



Ed LaClaire, NSF Davis Fresh, discusses harvest bin sanitation with mock audit participants.

Fresh Produce Safety Portal

Fresh produce safety resources are featured on a portal at www.ncmarketready.org. Recent additions include:

- [GAPs Growers Directory](#), a searchable database of GAPs-trained growers.
- [Good Agricultural Practices — Fresh Produce Safety Plan for Field Practices Template](#), a guide for growers to develop their own food safety program and plans.
- [Recall and Traceability](#), a pilot on traceability measures at different sized fresh produce operations in North Carolina. The section also includes recent traceability seminar presentations and videos.
- [Diane's Blog](#), quick updates and breaking news.

BOOKMARK IT!

Resources for You!

One-stop-shop information portals for growers, fresh produce safety materials, value-added cost share program, business toolkits, enterprise budgets, marketing handbooks, production guides, The Produce Lady and more.

www.ncmarketready.org
www.theproducelady.org



www.ncmarketready.org

A Program of NC Cooperative Extension

Mock Farm Audits Are Training Tools

Mock farm audits are an educational tool N.C. Cooperative Extension is using to train growers and educators about Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and the requirements to become GAPs certified. In August, Extension, in cooperation with the N.C. Fresh Produce Safety Task Force and the Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS), invited North Carolina growers and educators to an educational GAPs third-party audit and risk assessment. The assessment was conducted by NSF Davis Fresh at CEFS in Goldsboro. NSF Davis Fresh is one of several companies that audits growers for GAPs certification. The training was directed toward small farms and was designed to help participants better understand how GAPs certification can affect small farm operations, market opportunities and consumer confidence regarding fresh produce. NSF Davis Fresh



Participants learn about field risk identification and risk reduction practices.

provided insight on required documentation and answered questions regarding the process of a GAPs risk assessment. The second day of the assessment provided participants a view of small farm operations and what an audit would entail on a small farm.

More opportunities like this one are announced at www.ncmarketready.org.

2010 Fresh Produce Safety Training Impacts

Fresh produce safety training for farmers is an important step toward minimizing the risk of contamination and bolstering consumer confidence. N.C. MarketReady, along with the N.C. Fresh Produce Safety Task Force, developed *N.C. MarketReady Fresh Produce Safety – Field to Family Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) Training Curriculum* in 2009. The development of the curriculum involved numerous faculty and was coordinated by Diane Ducharme, Extension associate, horticulture and food safety and GAPs program coordinator with N.C. MarketReady.

The curriculum's nine modules are divided into two seven-hour training tiers. Through the train-the-trainer sessions, Extension agents are provided with the curriculum along with Web-based training resources. More than 120

Extension agents have been trained. In turn, they lead the training for local producers through a series of workshops including education about field production, worker health and hygiene, packing facility sanitation, traceability, crisis communication, and managing risk and liability. More than 300 growers representing over 1,300 production acres have completed Tier 1.

“Many growers who have participated in the Tier 1 training have gone on to become GAPs certified with an audit and many plan to apply for GAPs certification later this year,” reports Billy Little, Extension agent in Wilson County. The trainings focus on risk reduction and prepare producers for a third-party audit, a requirement for GAPs certification. The goal of this educational effort is to encourage growers to return to their operations and implement

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Tier 2 Trainings Scheduled Across the State

The N.C. Fresh Produce Safety Task Force will present six risk identification workshops for growers across the state, featuring the *N.C. MarketReady Fresh Produce Safety – Field to Family Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) Training Curriculum*. Building upon Tier 1, Tier 2 will address risk identification and management issues including transportation and traceability, product recalls, liability and insurance options, and developing a crisis strategy. This workshop will benefit growers, packinghouse managers, wholesalers and transportation managers who all play an integral role in maintaining the safety of fresh produce as it moves from the field to the consumer. Currently, GAPs certification is voluntary for North Carolina farmers, though outbreaks of food-borne illness in other parts of the country have resulted in increased pressure for all farmers to become certified. The development of the curriculum was funded with grants from the N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund

Fresh Produce Safety Symposium 2010

Outbreaks of food-borne illness related to contamination of fresh produce by human pathogens continue to occur. Federal legislation has been proposed that will result in new rules and regulation for farmers in North Carolina and nationally. There is considerable debate about the application of these proposed rules.

A Fresh Produce Safety Symposium, from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Sept. 9 at the State Fairgrounds (Martin Building) in Raleigh, is targeted to growers, industry, academics, policy makers, regulators and Extension agents. The primary focus will be on the professional recommendations for Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and Good Handling Practices (GHPs) for fresh produce safety and protection of public health. Speakers will share fresh produce food safety initiatives and research in their states along with regional and national perspectives. Registration is due by Sept. 6. Find video streaming information at www.ncfoodsafety.com.

For information on the speakers, visit www.ncmarketready.org. The symposium is funded by N.C. A&T State and N.C. State universities. Sponsors include the N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, N.C. Fresh Produce Safety Task Force and N.C. Cooperative Extension.

www.ncmarketready.org

Our multidisciplinary team builds partnerships and educational resources to help North Carolina agriculture be more profitable.

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N.C. MarketReady is a partner of the Plants for Human Health Institute at the N.C. Research Campus.

Commission, Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE), N.C. Rural Economic Development Center and USDA Risk Management Agency. For more information contact Diane Ducharme at 704-250-5402 or diane_ducharme@ncsu.edu. Learn more at www.ncmarketready.org.

Upcoming Tier 2 Workshops

- September 16, 2010, Smithfield
- September 22, 2010, Jacksonville
- October 12, 2010, Waynesville
- October 26, 2010, Albemarle
- November 9, 2010, Plymouth
- February 23, 2011, Lillington

Intern Helping Develop Risk Management Tools

Walter Friday, an intern from Rowan-Cabarrus Community College, is working with N.C. MarketReady team members Diane Ducharme and Dr. James Oblinger on a grant, “Implementing Risk Management Tools in On-Farm Safety Programs,” from the N.C. Rural Economic Development Center. Walter’s work involves the evaluation of several types of microbiological rapid detection kits used for environmental testing associated with fresh produce, specifically tomatoes.

Training Impacts *(continued)*

improvements in their production, harvest and handling practices that will minimize fresh produce safety risks.

Skipper Russell, a produce farmer in Waynesville, has worked with Ducharme and Sue Colucci, area specialized agricultural agent in western North Carolina, to prepare for a third-party audit for GAPs certification. “We’ve come a long way since the training, which helped us understand the practices we needed to have in place and gave us the information we needed to educate consumers,” explains Russell. “The market conditions are changing,” he says, “as more consumers are looking for local, certified, safe produce. We need to change to adhere to those criteria.”

The fresh produce safety training initiative under way works to ensure the vitality of the fresh produce industry by minimizing food safety risks and enhancing the economic competitiveness of N.C. crops for the benefit of farmers and consumers.

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