

Produce Safety ALLIANCE



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May 19, 2016

Hello Produce Safety Alliance Members,

Welcome to the Produce Safety Alliance newsletter! To some of you, this is old hat, but we have had many new people join the listserv recently. The PSA community listserv now includes over 2,000 produce growers, industry members, educators, regulators and others interested in produce safety practices and the FSMA Produce Safety Rule. With the start of official [compliance dates](#) for the [FSMA Produce Safety Rule](#) fast approaching, we have received many inquiries about the PSA's training courses, outreach efforts, and available resources to assist growers, packers, regulatory personnel, and other interested in the safety of fresh produce.

This newsletter will help highlight current updates from the Produce Safety Alliance, as well as other information from FDA, USDA, and our collaborators. We are always open to sharing pertinent information - so if you have something of interest to share with the group, please contact [Gretchen Wall](#). In the meantime, read on for more of the latest in produce safety.

PSA Training Updates

We are currently wrapping up the curriculum editing process in collaboration with the [FDA Division of Produce Safety Staff](#) to ensure the educational materials align with the final FSMA Produce Safety Rule requirements. We are on target to launch training programs in September 2016. We will provide updates about the availability of training through this listserv as well as on our [website](#) as soon as training dates are established.

To learn more about the [PSA's training courses](#) as well as the [trainer development process](#), please visit our website for more information. Applications for trainers will not be accepted until courses have been scheduled, but applications will be a part of the overall Train-the-Trainer Course registration process. Any individual is welcome to attend the PSA Train-the-Trainer Course after filling out the application and registration (i.e., we will not turn anyone away, but attendance will be limited by the availability of courses scheduled and open seats). Stay tuned for more information this summer as we prepare to launch courses this fall.

Produce Safety Alliance Team

In October, we introduced four new members of the PSA's team including Michele Humiston (Extension Aide, Geneva, NY), Kristin Woods (SE Regional Extension Associate, Grove Hill, AL), Donna Pahl (SW Regional Extension Associate, Riverside, CA), and Don Stoeckel (MW Regional Extension Associate, Columbus, OH). A major missing piece to the PSA team has been our Northwest Regional Associate. We are excited to announce our most recent addition to the team, Barb Fick, who will be based in Corvallis, OR and engage with our collaborators, growers, and industry members in the Northwest.



Barb is a horticulturist who brings a diverse background to the Produce Safety Alliance. She has been involved in the development and implementation of numerous educational programs including management of yard waste, home and garden integrated pest management, Firewise landscaping, and Oregon waterwise gardening. Barb has spent the majority of her career working at Oregon State University as a community horticulture extension faculty member training and coordinating Master Gardener volunteers. She has a Bachelor of Science in plant science from the University of

Wisconsin-River Falls and a Master of Science degree in horticulture from the University of Minnesota.

You can also get to know the rest of the PSA team by visiting our website and reading their [biographies](#) online. For state and local resources near you, check out our [University Collaborators contact page](#).

As always, please do not hesitate to contact any members of the PSA team if you have questions, training needs, or outreach opportunities - we believe collaboration at every level will benefit growers, educators, and industry members going forward. In the near future, we will be setting up individual pages on our website for each Regional Extension Associate to provide news and updates from their region.

PSA Team & Regional Extension Associates

Northwest:
Barb Fick, M.S.



Midwest:
Don Stoeckel, Ph.D.



Northeast:
Betsy Bihn, Ph.D.
Gretchen Wall, M.S.
Michele Humiston



Southwest:
Donna Pahl, M.S.



Southeast:
Kristin Woods, Ph.D.

FDA Produce Safety Rule & FSMA Updates

FDA Extends Comment Period for Risk Assessment of Untreated Biological Soil Amendments



The FDA announced that they are extending the comment period for the notice entitled *"Risk Assessment of Foodborne Illness Associated With Pathogens From Produce Grown in Fields Amended With Untreated Biological Soil Amendments of Animal Origin; Request for Scientific Data, Information, and Comments"* that appeared in the Federal Register on March 4, 2016. The notice requested scientific data,

information, and comments that would assist in the development of a risk assessment for produce grown in fields or other growing areas amended with untreated biological soil amendments of animal origin (including raw manure). FDA is providing this extension to allow interested persons additional time to submit comments. **The agency is extending the comment period by 60 days, to July 5, 2016.**

For more background information regarding this comment period and the risk assessment of raw manure as a fertilizer, visit the FDA website at: <http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/ucm482426.htm>

USDA Updates

USDA AMS Launches New GroupGAP Certification

On April 4, 2016, USDA AMS officially launched GroupGAP, a new certification option for the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) audit program. This program makes GAP certification more accessible to small and medium size producers by allowing multiple growers to work together to obtain a single certification as a group. GroupGAP certification increases the opportunities for the entire specialty crops industry to



supply and buy USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)-certified produce. For more information, visit the USDA AMS website at: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/auditing/groupgap>

Regional Center News

Northeast Center to Advance Food Safety Hiring Administrator

**WE'RE
HIRING!**

The Northeast Center To Advance Food Safety (NECAFS) is one of the four Regional Centers (RC) tasked with coordinating efforts to provide food safety training, education, and technical assistance to small and medium-sized growers, processors, and food producers. They are currently advertising for a Center Administrator. If you know of anyone who would be a great fit or if you are interested, please follow

the link below to apply.

<https://www.uvmjobs.com/postings/19497>

New Resources for Produce Safety

New Tools for Calculating Agricultural Water Quality Criteria



For those of you starting to familiarize yourself with the FSMA Produce Safety Rule (PSR) requirements, you may have reached Subpart E: Agricultural Water and tripped across some new terms such as 'Microbial Water Quality Profile', 'geometric mean (GM)', and 'statistical threshold value (STV)'. Do not fret! In the next few months, we will be providing a series of short articles to help you better understand the PSR requirements. Additionally, FDA plans to release guidance documents that will clarify how these requirements can be achieved.

Work is already underway in developing additional resources and tools designed to assist growers in understanding and implementing the agricultural water requirements of the regulation, and many more will become available in the next year. For produce growers wanting to get a jump on developing their MWQP, a new tool is currently available to help establish the MWQP by calculating the STV and GM values (Phew - that was a lot of acronyms!).

The [Western Center for Food Safety at the University of California Davis](#) has developed a tool to make it easy to calculate the GM and STV and to determine if your water meets the standards for unrestricted application to produce before harvest. The tool is also designed to assist growers with making food safety management decisions if the water does not meet the standards in the regulation.

For more information and to access the Excel tool, please visit the Western Center for Food Safety website at: <http://wcfs.ucdavis.edu/>. If you would rather use an online interface, a web-based app and an online calculator based on the Excel tool were created at the University of Arizona and are hosted on their website: <http://agwater.arizona.edu/> (for the app) and <http://agwater.arizona.edu/onlinecalc/> (for the on-line calculator)

FSMA Produce Safety Rule Water Requirements: Insights to Get You Organized!

There has been a lot of talk about the agricultural water requirements that are part of the FSMA Produce Safety Rule. This month, we would like to share a brief article which talks more about what is covered by the requirements, the [timing of the requirements](#), and some key things to help growers prepare. There will be more information coming on the topic, including guidance documents from FDA. This article is meant to serve as an introduction to some of the main parts of the agricultural water requirements including:

- Understanding when water qualifies as 'agricultural water'
- Microbial quality requirements for agricultural water used during growing activities or during and after harvest
- Microbial Water Quality Profile: What is it, how many samples do you need to build one, and what resources are out there to help you
- Options if your agricultural water does not meet microbial water quality criteria

For the full article, [click here](#).

Stay in Touch!

Our general listserv reaches over 2,000 growers, industry members, regulatory agents, and educators in the United States and around the globe. Signing up for the listserv is the best way to stay in touch with the PSA. To sign up, please visit our website at producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu or use the link included at the bottom of this e-mail message.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions, comments, or ideas. We love feedback, so let us know! Good, bad, or otherwise - our ears (and e-mail inboxes) are always open!

Gretchen L. Wall, M.S.
Produce Safety Alliance Coordinator

Cornell University - Dept. of Food Science
110B Stocking Hall
Ithaca, NY 14853
Phone: 607.255.6806
Email: glw53@cornell.edu

Elizabeth A. Bihn, Ph.D.
Produce Safety Alliance Director

Hedrick Hall - NYSAES
630 W. North Street
Geneva, NY 14456
Phone: 315.787.2625
Email: eab38@cornell.edu



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