Commonwealth Quality Program

Providing Direction at the Intersection of Market Driven and Federal Food Safety Programs

Michael Anthony Botelho,
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
A jigsaw puzzle of many pieces

- Buyer Requirements (Changing and Evolving)
- Stakeholder Education and Outreach
- Peer to Peer Influence
- Federal Legislation
- Market Forces
- Business and Investment Planning by the Producer
The major pieces

- **Good Agricultural Practices (GAPS)**
  - Third party audit system.
  - Defined practices and requirements.
  - USDA-AMS.
  - Independent third party providers.
  - Cooperative agreement with State partners.
The major pieces

- **Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)**
  - Legislative Mandate.
  - Produce Rule and Preventive Controls.
  - Based on GAPs with modifications.
  - Sweeping reform for produce.
  - Covered/ non-covered crops.
  - Exemptions/Qualified Exemptions.
  - Cooperative agreement with State partners.
The major pieces

- **Buyer requirements**
  - Ever changing.
  - Third party to own party.
  - Riders.
  - Inconsistent.
  - Corporate mergers and acquisitions.
  - Changing distribution patterns.
  - Wholesale and direct to end-user.
A confusing picture

- What will my buyer require?
- What do I need to do?
- Where will I find educational support?
- Where do I find technical assistance?
- When will I need to be compliant?
- Is there grant assistance for upgrades?
Local Definition

State and Local Regulations

Farm Food Safety (GAPs, FSMA)

Environmental Sustainability (RC)
Commonwealth Quality

- Developed on the premise that every Massachusetts farm would need support:
  - Independent of market.
  - Independent of size.
  - Independent of crop.
  - Key message for the go-local movement.
  - Market forces would be unleashed that would change local supply.
Commonwealth Quality

- Designed to educate, translate and assist in change management:
  - Voluntary.
  - Classroom education.
  - Boots on the ground.
    - On-site technical support.
    - Pre-audits.
    - Support dialogue and transparency between buyer and producer.
    - Provide Grant assistance (AFSIIP).
Provide third party audit support:
- Utilizing GAPS and industry BMPs.
- Reduce paperwork (food safety plan)
- Work with buyers for acceptance.
- Use as a stepping stone to GAPs and FSMA.

Manage change for the producer effectively and reduce pain!!
Moving forward

- FSMA is here and moving.
- USDA GAPS Program will align with FSMA guidelines.
- Guidance and requirements will change and be updated.
- Support, training and tool development will evolve.
- MDAR will be FDA's partner.
- The Market will evolve!
CQP in support

- CQP will align with FSMA and GAP.
- Will be scalable to farms.
  - Exemptions.
  - Covered crops.
  - Required paperwork.
- Will integrate Regulatory Certainty for environmental practices.
- Will integrate and synthesize State and Federal regulations
  - Nutrient Management.
  - Compost
CQP in support ..........

- Is the same exact model that FDA will utilize for FSMA.
- Will utilize the same personnel and partnerships.
- Will act as the foundation of a future variance model under FSMA, using standards developed and verified here in Massachusetts.
Brought to you by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, the University of Massachusetts Agricultural Extension and with support from you Our Growers!!