

Produce Safety ALLIANCE

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

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Hello Produce Safety Alliance Members!

While we are just a few short weeks away from seeing the much anticipated final FSMA Produce Safety Rule, the Produce Safety Alliance has been very busy polishing the curriculum materials, planning for trainings, and most exciting, expanding our program with the hiring of three Regional Extension Associates and an Extension Aide who will play a crucial role in outreach, education, and technical assistance across the country. In this newsletter, we would like to highlight our updated timeline for training, introduce you to the new members of the PSA team, and share some new educational resources for produce safety developed by our collaborators.



Produce Safety Alliance Updates

After two successful training pilots in December 2014 (Train-the-Trainer) and January 2015 (Grower Training), the PSA has been continually refining the curriculum materials in preparation for a national launch of trainings in early 2016. In June, two PSA Train-the-Trainer Courses were held in Kalamazoo, MI and Harrisburg, PA to further refine the training materials and trainer certification process. To be sure the PSA's curriculum materials align with the final FSMA Produce Safety Rule, the **PSA will not be hosting any training courses until after making the appropriate changes to the current curriculum materials.**

There will be many opportunities to attend a PSA Train-the-Trainer Course starting in January 2016. The best way to stay up-to-date with scheduled trainings and educational opportunities is to join the [PSA's general listserv](#) . We will be sending updates when the final FSMA Produce Safety Rule is released, as well as information about scheduled PSA Train-the-Trainer and Grower Training Courses.

Introducing the New Produce Safety Alliance Team Members

We are very excited to announce that we have hired four new individuals to join the Produce Safety Alliance staff: Michele Humiston (Extension Aide), Donna Pahl (Southwest Regional Extension Associate), Don Stoeckel (Midwest Regional Extension Associate), and Kristin Woods (Southeast Regional Extension Associate). Since 2010, the PSA has been led by director, Elizabeth (Betsy) Bihn with a small staff of two, including coordinator, Gretchen Wall and part time graphic/web designer, Mark Kogut. We are very excited to expand the PSA's ability to provide regional technical assistance and training opportunities. Please do not hesitate to contact any of the PSA team with questions!

Michele Humiston, Extension Aide



Michele has been employed by Cornell University for more than 20 years, serving in a variety of roles. The majority of Michele's years of service were as a Research Support Specialist for the IR-4 Project, a national program that facilitates regulatory approval of sustainable pest management technology for specialty crops and specialty uses to promote public well-being. As an Analytical Chemist for the IR-4 Project, Michele extracted and analyzed pesticide residues from varying crop matrices using High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC), Gas Chromatography (GC) or Liquid Chromatograph Mass Spectrometry (LC/MS/MS) instrumentation following EPA Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) standards. The data collected and reported supported new EPA tolerances and labeled product uses for specialty crop growers. Michele has also worked as a Quality Assurance Auditor for IR-4, monitoring compliance of USDA IR-4 agrochemical residue studies at field

research facilities located across the Northeast Region through on-site critical phase audits, facility audits, and field data reviews. Michele, who holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Biology with a minor in Chemistry from Keuka College, joined the Produce Safety Alliance in July 2015. Michele will play a crucial role in many of the PSA's behind-the-scenes administrative tasks, training organization, review and production of educational materials, and will be a primary contact for questions related to the PSA's training courses.

Mark Kogut, Graphic Designer

Although Mark is not a 'new hire', and in fact, has been working with the PSA since 2010 (and at Cornell for even longer!), we felt that it is important to recognize the work behind the PSA's beautifully designed website and educational materials, along with the myriad of other projects that land on Mark's desk. Mark has been working as a graphic designer for Cornell University since 1998. He started his career with the Food Industry Management Distance Education program co-designing curriculum materials for the retail food industry. In 2001, Mark joined Cornell's Department of Food Science and the National GAPs program where he was in charge of the design, illustration, and print production of food safety and sanitation educational materials. While at Cornell, he has lent his design and illustration skills to various other departments such as the American Indian Program, Entomology, Dairy Foods Extension, and Viticulture. Not limited by his design experience, Mark also designed a database that maintained the collection data of more than 1,100 water samples for 165 locations across the country. In addition to his graphic design responsibilities, he manages the GAPs and PSA program's websites and listserves. Currently, Mark brings his experience to the development of the PSA program's Train-the-Trainer and Grower Training curriculums. Prior to working for Cornell, he has held design and illustration positions with various companies, community colleges, and a book publisher. Mark graduated with a BFA in Graphic Design from Rochester Institute of Technology.





Donna Pahl, M.S., Southwest Regional Extension Associate

Before joining the Produce Safety Alliance, Donna worked at the University of Maryland as a produce safety trainer where she collaborated with the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) and University of Maryland Extension to conduct produce safety training programs and offered individualized support for farmers seeking GAP certification. She also helped MDA develop and launch a State of Maryland GAP certification for direct market growers. Donna's research collaborations include studying the effects of production practices and region on the microbial populations of fresh market crops and surveying the microbial quality of Maryland agricultural water sources. Donna's involvement in the fresh produce industry began while working on her family's fruit and vegetable farm, which was primarily a direct marketing enterprise. She has experience in production, harvesting, postharvest handling, and sales of perishable products. Donna received both her Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in Plant Science from the University of Maryland. Donna joined the Produce Safety Alliance in September 2015 to serve as the

Southwest Regional Extension Associate.

Don Stoeckel, Ph.D., Midwest Regional Extension Associate

Don is an environmental microbiologist who has collaborated with the Cornell National Good Agricultural Practices Program for nearly a decade on water quality issues related to food safety. For the past five years, he has been an instructor of the online GAPs Produce Safety Course. As a career research scientist and educator, he has 15 years of professional research experience at Battelle Memorial Institute and the U.S. Geological Survey. Over the course of 20 years, he also has served in adjunct teaching roles at Cornell University, the Ohio State University, Auburn University, Columbus State Community College, and Cincinnati State Technical and Community College. His professional experience ranges across development of conceptual models of fate and transport of chemicals and pathogens following introduction to water and water systems, estimating public health consequences, field monitoring of water quality, research into sources of water quality impairment, and laboratory studies to improve monitoring and forensic attribution of contaminants. Don has authored 15 peer-reviewed research articles among other publications that include extension publications, government reports, review articles, and book chapters. His outreach experience includes development of technical seminars and workshops for diverse audiences across a broad spectrum of topics, in particular water quality and GAPs. Dr. Stoeckel joined the Produce Safety Alliance in August 2015 to serve as the Midwest Regional Extension Associate.



Kristin Woods, Ph.D., Southeast Regional Extension Associate

Kristin joins the Produce Safety Alliance through a collaborative arrangement with Alabama Extension and Auburn University. For the past 12 years, Kristin's focus has been on community education and economic development in the area of food safety and food systems. Her primary area of interest has been the development of food businesses in the rural area of Alabama where she lives. She specializes in helping small farmers and retail food establishments meet food safety requirements and navigate food regulations. Kristin has taught Better Process Control School, Seafood HACCP, School (CNP) HACCP, and ServSafe®. In addition, she has led training and instructed farmers in GAPs, as well as the small farmer food safety training program: *Enhancing the Safety of Locally Grown Produce*. Prior to her Extension



experience, Kristin spent five years in the food industry working in process development, quality, and management. Kristin embraces a lifelong love of agriculture and currently owns and operates a small diversified farming operation in Southwest Alabama. Kristin joins the Produce Safety Alliance in October to serve as the Southeast Regional Extension Associate.



National Training, Education, Extension, Outreach, and Technical Assistance Competitive Grants Program: Regional Center Grants to Enhance Food Safety

FDA has issued a [request for applications](#) for the establishment of two Regional Centers, one in the North Central Region and one in the Northeast Region as defined by [Cooperative Extension System Regions](#) for the Food Safety Training, Education, Extension, Outreach, and Technical Assistance Program. These centers are part of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) collaborative partnership to administer and manage the National Training, Education, Extension, Outreach, and Technical Assistance Competitive Grants Program: Regional Center Grants to Enhance Food Safety. **Applications are due by November 2, 2015.**

FDA's Strategy for FSMA Training Who Will Provide Training for the Food Industry? Public and Private Partners Working Together

The FDA has released its [FSMA Training Strategy](#) outlining its evolving vision of how the agency will work with public and private partners on the development and delivery of food-industry training. The strategy outlines the options for those who must comply with the new food safety regulations and introduces the FDA's partners in promoting training to the global community of food suppliers. The Produce Safety Alliance will play a critical role in providing standardized training and education to assist the domestic and foreign produce industry, including but not limited to small and very small farms, as well as regulatory personnel, with the implementation of FDA's forthcoming Produce Safety Rule.

New Educational Resources

Designing efficient and clean packing facilities can be a challenge for limited resource or small-scale farms. Post-harvest handling activities are often the last step in getting produce to market, but should not be overlooked. A mistake or oversight at this stage in post-harvest handling can lead not only to introduction of foodborne illness causing microorganisms after harvest, but also to spoilage organisms that can shorten the shelf-life of produce. This month, we would like to highlight several new resources developed by the University of Vermont Extension Center for Sustainable Agriculture, highlighting practical solutions and considerations for post-harvest handling in packinghouses, keeping food safety and efficiency in mind.

Three Videos on Packshed Design for Efficiency & Safety by Ginger Nickerson

Produce farmers spend a huge amount of time in their packhouses. Investing in good pack house design and materials results in cleanable spaces and reduced risk of food contamination, and also less wasted motion and more pleasant workspaces. These videos by UVM Extension Center for Sustainable Agriculture tell the story of how three farms improved their food safety, efficiency and worker morale through packhouse design.



[Packshed Design for Efficiency and Safety Videos](#)

Fact Sheets:

- [Building an Unenclosed Packshed](#)
- [Renovating Old Barns](#)

Updates from our Sister Alliances

Food Safety Preventive Controls Alliance (FSPCA)

- The [FSMA Final Rule for Preventive Controls for Human Food](#) was released on September 10, 2015, and compliance dates for some businesses begin in September 2016.
- The Editorial Subcommittee is currently incorporating changes to the Human Foods training curriculum that were released in the final rule.
- Train-the-Trainer sessions will be held October 28-29, 2015 and November 2-3, 2015 in the DC area **only** for participants who attended previous Train-the-Trainer pilots and for those who will become Trainers-of-Trainers.
- Logistics for both the Train-the-Trainer Course and the Preventive Controls Course are being worked out and registration details will be posted on the FSPCA website, when finalized. Public courses are expected to begin mid to late November.
- FSPCA Lead Instructor applications are in review. Applicants will receive notification via email regarding the next steps.
- Dr. Robert Brackett will be participating in the upcoming FDA Public Meeting on October 20, 2015 in Chicago, IL.
 - More information about the Public Meeting for FSMA Preventive Controls for Human and Animal Food Final Rules is available at:
<http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/ucm461791.htm>

Sprout Safety Alliance (SSA)

- The Sprout Safety Alliance continues to move ahead with curriculum development and review, in preparation for final materials to be printed in early 2016. You can review the SSA's progress since 2012 on their website at:
http://www.iit.edu/ifsh/sprout_safety/about/accomplishments.shtml.

Stay in Touch!

As always, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions, comments, or ideas. Keep an eye out for our e-mails later this month, hopefully announcing the release of the final FSMA Produce Safety Rule and opportunities to learn more about the regulation!

As always, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions, comments, or ideas.

Take care,

Gretchen & Betsy

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