Hello Produce Safety Alliance Members!
To those of you working in agriculture, it’s no surprise how busy the winter months can be. Conferences, extension workshops, grower meetings, winter maintenance – and before you know it, spring has arrived! Although some areas never get a break and produce fresh fruits and vegetables year-round, we have been busy working with growers across the country in the “off season”.

Working Committee Updates
We are in the home stretch with many of our Working Committees (WC) entering their final conference calls and discussing their draft summaries. Many thanks to all of you who have participated in the WCs and to the WC co-chairs who have provided keen leadership. As the WCs finalize their reports, they are being posted to the PSA website, so we invite you to follow their progress.

PSA Focus Groups
To supplement the output from our working committees, we have started collecting information from small fruit and vegetable growers in focus groups. We have been discussing challenges to implementing Good Agricultural Practices, preferred methods of learning, and attributes of effective training programs to minimize food safety risks at the farm. When we are finished, a summary of these listening sessions will be made available on the PSA website.

PSA by the Numbers
In other exciting news, this week the PSA exceeded the 400 mark for members subscribed to our general listserv. As we move forward through the curriculum development process, we hope this base of growers, industry representatives, educators, regulators, and consultants will continue to grow and aid in the future roll out of the program.

Current Events in Produce Safety: February 2012
Sprout producers will get special help in meeting future produce safety standards set by the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) as the FDA announced on February 28th the creation of a new Sprouts Safety Alliance (SSA) to identify best practices for the safe production of sprouts. The Alliance is a one year, $100,000 grant to the Illinois Institute of Technology’s Institute for Food Safety and Health (IIT IFSH) to develop training materials, self-audit tools, and serve as a resource hub for industry and regulators. Read more about the Sprouts Safety Alliance.
Upcoming Online GAPs Training Course
The next two Online GAPs Training Courses have been scheduled. One will begin March 14 and another April 11, 2012. If you are interested in receiving more information or would like to register for either of these courses, please visit www.gaps.cornell.edu.

Spotlight Series
This month, we are introducing a new section of our newsletter. In future issues, we will be highlighting a new program, resource, or research as it pertains to current events in produce safety. Our first highlight will be of the University of Georgia Center for Food Safety. It recently launched a new website which is devoted to summarizing scientific research on food safety of leafy greens. As such, the primary audience is targeted at researchers, governmental regulators, leafy green growers and suppliers, third party auditors, food industry professionals, and graduate students. For an overview of the project additional information is provided in the attached abstract or the project’s website titled “A Systems Approach for Produce Safety – A Research Project Addressing Leafy Greens”.

Keep Up-To-Date
Get the latest updates on the PSA’s activities and future produce safety regulations through our listserv. To sign up, please visit our website at http://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/psa.html.

Interested in a handout to use at meetings? Download the PSA Flyer to share with others.

Other Resources
The calendar is continually updated online with committee meeting dates. Miss a meeting? All WC meeting notes and summaries are available for download as they are received.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact myself or Betsy Bihn (eab38@cornell.edu) if you have any questions.

Take care,
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