

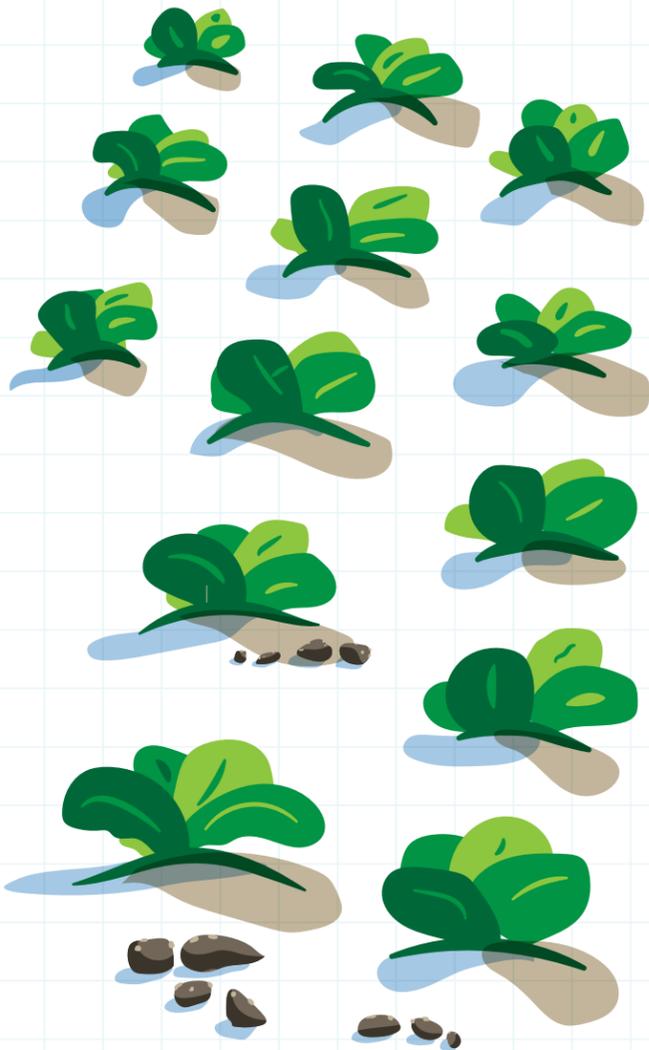
Preventing Produce Contamination: Identifying Animal Intrusion¹



Animals and animal feces may contaminate produce if they are present in or near produce fields or water sources. Large numbers of animals represent the biggest risks because they can produce large amounts of fecal matter that may be deposited in fields or enter through water runoff, airborne particles, or by contaminating water sources.

Farms can take steps to identify when animal field intrusion occurs and when it presents a health risk. First, you can use this handout along with on-site training to help workers identify animal scat and tracks, and instruct them on what to do if any is seen in the field pre-harvest.

Ways to assess the food safety risks associated with animals on your farm:



- Talk with workers to identify animal intrusion.
- Evaluate topography of the land to assess for potential runoff, including presence and location of nearby grazing and feeding operations.
- Identify the type and approximate number of animals (domestic and wildlife) entering fields.
- Observe activity patterns or seasonality of domestic animals and wildlife presence.
- Monitor weekly (if not more), fields for animal intrusion, and more frequently close to harvest to identify problems, and take action to reduce risks.
- Document any activity observed throughout the season, especially close to and during harvest. Include date, location, name of worker completing task.

Determine the appropriate procedures for marking buffer and no-harvest zones.

Tools to take with you during monitoring include:

- protective gear (gloves, apron, designated boots)
- small shovel
- heavy-duty trash bags
- flags/markers and caution tape to mark buffer/no harvest zones
- record sheets and pen



¹ For more information about preventing contamination by identifying animal intrusion, see 21 CFR Subpart I, §§ 112.81-112.84.

Questions? Contact the Maryland Department of Agriculture at 410-841-5769, produce.safety@maryland.gov

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