Produce Safety Alliance Educators Call #29
February 5, 2018 2-3 PM EDT

Total Attendees: 81
Audio recording: Note - We had technical difficulties with the Zoom meeting room, so the audio recording ended up in two files. Our apologies for the inconvenience.
Audio Part I
Audio Part II

Topic: 2018 Updates to the USDA Harmonized GAP and New Harmonized GAP+ Audit
Special guest speaker: Jennifer Dougherty, USDA Audit Programs Coordinator

Call Notes
• 2003 started the voluntary audit program
• 2011 started Harmonized audit
• Audit programs revised this year
  o Harmonized GAP
  o Harmonized GAP Plus+

- USDA Harmonized GAP Standard – combined Field Operations and Harvest and Post-Harvest Operations Standards; on USDA website; effective May 1, 2018 – reorganized standards for efficiency
  4 Scopes –
    1. General Questions required for all audits (G)
    2. Field Operations and Harvesting (F)
    3. Post-Harvest (P)
    4. Logo Use - only for auditees who apply for and are using the USDA GAP& GHP Logo

- Columns added to standard
  o Documentation (DOC)
  o Mandatory Requirements (MAN)

- Revised checklist coming soon (February) – effective May 1, 2018

USDA Harmonized GAP Plus+ Audit
• New service
• Submitting for GFSI Technical Equivalence
• Same layout as Harmonized GAP Standard with additional benchmark requirements for GFSI
• See PPT Slides for additional requirements within each section

USDA Reference Materials
• Equivalency Matrix & Summary of Changes
• Harmonized Guidance Manual (includes references)
Question & Answer:
Q: Would any of these dates, including the release of the documents, be affected by a government shut-down?
A: USDA doesn’t anticipate that would have an effect since it is a fee for service agency.

Q: Is GAP/GHP being phased out? If so what’s the timeline?
A: For 2018, the GAP/GHP audit will still be offered.

Q: Is the Group GAP audit going to be modified?
A: The group to participate in GroupGAP would need to decide which audit they are going to pursue.

Q: What about alignment with FSMA?
A: An audit is not going to replace an inspection. Similar requirements that would be looked for in an audit would also be looked for in the Produce Safety Rule.

Comment - Still a lot of confusion audits and inspections. Need to be clear about differences. Audits are voluntary and annual, and we do not know how often there will be inspections. Inspections are regulatory.

Comment - The audit is separate from an inspection. Looking to make sure to cover those areas covered in the Produce Safety Regulation.

Q: Are all of the same areas of the rule covered in the audit?
A: More is covered in the audit. The audit includes best practices for the industry.

Q: Will there be online training on the new standards?
A: No, we do not provide training to the audits. There are workshops for implementing food safety plans.

Q: If we have audit questions, should we contact USDA or Jennifer directly?
A: Either one is fine.

Q: Jen mentioned a Harmonized GAPs Manual with interpretations. Would this be helpful in developing FDA guidance? Insights?
A: The manual will be publically available and has been shared directly with FDA.

Comment - Summary of changes will be released soon. Will help update educational materials.

PSA Updates
- Water Summit Update
  - Registration sold out in 11 minutes
  - Check our website for options to participate remotely
    - https://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/water-summit#remote
  - Filling any open seats with individuals from the waitlist

Next Meeting – Monday March 26, 2018 2 PM Eastern
- No registration is necessary
- Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android: https://cornell.zoom.us/j/926517131
- Or Dial Toll-free: 1 877 369 0926, Meeting ID: 926 517 131