

## 2021 Needs Assessment: Farmer's Voice Survey Results Summary

SCRUB Small Farms- Sanitizing and Cleaning Resources for Ur Business

Website: <https://forms.gle/LFEQCfLEsf65NUmv5>

Dates: January 2021-March 2021

Number of Responses: 88

Targeted Promotional Regions: Georgia, Michigan, Vermont, New York

### Key Takeaways:

- 1) 91.9% of Respondents follow food safety practices because of a personal commitment to produce a safe and high-quality product.

68.9% of Respondents follow food safety practices because they meet regulatory requirements in the Food Safety Modernization Act.

- 2) 53.5% of Respondents have taken food safety training(s) through Extension or other agricultural organizations.

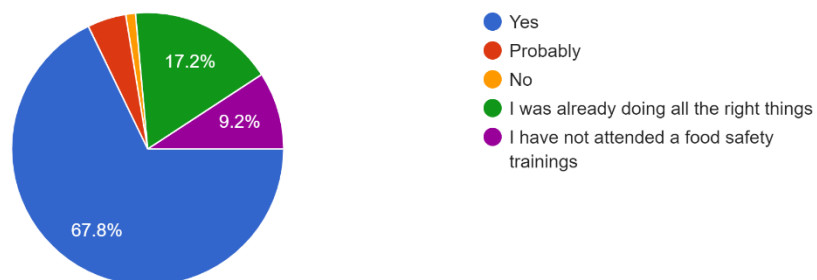
50% of Respondents have taken PSA Grower Training

47.7% of Respondents have taken GAPs Training.

- 3)

Have you or do you plan to implement food safety practices as a result of attending training(s)?

87 responses





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- 4) The **least likely limitation** to implement food safety practices on a farm or in a food facility was **Confidence**. (54.6% Not a Limitation)

The **most limiting** to implement food safety practices on a farm or in a food facility was **farm or processing facility infrastructure**. (34.4% Very Limiting)

79% of Respondent indicated **time** was somewhat limiting or very limiting.

- 5) Other barriers to implementing food safety practices, as identified by respondents:
- 1) Program changes & access to training. Expense incurred for program changes. (2)
  - 2) Not clear what classification I fall under. (1)
  - 3) Getting employee buy-in. (1)
  - 4) Besides training our regular staff, feeling the need to spend much time training people who only work a few days. (1)
  - 5) Trying to run business. (1)

- 6) Most preferred communication channels to receive information about food safety training.
- 1) Email (94.3%)
  - 2) Farm Association Newsletter or Listserv (51.7%)
  - 3) Mail (28.7%)
  - 4) Podcast (26.4%)
  - 5) Commodity specific newsletter or listserv (26.4%)

- 7) 98% of Respondents were most likely to learn a new skill from **Websites**. Next in popularity were **Instructional Videos (90%)** and **Extension Trainings, group meeting, and seminars (94%)**, with respondents indicating they were **sometimes or very often** used to learn a new skill.

69.1% of Respondents **never** learn a new skill from **Mobile Apps**. Next is least popular platforms were **podcasts (45%)** and **online discussion forums (37.5%)**

- 8) Other platforms used to learn information or a new skill from, as identified by respondents:
- 1) Webinars (1)
  - 2) Experience, friends and family (1)
  - 3) one on one consultation with extension or other resources, Other farmer discussions (1)
  - 4) University listserv discussion (1)
  - 5) Self-directed research and experimentation (1)
  - 6) I learn new practices or methods from other growers. (1)

9) On average, what percentage of your food is currently sold to the following markets?

	0%	1%-25%	25%-50%	51%-75%	76%-99%	100%
Direct to Consumer (CSA, U-pick, on-farm market, local farmers market, or other)	14 (17%)	20 (24%)	8 (10%)	11 (13%)	19 (23%)	11 (13%)
Wholesale (domestic)	23 (34%)	20 (30%)	7 (10%)	7 (10%)	9 (13%)	1 (1%)
Small retail entities (specialty food shops, restaurants)	27 (42%)	29 (45%)	5 (8%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	2 (3%)
Aggregate entities (such as food hubs, cooperatives, produce auctions)	38 (66%)	13 (22%)	6 (10%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
Direct to Institutions (such as hospitals, prisons, child care)	47 (87%)	6 (11%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Emergency food assistance providers (food banks, meal programs, distribution providers)	34 (56%)	26 (43%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Online / catalog / mail order	43 (81%)	9 (17%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Processors	34 (55%)	14 (23%)	2 (3%)	2 (3%)	7 (11%)	3 (5%)
Other (Please specify below).	12 (67%)	2 (11%)	3 (17%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

10) Additional resources or information regarding cleaning and sanitizing that would help enhance food safety on farm or in facility.

- Information about food safety with **value-added products**
- **Specific risks and reasoning** behind good sanitation
- SOPs have been a bit overwhelming, as there are so many areas that they would be appropriate. I have seen a fair number of blank templates, but not **actual examples of complete ones specific to food safety**, which would be much more helpful than a blank template. Developing them for the wash station and harvest has been a priority, **actual implementation of a set cleaning schedule has been tough**. If there are good case studies out there of farms that have implemented a **strong FSMA-compliant culture**, it would be good to hear how they created the time in their day-to-day operations to make it happen. I have seen a big focus on compliance with equipment, examples of designs of pack houses that have been upgraded or built to be more food safe but hearing how farmers have actually implemented new systems into the workflow hasn't been as prominent.
- How to handle **different degrees of rodent evidence in the field/tunnel**
- More **training resources in Spanish** please
- **Written suggestions** for harvesting various vegetables from market gardens and **displaying** them at a farmer's market would be handier than a workshop.

- More info on specific products for cleaning and sanitizing.
- As a grower of 90% processing apples, we feel most/all of these regulations don't apply and dealing with 4-5 yearly inspections borders on harassment
- **American made** reasonably priced **containers, baskets & harvesting equipment.**
- We are trying to figure out **HOW to regularly sanitize reusable plastic produce crates and totes**, used for in-cooler storage and local deliveries, efficiently. This step takes a long time if it needs to be done between every use! Also, we do not have a wastewater system for our wash barn, which is a **renovated old cow barn**. The water currently drains into the bottom of a hill in the yard of the farmhouse.
- It would be helpful to have a **cleaner/sanitizer** to reduce cleaning to **one step**.
- Wash-line machinery that is EASILY cleaned and sanitized AND cleans produce efficiently.
- It is just hard to get the money together for equip upgrades/upgrade buildings to better house these functions, etc. We work with such low profit margins there is not much left over and yet you want to have **nice, cleanable gear**.
- More help for **farms who do not have a special wash/ pack house** would be nice. Many beginning farms have to do sanitation procedures in a **shared household kitchen** as they grow/expand. Info about managing that risk and the dos/ don'ts would be great.
- Information specific to **homestead small scale market gardens and orchards**.
- As owner operator, **I do not have SOPs, but I follow GAP best practices** to reduce lib.
- More financial and time support. Being a medium sized grower, **I don't have money available to hire a dedicated food safety person** so it falls on my shoulders when I should be doing other things to manage harvest struggles.
- Information on **better automated systems** - injectors of wash lines, crate cleaners, cooling systems, really clear resources on cleaning products and appropriate use. I have to wade through so much info to find what I want.
- A suggested **minimum template SOP** for: wash water (dunk 2X, 3X, or 1x with Sanidate, water temp ranges, cloudiness), pack shed cleaning routine timelines and method.
- Maybe it already exists, but a set standard of how often to sanitize and which products are acceptable to use for that.
- it would be great to have a **plain and simple manual**.
- **Educational videos that I can share directly with students ("employees")**, use experts voice not mine