



# 2019 NECAFS Annual Conference Notes

Albany, New York, 02/04/19 through 02/06/19

## Day 1, Monday, Feb 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Evening welcome reception.

## Day 2, Tuesday, Feb. 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019

8:30am: Welcome and Plenary Session

The annual meeting began at 8:30 am, with an introduction and plenary session. The goal of this meeting is to provide a platform for **enhancing produce safety and preventive controls training, education, & outreach among small and medium sized farms and small processors in the Northeast** (the goal of NECAFS), by opening up conversation and collaboration between regulators, academia, and producers. Through this, best practices and common challenges can be shared, which allows for the consolidation of efforts to work on the gaps that are identified, and the solutions that can be found. **The objectives of NECAFS and of the conference were as follows:**

1. Establish foundational network structure
2. Build capacity, competency & collaboration
3. Develop and deliver educational programs
4. Evaluate & assess progress and impact
5. Sustain good work.

Also highlighted were some of the successes NECAFS has had since it began in January 2015 as NE-PHRESH, which was a small group discussion (funded by a NEED/NERA grant) to focus on postharvest research and needs. Some highlights of the successes include:

- Improved Regional Communication - The e-newsletter, which has grown from 19 subscribers to 433
- The NECAFS Clearinghouse (a database that houses produce safety and preventive controls resources), which has 6,847 page views
- Hosting 14 webinars, with 938 attendees and 1,205 contact hours
- 3 years of extended funding through USDA NIFA, FSOP, which runs from August 2018-August 2021 to continue to build regional capacity and facilitate conversations and collaborations
- Training support stipend program (TSSP) has produced 41 trainers and 13 events

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## Day 1, Tuesday, Feb. 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019

10:30am: State and Regional Project Updates

### State by State Review

- Connecticut
  - Collaborated with MA and RI for buyer outreach through educational programs
  - PSA trainings attended by most exempt growers
- Delaware
  - Working with growers to convert poultry houses
  - FDA commissioned study of Biological Soil Amendments of Animal Origin (BSAAOs)
- Maine
  - Creating new collaborative network with other in-state groups
  - 87% PCQI participants plan to start plan within 6 months. Follow-up showed that 60% started within 6 months of attending training
- Maryland
  - Increased focus on water testing labs
  - Recordkeeping sheets developed
  - Held GAP workshops with pre/post knowledge testing, 38 farmers documented change in sanitation knowledge
- Massachusetts
  - Created master list of farms to aid in farm registration, inspectors working to give growers overview on rules
  - Produce and processing safety collaborations with many other states
- New Hampshire
  - Tracked behavior change from different programming, including sanitizers and record keeping
  - NHDAMF expanding outreach efforts quickly, including on-farm readiness request (OFRR) form, and produce safety meetings
- New Jersey
  - Created a model for OFRR's, conducted over 75, implemented pre/post review, showed knowledge gain
- New York
  - 1,104 manufacturers received resources on FSMA
  - Inspection program is being updated to include PC and PS
- Pennsylvania
  - Created educational toolbox to distribute at OFRRs
  - \$45k saved by growers with reduced training costs
  - Gave unique PSR training to Amish and other plain sect growers

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- Rhode Island
  - Developed educational toolbox and handouts for OFRR's, including PSR exemption calculator
  - Created multilingual resources
- Vermont
  - Awarded \$74k in produce safety improvement grants, including a grant for testing surface and ground water on produce farms
  - Helped transition farms into PSR compliance
- West Virginia
  - Grant for improving fruit drying practices
  - SPGP funding leveraged into additional work, seeing increase in new farmers passing audits connected to outreach throughout the state on the PSR.
- **In 2018, the NECAFS region supported the delivery of a total of 503 trainings for PC and PSR, reaching 4,291 participants.**

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