

Produce Safety Rule Implementation in NC and the New Era of Smarter Food Safety

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Part 1: Produce Safety Rule Implementation in NC

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Food Safety and Modernization Act (FSMA)

- 1. Produce Safety**
2. Preventive Controls for Human Food
3. Preventive Controls for Food for Animals
4. Foreign Supplier Verification Program
5. Third Party Accreditation
6. Intentional Adulteration
7. Sanitary Transportation of Food



FSMA Produce Safety Rule (PSR)

- Signed into law January 4, 2011
- Produce farm food safety
- Established science based minimum standards for the safe growing, harvesting, packing, and holding of produce for human consumption
- Developed a "farm to fork" approach to food safety with a focus on preventing the spread of foodborne illness causing pathogens in fresh fruit and vegetable agriculture
- Directs the creation of an integrated food safety system in partnership with federal, state, and local authorities



Farm Coverage Under the PSR

- Not covered, not a farm
- Not covered due to sales (less than \$28,561)
- Not covered due to commodity
- Not covered, on farm consumption
- Processing Exempt
- Qualified Exempt
- Very Small Farm (\$28,561-\$250,000)
- Small Farm (\$250,000-\$571,214)
- Large Farm (over \$571,214)

Farms
receiving inspections by the
NCDA&CS Produce Safety
Program



Produce Covered by the PSR

- Produce commonly consumed raw:
 - Almonds, apples, apricots, apriums, Artichokes- globe-type, Asian pears, avocados, babacos, bananas, Belgian endive, blackberries, blueberries, boysenberries, brazil nuts, broad beans, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, burdock, cabbages, Chinese cabbages (Bok Choy, mustard, and Napa), cantaloupes, carambolas, carrots, cauliflower, celeriac, celery, chayote fruit, cherries (sweet), chestnuts, chicory (roots and tops), citrus (such as clementine, grapefruit, lemons, limes, mandarin, oranges, tangerines, tangors, and uniq fruit), cowpea beans, cress-garden, cucumbers, curly endive, currants, dandelion leaves, fennel-Florence, garlic, genip, gooseberries, grapes, green beans, guavas, herbs (such as basil, chives, cilantro, oregano, and parsley), honeydew, huckleberries, Jerusalem artichokes, kale, kiwifruit, kohlrabi, kumquats, leek, lettuce, lychees, macadamia nuts, mangos, other melons (such as Canary, Crenshaw and Persian), mulberries, mushrooms, mustard greens, nectarines, onions, papayas, parsnips, passion fruit, peaches, pears, peas, peas-pigeon, peppers (such as bell and hot), pine nuts, pineapples, plantains, plums, plumcots, quince, radishes, raspberries, rhubarb, rutabagas, scallions, shallots, snow peas, soursop, spinach, sprouts (such as alfalfa and mung bean), strawberries, summer squash (such as patty pan, yellow and zucchini), sweetsop, Swiss chard, taro, tomatoes, turmeric, turnips (roots and tops), walnuts, watercress, watermelons, and yams



Produce Not Covered by the PSR

- Produce NOT commonly consumed raw:
 - Asparagus; black beans, great Northern beans, kidney beans, lima beans, navy beans, and pinto beans; garden beets, (roots and tops) and sugar beets; cashews; sour cherries; chickpeas; cocoa beans; coffee beans; collards; sweet corn; cranberries; dates; dill (seeds and weed); eggplants; figs; ginger; horseradish; hazelnuts; lentils; okra; peanuts; pecans; peppermint; potatoes; pumpkins; winter squash; sweet potatoes; and water chestnuts



A covered farm that must comply with the Produce Safety Rule must adhere to:

- The Produce Safety Rule, CFR 112
 - Worker Health, Hygiene, and Training
 - Agricultural Water for Pre- and Post-harvest Uses (Proposed)
 - Biological Soil Amendments
 - Domesticated and Wild Animals
 - Equipment, Tools, Buildings, and Sanitation
 - Required Records



NC and the Produce Safety Rule

- North Carolina had complete adoption of the Produce Safety Rule in May of 2018
- The NCDA&CS Produce Safety Program is the agency conducting inspections in North Carolina



The NCDA&CS Produce Safety Program Team

- Produce Program Manager- Chris Harris
- Compliance Officer- Ryan Knox
- Outreach Coordinator- Sarah Cope
- Produce Regulatory Specialist- Lucy Love
- Produce Regulatory Specialist- Bryan Harris
- Produce Regulatory Specialist- Greg Fillmore
- Ag Program Specialist- Stan Biconish



Educate Before and While We Regulate

- Path C State
 - Outreach and education
 - Inspections and compliance



Outreach and Education

- Partnering with collaborators to host workshops
- Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training Courses
- On-Farm Readiness Reviews
- Educational farm visits
- Outreach tables and presentations
- Produce Safety Field Days



Collaboration

- NC State Extension/NC Cooperative Extension
- NC State University
- NC A&T University
- NC Fresh Produce Safety Task Force
- NC Governor's Food Safety and Defense Task Force
- International Fresh Produce Association
- NC Farm Bureau Federation
- Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration
- National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
- Association of Food and Drug Officials



Farm Verification

- Every produce farm in the state, no matter their size, is encouraged to verify their farm with the Produce Safety Program so we have their most up-to-date contact information for outreach and education purposes
- So far we have 735 verified farms
 - Out of those 735 only some of them are covered farms that are eligible for inspection, this includes large, small, and very small farms according to the Produce Safety Rule
- Even if a farm isn't covered under the Produce Safety Rule we would still like to verify that



Produce Farm Inspections

- Initial inspections are educational
- Large, Small, and Very Small Farms are all currently eligible for inspection
- Inspection flow:
 - Inspection scheduling
 - Pre-inspection call
 - Day of the inspection
 - Notice of inspection
 - Initial interview
 - Walk-through of the farm
 - Exit interview



Inspection Information

- On an inspection we collect generic farm information and information as it relates to the Produce Safety Rule
- Compliance receives the inspection document 4056 and a summary sheet from the lead inspector
- Compliance compiles inspection information to facilitate work planning and determine if further compliance actions are needed
- The information compiled during inspections is used to create trainings and observe trends to focus on areas where resources can be utilized



Part 2: New Era of Smarter Food Safety

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New Era of Smarter Food Safety in NC's Produce Safety Program

1. Tech-enabled Traceability
 - Inspection software
2. Smarter Tools and Approaches for Prevention and Outbreak Response
 - Outreach and education
 - Policies and procedures for response
3. New Business Models and Retail Modernization
 - Outreach and education
4. Food Safety Culture
 - Promoting produce safety in NC



Tech-enabled Traceability

- NC has obtained an inspection software platform, WinWam, to conveniently house all verified farm information
 - This allows for quick and easy searches if needed



Smarter Tools and Approaches for Prevention and Outbreak Response

- Prevention:
 - Education and technical assistance regarding the PSR
 - Educate before and while we regulate
- Response:
 - Policy for Approach to Conducting Illness Outbreak Responses, Emergency Responses, Recalls, Complaints, and Investigations
 - Food Emergency Response Plan Procedure



New Business Models and Retail Modernization

- The Produce Safety Program collaborates with a variety of different groups, programs, agencies, and associations to provide produce growers in NC with education regarding new and modern approaches to produce safety practices



Food Safety Culture

- The Produce Safety Program is working diligently to help every produce farm in the state be aware of the Produce Safety Rule, understand the importance and significance of food safety practices on the farm, and implement procedures that align with the Produce Safety Rule on their farm
- The work that each and every one of us at this conference do everyday helps build the food safety culture throughout the state



Thank you

Questions?

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