

Produce Safety Alliance -- AMS Tribal Consultation (June 11, 2014, 3:00-4:30 pm)

The Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) is a collaborative project between USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) – both of which provided funding for its operation. Established in 2010, the PSA operates under a Cooperative Agreement with Cornell University. The overarching objective of this project is to provide the produce industry and associated groups with training and educational opportunities related to current best practices and guidance, and future regulatory requirements. Specifically, the primary goal of the PSA is to develop a nationwide curriculum to increase the understanding of the principles of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and to facilitate the implementation of food safety practices on fresh fruit and vegetable farms and in packinghouses. The curriculum is being designed so that growers and packers subject to the FDA Produce Safety Regulation can meet the training requirement; and, so growers and packers NOT subject to the regulation have access to fundamental education in on-farm produce safety.

Main Objectives of the PSA are to:

- Provide educational outreach assistance to fresh produce growers and packers, including grower cooperatives, to increase their understanding of the critical role they play in public health via implementation of on-farm and packinghouse GAPs, on-farm environmental coordinated management (co-management), and other preventive controls;
- Develop a standardized, multi-format training and education program to assist the produce industry including growers and packers and regulatory agencies with the implementation of FDA's requisite produce safety regulation;
- Develop a standardized, multi-format, training and education program to assist the produce industry including growers and packers and regulatory agencies in understanding the environmental benefits of co-management and to integrate food safety and environmental co-management principles while implementing FDA's produce safety regulation; and
- Be a repository for and providing easy access to stakeholders of up-to-date scientific and technical information related to FDA's produce safety regulation, on-farm and packinghouse produce safety, and related environmental co-management.

In addition:

- Train-the-Trainer curriculum is under development with beta testing in about 6 weeks;
- Farmer training curriculum is under development with beta testing later this year;
- Training classes to be held across the nation – number and locations yet to be determined; and
- Website and list-serve accessible via the internet. Materials can also be mailed when mailing address is provided to PSA.

Reference Materials include the PSA Website Home page, PSA Website "Contact Us" page, and NIFA Land-Grant Colleges and Universities map.

Primary Contacts at the PSA are its Director, Betsy Bihn, and Program Coordinator, Gretchen Wall, who are continuing to build upon the network of cooperative extension professionals from the land-grant colleges and universities across the nation as a means to engage with them and ultimately, with stakeholders (i.e., growers and packers) throughout the nation on the topic of on-farm produce safety. Currently, 22 different land-grant institutions are active on the PSA, and we encourage participation by cooperative extension personnel at all land-grant colleges and universities. Can you provide/identify contacts at the 1994 or other land-grant colleges and universities to engage with Ms. Bihn and Ms. Wall?