

Delaware Fresh Produce Food Safety Training for Wholesale Vegetable and Fruit Producers

Voluntary Certification Training on Good Agricultural Practices, Good Handling Practices, Produce Food Safety Plans, and Third Party Audits for Wholesale Produce Growers, Packers, or Shippers in Delaware.

Recent food safety concerns emphasize the need for fresh produce growers to reduce potential exposure of fruits and vegetables to organisms that cause food-borne illness as well as other contaminants. Keeping produce safe should be a priority for Delaware produce growers, packers, and shippers. Good agricultural practices (GAPs) and good handling practices (GHPs) for vegetable and fruit production and packing are important to ensuring safe products. One of the recommendations of produce grower groups such as the National Watermelon Association is that all produce growers attend a GAP produce food safety class.

The University of Delaware Cooperative Extension Service in cooperation with the Delaware Department of Agriculture and the Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association of Delaware is offering a voluntary certification program that will provide the training necessary for wholesale produce growers, packers, or shippers in Delaware to understand and implement GAPs/GHP's in their operations; develop produce food safety plans; and prepare for a third party audit if buyers require one. This will be a 2-part training with 3 hours of classroom education and 3 hours of on-farm practical instruction. We advise that at least one person from an operation attend both sessions and become certified. The Delaware Department of Agriculture will be issuing the certificate. Consultants and agency or university personnel that work with wholesale produce growers are also encouraged to attend.

Training Schedule – You Must Attend Both Sessions to Become Certified

Session 1: GAP & GHP Basics, Farm Produce Safety Plans, and Third Party Audits – Classroom Training

Date: Thursday, February 19, 2009

Time: 9 AM -noon with lunch, Optional plan writing workshop in afternoon 1-4 PM

Location: University of Delaware, Paradee Center, Dover, Rt. 113, Next to DeIDOT

Registration: Call (302) 730-4000 to register by February 17, 2009

Session 2: GAPs/GHPs in Action – On farm training at Fifer Orchards

Date: Tuesday, February 24,

Time: 9 AM-Noon with lunch

Location: Fifer Orchards, Wyoming, DE.

Registration: Call (302) 730-4000 to register by February 17, 2009



Small Growers

For smaller growers that do not sell wholesale, sell only locally to farm stands, or direct market (farmers markets, u-pick, on-farm sales), 3-hour sessions will be held in each county that will fulfill the voluntary certification training requirements. The following is more information:

1) Kent County: Produce Food Safety GAPs/GHPs for Small Produce Growers session at the Delaware State University Profiting from a Few Acres Conference

Date: Friday, Feb. 20,

Time: 1-4 pm

Location: Dover Sheraton, Dover, Delaware

Registration: Call (302) 857-6424 to register (Conference fee is \$25)

2) Sussex County will have similar trainings in April 2009. Contact the county office for dates at (302) 856-7303

3) New Castle County will have similar training in June - July 2009. Contact the county office for dates at (302) 831-2506

Funding to support this initiative has been provided by the Delaware Department of Agriculture

On-farm worker training and on-farm produce food safety evaluations/mock audits will be provided upon request by contacting the County Extension Office.
NCC (302) 831-2506, Kent (302) 730-4000, and Sussex (302) 856-7303

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