

Contact:

Abbey Willard
Local Foods Administrator
Vermont Agency of Agriculture
Ph: 802-828-3829
Email: abbey.willard@state.vt.us

Food Safety Modernization Act Upcoming Webinar – Commenting Made Easy

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFAM) will conduct a webinar on November 4th from 12-1pm that will walk participants through the comment process for the Produce Safety and Preventive Control Rules. The deadline for making comments on the FDA’s proposed rules to implement the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) is November 15.

When finalized, these rules will affect many Vermont vegetable and fruit growers – large and small. UVM Extension, NOFA-Vermont and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture are hosting a webinar for farmers and others that will highlight the elements of a strong comment, give examples of potential talking points for different types of farms (focusing on alternatives to the proposed rules), and walk you through how to submit comments on the Federal Register site.

Space is limited. Reserve your Webinar seat for November 4th from 12 -1 pm now at:
<https://www4.gotomeeting.com/register/173761087>

PLEASE NOTE: The purpose of the webinar is NOT to explain the details of FSMA, but to help you submit your comments. **Please prepare yourself for the webinar ahead of time** by using one of these resources to familiarize yourself with the proposed rules.

Resources:

- **Webinar:** American Farmland Trust (takes a couple minutes to load):
<http://www.farmland.org/programs/states/ma/Food-Safety-Modernization-Act.asp>
- **Factsheet** by Vern Grubinger:
http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/factsheets/Understanding_FSMA_Rule.pdf
- **More details:** National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition website (has information on Preventive Controls Rules as well for people who process food): <http://sustainableagriculture.net/fsma/>

Regardless of whether your farm falls in the “exempt” categories or not, we anticipate these rules will influence standards for what the marketplace expects of businesses selling to wholesale markets. It is critical that the FDA hears from as many farmers, food hubs, and concerned consumers as possible so that the final rules take the voices of small-scale diversified farms and advocates of local food systems into account. VAAFAM highly encourages all growers, manufacturers, and anyone interested in fresh produce safety and manufacturing of human food to comment on the rules.

If you are not able to attend the webinar and would like to make comments, please see the following:
The comment period will remain open until November 15, 2013. A full copy of both proposed rules is available for viewing through the following links:

Produce - <http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/FSMA/ucm334114.htm>

Current Good Manufacturing Practices - <http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/FSMA/ucm334114.htm>

There are two ways to submit comments to FDA:

- 1) Comment electronically at <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=FDA-2011-N-0921>
- 2) Written comments may be faxed to the FDA at 301-827-6870 or you may mail them to:

Division of Dockets Management (HFA-305)

Food and Drug Administration

5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061

Rockville, MD 20852

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About the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets: VAAFMM facilitates, supports and encourages the growth and viability of agriculture in Vermont while protecting the working landscape, human health, animal health, plant health, consumers and the environment.

www.vermontagriculture.com

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