



Winter/Spring Training for Produce Safety Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), FSMA Produce Rule, and FSMA Preventive Controls for Human Food

The Maryland Department of Agriculture, University of Maryland (UMD) and University of Maryland Extension (UME) are offering three different trainings for food safety: 1) FDA approved training curriculum for the FSMA Produce Rule (covers produce that may be consumed raw), 2) FSMA Preventive Controls Rule (covers processed foods), and 3) Basic GAP training during 2017.

Background

In 2010, Congress passed the federal Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) mandating preventive food safety standards for human and animal food. The seven federal rules implementing this legislation are final and compliance dates are fast approaching. For those farms “covered,” i.e. required to be in compliance to the Produce Safety Rule, please note the following compliance dates and register for the FDA required Produce Safety Rule training. Don’t know if your farm is “covered” or “exempt,” [click here](#) to find out.

Business Size	Compliance Date
Less than \$25,000 in produce sales annually	Exempt
“Very small” \$25,000 - \$250,000 produce sales annually	January 26, 2020
“Small” \$250,000 - \$500,000 produce sales annually	January 26, 2019
All other farms	January 26, 2018

What’s the difference between FSMA and GAP?

FSMA is a federal law and the rules are mandatory for farmers and food businesses to follow with some exemptions.

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP) are sets of best practices for reducing food safety hazards for produce on the farm. GAP/GHP are voluntary, market-driven standards. Many farms choose to have a voluntary GAP/GHP audit at the request of their buyers. A GAP/GHP audit is a way that farms can provide their customers with a third-party assurance of their on-farm food safety practices.

Many of the basic principles for reducing food safety risks are similar between GAP and FSMA. Farms that are familiar with GAP/GHP will be well prepared to comply with FSMA. Even if your farm is exempt from FSMA and your buyers don’t need GAP, we strongly encourage you to attend a GAP training to keep up with the latest information on produce safety.

Which training is right for you?

The FDA approved training covers the requirements of the FSMA Produce Safety Rule or the FSMA Preventive Controls for Human Food Rule. The Basic GAP training provides technical information on writing a food safety plan and implementing practices to meet the FSMA Produce Safety Rule and/or GAP certification standards but does not meet the FDA approved training requirements.

FDA approved FSMA Produce Safety Rule and Preventive Controls for Human Food Training

The upcoming FSMA training sessions will cover two of the final rules – Preventive Controls for Human Food and the Produce Safety Rule.

- The Produce Safety Rule requires one supervisor or responsible party to attend training recognized as adequate by FDA. The one day Produce Safety Rule training meets FDA's standards and attendees will receive the FDA required certificate documenting their attendance. Additional FDA approved Produce Safety training sessions are being planned for early spring 2017 on the lower Eastern Shore and winter/early spring of 2017 and 2018.
- The Preventive Controls for Human Food Rule requires key personnel responsible for food safety become Preventive Controls Qualified by attending a course meeting FDA's requirements. The three day Preventive Controls course meets FDA's standards and attendees will receive the FDA required certificate documenting their attendance. Produce growers that grow, harvest, pack, and hold produce that may be consumed raw are required to take the one day Produce Safety Rule course. Producers of processed foods (jams, jellies, acidified foods, etc.) can meet FDA's Preventive Controls qualified requirements by attending the three day Preventive Controls for Human Food course.
- UMD has scheduled three hybrid courses to cover both the Produce Rule and the Preventive Controls for Human Food Rule however you can register for the courses individually depending on the type of training required for your operation. (See Dates and Registration Information document for training details).

Fruit and Vegetable Growers - Good Agricultural Practices training

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) and University of Maryland Extension (UME) will be conducting two regional food safety training workshops for fruit and vegetable growers. These one-day workshops, offered winter/spring of 2017 in Queen Anne County and Carroll County, are important for small- and large- scale producers who want to understand how to meet the FSMA Produce Rule food safety requirements or are considering Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) certification.

The training will provide assistance in writing and implementing a GAP program for both wholesale growers and direct marketers. Topics covered include highlights of the federal Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA); Good Agricultural Practices such as addressing pre-harvest and post-harvest water quality issues; an update on current food safety research; writing a food safety plan; and MDA/University of Maryland programs to assist producers in implementing GAP. A portion of the training will be spent helping producers write their food safety plans. Producers are encouraged to bring their own personal laptops. Laptops will also be provided to those who cannot bring them. These training sessions are *not approved* by FDA to meet the training requirements of the FSMA Produce Rule, however, they provide technical assistance to write and implement a food safety plan that will be compliant with the Produce Safety Rule. (See Dates and Registration Information document for training details)

Still have questions? Please contact: Deanna Baldwin at 410-841-5769; Deanna.baldwin@maryland.gov
USDA Specialty Crop and USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture grant funds obtained by UMD and MDA make it possible for these training sessions to be offered for a small fee to cover the cost of lunch and supplies.