Produce Safety Educators
Call #36
February 25, 2019
2 pm ET (1 pm CT)
Instructions

- All participants are muted.
- There will be time for questions and answers throughout the meeting.
  - We may not get around to all comments/questions, BUT you may leave additional comments in the comment box to be compiled after the session.
- This session will be recorded and notes will be shared via the listserv and on our website after the call.
Agenda

- Focus on Worker Health, Hygiene, and Training

- Presenters:
  - Darrell McGuire
    Food Safety Specialist
    *Deep South Food Alliance*
  - Joan Olson
    Farmer/Owner
    *Prairie Drifter Farm*
Module 2: Worker Health, Hygiene, and Training
Learning Objectives

• Identify potential routes of contamination associated with workers
• Identify adult learning concepts and topics to include in a worker training program
• Describe how to monitor that facilities are maintained on the farm
• Describe corrective actions that may be used to correct identified problems
• Identify recordkeeping tools for worker health and training
Workers Are A Food Safety Concern Because They...

• Can carry human pathogens
  – *Shigella*, Hepatitis A, Norovirus, and others

• Can spread human pathogens
  – Harvest and pack with their hands
  – Fecal-oral route

• Require training to reduce risks
  – Proper handwashing
  – How to handle illnesses and injuries
Routes of Contamination

- Feces
- Clothing
- Hands
- Footwear
- Tools & Equipment
- Illness & Injury
Importance of Training Workers

• Fresh fruits and vegetables often receive no additional processing (such as cooking), so contamination with a pathogen can result in illness when the produce is consumed.

• Workers need to use food safety practices every day to reduce produce safety risks.

• Food safety practices are learned so training is key to successful implementation.
Potential Training Challenges

- Time for training
- Language
- Literacy level
- Training mid-season
- Variation in hygiene practices and expectations
- Misconceptions/misperceptions
Communication

• Good communication supports food safety by improving risk identification and reduction

• Trained workers know:
  – How to identify food safety risks
  – How to reduce risks they find
  – Who to tell if they see a food safety risk they cannot minimize or eliminate
  – That their food safety concerns will be taken seriously
Everyone Needs Training

• Implementing food safety practices is a company wide task
  – Managers, farm workers, office staff, volunteers, interns, family members

• Everyone needs to know how to identify and reduce food safety risks
  – Practices they are responsible for doing
  – How to report food safety risks they see

• Owners, managers, and supervisors should set a good example and follow company policies
Visitors

• Growers must:
  – Make visitors aware of the farm’s food safety policies
  – Provide access to toilet and handwashing facilities

• Other key information for visitors should include:
  – Areas of the farm they are allowed to visit
  – The importance of not visiting the farm when ill
  – How to wash their hands
  – Instructions to keep pets at home
Another problem caused by deforestation
Training Programs Must Include

- Principles of food hygiene and food safety
- Recognizing symptoms of foodborne illness and the importance of personal hygiene for all personnel and visitors
- Other training relevant to the worker’s job
Training Programs Must

• Be appropriate for the job and conducted upon hiring
• Include refresher training throughout the season (at least annually) or when a problem arises
• Be easily understood
• Be supervised by a qualified person
• Include a process for documenting the training
Worker Qualifications

Workers and supervisors must be qualified to conduct their job duties through:

• Education
• Training
• Experience
Training Workers to Identify and Reduce Risks at Harvest

- Evaluate contamination risks before and during harvest such as significant animal activity, presence of fecal matter, damaged crops, or extensive animal tracks
- Never harvest produce destined for the fresh market that is visibly contaminated with feces
- Never harvest dropped produce
- Only use clean harvest and packing containers
Resources Provided to Support Food Safety Practices

• Toilets
• Toilet paper
• Soap
• Clean water
• Paper towels
• Container to catch wastewater
• Garbage cans
• First Aid Kit
• Break Areas
Toilet & Handwashing Facilities

• Provide a sufficient number of toilets and sinks to meet worker and visitors’ needs
  – OSHA requires one facility per 20 workers within ¼ mile of the working area
• Facilities must be fully serviced on a regular schedule
• Toilet and handwashing facilities must be well stocked
• Facilities should be monitored every day when in use
Drinking Water & Break Areas

• Workers should be provided with drinking water to reduce the risks of dehydration and heat exhaustion
• Break areas do not need to be a separate building but must be in a designated area
• Healthy workers are better able to do their jobs and implement food safety practices!
Training versus Practices

• The Produce Safety Rule includes requirements for
  – Training programs and resources that must be provided for workers and visitors
  – Practices workers must follow

• We just finished the training and resource slides
  – Do you remember what was required?
  – As a reminder, rule requirements are in the notes!

• Now we will cover practices workers must do to reduce microbial risks to fresh produce
Workers Must

• Maintain personal cleanliness
• Avoid contact with animals (other than working animals)
• Maintain gloves in a sanitary condition, if used
• Remove or cover hand jewelry that cannot be cleaned
• Not eat, chew gum, or use tobacco in an area used for a covered activity
• Notify their supervisor if they are ill
• Wash their hands
When Must Hands Be Washed?

- After using the toilet
- Before starting or returning to work
- Before and after eating and smoking
- Before putting on gloves
- After touching animals or animal waste
- Any other time hands may become contaminated
Proper Handwashing

1. **Wet hands** with water

2. **Apply soap and lather.** Be sure to wash the front and backs of hands as well as in between the fingers. Rub hands together for AT LEAST 20 seconds

3. **Rinse** hands thoroughly with clean water

4. **Dry** with a paper towel (turn off faucet with used towel)

5. **Throw** the paper towel in a trash can

*Antibacterial hand sanitizers CANNOT replace handwashing*
Proper Use of Toilets

• All urination and defecation should be done in a toilet, NEVER in the field or nearby production areas
• Toilet paper should be deposited into the toilet, not in a garbage can or on the floor
• Always wash hands after using the toilet
• Clean clothes should be worn each day
• Footwear cleanliness is important
  – Designated footwear helps prevent cross-contamination
• Gloves, if worn, must be changed when they become contaminated or torn
  – If reusable gloves are used, clean often or as needed
• Aprons, gloves, and other food safety equipment should be removed before using the toilet and should be stored in a clean, designated area when not in use
Worker Illness

• Workers who are sick or show signs of illness can contaminate fresh produce
• Ill workers must not handle fresh produce
• Symptoms of illness can include:
  – Nausea
  – Vomiting
  – Diarrhea
  – Fever
  – Jaundice
Worker Injury

- Worker injuries may pose food safety risks
  - A first aid kit should be available, stocked, and monitored
  - Clean and bandage all wounds
    - If the wound is on the hands, a glove should be worn to create a double barrier
  - Discard any produce that may be contaminated
  - Clean and sanitize any items that came in contact with bodily fluids
  - Report all injuries to supervisor
Monitoring

• Develop a monitoring process to ensure:
  – Workers are following food safety practices and farm policies every day
  – Facilities are available, clean, and well stocked every day

• This can include:
  – Training supervisors to observe employee behavior
  – Appointing someone to check facilities each day
  – Using monitoring logs
Corrective Actions

• Workers are not following food safety policies
  – Develop rewards to encourage positive practices
  – Implement deterrents for poor practices

• Facilities are not cleaned, restocked or are broken
  – Sanitation company contact on speed dial
  – Retraining workers or improving monitoring process

• Facilities leak in the field or packinghouse
  – Emergency plan for spills
Recordkeeping

Document actions taken to support worker health, hygiene, and training on the farm such as:

- Worker training programs
- Monitoring and restocking of toilet and handwashing facilities
- Illness and injury reporting
- Restocking of first aid kits
Recordkeeping Tips

• Take advantage of template recordkeeping logs, but be sure to modify them to fit your farm
Recordkeeping

• Example of documenting worker training
  – Date
  – Name of trainer
  – Materials/information covered
  – Printed names & signatures of attendees
  – Manager signature
Worker health and hygiene is critical to food safety because workers can introduce food safety risks. Therefore, everyone should be trained but anyone who handles covered produce must be trained. Visitors must be made aware of policies too. Training should emphasize health and hygiene practices that reduce risks. A written training program should be developed, implemented, and documented.
Questions &
Discussion
Next Meeting

• Tuesday, March 26, 2019 – 3-4:30 PM Eastern
• Topic: PSR Draft Guidance
• Meeting info sent out on 2/22 and available on the PSA website
• Submit other topics for discussion to Gretchen (glw53@cornell.edu)
The PSA Website
http://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/

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