



2019 NECAFS Annual Conference Notes

Albany, New York, 02/04/19 through 02/06/19

Day 1, Tuesday, Feb. 5th, 2019

Produce Safety Meetings

1:00pm: Produce Safety Workgroup Meeting

Gretchen Wall – Cornell / Produce Safety Alliance

- Working to bring together people to talk about issues through soil and water summit
- Creating outcomes from meetings, water summit info published
- Fact sheet from water summit coming out that is more succinct
- With UC Davis did advanced trainer course, created more material to fill gaps from trainer knowledge
- PSA manual revised- version 1.1 and now have Spanish version that can come online
- International trainings
- New extension associate with bilingual resources hired
- Hosted 1,300 grower trainings
- 31,000 participants, 1/3 international
- 2,479 train the trainer, 1/4 international, 77 courses
- Trainings in all 50 states
- More trainers in west and south regions
- Two train the trainer courses offered in the northeast
- Need for train the trainer declining
- Quite a bit of turnover could need more trainers
- Locations where people could fly into
- Sign up for general list serve to get info on new resources available
- PSA online course being offered with interactive elements and an instructor in 2019
- Supporting trainers is a goal- make sure have resources and contacts
- Key pages translated into Spanish from website
- Fully Spanish lead trainer
- Publications on evaluations from courses
- Pursuing ongoing funding
- 3 ways to get info- general listserv, educators listserv, PSA trainers or lead trainers listserv
- Update contact info online
- Facebook, twitter, Instagram, YouTube, website
- Want region specific resources for online course for growers
- No current talk of future water summit
- Have cooperative agreement through 2022 with USDA, have funding through 2021

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- Budget would be 1.5 million for team
- PSA role in inspections- growers need technical support and time, advanced train the trainer to address more specific questions, rules not finished but can still make water safe, PSA can give help day in and day out because it is their main job
- Valuable to have PSA once inspections occur
- Trainings are just a small part of what PSA does
- Is there going to be redundancy with NECAFS, PSA, etc.
- Things will become regionally different, commodity differences- helpful that PSA team is spread out
- May need to monitor regionally only and use research to back it up
- Translate research to how it impacts farms

Dominique Giroux – VT Agency of Ag, Food and Markets

- Assess On Farm Readiness Reviews (OFRR)
- OFRR northeast collaboration
- Determined group guidelines, and reported 11 northeast states on calls
- Each month two to three states shared their on farm readiness reviews
- Second half discussion topics on call
- Fact sheet to get ready for OFRR, cleaning and sanitizing record, booklets
- Identified best practices on farm- wash lines, employee safety, restrooms
- Areas for improvement- cleaning vs sanitizing, bird management, enclosed buildings
- Expanding beyond OFRR
- Want increased participation and engagement
- Specific topic prompts for people to share
- Identifying areas where resources are missing
- Inspection program approach could be beneficial moving forward
- Recordings and resources can be found online
- OFRR will continue into next year, but will go down a little because some groups will be doing inspections now, mixed depending on state

Betsy Bihn – Cornell / Produce Safety Alliance

- OFRR survey results
- 429 surveys completed
- A lot of the farms are 1 to 9 acres in the northeast that did survey
- Northeast lines up with national
- Small farms are bringing in a lot of money with specialty crops
- Priorities on improvement in northeast- #1- postharvest sanitation

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- Postharvest sanitation- need help with recordkeeping, maintenance of buildings, pest control, proper sanitizer
- Growers have questions on what a washable surface is, how to improve drainage- which is best
- Worker hygiene can be more easily addressed
- Covered and non-covered produce difficult to differentiate
- Inadequate frequency unclear for growers
- 34% meet minimum standards, 53% minor, 13% major- had lined up originally, then realized that actual inspections would not have passed everyone
- Needs for assistance is more time, technical assistance, none, facility upgrade, significant money
- Answer survey differently, not all info is represented, some states don't use surveys

Gretchen Wall (Cornell / PSA) and Tucker Diego (VT Ag Food and Markets)

- Share best practices of regulatory and educational
- Ways to improve OFRR
- Identify what questions need to be answered about inspection process
- As a regulator, very important to educate while the regulation is going on
- Need a strong knowledge of PSR before doing an inspection
- One person from state, one from extension for every OFRR
- Lead for OFRR is the person with most PSR knowledge, usually a regulator
- Regulator will explain PSR
- Extension brings own background
- A lot of trainings for team members, did not have lead, but shared responsibilities
- Tell difference between FSMA and GAP audits to growers
- Vermont goes as team for OFRR
- Opportunity for case management and start relationship with farm
- Connecticut deciding to get away from OFRR as state is preparing for inspections
- Rhode island will also use inspection guidelines more instead and additional technical assistance
- Valuable for inspectors to be on farm and figure out questions may have once inspection actually occurs
- How to provide technical resources to farmers once you leave- in new Hampshire don't take any notes but just tell growers to send email and they do

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- Do not understand why can't take notes back with them without making dialogue
- If FOI-able, don't want to take back knowledge from OFRR that may throw off buyers
- OFRR curriculum is recommendations, PSA grower training cannot be deviated from
- OFRR is all a state decision and can be researched within state
- Did not want to identify farms that volunteered for OFRR because meant were probably under rule and didn't want list of that
- Didn't want it to say that certain farms were out of compliance with federal rule
- FSMA came about because some thought they were having a government business that was not what was expected so they don't want to be put onto a list
- Can be creative to implement in best way
- Regulators and extension know farmers work with and need to reach out to others that don't
- Can take notes and leave with the farmer
- Can ask the farmer what they would be most comfortable with
- Resource needs- will growers be able to see inspection checklist
- FDA and NASDA are creating observation form with states being able to modify, with a cover sheet, attachments- forms not yet completed
- Sheets are recommended framework but states can modify

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