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FOOD QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM

(410) 841-5769 FAX (410) 841-2750

MDA GAP Program

The Maryland Department of Agriculture has developed a food safety program for direct marketers of fresh fruit and vegetables. The program is designed to minimize the risk of microbial contamination through good production practices and is based on guidance developed by the US Food and Drug Administration.

Program Requirements

1. Attend an approved GAP training program. MDA and the University of Maryland are offering producer training sessions. Other University and/or State Department of Agriculture GAP training programs are acceptable, as are online trainings offered by these institutions. Watch for upcoming trainings at:
<http://www.gaps.cornell.edu/eventscalendar.html>
www.mda.state.md.us
2. Complete a self assessment using the National GAPS Program Self Assessment or the Direct Marketers Self-Audit. The National GAPS program Self-Assessment can be found at
<http://www.gaps.cornell.edu/farmassessmentws.html>.
3. Develop a written food safety plan that addresses any risks identified in the self assessment. Assistance in developing the plan is available through a joint project of MDA and the University of MD. For assistance, contact Donna Pahl, 2176 Plant Sciences Building, College Park, MD 20742-4452, 301-405-4372, dpahl@umd.edu.
4. Implement the food safety plan.
5. Contact MDA's Food Quality Assurance Program at 410-841-5769 or baldwiDL@mda.state.md.us to schedule an inspection to verify the plan adequately addresses food safety risks and has been implemented. USDA Specialty Crop Grant funds will be used to cover the entire cost of the inspection.
6. MDA will issue a Certificate of Compliance to producers that pass the inspection. A list of producers that have been issued a Certificate of Compliance will be maintained on MDA's website – www.mda.state.md.us.