

# State Produce Program Design

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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



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# Massachusetts CQP Program

Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources and the University of Massachusetts Agricultural Extension Service



# Program Foundations

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- 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

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- 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

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- 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

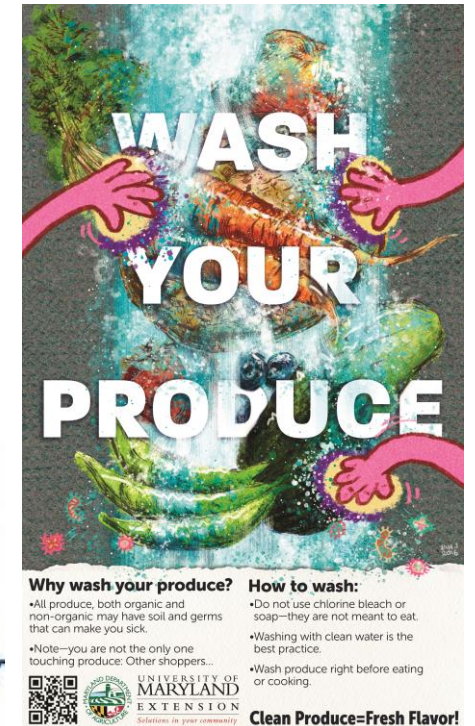
- Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
  - Farm Food Safety Educator Position at UMASS Extension
  - Conduct USDA and USDA Harmonized GAP Audits
    - Cost share of Audit Fees
  - MDAR GAP Commonwealth Quality Program
    - Implement and maintain program requirements for certification
    - 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

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- 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

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- 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

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- 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)

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