Small Farm Food Safety, Fresh Produce—Part 1: Introduction to the PACE Principles

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Overview

Small Farm Food Safety, Fresh Produce is a short, interactive training program that introduces food safety concepts as applied to fresh produce. The concepts are based on the FDA’s Guide to Minimized Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (FDA-GAPs).

Part 1 consists of an introduction and an introductory slide show about the PACE principles.

Time required: 10 minutes

Materials for Trainer

- Computer with PowerPoint, LCD projector, screen
- “Keep PACE!” (Power Point slides)*

Advance Preparation for Trainer


Additional Resources

- Commodity Specific Food Safety Guidelines for the Fresh Tomato Supply Chain, 2nd Ed https://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/GuidanceDocumentsRegulatoryInformation/ProducePlantProducts/ucm171695.htm
- Produce Safety Standards https://www.fda.gov/food/guidanceregulation/fsma/ucm304045.htm

Materials for Participants

None

Objectives

Introduce the idea of food safety on the farm through an overview of the PACE principles.

Procedure

Present the slides and lead a discussion of the key principles that they illustrate. Make sure to discuss the key points.
indicated. Encourage engagement in the learning process by asking participants to comment on their own experiences.

Each letter in PACE represents an important idea for reducing microbial contamination.

- Current technologies cannot eliminate all potential food safety hazards associated with fresh produce that will be eaten raw.
- Therefore, our aim is risk reduction, not risk elimination.

The first PACE principle is Prevention.

- Prevention is a philosophy and mindset that we can lose easily when our lives are too busy.
- Relying on corrective actions alone is not good enough. Fixing a problem usually takes more time than preventing the problem in the first place.
- If we fail to prevent contamination, we make more work for ourselves in the long run and we are more likely to suffer legal consequences.
The second PACE principle is Accountability.

- Accountability is key at all levels of the food system: the farm, the packing facility, the distribution center, and the transportation system.

Qualified personnel and effective monitoring are critical for ensuring that every element of the food safety program functions correctly.

The third PACE principle is Control.

- Today’s agricultural operations rely on an increasingly specialized and segmented network of suppliers and distributors.
- Many factors affect the ecosystems where farms are located.
- Producers must be knowledgeable about both the human and the environmental factors that affect their farms and do their best to minimize their contribution to microbial contamination.

The fourth PACE principle is Education.

- Worker hygiene and sanitation practices during production, harvesting, sorting, packing, and transport play a critical role in minimizing the potential for microbial contamination.
- Everyone involved must be educated and held accountable for worker hygiene and sanitation.
- Everyone who is a part of the production process must understand the food safety program on the farm.
- Adequate, ongoing education makes this possible.

**The Next Step**

Part 2 in the series is an activity entitled “The Buck Stops Here,” which discusses the consequences of foodborne illness outbreaks.

To obtain copies of the DVD that accompanies this publication, please contact the UF/IFAS Extension Bookstore at 1-800-226-1764 or order online at [http://www.ifasbooks.com](http://www.ifasbooks.com).