



Southern Region Integrated Produce Safety Conference

**February 20-22, 2024
Embassy Suites
Hilton Greenville Golf Resort &
Conference Center
Greenville, SC**

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Sponsors



Southern Region Integrated Produce Safety Conference

February 20-22, 2024

Welcome to Greenville, South Carolina and the fourth annual Southern Region Integrated Produce Safety Conference. We are so happy to host you here in the Palmetto State! Over the next few days, we will dive into many different topics about produce safety including postharvest water, outbreaks, positive samples, educational tools, traceability and more. We will hear from growers and learn about their experience with the Produce Safety Rule, what was helpful for them or if there are areas of improvement we can learn about. We will get to hear from all the southern region states to learn about their challenges and successes with the enforcement of the Produce Safety Rule. We will also hear from a number of organizations, researchers, and extension educators who will provide updates and insight about the work they are doing. We hope you will join us Thursday morning for a tour of Hurricane Creek Farms to learn from their work and experiences. This program booklet contains our agenda for this week and state update reports from the 13 states in the southern region. Multiple states and organizations have worked together to make this event happen and we are so excited to meet in person for the first time since 2019. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn about the amazing work being performed around the region, strengthen our connections with colleagues, and gain inspiration for better ways to protect public health.

To get to know our state a little better, I wanted to share a few agricultural facts about South Carolina:

With nearly 25,000 farms and 4.8 million acres of farmland, South Carolina is driven by agriculture. Agribusiness (agriculture + forestry) is the state's No. 1 industry, accounting for 259,215 jobs and \$51.8 billion in annual economic impact.

South Carolina's Top Agricultural Commodities:

1. Broilers
2. Turkeys
3. Corn
4. Cattle & Calves
5. Soybeans
6. Cotton
7. Chicken Eggs
8. Peanuts
9. Floriculture
10. Tobacco

National Fruit and Vegetable Production Rankings:

- #1 Turnip Greens
- #2 Collard Greens, Kale, Mustard Greens, Peaches
- #5 Okra
- #6 Honeydew, Green Peas
- #7 Broccoli
- #8 Summer Squash, Sweet Potatoes, Watermelon
- #9 Bell Pepper, Cantaloupe
- #10 Tomatoes

Thanks for joining us!

Kelly

Kelly Johnson

Produce Safety Manger

South Carolina Department of Agriculture



Southern Region Integrated Produce Safety Conference

February 20-22, 2024

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

Time	Session	Presenter(s)
<i>Morning Moderator: Robert Donato, SCDA</i>		
8:15 AM	Welcome and Introduction Ice Breaker	Bobby Donato, SCDA
8:30 AM	Postharvest Water	
	Postharvest water and its uses	Lynette Johnston, NCSU
	Postharvest water and its challenges	Laura Strawn, VT
	Scenario	Group Discussion
10:30AM	Break	
10:45 AM	Cyclospora	Michelle Danyluk UF - Moderator
	Q&A and Panel Interactive	Ynes Ortega, UGA Mauricio Durigan, FDA Nicole Clausen, FDA Richard De Los Santos, TX
11:30 AM	CEA	
	FDA Thinking & the PSR	Trevor Gilbert, FDA
	Background and Resources	Elena Rogers, NCSU
12:00 Noon	Lunch	
<i>Afternoon Moderator - Ben Marshall, FDA</i>		
1:15 PM	Outbreaks Involving Produce	
	Introductions	Brenda Morris, AFDO
	State Perspective	Summer Williams, GDA
	PSN ORA	Leah Tapley, FDA
	FDA CORE	Nicole Clausen, FDA
	Break Out Activities	Brenda Morris, AFDO

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

Time	Session	Presenter(s)
3:30 PM	Break	
3:45 PM	Educational Tools	
	Overview of the session	Billy Mitchell, UGA and LFSC
	How are outreach personnel/ educators identifying produce safety educational needs in their state?	Sarah Cope, NCDA Kranti Yemmireddy, UTRGV
	What produce safety resources are out there and where/how to find them?	Kirby Quam, FDACS
	Minority Serving Institutions	Kranti Yemmireddy, UTRGV Keawin Sarjeant, FAMU
	Farmworker training strategies	Billy Mitchell, UGA and LFSC Kristin Woods, TU Kelly Hughes, LDAF

Wednesday, February 21, 2024

Time	Session	Presenter(s)
	<i>Morning Moderator – Kelly Hughes Thompson, LDAF</i>	
8:15 AM	Welcome and Review	Kelly Hughes Thompson, LDAF
8:30 AM	State Updates	
	Alabama	Christy Smith, ADAI
	Arkansas	Amanda Perez, UofA
	Florida	Kirby Quam, FDACS
	Georgia	Andrea Riley, GDA
	Kentucky	Tyler Goodlett, KDA

Wednesday, February 21, 2024

Time	Session	Presenter(s)
8:30 AM	State Updates (cont.)	
	Louisiana	Kelly Hughes, LDAF
	Mississippi	Davis Edwards, MDAC
	North Carolina	Sarah Cope, NCDA
	Oklahoma	Justin McConaghy, ODA
	South Carolina	Kelly Johnson, SCDA
	Tennessee	Cathy Rubin, TDA
	Texas	Richard De Los Santos, TDA
	Virginia	Erik Bungo, VDACS
	Partner Updates	
	AFDO	Brenda Morris, AFDO
	FDA-PSN	Trevor Gilbert, FDA
	FDA-ORA	Leah Tapley, FDA
	IFAI	Will Seeley, IFIA
	NASDA	Jim Melvin, NASDA
PSA	Tommy Saunders, PSA	
Southern Center	Michelle Danyluk, UF	
10:00 AM	Break	
10:30 AM	Positive Samples	
	Inspection	Bobby Donato, SCDA
	Compliance	Shay Frankenfield, SCDA
11:00 AM	Traceability	
	Overview of the Rule	Andy Kennedy, NEP
	Panel Session	Taylor Livingston, Titan Farms, SC Amy Dortch, FSP Consulting, TN Aries Haygood, A & M, GA Maria Molina, A & M, GA
12:00 Noon	Lunch	

Wednesday, February 21, 2024

Time	Session	Presenter(s)
<i>Afternoon Moderator – Tommy Saunders</i>		
1:15 PM	Cleaning and Sanitizing	
	Labeled Sanitizers for Produce	Tommy Saunders, PSA
	FDA Cleaning and Sanitizing Workshop	Christy Smith, ADAI
	Cleaning and Sanitizing on Farms	Andrea Riley, GDA
2:45 PM	Break	
3:00	Grower Experiences	Taylor Livingston, Titan Farms, SC Amy Dortch, FSP Consulting, TN Aries Haygood, A & M, GA Maria Molina, A & M, GA Bryson Nix-Edney Apple Wedge Packers & Cider, NC Matt Rudd, Rudd Farm, NC
4:00	Discussions, Emerging Trends, Future Topics	Michelle Danyluk

STATE UPDATE REPORTS

State Update Report

Alabama Department of Agriculture

Program Area	Responsible Party
1.) CAP Project Designation <u>Status Update</u>	Department of Agriculture & Industries Alabama is Path C state. We have a subaward with Alabama Cooperative Extension Service to assist with education in outreach.
2.) PSA Grower Training <u>Status Update</u>	Alabama Cooperative Extension Service and Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries We have conducted 34 grower trainings to date and will plan additional ones for 2024. We still conduct a one day, 8-hour course with our Extension folks leading the courses.
3.) OFRR <u>Status Update</u>	Department of Agriculture & Industries We have conducted 32 OFRRs to date. We have seen a large decline in request for OFRRs the last couple of years. Farmers are busy and want to get everything done in the inspection so they can get back to farming.
4.) Inspection <u>Status Update</u>	Department of Agriculture & Industries We have completed 11 inspections so far with another 8 on the schedule. Our goal was to complete 16 by end of 2019 but will surpass that goal if scheduled inspections go as planned.
5.) State Rule Making <u>Status Update</u>	Department of Agriculture & Industries We have state authority to do farm inspections. Alabama is adopting rule by reference.
6.) Farm Visits <u>Status Update</u>	Department of Agriculture & Industries Department of Agriculture inspectors plan farm visits to meet farmers and verify inventory information or to provide technical assistance to farmers if they request it.

State Update Report

Alabama Department of Agriculture

A. Metrics of quantitative success:

Number of trainings provided?	34 grower trainings
Number of growers reached?	562
Number of packers reached?	
Development of materials	Development of materials: Record Keeping Guide, handwashing posters, What to expect on Inspections information sheets, Grower Resource Guide.
Presentations given at educational event	Presentations given at educational events: Farmers Market Manager meetings, Grower Trainings, Cleaning/Sanitizing Workshops, Commodity meetings.

State Update Report

Arkansas Department of Agriculture

Program Area	Responsible Party
<p>1.) CAP Project Designation</p> <p><u>Status Update</u></p>	<p>Arkansas Department of Agriculture (ADA)</p> <p>Arkansas is a path C. ADA has a subaward in place with University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture (UADA) Extension Service to help with Education and Outreach.</p>
<p>2.) PSA Grower Training</p> <p><u>Status Update</u></p>	<p>University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture (UADA)</p> <p>UADA faculty/staff work closely with producers to identify PSA Grower Training needs including dates and locations to host both in-person and remote trainings. Faculty/staff coordinate, conduct, and evaluate training including all training marketing, teaching, follow-up paperwork, reporting, and rewarding of training certificates.</p> <p>UADA has conducted 33 grower trainings to date and have planned 4 (2 in-person, 2 remote) planned for 2024. Each training is either one 9-hour day (in-person) or two 4.5 hour days (remote).</p>
<p>3.) OFRR</p> <p><u>Status Update</u></p>	<p>University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture (UADA)</p> <p>UADA Extension Service faculty/staff conduct On-Farm Readiness Reviews including outreach to offer an OFRR visit, coordination/scheduling of visits, conducting the visit to provide consultation and technical assistance, and post-visit survey and technical assistance.</p> <p>UADA has conducted 30 OFRRs to date. Faculty/staff call farms to set up an OFRR prior to inspections. All information gathered during OFRRs is confidential, and all notes are left with the farm. Visits range from 2-4 hours on average.</p>
<p>4.) Inspection</p> <p><u>Status Update</u></p>	<p>Arkansas Department of Agriculture (ADA)</p> <p>ADA has completed 19 inspections in 2023. ADA anticipates 37 inspections in 2024.</p>

State Update Report

Arkansas Department of Agriculture

5.) State Rule Making Arkansas Department of Agriculture (ADA)
Status Update Arkansas/ADA has state authority to conduct inspections.

6.) Farm Visits Arkansas Department of Agriculture (ADA)
Status Update ADA conducted 39 farm visits in 2023.

A. Metrics of quantitative success:

Number of trainings provided? PSA Grower Trainings: 33

Number of growers reached? Total Attendees Trained: 451 (with repeats) – see breakdown below:
o Total Number of Farms/Packers: 351
o Total Number Trained at UA System: 60
o Total Number Trained at ADA: 12
o Total Number Trained Farm Support (i.e. Farmers Market, Schools): 13
o Total Number Trained Other Agency: 15

Number of packers reached? 4

Development of materials Posters, presentations, workshops + training activities, newsletters, social/digital media, factsheets. Content available at uaex.uada.edu/localfoods and uaex.uada.edu/producesafety.
Publications:
Arkansas Grown Magazine, Arkansas Democrat Gazette, Arkansas Farm Bureau

Presentations given at educational event Presentations given at educational events: Annual Arkansas Grown Conference and Expo, Arkansas Blackberry Growers Association, County Agent workshop/meetings, Farmer + School Personnel workshop, Statewide Agriculture + Local Foods conference, NASDA Produce Safety Consortium annual meeting.

State Update Report

Arkansas Department of Agriculture

B. Do you have any specific anecdotes/stories that you'd like to share? Please include quotes, if possible, from growers/producers since this is helpful in engaging others with your work.

C. Other information you would like to share?

The UADA Extension Service produce safety education & outreach team receives consistent feedback on the quality of their trainings from training participants and on-farm technical assistance.

Two examples are below from the October 2023 in-person training:

- “Thank you so much for the insightful workshop, how well organized it was and the wonderful panel of speakers.”
- “I just wanted to let you know that you all did a really great job putting that training on. It is so difficult to make an 8 hour food safety training engaging and you all did the best I’ve seen. Thank you for your hard work and for travelling to our neck of the woods.”

Two examples from On-Farm Readiness Reviews:

- “Thanks for all you do, like most jobs people probably don’t show their appreciation enough, but I would struggle to properly complete the food safety program without you.”
- “I didn’t understand the why behind all of this [regulation] but now that I know, I have to do the right thing and have been able to make the changes thanks to your input.”

State Update Report

Florida Department of Agriculture

Program Area	Responsible Party
1.) CAP Project Designation	Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS)
<u>Status Update</u>	Florida is a Path B state. FDACS conducts all regulatory activities in the state under FDA credentialing. FDACS has a subaward in place with University of Florida - Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) to conduct produce safety education. Outreach and Technical Assistance activities are conducted by both FDACS and UF/IFAS.
2.) PSA Grower Training	University of Florida - Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS)
<u>Status Update</u>	<p>UF/IFAS faculty and staff work closely with FDACS, producers, and industry partners to identify PSA Grower Training needs including dates and locations to host both in-person and remote trainings. UF/IFAS faculty/staff coordinate, conduct, and evaluate training including training marketing, teaching, reporting, and issuing of training certificates. FDACS provides additional support for these trainings through marketing, outreach, training materials and delivering training modules.</p> <p>Florida has conducted 97 grower trainings to date, with 9 more planned through the end of this CAP year.</p>
3.) OFRR	Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) and University of Florida - Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS)

State Update Report

Florida Department of Agriculture

Status Update

FDACS conducts On-Farm Readiness Reviews in partnership with UF/IFAS. A representative from both agencies is present during the OFRR. FDACS receives OFRR requests from farms and coordinates the scheduling of visits. There is a high level of cooperation between FDACS and UF/IFAS for these farm visits.

Florida has conducted 108 OFRRs to date. OFRRs are scheduled as they are requested by farms. Demand for OFRRs has declined in recent years.

4.) Inspection

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS)

Status Update

FDACS has conducted 675 inspections to date. Florida conducts routine inspections of covered farms at a frequency of once every 1-5 years. Frequency of inspections may vary depending on the nature of the inspection (initial-routine, routine, for cause, etc.).

5.) State Rule Making

Florida Legislature

Status Update

Florida is a Path B state, conducting inspections under FDA credentialing per the Produce Safety Rule (Title 21 CFR, Part 112). Other than the Florida Tomato Good Agricultural Practices (T-GAPs), no state law or regulation establishes authority for produce safety inspections in Florida.

6.) Farm Visits

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS)

Status Update

Florida rarely conducts farm visits outside of inspections or OFRRs. Occasionally, FDACS staff may conduct farm visits for the purposes of technical assistance or to verify unresponsive farms in our inventory.

State Update Report

Florida Department of Agriculture

A. Metrics of quantitative success:

Number of trainings provided? PSA Grower Trainings: 97

Number of growers & packers reached? Total Attendees Trained: 1767

Development of materials In support of our produce safety program, Florida has developed posters, flyers, and glossy rack cards of information. We have delivered presentations, trainings, and workshops at events across the state. Information has been disseminated in newsletters, articles, and email blasts, and we have advertised produce safety programming through publications in print, digital, radio and billboard announcements.

Publications Same as development of materials.

Presentations given at educational event We attend more than 30 educational outreach events annually and deliver presentations about our program or produce safety related topics at many of them. These events include but are not limited to commodity association meetings, commodity-specific research field days, grower meetings, agricultural education conferences, food safety educational events, university programs, and other industry events.

State Update Report

Georgia Department of Agriculture

Program Area	Responsible Party
1.) CAP Project Designation <u>Status Update</u>	Produce Safety Program, Food Safety Division, Georgia Department of Agriculture (GDA) Program Path C; Program name change in 2019 from Farm Safety Program to Produce Safety Program.
2.) PSA Grower Training <u>Status Update</u>	GDA and UGA Extension Organized and hosted by the GDA Produce Safety Program, at least quarterly. We offer virtual and in-person courses. We have one team member that is PSA Trainer Certified. We use UGA Extension personnel that is PSA Lead Trainer Certified. GDA previous PSA Lead Trainers left Produce program in 2022.
3.) OFRR <u>Status Update</u>	Georgia Department of Agriculture OFRRs are conducted by GDA education/ outreach personnel or inspectors. Since we began inspections in 2019, interest in OFRRs has steadily declined. Farm request them via phone, email, or by directly asking at PSA trainings, meetings, farm visits. When contacting farms to schedule initial inspection, an OFRR is offered prior to the inspection. We completed 48 during 2020-2023
4.) Inspection <u>Status Update</u>	Georgia Department of Agriculture Inspections are conducted by staff that have completed FDA 226; and trainer-led and trainee-led joint inspections with a qualified trainer; and have had an acceptable training inspection evaluation with a qualified trainer. 2020 completed 69 inspections with 6 full time trained field staff (FTTFS) 2021* completed 108 inspections with 7 FTTFS 2022 completed 66 inspections with 3 FTTFS 2023 completed 86 inspections with 2 FTTFS Inspections can be initial, routine, for cause, or a follow up. *first year after COVID being able to complete full year of inspection with no issues

State Update Report

Georgia Department of Agriculture

5.) State Rule Making Georgia Department of Agriculture

Status Update

2019 Georgia 40-7-20- Produce Safety Regulations states we adopted the Produce Safety Rule by reference. State regulations also grants us (GDA) Right of Entry, meaning free access during all hours of operation to any farm, mixed-type facility, warehouse, or establishment in which produce is grown, harvested, packed, or held for introduction into commerce, and any vehicle used to transport, or hold produce to commerce for the purposes of inspection, reinspection, examining applicable records of compliance with 40-7-20. Fresh sprout processing facilities must have a food sales establishment license.

6.) Farm Visits Georgia Department of Agriculture

Status Update

Farm visits are a key aspect of our program’s relationship building with our state growers and shareholders. GDA inspectional staff conduct farm visits in multiple capacities: educational, inventory verification, new farm inventory, etc-these are typically unannounced. If the farm hasn’t met their inspector, a face-to-face introductory visit between the inspector and the farm is usually scheduled prior to inspection. GDA education/outreach staff will conduct OFRRS, and provide assistance as needed-these types of visits are scheduled. Inspectors also conduct Exemption Verification Visits. These are scheduled and consist of a sanitation check, examination of records, and a copy of the sales record is collected. A report is completed, discussed, and signed by inspector and farmer. The farm receives a copy of the report. During 2020-2023 we conducted 58 exemption verification visits.

State Update Report

Georgia Department of Agriculture

A. Metrics of quantitative success:

Number of trainings provided?	48 PSA Trainings 2 State in person Water Systems Workshops
Number of growers reached?	Approximately 1200 farmers
Number of packers reached?	0
Development of materials	Promotional Items-stress ball, cutting board, vegetable scrubber, ink pen, note pad, hand sanitizer, magnets, rain gauge CFR pocket guide Georgia Produce Program Presentations Currently working toward online portal for farm registration
Publication	Re-print of Bilingual Produce Safety Worker Training Flipcharts, Produce Safety Program Brochure, OFRR resource manual, Water System resource manual
Presentations given at educational event	Southeast Regional Fruit and Vegetable Convention, Commodity group meetings for peaches, onions, green beans, blueberries, strawberries, watermelon, citrus UGA Extension production meetings Other types of events include farm field days, roundtable discussions, statewide training within agency, sunbelt ag expo, GA national fair

State Update Report

Kentucky Department of Agriculture

Program Area	Responsible Party
1.) CAP Project Designation <u>Status Update</u>	Kentucky Department of Agriculture The KDA is responsible for the CAP Project Designation and Implementation throughout Kentucky.
2.) PSA Grower Training <u>Status Update</u>	University of Kentucky Extension PSA Grower Trainings have been scheduled and taught by our counterparts with University of Kentucky Extension. Two KDA team members are currently PSA Trainer certified to teach modules at trainings. 54 trainings have been conducted to over 900 growers since 2018.
3.) OFRR <u>Status Update</u>	Kentucky Department of Agriculture & UK Extension Kentucky has completed over 30 OFRRs to date. These are conducted by a member of the KDA Produce Safety team and a member of UK Extension. OFRRs are often offered to micro exempt farms that do not meet the requirements of an inspection yet, as well as covered growers who have not yet received an initial inspection.
4.) Inspection <u>Status Update</u>	Kentucky Department of Agriculture We have completed a total of 145 inspections. Our primary target for 2024 is very small farms that have not yet received an initial inspection. We have conducted some farm re-inspections and they have gone well. The most frequent issues frequently involve pre & post harvest sanitation practices and the documentation of employee training.

State Update Report

Kentucky Department of Agriculture

5.) State Rule Making Kentucky Department of Agriculture

Status Update

In the KY Spring 2020 General Session, Kentucky adopted the Produce Safety Rule by reference. KDA's Produce Safety Statute, KRS 260.765-772 became effective July 15th, 2020 giving KDA full state authority. KDA also filed a Produce Safety Regulation (302 KAR 60.010), effective beginning January 2021. These two rules provide the KDA Produce Safety Program with a sound regulatory foundation for continuing to conduct regulatory inspections under full state authority

6.) Other Kentucky Department of Agriculture

Status Update

Various outreach events have been held or attended since the beginning of the program, this includes Farm Visits, Attending and Speaking at Conferences, Listening Sessions with Growers, Meetings with Extension Agents, Attending and Speaking at Field Days, Phone Calls and Emails with Growers.

A. Metrics of quantitative success:

Number of trainings provided? 54

Number of growers reached? 900 growers

Development of materials We have developed several materials to help educate our growers on different parts of the Rule. These include a Farmer's Market Fact Sheet on FSMA, Qualified Exemption Applications, educational brochures, GAP/FSMA Differences and more. We have also created several methods of collecting farm inventory data in the form of Survey cards, an online portal, and handouts that explain how the PSR relates to KY farmers.

State Update Report

Kentucky Department of Agriculture

Publication

We have worked with UK Extension to publish several educational materials that pertain to Produce Safety that can be easily accessed on the UK Center for Crop Diversification page. Our Education and Outreach Coordinator has worked with UK Ag Communications to develop posters on toilet use, handwashing and U-pick guidance.

Presentations given at educational event

Our team has given presentations at a wide array of educational events including: Kentucky Fruit & Vegetable Conference, Organic Association of Kentucky Conference, Regional and Local Farmers Market Vendor Meetings, UK Ag Water Quality Field Day, Kentucky Women in Agriculture, Farm Bureau Meetings, Produce Auctions, and more. Over the course of our program's existence we would estimate approximately 60 presentations at educational events, not counting impromptu opportunities to speak with growers.

State Update Report

Louisiana Department of Agriculture

Program Area	Responsible Party
<p>1.) CAP Project Designation</p> <p><u>Status Update</u></p>	<p>The Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry (LDAF)</p> <p>The Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry (LDAF) is the grantee for our state with subawards for Louisiana State University Agricultural Center and Southern University Agricultural Research & Extension Center.</p>
<p>2.) PSA Grower Training</p> <p><u>Status Update</u></p>	<p>Extension</p> <p>Louisiana has 2 lead trainers – One of these trainers is associated with the CAP grant (one at LSU). The other trainer is associated with NGOs in the state. Southern University and LSU take the lead on hosting trainings around the state. LDAF provides support for these trainings and LDAF staff also serve as trainers. We aim to host at a minimum of 2 trainings ever year around the state.</p>
<p>3.) OFRR</p> <p><u>Status Update</u></p>	<p>The Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry (LDAF)</p> <p>LDAF takes the lead on coordinating OFRRs. OFRRs are conducted by a combination of staff from LDAF and the two universities depending on availability. LDAF has completed 4 OFRRs since 2020. We are working with our communications department to develop marketing for promoting OFRRs.</p>
<p>4.) Inspection</p> <p><u>Status Update</u></p>	<p>The Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry (LDAF)</p> <p>LDAF has 1 inspector and a Program Manager that both conduct inspections in the state. The inspectors along with the Program Manager have attended mandatory training through FDA. LDAF also has a training curriculum established to ensure that inspectors are continuously educated. Louisiana has completed 21 inspections in total since 2020.</p>

State Update Report

Louisiana Department of Agriculture

5.) State Rule Making

The Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry (LDAF)

Status Update

The Louisiana legislature passed legislation in 2017 giving LDAF authority to conduct produce safety inspections in the state. We are working with our legal team to update the water rule as it becomes finalized.

6.) Farm Visits

Extension

Status Update

Louisiana State University takes the lead on farm educational visits. These visits educate the growers on good agricultural practices. They educate on differences between the Produce Safety Rule and GAP and what they will need for each inspection.



State Update Report

Louisiana Department of Agriculture

A. Metrics of quantitative success:

Number of trainings provided?

PSA Grower trainings: 10
Composting workshops- 2
OFRR- 4
Farmers Market Food Safety workshop: 8
LFVGS Field Day: 4

Number of growers reached?

An estimated over 700 growers have been trained in person with over 100,000 individuals reached through social media pages. Outreach events include field days, vendor meetings at farmers markets, civic association meetings, the Louisiana Ag Expo, the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation annual meeting, the Louisiana Farm to School Conference, the Louisiana Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association meeting, the Louisiana Small Farmers Conference and Louisiana Women in Ag conference.

Number of packers reached?

Since most of the farms in Louisiana are small or family owned they pack their own produce.

Development of materials

LSU and Southern University have developed several fact sheets for stakeholders on various topics related to the Produce Safety Rule. Topics covered include wash water and produce safety, service animals and produce farms, a guide to food grade sanitizers, a comparison document on the Produce Safety Rule and Good Agricultural Practices, water sampling techniques, post-harvest sanitation, and handling and storage of produce. In addition several videos on Pre-post harvest food safety, composting, water sampling, and farmers market food safety were prepared and posted at LSU AgCenter web page

State Update Report

Louisiana Department of Agriculture

Publication

Over 30 magazine or extension publications have resulted from the work done by the team in Louisiana. These publications have been on various topics related to produce safety and the work being done as a result of this grant program.

Presentations given at educational events

Louisiana Farm to School: Meet the Buyer, Meet the Grower, Warner Hall Field Day, Louisiana Women in Ag



State Update Report

Mississippi Department of Agriculture

Program Area	Responsible Party
1.) CAP Project Designation <u>Status Update</u>	Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce Under the cooperative agreement Mississippi Department of Agriculture & Commerce is a Path C State. MDAC has a subaward with MSU Extension to assist with education and outreach efforts across the state.
2.) PSA Grower Training <u>Status Update</u>	Outreach Coordinator / MSU Since the program started the MDAC Produce Safety Division has done 43 PSA Grower Trainings since the program began. In 2023/2024 we have conducted 6.
3.) OFRR <u>Status Update</u>	Outreach Coordinator / MSU We have done a total of 17 OFRRs, 15 in 2021 and 2 in 2022. There were none conducted in 2023 and we have non planned for 2024 but they will be offered to any new farms prior to starting their inspections.
4.) Inspection <u>Status Update</u>	Inspection Supervisor / Inspector MDAC Produce Safety Division has conducted 77 inspections across the state. Our goal is to conduct 30 inspections in 2024.
5.) State Rule Making <u>Status Update</u>	State Legislature We have adopted the rule by reference into state law.
6.) Farm Visits <u>Status Update</u>	PSR Team The PSR team has conducted approximately 158 farm visits in the last couple of years. These visits do not include inspections or OFRRS.

State Update Report

Mississippi Department of Agriculture

A. Metrics of quantitative success:

Number of trainings provided?	44 total trainings/workshops
Number of growers reached?	Mississippi has reached 623 growers through PSA Grower Trainings/workshops
Number of packers reached?	N/A
Publication	9
Presentations given at educational event	38 various presentations since 2021

Other information you would like to share?

1. MSU was one of the first to deliver PSA grower courses (June 2017 w ASU, Okolona; Sept. 2017, Stoneville)
2. MSU was one of the first to deliver remote (virtual) PSA courses during COVID
3. MSU has hosted or organized (with other states) six TTT courses with over 100 total attendees.
4. MSU has trained about 60 extension/university agents and has three Lead Trainers (including one ToT). Also have a cadre of ~8 active PSA Trainers from a total of ~24 PSA trainers to date
5. MSU developed online modules for the Cleaning and Sanitation Workshop. Hosted an inperson activities (2nd part) of the Cleaning and Sanitation Workshop. This effort was done in conjunction with Alabama Ag & Industry Department and MDAC

State Update Report

North Carolina Department of Agriculture

Program Area	Responsible Party
<p>1.) CAP Project Designation</p> <p><u>Status Update</u></p>	<p>North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Produce Safety Program</p> <p>Path C, regulatory band 7, education and inventory band 3.</p> <p>NCDA&CS Produce Safety Program has a Produce Safety Outreach, Educational, and Technical Assistance Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with NC State Extension.</p>
<p>2.) PSA Grower Training</p> <p><u>Status Update</u></p>	<p>NC State Extension and NCDA&CS Produce Safety Program</p> <p>NC State Extension works to schedule and train at PSA Grower Training Courses, while NCDA&CS Produce Safety Program provides the manuals and also trains at the PSA courses. 65 PSA courses have been held through the end of 2023. 881 attendees have completed the PSA course in NC, which to our calculations is approximately 437 farms.</p>
<p>3.) OFRR</p> <p><u>Status Update</u></p>	<p>NCDA&CS Produce Safety Program and NC State Extension</p> <p>NCDA&CS Produce Safety Program and NC State Extension promote OFRRs to all produce farms. NCDA&CS Produce Safety Program schedules the OFRRs and provides the manuals. Both agencies participate in the OFRRs. 54 OFRRs have been conducted through the end of 2023.</p>
<p>4.) Inspection</p> <p><u>Status Update</u></p>	<p>NCDA&CS Produce Safety Program</p> <p>124 regulatory produce farm inspections have been conducted through the end of 2023 in North Carolina.</p>
<p>5.) State Rule Making</p> <p><u>Status Update</u></p>	<p>NCDA&CS Produce Safety Program</p> <p>NCDA&CS Produce Safety Program adopted the Produce Safety Rule as written in 2018.</p>

State Update Report

North Carolina Department of Agriculture

6.) Farm Visits NCDA&CS Produce Safety Program and NC State Extension

Status Update Technical assistance and outreach can be conducted individually by NCDA&CS Produce Safety Program, individually by NC State Extension, or jointly with both agencies. 467 farms have received on farm technical assistance and 247 farms have received remote/virtual technical assistance through the end of 2023.

7.) Verified Farms NCDA&CS Produce Safety Program and NC State Extension

Status Update Through the end of 2023, NCDA&CS Produce Safety Program has verified 105 Large, 54 Small, 60 Very Small, 233 Not Covered Due to Size, and 120 Qualified Exempt produce farms.

A. Metrics of quantitative success:

Number of trainings provided? Between July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023 NCDA&CS Produce Safety Program collaborated with the FDA CFSAN PSN and NC State Extension to host two of FDA’s Joint Cleaning and Sanitizing Workshops. The first on March 16, 2023 in Clinton, NC and the second on March 22, 2023 in Mills River, NC

Number of growers reached? 1,714 outreach attempts have been made through the end of 2023.

Number of packers reached? N/A

Development of Materials Educational Needs Assessments (ENAs) have been developed and approved for the development of: Water Systems Workshop content, Cleaning and Sanitation Workshop content, a Produce Safety On Your Farm booklet, a variety of PowerPoint presentation slides, and a set of supplemental resources/handouts to accompany live presentations.

State Update Report

North Carolina Department of Agriculture

Publication	NCDA&CS Produce Safety Program: https://www.ncagr.gov/divisions/food-drug-protection-division/food-program/fdpd-food-program-produce NC State Extension: https://ncfreshproducesafety.ces.ncsu.edu/
Presentations given at educational event	NCDA&CS Produce Safety Program conducted 11 exhibit booths and 5 presentations. Exhibit booth tables were conducted at: Apple Field Day, Tomato Field Day, Mountain Research Station Field Day, NC Commercial Blackberry and Raspberry Growers Association Field Day, NC State Fair, 2022 Southeast Strawberry Expo, 2022 Southeast Vegetable and Fruit Expo, Southern Farm Show, NC Agritourism Farm Tour and Conference, NC Winter Vegetable Conference, and NC Watermelon Association Convention. Presentations were conducted at: Oyster Mushroom Workshop, 2022 Southeast Vegetable and Fruit Expo, Wegman’s Grower Meeting, Farm School on Wheels: Native American (Lumbee Tribe) Business of Farming Farm2Fork Webinar Series, and Farm School on Wheels: Business of Farming in the East. Through the Produce Safety Outreach, Educational, and Technical Assistance Memorandum of Agreement with NC State Extension, they conducted 29 presentations. Presentations by NC State Extension were conducted at: Food Safety for Muscadine Growers, Produce Safety Practices at the NC Farmworker Summit for the Mountains, Apple Field Day, Tomato Field Day, Strawberry Preplant Meeting, Small Farms Field Day, NC Commercial Blackberry and Raspberry Growers Association Field Day, NC Greenhouse Growers Association Meeting, NC Irrigation Society Annual Meeting, NE NC Niche Ag Conference, SE Vegetable and Fruit Expo, Apple Growers Meeting, Blue Ridge Apple Growers Meeting, Farmers Food Hub, (continued)

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North Carolina Department of Agriculture

Presentations given at educational event Small Scale Produce Farms, Farms, Brushy Mountain Apple School, NC Blackberry and Raspberry Growers Association, NCSU Executive Farm Management Program, NC Winter Vegetable Conference, National Watermelon Conference, Wegman's Grower Meeting, Buncombe County Small Farms Series, Small Farms Meeting, NC A&T Small Farms Week, 4 presentations at a Food Safety for Small Farms series, and a PSR Update for Spanish Speakers.

B. Do you have any specific anecdotes/stories that you'd like to share? Please include quotes, if possible, from growers/producers since this is helpful in engaging others with your work.

C. Other information you would like to share?

Between July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023 NCDA&CS Produce Safety conducted two sets of analysis to identify Produce Safety Rule knowledge gaps amongst our produce growers in North Carolina. The first was a 'Produce Safety Training Needs Survey' distributed to growers to help us determine North Carolina's produce growers' felt educational needs. When asked to select all that apply, the top 6 highest felt needs by fresh fruit and vegetable growers in NC at this time include: 1) training provided on the topic of managers' and farm supervisors' responsibilities under the Produce Safety Rule (43/55 respondents); 2) training materials, such as posters and videos, for harvesters, packing line workers, and those working directly with produce (36/55 respondents); 3) understanding and implementing water risk assessments on water used during the growing season (34/55 respondents); 4) addressing contamination from wildlife and domestic animals in produce fields (33/55 respondents); 5) general Produce Safety Rule overview for farmworkers, harvest practices and techniques to reduce the likelihood of contamination when field packing (32/55 respondents); and 6) how to implement a cleaning and sanitation program in your farm and packinghouse (32/55 respondents). The second set of analysis looked at the inspection summary and observation form data from all of the Produce Farm Inspections conducted in North Carolina to date to determine the top 5 discussion points with North Carolina produce growers and what citation of the Produce Safety Rule the discussion surrounded.(continued)

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C. Other information you would like to share?

The top 5 discussion points with North Carolina produce growers were about citation: 1) Subpart L, 112.123: What general requirements apply regarding equipment and tools subject to this subpart?; 2) Subpart K, 112.113: How must I handle harvested covered produce during covered activities?; 3) Subpart L, 112.140: Under this subpart, what requirements apply regarding records?; 4) Subpart L, 112.130: What requirements apply for hand-washing facilities?; and 5) Subpart C, 112.30: Under this subpart, what requirements apply regarding records?.

Also, during the past year, NCDA&CS Produce Safety Program has seen immense success with easily scheduling inspections due to the positive relationships the Program has built with influential produce farmers in the state. We are happy to report that we are building our name as a reputable resource for produce farmers to utilize to learn more about the Produce Safety Rule and farms are seeking produce farm inspections. With ample educational opportunities, farms feel prepared for inspections, and we are hearing positive feedback from the produce community here in North Carolina about Produce Safety Rule implementation. Additionally, through our continued commitment to hosting exhibit booths, conducting outreach attempts, and providing presentations at a variety of grower events and gatherings in NC we have seen terrific benefits in building connections with the produce growing community in NC. We have made connections with growers and learned about farms being sold, changing ownership, and siblings/children expanding the business to start their own farm which has helped us stay up to date with our inventory.

State Update Report

Oklahoma Department of Agriculture

Program Area	Responsible Party
1.) CAP Project Designation <u>Status Update</u>	Ag Department Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry Awarded competition A/B
2.) PSA Grower Training <u>Status Update</u>	Ag or Extension Oklahoma State University Overall class rating of 4.8/5
3.) OFRR <u>Status Update</u>	ODAFF and OSU Farms that have been audited (GAP or Primus) are much more ready for inspection than those that have not had any audits.
4.) Inspection <u>Status Update</u>	ODAFF We have completed 2 inspections. The common deficiency has been a lack of signatures proving that management reviewed records.
5.) State Rule Making <u>Status Update</u>	ODAFF Rules were adopted in 2017. State authority was given to ODAFF in 2014.
6.) Farm Visits <u>Status Update</u>	ODAFF and OSU
A. Metrics of quantitative success:	
Number of trainings provided?	50
Number of growers reached?	660

State Update Report

Oklahoma Department of Agriculture

Number of packers reached? unknown

Development of materials

Publication

Presentations given at educational event Each year we are asked to give presentations at a half dozen events. These are typically events for farmers markets and local agriculture. In the last year we worked with Langston University to provide produce safety trainings in conjunction with their market gardening course and aquaponics workshop. Additionally we have presented about produce safety and the law at a Beginning Farmers Conference and a Farmer Veteran Coalition meeting. These two meetings were hosted by OSU Extension, USDA-NRCS, and USDA-FSA. Other educational presentations we gave were at three events for small farms and farmers market vendors. These educational workshops/presentations reached an estimated 478 people.

B. Do you have any specific anecdotes/stories that you'd like to share? Please include quotes, if possible, from growers/producers since this is helpful in engaging others with your work.

In the last fiscal year we conducted a total of 17 outreach activities at various events. Some examples are the Adair County Strawberry Growers Meeting, four Oklahoma Local Agriculture Collaborative Workshops, OSU Pecan Field Day, Women in Agriculture Conference, farmers market meetings, Oklahoma Local Agriculture Summit, and Langston Sustainable Small Farming Conference. At each of these events we either made a short presentation about the produce safety rule or had an informational booth at the event. The estimated number of attendees at these events is 1780. At these events we distribute our farm inventory postcard, produce safety rule brochure, and our new "Bringing Farm to Market" booklets that were developed and printed with specialty crop block grant funds. Additionally we visited 96 farmers markets/Hubs/Stores, visiting with an estimated 284 farmers. We have also sent out five e-mail newsletters to share produce safety information, remind of farms to renew their registration, and to advertise our PSA classes which goes out to about 550 contacts.

State Update Report

South Carolina Department of Agriculture

Program Area	Responsible Party
<p>1.) CAP Project Designation</p> <p><u>Status Update</u></p>	<p>South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA)</p>
<p>2.) PSA Grower Training</p> <p><u>Status Update</u></p>	<p>South Carolina is a Path C state. We currently have 1290 farms in our inventory with 177 of those being covered by the Produce Safety Rule</p> <p>SCDA, Clemson Ext, Carolina Farm Stewardship Association</p> <p>To date, we have hosted 37 PSA grower trainings. We have trained a total of 538 individuals. SCDA has a lead trainer on staff and hosts the trainings with assistance from our partners at Clemson University Extension and Carolina Farm Stewardship Association. We host a mixture of both in-person and remote trainings.</p>
<p>3.) OFRR</p> <p><u>Status Update</u></p>	<p>SCDA</p> <p>We have completed a total of 19 OFRRs. All farms are given an opportunity to have an OFRR completed prior to their initial inspection. The OFRRs are completed by our Outreach staff.</p>



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South Carolina Department of Agriculture

4.) Inspection	SCDA
<u>Status Update</u>	We conduct inspections at a rate of 20% covered farms annually. Our program is on track to complete all initial inspections by 2026. We have completed a total of 87 inspections so far.
5.) State Rule Making	SCDA
<u>Status Update</u>	We have state authority for the enforcement of the Produce Safety Rule through the South Carolina Produce Safety Act which was passed in May 2017.
6.) Other	SCDA
<u>Status Update</u>	During the off-season, we conduct farm visits to verify farms that have been unresponsive. These visits are to inform the farms of the Produce Safety Rule, to determine their coverage under the Produce Safety Rule, and to gather the necessary verification data points.

A. Metrics of quantitative success:

Number of trainings provided?	37 PSA trainings conducted – 23 in-person, 14 remote 538 individuals trained
Number of growers reached?	
Number of packers reached?	
Development of materials	Coverage Brochure Compliance Dates Flyer Grower Training Flyer Produce Safety Resource Guide Water Labs in SC Worker Training Resources for Farmers Produce Safety Resource Flash Drive
Publication	SC Market Bulletin, SCDA News Press Releases Grown in SC Magazine, Fruit Growers News

State Update Report

South Carolina Department of Agriculture

Presentations given at educational event

130 events attended including: SE Regional F&V Conference, SC Farm Bureau, Commodity Field Days, Commodity board meetings, Certified SC Grown Showcase, Pre-Season Clemson Extension meetings, GAP workshops, among many more.



State Update Report

South Carolina Department of Agriculture

B. Do you have any specific anecdotes/stories that you'd like to share? Please include quotes, if possible, from growers/producers since this is helpful in engaging others with your work.

C. Other information you would like to share?

Some other work and achievements we have found helpful throughout the implementation of the produce safety rule in our state:

- Writing and developing a Produce Safety Resource Guide. It is a 68-page booklet that has streamlined our previous resources into one handout. It makes it easier for growers to make sure they get all the information they need when talking with us at outreach events.
- Developing an exemption application process. We have been using our exemption application process since we developed it in 2017. We continue to improve the process to meet the needs of our program, but also make it easier for our growers. Since implementation we have created an online portal for growers to apply and have recently converted the program to be a 3-year cycle instead of growers having to apply annually.
- Annual on-farm training for all employees. In early spring each year, we schedule a day for our whole team to go on farm and review best practices, hold mock inspections (for new employees), review stop sale and other enforcement procedures, and plan for the upcoming inspection season.
- Grower testimony video. This video can be found on our website, www.scproucesafety.com. We interviewed one of our growers and got his testimony on his experience with OFRRs and inspections.
- Participated in writing the Produce Regulatory Program Standards. Being a part of the standard sub-committee for Standard 2 and 8 was a great experience that helped further our knowledge and increase our connections with other professionals in our industry.
- Involvement with the AFDO Produce Safety Committee. Being involved with both AFDO and AFDOSS has been a tremendous resource and has greatly helped our team grow, learn, and make connections.
- Involvement with NASDA workgroups. Being involved with NASDA workgroups throughout the years has given us a chance to help shape the produce safety program implementation and connect with other states.

State Update Report

Tennessee Department of Agriculture

Program Area	Responsible Party
1.) CAP Project Designation	Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA)
<u>Status Update</u>	Tennessee is a Path B state that conducts PS Inspections under FDA authority. We have a subaward in place with University of Tennessee, Institute of Agriculture (UTIA) to help with outreach and education.
2.) PSA Grower Training	TBA and University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture (UTIA)
<u>Status Update</u>	Tennessee has conducted 12 PSA grower trainings and have 3 planned in the current fiscal year. UTIA hosts and organizes these trainings with the Produce Safety Team teaching some of the modules. We have two options for training: 1) In person training (1 day/8 hours) and 2) Virtual (2 day/4hours each day). Some virtual trainings are joint with Virginia Tech also.
3.) OFRR	TDA/UTIA
<u>Status Update</u>	TDA has completed 12 OFRR. Majority of OFRRs are conducted with both a PS Inspector and UTIA Personnel or an Extension Agent. Farmers are able to request for OFRR through calling or emailing TDA. We also offer OFRR for farms who are scheduled to have their initial inspection.
4.) Inspection	TDA
<u>Status Update</u>	TDA has completed 10 inspections for this CAP year. We are scheduled to complete our minimum goal before the end of June. Since Tennessee is a Path B state, our inspections are conducted under FDA authority.
5.) State Rule Making	TDA Legal Staff
<u>Status Update</u>	TDA has not pursued any changes to the adoption of the PSR since program started.
6.) Farm Visits	TDA
<u>Status Update</u>	Tennessee has done 25 farm visits that is outside of an OFRR.

State Update Report

Tennessee Department of Agriculture

A. Metrics of quantitative success:

Number of trainings provided?	Tennessee has provided 12 PSA Growers Training for this CAP. These trainings were either done in person or virtual.
Number of growers reached?	A total of 160 participants completed the PSA training. The participants were a mixed group comprising of farmers, food safety managers, office employees, extension agents and regulators. We estimate that 76 farms are represented in this number for training.
Number of packers reached?	0
Development of materials	Posters, Produce Safety trifold “Tennessee’s Produce Safety Program”, Bi-lingual booklet “Best Basic Practices for Growing, Harvesting and Handling Produce in the Field and the Packinghouse
Publication	TDA has not produced any publications at this time.
Presentations given at educational event	Farmers Market Managers Meeting, Farmers Market Vendor Meetings, Fruit and Vegetable Association Conferences, Beginning Farmers School.

B. Do you have any specific anecdotes/stories that you’d like to share? Please include quotes, if possible, from growers/producers since this is helpful in engaging others with your work.

C. Other information you would like to share?

Our Education before Regulation approach to Produce Safety Inspections seem to resonate well with farmers. We have been told in several occasions that after getting over the “inspection anxiety”, they actually enjoyed the inspection and learned things.

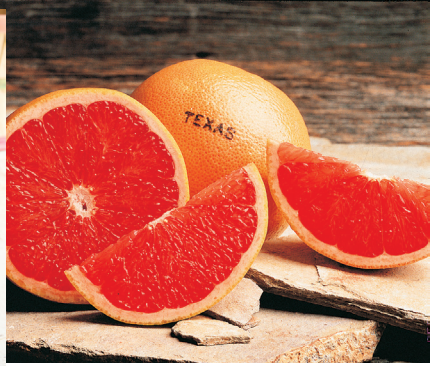
State Update Report

Texas Department of Agriculture

Program Area	Responsible Party
1.) PSA Grower Training <u>Status Update</u>	Texas Department of Agriculture Office of Produce Safety (TOPS) Through outreach and inspection activities, TOPS staff determine PSA Grower training needs and schedule training as needed. Currently, training is done remotely/virtually continuously; TOPS works with Texas AgriLife Extension for registration, course presentation, and distribution of materials. TOPS Produce Safety Outreach Specialists are trained PSA trainers (2 in Spanish) and conduct Module 1.
2.) OFRR <u>Status Update</u>	TOPS; A.K.A.: On-farm Consultations On-farm consultations are offered to every farm covered by the PSR. Can be “Limited” or “Full scope” activities, depending on the needs of the farm. Only available by request and to farms that do not have an “open” case file. Farms participating in on-farm consultation will be placed on a lower priority schedule for the harvesting season.
3.) Inspection <u>Status Update</u>	TOPS Conducting inspections of 20% of covered farm inventory annually: initial, routine, and follow-ups.
4.) State Rule Making <u>Status Update</u>	TOPS Complete
5.) Verification and Validation <u>Status Update</u>	TOPS TOPS continues to verify and validate the status of all farms growing covered produce.
6.) Rapid Response Team <u>Status Update</u>	TOPS TOPS works very closely with the Texas Rapid Response Team for all outbreaks that include produce.

State Update Report

Texas Department of Agriculture



State Update Report

Texas Department of Agriculture

A. Metrics of quantitative success:

Number of trainings provided? 37 PSA Grower trainings + 3 Train the trainer = 40 total

Number of growers reached? 79 TTT course participants (3 courses) and 662 GR course participants (37 courses) as of the September Training data pull.

Note that the 662 participants are not all growers. There are many consultants, extension, regulators, etc. that take the GT course. It's also not 662 farms since some farms send more than one person to training. Our records indicate that we have reached 1070 growers through farm visits and phone calls.

Development of materials Posters, Clipboards, flashlights, Produce Safety Trifold, "What to Expect with an On-Farm Consultation" Trifold, "What to Expect with an Assessment" Trifold

Publication AG Mag, Texas Farm Bureau, Texas International Produce Association

Presentations given at educational event Farmers Market Conferences, Different Agriculture conferences, Fruit Growers Conferences, Battle Ground to Breaking Ground, Department of Labor Conference

B. Do you have any specific anecdotes/stories that you'd like to share? Please include quotes, if possible, from growers/producers since this is helpful in engaging others with your work.

We had a grower who stated that our On-Farm Consultation and required corrective actions helped prepare them for their Third-Party Audit.

Growers participating in our On-Farm Consultations regularly comment on how helpful the visit was how it helps them improve produce safety and minimize the risks.

State Update Report

Virginia Department of Agriculture

Program Area	Responsible Party
1.) CAP Project Designation <u>Status Update</u>	VDACS Path C, Regulatory Band 7, Education Band 4
2.) PSA Grower Training <u>Status Update</u>	Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) Trainings are coordinated by Virginia Cooperative Extension through a grant sub-award and MOU. VDACS employees have completed the PSA train-the-trainer course and try to assist with teaching course modules during in-person classes. VCE has moved to a mostly virtual PSA course offering. There are currently: One PSA Trainer of Trainers (TOT) from Virginia Tech; Two PSA Lead Trainers (includes the TOT) from Virginia Tech; 23 PSA Trainers from Virginia Tech/Virginia Cooperative Extension; Three PSA Trainers from VDACS. This has been a successful collaboration for everyone involved. A total of 43 PSA Grower Trainings (1070 participants) have been held to date.
3.) OFRR <u>Status Update</u>	Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) A total of 65 OFRRs have been completed. VDACS began regulatory inspections for very-small covered farms on May 1, 2021 and the entire OFRR program was then turned over to VCE. While VDACS conducts regulatory inspections, Virginia Tech extension can conduct OFRRs on farms that have not yet been inspected or new farms that are now growing covered produce or considering growing covered produce. Funding for OFRRs has been added to the grant sub-award and MOU with VCE.
4.) Inspection	VDACS

State Update Report

Virginia Department of Agriculture

Status Update

A total of 114 inspections were completed in YR2. This is broken down into 52 large farms, 29 small farms, and 33 very small farms. We had 2 full-time inspectors in YR2 and a 3rd inspector was hired on. A productivity target of 55 inspections per person has been set for annual evaluation purposes. We have exceeded the FDA minimum 20% target set forth in Objective 5 of the FOA. We also partner with FDA and conduct joint sprout inspections.

5.) State Rule Making

VDACS

Status Update

Legislation was introduced in 2017 after a jurisdictional self-assessment revealed that our Program did not have clear regulatory authority on the state level to enforce the Produce Safety Rule through the current Virginia Food Laws. Senate Bill No. 1195 was introduced to the 2017 General Assembly and would amend the Code of Virginia by adding to Title 3.2 a chapter numbered 51.1, consisting of 6 sections numbered 3.2-5146 through 3.2-5156, relating to produce safety. Specifically, SB1195 prohibits certain farms from violating the federal regulations that set minimum standards for the safe growing, harvesting, packing, and holding of fruits and vegetables. The bill authorizes the Board of Agriculture and Consumer Services to adopt regulations to carry out the purposes of the law and gives the Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services free access at reasonable hours to certain farms to inspect the farms and take samples. The Commissioner or his/her agents are also authorized to seize certain produce if determined to be grown, kept, or exposed for sale or held in violation of federal regulations or state law, and the bill provides a court process by which the seizure may be contested. The Bill was signed by the Governor on March 16, 2017 and became law effective July 1, 2017. Please see Code of Virginia, Title 3.2, Chapter 51.1 Produce Safety §3.2-5146 through §3.2-5156.

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Virginia Department of Agriculture

6.) Farm Visits

VDACS

Status Update

A total of 312 visits were completed in YR2. These visits were to determine coverage or exemption under the PSR and to verify farm inventory numbers.

7.) Covered Farms

VDACS

Status Update

212 total (55 large, 47 small, 110 very small)
126 QE
577 micro exempt

8.) Staff

VDACS

Status Update

1 Program Supervisor/PI and 3 Inspectors

A. Metrics of quantitative success:

In FY 2023, the VDACS Produce Safety Program (PSP) also:

Continued to build and focus on the internal produce farm inventory database and verification of existing farm data. FDA announced in June 2021 that farm data would be used to justify future federal funding grant amounts. Prior to this, the 2012 USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) data was used to determine federal funding for the PSP. Farm inventory is the core of the PSP and used to determine the number of inspections required by FDA, the frequency of these inspections, staffing levels, and inspector territory assignments. This has also been the most difficult aspect of implementing the PSP since its inception in September 2016 as the farming industry is very dynamic based on fluid market conditions, commodity demand in the marketplace, drought, crop rotation and soil conditions, and other economic and political factors. Thus, farm inventories are expected to change on a continual basis. There are currently 212 covered produce farms identified that require inspection (which includes large, small, and very small farms) with another 841 that have been identified as exempt from the Produce Safety Rule or qualified exempt. The exempt farms will be exempt from inspection, but still must comply with other components of the federal Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and the Virginia Food and Drink Law, as overseen by VDACS. The PSP is well above the 2017 NASS estimates in the small farm category (47 on file vs 35 estimated by the NASS data) and large covered farm category (55 on file vs 50 estimated by the NASS data). There is still work to do in the very

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Virginia Department of Agriculture

small farm category (110 on file vs 418 estimated by the NASS data), which is to be expected as those farms are smaller in acreage and much harder to identify. Very small farms are those that generate between \$25,000 and \$250,000 in annual gross produce sales. The very small farms formally came under inspection on May 1, 2021. The PSP has taken numerous different approaches to try and identify all covered farms in the state of Virginia, including working with the VDACS Division of Commodity Services and Division of Marketing (VA Grown Program) and VCE agents throughout the state. Staff has contacted and met with farmers' market managers, visited farmers' markets in operation, reviewed the VA Grown shipper's directory and USDA GAP audit database, and performed territory surveillance/visits and Google searches by county and industry. In August 2021, the 2018 Dun & Bradstreet/ US Farm survey data set for Virginia was merged with the PSP farm database, which added 4,885 new farms with possible produce sales (both covered and non-covered commodities, row crops, pulse crops, etc.). Inspectors have been working to verify farm data in their respective areas. There are still 2,932 active farms in the database where more information is needed to see if these farms are still in business and covered by the FSMA Produce Safety Rule. In FY 2023, administrative staff sent 2,742 informational letters to clients with only a P.O. Box listed in the farm survey, 502 responses were received and 183 letters were returned as undeliverable.

In July of 2022, the PSP launched a brand new voluntary farm registration and exemption application online portal. This web-based portal was designed using \$54,800 in federal grant funding from a no-cost extension received from the FDA in May 2021. Farms currently in the database are able to update their farm registration information and farm demographics and print a newly implemented certificate of registration. This certificate also features the newly designed VA Grown logo, and farm registration information is shared with the VA Grown Program to mutually benefit both the regulatory and marketing/promotions functions of the agency. The certificates can be used by produce farmers to gain entry into new retail marketplaces, farmers' markets, and food service establishments. VDACS anticipates that this partnership will have a positive impact on sales of local produce as well as promote the regulatory partnership and future information sharing capabilities between farmers and government. Additionally, the second aspect of this portal is an exemption application. Produce farms are also able to apply for one of several exemptions that are available under the FSMA Produce Safety Rule. Exemption certificates

State Update Report

Virginia Department of Agriculture

are issued by the system and are valid for a period of one year before the farmer will have to log back in to reapply for an exemption. A total of 117 online farm registrations and 141 online farm exemption applications were reviewed and approved in FY2023.

Worked with VCE via an existing Memorandum of Agreement to continue to conduct Produce Safety Alliance grower training courses. Five courses were held virtually in FY 2023, with a total of 134 people in attendance. This has been a successful collaboration for everyone involved. Attendees at the courses have been a mix of farm owners, farm managers, farm food safety supervisors, food safety and produce government regulators, and retail industry food safety personnel. In May 2021, the on-farm readiness review (OFRR) educational program was turned over to VCE as VDACS entered the full regulatory phase for covered farms. In FY 2023, Virginia Tech reported completing a total of ten OFRRs.

Continued to participate in various produce industry organizations and programs to provide education and outreach. Examples include the VFBF Apple and Specialty Crops Advisory Committee, VA Biological Farming Conference, and National Association of State Departments of Agriculture Produce Safety Program Consortium. Additional outreach has been conducted at multiple local farmer's market meetings and regional grower meetings. The PSP participated in a total of 32 industry related events in FY2023.

