Module 2: Worker Health, Hygiene, and Training
Learning Objectives

• Identify potential routes of contamination associated with workers
• Identify adult learning concepts and topics to include in a worker training program
• Describe how to monitor that facilities are maintained on the farm
• Describe corrective actions that may be used to correct identified problems
• Identify recordkeeping tools for worker health and training
Ready To Eat or Minimally Cooked
WASH YOUR HANDS BEFORE WE EAT.

YOU THINK THEY'RE CLEAN. YOUR HANDS ARE COVERED WITH GERMS.

I DON'T SEE ANY GERMS!
Sources of Microbes

- From respiratory tract through coughing, sneezing, spitting, or touching the mouth
- From open sores, cuts, or boils
- From intestinal tract through hands soiled with feces
Workers Are A Food Safety Concern Because They...

• Can carry human pathogens
  – *Shigella*, Hepatitis A, Norovirus, and others

• Can spread human pathogens
  – Harvest and pack with their hands
  – Fecal-oral route

• Require training to reduce risks
  – Proper handwashing
  – How to handle illnesses and injuries
Routes of Contamination

Feces
Clothing
Hands
Tools & Equipment
Footwear
Illness & Injury
Importance of Training Workers

• Fresh fruits and vegetables often receive no additional processing (such as cooking), so contamination with a pathogen can result in illness when the produce is consumed
• Workers need to use food safety practices every day to reduce produce safety risks
• Food safety practices are learned so training is key to successful implementation
EMPLOYEE TRAINING
Ranked #1 Food Safety Problem by Food Processing Industry
ALL segments of produce industry
Keep a records of training - simple

Training

▪ You are only as good as your worst employee
▪ Lack of training/retraining – major barrier to food safety
▪ Different learners
  ● Beliefs, feelings, habits interfere
    ● workers vs management
  ● Show and tell, not just tell, the best
▪ Knowledge does not equal training
  ● Confirm implementation by employees
▪ It’s all about Behavior!

CFP, 2010
Potential Training Challenges

- Time for training
- Language
- Literacy level
- Training mid-season
- Variation in hygiene practices and expectations
- Misconceptions/misperceptions
Principles of Adult Learning

• Adults need to understand why food safety practices are important and needed

• Training should:
  – Be relevant to their jobs and daily tasks
  – Outline clear expectations
  – Detail practices that reduce risks

• Effective training materials:
  – Are presented through a variety of methods with practical examples and an opportunity to practice skills
  – Include interactive and visual learning opportunities
Communication

• Good communication supports food safety by improving risk identification and reduction

• Trained workers know:
  – How to identify food safety risks
  – How to reduce risks they find
  – Who to tell if they see a food safety risk they cannot minimize or eliminate
  – That their food safety concerns will be taken seriously
Everyone Needs Training

• Implementing food safety practices is a company wide task
  – Managers, farm workers, office staff, volunteers, interns, family members

• Everyone needs to know how to identify and reduce food safety risks
  – Practices they are responsible for doing
  – How to report food safety risks they see

• Owners, managers, and supervisors should set a good example and follow company policies
Visitors

• Growers must:
  – Make visitors aware of the farm’s food safety policies
  – Provide access to toilet and handwashing facilities

• Other key information for visitors should include:
  – Areas of the farm they are allowed to visit
  – The importance of not visiting the farm when ill
  – How to wash their hands
  – Instructions to keep pets at home
Training Programs Must Include

• Principles of food hygiene and food safety
• Recognizing symptoms of foodborne illness and the importance of personal hygiene for all personnel and visitors
• Other training relevant to the worker’s job
Training Programs Must

• Be appropriate for the job and conducted upon hiring
• Include refresher training throughout the season (at least annually) or when a problem arises
• Be easily understood
• Be supervised by a qualified person
• Include a process for documenting the training
Worker Qualifications

Workers and supervisors must be qualified to conduct their job duties through:

• Education
• Training
• Experience
Training Workers to Identify and Reduce Risks at Harvest

• Evaluate contamination risks before and during harvest such as significant animal activity, presence of fecal matter, damaged crops, or extensive animal tracks
• Never harvest produce destined for the fresh market that is visibly contaminated with feces
• Never harvest dropped produce
• Only use clean harvest and packing containers
Reinforcing Food Safety Training

• Post signs and reminders
  – Place signs where they will be most effective
  – Pictures are often better than words
  – Use appropriate language

• Conduct review and refresher training sessions throughout the season or when a problem arises

• Mix it up to keep information relevant and interesting to workers
Resources Provided to Support Food Safety Practices

- Toilets
- Toilet paper
- Soap
- Clean water
- Paper towels
- Container to catch wastewater
- Garbage cans
- First Aid Kit
- Break Areas
Toilet & Handwashing Facilities

• Provide a sufficient number of toilets and sinks to meet worker and visitors’ needs
  – OSHA requires one facility per 20 workers within ¼ mile of the working area
• Facilities must be fully serviced on a regular schedule
• Toilet and handwashing facilities must be well stocked
• Facilities should be monitored every day when in use
Hand washing station requirements

- Clean and sanitary
- Clean running water
- Hand soap
- Disposable hand towels
- Trash container
- A handwashing sign
- Inspect regularly

Toilet and handwashing standards apply to facilities inside the home if they are used by harvesters and handlers.
Handwashing Stations

From Penn State, 2012
Proper Hand Wash Station

5 Gallon Thermal Container

Warm Water 100°F–120°F

Continuous Flow Spigot

Soap

Paper Towels

5 Gallon Discard Bucket
What about hand sanitizers?

- They are **NOT** a substitute for hand washing
- Not very effective on soiled hands
- If you supply them, encourage their use **AFTER** hands are washed

From Penn State, 2012
Drinking Water & Break Areas

• Workers should be provided with drinking water to reduce the risks of dehydration and heat exhaustion
• Break areas do not need to be a separate building but must be in a designated area
• Healthy workers are better able to do their jobs and implement food safety practices!
Training versus Practices

• The Produce Safety Rule includes requirements for
  – Training programs and resources that must be provided for workers and visitors
  – Practices workers must follow
• We just finished the training and resource slides
  – Do you remember what was required?
  – As a reminder, rule requirements are in the notes!
• Now we will cover practices workers must do to reduce microbial risks to fresh produce
Workers Must

- Maintain personal cleanliness
- Avoid contact with animals (other than working animals)
- Maintain gloves in a sanitary condition, if used
- Remove or cover hand jewelry that cannot be cleaned
- Not eat, chew gum, or use tobacco in an area used for a covered activity
- Notify their supervisor if they are ill
- Wash their hands
When Must Hands Be Washed?

- After using the toilet
- Before starting or returning to work
- Before and after eating and smoking
- Before putting on gloves
- After touching animals or animal waste
- Any other time hands may become contaminated
Proper Handwashing

1. **Wet hands** with water
2. **Apply soap and lather.** Be sure to wash the front and backs of hands as well as in between the fingers. Rub hands together for **AT LEAST 20 seconds**
3. **Rinse** hands thoroughly with clean water
4. **Dry** with a paper towel (turn off faucet with used towel)
5. **Throw** the paper towel in a trash can

*Antibacterial hand sanitizers CANNOT replace handwashing*
(L, 112.130(d))
Proper Use of Toilets

• All urination and defecation should be done in a toilet, NEVER in the field or nearby production areas
• Toilet paper should be deposited into the toilet, not in a garbage can or on the floor
• Always wash hands after using the toilet
Worker Clothing

• Clean clothes should be worn each day

• Footwear cleanliness is important
  – Designated footwear helps prevent cross-contamination

• Gloves, if worn, must be changed when they become contaminated or torn
  – If reusable gloves are used, clean often or as needed

• Aprons, gloves, and other food safety equipment should be removed before using the toilet and should be stored in a clean, designated area when not in use
Worker Illness

• Workers who are sick or show signs of illness can contaminate fresh produce
• Ill workers must not handle fresh produce
• Symptoms of illness can include:
  – Nausea
  – Vomiting
  – Diarrhea
  – Fever
  – Jaundice
Worker Injury

Worker injuries may pose food safety risks

- A first aid kit should be available, stocked, and monitored
- Clean and bandage all wounds
- If the wound is on the hands, a glove should be worn to create a double barrier
- Discard any produce that may be contaminated
- Clean and sanitize any items that came in contact with bodily fluids
- Report all injuries to supervisor
Monitoring

• Develop a monitoring process to ensure:
  – Workers are following food safety practices and farm policies every day
  – Facilities are available, clean, and well stocked every day

• This can include:
  – Training supervisors to observe employee behavior
  – Appointing someone to check facilities each day
  – Using monitoring logs
Corrective Actions

• Workers are not following food safety policies
  – Develop rewards to encourage positive practices
  – Implement deterrents for poor practices
• Facilities are not cleaned, restocked or are broken
  – Sanitation company contact on speed dial
  – Retraining workers or improving monitoring process
• Facilities leak in the field or packinghouse
  – Emergency plan for spills
Recordkeeping

- Document actions taken to support worker health, hygiene, and training on the farm such as:
  - Worker training programs
  - Monitoring and restocking of toilet and handwashing facilities
  - Illness and injury reporting
  - Restocking of first aid kits
Recordkeeping Tips

- Take advantage of template recordkeeping logs, but be sure to modify them to fit your farm.
Recordkeeping

• Example of documenting worker training
  – Date
  – Name of trainer
  – Materials/information covered
  – Printed names & signatures of attendees
  – Manager signature
Pick Your Own Operations
Why consider health and hygiene?

- Customers “harvesting” produce are no different than employees and should observe good hygiene practices
- Communicate awareness about food safety issues to the public
Pick Your Own Operations
Visitor Health and Hygiene Policy

- If ill, please don’t pick.
- Wash hands when appropriate
- Do not eat in fields
- No smoking
- If injured, tell farm host
- No pets – unless service animal
Summary

• Worker health and hygiene is critical to food safety because workers can introduce food safety risks
• Everyone should be trained but anyone who handles covered produce must be trained
• Visitors must be made aware of policies too
• Training should emphasize health and hygiene practices that reduce risks
• A written training program should be developed, implemented, and documented
Takeaways from this section

- Develop a health and hygiene worker training program, focused on the needs of your farm.
- Train all employees, including family members regarding worker health and hygiene.
- Use signage to make visitors aware of policies.
- Document that the training was done with a written record.