



CLEAN START

FOOD SAFETY PROGRAM

Program of Iowa Valley RC&D
www.iowavalleyrcd.org

This program is a free, five month (Aug 2021 - Dec 2021) food safety coaching opportunity made possible through a federally-funded USDA Food Safety Outreach Program grant. The program goal is to improve on-farm knowledge and capacity of beginning farmers to implement food safety best practices.

Once program participants have completed all the required tasks and in-person learning modules, a \$2000 stipend will be awarded to participants to purchase equipment, tools, or facility improvements that reduce food safety risks on their farm.

Ideal Participants

The 2021 Clean Start Food Safety Coaching Program will focus on produce farmers in **Eastern Iowa** in business for **at least one year**. Participants should be dedicated to improving food safety systems and infrastructure on their farm. Applicants who will benefit most from the program should have the following training and business goals:

- Attended a Produce Safety Alliance Training
- Annually sells at least \$10,000 in produce
- An interest in institutional, retail, or other wholesale market channels

What will participants gain from this program?

- Knowledge and comfort with Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) regulations and USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) certification
- Assessment of your farm's operation as it relates to food safety best practices
- Creation of a Food Safety Plan and traceability system for your farm
- Ability to pass a FSMA inspection
- A \$2,000 stipend to invest in food safety equipment and supplies on your farm

Program Structure and Expectations

This program will be divided into six topics to increase each participant's capacity as a Food Safety Manager for their farm business. The first session will be a group meeting to introduce participants to the program and each other. Subsequent sessions will be one-on-one coaching sessions. See the '**Core Topics**' and '**Program Timeline**' sections below for more details.

Participants are expected to:

- **Collaborate** with their coach for the duration of the program.
- **Communicate** regularly with their coach via phone, email, social media messenger, and/or in-person meetings as needed.
- **Demonstrate** a willingness to learn the importance of food safety and practical strategies to implement practices on your farm.
- **Provide feedback** to your coach to inform program evaluation and analysis.
- **Identify, purchase, and implement** a piece of equipment, tool or facility improvement that reduces food safety risks on your farm with assistance from your coach.
- **Participate in discussions** with other Clean Start program participants to maximize learning and peer-to-peer sharing.

Time Commitment

Throughout the course of the program, participants should expect to spend **12-16** hours working directly with coaches, as well as **10-15** hours working on individual tasks outside of coaching sessions.

Core Topics

Food Safety Guidelines

- Introduction to basic food safety concepts
- Overview of GAP Requirements
- Overview of mandatory FSMA regulations and Produce Safety Rule (PSR)

Food Safety Inspections and Audits

- On-Farm Readiness Review (OFRR)
- Harmonized GAP Mock Audit

On Farm Food Safety Assessments

- Worker Health and Hygiene
- Worker Training and Visitor Policies
- Soil Amendments
- Domesticated and Wild Animals
- Production and Postharvest Water
- Harvest and Postharvest Handling
- Facilities/Infrastructure

Food Safety Plan Creation

- Document Templates
- Policies and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- Farm Maps

Food Safety Record Keeping and Documentation

- Traceability Program Principles
- Documentation and Labeling Requirements

Facility and In-Field Food Safety Investments

- Harvest Tools
- Hand Washing Station
- Produce Washing Equipment
- Post Harvest Wash and Pack
- Water Testing

Program Timeline *denotes that the session would be in person

Month	Topics	Activities	Est. Time Required
Aug	Program Orientation (Group Meeting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Introductions, Food Safety Social ❖ Syllabus and Expectations ❖ Questionnaire 	2 HRS
Sept*	Food Safety Overview and Farm Tour (2 Sessions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Overview Food Safety Guidelines and Best Practices ❖ Discuss Questionnaire Responses ❖ Farm Tour and OFRR 	4 HRS
Oct	Food Safety Plan Creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Overview of a Food Safety Plan ❖ Principles of Traceability and Tools for Recordkeeping ❖ Begin developing your food safety procedures 	3 HRS
Nov - Dec*	Food Safety Plan Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Review final copy of your Food Safety Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Must complete by Dec 13 ❖ Discuss program stipend options ❖ Farm Visit - Plan Implementation Review ❖ Complete Program Evaluation 	3 HRS

Program Policies

Program Completion Expectations

- Develop, implement and follow your own Food Safety Plan
- Submit final program evaluation
- Attend and participate in minimum of 5 sessions with program coaches (12-16 hrs)
- Schedule and complete an OFRR with program coaches

**Participants unable to complete the program will be expected to return the tablet and label printer to Iowa Valley RC&D. Participants will forfeit the stipend if unable to complete a Food Safety Plan by December 13th.*

Food Safety Plan Creation and Implementation

During the Clean Start program, you will be expected to work with your coach to draft, edit and implement a Food Safety Plan for your farm. Coaches will provide sample food safety plans, standard operating procedures and record keeping logs. As a participant in the program it is expected that you follow your Food Safety Plan during the length of the program so coaches can observe and guide its implementation.

Stipend Reimbursement

Upon satisfactory creation of the farm's Food Safety Plan, participants will be awarded up to a \$2,000 stipend reimbursement to purchase equipment and supplies to improve food safety practices on their farm. Participants will be required to purchase the equipment and supplies, then request reimbursement from Iowa Valley RC&D staff.

Microsoft Surface Go Tablet and Label Printer

Once participants have shown satisfactory participation, they will receive their own Microsoft Go Tablet, tablet case, and label printer. The tablet will be pre-installed with Microsoft Office and FarmTabs, Iowa Valley RC&D's food safety documentation software. Participants will be required to keep equipment in good condition and stored in a secure location during the program.

Media/System Requirements

Technical requirements for participating in the Food Safety Coaching Program include:

- Access to a personal computer, tablet, and/or smartphone with video capability
- Reliable Internet or cell phone data access
- Basic familiarity with Microsoft Office Suite and Google Suite (Drive, Sheets, Docs)

Recommended Resources

The following resources are recommended to familiarize with basic and mid-level on farm food safety strategies:

- **Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training**
- **USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)**
 - <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/auditing/gap-ghp>
- **National Young Farmers Coalition**
 - Small Farmer **Food Safety Guide** - <https://www.youngfarmers.org/resource/foodsafetyguide/>
 - Other **FSMA Resources** - <https://www.youngfarmers.org/fsma-resources/>
- **University of Vermont Extension - Ag Engineering**
 - https://www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/agricultural_engineering
- **Food Safety Resource Clearinghouse**

- <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/necafs/clearinghouse/>
- **Penn State Extension - Food Safety Modernization Act Video Series**
 - <https://extension.psu.edu/catalogsearch/result/?q=food+safety+modernization+act+videos>
- **National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition**
 - <https://sustainableagriculture.net/our-work/issues/food-safety/#2>
- **North Central Region Center for FSMA Training**
 - <https://www.ncrfsma.org/>
- **Iowa State University Safe Produce**
 - <https://www.safeproduce.cals.iastate.edu/>