

## **TAKE ACTION: Submit Comments on the FDA's Proposed Rules**

**You have until November 15** to submit comments to the FDA on the proposed regulations

**It is very important to personalize your comments!** Please do not just take verbatim what we or anyone else has written. Take some time to explain to the FDA how specific proposals will affect your farm. This will have the greatest effect on the regulations.

- Your story matters – be sure to share with FDA why this matters. Are you a farmer? Share how the rules might impact your farm. Are you a consumer? Make sure FDA knows the kind of food you like to buy from farmers and that you want to ensure these rules don't unfairly burden those farmers.
- Keep it polite and avoid profanity – remember that all comments will become part of the public record and will be read by FDA officials.
- Make sure you have a clear “ask” for FDA – either about a specific issue or, broadly, about the importance of ensuring both safe food and thriving family farms.
- Do not exactly copy someone else's comment – for FDA to count your comment, it must be unique. You can make the same or similar points as another person, but you do need to add your own perspective as much as possible.
- Looking for more tips on what makes a good comment? [Check out this PDF from Regulations.gov.](#)

### **To submit comments by mail:**

1. Write your own comments
2. All submissions received must include the following:
  - Your Name—sign your full name
  - Your Organization (if any)
  - The appropriate docket number:
    - For the Preventive Controls Rule: FDA-2011-N-0920 and RIN 0910-AG36
    - For the Produce Rule: FDA-2011-N-0921, and RIN 0910-AG35

If you want to comment on both rules, you can mail them together but must label them separately.

*Note: FDA states that all comments received by mail may be posted without change to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), including any personal information provided.*

Mail to:            Division of Dockets Management (HFA-305)  
                         Food and Drug Administration  
                         5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061  
                         Rockville, MD 20852

### **To submit comments online:**

The best way to comment on the proposed rules is through the government website *Regulations.gov*, which hosts the proposed rules for viewing and a form the public can use to submit comments for consideration. The process can be a little bit confusing; these instructions will help you understand how it works.

1. You have studied the rules, summaries of rules, suggested comments, etc. and you have written your own comments. *We recommend that you write your comment ahead of time and save it on your computer — there is a time limit when using the Federal Register System, and you may get timed out if you write your comment from scratch.*
2. Click on the appropriate commenting page in *Regulations.gov* – either the [Produce Rule](#) (FDA-2011-N-0921) or the [Preventive Controls Rule](#) (FDA-2011-N-0920). You can comment on both rules, but you must comment separately. Some issues, such as the Tester-Hagan exemptions, affect both rules – this means you’ll have to submit a separate comment on each form for each rule if you want to comment on that issue. (Note: you can’t read the rules on the commenting pages.)
3. Click on the blue “Comment Now!” button on the upper right-hand side of the page.
4. Double-check that you are commenting on the correct rule – on the next page, if you are commenting on the Produce Rule, it will say: *Standards for the Growing, Harvesting, Packing, and Holding of Produce for Human Consumption; Extension of Comment Periods*. If you are commenting on the Preventive Controls Rule, it will say: *Current Good Manufacturing Practice and Hazard Analysis and Risk-Based Preventive Controls for Human Food; Extension of Comment Periods*.
5. Enter your comments and personal and business information under Section 1, which is labeled “Your Information.”
6. First up is the comment box where your FSMA comments will go. You can type them right into the box, paste them in from another document, or upload a separate file. Whatever you do, we strongly recommend you pre-draft and prepare your thoughts ahead of time using a word processor like Word or good old-fashioned pen and paper! *Note that there is a 5000-character limit for the box – this is about one and a half pages of single-spaced typed text or around 700-750 words – but that if you attach a separate file it can be as long as you’d like. If you think you have more to say, you should UPLOAD a separate document (like a Word or PDF file) with your longer comments instead and type “See attached file” in the box. To upload a file, click the Choose Files tab below the comment box and find the file on your computer.*
7. Enter your first and last name (or opt to remain anonymous).
8. (Optional) Click the box that says “I want to provide my contact information” and enter your ZIP code and email address. It’s a good idea to provide your contact information so that FDA can follow up with you if they have questions, and your contact information will not be made public.
9. Unless you are entering a comment on behalf of someone else, uncheck the “I am submitting on behalf of a third party” box. If you have trouble unchecking the box, just type “self” for the organization name.
10. Select which category you fall into. There are many options, including “Individual Consumer” and “Food Industry” (“Food Industry” is what you should choose if you are a farmer or food processor).
11. Click the “Continue” link to preview your comments and ensure everything is accurate on the next screen, which will be labeled “Your Preview”. *Note: you cannot edit your comment once you submit it – but if you see a mistake at this point, you can click the “Edit” button at the bottom to go back and make changes.*

12. Click “Submit Comment” to officially submit your comment to FDA.
    - *You did it! FDA will read every comment submitted. They may not respond to each comment individually but they will address the substance of these public comments publicly once the comment period has closed.*
  13. A screen will appear with a confirmation number for your comment. Copy this down – you can use it later to ensure your comment was received. Your comment may not appear on *Regulations.gov* right away!
- **Having trouble?** Check out the [official Regulations.gov help page](#) or contact the Regulations.gov help desk – they have both email and phone options (Phone: 1-877-378-5457).
  - **Make a mistake?** To make changes, submit another comment referring to your previous comment, correcting any errors and/or re-stating your position or opinion.
  - **Want to submit additional comments?** You can submit more than one comment – simply follow this process again!
  - **Remember to keep a separate copy of your comment just in case!** This way if you have a problem submitting it or need to reference it later, you’ve got a copy.