

Cyclone Vaianu – Preparing for and managing food safety risks

New Zealanders are bracing for a significant weather event with heavy rain and strong wind forecast over the weekend as [Cyclone Vaianu](#) nears. Growers should be updating and implementing their incident management plans in preparation for the storm. This update provides guidance and resources to growers on managing food safety risks during adverse events.

Strong winds, heavy rain and flooding pose serious challenges for fresh produce growers and packhouses, particularly when it comes to managing food safety risks. Flooding is considered a critical incident because floodwater can introduce sewage, animal waste, chemicals and pathogens into growing and packing areas. Even short exposure times could contaminate produce and pose a risk to public health. The following resources support growers with managing food safety risks during and after these events:

- [Food Safety Essentials: Flood Incident \(FPSC\)](#)
- [Managing Critical Incidents and Recalls – Fundamental Guidelines C19 \(FPSC\)](#)
- [Managing Critical Incidents and Recalls - Quick Guide C19 \(FPSC\)](#)

The key actions for growers are to:

- Develop and implement an Incident Management Plan (IMP)
- Complete a food safety risk assessment
- Implement good practices to manage, minimise or eliminate food safety hazards
- Monitor and report on implementation
- Communicate with stakeholders

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) has also published helpful information for growers and New Zealanders affected by flooding, and other emergencies:

- [Flood recovery checklist for farmers and growers \(MPI\)](#)
- [Dealing with floods \(MPI\)](#)
- [Guidance for harvesting flood-affected produce for human consumption \(NZ Food Safety - MPI\)](#)
- [Food safety in natural disasters and emergencies \(NZ Food Safety – MPI\)](#)
- [Food safety in the home after flooding \(NZ Food Safety - MPI\)](#)

The following research papers underpin these guidelines for growers:

- [Flooding adversely affects fresh produce safety \(Dr Sukhvinder Pal \(SP\) Singh\)](#)
- [Microbiological Food Safety Risks Associated with Flood Affected Soils \(NZFSSRC\)](#)

This information has been collated in collaboration between Horticulture New Zealand, United Fresh, New Zealand Food Safety, New Zealand Food Safety Science Research Centre (NZFSSRC) and the Fresh Produce Safety Centre (FPSC).

Please reach out to any of these organisations, technical experts, industry bodies or regulators where needed for more information or support with food safety after the cyclone.

Prepare well and stay safe this weekend.

Organisation/Team	Email	Phone
MPI On Farm Support	onfarmsupport@mpi.govt.nz	0800 70 71 33
NZ Food Safety	foodactinfo@mpi.govt.nz	0800 00 83 33
Rural Support Trust		0800 787 254
FPSC	ceo@fpsc-anz.com	027 536 8063
HortNZ Regional representatives	Arjune Dahya (Upper North Island) Tessa Rodden (Tairāwhiti) Chelsea Donnelly (Central Otago and Canterbury) Matt Thorn (Lower North and Upper South Islands) www.hortnz.co.nz	027 336 4994 027 442 5546 027 478 0068 027 553 7848
United Fresh	info@unitedfresh.co.nz	09 480 5057
NZFSSRC	info@nzfssrc.org.nz	06 951 6355

