



Trainer Qualifications Document

Introduction and Background

The Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) has developed a science-based, on-farm food safety education and training program for fresh fruit and vegetable farmers, packers, and regulatory personnel. This curriculum will help prepare farmers to meet the regulatory requirements of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) proposed Produce Safety Rule. The standardized curriculum covers Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and produce safety practices for fresh fruit and vegetable production, including co-management of food safety, environmental conservation, and sustainability. Even farmers exempt from the FSMA Produce Safety Rule may find the curriculum of value because industry demand for food safety practices continues to impact market access.

In the United States, there are approximately 189,600 farms growing fresh fruits and vegetables. For this reason, it is critically important that a qualified cadre of trainers across the United States be available to offer education and training opportunities to help farmers understand food safety risks and implement practices on their farms. The PSA Train-the-Trainer Course will prepare trainers to teach the standardized curriculum and satisfy the requirements proposed in Produce Safety Rule §112.22(c), which requires “at least one supervisor or responsible party from the farm to successfully complete food safety training at least equivalent to that received under the standardized curriculum recognized as adequate by the Food and Drug Administration”.

Prerequisite Knowledge and Competency Areas

Each Train-the-Trainer course offered will be limited to two days of classroom instruction. Due to the depth and breadth of information covered by the curriculum, it is important that prospective trainers have prior knowledge and experience with fruit and vegetable production, minimizing microbial risks on produce farms, educational delivery, and the FSMA Produce Safety Rule. Lack of knowledge in any of these areas may impact the effectiveness of the trainer and lead to questions not being answered correctly or effectively. Effective trainers and training sessions will afford growers and regulatory personnel the opportunity to learn how to assess risks and effectively implement produce safety practices on the farm.

No one will be turned away from attending the PSA Train-the-Trainer Course, but all individuals must fill out the application prior to attending.

Competency 1: Produce Safety Scientific Knowledge and Experience

- Understand how bacteria, viruses, and parasites grow and multiply;
- Knowledge of fresh fruit and vegetable physiology that influence pathogen presence and survival;
- Ability to locate relevant scientific research that informs the development of food safety practices and support practice implementation on farms;

Competency 2: Fruit and Vegetable Production Knowledge

- Understand produce production and food safety risks that could exist in agricultural environments;
- Knowledge of farming practices that reduce microbial risks in an agricultural environment;
- Understand of how conservation practices may intersect with food safety;
- Knowledge of different types of farming operations and market types (CSA's, wholesale, farmer's markets, etc.) that influence management decisions on a farm.

Competency 3: Effective Training Delivery

- Understand and effectively communicate scientific research that impacts produce safety to a non-scientific audiences;
- Ability to organize, evaluate, and adapt core training curricula for diverse audiences;
- Ability to discern participant needs for additional clarification or interactions while fostering productive and engaging dialogue.

Competency 4: Knowledge of the FSMA Produce Safety Rule

- Understand the new FSMA Produce Safety Rule and how it may impact produce growers;
- Use appropriate resources and technical assistance to answer questions related to compliance with the regulation.
- Understand how state and national regulations may impact produce production

Train-the-Trainer Course Structure and Content

During two-days of classroom instruction, prospective trainers will have the opportunity to learn about the content of the PSA curriculum for produce growers through presentations, discussion, and Q&A sessions covering the seven curriculum modules. Key principles of adult education and effective training delivery, how to develop training partnerships, and multi-day training options will also be covered. Trainers will learn about the process for becoming a PSA Certified Trainer or PSA Certified Lead Trainer and how to register PSA Grower Training courses with the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO). The training will cover available educational materials and technical assistance that the PSA, Food and Drug

Administration (FDA), United States Department of Agriculture – Agricultural Marketing Service (USDA-AMS), and United States Department of Agriculture – Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) can provide.

Becoming a PSA Certified Trainer or PSA Certified Lead Trainer

For a visual schematic of this process, see Appendix I.

PSA Certified Trainer

To become a PSA Certified Trainer, an individual must attend the full, two-day PSA Train-the-Trainer Course. After completion of the course, the new PSA Certified Trainer may deliver any of the seven curriculum modules during a PSA Grower Training under the supervision of a PSA Certified Lead Trainer.

PSA Certified Lead Trainer

To become a PSA Certified Lead Trainer, an individual must attend the full, two-day PSA Train-the-Trainer course and then successfully pass an interview conducted by at least two PSA Interview Committee members to evaluate their competencies in the areas described above. The interview will be held over toll-free conference call or appropriate web technology and should last no longer than one hour. Prospective PSA Certified Lead Trainers will be asked questions and provided with scenarios relevant to produce safety training. A standardized rubric will be used by the PSA Interview Committee members to score the interview. The prospective trainer will be notified as to whether they have satisfied the requirements to become a PSA Certified Lead Trainer, usually within two weeks of the interview.

For additional questions, please contact:

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Appendix I: PSA Trainer Certification Process

1

Prospective trainer completes and submits application to attend PSA Train-the-Trainer Course. No one will be turned away from attending.

2

Individual attends full, two-day PSA Train-the-Trainer Course.

3A

CERTIFIED TRAINER

- Trainer receives certificate indicating they are a PSA Certified Trainer
- These individuals may:
 - Deliver any of the seven curriculum modules under the supervision and course registration of a PSA Certified Lead Trainer
 - May proceed with an interview (See 3B) to become a PSA Certified Lead Trainer

3B

CERTIFIED LEAD TRAINER

- Trainer schedules interview with PSA Interview Committee
- Application is reviewed
- Date and time of interview scheduled
- Committee of no less than two will evaluate the trainer using a rubric designed to demonstrate knowledge in competency areas
- Interview committee will decide if trainer is qualified to become a PSA Certified Lead Trainer

4A

PASSES INTERVIEW

- Individual is now a PSA Certified Lead Trainer
- A PSA Certified Lead Trainer can register PSA Grower Training Courses through AFDO and either teach solo or teach as a team
- All training team members must have attended the PSA Train-the-Trainer Course, as outlined above in 3A

4B

DOES NOT PASS INTERVIEW

- Individual will receive scoring rubric to indicate areas needing improvement
- Individual can participate in training as part of a team, as indicated in 3A
- Individual can reapply for the PSA Certified Lead Trainer interview after addressing the identified deficiencies
- Actions could include the following:
 - Re-attend the PSA 2-day TTT
 - Participate in two registered PSA Grower Trainings under the supervision of a PSA Certified Lead Trainer
 - Take and document other actions to improve knowledge (e.g. enrolling in a microbiology course)
- All actions taken must be submitted to the interview committee prior to rescheduling the interview.