***Southern Center for FSMA Training***

***Semi-Annual Check-In Meeting Minutes***

Sunday July 27th, 2025 / 8:30am-12:00 PM (EDT)  
Huntington Convention Center of Cleveland, Room: 304

1. **SC/LRCC Updates:**

Keith Schneider

* USDA FSOP Program:

Dr. Pascale Jean appointed new leader of the USDA FSOP program, overseeing all FSMA regional centers, along with Colin Edwards as Program Specialist.

Dr. Jodi Williams moved into Director role of the Nutrition Division.

FSOP program seems to be moving positively towards working with RFPs opportunities and programmatic continuation.

* LRCC FSOP NPD Meeting 2025/ Webinars 2026

The USDA FSOP National Program Directors meeting was held in May 2025 successfully. Next in-person event is expected to be scheduled in 2027.

A new FSOP webinar is planned for 2026.

* SC Project Round Funds Transition:

Round Four funding transition completed as of August 31, 2025, with Round Three officially ended.

* Any outstanding invoices related to round 3 need to be submitted ASAP.
* Any funds left, or salary, bills, indirect travel- money should be spent. Balances should be Zero.

No-cost extension is likely for Round Four funding based on grant overruns.

1. **SC/ LRCC Evaluation Update:**

* SC Evaluation Update:

Southern Region Center FSMA numbers- Grant 4.0, Year 1 (Sept. 1, 2024 – July 26, 2025) were presented by partner states (\*Texas data given corrected and added below).

* Alabama (1 PSA), Arkansas (3 PSAs), Florida (1 PCQI + 10 PSAs), Kentucky (5 PSAs), Louisiana (1 PCQI + 4 PSAs), North Carolina (5 PSAs), South Carolina (1 PSA), Tennessee (1 PSA). Texas (1 PSA).
* All partners to revise training activity records where SC funds were used and send unsubmitted FSMA data before the end of year (Aug. 31) to be counted in final E.O.Y report – to be out in Sept.
* Data from FSMA training period 2021-2024 where SC funds were not used, but Cap money was used instead, and a partner collaborated with, could be sent to be aggregated in.
* Other produce safety trainings could be aggregated.
* A close-out report per year of the current round is planned.
* All these efforts justify the program aids in congress.
* Training Evaluation System:

An evaluation team from all regions is working on a new evaluation tool that will launch in September 2025. It will replace the current pre/post tests, focusing on intent to adopt new practices for PSA training.

Pre/Post evaluation tool format going away in September.

Partner’s collaboration required to review -pilot new tool and report back data, and id possible barriers and challenges.

1. **SC Partners Updates**

* **UF- Taylor O’Bannon:**

The following trainings had been done for the current reporting period since Jan.9th, 2025:

* 7 PSA Grower Trainings: 3 remote, 3 in-person (Eng.), 1 remote (Spanish). 71 participants trained in PSA, so far. Lots of retakers due to the recent changes to water module- subpart E.
* Spanish language PSA Grower training available. Contact Peggy Geren (SC) if interested in training or partnering as instructor. Training collab with other states available.
* A few Pre-Harvest webinars were done. Helped get the word out on Subpart E changes and brought questions on topic and discussion.
* Two remote Packinghouse HACCP Trainings.
* One Juice HACCP TTT in June 2025.

Future training plans and collaborations include:

* One Packinghouse HACP training remote, run by UGA, and another one remote, coming in Dec, which will be run by Virginia Tech.
* One Food Safety Supervisor training to be held in November (In-person), to help support food safety supervisors in FL state.
* **UGA- Laurel Dunn:**
* Five PSA Grower training courses have been done since December 2025- four in-person, one virtual format.
* One training course included H2A workers.
* Training collab done with GA Dept. of Ag. Agency lost their education arm for 2026.
* One Preventive Controls course done in Athens, GA.
* **Auburn- Janet Johnson/ Camila Rodriguez:**
* Two PSA courses were done that involved repeated participants due to the water info updates.
* One Water & Sanitation workshop was cancelled due to bad weather (snow).
* Sub-contract in place with ADAI for educational resource for FSMA training- Christy Smith will function as lead trainer.
* Collaboration with Janice Hall’s FSOP grant project before it ended- “empowering farmers” in local Farmers Markets, where they received tents, coolers, and education. It was a successful farmer’s market kickoff.
* **NCSU**:

**Lynette Johnston**:

During the current period, the following produce safety efforts have been made or are scheduled:

* One PCQI’s V.2.0 (in-person) course was done in May, another one in virtual format planned for August 2025.
* Combining the virtual and in-person training formats have worked in providing good participation numbers overall.
* Frontline Food Safety course- training program developed out of PCQI supportive training request from different companies, aimed at their frontline groups and processors- requests channeled through Dept. of Ag. Efforts are made also through environmental monitoring- lots of questions are received regarding it.
* A few FSOP project collaborations active:
* One project in NC state: efforts aimed to build on educational capacity of Extension agents to help meet the needs of local food initiatives, entrepreneurs, and local processors.
* A Food Safety School course is scheduled for September. At the Innovation Lab location.
* A traceability project collab with Ellen Shumaker and Ben Chapmans team to develop education program aiming food retailers.

**Chip Simmons:**

* Nine PSA Growers training courses have been done, so far.
* Five OFRR completed.
* Four Pre-Harvest Water Rule 3-hr workshop developed with the help of NCDA, that included the rules’ aspects, science components related to risk assessment on farm and possible related scenarios.

Effort has been positive and has generated lots of questions and discussion between growers.

* **V. Tech- Alexis Hamilton:**
* Five PSA Grower courses have been held since January, in partnership with the University of Tennessee.
* 180 participants helped, so far.
* Three remote Water- subpart E webinars in collaboration with the local Dept. of Ag. Each presentation lasted 1hr., with 30 min dedicated to Q&A.

Some future educational plans include:

* Planning PCQI courses as a blended virtual format offering soon.
* Produce safety educational resources available through VT’s produce safety page, YouTube channel and social media platforms.
* A Traceability course scheduled for Aug. 2025- registration opens Aug.15th – teaching basic concepts.
* A remote Packinghouse HACCP course is planned for December- registration opening soon.
* **University of KY- Paul Priyesh:**
* Seven PSA Grower training has been done since July 2024.
* About 107 participants served.
* An increased number of Amish and Mennonite growers present in the North KY area and more participation observed.
* Kentucky milestone: Reached 1,000 grower mark with 400 Amish participants.
* Some outreach challenges present with Amish and Mennonite growers related to the Water rule updates and other educational updates- difficulty on taking long hr. training. Online training is not an option.
* KY Team needs collaboration from partners in tackling and best serving the Amish community educational needs.
* One PC workshop was held in March- 15 participants, mostly students.
* Solicitating collaboration from SC partners to plan C&S workshops and Packinghouse HACCP course (remotely).

* **Mississippi State- Angelica Abdalah**
* Five PSA Grower courses done in English-language, in collaboration with Auburn State University- 44 growers served (29 farms represented).
* One PSA Spanish-language collaboration done with FL and GA.
* One in-person Water System Assessment workshop was given for Extension agents to help educate growers.
* Some Farmer Markets Produce Safety workshops were held- 25 participants served.
* **LSU- Achyut Adhikari**
* Held three PSA Grower Trainings, in collaboration with the Dept. of AG. - two courses for the Western Chemicals company, and one for 40 growers that had no prior training experience or were not reached by any other produce safety institution before. The results were positive.
* The training structure is fir the PSA training last 1 ½ day, following by a GAP training the next day.
* There are plans and funding available to provide FREE water testing tools, Handwash station and C&S kits.
* Farm workers training is available in Spanish and English languages- are customized and provided per audience’s demand. Training duration adjusted to the grower’s needs- 3 to 3 ½ hrs. duration.
* Three Produce Safety courses for La Farmers Market’s vendors, complying with state laws.
* New faculty member on board: Dr. Shannon Coleman is a Food Safety Specialist/ associate professor at LSU.
* **U. Arkansas- Amanda Perez**
* Four PSA Grower training courses have been performed since this year’s reporting period- 48 growers served.
* State farm inventory increased- Dept. of Ag. Is working diligently on pursuing that task.
* Twelve OFRR done.
* Three short- Produce Washing workshops were held.
* A Vegetable post-harvest training was offered during the annual conference.
* An informative session for a panel of RFSI Infrastructure Project grantees- funds available, not distributed yet; 9 applicants, 40 equipment projects. Grant period got shortened.
* Visited a Blackberry IQF organic production. Farm facility built with no prior (PS) experience. Educational support needed.
* Education on the On- Farm, food manufacturing and small-farm technical support are being offered - lots of new manufacturing facilities have been shown in the area.
* One Spanish- language worker’s training offered.
* A Spanish-language for workers training and UAP for Gaps project for specialty crop grant application was done without success. Will try to pursuit again.
* A food manufacturing and Preservation workshop series for the summer was initiated, in partnership with county FCS agents. The first workshop was done successfully, another one coming up. on –
* One county agent training on sanitizers and pH was done.
* The Farmers Market food safety game project from Kristin Gibson was tested. Provided feedback and technical assistance regarding the game structure.
* Raw milk bill passed in this state.
* **OK State University- Ravi Rajeda:**
* 4 PSA trainings done since the new period. Some of the factors for bringing people into PSA training are:
* There is a mayor demand for training, required by recent regulations in place.
* Several local laws around selling food as a prescription (produce as a prescription).
* A group GAP initiative has been organized- 28 farms are participating, so far, besides some struggles to get funding in place to cover the training initiative.
* New law for local produce purchasing in schools. Part of the condition to sell in schools is PSA training.
* Food-freedom training is also being offered.
* **Texas A & M- Alex Castillo:**
* Five PSA workshops have been done since last summer, in conjunction with Texas Dept. of Ag.
* One PCQI internal for Texas A&M students and staff (free of charge).
* **Texas Tech- Angela Shaw:**
* Four PSA Grower courses were given since August of 2024. Six additional training courses are being planned in virtual format (due to state size and other limitations).
* An ongoing initiative includes the development of 50-minute lecture curriculum for horticulture courses across multiple disciplines.
* Lectures available include fruit/veg courses, Horticulture courses, hydroponics & aquaponics courses, with a produce safety base. Also, an option of 1–2-hour lab sections are available for anyone interested.
* A Controlled Environmental Ag. curriculum available, currently at a pilot stage- lab based, includes lectures and activities.
* Storytelling course for produce safety influencers.
* A “Beyond the Farm” program initiative- targeting and empowering audiences that include Hispanic and other students coming directly from produce and cattle farms.
* Program partnering with K-12 programs to help students learn about produce and cattle related work. A Greenhouse and a slaughter facility are available, where the K-12 students are learning these processes before leaving school with a produce safety approach.
* Inspection/auditor courses being offered - aiming to develop more inspector and auditor jobs and to fulfill state demand. Courses and internships (Dept. of Health) available for training undergrads from produce safety and animal sciences to become state or local inspectors and auditors -to help with job placement.
* Produce Safety University curriculum for school nutrition specialists is being reviewed and updated.
* **Clemson University- Chad Carter (Written report):**
* Two remote PSA grower training courses were held in March and May, in collaboration with the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association. Forty-three participants received the course certificate. Another PSA course scheduled for August.
* Out-of -State participation in demand- course price was raised to $125.
* Only offering remote (Zoom) training format, three times a year.
* Two half-days, 4hrs/day.
* Dr. Subash Shrestha- new director appointed to the Center for Food Safety and Health, South Carolina State 1890 Extension.
* Initial conversation done for invitation to collaborate with the SC Extension on Produce Safety Rule and PSA Grower trainings.
* A few presentations on Produce Safety Regulations were offered to several groups, including the Clemson Extension New and Beginning Farmers Program (October and June), Trident Technical College's Sustainable Agriculture Course (November), Clemson Extension Food2 Market Program (November) and at the Certified South Carolina Showcase (March).
* Invited to represent the SC/LRCC, and shared the southeast regional center updates at the Western Regional Center to Enhance Food Safety Training Annual Meeting at Biosphere 2, Oracle, AZ.
* Ongoing technical support and assistance is provided to growers on a one-on-one basis.

**\* The SC offers opportunities to sponsor partners on representing the center and sharing presentations and center updates at any produce safety or regulatory agencies’ events or FSMA training center events.**

**Any of the SC partners interested should contact Dr. Keith Schneider or Dr. Michelle Danyluk and inquire for any opportunities available.**

* **CFSA- Sarah Runkel (Written report):**
* The Diversified Farm FSMA Training Initiative continues to progress.
* Pilot training was held for farmers at the Center for Land-Based Learning in Woodland, CA.
* Training material adapted from the original FSMA curriculum, with edits to maintain language consistency and a friendly approach and includes more small-farms examples.
* Nine farmers and two PS educators attended the training.
* Mixed feedback received regarding training length, material delivery:
* “Just right, too long, too short.”
* “Delivery modality, structure, examples, and activities enhance engagement.”
* “Add an extra day to slow the pace and include a few more interactive activities too.”
* Other work completed since our last update:
* Developed a training pre- and post-test evaluation tool to measure change in knowledge and intent to change behavior.
* Completed the copy editing of the training materials and responded to all FDA comments. Submitted the complete curriculum to the FDA review team for a final review.
* Held two farmer training courses in North Carolina: One at Guilford College Farm and one at CFSA’s Emma C. Lomax Research and Demonstration Farm. Six farmers attended each course.
* Developed a train-the-trainer manual, finalized the instructional plans for all activities, and created an outline for the train-the-trainer process.
* Held a pilot train-the-trainer event in July with eight participants, including Department of Agriculture staff, Extension Agents, and other small farm educators.
* Continued to develop a management plan for the curriculum.
* Some future actions are:
* To share the Diversified small farm-friendly training with produce safety educators and farmers.
* Final review from FDA for the FDA for technical accuracy and meeting the PSR critical learning objectives still waiting to be completed.
* This course will be considered an equivalent training course that meets the requirements of the PSR.
* The FSOP grant funding for this project ends in August 2025- the project collaborators are applying for additional funding to keep this project going.
* Expect to be able to hold more farmer’s training and Train-the-Trainer trainings in select regions around the country in 2026.

1. **FSOP Updates:**

* **Armitra Jackson**- Development of Produce Safety Educational Material for Small Beginning Underrepresented and Underserved Farmers.
* One project’s goal is to train students so they can develop materials for underrepresented farmers. After materials are developed, they go through review and will go to the Food Safety Clearinghouse.
* Students were trained in the Produce Safety Course and participated in the focus group.
* Student associated with FSOP project, present at SC meeting: Laurel and Philip:

P: Surveys and questionnaires were developed based on farmers’ needs. Data obtained was analyzed, and educational materials were developed based on those results.

* Materials are presented and revised by an Advisory Board group, where Shannon Colemans is part of.
* **Angela Walla**- Empowering Minority Serving Institutions Food Safety Specialists to Write Successful Food Safety Outreach Program Grants through Education, Training and Technical Assistance.
* The Grant writing project group was on during the summertime and will continue during the fall 2025.
* Shannon Coleman led the summer writing group session (6-week duration).
* For fall session registration or questions reach out to Shannon Coleman.
* Project’s focus on helping write and submit more quality grants out.
* Program and training open for anyone- universities & commodity groups.
* Program offers workshops or webinars on grant reviews and grant pitches.
* Program group offered a workshop at an Ag conference on how to write grants with a high-impact focus.
* The program worked with a group called Acres in Louisiana state, learning focused on how to do a research plan, have measurable outcomes, etc.
* **Laurel Dunn**- Managing Water Well: Enhancing Water Quality to Foster Food Entrepreneurship and Farm Food Safety.
* Project focus: well water and septic/sewer tank management.
* Communities being on well that are dug out (20-30 feet**),** resulting in illness caused by surface water.
* Lot of entrepreneurship potential here in the blackbelt region- focus based on importance of having clean water for any commercial kitchen project or larger scale business.
* Project phase is at year 1-based on pre-existing curriculum from UGA.
* Materials and videos were created and in need of be adapted to a more cohesive curriculum.
* Partnered with Tocco group on their video/media images library resource and collaborate.
* **Camila Rodriguez**- Developing an Engaging Produce Safety Add-On Training for Soilless Growing Operations.
* A developing curriculum for CEA- collaboration within Auburn, UGA, and Alabama A&M.
* Project development delayed a bit due to recent changes with Ag. water.
* Collab with NECAFS about development of related list of definitions/ terms.
* Hosted a course for students and educators.
* Developed A Needs assessment for curriculum development- it has been peer reviewed (curriculum).
* Curriculum focus shifted - Identifying risks and implementing mitigation measures.
* **Lynette Johnston**- Leveraging Partnerships Among North Carolina Extension Programs to Build Food Safety Educational Capacity and Expand Industry Accessibility to Resources.
* Project focus: building educational capacity across the NC state and divided on different tasks each year.
* No food science agent in area- Extension horticulture & FCS agents getting lots of food science/processing questions from entrepreneurs.
* Outcome- put the food science department on the map and their contact info available for all NC counties.
* Year one: Webinar series developed to help local food organizations and agents get organized and know resources available- which are the regulating agencies or who to call with any product initiative.
* Year two: NC State Extension portal- videos n and factsheets available.
* Year three: series of workshops for same previous audience served and industry – working with agents/initiative members to build the educational capacity.
* **Alexis Hamilton**- Equipping Small Processors to Thrive in Larger Markets: A Hybrid Approach to Support Training Efficacy.
* Food safety school- basic processor course to help them get ready for scale up. Prep for preventive controls.
* VT partnered with NCSU, UGA, and U. Arkansas.
* First course thought in AK in June. Getting ready to do first ones in VA and GA in the coming months.
* V. tech looking to have this course to replace PCHF training for small producer requirement in the state.
* Request to expand curriculum to northeast and north central regions.
* TTT food safety-hygiene webinar likely to happen in Jan/Feb next year and continue to spread material across other states.
* **Shannon Coleman**- 2 FSOP Projects:
* Project 1: Addressing Produce Safety Educational Needs for Non-English-Speaking Produce Growers in the Midwest (Iowa State University).
* Two videos developed in 5 languages (poly, Kurumi, Burmese, Swahili, and English).
* Four posters developed in 5 languages (mentioned above).
* Collaborated with SAWBO (Scientific Animation Without Borders/ https://sawbo-animations.org)- several produce and dairy videos available on their site.
* Project 2: ITIPS: Interactive Tools to Improve Practice of Food Safety
* iTIPs: Interactive game developed (iTIPs food safety.org).
* Game format extended to long form in online platform, with a NMSU collab, to develop lectures and the interactive game.
* Will try to do a pilot before the grant ends in the next few months at the Food Innovation Center-LSU and 2 other shared kitchens at NMSU.
* Request for produce safety colleagues to test project and provide feedback.
* **Kranti Yemmireddy**- Closing GAPs- Food Safety Education and Outreach to Underserved Communities in LRGV.
* Project ends this year.
* Serve local produce growers – lot of Hispanic growers in South Texas area.
* More than 10 training workshops were done, and more than 200 growers served.
* One Gap webinar for 8 growers.
* Last 6 months- reaching out to attendees and collecting behavior change data (20% response rate). External evaluator working on data (pre/post) and evaluating data to get a manuscript.
* Working with growers to develop farm food safety plans and help them go for GAP certifications.
* Texas legislative has changed some of their cottage food laws to expand products covered- the Food Freedom Act.
* Working towards training these new processors to implement food safety practices.
* **Carla Shwan**- An integrated approach to developing Extension outreach curricula for home food preservation, retail food safety, and cottage foods: A Food Safety Extension Network Effort
* Project collaboration between SC, NC, Fort Valley, and UGA.
* Three committee areas – Home preservation, Retail, Food Safety and Cottage Foods. Materials were developed for all areas.
* Developing hybrid TTT in these areas with extension specialists (target audience).
* Home food preservation curriculum was piloted in June with UGA, Fort Valley. 18 people trained. Troubleshoot the delivery method and other things to improve. Curriculum is being revised.
* Three more sessions will pilot: September with the Oregon State University collab, January with LSU, and SC in summer 2026.
* Retail will co- piloted in GA in September, in Oregon in December, another scheduled in VA and SC.
* Home business- curriculum finished this month (July). Training to be scheduled for next fall.
* Project is expected to wrap up by the next summer.

**\*FSOP grant projects- PIs can report training results to the SC evaluation team- Dr. Matt Benge**

1. **Other Partner Updates:**

* **Yulie Meneses (Produce Safety Alliance):**
* Project Funding ends in August. Not sure what happens for next year.
* Priority for this year is v2 of PSA curriculum. 1st V.2 drafts tentatively scheduled for August. FDA reviewing- not sure how long it will take to be completed.
* Lot of efforts have been on subpart E Agricultural Water changes.
* Some funds were allocated for international training and mentoring, and to help maintain functionality of the Lead Training Application process on website.
* For v2 initiative- provided survey early in the year, to request feedback from trainers on the curriculum updates.
* Second round of reviews for subject matter experts and trainers. Now incorporating those comments into the materials.
* Expect to get draft to FDA in first weeks in August.
* Depending on funding and plans, the program will create focus groups on the new training curriculum.
* Translations are also planned and have inclusiveness on the curriculum for Amish groups and other audiences.
* Some of the outreach efforts for the subpart E include:
* updating files and P. points for training
* updating templates for ag water assessment- feedback requested.
* 16 webinars (half English and half Spanish on subpart E) were delivered. Webinars can be taken individually.as needed.

- Learnings from webinars- lots of people did not know about the changes (this included inspectors as well).

* Have an on-demand video (1hr. duration) that serves as training certification. Participant- trainers need to request a link and filling form.
* Food Safety Fellow Program (FSOP project)- targeting developing new trainers in all states.
* Some states do not have active trainers. Need to Identify leaders in underserved communities to be trained under a three-tier program: PSA training, TTT and Advanced PSA.
* All costs are covered.
* Collab with UF, Alabama A&M and TAMU to help recruit.
* Project is in Year 1 phase.
* First Advanced training scheduled for October in Texas, and the second training in will be held in Prosser, WA next year.
* Changes in PSA team:
* Rob White (website/IT) retired this month. A new person is working in this area.
* A new Evaluation manager- some delays on training evaluations.
* **Dr. Jason Wan (FSPCA**):
* FSPCA v2.0
* As of June 30- v1.2 is retired- cannot teach this version of the course anymore. V2 is live.
* As of July 1- refreshed 1,000 v1.2 Lead instructors on v2.0.
* Have conducted 2 Lead Instructor courses for 2.0 (April and June).
* Trained 30 additional trainers through these efforts.
* Good feedback received on new approaches of hazard Analysis to be consistent with FDA thinking, and changes to supply chain area. In addition, good feedback was received on consistency on the 7 principles of HACCP.
* Next 2.0 Lead-instructor course scheduled for early September (2nd-5th)- session is full.
* Next class will be Nov/December.
* 2026 courses are being thought about (dates forthcoming).
* V2 Spanish language version has been completed and is available on website.
* Translation is of manual/slides/teaching example (fettuccini marinara).
* PCQI Blended course launched as well. Part 1 – asynchronous. Part 2 – instructor led.
* Collaboration from NCSU on webinar and developing part 1 & 2 course slides.
* The Webinar was held on June 18th, 2025.
* Food Traceability:
* The curriculum is completed.
* The pilot was held in June with 24 industry participants.
* Lot of comments from industry and faculty members. Working on implementing edits.
* Completing the final version for FDA’s review in the next few weeks.
* Scheduling the TTT course (combo course- participant course and LI course) in November.
* planning to have the combo course after the FSPCA annual conference.
* LI application portal for full Traceability course is now open.
* Traceability Symposium session will be held at IAFP- 8:30am- 10:00am- FDA presentation & talks.
* FSPCA Annual Conference: Nov.18-19, 2025, Rockville, MD
* Participation from panelists from the FSMA regional centers at last year’s annual meeting was appreciated.
* This year’s meeting is expected to have a similar session.
* The session serves as an opportunity to hear program needs from FSMA regional centers, and from Extension community. Participation is needed.

1. SC final reminders:

* SC partners traveling on SC funds, submit invoices related to IAFP travel, along with a short statement confirming travel related to grant project, to ease fast processing and payment.

Meeting adjourns: 11:00am