

Vermont Vegetable and Berry News Feb. 12, 2013 Compiled by Vern Grubinger, University of Vermont Extension (802) 257-7967 ext. 303, vernon.grubinger@uvm.edu www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry

NEW FOOD SAFETY REGULATIONS PROPOSED FOR FRESH PRODUCE GROWERS By Dr. Luke LaBorde, Department of Food Science, Penn State University

On January 4, 2013, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released a draft Produce Safety Rule as required under the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) of 2011. This proposed regulation would establish mandatory practices that farmers must take to prevent microbial contamination of fresh produce. Below are highlights of requirements FDA would issue in the final regulation.

Worker Health

produce, and their supervisors, must receive training on personnel hygiene and health conditions that can increase the risk for food contamination. Growers are required to show proof of training by keeping written records. Toilet facilities have to be readily accessible, kept reasonably clean, and supplied with toilet paper.

facilities and supplied with potable running water, hand soap, and clean single use towels.

pesticide preparation, cooling and washing, etc. is safe for its intended use. Maximum average E coli levels of 126 cells per 100 milliliters have been proposed for irrigation water that can

standards; no detectable levels of E coli are allowed.

nth interval (270 days) would be required between application of raw animal manure to produce fields and harvesting if there is a possibility that the manure may contact the produce. Composted animal manures can be applied from 0 to 45 days before harvest depending on whether or not it can contact the crop. Growers, or commercial compost suppliers, must provide proof through laboratory testing that the composting process was adequate to make it safe to use. No human waste is allowed on fields except in the case of sewage sludge biosolids that are treated according to already existing regulations. fields as long as the grower can demonstrate that they have taken adequate measures to prevent contamination. If animals are allowed to graze in areas intended for produce growing,

And finally, keep in mind that growers of any size who sell at least some of their crop through wholesale marketing channels, even if technically not covered by the federal regulation, have been facing and will to continue to face standards at least as stringent as anything in the final FDA regulations.

Remember, this is a proposed rule. It is not a final regulation. This means that growers have an opportunity to comment on any part of the rule they do not understand or object to. The draft ruling is available for viewing at <u>http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/FSMA/ucm304045.htm</u>. The public will have the opportunity to submit comment on the draft rule until May 16, 2013. Before this date, FDA will be holding public meetings to explain the proposal and to provide additional opportunity for input.

There are two ways to send comments. You may submit comments through the internet at http://www.regulations.gov. Once you are on the site, follow the instructions for submitting comments.

D , Food and Drug Administration, 5630 Fishers Lane, rm. 1061, Rockville, MD 20852. All written submissions received must include the Docket No.

VVBGA ANNUAL MEETING PRESENTATIONS ON LINE

Over 200 people attended the Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Association annual meeting in Montpelier; if you missed it or want to re posted at: http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/VVBGAMeeting2013Presentations.html.

To join the VVBGA for 2013 print and mail this form, the cost is \$25 per farm per calendar year: http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/VV&BGA/VVBGA_membership_form.pdf