



**FOOD QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM
(410) 841-5769 FAX (410) 841-2750**

MDA GAP Program for Fruit and Vegetable Producers

PURPOSE: Concerns with food safety and fresh fruits and vegetables have led wholesale buyers to require Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) audits and the federal government to include provisions that are similar to GAP programs in the Food Safety Modernization Act. MDA has developed a voluntary GAP program geared towards smaller and/or direct marketers to provide safe, wholesome fresh produce by covering the basic food safety requirements. This program may also be of assistance to larger farms and/or farms selling wholesale by providing a starting point for implementing a more comprehensive GAP food safety program. Many of the requirements are similar to those required by USDA GAP or other private audit companies, however, the program is more focused on addressing the basic food safety risks with compliance options that are more suited to smaller farms. This program is funded by a USDA Specialty Crop Grant to minimize costs to producers.

Program Requirements:

Training

Mandatory for participation

Provided through University of Maryland and Maryland Department of Agriculture

Other training will be accepted such as food safety webinars and online classes as long as a certificate of completion is issued.

Self Assessment of Food Safety risks

University of Maryland self assessment

National GAP program self assessment

Assistance with developing and writing a plan

Dedicated position at the University of Maryland, funded with specialty crops funds, works one-on-one with producers on site to develop food safety practices, write plans and implement documentation of plan compliance.

For assistance, contact: Donna Pahl, 2176 Plant Sciences Building, College Park, MD 20742-4452, 301-405-4372, dpahl@umd.edu.

MDA GAP Auditors inspect to verify that the plan has been implemented

Recommendations for improvements are based on the inspection

Reinspect as necessary to verify that improvements made

For assistance, contact: Deanna Baldwin at address and phone number listed above.

Certification by MDA if inspection is passed

Food Safety Plan Requirements:

Written plan that addresses:

Worker Hygiene

Disease

Clean Hands and Clothes

Restroom facilities

Smoking and eating

Surfaces

Bins, work surfaces, equipment

Post Harvest Sanitation

Soil

Manure use restrictions

Pet, poultry and livestock restrictions

Wildlife restrictions

Water

Use restricted if not potable

Water testing required

Documentation that plan is followed such as logs and records of sanitary practices, such as water testing and treatment (if necessary), maintenance, and food safety trainings for workers.