

## **Good Agricultural Practices Workshop**

Many growers are seeking information about food safety and good agricultural practices in response to recent outbreaks associated with produce. Several commodity groups have established guidelines for good agricultural practices; however, differences in recommendations exist, leaving producers wondering how to proceed. This symposium offers science-based information from a multi-disciplinary group of WSU faculty along with producer, market manager and regulatory perspectives.

Many diversified farmers are seeking information regarding food safety. This two-part workshop series offers an introduction to food safety and risk management and the opportunity to develop a GAPs program for the participant's farming system. In the first workshop, participants will be provided with information on GAPs and assessment tools for their farming system. Between workshops, trainers will contact participants to assist with the assessment process. In the second workshop, participants will have the opportunity work with trainers to develop a GAPs program for their farming system.

- 8:00 Registration
- 8:15 Welcome and Introductions
- 8:30 GAPs Overview  
*Dr. Richard Dougherty, Washington State University*
- 9:00 Produce Food Safety Issues  
*Dr. Karen Killinger, Washington State University*
- 9:45 Department of Health Perspective  
*David Gifford, WA-DOH Food Safety Program*
- 10:15 Break
- 10:30 WSDA Perspective, WSDA Food Safety Program
- 11:00 Water Quality  
*Craig Cogger or Andy Bary, Washington State University*
- 11:30 Manure Management  
*Craig Cogger or Andy Bary, Washington State University*
- Noon Lunch
- 1:00 Worker Health and Hygiene  
*B. Susie Craig, Washington State University*
- 1:30 Food Safety in Harvesting, Transportation, and Storage  
*Dr. Richard Dougherty, Washington State University*
- 2:00 Program Evaluation
- 2:15 Bringing It All Together, Panel Discussion
- 3:00 Adjourn

## Session Description

**Good Agricultural Practices Overview.** The safety of food products requires a commitment at every step in the food chain and begins on the farm. Several recent widely publicized outbreaks of food borne illnesses have identified the farm or growing area as the source of the pathogens involved. Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) are guidelines for growers and handlers to minimize the risk of pathogens getting to consumers via produce and other raw materials. Application of these guidelines will be discussed throughout our program.

**Food Safety Issues associated with Fruits & Vegetables.** Several highly publicized outbreaks associated with vegetables and fruits have occurred recently, bringing increased attention to food safety for growers, packers, processors and consumers. What pathogens are most likely to be present in produce, and what practices are available to limit pathogen presence in produce? An overview of bacterial pathogen characteristics will be presented to provide a framework for discussion of how GAPs, processing interventions and consumer practices can reduce pathogen risk in produce.

**Pre-Harvest Issues: Water Quality.** Water resources for crops, sanitation and employees contribute to on-farm food safety. The ability of water to introduce foodborne pathogens will be discussed as well as a system for assessing water resources and safety.

**Pre-Harvest Issues: Manure Management.** Manure management is critical to food safety on the farm. Practices related to raw manure use and processes to reduce pathogens during composting will be discussed.

**Post-Harvest: Food Safety in Harvesting, Transportation, and Storage.** Opportunities for contamination and recontamination of raw agricultural produce during and after harvest abound. Harvesting tools and aids, transporting containers and vehicles, and animals in fields can be sources and are usually controllable. Storage facilities must be properly maintained and operated to assure maintenance of safe products

**Harvester Hygiene Programs.** Humans can introduce pathogens to foods, so communicating the importance of good personal hygiene to all members who handle food products is critical. A “hands on” activity, *Germ City: Clean Hands, Healthy People* will offer participants an opportunity to assess the contribution of hand washing to food safety. The roles of cleaning and sanitation in relation to hand hygiene will also be discussed.

**GAPs System: Bringing it All Together.** A panel discussion with food safety regulators from the WSDA, DOH Food Safety Program and symposium speakers will offer participants a forum for discussion of issues related to GAPs and food safety.

**Program Evaluation.** Your evaluation of the symposium will provide vital information to improve future workshops on GAPs. This symposium was organized as part of an ongoing effort by a partnership between a multi-disciplinary group of WSU faculty, commodity and regulatory partners. Funding for this program was provided by the Washington State University Western Center for Risk Management Education, the USDA Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service (CSREES), and WSU Extension and WSU Agricultural Research Center.