

## **Project: Extension Food Safety Initiative**

**Project Leader: Amanda Kinchla**

### **Project Overview**

The Food Safety Extension program conducts and supports research to help businesses address technical challenges and create innovative products and processes from farm to fork. Our group also identifies public needs, conducts applied research and educational programming and offers other outreach opportunities that address the food safety needs of individuals and groups through short courses, on-line training and other outreach venues.

### **Activity Summary – 2015**

- Conferences – Best Practices for On-Farm Food Safety (4)
- Better Process Control School, incorporating MDAR Specialty Crop Grant (Supporting Specialty Crops through Better Process Control School and Value-Added Processing) (1)
- Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Workshop (1)
- Grant preparation and submission related to food safety research and extension (eg USDA NIFA) (1)
- Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Point training and certification program (1)

### ***Total educational contacts***

	Adult Contacts
In Person	261
Indirect Contacts (Print, Web, etc...)	1500

### **Narrative Summary and Impact**

The Food Safety Extension program focuses on applied research and food safety education to support the food industry and provide a safe and sustainable food system. I have been identifying ways to effectively integrate research and extension activities to best cater to the needs of the food industry stakeholders I serve. Stakeholder groups include farmers, processors, startup entrepreneurs, regulating

entities and food safety educators. Specific successes this year include securing research grants that address food safety research needs for produce safety (i.e. USDA NIFA funding), implementing new extension short courses to promote new knowledge to improve food safety practices and establishing a stronger network of collaborative partners throughout the northeast to optimize extension and outreach activities. Specific highlighted successes from this year's work include:

1. A variety of Post-harvest Produce Washing programs to increase knowledge about best food safety practices to reduce risk on-farm. i.e. Extension Factsheets, Workshops and Technical Talks.
2. Increase knowledge about food product development for new producers to better prepare for entrepreneurial success. Extension activities include 3 workshops, 3 invited speaking talks/panels and 1-on-1 consults.
3. Establishing a stronger network to help with dissemination of food safety information and provide technical support. Through these networks I have been able to leverage resources from existing programs, gain support for research proposals, and identify and develop new extension programs and/or materials to support our stakeholders. Networks include: Massachusetts Food Hubs (i.e. Franklin County Development Center, Commonwealth Kitchen and the Community Development Partnership), New England Produce Safety Coalition (NEPSC), Produce Safety Alliance (PSA), Better Process Control School Coordinators Group, and the Northeast Regional Post-Harvest Research and Extension.
4. Executive Board member (CO-PI) for the Northeast Center to Advance Food Safety (NECAFS). This is a northeast consortium aimed to collaborate and centralize the regional needs specific to food safety (training and technical support).

Food Safety Extension has focused on two pillars: On-farm food safety and Product Development. Many food processing entities are now encouraging and/or requiring educational certifications to ensure proper food safety practices are introduced and practiced in all aspects of food processing from farm-to-fork. UMass Food Science Extension has been building a variety of relevant programs for the stakeholders of MA to ensure that they have the appropriate tools to be a successful and sustainable business within the state of MA (and outside of MA).

The IREP has two focus areas: 1) what are current commercially available on-farm tools to help manage the use of sanitizer in produce washing "today" to reduce the risk of pathogen contamination 2) can there be novel, affordable tools developed to improve on-farm food safety practices.

### **Collaborating Organizations**

- **Massachusetts Department of Agriculture**

