



Nourishing Kids and Communities



# GAP and Food Safety Planning: One farm's story

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## Today's panelists:

**Chelsey Simpson** – National Farm to School Network

**Susan Bergen** – Owner of Peach Crest Farm, which has 100 acres of vegetable production. Susan has been a Farm to School grower for five years.

**Dr. William McGlynn** – works for the Robert M. Kerr Food and Agricultural Products Center at Oklahoma State University and is a faculty member in the Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture.

**Chris Kirby** – Farm to School program administrator through the Oklahoma Dept. of Agriculture and National Farm to School Network State Lead. She has worked with local food advocacy for over 15 years.

# GAP's and Food Safety Planning

## Peach Crest Farm – Stratford, Oklahoma



Susan Bergen, Peach Crest Farm, [freshfoodtoyou@gmail.com](mailto:freshfoodtoyou@gmail.com)

# Peach Crest Farm & Oklahoma Farm to School

- Started statewide program in 2008 with cantaloupe
- Shipped 7500 cases of produce in 2011
- Cantaloupe, yellow & zucchini squash, cucumbers, bell peppers, sweet potatoes, lettuce spring/fall mix

- Shipped with 11 distributors in 2011
- 1 company picked up at the farm, backhauled & delivered to 6 distributors
- Delivered to 3 distributors with 1 cross dock
- **Goal for 2012 – all orders picked up at the farm**



# Reason for Food Safety on the Farm

Empower growers to be food safety audited

Let's get real about food safety

It's not as daunting as it seems

Important for any size farm

Partnerships were vital to success

# Why food safety audit - HELP

- Biggest customer needed 3<sup>rd</sup> party certification in 3 weeks
- Didn't want to do it and paralyzed with overwhelming task in beginning
- Didn't know who to go to for help – started calling people
- Called land grant university and asked for help

# Common Definitions

- GAP – Good Agricultural Practices
  - Safe growing and harvesting practices in the field.
- HACCP – Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points
  - A written food safety plan designed to identify, monitor, and control food safety hazards. Tailored to a specific operation.
- SOP or SSOP
  - (Sanitary) Standard Operating Procedures. Standard food safety procedures described in your food safety plan.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – party Audit
  - A review of your food safety plan and practices by an outside auditor. Can be a USDA representative or a private auditing firm.



# Keeping Fresh Produce Safe

- Must have a comprehensive, “Farm to fork” system.
- Must think about potential food safety risks:
  - Before planting.
  - During production.
  - During harvest.
  - During packing and storage.
  - During transportation.



# What we did for Peach Crest Farms

- Provided model GAP, HACCP and SOP documents.
- Helped Susan customize her plans.
- Provided scientific support for food safety procedures.
- Conducted on-site informal pre-audits and made recommendations.
- Served as a sounding board for questions and concerns.



# Online resources



FAPC 168 -- Developing a Food Safety Plan for Your Fresh Produce Operation:

<http://www.fapc.biz/files/factsheets/fapc168.pdf>

FAPC 167 -- Fresh Produce Production Food Safety Plan Logs and Worksheets:

<http://www.fapc.biz/files/factsheets/fapc167.pdf>

Cornell University Good Agricultural Practices Publications:

<http://www.gaps.cornell.edu/pubs.html>

includes:

Food Safety Begins on the Farm – a grower's guide

Food Safety Begins on the Farm – a grower's self-assessment

# More online resources

FightBac's Guide to Safe Handling of Fresh Produce:

<http://www.fightbac.org/campaigns/produce-handling>

FDA Produce and Plant Products Guidance for Industry

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceComplianceRegulatoryInformation/GuidanceDocuments/ProduceandPlantProducts/default.htm>

Includes general guidelines and specific guidelines for tomatoes, melons, leafy greens, and fresh-cut produce.

USDA Fresh Produce Audit Verification Program

[http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/GAPGHPAuditVerificationProgram#P51\\_2582](http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/GAPGHPAuditVerificationProgram#P51_2582)

- Most people are practicing food safety steps and just need to put it on paper
- Brought to light areas that need more attention or changes
- Didn't have a concept of potential hazards
- They identified and gave corrective tools to eliminate hazards



- Audit – Primus Labs – documents are on-line  
*<http://www.primuslabs.com/services/StandardGAP.aspx>*
- Harvest Crew Audit
- Packing shed audit
- Took 4 hours to do audit
- Auditor came from a farming background and familiar with farming operations
- In areas needing corrective action, auditor was very helpful – Not the case with all audit situations
- Cost - \$2000 because no USDA produce inspectors or 3<sup>rd</sup> party certifiers in Oklahoma



# Examples of Corrective Action

- Bathroom door entered in packing shed and changed
- Insect & Pest control management in packing shed change
- Re-cleaning harvest bins everyday
- Color code cleaning tools – not crossing bathroom with packing area
- Wash hands, Wash hands, Wash hands
- Employee training very important

# Tips

- Visitors log
- Test your water – once a year
- Standard water test doesn't provide enough information. We tested at State Agriculture Department milk lab (call to find who tests for e-coli & chloroforms)
- Mock re-call very important
- Small farm – harvesting from one place makes it a lot easier
- Good Records important
- Write out what you are going to do & do it! Don't write up plan and stick it on a shelf
- Pack in new boxes or RCP? – client will dictate what to use



# Closing Thought

- Not going to learn everything overnight. It is a progression and continual learning.





Good Luck with your  
Farm to School  
Program!



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# Questions?

You can type questions into your webinar control panel.

You can also contact the webinar organizer at  
[chelsey@farmtoschool.org](mailto:chelsey@farmtoschool.org)