State Produce Program Design

Integrating State Market Access Produce Safety Programs with the Produce Safety Rule
Maryland GAP Program
Maryland Department of Agriculture, University of Maryland, and University of Maryland Extension Partnership

Massachusetts CQP Program
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources and the University of Massachusetts Agricultural Extension Service
Program Foundations

• Maryland and Massachusetts similar to other states in the Region
  • Short growing season
  • Small farm size
  • Wide variety of produce grown on same farm
    • Very few producers of one crop
    • Close to major urban markets

• Buy Local movement created increased retailer demand for produce from smaller farms in MA and MD
  • Buyers required GAP certification

• 2008 – MDA, MDAR recognized many barriers for growers trying to obtain GAP certification
  • Cost of private and USDA compliance audits
  • Cost of implementing food safety practices
  • Difficulty of writing a food safety plan
  • Infrastructure upgrade requirements

• 2010 Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)
Partnerships with Agricultural Extension

• UMD/UME-MDAR/UMASS
  • Annual basic GAP/GHP and advanced GAP/GHP training
  • Consumer Education Programs
  • Dedicated GAPS Educator Position
    • One-on-one assistance to farmers with food safety plans
    • Environmental Sampling on farms
  • Research related to Produce Safety
  • Presentations on GAP/GHP at grower meetings
  • Coordinate with MDA, MDAR on GAP certification requirements
  • Coordinate with MDA, MDAR on FSMA Produce rule requirements
  • Publish Guidance Documents on specific food safety issues related to produce
Maryland GAP Program – MDA, UMD and UME Partnership

- Maryland Department of Agriculture
  - Fund a dedicated GAPS Educator Position at UMD
  - Conduct USDA and USDA Harmonized GAP Audits
    - Cost share of Audit Fees (First $400 and 75% of amount over $400)
  - MDA GAP Certified Program
    - Update requirements for certification
    - MDA Auditors conduct inspections to verify compliance with program requirements
    - Provide feedback for growers that want to obtain USDA or USDA Harmonized GAP Certification
    - Issue Certificates of Compliance to Growers
    - Provides a stepping-stone for growers to build a food safety program
    - Prepare for FSMA Produce Rule Compliance
Massachusetts CQP Program – MDAR, UMASS Extension Partnership

• Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
  • Farm Food Safety Educator Position at UMASS Extension
  • Conduct USDA and USDA Harmonized GAP Audits
    • Cost share of Audit Fees
  • MDAR GAP Commonwealth Quality Program
    • Implement and maintain program requirements for certification
    • MDAR/UMASS conducts on farm readiness reviews (pre-audits) and provides technical assistance
    • MDAR-CQP Auditors conduct inspections to verify compliance with program requirements
    • Issue Certificates of Compliance and Audit Reports to Growers
  • Deploy grant support for Infrastructure and equipment upgrades (AFSIIP) specific to Farm food safety.
  • Incorporates environmental standards (IPM, soil and water conservation, nutrient management, reduced applications)
Market Access Support-Buyer Outreach

• **MDA/MDAR**
  • Meet with Wholesale buyers (Retail and Foodservice Buyers) to encourage acceptance of MDA GAP certification
  • Maintain working relationships with buyers
  • Develop and extend market channel diversification for growers
  • Provide funding for Consumer Education Materials used at Farm Stands, Farmer’s Markets
  • Provide Laboratory Analysis of environmental samples collected by UMD
    • Used to determine the effectiveness of GAP/GHP practices
Ongoing Program Support

• Continue to conduct trainings, incorporating information about the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)
  • FDA Approved Produce Safety Alliance Training (Produce Safety Rule)
  • State level

• Continue to work directly with growers to provide technical assistance, deploy grant support and write and implement a food safety plan

• Continue to support and expand the MDA/MDAR State Produce Programs
  • MDA/MDAR – Outreach, Inventory, Inspection and Enforcement
  • UMD/UME/MDAR/UMASS – Provide training and technical assistance to growers
Integrating State Produce Safety Programs with the Produce Safety Rule

• Implement and Deploy a State Produce Safety Program (FDA Cooperative Agreement)
  • Statutory authority at the State level incorporating the Produce Safety Rule in its entirety.
  • Conduct rule writing for program deployment and operational support under the statute.

• Update State Farm Food Safety Program requirements to integrate FSMA Produce Safety Rule with GAPs

• Support all farms including those that fall into FSMA Produce Rule Qualified Exemption or Exempt categories
Integrating State Produce Safety Programs with the Produce Safety Rule

• Assist all farms, independent of scale with FSMA Produce Rule Compliance through education, technical assistance and grant support.

• Provide support for small farms that fall into FSMA Produce Rule Qualified Exemption or Exempt categories.

• Continue to provide broad market access.

• Evaluate the use of Alternative Practices and Variances (NECAFS???)

• Evaluate, support and integrate best practices from States in the region and nationwide with an aim at consistency (NASDA)
State Produce Program Design

Integrating Market Access Produce Safety Programs with the Produce Safety Rule