

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROMOTES PRODUCE SAFETY IN KENTUCKY



The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service estimates economic loss due to foodborne illnesses to be approximately \$15.5 billion per year. The Food Safety Modernization Act - Produce Safety Rule (FSMA-PSR) sets federal regulatory standards for safe cultivation, harvest, packaging, and storage of fruits and vegetables to prevent foodborne illnesses.

The University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension (UK Extension) produce safety programs play a vital role in educating producers and processors to comply with local and federal food safety requirements. These programs also encourage growers to commit to ongoing food safety, which increases buyer confidence, opens new market opportunities, and boosts sales.

**UK Animal and Food Sciences
Produce Safety Program - Produce
Safety Alliance Grower Training**

UK-Animal and Food Sciences produce safety specialist conducts training courses to educate growers on the federal produce safety rule. The trainings aim to enhance growers' understanding of produce safety on their fresh fruit and vegetable farms, knowledge of strategies to prevent and reduce risks of contamination by human pathogens, and their commitment and skills to implement food safety practices.



**Free On-Farm Readiness Reviews
of Kentucky Produce Farms**

UK Extension produce safety personnel, in partnership with representatives from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA), conduct voluntary, confidential readiness reviews and assessments to familiarize farmers with federal produce safety requirements and highlight areas for practice improvement. The overarching goals of the review are to educate farmers on best practices for produce safety and facilitate voluntary compliance with the requirements of the produce safety rule. Farmers receive individualized feedback to enhance their readiness for compliance, prior to onsite regulatory inspection by the KDA.



**Produce Best Practices Training
(PBPT) Farmers Market Raw Sampling
Certificate Program**

A joint effort among UK Extension, UK-Animal and Food Sciences produce safety team, UK Center for Crop Diversification and KDA, this certificate program was revamped to enhance produce safety knowledge and practices among growers who offer raw samples at farmers markets approved by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture and roadside stands approved by Kentucky Farm Bureau.



**Good Agricultural Practices
Audit Training and Food Safety Plan
Writing Workshop**

Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and Good Handling Practices (GHPs) are voluntary audit programs to validate the production, handling, packaging, storage and transportation procedures of vegetables and fruits to ensure their microbial safety. The programs specifically target small- to medium-scale farmers interested in selling their produce through wholesale market channels and to buyers who typically require proof of this certification. Third-party GAP certification universally requires comprehensive food safety plans. UK Extension offers workshops to help growers understand how to construct a food safety plan that matches the audit certification they are seeking.



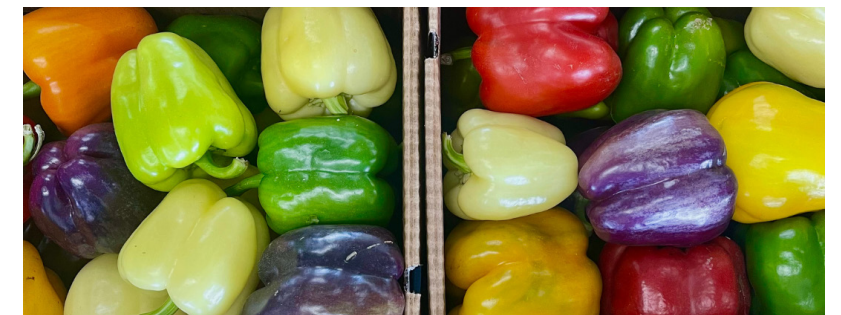
**The Food Connection's Cultivate
Kentucky Program**

Cultivate Kentucky is a collaborative initiative aimed at growing the specialty crop sector in Kentucky, with a particular emphasis on farm-to-institution supply chains. Program efforts focus on produce growers, specifically supporting producers' adaptation to rapid changes in produce food safety regulation and audit certification requirements. Cultivate KY Extension Associates offer on-farm technical assistance to produce farmers to assist in food safety plan development and identifying cost-effective solutions, while preparing growers for third-party GAP audits and developing and directing them to appropriate educational and cost-share resources.



UK Center for Crop Diversification (CCD)

The CCD acts as the web hub for sharing produce food safety educational resources with grower and Extension agent communities. It houses produce best practices training materials and contains publications and links to other tools and resources related to the Food Safety Modernization Act - Produce Safety Rule and GAP programs.



(JULY 2017 - MAY 2024)

CULTIVATE KENTUCKY

280+
GROWERS engaged in programming

54
GAP AUDITS
100% PASS RATE including 48 unique farms and 6 packaging and aggregation sites

160
GAP AUDITS
TOTAL including annual renewals (149 farms and 21 packing and aggregation facilities)

MORE THAN
1/2 of GAP-audited farms in KY engage with Cultivate KY

1,000%
INCREASE in the number of GAP-audited farms in KY since the inception of Cultivate KY in 2016

CENTER FOR CROP DIVERSIFICATION (CCD)

18K+
PAGE VIEWS by over 12 thousand users on food safety related pages

404
RESPONSES to Food Safety Modernization Act Coverage tool housed on CCD website

1,129
TIMES Produce safety training video accessed 1,129 times

ON-FARM READINESS REVIEW

73
ON-FARM
READINESS
REVIEWS conducted for Kentucky farms, including 20 Amish farms

PRODUCE SAFETY BEST PRACTICES TRAINING

340+
EXTENSION
PERSONNEL trained on how to deliver safe produce sampling program

2,931
GROWERS trained in safe handling and distribution of raw produce samples

PRODUCE SAFETY TRAINING

58 training courses conducted

987
GROWERS in attendance, including 294 Amish and Mennonite community growers

SAFE



The Food
Connection



Center for Crop
Diversification