FOOD QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM
(410) 841-5769 FAX (410) 841-2750
MDA GAP Program for Fruit and Vegetable Producers

PURPOSE: Concerns with food safety and fresh fruits and vegetables have led wholesale buyers to require Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) audits and the federal government to include provisions that are similar to GAP programs in the Food Safety Modernization Act. MDA has developed a voluntary GAP program geared towards smaller and/or direct marketers to provide safe, wholesome fresh produce by covering the basic food safety requirements. This program may also be of assistance to larger farms and/or farms selling wholesale by providing a starting point for implementing a more comprehensive GAP food safety program. Many of the requirements are similar to those required by USDA GAP or other private audit companies, however, the program is more focused on addressing the basic food safety risks with compliance options that are more suited to smaller farms. This program is funded by a USDA Specialty Crop Grant to minimize costs to producers.

Program Requirements:
Training
- Mandatory for participation
- Provided through University of Maryland and Maryland Department of Agriculture
- Other training will be accepted such as food safety webinars and online classes as long as a certificate of completion is issued.
Self Assessment of Food Safety risks
- University of Maryland self assessment
- National GAP program self assessment
Assistance with developing and writing a plan
- Dedicated position at the University of Maryland, funded with specialty crops funds, works one-on-one with producers on site to develop food safety practices, write plans and implement documentation of plan compliance.
For assistance, contact: Carol Allen or Angela Ferelli, 2125 Plant Sciences Building, College Park, MD 20742-4452, 301-405-4372, callen12@umd.edu or angfer@umd.edu.
MDA GAP Auditors inspect to verify that the plan has been implemented
- Recommendations for improvements are based on the inspection
- Reinspect as necessary to verify that improvements made
For assistance, contact: Deanna Baldwin at address and phone number listed above.
Certification by MDA if inspection is passed

Food Safety Plan Requirements:
- Written plan that addresses:
  Worker Hygiene
    Disease
    Clean Hands and Clothes
    Restroom facilities
    Smoking and eating
  Surfaces
    Bins, work surfaces, equipment
  Soil
    Manure use restrictions
  Water
    Use restricted if not potable
  Post Harvest Sanitation
  Pet, poultry and livestock restrictions
  Wildlife restrictions
  Documentation that plan is followed such as logs and records of sanitary practices, such as water testing and treatment (if necessary), maintenance, and food safety trainings for workers.