



Vermont Tree Fruit
Growers Association, Inc.



USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) TRAINING FOR COMMERCIAL PRODUCE FARMERS

Recent outbreaks of food borne illnesses in fruits and vegetables have brought food safety on produce farms to the forefront of consumer consciousness. In response, some chain supermarkets and other buyers are requiring farms undergo a USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) Audit to certify that they are following food safety practices. This workshop is for commercial growers who want to learn more about how the USDA GAP program works and what is included in an audit. If you are interested in becoming GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) certified for wholesale markets, it will help you evaluate your facilities and practices to prepare for a GAPs audit.

Attendees to the morning session will learn about pathogens associated with fresh produce, strategies for reducing food safety risks in all steps of production, and how to meet the requirements of a USDA GAPs Audit. Attendees to the afternoon session will leave with a draft of a food safety plan for their farm. Growers can attend just the morning session or both the morning session and the afternoon session depending on their needs.

All attendees will receive:

- A manual filled with GAP resources
- A CD loaded with templates needed to maintain USDA GAP records that you can tailor for your operation

8:30 – 12:00 Morning Session

- Overview of food borne-pathogens and food safety issues
- Overview of pending federal regulations, marketing trends and future prospects in food safety
- Review of the most common on-farm food safety challenges and best practices
- Review of the GAP Audit Checklist

12:00 – 1:00 Lunch (provided)

1:00 – 4:00 Afternoon Session:

- Working from a template, growers will draft a farm food safety plan tailored for their operation.
- The Vermont GAPs Auditor and Extension educators will be available to answer questions.
- Growers attending the afternoon session will be asked to fill out a one-page evaluation of your operation prior to the workshop to make the most efficient use of your time.

Instructor: Rich Bonanno, Ph.D., UMass Extension Educator with UMass GAP project. Rich Bonanno is an Extension Educator with UMass Extension and is a co-Principal Investigator on the UMass GAP project. He is also responsible for weed management in vegetable and small fruit crops. Rich currently serves as president of the Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation and is a past-president of the New England Vegetable & Berry Grower's Association. Rich owns and operates Pleasant Valley Gardens in Methuen, MA, where he raises vegetables and flowers on 50 acres.

Additional service providers will be on hand to answer questions: Vern Grubinger, Ph.D., UVM Extension and Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers; Dave Rogers, Northeast Organic Farming Association-Vermont Policy Advisor; Ginger Nickerson, UVM Extension Center for Sustainable Agriculture GAPs Outreach Coordinator; Hans Estrin, UVM Extension Local Food Network Coordinator; Steve Justis, Vermont Tree Fruit Growers Association. Steve Parise, VT Agency of Agriculture USDA GAPs Auditor, will be on hand to help answer questions.

Sponsored by: [University of Vermont Extension](#), [UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture](#), [Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont \(NOFA-Vermont\)](#), and the Vermont Tree Fruit Growers Association. Additional support provided by the [Vermont Agency of Agriculture](#) specialty crops program.

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Questions? [Ginger Nickerson](#), UVM-Extension Center for Sustainable Agriculture, 802-656-5490, or [Dave Rogers](#), NOFA Vermont, 802- 434-4122

REGISTRATION FORM for USDA GAPs WORKSHOP for COMMERCIAL PRODUCE GROWERS

Please indicate which session you are registering for:

November 8

Hampton Inn, Colchester, VT
42 Lower Mountain View Drive
Colchester, VT 05446

December 10

Fairfield Inn, White River Junction, VT
102 Ballardvale Drive
White River Junction, VT 05001

Registration Due: October 25

Registration Due: November 26

Meeting Cost: You are encouraged to bring a second person from your farm. The registration fee is \$30 for the first registrant and an additional \$10 for additional registrants from each farm. Registration fees cover lunch and refreshments for both attendees, and educational materials (manual and CD) for one farm.

Name: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Email: _____

Amount: _____

Amount: _____

Vegetarian

Vegetarian

Total Included: \$_____ for a total of _____ registrants

Laptop: We will be able to provide a limited number of laptops for participants in the afternoon session. Please check one:

____ I will need a laptop

____ I will bring a laptop

Please make checks payable to NOFA Vermont and return this form with your payment to:

NOFA Vermont – GAPs Workshop
PO Box 697
Richmond, VT 05477

We will send registration confirmation and directions to the workshops via e-mail. **Please indicate if you need to receive registration confirmation via regular mail:** ____ I prefer confirmation via regular mail.