

# Sample SOP: Managing Wildlife and Domestic Animal Intrusion and Contamination

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## 1—Purpose

Describes how to manage wildlife and domestic animal intrusion and fecal contamination in fresh fruit and vegetable production areas.

## 2—Scope

Applies to farm personnel including workers, owners, and managers.

## 3—Responsibility

Farm workers are most likely able to identify animal and fecal material presence because of their presence in the field. Farm owners and managers will make decisions about deterrent methods, corrective actions, and farm policy regarding continued animal intrusion and presence.

## 4—Materials

- *Wildlife and Domestic Animal Monitoring log*
- Tools for removing and disposing of fecal contamination and affected fresh produce
- Clean water, hand soap, disposable towels
- Detergents and sanitizers for cleaning tools and equipment that have come into contact with contaminated soil, product, or feces

## 5—Procedure

*To be completed upon finding evidence of animal intrusion or fecal contamination in fresh produce production areas.*

- A. If wildlife or domestic animal activity (e.g., extensive tracks, destroyed product) or fecal material is found in fresh fruit and vegetable production areas, the following actions should be taken:
  1. Determine if the animal intrusion has compromised the safety of the crop by scouting for extensiveness of animal activity and for fecal material.
  2. Repair or construct methods to exclude (or limit) animal entry into the field in the future. This might include fencing, noise deterrents, or removal of cull piles which may attract unwanted animals.<sup>1</sup>
  3. Record this observation and any actions taken as a result of the animal intrusion, including any methods to keep animals out of the field and what actions were taken to correct the incident.

B. If fecal contamination from wildlife or domestic animal activity is found in fresh produce production areas or on the product itself, the following actions should be taken:

1. Do not harvest any produce that may be contaminated with fecal material.

**Option 1:** Flag the affected area(s) and create a buffer zone<sup>2</sup> to identify the affected product that is to be excluded from harvest.

- Evaluate the extensiveness of the contamination, weather conditions (such as rain that may cause splash), and whether the affected product and fecal material can be removed without causing further spread of contamination.
- Make a decision whether to remove fecal material and contaminated product, if possible; or whether flagging and creating a buffer provides sufficient protection from contamination.
- If extensive contamination is found throughout the field, it is best to take action to evaluate whether harvest should proceed and whether actions, such as disking in the crop, should be taken to minimize the risk.

**Option 2:** Remove the feces and/or affected product from the field using designated tools or equipment.

- Clean and sanitize all equipment and tools used to flag, remove, and dispose of affected produce and fecal material.
- Any worker involved in the removal of contaminated product or animal fecal material must wash their hands with soap and water. Additionally, boots and clothing that may be soiled with contaminated product or feces should be changed to minimize the potential that contamination is spread.

2. All actions must be documented in the *Wildlife and Domestic Animal Monitoring Log*, including a description of the actions taken to reduce current food safety risks in the produce.

1. Note—Co-management: Be sure to check local, state, and federal laws and regulations that protect riparian habitat, removal of vegetation, or the construction of deterrent fences for wildlife corridors.
2. If fecal contamination is identified in the field, it is recommended that a buffer zone around the contamination be established and that no product in the buffer zone be harvested. These buffer zones should be a minimum of a 5 foot radius from the contaminated crop or feces, depending on the crop type, climate, and contamination event.