

Produce Safety

ALLIANCE

June 3, 2013

Hello Produce Safety Alliance Members:

It's been a while since we've sent our monthly listserv update – but for good reason! We've had a very productive spring, hosting eight question and answer teleconferences with the FDA and working feverishly to finalize the PSA's curriculum content. In this newsletter, we'd like to update you on upcoming PSA events, share some valuable resources, and encourage you to stay active in the comment process for the proposed Produce Rule.

Center for Produce Safety Produce Research Symposium

The Center for Produce Safety (CPS) will be hosting its fourth annual Produce Research Symposium in upstate New York on June 25-26, 2013 at the Wegmans Conference Center in Rochester. The conference has been expanded to 2 days this year to include several keynote speakers as well as sixteen new research program reports.

For more information on the symposium or to register visit:

https://cps.ucdavis.edu/event/15/CPS_2013_Produce_Research_Symposium.html

PSA at CPS: Opportunity for Input – Monday June 24, 2013 5-7 PM, Wegmans Facility

On Monday June 24, 2013, the PSA will be hosting a focused discussion on trainer qualifications for the Produce Safety Alliance training curriculum. We are interested in talking with those who may want to become trainers. We have drafted a document to outline necessary prerequisite knowledge and are looking for feedback to ensure the document adequately addresses the varying levels of education and experience potential trainers may have. Space at the meeting facility is limited to 30 people, so please register in advance. There is no cost to attend and the goal will be to have a focused discussion on what prerequisite knowledge is important for produce safety trainers. Food and drinks will be provided during the discussion. If you are interested in attending, please contact Gretchen Wall at glw53@cornell.edu for more information and to register.

Question and Answer Sessions with FDA

If you were not able to attend any of the eight [Q & A sessions](#), the audio recordings from each session with the FDA Produce Safety Staff are now available for listening online. These sessions were unscripted and driven by actual situations and questions from farmers, packers, retailers, educators, and industry members.

The Q & A series covered key areas of the proposed Produce Rule including:

- Understanding Exemptions
- Agricultural Water
- Soil Amendments
- Domestic and Wild Animals
- Growing, Harvesting, Packing, & Holding
- Equipment, Tools, Buildings, & Sanitation
- Health, Hygiene and Training for Workers
- Recordkeeping, Compliance, & Enforcement

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The recordings are available to listen at:

<http://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/news.html>

We would especially like to thank Dr. Jim Gorny, Dr. Erick Snellman, Dr. Mike Mahovic, Ms. Scarlett Salem, Dr. Crystal McKenna, Ms. Fazila Shakir, Dr. David Ingram, and Ms. Joy Johanson for their expertise in answering questions and commitment to the series. We hope to continue this great partnership to provide informative and convenient presentations in the future.

Comment on the Proposed Produce Rule

Those Q & A calls highlighted many areas where FDA could use some comments and information. The comment period has been extended until **September 16, 2013**, so there is still time to offer your suggestions on the [Standards for the Growing, Harvesting, Packing, and Holding of Produce for Human Consumption](#) (the Produce Safety proposed rule). We cannot stress enough how important it is for comments to be submitted to the docket. The FDA recognizes that there are many situations and practices that they may be unaware of and may affect how the regulation should be revised. Comments that are thoughtful and substantive, containing real examples and data that support your position are encouraged and will have the most impact.

How to submit your comment:

- 1.) Comment electronically at <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=FDA-2011-N-0921>
- 2.) Written comments may be faxed to the FDA at 301-827-6870 or you may mail them to:
Division of Dockets Management (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

New Resources Available!

In the wake of the 2011 *Listeria* outbreak in cantaloupe, more resources are available now than ever before to help growers assess potential food safety risks on their farm from the field to the packinghouse and beyond. The University of Florida has put together a great site for information related to food safety concerns with cantaloupes and the new [FDA inspection program for cantaloupe packinghouses](#).

For more information visit the University of Florida/IFAS Produce Safety Center at:

<http://fshn.ifas.ufl.edu/foodsafety/>

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PSA Curriculum Progress & Training Opportunities

The curriculum content is coming together very nicely using our [learning objectives](#) as the guide. Our goal is to create a day long (7 hours of dedicated instruction) produce safety training course for growers. With so many important topics to cover, keeping the content concise and relevant has been a major priority. Once the content has been reviewed and approved by our committee members, we plan to schedule Train-the-Trainer workshops in late summer/early fall across the country to make sure there are enough trainers to meet training needs. As we prepare to launch Train-the-Trainer programs in the next few months, keep an eye out for announcements of opportunities in your region and details on how to attend the training programs.

Produce Safety Alliance Website Update

Our website has become a great repository for all types of information regarding food safety at the farm level, from [University GAPs contacts](#) to useful links to [FSMA documents](#). With so much information to share, we plan to update the organization of the site to make it more user-friendly and to make space for additional information related to training opportunities and curriculum materials. We are always open to suggestions for resources or additional information you'd like to see available from our site. Don't be shy. Let us know how the website could be improved to better meet your needs.

Join Us!

Our listserve provides 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 us if you have any questions, comments, or ideas.

Take care and we'll see many of you in a few short weeks,



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