

# Produce Safety

ALLIANCE



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September 13, 2017

## Hello Produce Safety Alliance Members:

It has been a busy summer for the Produce Safety Alliance, and getting even busier as we approach the fall and winter training 'seasons'. We have quite a few updates to share in this newsletter, so read on to learn more about the PSA's new team member, upcoming Train-the-Trainer Course availability, lots of updates and announcements from the FDA, and educational resources for emerging and current issues in produce safety.



## PSA Training Course Availability

### Immediate Train-the-Trainer Course Seat Availability!

The PSA has two upcoming Train-the-Trainer Courses that have immediate seat availability. For a full list of upcoming PSA Train-the-Trainer Courses, [visit our website](#).

### Sanford (near Raleigh), NC, USA: 10/4-5/2017

- Location: 2420 Tramway Rd., Sanford (near Raleigh), NC 27332, USA
- Contact Information: [Kristin Woods](#), Phone: 251-753-1164
- Cost: \$200 in State/\$250 out of State
- [Registration Information](#)

## St. Charles County (near St. Louis), MO, USA: 10/11-12/2017 (Integrated Course)

- Location: 260 Brown Road, St. Peters, MO 63376, USA
- Contact Information: [Don Stoeckel](#), Phone: 614-634-0884
- Cost: \$130 (Growers)/\$190 (Trainers)
- [Registration Information](#) (Closes Sept. 26, 2017)

### **PSA Grower Training Course Availability**

New PSA Grower Training Courses are being registered almost daily and the list is continually growing! [Check out the current schedule of PSA Grower Training Courses](#) that our team and cadre of PSA Trainers and PSA Lead Trainers across the country (and now globe), are hosting this fall and winter. There are many opportunities to learn about the FSMA Produce Safety Rule; take advantage of course opportunities now!



### **Introducing New PSA Team Member: Connie Fisk, Ph.D.**



We are excited to announce the addition of new team member, Connie Fisk, as the PSA's Northwest Regional Extension Associate. With over eight years of extension experience in Nebraska and North Carolina and over three years of experience teaching college-level horticulture, microbiology, food science, agroecology, and family and consumer science courses, both on campus and online, Connie will be a fantastic addition to the PSA team. Her education and work experience include production, harvest, post-harvest handling, processing, and evaluation (quality, safety, sensory) of a variety of agricultural products. She is passionate about teaching the information and skills growers need to produce safe, high quality crops for fresh and processing markets and comply with buyer requirements and government regulations.

Connie received her B.S. in Nutrition and Food Management, her M.S. in both Food Science & Technology and Horticulture from Oregon State University, and her Ph.D. in Horticultural Science from NC State University. Welcome, Connie!

#### **You can reach Connie at:**

E-mail: [ccl239@cornell.edu](mailto:ccl239@cornell.edu); Phone: (541) 250-6227

Or follow her on 

### **FDA Updates & Announcements**

#### **September 5, 2017**

[\*\*FDA Releases Guidance for Industry: Standards for the Growing, Harvesting, Packing, and Holding of Produce for Human Consumption: What You Need to Know About the FDA Regulation - Small Entity Compliance Guide\*\*](#)

This guidance document is intended to assist small farms and businesses in complying with the Produce Safety Rule. **Note:** FDA's guidance documents, including this guidance, do not establish legally enforceable responsibilities. Instead, guidances describe FDA's current thinking on a topic and should be viewed only as recommendations, unless specific regulatory or statutory requirements are cited. The

use of the word *should* in FDA guidances means that something is suggested or recommended, but not required.

### September 11, 2017

#### Equivalent Testing Methodologies for Agricultural Water

FDA has determined that the [following methods](#) are "scientifically valid" and "at least equivalent to the method of analysis in § 112.151(a) in accuracy, precision, and sensitivity".

The methods that FDA recently considered equivalent to modified mTEC agar (EPA Method 1603) are all on the list of EPA approved methods for monitoring recreational water for generic E. coli, but some methods on the EPA list are not considered equivalent by FDA.

#### **The list of equivalent methods, as they're usually called at the labs, is:**

##### **Membrane filtration methods:**

- mTEC agar (EPA method 1103.1, Standard methods 9213D, & ASTM 5392-9)
- MI agar (EPA method 1604)
- mENDO/NA-MUGagar (Standard methods 9222B followed by 9222G)
- mColiBlue 24 agar (Hach method 10029)

##### **Most probable number methods:**

- Colilert (Idexx method, using Quantitray 2000)
- Colilert 18 (Idexx method, using Quantitray 2000)

Additionally, the Center for Produce Safety issued their [final report](#) on the Agricultural Water Testing Methods Colloquium for further information about water testing methods.

### September 12, 2017

#### Standards for the Growing, Harvesting, Packing, and Holding of Produce for Human Consumption; Extension of Compliance Dates for Subpart E

The FDA issued a [proposed rule](#) that, if finalized, would extend the compliance dates for the agricultural water requirements by an additional two to four years (for produce other than sprouts). The proposed extension will give the agency time to take another look at the water standards to ensure that they are feasible for farmers in all regions of the country, while protecting public health. The new agricultural water compliance date the FDA is proposing for the largest farms is January 26, 2022. Small farms and very small farms would have until January 26, 2023 and January 26, 2024, respectively. The proposed rule is open for public comment for 60 days.

**Table 2.--Proposed Compliance Dates for Requirements in Subpart E for Covered Activities Involving Covered Produce (Except Sprouts Subject to Subpart M) Size of Covered Farm Proposed Time Periods Starting from the Effective date of the November 27, 2015, Produce Safety Final Rule (January 26, 2016)**

Business Size	Compliance Period	Compliance Date
Very Small Businesses	8 years	January 26, 2024
Small Businesses	7 years	January 26, 2023
All Other Businesses	6 years	January 26, 2022

**September 12, 2017**

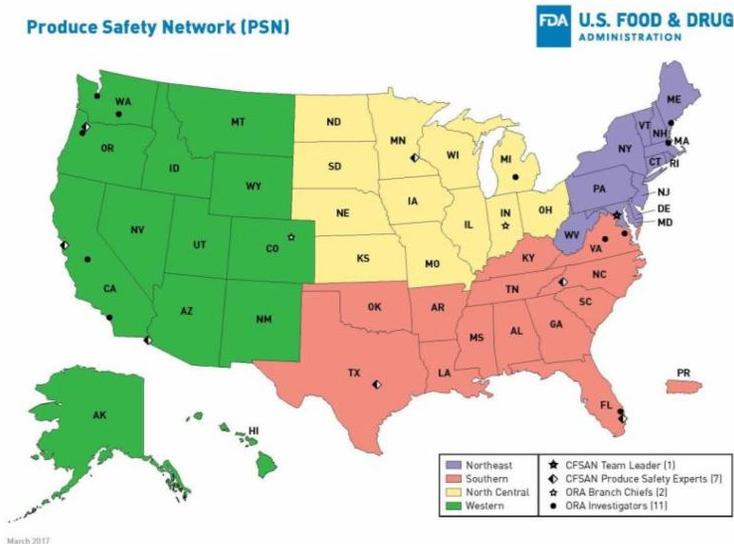
**FDA Commissioner Addresses State Agriculture Commissioners; Announces New Steps to Enhance Collaboration with States and Ensure Farmers Are Prepared for FSMA**

At a speech in New Orleans at the annual conference of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, M.D., outlined a number of immediate next steps in a comprehensive approach to ensuring successful implementation of the Produce Safety Rule established by the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). During the conference, he discussed FDA's approach to agricultural water challenges including an extension of agricultural water compliance dates, stakeholder engagement on agricultural water standards, and equivalent water testing methods. In addition, produce farm inspections and training opportunities for producers and regulators were discussed as part of the comprehensive plan.

**Connect with the FDA Produce Safety Network**

Implementation of the FSMA Produce Safety Rule provides unique opportunities and challenges, including recognition of regional differences in growing practices, and increased reliance on state regulatory partners. In response, the FDA created the Produce Safety Network (PSN) to aid in achieving high rates of implementation and compliance with the Produce Safety Rule. The PSN is comprised of seven produce safety experts and one team leader from the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) and 11 investigators and two branch chiefs from the Office of Regulatory Affairs (ORA). The network is regionally-based and responsible for collaborating and communicating with regional partners to support high levels of compliance in the farming community.

Figure 1: Location of Produce Safety Network members



For more information about the Produce Safety Network and to access contact information for Produce Safety Experts in your region, visit the [PSN Directory](#).

## Rat Lungworm

Earlier this year, the PSA became acutely aware of a produce safety risk caused by a parasitic nematode, *Angiostrongylus cantonensis*, also called rat lungworm. Although foodborne parasitic infections associated with *Angiostrongylus* have been reported for years, recent high profile outbreaks in Hawai'i have highlighted the need to incorporate information about the prevention of this parasite into the PSA's curriculum materials. Human infection has most often occurred in Latin America and the Caribbean, but several cases have been reported this year in the United States including Hawai'i and U.S. citizens returning from other countries affected by rat lungworm. Additionally, rat lungworm infected snails and infected animals/fecal material have been identified in [Florida](#) and Texas. For those not familiar with rat lungworm, additional resources and articles are included below.

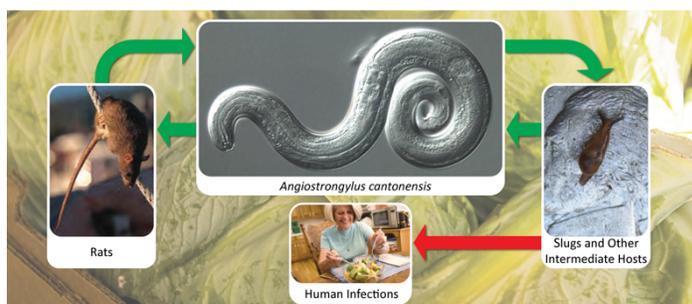


Photo: Hawai'i Department of Health & Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

- Hollyer, J.R., Toegner, V.A., Cowie, R.H., Hollingsworth, R.G., Nakamura-Tengan, L.C., Castro, L.F. & Buchholz, A.E. (2010) Best On-Farm Food Safety Practices: Reducing Risks Associated with Rat Lungworm Infection and Human Eosinophilic Meningitis. University of Hawai'i at Manoa - Food Safety and Technology, FST-39. Available at: <https://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/oc/freepubs/pdf/FST-39.pdf>
- State of Hawaii, Department of Health. Disease Listing: Angiostrongyliasis (Rat Lungworm). Available at: [http://health.hawaii.gov/docd/disease\\_listing/rat-lungworm-angiostrongyliasis/](http://health.hawaii.gov/docd/disease_listing/rat-lungworm-angiostrongyliasis/)
- Safe Produce: Keep it Clean (Video). Available at: <http://manoa.hawaii.edu/ctahr/farmfoodsafety/wp-content/food-safety-videos/WashProduce-DOH.mp4>

## Food Safety & Flooding

[Factsheet Available!](#)

With the recent devastating hurricane events in Texas, Florida, and the Southeast, we thought it might be useful to share basic guidance on how to assess food safety risks to produce crops that may have been affected by flood events. Read more about types of flooding, sources of contamination, and how to determine whether the crop is safe in this [short fact sheet](#). The PSA sends best wishes for a safe and easy road to recovery to all who were affected by these catastrophic events.



## Local Food Safety Collaborative - Food Safety Survey

The Local Food Safety Collaborative (LFSC), a collaboration between National Farmers Union Foundation and the Food and Drug Administration, aims to provide specialized training, education, and outreach to farmers and food processors who serve local markets. The LFSC is conducting a food safety survey to help direct their resources to best enhance fundamental food safety knowledge and help small farmers and processors comply with applicable Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) regulations. Survey participation is voluntary and will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. After completing the survey, participants may elect to enter personal information to be entered in a raffle for one of twenty \$100.00 gift cards.

**Survey Link in English:** [www.localfoodsafety.org/survey](http://www.localfoodsafety.org/survey)

**Survey Link in Spanish:** [www.localfoodsafety.org/spanish-survey](http://www.localfoodsafety.org/spanish-survey)



## Produce Safety Job Opportunities



### University of Minnesota

Extension Educator - Food/Farm Safety

**Description:** With an expanding number of producers focused on local foods, farm-to-table, farm-to-institution, wholesale, and small farms, food safety issues related to horticultural food crop production is of increasing concern to all audiences, especially within diverse communities. This Extension educator will focus on food/farm safety. This person will be responsible for designing, developing, implementing and evaluating research-based educational programming on safe food handling techniques, harvest and post-harvest management, "good agricultural practices" (GAP), "good handling practices" (GHP), and on-farm processing and packing. The educator will work with producers who are growing food for others, including those who sell to direct market customers, institutional buyers and wholesale distributors as well as to institutions such as schools and hospitals. Community gardens may also be a focus for this educator. This position will also include an emphasis on technology skills in order to facilitate technology-enhanced teaching and creation of online content.

**[Click here for more information and to apply!](#)**

*Application review will begin September 8, 2017; accepting applications until position is filled.*

## Stay in Touch!

Our general listserv reaches over 3,000 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](http://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.**  
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