If the produce grown on your farm is covered by the Produce Safety Rule, the inspector will schedule an inspection date that works for both the inspector and the person in charge. In most cases the inspection will be scheduled within five business days of contact with the person in charge. If the person in charge is not the produce safety/quality expert, the inspector may suggest that individual also be present for the inspection. The inspector will explain the general flow of the inspection, what the inspection will cover and records that may be reviewed.

The inspector will ask if your farm has any biosecurity practices, hazards, safety protocols and other requirements that the inspector needs to be aware of and adhere to before the visit.

Most inspections will be announced but there are circumstances in which unannounced inspections may be conducted. The following are examples of when an unannounced inspection may occur:

1. If your farm is unresponsive (no contact within five business days after reasonable contact attempts have been made) or unwilling to set a date for an “announced” inspection;
2. If your farm has had produce safety issues in the past and the issues have not been corrected;
3. If a follow-up inspection is needed and an unannounced inspection may work best to observe the necessary changes being made; or
4. In response to a complaint, recall or foodborne outbreak investigation.
It is preferable if the most responsible person on your farm, such as the farm owner or manager, is available during the exit interview. The inspector will go over any regulatory concerns and findings and provide you with information on resources and technical assistance.

If you are able to make corrections during the inspection, the inspector will document the corrections that you implemented. If the deficiency cannot be corrected during the inspection, the inspector will work with you to determine a reasonable time frame to implement preventive measures and corrective actions.

During the exit interview, the inspector will also identify preventive produce safety practices and conditions on your farm that align with the requirements of the Produce Safety Rule. The inspector will also answer any questions you may have regarding the inspection. He or she will also provide you with an inspection sheet with agency contact information that will document the inspection.