

# FSMA Trainings and Resources for Farmers

Compiled by MCS Staff

While the FDA has announced it is delaying FSMA Produce Safety Rule inspections for now, compliance dates for the Produce Safety Rule have not changed. "Large farms" (with annual produce sales over \$500,000) were due for compliance as of 1/26/2018 and are expected to be in compliance at this time. The delay is intended to provide time for additional education, training and outreach on the new FSMA requirements. The [Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry](#), in collaboration with [AgMatters LLC](#) and the [University of Maine Cooperative Extension](#), are currently presenting Produce Safety Alliance Grower Trainings.

The upcoming workshops in Bangor and Unity are meant for fruit and vegetable growers and others interested in learning about produce safety, the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule, farm food safety best practices, and co-management of natural resources and food. The PSA Grower Training Course is one way to satisfy the FSMA Produce Safety Rule requirement outlined in § 112.22(c) that requires "At least one supervisor or responsible party for your farm must have successfully completed food safety training at least equivalent to that received under standardized curriculum recognized as adequate by the Food and Drug Administration."

## Upcoming FSMA Produce Safety Classes

**Bangor, January 8, 2019**

**(Snow date: Jan 11)**

9:00 AM – 6:00 PM

UMaine Extension in [Penobscot County](#)

[307 Maine Ave, Bangor, ME 04401](#)

[Register Online](#)

*Registration closes January 2, 2019*

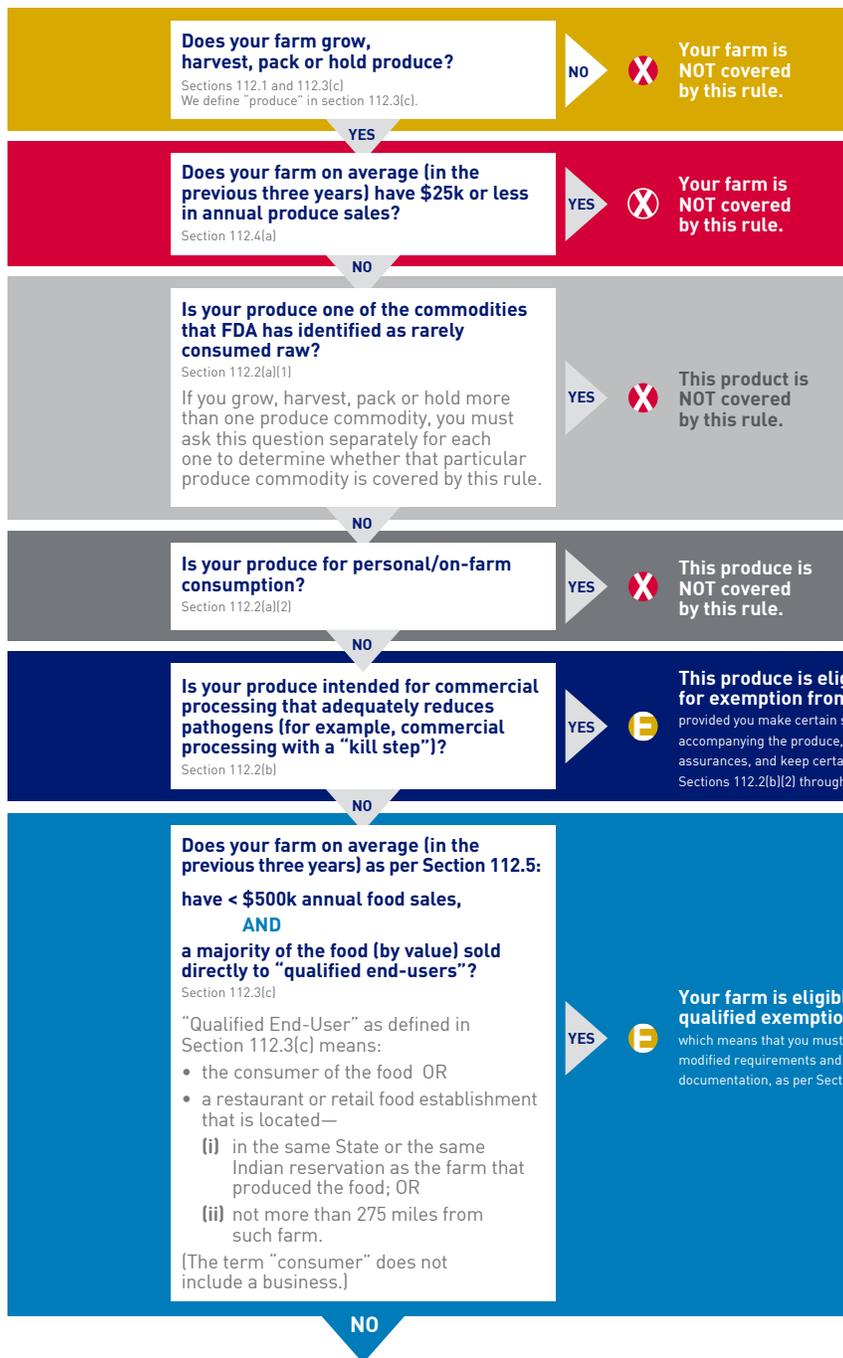
Limit: 28 attendees

(Continued on page 8)



## STANDARDS FOR PRODUCE SAFETY Coverage and Exemptions/Exclusions for 21 PART 112

The Preventive Controls for Human Food rule clarified the definition of a farm to cover two types of farm operations, primary production farms and secondary activities farms. The same definition is used in the Produce Safety rule (section 112.3(c)). Below are basic criteria that determine whether an operation that meets the definition of "farm" is subject to the produce rule.



**YOU ARE COVERED BY THIS RULE.**



## FSMA Resources (continued from Page 7)

### Unity, February 8, 2019

(Snow date: Feb 15)

9:00 AM – 6:00 PM

Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association

[294 Crosby Brook Rd, Unity, ME 04988](http://294CrosbyBrookRdUnityME04988)

[Register Online](#)

Registration closes February 1, 2019

Limit: 28 attendees

### FSMA Workshop Series at Maine's Ag Trade Show

Jan 15-17, 2019,

Augusta Civic Center

Workshops will be offered on TUESDAY & THURSDAY

(Contact Leah Cook for more info: [leah.cook@maine.gov](mailto:leah.cook@maine.gov) or (207) 764-2100)

#### Workshop I 9-10 AM: #FSMAFacts— What You Need to Know About the Produce Safety Rule

Join Leah Cook and the Department of Ag to learn what's required by FSMA's Produce Safety Rule, how it affects you, and who qualifies for which exemptions. Bring your questions and your creativity—we'll help you navigate the law and access the free resources that can help you be confident AND compliant!

#### Workshop II 10 – 11 AM: FSMA's Pro- duce Safety Rule vs GAP—A Side by Side Comparison

The Food Safety Modernization Act is a mandatory federal Rule. Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Audits are a voluntary certification. Both require planning and paperwork and come with costs and opportunities. Come to this session to learn how their rules and requirements compare, and how you can streamline your planning and on-farm systems for both.

#### Workshop III 1-2 PM: Bridging the GAP—Opening Markets and Manag- ing Risks with USDA GAP Audits

Curious about Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Audits and how they work? Leah Cook of the Department of Ag and Linda Titus of Ag Matters will explain how the USDA Gap Audit

program works, what Leah's inspectors will look for, and solutions to common farm challenges. They will share real costs, real benefits, and the free resources available to help you prepare.

### Produce Safety Rule Compliance Dates

Compliance dates for covered activities (excluding water), except for those involving sprouts, are:

- **Large Farms** (Annual Produce Sales over \$500,000), January 26, 2018
- **Small Farms** (Annual Produce Sales \$250,001-\$500,000), January 28, 2019
- **Very Small Farms** (Annual Produce Sales \$25,001-\$250,000), January 27, 2020

### Exemptions

The rule does not apply to:

- Food that is not in its raw or natural state; i.e., processed food
- Produce commodities that FDA has identified as rarely consumed raw; including asparagus, beets, dry beans, sweet corn, eggplants, potatoes, pumpkins and winter squash, sweet potatoes\*
- Food grains, including: barley, dent or flint corn, oats, rice, wheat, buckwheat and oil seeds\*
- Produce that is used for personal or on-farm consumption
- Farms that have an average annual value of produce sold during the previous three-year period of \$25,000 or less

\*For a full list of these food definitions visit: <https://www.fda.gov/food/guidanceregulation/fsma/ucm334114.htm>

The rule provides a qualified exemption which may allow for modified requirements for certain farms. **To be eligible for a qualified exemption, all farms must meet two requirements:**

1. The farm must have All Food Sales averaging less than \$500,000 per year during the previous three years, and;
2. The farm's sales to qualified end-users must exceed sales to all others combined during the previous three years. A qualified end-user is either (a) the consumer of the food, or (b) a restaurant or retail food establishment that is located in the same state as the farm or not more than 275 miles away.

Visit <https://www.fda.gov/food/guidanceregulation/fsma/ucm334114.htm> for a full explanation of the qualified exemption.

## Resources

Maine's Department of Agriculture,  
Conservation and Forestry

<https://www.maine.gov/dacf/qar/fsma/>

The DACF's Division of Quality Assurance & Regulation offers a comprehensive website of FSMA resources and news. Leah Cook, in a new role as Food Inspection Supervisor, will head a statewide outreach effort to all produce farms.

Leah and her team are responsible for the FSMA roll out of the Produce Safety Rule. She and her team are charged with mobilizing outreach and education to every farm in Maine to determine coverage (or exemption) under the Produce Safety Rule, and to assist all Maine produce farms in achieving readiness for the inspections beginning in June 2019. As liaison with the FDA, they are able to obtain direct answers to questions, and they have the opportunity, funding, and mandate to help farmers before applying enforcement. Leah's team can deliver resources to your town or community through teach-ins, Q&A sessions, and sharing of information. Contact her with any and all FSMA/PSR questions or to request a FSMA session in your area: [leah.cook@maine.gov](mailto:leah.cook@maine.gov) (207) 764-2100.

