



## **Managing Food Safety Risks Through Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) Washington**

Recent produce recalls highlight the importance of diligent food safety practices at the grower level to reduce food-borne pathogen risks. This workshop series, conducted by Washington State University, targeted Washington and Oregon producers who market directly to local and regional food systems. The workshops provided information over a four month period about on-farm food safety practices to participants representing a broad range of experience levels, acreage and distribution scales. Topics included: food safety, water quality, manure management, worker health and hygiene, sanitation and liability, as well as regulations.

Results showed that 313 of the 483 producers who participated in the first session reported high to very high knowledge levels after the workshop, a 45% increase in knowledge among participants, based on a retrospective pre-test. Over half of the 149 participants in Session II had implemented additional GAPs and record keeping practices. Of the 76 participants who completed a one-year follow-up evaluation, 27 have made long-term changes in terms of Gaps and food safety practices, with eight earning third-party GAPs certification.

“My goals in attending the program were to learn how to: 1) ensure that the food we produce is clean and safe, 2) develop a standardized food-safety program to ensure that all employees are trained in and follow food safety best practices in all areas of our farm operation at all times as a condition of employment, and 3) achieve the first level of third party certification (GAP/GHP) before such certification becomes a requirement. After completing the program, I wrote a customized manual based on USDA guidelines and implemented the program for the farm. We became USDA GAPS/GHP-certified...; the first in Washington for the diversity of crops we grow. This has opened up real and potential new distribution channels such as Safeway and other large regional buyers; schools and institutions, and wholesale customers who were no longer buying from us because of their new grower requirements regarding food safety. We could easily realize a 25% increase in revenue in the coming season with further growth to come. Additionally, large-scale customers allow us to farm more efficiently in that we will decrease the number of items we grow (or the number of acres needed to grow certain items) and grow and sell substantially more of the core items we grow best. Dollar-per-order averages will increase, and thus delivery cost-per-case savings will be substantial.”- Producer Participant



“These benefits enable us to provide healthful, clean, sustainably-grown food to more members of our community while maintaining stewardship of the land through organic agriculture.”- Producer Participant





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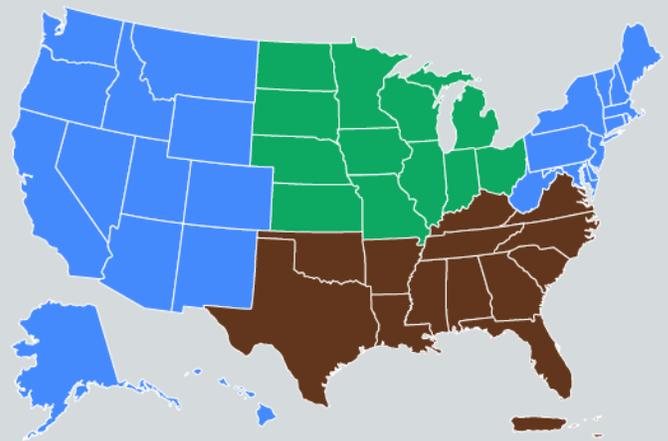
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**“Educating America’s farmers and ranchers  
to manage the unique risks of producing food  
for the world’s table.”**

**Extension Risk Management Education (ERME)** is delivered through four regional centers that provide grant funding and leadership within their regions.

Projects are producer-focused, results-based and encourage public-private partnerships. Funded projects must identify targeted results that will help producers manage risk and then describe how the project will measure those results.

Extension Risk Management Education has funded innovative programs that have generated tangible results for producers in every state. ERME is committed to funding results, providing transparent accountability, and encouraging collaboration. View the accomplishments of all funded projects on our website.  
<http://ExtensionRME.org>



**ERME Regional Centers**



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