



**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
AGRICULTURAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, August 19, 2026, at 10:00 A.M**

**ALRB Hearing and Conference Room
1325 J Street, Suite 1900, Sacramento, CA 95814**

Board Members: Chair: Victoria Hassid,
Members: Barry Broad and Ralph Lightstone
Executive Secretary: Santiago Avila-Gomez

Board Counsels: Board Counsels: Scott Inciardi and Thomas Barnes

Technical Support: Satyadarshini Mathan

Spanish interpreter: Julie C Conde

Open Session

1. Call to Order

- Chair Hassid called the meeting to order at 10:02 A.M.
- Board Members Present: Board Member Broad, and Board Member Lightstone.

2. Approval of Minutes from Public Board Meeting, August 5, 2026.

- Board Member Broad moved to approve the minutes from the Public Board Meeting from August 5, 2026.
- Board Member Lightstone seconded the motion.
- Motion approved unanimously.

3. Chair's Report – Presented by Victoria Hassid

- Chair Hassid provided an update on Labor Rights Week, which will be held next week in partnership with the Mexican Consulate and local Mexican consular offices throughout California. The week will feature a series of events aimed at informing workers about their rights and providing helpful resources and information. Additional details and event information are

available through the Mexican Consulate's Facebook page and the various local consular office Facebook pages.

4. Executive Officer's Report on Elections, Unfair Labor Practice Complaints, and Hearings

- Please refer to Appendix A.

5. Litigation Report

- No report provided.

6. General Counsel's Report

- No report provided.

7. Legislative

- No report provided.

8. Informational panel on food safety - Presented by

- Michael Needham, Chief, Food Investigations and Technical Support Section, Food and Drug Branch, California Department of Public Health.
- Please refer to Appendix B
- Dr. Geetika Joshi, Environmental Program Manager, Produce Safety Program, California Department of Food and Agriculture.
- Please refer to Appendix C
- Jason Sharrett, Director of Grower Education and Outreach, California Strawberry Commission
- Please refer to Appendix D
- A brief Q&A session between the Board and the panelists followed the presentations.

9. Public Comment

- None

Closed Session

- The Board recessed into closed session at 11:43 A.M and returned at 12:35

P.M.

10. Announcements

- The next regularly scheduled meeting is Wednesday, September 2, 2026, in Sacramento.

11. Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned at 12:35 P.M.

Office of the
Executive Secretary
1325 J Street, Suite 1900-B
Sacramento, CA 95814



ALRB
AGRICULTURAL LABOR
RELATIONS BOARD



**ALRB PUBLIC MEETING
EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT
ELECTIONS, UNFAIR LABOR PRACTICE COMPLAINTS, AND HEARINGS**

DATE: August 19, 2026
TO: Agricultural Labor Relations Board
FROM: Santiago Avila-Gomez, Executive Secretary

Board Administrative Orders

1. *SoCal Berry Growers, LLC* (August 6, 2026) ALRB Admin. Order No. 2026-11-P (Order Dismissing Objections to Certification [2026-RM-001])
2. *Sea Mist Farms, LLC* (July 27, 2026) ALRB Admin. Order No. 2026-10 (Order Granting General Counsel's Request for Subpoena Enforcement [2025-CE-045])

Board Decision

1. *Olive Hill Greenhouses, Inc.* (2026) 52 ALRB No. 4 (Decision and Order [July 30, 2026; 2024-MMC-002])

Food and Drug Branch

Michael Needham, MPH

Chief, Food Investigations & Technical Support Section

August 19, 2026

Overview - Public Health in California



- Population: ~40 million
- Decentralized state
 - 61 local public health agencies
 - 62 local environmental health agencies
- 29 local public health laboratories
- **Restaurants** - inspections by local environmental health
- **Wholesale Food Manufacturing** – inspections by the Food and Drug Branch

California Department of Public Health

Food and Drug Branch



Food and Drug Branch

**Investigations,
Inspections, and Sampling**



California Health & Safety Code, Section 110140 – Authorizes CDPH to inspect any facility, establishment, vehicle, or place where food is being held.



California Health & Safety Code, Section 110150 – Authorizes CDPH to collect samples.



~7000 licensed wholesale food manufacturers in California – inspections conducted based upon a risk assessment protocol.

Food and Drug Branch

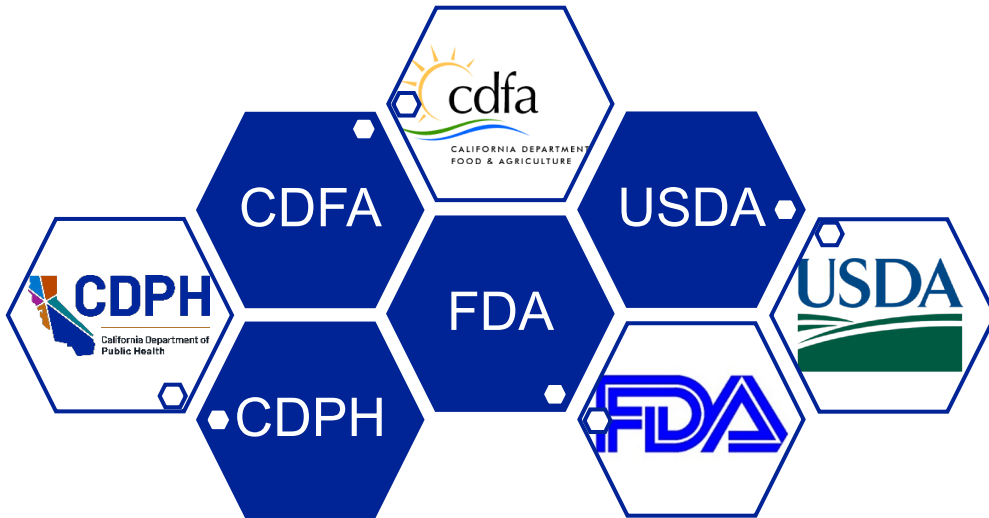
Mission and Staffing

Our Food and Drug Branch professional team is dedicated to protecting and enhancing the public health and the well-being for all. We accomplish this through sound science and enforcement of laws and regulations pertaining to food, cosmetics, drugs, medical devices, and industrial hemp products.

- Staff: 170 (law enforcement, science, inspectors, and administrative)

CalFERT

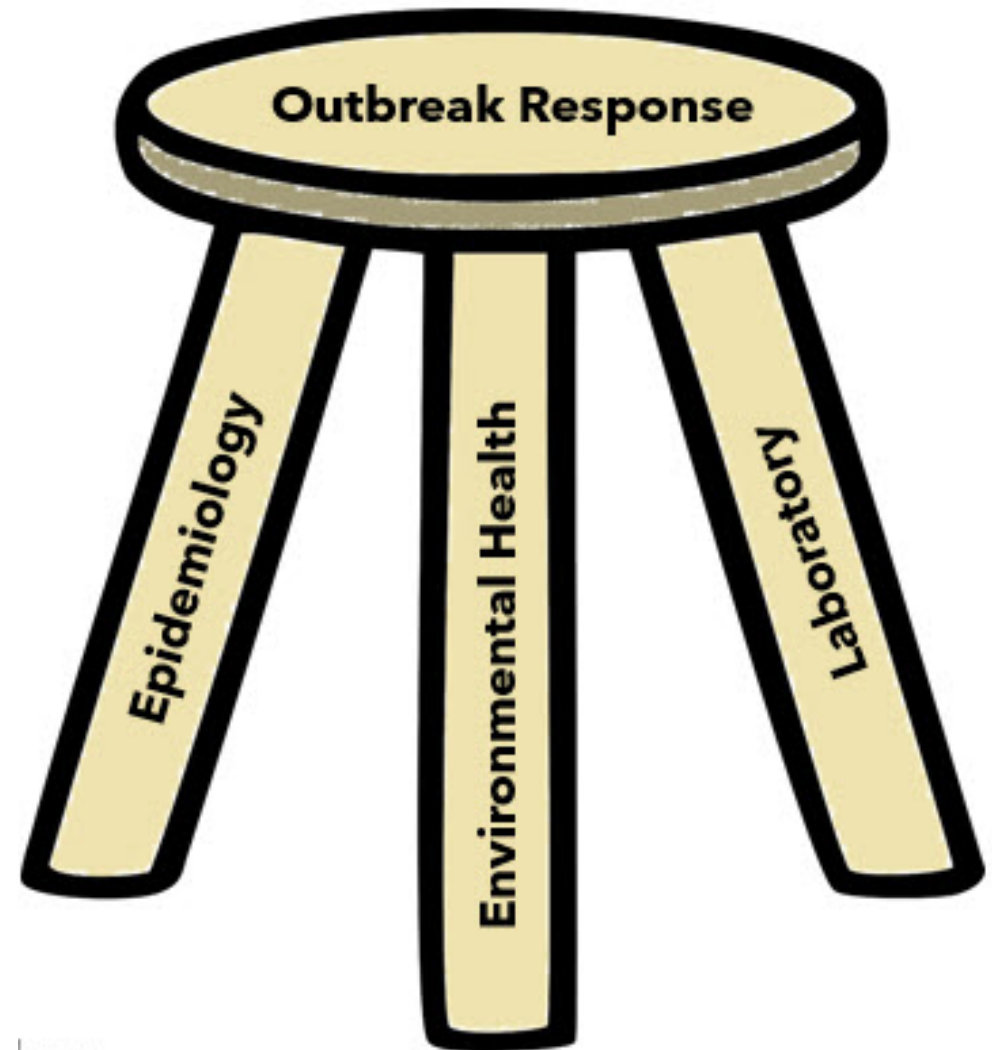
(California Food Emergency Response Team)



- Partnership between CDPH, CDFA, USDA, and FDA
- Interdisciplinary group of experienced investigators and scientists.
- Conducts foodborne illness outbreak investigations.

CaIFERT

- Mission: Protect public health
- 1st priority during a foodborne outbreak
 - Stop the outbreak.
- Three categories within outbreak response:
 - Epidemiology
 - Environmental Health
 - Laboratory



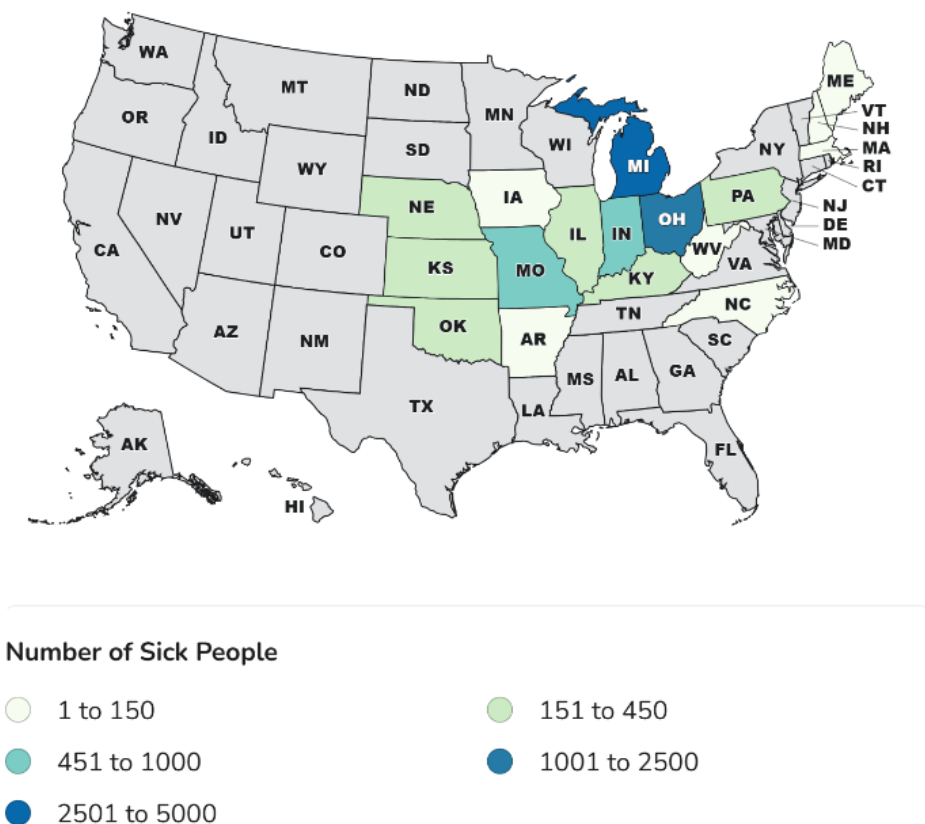
Benefits of CalFERT

- Increased efficiency
- Better utilization of resources
- Opportunities for cross-training
- Meeting priorities



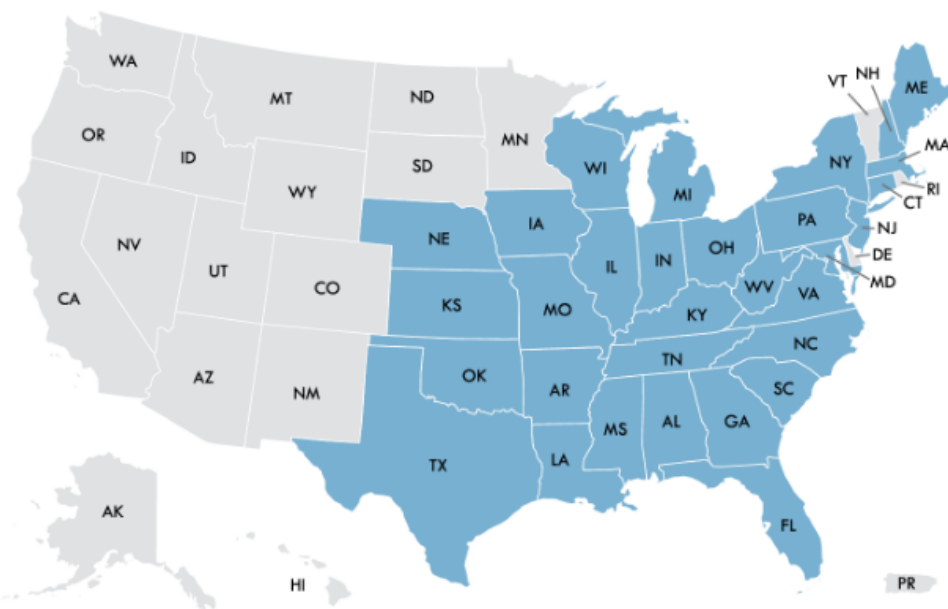
Cyclospora Outbreak Linked to Iceberg Lettuce

Case Count Map Provided by CDC



Product Distribution Map

Distribution of recalled products has been **confirmed** for the states shown below. Recalled product may have been distributed further, reaching additional states.







Appendix C

California Produce Safety Program

Geetika Joshi, Ph.D.

August 19, 2026

Sacramento, CA



Overview

- Over 400 specialty crops in CA that include over a third of country's vegetables and nearly three-quarters of the country's fruit and nuts
- Dairy products, milk, cattle and calves among the top 3 valued commodities for the 2023 crop year
- Almonds, pistachios, walnuts, dairy, dairy products among top exports
- Largest organic production in the nation (farms, acres and sales)
- Unique landscapes, microclimates, watersheds and soil types



Source: LearnAboutAg.org,
created from data in
California Agricultural
Statistics Review, 2020-21

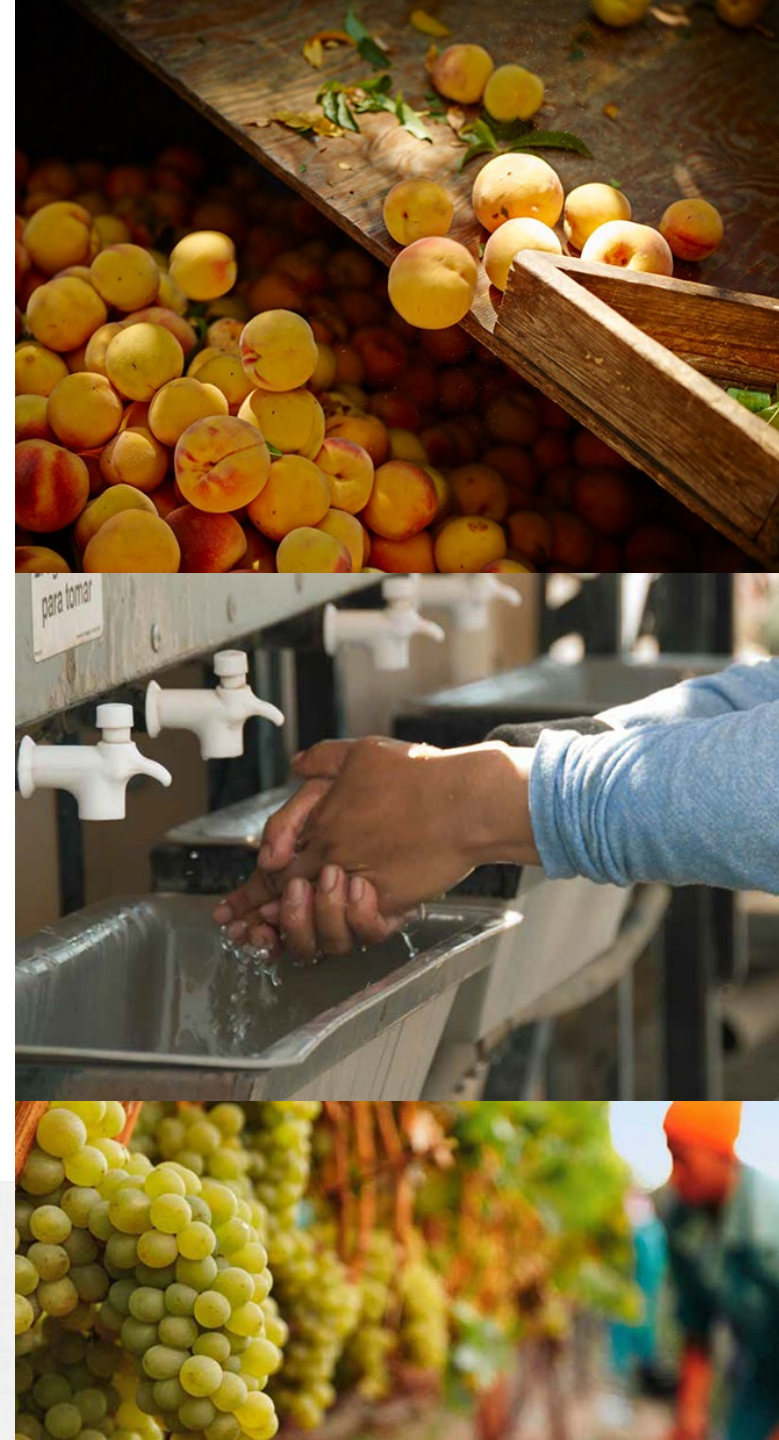
Food Safety – A Shared Responsibility

- Public health protection at federal, state and local levels
- Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) – federal law in 2011
- FDA, USDA or joint; varies by food product type (fresh produce, milk/dairy products, eggs, meat)
- Implementation and enforcement in 50 states – balancing regional variability and standardization
 - On-farm produce safety: FDA or state agriculture department(s)
 - Food processing facilities: FDA, state departments of public health and/or agriculture
- Government and private voluntary audit/certification programs



California Produce Safety Program (PSP)

- Established under Produce Safety Cooperative Agreement with US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- Housed within Inspection Services Division with goal to help California fresh produce farms be compliant with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule (PSR)
- Education, outreach and on-farm inspections
- Estimated 20,000 fresh produce farms in California growing over three-quarters of the nation's fresh fruit, vegetables and nut crops
- Team comprised of 8 regional produce safety inspectors and 5 specialists that conduct inspections statewide, with support from management, data and administrative personnel
- FSMA PSR focuses on food borne illness risk from microbial pathogens
- CA conducts work under federal authority as a "Path B" state under the Cooperative Agreement Program
- <https://www.cdffa.ca.gov/producesafety/>



Produce Safety Rule

Covered Farms

- Raw agricultural commodities
- Businesses with produce sales >\$30K annually
- Farm activities
 - Grow, harvest, pack, hold

Not covered/Exempt

- Produce grown for personal consumption or farmers markets/restaurants (qualified end users)
 - Exception – Food sales over \$610K
- Produce rarely consumed raw
 - Examples: Beans, lentils, asparagus, eggplant, potatoes
- Produce that is commercially processed (“kill step”)
 - Examples: Tomatoes for canning, apples for juice
- Enforcement discretion
 - Examples: Almonds, hops, wine grapes

Areas of Attention

- General provisions and requirements
- Personnel Qualifications and Training
- Health and Hygiene
- Agricultural Water
- Biological Soil Amendments of Animal Origin
- Domesticated and Wild Animals
- Growing, Harvesting, Packing and Holding Activities
- Equipment, tools, buildings and sanitation
- Records

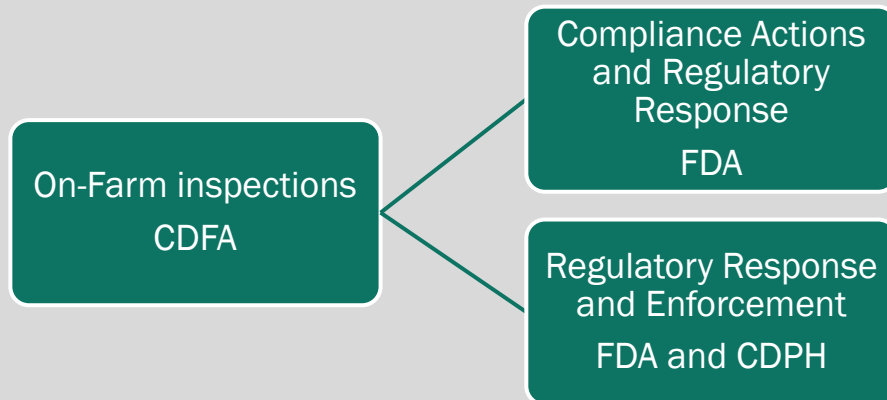
What does the Inspection look like?

- Educate while we regulate
- Systems-based approach
- Details about the farm discussed
- Regulatory concerns discussed as observed
- Notes, pictures, and records review conducted
- Language support available: Spanish



Regulatory Roles and Responsibilities (Fresh Produce)

Surveillance Activities



Emergency Response

- Food-borne illness outbreaks
- Consumer complaints
- Coordination with CalFERT, CDC, FDA
- CDFA provides investigation support and/or conducts follow-up inspections

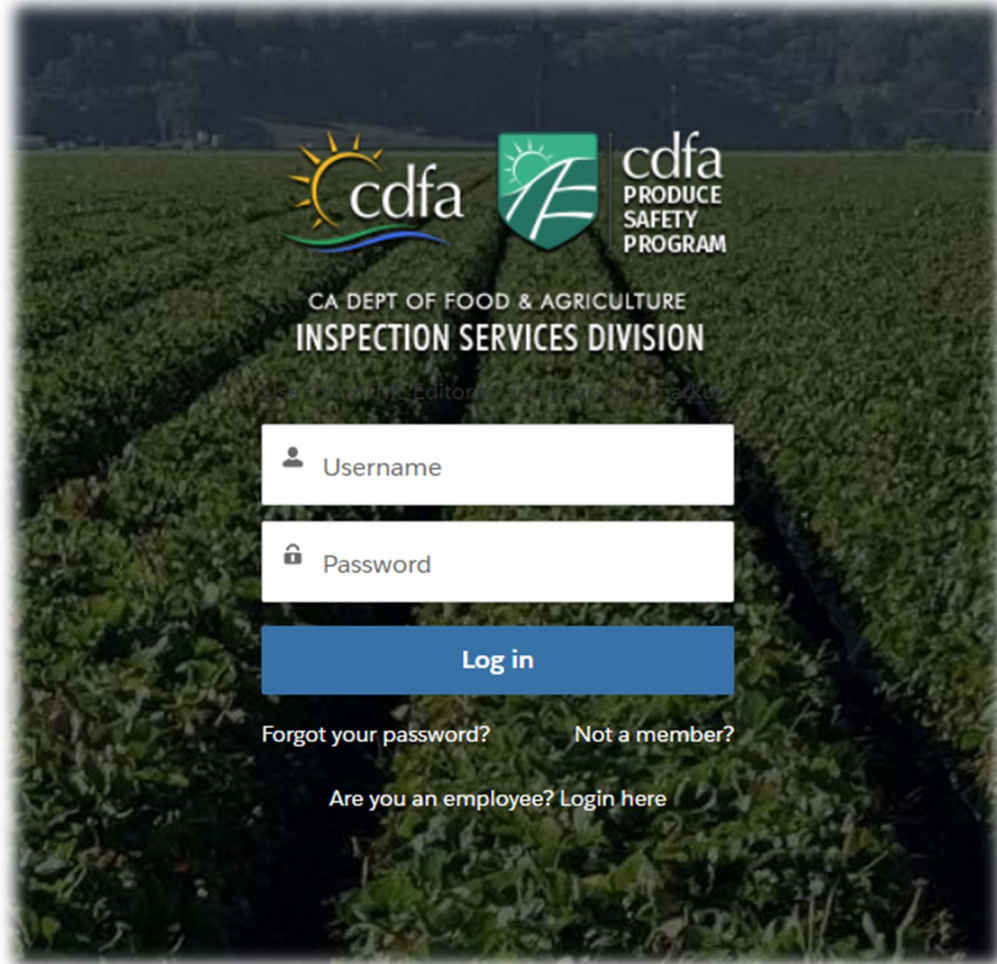
Technical Assistance
Program

PSP Farm Inventory Verification, Education and Outreach

- Estimated 20,000 produce farms in CA
- 6,439 verified farms – farm verification is an ongoing process
- 2,604 inspections as of March 31, 2026
- 196 On Farm Readiness Reviews (OFRRs) conducted as of March 31, 2026
- Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) – FDA approved grower training – over 500 participants trained since 2024



Farm Inventory and Inspections Data Management



- PSP Portal (Salesforce-based)
- Store farm information and inspection records
- Accessible by PSP team for planning future inspections
 - Risk-ranking and modeling to prioritize inspections
- Accessible by farm for access to their individual inspection reports

Outreach and Communications

- PSP Portal Training Workshops
- In-house PSA Grower Trainings
- On-demand trainings for industry
- On-Farm Readiness Reviews
- Produce Safety Rules! Blog: <https://blogs.cdфа.ca.gov/ProduceSafety/>
- Mailing list: <https://www.cdфа.ca.gov/producesafety/maillinglist.html>





Questions?



Grower Education and Outreach FOOD SAFETY PROGRAM

Jason Sharrett

Director of Grower Education and Outreach



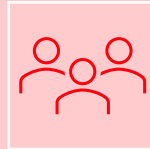
California Strawberry Industry in 2026



43,000 Acres (Watsonville, Salinas, Santa Maria and Ventura/Oxnard)



Approximately 280 Growers, 25 Shippers and 15 processors



At peak production there are over 1200 harvest crews and more than 40,000 harvest workers.



In 2025 growers produced 245 million trays of strawberries (Almost 2 billion pounds!)

Grower Education and Outreach

Our Purpose

Provide technical resources and training to increase the success of farming operations.



**FOOD SAFETY
PROGRAM**



**LABOR
MANAGEMENT AND
COMPLIANCE**



**PESTICIDE
SAFETY**



**PRODUCTION
TRAINING AND
SERVICES**



Food Safety Program

Food Safety Education, Leadership, and Industry Representation

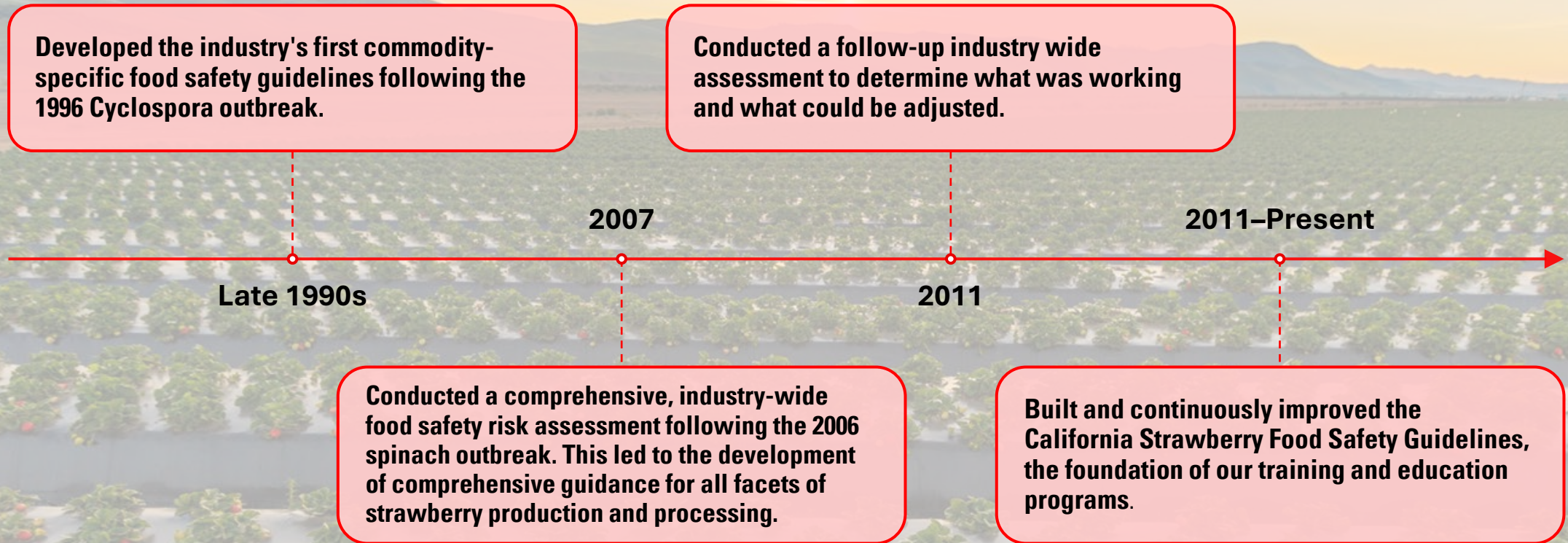
Program Focus

Building a strong food safety culture across the strawberry industry through education, leadership development, and proactive regulatory engagement.

Strategies

- Build and reinforce daily food safety behaviors at the crew and supervisor level
- Deliver consistent, bilingual training resources that reduce harvest-related risks
- Maintain strong working relationships with FDA, CDFA, and other food safety partners.
- Use data, feedback, and other evaluations to drive continuous improvement in food safety programs.

Foundation of California Strawberry Industry Food Safety Program



The California strawberry industry developed one of the nation's first commodity-specific food safety programs, including a 90-page bilingual implementation manual, before FDA issued its Good Agricultural Practices guidance in 1998.

THE POWER OF ONE WORKER

A worker wearing a dark hoodie and a face mask is crouching in a strawberry field, harvesting strawberries into a cardboard box. The field is filled with rows of green strawberry plants.

EVERY STRAWBERRY IS HARVESTED BY HAND

A single worker may harvest

As many as 100 TRAYS a day!

(8 lb trays $\approx$ 800 pounds)

If every pound is shared by
about 3 consumers:

**800 pounds $\times$ 3 people =
approximately 2,400 consumer
servings.**

**Food safety is built one
decision at a time.**

OUR TRAINING PHILOSOPHY

We design our programs around the needs of the agricultural workforce

**Leadership
Focused**

Accessible

**Hands-On
Learning**

**Communication
Focused**

**Designed for
Learning**

Our Goal

Provide leaders with the practical knowledge, skills, and resources to build and sustain a strong food safety culture throughout their organizations.

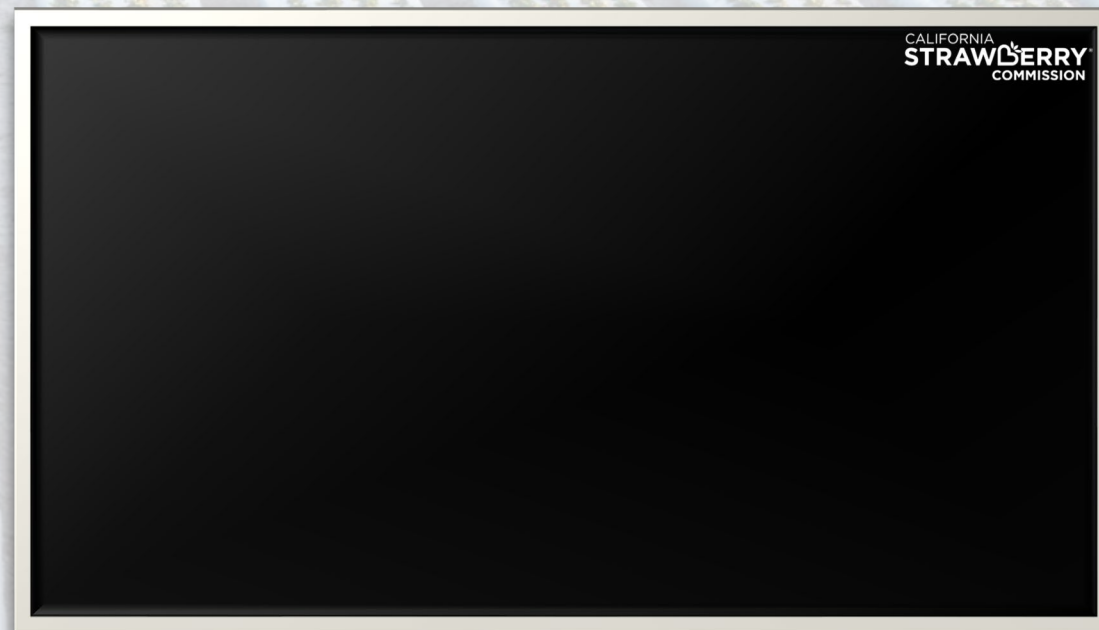
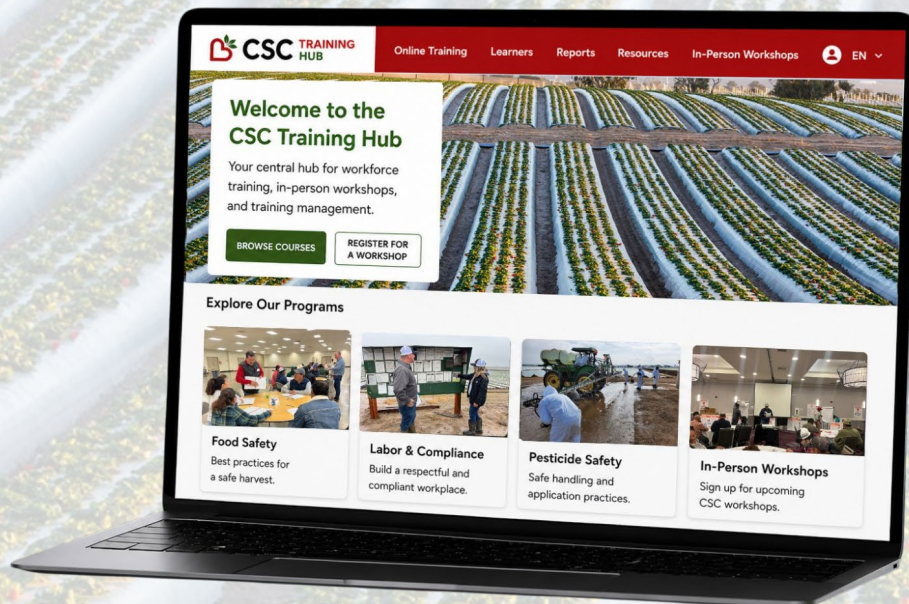
CSC Food Safety Training

Current Trainings

- Basic Principles of Food Safety
- Supervising Food Safety – New for 2026 (In-person and Virtual)
- Harvest for Processing (Virtual)
- Food Safety Leadership
- Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training (FSMA)



CSC Training HUB



<https://learn.calstrawberry.com>



ONLINE TRAINING

Learn anytime,
anywhere.



RESOURCES

Access tools, guides,
and training materials.



REPORTS

Track completion and
progress.



IN-PERSON WORKSHOPS

Register for CSC live
trainings.



LEARNERS

Assign training to
individuals or groups.



Food Safety Guidelines Refresh

HOW TO CLEAN AND SANITIZE CALYX REMOVAL TOOLS

APPLIES TO COMPANY-OWNED TOOLS AND EMPLOYEE-OWNED
TOOLS USED FOR STRAWBERRIES HARVESTED FOR PROCESSING



STEPS

1 COLLECT TOOLS

- Workers turn tools in to the supervisor:
- At the start of the shift* (employee-owned tools only)
 - At lunch
 - At the end of the day



*Company-owned tools stored in sanitary storage may be issued without re-sanitizing if they are clean and in good condition.

2 PREPARE SANITIZER

Prepare a fresh chlorine sanitizing solution.

ADD CHLORINE TO WATER.
Never add water to chlorine.
Follow all product label instructions.



3 VERIFY

Test the sanitizer using chlorine test strips.

If the reading is below 100 ppm or above 200 ppm, prepare a new solution.



4 WASH

Scrub the tool using a synthetic bristle brush in potable water with nonscented dish soap. Remove fruit residue, calyx material, juice, and other visible contamination.



5 RINSE

Rinse the tool in clean potable water.



6 SANITIZE

Completely submerge the tool in the chlorine sanitizing solution. Ensure all food-contact surfaces are fully exposed to sanitizer.



7 AIR DRY

Place the tools in a clean area to air dry. Do not place sanitized tools on unsanitary surfaces.



CHLORINE SOLUTION

Target: 200 ppm available chlorine
Acceptable range: 100 to 200 ppm

CHLORINE CONCENTRATION (SODIUM HYPOCHLORITE)	AMOUNT OF CHLORINE TO ADD TO WATER		
	1 GALLON	5 GALLON	10 GALLON
6.0%	2.5 tsp (2½ teaspoons)	4.5 tsp (½ cup + ½ tbsp)	9 tsp (½ cup + 1 tbsp)
7.5%	2 tsp (2 teaspoons)	3.5 tsp (½ cup + ½ tbsp)	7 tsp (just under ½ cup)

tsp = teaspoon | tbsp = tablespoon | 1 cup = 16 tablespoons

Use only unscented bleach. Do not use scented bleach or splashless bleach.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- Replace sanitizer when visibly dirty.
- Do not mix chlorine with other chemicals.
- Store bleach in its original container, tightly closed, in a cool shaded location.
- Follow product label instructions.
- The designated supervisor or sanitation employee shall inspect tools for: visible dirt, fruit residue, calyx residue, juice buildup, damage, excessive wear, surfaces that may be difficult to clean, and tape, wrapped handles, or added materials that may prevent effective cleaning and sanitizing.

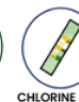
RECORDKEEPING REQUIRED

Document each cleaning and sanitizing event in the calyx removal tool cleaning and sanitizing log.



CALYX CUTTING TOOL CLEANING AND SANITIZING LOG

Document each required sanitation event



TOOLS

SANITIZER

CHLORINE PPM

RECORDKEEPING



Operation / Company: _____



Ranch / Location: _____



Supervisor: _____



Date: _____

TIME (AM / PM)	SANITATION EVENT (Check one)	CHLORINE PPM* (Write the verified number)	NEW SOLUTION MIXED?	EMPLOYEE-OWNED TOOLS SANITIZED (Number)	TOTAL TOOLS PROCESSED (Number)	INITIALS
1. _____ AM / PM	☐ Pre-Shift (employee-owned tools only) ☐ Lunch ☐ End of Day (when contamination occurs)	_____	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____	_____	_____
2. _____ AM / PM	☐ Pre-Shift (employee-owned tools only) ☐ Lunch ☐ End of Day (when contamination occurs)	_____	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____	_____	_____
3. _____ AM / PM	☐ Pre-Shift (employee-owned tools only) ☐ Lunch ☐ End of Day (when contamination occurs)	_____	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____	_____	_____
4. _____ AM / PM	☐ Pre-Shift (employee-owned tools only) ☐ Lunch ☐ End of Day (when contamination occurs)	_____	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____	_____	_____
5. _____ AM / PM	☐ Pre-Shift (employee-owned tools only) ☐ Lunch ☐ End of Day (when contamination occurs)	_____	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____	_____	_____
6. _____ AM / PM	☐ Pre-Shift (employee-owned tools only) ☐ Lunch ☐ End of Day (when contamination occurs)	_____	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____	_____	_____
7. _____ AM / PM	☐ Pre-Shift (employee-owned tools only) ☐ Lunch ☐ End of Day (when contamination occurs)	_____	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____	_____	_____
8. _____ AM / PM	☐ Pre-Shift (employee-owned tools only) ☐ Lunch ☐ End of Day (when contamination occurs)	_____	☐ Yes ☐ No	_____	_____	_____

Record the available chlorine ppm verified before use and at each sanitation event. Acceptable range: 100 to 200 ppm.

First phase of a comprehensive review and update of CSC Food Safety Guidelines.





I Pick Safety/Cosecho Seguridad

Renewing a Message That Still Matters



What Is It

Originally developed during COVID, I Pick Safety is being refreshed as a food safety awareness campaign focused on personal responsibility and everyday decision making

Why It Matters

- Makes food safety visible in the field
- Supports consistent supervisor messaging
- Strengthens food safety culture at the crew level
- Connects training to daily harvest practices

Core Messages

- Clean hands
- Report illness
- Clean tools & equipment
- Safe harvest practices
- Speak up about food safety concerns

Potential Materials

- Crew posters
- Ranch Signs
- Videos
- Tailgate training cards
- Supervisor checklists
- Stickers/ decals



FOOD SAFETY IS BUILT ONE DECISION AT A TIME

Our job is to give them the knowledge, tools, and support to make those decisions well.



Thank You