



December 11, 2012

## **Hello Produce Safety Alliance Members!**

The New Year is approaching just in time for the Produce Safety Alliance to start shifting gears in the curriculum development process. Read on to hear about our progress and future goals as we move into the PSA's third year.

### **PSA Curriculum Learning Objective Development**

In the September newsletter, we outlined the basic steps in the development of the Produce Safety Alliance's educational curriculum with specific focus on completing the learning objectives. We are happy to report that the process is now complete and we are moving onto content development. The learning objectives are reflective of the working committee process, farmer focus groups, and identified educational needs based on collaborator programs from around the country. It has certainly been a challenging task to arrive at such succinct, finite learning objectives; however, focusing on the most critical educational areas and needs will enable us to effectively provide growers with the information they need to understand food safety risks on the farm, identify risks in their own operations, and implement strategies to address those risks.

One noteworthy addition to the learning objectives is the inclusion of the term *preventive controls*. The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) places emphasis on the prevention, rather than the detection, of food safety issues and it is anticipated that the Produce Safety Rule will refer to these preventive measures as *preventive controls*.

In the PSA curriculum materials, you will see preventive controls terminology introduced to complement the traditional Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) principles. As educators, we strive to ensure that farmers and packers understand and are prepared for future regulations as well as able to understand the basic principles of reducing on-farm food safety risks. Familiarity with new terminology will prepare farmers not only for proposed regulations, but future buyer and market requirements that will likely incorporate this terminology directly from the regulation.

### **Farmer Focus Group Summary: Now Available**

One of the most critical areas the Produce Safety Alliance has sought to address is the issue of educational program delivery and farmer preferences for learning about fresh produce safety. From January to April of this year, we conducted eight focus groups with fruit and vegetable growers from across the country. Hosting the focus groups enabled the PSA to engage farmers in a dialogue that included a variety of important topics related to on-farm food safety practices and educational expectations. Throughout focus groups, several key themes emerged that were common across the groups, while others reflected regional, commodity, or market specific variations. A brief summary can be found online at <http://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/newsletters/FocusGroupSummary.pdf>, but keep an eye out in coming months for a more detailed, peer-reviewed journal article.

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# Produce Safety

## ALLIANCE

### Publications of Interest

The body of fresh produce safety research has been expanding rapidly in the past decade, and as we strive to create science-based recommendations, this research is more important now than ever before. In order to provide the best guidance to growers and build a credible and useful curriculum, incorporating the newest research is key. To highlight this, we have decided to add this new section to our newsletter. We hope our reference list will always continue to grow, so if you have read a recent article or know of one to be published soon which might be applicable to the PSA or readers of this newsletter, please let us know. These publications are also available on the [National GAPs Program Research and Extension Database](#), a great resource for fresh produce and on-farm food safety publications. Happy reading!

- Becot, F. A., Nickerson, V., Conner, D. S., & Kolodinsky, J. M. (2012). Costs of Food Safety Certification on Fresh Produce Farms in Vermont. *HortTechnology*, 22(5), 705-714.
- Harris, L., Bender, J., Bihn, E., Blessington, T., Danyluk, M., Delaquis, P., Goodridge, L., Ibekwe, M., Ilic, S., Kniel, K., LeJeune, J., Schaffner, D., Stoeckel, D., & Suslow, T. (2012). A Framework for Developing Research Protocols for Evaluation of Microbial Hazards and Controls during Production That Pertain to the Quality of Agricultural Water Contacting Fresh Produce That May Be Consumed Raw. *Journal of Food Protection*, 75(12), 2251-2273.
- Ngwa, G. A., Schop, R., Weir, S., León-Velarde, C. G., & Odumeru, J. A. (2012). Detection and Enumeration of *E. coli* O157: H7 in water samples by culture and molecular methods. *Journal of Microbiological Methods*.
- Strawn, L. K., Fortes, E. D., Bihn, E. A., Nightingale, K. K., Gröhn, Y. T., Worobo, R. W., Wiedmann, M., Bergholz, P. W. (2012). Landscape and Meteorological Factors Affecting Prevalence of Three Foodborne Pathogens in Fruit and Vegetable Farms. *Applied and Environmental Microbiology*.

### Into 2013!

The New Year will bring full focus on the curriculum's content development and review, with outreach efforts and Train-the-Trainer programs to come in the Spring and Fall of 2013. Stay tuned! There are lots of great opportunities ahead, so we hope you will stay engaged with us as we continue our education and outreach efforts.

### Join Us!

Our listserve is always expanding and a great way to stay in touch with the PSA. To sign up, please visit our website at <http://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/psa.html>. Already signed up? Please share this newsletter with friends and colleagues who might also be interested in produce safety. As always, please do not hesitate to contact myself or Betsy Bihn (eab38@cornell.edu) if you have any questions, comments, or ideas.

Wishing you a happy and healthy holiday season,



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