

Produce Safety ALLIANCE

Produce Safety Educator's Monthly Call #2

October 15, 2013

2 PM EDT

Meeting Summary

Call-in Only Participants: 14

Total Attendance (Web & Call In): 48

Comments submitted through chat feature (public & private) and through follow-up e-mails.

*Note: On the webinar polls, the rate on non-responses was fairly high due to a high proportion of call-in only participants who were not able to access the WebEx polling feature.

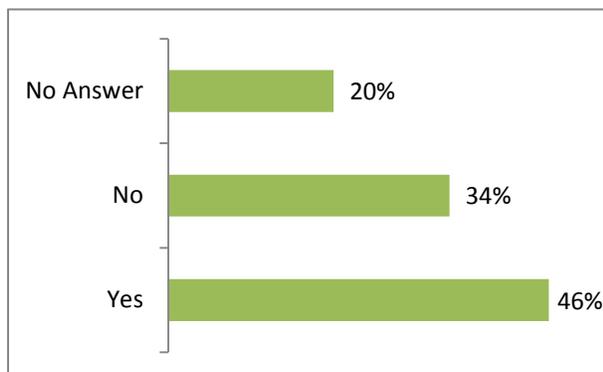
PSA Update:

- Agricultural Water Module released for review, two more modules left for review.
- Train-the-Trainer hoping to start scheduling trainings in winter/spring 2014.
- Document regarding trainer qualifications has been updated and is out for review among the PSA Steering and Executive Committees.
- Working with AFDO to finalize process for issuing certificates for both trainers and participants.

Webinar Poll Results & Associated Comments

Discussion: It is clear that outreach and education will be needed to help growers understand the produce rule and implement the practices that are required. Several people in the educators group have asked about funding and have expressed concern that they do not have funding to do the outreach that will be required. So, on this call we wanted to devote some time to discuss funding. To get the discussion going, there were several poll questions to help assess current funding for produce safety outreach and education including what funding is currently available to you, the challenges of securing funding for this type of programming in Extension, and where you think funding should come from in the future given the current training requirement in the proposed Produce Rule.

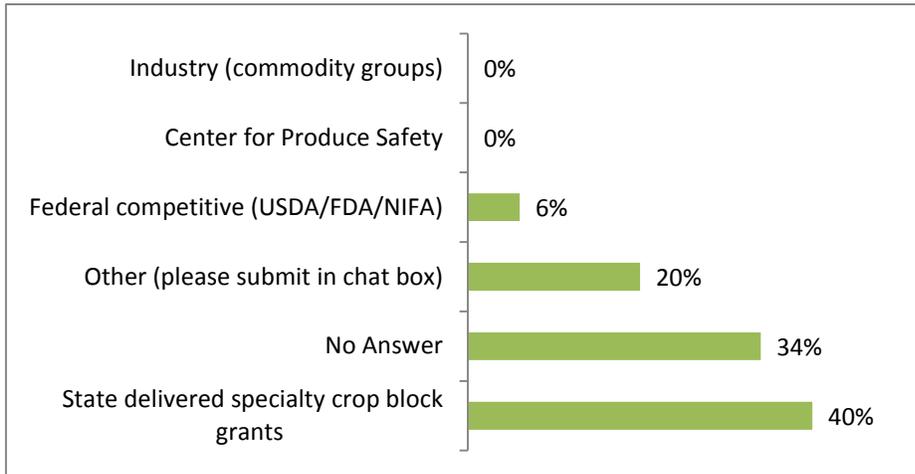
1. Do you currently have funding for produce safety outreach and education?



Comments:

- It would have been nice to know if they had funding, when it will expire.
- No, we do not.
- This is a UMaine Extension priority area.
- No, but we are scraping together resources from other programs to do this.
- No, but will need.
- It is good news the 46% of the people on the call have funding. The next question will ask where that funding is coming from to help identify where future funding might be available.

2. Where does the majority of your current funding for produce safety education and outreach come from?



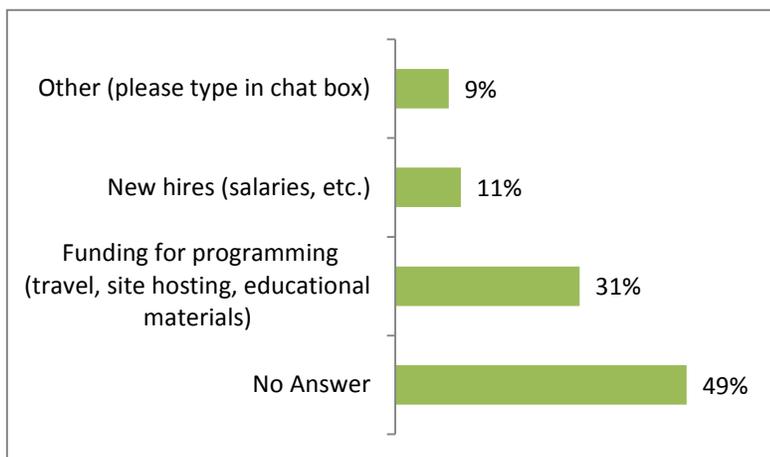
Comments:

- CPS may not allow grant funds to be used for education and outreach but there has been some discussion at CPS about possible funding to go in this direction in the future.
- County dollars (80%) and (5%) from state grants.
- State funds, but they expire in 5 months. NO, NIFA does not have a big extension component for food safety. Mostly research.
- User fees
- Foundations
- Other (non-competitive) FDA Western Center for Food Safety

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- Specialty block grants are providing the most funding. This is good because this mechanism is likely to be in place. Is this a good way to get it to the states? Are those who get funds this way happy with it?
- Our next poll question asks about what funding is needed to support. It funds are just needed to support programming, this requires less money then if people need to pay for salary and benefits. I think it is important to identify what type of funds people need because that will influence the amount of funds needed.

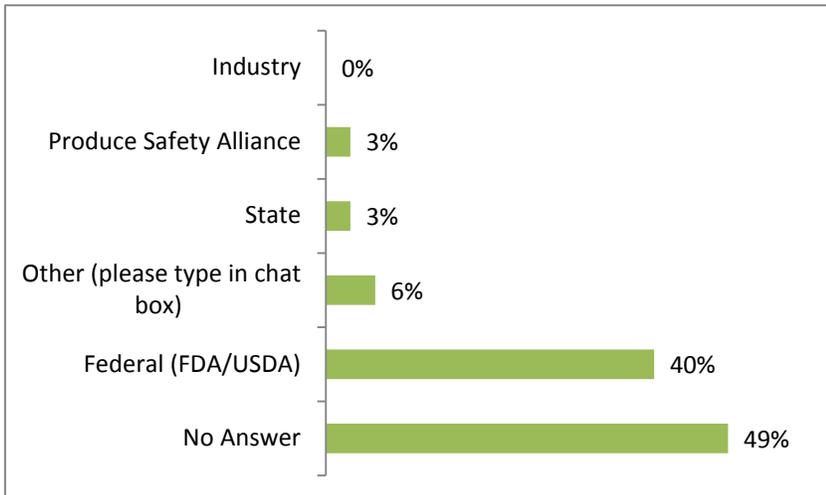
3. If you need funding, do you need funding for:



Comments:

- Yes, funding for both (9)
- Salaries and travel, plus printed materials
- Both, plus professional development
- Online resources
- We use the block grant money for my salary, our program, and paying for the educators that present along with their travel.
- The next poll question is asked to help us determine if people are interested in working together to advocate for funding coming from a particular place.

4. Where do you think we, as educators, should advocate that future funding should come from?



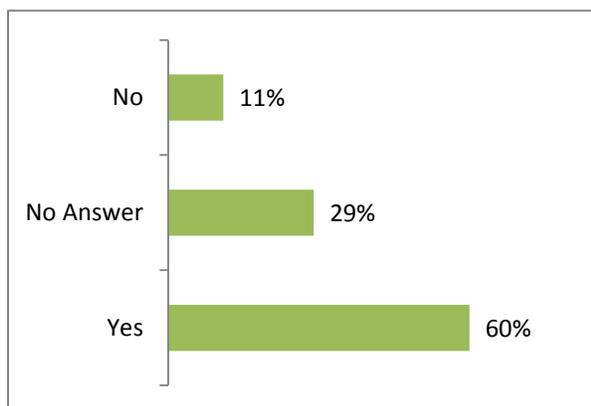
Comments:

- The education funds should come from FDA - block grants. AMS can, like in organics, provide the subsidy for audits. Should be the same.
- Advocate from all listed.
- Funding via partnerships amongst all listed groups.
- The USDA-AMS are the guys who do the organic subsidy. Thus, there should be subsidy for GAP audit support.
- Yes, on the advocacy on the federal side (3)
- We should advocate for subsidies to growers to help them meet food safety requirements and the cost of having third party audits.
- I agree with previous comment about funding needed for certification, but I wonder why the cost is \$800; for a farm review in CA the cost is about \$250.
- Federal funding for extension is the smallest leg on the three legged stool.
- I think at least some funding should come through FDA, through grants process is fine. Some money could come through education or user fees.
- Alt. funding would be helpful. FDA, if possible would be nice.
- If PSA has the means to advocate to federal I would recommend and then states could submit to PSA for a grant.
- I don't know how the a lot of the system works yet, but if there is an entity pushing enforcement, that entity should have some sort of means to get the ball rolling.
- I think that FDA needs to help with funding as they are looking to Extension to do the job.

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- We need to reach out to the President's Food Safety Group and get the feds to understand that FDA needs to pay for the outreach (education), and then USDA-AMS can pony up the 75% subsidy like they do for organic.
- For best "bang for the buck", I feel that the Produce Safety Alliance through FDA/USDA funding would give more specific educational resources as needed on a case by case basis (i.e. state, regional, commodity specific, etc.).
- FDA block grants to states. Maybe a percent of match from state funds as an incentive. I agree with Wes. We need to clean up ALL of the US agriculture, not just a few places or crops. Or, maybe we can influence a number of grant funds to focus on food safety education for 5 years.
- It might be a good idea if funding for Produce Safety was distributed in the same way that funding for sustainable agriculture is distributed through SARE, through small, regional funded centers at universities.
- Would it be feasible for federal funds to be allocated to the state departments of agriculture? That has worked very well in MD, since the state departments of agriculture are conducting the USDA audits as well.
- It is a difficult question - as with the proposed FSMA rules, the education is going to have to be a collaboration and partnership with FDA, with the States, and with the land grant universities to be able to effectively deliver to the farmers
- There needs to be some mechanism for using federal dollars to support collaborative efforts between States and universities to deliver effective training
- The PSA should get the money from USDA and disburse it to deserving educational institutions
- I think we need a plan to "push for funding support". We need to work on this now and get it moving. This call format does not work for this type of discussion.
- I think that PSA could effectively channel federal dollars better than FDA could. I would really appreciate the support in implementing programs that would come with being a PSA grant recipient. Feel like it would be more equitable and effective.
- When Fed dollars go thru the States, too much gets skimmed off.
- The funding period and performance criteria need to extend beyond 1 or 2 years. Then we can focus on long term education with our clients instead of trying to meet short term funder goals.

5. Next meeting: Does Monday, November 18th at 2PM Eastern work for you?



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A L L I A N C E

Call Wrap Up:

- FDA Outreach Plan to Generate Comments
 - Regional/State webinars
 - Moving ahead with webinars in two states, but uncertain about FDA participation due to furlough.
 - Contact Gretchen (glw53@cornell.edu) or Betsy (eab38@cornell.edu) if you are interested in hosting a webinar in collaboration with the FDA in your state/region. We are hoping to host as many as possible between now and the Nov. 16th deadline.
- Future Produce Safety Educator Meeting Agendas: Let us know what you would like to talk about! Send us your ideas, concerns, comments and we will add it to the next monthly meeting.
- **Next meeting: Monday November 18th, 2013 at 2PM EST**

Other Announcements and New Resources:

- Wild Farm Alliance is publishing two documents this week
 - A Farmer's Guide to Food Safety and Conservation: Facts, Tips, and Frequently Asked Questions
 - Training Scenarios for USDA and Third Party Auditors on the Co-management of Food Safety and Conservation as well as Small Farm Concerns
 - www.wildfarmalliance.org

Follow-Up Comments:

- **From Jim Hollyer:**
Aloha, my thoughts on a focused funding plan:

Get with a few groups, like the Association of National Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), WGA, PMA, UFFVA, and other proactive GAP groups, and send a letter to the President's Food Safety Working group members (<http://www.foodsafetyworkinggroup.gov>) asking directly for financial support to do the work they need done. In that letter:

a) Note that Land Grant educators have the knowledge and experience to teach US farmers Good Agricultural Practices as desired by the President. We are equally interested in reducing the human and financial impact of food borne illness; starting on US farms.

b) To accomplish what the President wants, funding for education outreach must be available to each state and territory in a block grant (based on some formula). Those funds to cover salaries, travel, and educational supplies, not research. These grants will run for 5 years with annual reviews on performance. Using the USDA-SARE network is a simple and cost effective way to make this happen.

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c) Call for USDA-NIFA & AMS to refocus a number of their programs, or a percentage of them, such as funding for New and Underserved farmers, SARE, and support for Farmers Markets, to provide education support to reach 90% of all US fruit and vegetable growers in 5 years with GAP best practices and coverage on FSMA as appropriate.

d) To then mirror the USDA-AMS Certified Organic subsidy program, with a GAPs audit subsidy program - annually covering 75% of the cost of a third-party audit. Put this program at AMS since they already have the experience.

If the U.S. suffers \$78 Billion in economic impact each year from food borne illness (According to a 2011 Ohio State study), the cost of the education and GAP audit subsidy is a VERY small and reasonable investment to make with a very high return. Heck, if you look at the hundreds of millions that have gone to lawsuits from farm-related outbreaks and deaths, this investment makes fiscal sense.