, however, be seen with the naked eye.

Microbes in food can cause the food to spoil or can cause food poisoning in humans.

Microbiological purity

A surface is microbiologically pure if it does not contain microbes.

A surface that appears clean to the eye is not necessarily microbiologically pure. For this reason, food companies, for example, use disinfectants in addition to detergent. Disinfectants kill microbes. Microbiological purity is tested with tests specifically designed for this purpose.

Microbiological samples and analyses

Laboratory tests for ensuring the quality, safety and shelf-life of food or ingredients.

Microwave, microwaving

A microwave oven is an appliance for heating food and drink with the help of microwaves. A microwave oven can also be referred to as a 'microwave' or 'micro'.

Mould

Mould creates growths on the surface of food, spoiling it. Mould can be seen with the naked eye. Mouldy food must not be used. Do not eat or use, for example, bread if mould can be seen on its surface.

Novel food authorisation

A novel food authorisation is required if the product or ingredient has not been used as a foodstuff in the EU before May 1997. The authorisation is applied for from the European Commission. The application must include an account of the new food product's or ingredient's safety.

Organic products

Organic production generates products without causing harm to the environment or the health and well-being of humans, plants or animals.

In the production of organic food, the permitted additives and processing agents have been limited to the absolutely necessary. For example, artificial dyes and sweeteners are not allowed.

Overhead watering

Plants in cultivation are watered from above.

Own-check plan

The own-check plan is a document in which are recorded the measurements taken by food entrepreneurs themselves to control the safety and quality of food products.

Period of minimum durability

See "Date of minimum durability".

Perishable foods/foodstuffs

Perishable foodstuffs refers to food in which bacteria that spoil the food or cause food poisoning can grow rapidly if the food is not stored at/in the correct temperature and conditions. For example, meat, fish, grated carrots and raw sausages are perishable foodstuffs.

Non-perishable foodstuffs can keep for a long time at room temperature and dry conditions. These include, for example, nuts, spices and flour.

Pests

Pests include rats, mice, cockroaches, flies and silverfish. Pests can spread diseases and spoil or soil foods or their packaging.

Prepared for sale

Preparing for sale means the removal of soil, the tops, ie. the parts on top of the ground, or the top leaves. In some cases it means washing of vegetables and cutting bigger vegetables in small pieces.

Primary production

Primary production produces foodstuffs and raw materials, which are then delivered to, for example, shops, the food industry for processing, or directly to consumers.

Primary production includes farming such as dairy production, egg production, beef cattle breeding, and the cultivation of fruits, vegetables and cereals. Primary production also includes the exploitation of wild produce, such as collecting berries and mushrooms, fishing and fish farming.

Primary production notification

A primary production notification must be filed for a farm engaged in primary production. The notification is filed with the municipal food control authority. There is a specific form for the notification.

Process, processing

Processing food can consist of chopping, flavouring or cooking it. Processing food in a food company requires a hygiene passport and health certificate.

Serving prepared food or moving packaged food from one place to another does not constitute processing that would require a hygiene passport or health certificate.

Raw milk

Raw milk is the milk of domestic animals which has not been heated to over 40 degrees Centigrade or processed in any other way. Nothing has been taken away from or added to raw milk.

Raw milk is also known as farm milk.

REKO food rings

A REKO food ring sells directly to the end consumer through a remote medium. REKO food rings operate through private Facebook-groups.

Salmonella

Salmonella is an intestinal bacteria that can be transmitted through contaminated food or water and causes food poisoning.

The symptoms of a salmonella infection or salmonellosis can include

- nausea
- abdominal pain
- diarrhoea
- fever and
- headache.

Salmonella infections may also cause permanent damage, such as severe joint pain. In addition, salmonella can cause serious conditions, such as blood poisoning.

Salmonella is most commonly transmitted through raw or poorly cooked poultry or pork, or through raw milk and raw vegetables. Salmonella can also spread through foodstuffs contaminated by an infected worker.

Salmonella test, health examination

If necessary, the employees must be able to reliably demonstrate that they do not have salmonella infection. A new employee's health must therefore be examined at the start of employment. If necessary, a salmonella test will also be taken.

Salmonellosis

Salmonellosis is the name of the disease caused by the salmonella bacteria. Salmonellosis most commonly affects the digestive tract, manifesting as diarrhoea.

Separation in time

Separation in time means that different food groups are processed on the same work surfaces or with the same tools, but at different times. Temporal segregation requires the surfaces and tools to be carefully cleaned between different applications.

For example, handling unwashed root vegetables and gutting fish must be temporally segregated from other processing, if they cannot be processed on dedicated surfaces with dedicated tools. Ingredients that cause allergies and intolerance reactions can also be temporally separated from each other and foods for which they are not intended.

Supervisory authority

See "Food control authority".

Surface cleanliness samples

Surface cleanliness samples are taken for example from work surfaces. These samples are used for monitoring the microbiological purity of surfaces.

Traceability

Traceability means that you will need to be able to demonstrate the place of purchase of ingredients and other products. Similarly, you must know where the finished products have been delivered.

Use-by date or expiration date

Instead of the date of minimum durability, the packaging of microbiologically perishable food products must indicate an expiration date. This refers to the date until which the foodstuff is safe to use, provided that it has been stored appropriately.

A foodstuff may not be sold after its expiration date or used in the manufacture of foodstuffs for sale or service.

Vegetable produce, vegetable products

Vegetable products are primary products originating from plants. They are used as foodstuffs as such or through a production process.

Viruses

Viruses are small particles which cause infections in, for example, the respiratory or digestive tract. Viruses can cause colds, cough, diarrhoea or vomiting.

Viruses can infect humans through food, for example, or via surfaces touched by humans.

Wholesaler

Wholesalers sell goods in large quantities. They sell their products and services to shops, restaurants and other companies.

Wine glass and fork symbol

Packaging or utensils bearing the wine glass and fork symbol are made of material suitable for use with foodstuffs. The wine glass and fork symbol indicates that the product fulfils the requirements set for items and materials that come into contact with foodstuffs.



Wine glass and fork symbol

Withdrawal

If it is discovered that a food product does not comply with the requirements for the safety of foodstuffs, the product shall be withdrawn from the market. This is called withdrawal.

Work hygiene

The production of foodstuffs require good work hygiene. This includes personnels' good hand hygiene, good health status and clean work clothing as well as good cleaning of premises and equipment and prevention of cross-contamination.

Annex 1. Selling food on your farm

You are a primary producer and want to sell food in connection with your primary production.

Will you need to file a food establishment notification on your operations?

- 1** You sell the produce of your own primary production directly to consumers on your farm or at the market, and your annual sales remain below the kilogramme thresholds specified in the Low-Risk Decree. You can also pack vegetable products, mushrooms or honey you have produced for sale.
- 2** You are also selling low-risk primary production products produced by your neighbours directly to consumers in connection with selling your own produce on your farm or at the market, and the value of this trade is less than EUR 10,000 per year.
- 3** You are also offering packing services for the vegetable products, mushrooms or honey of other primary producers, and the packaged products are returned to the farms on which they were produced.

You will not need to file a food establishment notification. You can report your sales as part of primary production.

- 1** The operations are considered as part of primary production.
- 2** The operations are considered to take place in connection with other business activities.
- 3** Responsibility for the products will remain with their farm of origin, you are only selling a service to another primary.

You sell the produce of your own primary production directly to consumers on your farm or at the market, and your annual sales exceed the kilogramme thresholds specified in the Low-Risk Decree.

You are also selling low-risk primary production products produced by your neighbours directly to consumers in connection with selling your own produce on your farm or at the market, and the value of this trade is more than EUR 10,000 per year.

Or, you are selling other foodstuffs on your farm or at the market in addition to those produced by yourself.

You buy products from other primary producers and pack them for sale at your own place of primary production.

You must file a food establishment notification of the sales and possible packing.

Annex 2. Processing vegetable products from your own crop

You are a primary producer and would like to process vegetable products from your own crop.

Will you need to file a food establishment notification on the production?

You produce low-risk products, such as milling grain into flour or baking bread from flour, and the annual value of this production is less than EUR 10,000.

- 1 You produce low-risk products, such as milling grain into flour or baking bread from flour, and the annual value of this production is more than EUR 10,000.
- 2 You produce products that are not low-risk as such, but do not pose a particularly high risk either, such as jam or juice.
- 3 You produce products involving special risks, such as grated vegetables or salads, for sale.

You will not need to file a food establishment notification of your low-risk production. The operation is considered to take place alongside other business activities, so a food establishment notification will not be required.

However, you are permitted to deliver these products for sale or service elsewhere, or to sell or serve them as part of your own business.

- 1 You need to file a food establishment notification on the production. When the value of the operation exceeds the EUR 10,000 threshold, it is considered a part of your main livelihood.
- 2 You can carry out marketing trials with your products for a maximum of one year. When you have determined that there will be a market for your product, you must file the food establishment notification within one year of the start of operations.
- 3 You need to file a food establishment notification on the production 4 weeks before the start of operations.



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