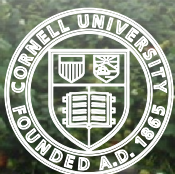


GAPS

CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

*Keeping
New York
growers
ahead of
the curve in
food safety*

Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) reduce the risk of microbial contamination of fruits and vegetables in the field as well as during harvest, packing and transport. Growers are charged with recognizing common risks and implementing practices to mitigate them. Crucial areas include worker hygiene, safe use of manure, wildlife management, post harvest water use, packinghouse sanitation, traceability and transportation. The cornerstone of GAPs is an individual farm's food safety plan tailored to the operation as third-party audits may be required by purchasers to verify GAPs.



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension



GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES TRAINING

Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), along with the National GAPs Program and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, has developed and implemented a nationally-recognized training program in Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) to prepare New York growers for the marketplace's increased vigilance in food safety.

- **Growers in New York are ahead of the curve in meeting the expected requirements of their buyers and the Food Safety Modernization Act.**
More than 400 growers in NYS have attended Cornell Cooperative Extension GAPs workshops, drafted farm safety plans to identify microbial contamination risks on their own farms, and are making changes to reduce those risks.
- **GAPs training is giving New York growers an edge in a competitive marketplace.**
Due to the growing call for Good Agricultural Practices from buyers, our workshop attendees are better prepared to meet the demand for third-party audits and retain their shares of a competitive market. Without GAPs certification, large operations can face potential losses of market share that amount to over \$1 million. For others, GAPs certification is an effective marketing tool for courting distributors concerned about produce safety and liability.
- **Food safety modernization is sparking investment in agriculture.**
Although capital improvement costs in preparation for an audit are low for most growers, some have seized the opportunity to invest in new technologies, update facilities, and apply new food safety practices on the farm. The primary investment in food safety is the daily commitment to implementing Good Agricultural Practices on the farm, which benefit both the safety and quality of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- **The antidote to "audit fatigue."**
Our training that includes in-depth GAPs information along with a complete farm food safety plan template gives growers the tools to develop their farm food safety plans. Growers leave our workshops feeling better prepared for food safety audits and are more confident in their ability to discuss and defend the food safety practices that they have implemented.
- **A national model for effective GAPs training.**
Our successful training model has been shared and adopted statewide and by other states. A cadre of competent trainers is being developed through our Train-the-Trainer outreach, which has involved CCE educators from across the state, inspectors for the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, crop consultants, as well as extension educators from other states.



GAPS

GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

Keeping New York growers ahead of the curve in food safety.....

"As a new vegetable grower it is important to me to market a quality product that not only looks and tastes good but is safe for my customer. The Cornell Cooperative Extension GAPS training helped me to assess my risks, improve farming practices, write a workable food safety plan and gain confidence as a grower. The support of the Cornell team has continued well past the formal training as new questions and challenges have come up for me related to food safety."

— Keturah Gilbert

"The GAPS training we received from Cornell Cooperative Extension was very thorough and helped guide us to finalize a complete GAPS plan for our farm. Once a buyer saw our growing environment, they were comfortable that they were buying as safe a product as possible."

— Paul and Kathryn Cooley, Seneca Breeze Berries

"The handouts and template that were provided at the Cornell Cooperative Extension GAPS training make it much easier to get a plan completed. The training also helped remove most of the concerns and fears about any audits and documentation requirements."

— Roger Ward, Farm Fresh First, LLC

In recent years, fresh produce associated foodborne illness outbreaks have made headlines. Growers across the nation are facing new food safety requirements imposed by their buyers, and await the final release of the first ever fresh produce regulation that is part of the Food Safety Modernization Act. This regulation, anticipated to arrive in 2014, will require most growers—from small to large farms—to have a basic understanding of how to assess risks, reduce contamination, and make informed decisions about the implementation of farm food safety practices.

Cornell Cooperative Extension assembled a team of educators—Craig Kahlke of the Lake Ontario Fruit Team, Robert Hadad of the Cornell Vegetable Program, and Elizabeth Bihn, Gretchen Wall and Giselle Guron of the National GAPS Program and Produce Safety Alliance at Cornell University—and farm inspectors from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets to offer informative and practical GAPS workshops to the farmers of New York. Since 2006 we have hosted more than 20 multi-day workshops that bring together the science, the practices, and the regulations behind GAPS, empowering growers to meet the market's demands. A typical workshop includes presentations on topics including record-keeping, water management, safe manure use, and traceability. The second day is dedicated to developing farm food safety plans using our template. We offer an optional supplemental session for growers interested in participating in a mock audit during the growing season. These trainings have been supported through funding from Smith-Lever, Risk Management Agency, and the Genesee Valley Regional Market Authority.

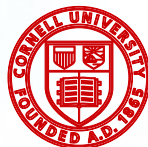
The impacts of our program are already accruing and, as national food safety regulations are formalized, Cornell Cooperative Extension will continue to fine tune the training to keep all New York farmers ahead of the curve.



Elizabeth Bihn, Senior Extension Associate, Director of the Produce Safety Alliance, and Program Coordinator for the National GAPS Program, assists a workshop attendee with his farm's food safety plan.

Photo: Robyn Wishna

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