



GROCERY INDUSTRY

COMPLYING WITH THE FOOD TRACEABILITY FINAL RULE

**SAFETY
TIP
OF THE
MONTH**



The Food Traceability Final Rule goes into effect on January 20, 2026. This rule creates new recordkeeping requirements for anyone who manufactures, processes, packs, or holds any of the foods on the food traceability list.

What's on the Food Traceability List?

- **Other-Than-Hard Cheese** – Includes fresh soft, soft unripened, soft ripened, and semi-soft cheeses and all cheeses made from unpasteurized milk other than hard cheese.
- **Shell Eggs** – Refers to the egg of the domesticated chicken.
- **Nut Butters** – Includes all types of peanut butters and tree nut butters.
- **Produce** – Includes fresh cucumbers, herbs, leafy greens, melons, peppers, sprouts, tomatoes, and tropical tree fruits and fresh-cut leafy greens, fruits, and vegetables.
- **Seafood** – Includes fresh, frozen, and previously frozen finfish, crustaceans, and molluscan shellfish/ bivalves and refrigerated, frozen, or previously frozen smoked finfish.
- **Ready-to-Eat Deli Salads** – Includes all types of refrigerated ready-to-eat deli salads, including those that are frozen at some point prior to retail.

What Information Does the FDA Require?

The FDA has identified seven critical tracking events (CTEs). For each CTE, there are key data elements (KDEs).

The seven critical tracking events are:

- Harvesting
- Cooling
(Before Initial Packing)
- Initial Packing
- First Land-Based Receiver
- Shipping
- Receiving
- Transformation

Traceability Plan

The FDA also requires all persons covered under the rule to maintain a traceability plan.

You must update this plan as needed and retain it for two years after any update. It must include:

- A description of the procedures you use to maintain records
- A description of the procedures you use to identify foods on the FTL
- A description of how you assign traceability lot codes to foods
- A statement identifying a point of contact for questions
- A farm map showing where you grow and raise foods on the FTL (other than eggs)



For more information, see <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-modernization-act-fsma/fsma-final-rule-requirements-additional-traceability-records-certain-foods>. Also see the electronic sortable spreadsheet template (which you can use to fulfill data submission requests) at <https://www.fda.gov/media/179616/download?attachment>.

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