

Choosing the Right Food Safety Training Class

Lindsey Pender, Sanja Ilic and Melanie Lewis Ivey

Whether you are an experienced or new grower, sell to large grocery chains or have a roadside farm stand, or need to renew your certification, you will most likely be required to take some type of fresh produce safety training. Which food safety training course you select will depend on whether or not you are covered by the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule, previous trainings you may have taken, and/or requirements of your buyer. The quality of the various trainings and cost will also impact your decision. An overview of the fresh produce safety training classes available in Ohio by The Ohio State University Fruit and Vegetable Safety Team is provided below. Classes are taught by Extension Specialists and Educators with fresh produce safety expertise. Classes are available year-round with the bulk of the classes offered during the fall and winter months.

Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) Grower Training:

The PSA Grower Training is ***only required by farms covered by the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule (see Figure)***. All covered farms must have the training to be compliant with the FSMA Produce Safety Rule. The training is only required once (i.e. not annually). Some buyers may be requesting that ALL growers complete the PSA FSMA training, however this is not required by federal law, and Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) compliance should be considered sufficient to ensure food safety. The PSA Grower Training is a 7-hour training that encompasses FSMA Produce Safety Rule requirements. Trainings are offered by public and private sectors and the cost depends on the agency providing the training. The Ohio State University Fruit and Vegetable Safety Team offers PSA Grower Trainings at a minimum cost of \$85.

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Training:

Good Agricultural Practices Trainings are voluntary trainings that introduce growers to common on-farm food safety hazards and how to reduce these hazards. The trainings provide growers with examples of best practices for a wide range of farming operations. Trainings are aligned with the FSMA Fresh Produce Safety Rule. Good Agricultural Practices Trainings are not required by federal law, although buyers may require that farms have the training annually. Growers who have completed a GAP training and are utilizing GAPs on their farm are demonstrating their commitment to fresh produce safety and ensuring that food safety risks are being reduced on their farm. The Ohio State University Fruit and Vegetable Safety Team offers 3-hour GAP Trainings at a cost of \$30.

To request a food safety training or to sign-up for a scheduled training please contact Eileen Ramsay (330-202-3555 Extension 2861 or ramsay.18@osu.edu). Schedules trainings are also posted on The Ohio State University Fruit and Vegetable Safety Team website (producesafety.osu.edu/events/calendar).