

Talking to Consumers about PFAS Contamination

If you've discovered that your farm has PFAS contamination, having open and honest conversations with your customers is an important step. Many consumers may not know what PFAS are, or they might hear exaggerated rumors and feel concerned about their health. Being informed and transparent can help ease fears and build trust. Here are some key points to stress when talking with consumers:



1 PFAS Contamination Was **Not Intentional**

PFAS chemicals can unintentionally enter farmland through sources that farmers may not be aware contain PFAS. These chemicals have been used in industrial processes, firefighting foams, and consumer products for decades, and they persist in the environment. Farmers are not responsible for causing this contamination.



2 Health Effects Come from **Long-Term Exposure**

Studies show that health risks are linked to chronic (long-term) exposure to PFAS. Short-term, infrequent, or low-level exposure is unlikely to cause harm. Sharing this context with consumers helps ensure accurate understanding and informed discussions.

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3 Michigan Leads the Nation in PFAS Testing and Research

Michigan is one of the most proactive states in testing for PFAS, researching its effects, and working on solutions. It was also one of the first states to implement enforceable drinking water standards for 7 PFAS compounds. Buying local food remains one of the best ways to know where your food comes from and support your community.



4 There Are **No National Food Safety Standards** for PFAS

Currently, there are no official food safety standards or reporting requirements for PFAS in food. Just because products are not required to monitor or report PFAS does not mean they are free of contamination. More research and monitoring efforts are needed to better understand the risk of consuming various foods that may contain PFAS.

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5 Labeling Can Be **Misleading**

Some products may be labeled 'PFOA-free' or 'PFOS-free,' but this does not mean they are entirely free of PFAS. With thousands of different PFAS compounds in existence, testing for all of them is not currently possible.



6 Food Is **Not the Only Source** of PFAS Exposure

Food is not the only source of PFAS—these chemicals are found in many aspects of daily life. However, you can take steps to reduce your exposure by testing your water, following fish advisories, avoiding stain-resistant products, using stainless steel, ceramic or cast iron cookware, and supporting companies with a PFAS-free commitment.

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By having transparent discussions and providing accurate information, farmers can reassure consumers and strengthen trust in local agriculture. Educated consumers are more likely to continue supporting their local farms, even in the face of PFAS-related challenges.

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