

# FLOODING

In the LGMA Metrics, flooding is defined as: the flowing or overflowing of a field with water outside a grower’s control that is reasonably likely to contain microorganisms of significant public health concern and is reasonably likely to cause adulteration of edible portions of fresh produce in the field.

*Note: The FDA considers produce—including leafy greens—that have been in contact with floodwaters to be adulterated.*

## BEST PRACTICES FOR THREE TYPES OF FLOODING

*Growers should do the following if flooding occurs in their fields:*

Existing crop has come into contact with flood water	Flooding is near existing crop but there is no direct contact	For future crops where ground has been flooded
<b>For all types of flooding, conduct a risk assessment and then:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Buffer and <u>do not harvest</u> any product that has come into contact with flood waters.</li><li>• Buffer and <u>do not harvest</u> any product within 30 feet of the high water mark.</li><li>• The buffer may be increased if the risk assessment indicates that this is necessary.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep personnel and farm/harvest equipment away from the flooded area to avoid cross-contamination.</li><li>• Place markers identifying the flooding high-water line.</li><li>• Place markers 30 ft. (or more) beyond this to allow equipment to turn outside of the flooded area.</li><li>• <u>Do not harvest</u> within the 30 foot buffer</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evaluate the source of flood waters for potential exposure to human pathogens.</li><li>• Prevent cross-contamination by cleaning and sanitizing any equipment that may have contacted previously flooded soil.</li><li>• Allow soils to dry sufficiently (see guidelines below) and rework prior to planting.</li></ul>
<b>For all types of flooding, document your actions and maintain these records for two years.</b>		

## BEFORE PLANTING AFTER A FLOODING EVENT

*Wait a minimum of 60 days; soil must be sufficiently dried out.*



### Soil testing can shorten the interval to 30 days:

- Collect a representative soil sample of the entire flooded area
- Soil test results are less than 1000 MPN/gram for fecal coliforms AND negative for Salmonella and E. coli O157:H7
- Soil Screening Guidance: Technical Background Document (US EPA 1996) provides guidance
- Third party environmental consultants and/or accredited labs can provide sampling services

This document provides an overview of a section of the LGMA Metrics (food safety practices). It is not a substitute for the full Metrics document, which can be found on the LGMA Tech Resources Page.