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# WRRC



## Western Regional Center to Enhance Food Safety

November 2020 Newsletter

Dear WRCEFS Community,  
Below you will find information related to relevant resources,  
WRCEFS receiving an award, surveys, job opportunities, and updates  
from our national partners and alliances.

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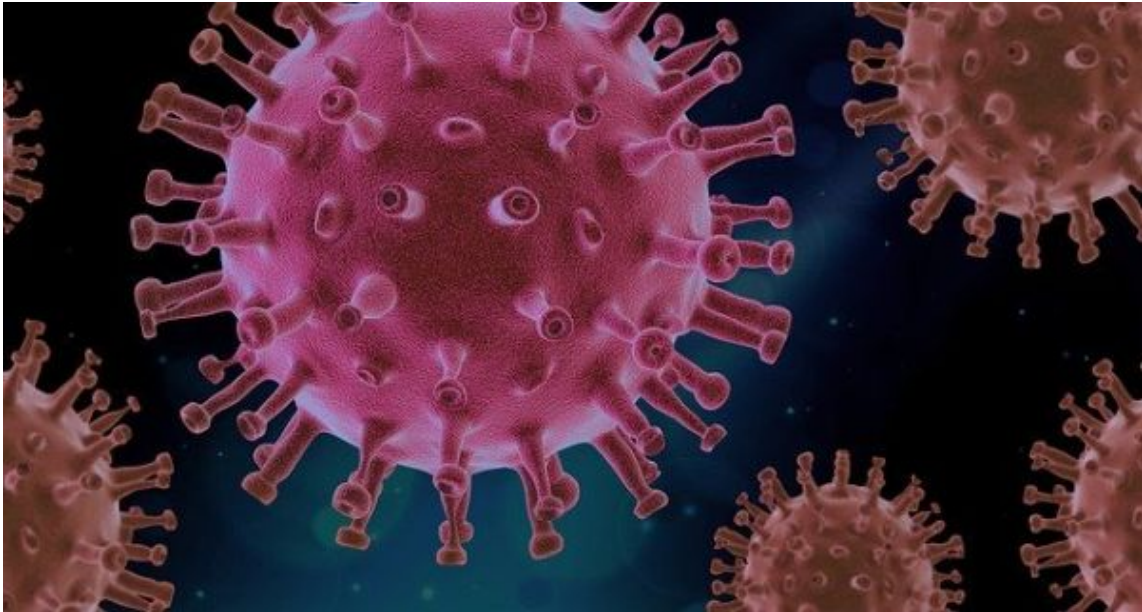
### **New WRCEFS Webinar Recording**

On November 6th, WRCEFS hosted a webinar on social media engagement featuring Dr. Connie Fisk. Common questions about social media use,

engaging with growers online, and the advantages of using social media were some of the numerous topics discussed during this 1 hour webinar. This event was recorded and can be accessed by visiting the [WRCEFS resource page](#) or [YouTube channel](#).

***Many thanks again to Dr. Connie Fisk for sharing her wealth of knowledge with us!***

Image Credit: wocintechchat.com



## COVID-19 Resources

1) The OSU team has created a page on the WRCEFS website dedicated to COVID-19 and food safety resources. We currently have many fact sheets, social media images, and links to other federal and state-specific websites and resources for viewing.

New resources available on the WRCEFS website include:

[U-Pick / Agritourism Guidance for Oregon](#)

If you have made any fact sheets, documents, or websites related to food safety and COVID-19 and want these shared within the Western region, please email us at [wrcefs@oregonstate.edu](mailto:wrcefs@oregonstate.edu).

2) North Carolina State University, Rutgers University, the University of Florida, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln have partnered to develop

FoodCoVNET. This team will be evaluating current practices through laboratory research on virus persistence, inactivation and transfer. Results collected from this team will be provided on their [website](#), which will serve as a hub information related to SARS-CoV-2 management in the food sector. For more information about the team and to view current resources, please check out their website (<https://foodcovnet.ces.ncsu.edu/welcome-to-foodcovnet/>).

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## Other Resources

### 1) New Website for Answering Key Legal Questions about FSMA Produce Safety Rule

NECAFS and the Center for Agriculture and Food Systems at Vermont Law School have collaborated to research commonly asked FSMA Produce Safety Rule (PSR) legal questions and create educational resources that provide clarity and understanding. Resources that can be found on this new website ([elsi.necafs.org](http://elsi.necafs.org)) include: an interactive map illustrating the specific of each state's PSR implementation, PSR inspections and third-party audits, PSR coverage and exemptions for farms with multiple business entities, alternatives and variances to the rule, and much more!

### 2) PSA Animated Videos

This month, the PSA released three animated videos on [handwashing](#), [biofilms](#), and [the On-Farm Readiness Review \(OFRR\)](#) with Spanish narration. Other PSA videos are available on their YouTube channel in English and Spanish.

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### Congratulations WRCEFS Members!

WRCEFS was recently awarded the Oregon State University Extension Association (OSUEA) Search for Excellence Award. This program recognizes outstanding Extension education efforts, innovation, and impact. Congratulations to all of the WRCEFS PIs, partners, and

stakeholders for your continued hard work and dedication to excellence!

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## Training and Resource Updates

1) The PSA hosted a Train-the-Trainer refresher webinar series to prepare trainers for remote delivery of the PSA Grower Training Course on Thursdays in October and November. Each week 1 hour was devoted to each module with tips included for teaching remotely. Presentations were recorded and are available on the PSA website, under the [Trainer Resources](#) tab.

2) The PSA team has modified their policy on remote delivery for PSA courses during the Coronavirus outbreak. Below are resources and documents needed to successfully deliver PSA content during this time.

- [Temporary policy](#).
- [Electronic Course Registration Form](#)
- [PSA Remote Delivery FAQ](#)
- PSA Educators' Call about remote delivery in [English](#) and slides in [Spanish](#)
- [Zoom Webinar Etiquette and Practices page](#)

3) Remote grower trainings are being offered throughout the Western region. To see a complete listing, please visit the PSA or WRCEFS websites.

4) The online PSA grower training course is now open. This three-week course can be completed at-your-own-pace and is expected to take 15-30 hours total for successful completion. To learn more about costs and key differences in the online course compared to the in-person/remote delivery courses, please visit the PSA website.



## **WRCEFS FSPCA and PSA Training Information**

WRCEFS is interested in having anyone who delivers PSA or FSPCA courses remotely to share their experiences with the rest of the group so we can learn from their activities. If you plan on offering remote courses and would be willing to share your experiences, please email Jovana Kovacevic at [wrcefs@oregonstate.edu](mailto:wrcefs@oregonstate.edu).

We understand collecting pre-/post-test data during remote training is challenging. A fillable version of these tests are now available. If interested, please email Stephanie Brown at [wrcefs@oregonstate.edu](mailto:wrcefs@oregonstate.edu) to obtain a copy. There are also polling options available in Zoom for capturing this information. If you have any specific questions on Zoom polling options, please contact us at [wrcefs@oregonstate.edu](mailto:wrcefs@oregonstate.edu).

**If you are capturing these data, please share with WRCEFS.**

For any remote courses, please continue to share all cover sheets and attendance rosters with WRCEFS. On the cover sheet, please indicate that the training was delivered remotely.

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## FDA and CDC Updates

### 1) FDA Releases Additional Resources Related to the Food Traceability Proposed Rule

The FDA released a [proposed rule](#) to establish additional traceability recordkeeping requirements for certain foods. To assist stakeholders in understanding this new proposal, the FDA is making a number of additional resources available.

The first resource is a [tool](#) designed to allow users to explore the results of the Risk-Ranking Model for Food Tracing used in the development of the Food Traceability List. In the tool users can learn more about the methods and criteria used to score commodity-hazard pairs, and the results of that scoring which was used to determine which foods to include on the [Food Traceability List](#) (FTL). In addition, the FDA has also made a number of other materials available including a ["who is subject to the rule?" flowchart](#) and a [key terms glossary](#).

The FDA has also released a [pre-recorded webinar](#) that discusses the benefits of the proposed rule, who would be subject to the rule, what the proposed key requirements are, exemptions and more.

### 2) FDA Extends Comment Deadline to Submit Information on Expansion of the Rarely Consumed Raw List for Uncommonly Consumed Produce

The FDA issued a Request for Information (RFI) in August 2020 to open a docket for data and information related to produce known to have no or low reported consumption. The Agency plans to use the data and information to consider whether

any of these produce commodities should be added to the “rarely consumed raw” (RCR) list and thereby exempt from the Produce Safety rule. The items currently on the RCR list are not subject to the requirements in the Produce Safety rule. The FDA is now extending the comment period for stakeholders to submit the requested information for an additional 60 days, through **January 8, 2021**. The FDA invites those with data, information, and/or comments regarding U.S. consumption patterns of those commodities with no or low reported consumption to submit such information to the agency through [the RFI docket](#).

### **3) FDA Issues Draft Guidance for Industry on Voluntary Disclosure of Sesame When Added as Flavoring or Spice**

On November 10th, the FDA issued a draft guidance for voluntary sesame labeling to encourage manufacturers to clearly declare sesame in the ingredient list, when it is used as a “flavoring” or “spice” or when the common or usual name does not specify sesame. This voluntary labeling guidance to industry aims to help consumers who are allergic or sensitive to sesame to avoid these products. Sesame is not one of the eight major food allergens required by the 2004 Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act to be included in specific allergen labeling, but in most cases, it does have to appear in the ingredient statement. An exception is when sesame is part of a flavoring or spice, so its presence may not be obvious to consumers. To learn more about the recommended voluntary labeling and draft guidance for industry, please click [here](#). Comments for this draft guidance are being accepted through January 11, 2021.

### **4) FDA Signals that it Intends to Extend Comment Period for the Food Traceability Information Collections Provisions**

During the second public meeting to discuss the proposed traceability rule, the FDA expressed their intent to extend the comment period for the information collection provisions. FDA also is considering whether to provide any extension of the comment period for the proposed rule. After hearing concerns from several stakeholders that more time is needed to adequately review and analyze the information collection provisions with consideration to the entire proposed rule, the agency intends to formally announce an extension to the comment period for these provisions in a forthcoming notice in the *Federal Register*. Some stakeholders also have asked the FDA to extend the comment period for the proposed rule, which is currently slated to close on **January 21, 2021**. Any extension of the proposed rule comment period would be announced through a notice in the *Federal Register* and issuance of a Constituent Update.

### **5) FDA CORE Outbreak Investigation Table Issued**

The FDA has issued the [Coordinated Outbreak Response and Evaluation \(CORE\) Investigation Table](#). This new tool will share information on FDA foodborne illness outbreak investigations, even in their early stages and as soon as FDA begins its response to the outbreak. It will give consumers early awareness of developing multistate outbreaks that are occurring across the United States. The

FDA's CORE team will use this new Investigation Table to communicate about outbreaks from beginning to end. This table will be updated once a week. It will include all outbreaks for which a CORE Response Team is coordinating an active investigation. This table will be rolled out as a 6-month pilot, during which the Agency is interested in receiving feedback and after which FDA may adjust the table, if needed.

## 6) CDC's New Outbreak Investigation Information Available

The CDC has added information on active investigations of possible multistate foodborne disease outbreaks to its website as part of a multi-agency effort to improve transparency and public communications on these investigations. The [CDC's Active Investigation Table](#) shows the number of possible Listeria, Salmonella, and Shiga toxin-producing E. coli outbreak investigations that CDC is coordinating. The table will include all active investigations, even if a food has not been linked to the outbreak. This table will be updated weekly.

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## Members



**FACES OF WRCEFS**

## Faces of WRCEFS

We have added a new section to the website called the Faces of WRCEFS. Here you can find staff spotlights, featuring our leadership team and partners. The goal of Faces of WRCEFS is to highlight the diverse expertise of our regional leaders by showcasing their stories and work related to the Food Safety Modernization Act.

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## Job Opportunities

### ***1) Produce Safety Research Specialist***

The Northeast Center to Advance Food Safety (NECAFS) seeks a Research Specialist to lead, coordinate and implement several research activities in the area of produce safety. The position reports



to NECAFS Assistant Director and works closely with the Director, workgroup members, staff from the Lead Regional Coordination Center, and regional NECAFS partners.

To learn more about the position and/or apply, please use this link: <https://www.uvmjobs.com/postings/41968>

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## ***2) Environmental Scientist***

The California Department of Food and Agriculture is seeking an Environmental Scientist to serve in their Department of Food and Agriculture. This person will conduct on-farm environmental assessments and enforcement to ensure compliance with FSMA and the PSR. The incumbent must be able to be commissioned and credentialed by FDA to perform work concerning present and future environmental issues relating to food safety and must work with industry to bring production/facility sites into compliance with FSMA requirements. The incumbent will be responsible for on-farm inspections to ensure that PSR standards are met and enforced and that effective on-farm training and communication are in place. The incumbent will use a prioritized inspectional approach to conduct specific statewide inspections and procedural activities for the PSP. The Environmental Scientist will be responsible for carrying out inspections and implementing the Produce Safety Rule in the Central Coastal Region (Region 3). The incumbent may be required to go to other locations throughout California as needed.

To learn more about the position and/or apply, please use this link: <https://www.calcareers.ca.gov/CalHrPublic/Jobs/JobPosting.aspx?JobControlId=216317>.

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## ***3) Senior Environmental Scientist- Water Microbial Specialist***

The California Department of Food and Agriculture is seeking a Senior Environmental Scientist who will act as a subject matter expert on California agriculture water systems. This will include, but not limited to: treatment of surface or ground water; technical support to growers; conduct water microbiological assessments; and, identify

and catalog agricultural water resources throughout California. The incumbent must be able to be commissioned and credentialed by FDA to perform work concerning present and future environmental issues relating to food safety and must work with industry to bring production/facility sites into compliance with FSMA requirements. The incumbent will explore data sources and options for the identification of farms using surface water, develop questions for CDFA Produce Safety inspections regarding the use of surface water, and provide technical expertise to farms using treatment systems for water.

To learn more about the position and/or apply, please use this link: <https://jobs.ca.gov/CalHrPublic/Jobs/JobPosting.aspx?JobControlId=219787>.

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#### ***4) Hawai'i Produce Safety Program Manager***

The Hawai'i Department of Agriculture is seeking a Produce Safety Program Manager who will develop a statewide produce safety compliance program that meets Federal FDA requirements and supports public health. They will act as the State's subject matter expert on FSMA and other agricultural food safety measures. Other duties include, but are not limited to, developing and implementing a program that includes inspection and compliance activities, technical assistance and industry support, producer and regulator training opportunities, and a robust evaluation process, and developing a farm inventory and explores the concept of a registration of farms that grow fruits, tree nuts, and vegetables covered by FDA's Produce Safety Rule. To learn more about the position and/or apply, please use this link: <https://www.realjobshawaii.com/jobs/Honolulu-Oahu/HAWAII-PRODUCE-SAFETY-PROGRAM-MANAGER-ID-220487-32192>.

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## **Microgreens Food Safety Research**

The University of Arkansas, Clemson University, the University of Houston, and New Mexico State University are collaborating to develop food safety training specifically for the microgreens industry. Our objectives are to characterize production and distribution aspects of the microgreens industry, determine barriers to implementation of risk management practices, use science-based evidence to develop training for microgreens growers, develop guidance documents for buyers and regulators of microgreens, and to provide education and outreach materials to producers, buyers, and regulators of microgreens.

**If you are a microgreens grower in the United States and are interested in participating in this project, please fill out [this form](#) with your contact information.**

Image Credit: Pixabay, Coloboque, 2015

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## Surveys

The WRCEFS team has received several survey share requests from our collaborators. If you or anyone in your networks fits these descriptions, please fill out and share these surveys!

1) A team at the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) has put together a survey on cooked versus raw specialty Asian produce items. The goal of this work is to help make federal food safety regulations more inclusive of diverse communities of farmers and consumers.

Survey Background: Small-scale farms throughout the US grow a diversity of produce, including many culturally important crops. New food safety regulations could impact these farms, especially immigrant and refugee farmers. Produce that is usually eaten raw, like lettuce, has stricter requirements for farmers to follow, while produce that is almost always cooked, like potatoes, could have fewer requirements. The FDA has a list of crops that are almost always cooked before eating, and these crops are exempt from federal food safety regulations. However, this list is mostly mainstream crops and does not include many types of produce consumed by diverse cultural communities in the US. This means that although some culturally important crops are hardly ever eaten

raw, they are still subject to regulation because the FDA does not have data from US consumers to show that they are usually cooked.

This survey asks consumers whether they eat each vegetable or herb as raw, cooked, or both. Based on this information, additional crops could be added to the FDA's "[rarely consumed raw](#)" list so that these crops can be exempt. Having the right crops on the list could help small-scale farmers to avoid unnecessary paperwork, costs, and inspections. If you consume any produce that is not already on the rarely consumed raw list, the research team would appreciate your help in finding out which crops could be added.

**Survey Link:** [https://ucanr.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_b9m2BMHZSfyxvGI](https://ucanr.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_b9m2BMHZSfyxvGI)

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2) A recently funded USDA SCRI project has developed an industry survey to find out the top five food safety things that keep people in the produce industry up at night. The goal is to hit as many diverse audiences as possible, including, but not limited to, buyers, auditors, inspectors, growers, packers, allied industries, consumer representatives, legal counsel, regulators, trade associations, extension, and consultants.

Survey Background: As a member of the food industry you are invited to participate in an anonymous online survey. In this survey you will be asked to rank your top five food safety risk management areas that need improvement in the produce industry. The anonymous survey will provide research data that will be used to guide future industry surveys and resource development specific to food safety. This survey should take about ten minutes to complete and there is no direct benefit to you for completing this survey. The first survey question, the informed consent, must be answered yes in order to proceed through the survey. The informed consent will give you more details about the nature of the survey, the handling of any information collected, and contact information should you have questions about this survey. Anyone involved in the produce industry who is at least 18 years of age may take this survey. Please click on the link below to enter the survey.

**Survey Link:** <https://go.rutgers.edu/4tuxsrdf>

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3) A team of researchers from Virginia Tech and North Carolina State University. are assessing the impact of COVID-19 on farmers markets nationwide. They are seeking input from farmers market managers and vendors on business practices implemented in response to COVID-19. They hope to use this data to better understand how resources can be developed for these groups.

**Survey Link:** [https://virginiatech.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_cGVIIyJZZFkSNkp](https://virginiatech.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cGVIIyJZZFkSNkp)

The research team hopes to collect data from farmers market managers and vendors, because the more responses they get, the better we will be able to understand COVID-19's impact on farmers markets.

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4) Researchers at the University of Houston are working to develop food safety training resources for hydroponic growers. They have designed a needs assessment survey and would appreciate it if hydroponic growers across the country help us with our research goals. The survey is anonymous:

[https://hrmuh.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3WSxppdefxY4fuB](https://hrmuh.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3WSxppdefxY4fuB)

*Image credit: Pixabay, Andreas Breitling, 2016*

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## **WRCEFS Communication**

### **Website**

We have given the WRCEFS website a new look for 2020. Content is constantly being added so please continue to check back with us to find new resources, training opportunities, and more!

# Social Media

Follow us on Social Media! We now have WRCEFS accounts on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#)! We will be posting updates, regional spotlights, and upcoming training opportunities on a weekly basis. We will also be sharing this information on the WRCEFS website. If you have anything that should be shared with the WRCEFS community, please contact Stephanie Brown ([stephanie.brown@oregonstate.edu](mailto:stephanie.brown@oregonstate.edu)).

## Stay Safe!



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