



College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences

## ***Illinois Fruit and Vegetable News***

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*A newsletter for commercial growers of fruit and vegetable crops*

*"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." Aristotle*

Address any questions or comments regarding this newsletter to the individual authors listed after each article or to its editor, Rick Weinzierl, 217-244-2126, [weinzierl@illinois.edu](mailto:weinzierl@illinois.edu). The *Illinois Fruit and Vegetable News* is available on the web at: <http://www.ipm.illinois.edu/ifvn/index.html>. To receive email notification of new postings of this newsletter, call or write Rick Weinzierl at the number or email address above.

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**University of Illinois Extension Specialists in Fruit & Vegetable Production & Pest Management**

### ***Upcoming Programs***

- **Webinar: Insuring Diversified and Specialty Farms: Is USDA's AGR-LITE Insurance Program Right for You? Thursday, January 20, 2011.** Begins at 10:00 a.m. (Free; online preregistration is required at <http://attra.ncat.org/webinars2011/agr-lite/>.)
- **Managing Legal Risks in the Direct Farm Business Webinars. January 25, 2011, and March 3, 2011.** Webinars will be hosted at 20 locations throughout Illinois. Contact Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant at [cvnghgrn@illinois.edu](mailto:cvnghgrn@illinois.edu) or 217-968-5583 or see <https://webs.extension.uiuc.edu/registration/default.cfm?RegistrationID=516>.
- **2011 Horseradish Growers Convention, January 27, 2011.** Gateway Conference Center, Collinsville, IL. For more information, contact Elizabeth Wahle, 618-692-9434; [wahle@illinois.edu](mailto:wahle@illinois.edu).
- **Webinar: Organic Apple Production and Marketing (A Beginner's Guide), January 27, 2011.** Begins at noon. (Free, online preregistration required.) Register at <https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/282739802>.
- **Southern Illinois Commercial Tree Fruit School, February 1, 2011.** Mt Vernon Holiday Inn, Mt. Vernon, IL. For more information, contact Elizabeth Wahle, 618-692-9434; [wahle@illinois.edu](mailto:wahle@illinois.edu).
- **Southwestern Illinois Commercial Tree Fruit School, February 2, 2011.** First Presbyterian Church, Hardin, IL. For more information, contact Elizabeth Wahle, 618-692-9434; [wahle@illinois.edu](mailto:wahle@illinois.edu).
- **Southern Illinois Commercial Vegetable School, February 9, 2011.** Mt Vernon Holiday Inn, Mt. Vernon, IL. For more information, contact Elizabeth Wahle, 618-692-9434; [wahle@illinois.edu](mailto:wahle@illinois.edu).
- **Western Illinois Fruit and Vegetable School, February 17, 2011.** Adams County Extension Office, 330 S. 36<sup>th</sup>, Quincy, IL Contact Mike Roegge at [roeggem@illinois.edu](mailto:roeggem@illinois.edu) or the Adams/Brown Extension Unit at 217-223-8380.
- **IL-WI Stateline Fruit and Vegetable Conference, February 21, 2011.** Union, IL, contact Maurice Ogutu at [ogutu@illinois.edu](mailto:ogutu@illinois.edu).
- **2011 MOSES Organic Farming Conference, February 24-26, 2011.** LaCrosse, WI, see <http://www.mosesorganic.org/conference.html>
- **Illinois Small Fruit and Strawberry Schools, March 1-2, 2011.** Mt. Vernon, IL. Details to be provided in the Illinois Fruit and Vegetable News.

## ***Regional Updates***

**In northern Illinois**, winter weather patterns over the last month have been somewhat “normal” (if there is such a thing) ... a few below-zero night-time temperatures and occasional snows ... assessment of any impacts on pests or perennial crops will need to wait until at least a few more weeks have passed. Growers in the region are encouraged to attend upcoming educational programs in the region. The *Stateline Fruit and Vegetable Conference* is set for Monday, February 21, 2011, at Donley’s Village Banquets, 8512 S. Union Road Union, IL. For more information, see <https://webs.extension.uiuc.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=5306> or contact the McHenry County Extension Office at 815-338-3737 or Maurice Ogutu at 708-352-0109 ([ogutu@illinois.edu](mailto:ogutu@illinois.edu)). Later the same week the *Kankakee County Vegetable Growers School* is set for Friday, February 25, 2011, at the University of Illinois Kankakee County Extension Office, 1650 Commerce Drive Bourbonnais, IL. For more information, contact James Theuri at 815-933-8337 ([jtheu50@illinois.edu](mailto:jtheu50@illinois.edu)) or see <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/kankakee/news/news19758.html>.

Maurice Ogutu (708-352-0109; [ogutu@illinois.edu](mailto:ogutu@illinois.edu))

## ***New Food Safety Modernization Act Closes the Gap on GAP***

On Tuesday, January 4, 2011, President Obama signed into law the Food Safety Modernization Act (bill S.510) that gives the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) the authority to order recalls of food products, increase inspections, and boost record keeping for produce and food processing and packaging companies. Prior to this bill major food-manufacturing facilities have been inspected about once every ten years. Under the new legislation, inspections will be accelerated to once every five years for low risk foods and once every three years for “high-risk” foods. High-risk products are based on their ingredient and history of their recall. Section 401 of the act directs FDA to apply funding to safety and enforcement and significantly increase field staff over the next five years. The price tag is expected to reach about \$1.4 billion over five years, which will come mostly from fees tied to increasing the number of inspections.

### **What this Act Changes**

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), Good Handling Practices (GHP) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) are sets of guidelines that have been developed by many large food processors and large produce farms, either voluntarily or mandated by their buyers, to minimize risk of food contamination during production, handling, processing, packaging, and transportation. The USDA and several independent inspection agencies have provided services for a fee to inspect operations and facilities to ensure compliance with their developed guidelines and issue a certificate of inspection. Under the old system, the government had no jurisdiction to set or enforce compliance with the company’s guidelines.

The bill requires farms and food processing facilities to develop, implement, and keep records of GAP to help the FDA trace food items that have been or need to be recalled. But farms and processing plants with net revenues of less than \$500,000 per year that sell directly to consumers at the farm, at local markets, and community supported Agricultural Programs (CSAs) will be exempt from this bill. This exemption has created concern among many large producers and processors because they see the potential for risk to be similar regardless of the size of the operation.

The law also covers produce grown and processed outside the US.

### **What it Includes**

- **Development of science-based standards that minimize the risk.** The law is expected to allow FDA to establish minimum standards for the safe production, harvesting, and processing of fruits and vegetables. Currently there are no uniform safety standards available. The industry is pushing for harmonized standards that will apply to all or to be specific for each product.
- **Preventive measures:** Farm and food processing facilities must develop and implement a written plan that outlines the potential risk that could affect the safety of the produce, steps that need to be taken to prevent the risk, and corrective steps in case a risk has occurred.
- **Issuance of mandatory recalls:** FDA, for the first time, will have the authority to order, instead of suggest, a recall of food products if it deems them unsafe for consumption. Prior to this Act, With the exception of infant formula, the FDA had to rely on food manufacturers and distributors to voluntarily recall contaminated foods.

- **A product labeling system** will be required to allow trace-back of produce to a farm and even to the harvest date and lot on that farm.
- **Conducting surprise inspections:** The new law calls for at least doubling of the frequency of inspections and for the inspections to be based on potential points of risk. Foods and facilities that pose higher risks will be inspected more frequently. It has not been sorted out yet as to who will do the inspection, but it is likely that USDA along with third party (licensed?) inspectors and inspection agencies will be responsible, because USDA is already providing inspection of farms that have developed GAP programs voluntarily.

### **What should you do if you are exempt?**

The simplest answer is to do nothing, but that is not the smartest response. The law does not protect you from being liable, in case of contamination of your product, just because you are exempt. Food safety should be everyone's concern. The 2010 revised report of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) indicated that 48 million people get sick from food poisoning each year, 135,000 of them are hospitalized, and 3000 of them die in the US each year. The CDC estimates that about 90% of the estimated illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths are due to the following pathogens: *Salmonella*, norovirus, *Campylobacter*, *E. coli* O157, *Listeria*, and *Clostridium*, all of which are known to contaminate fresh fruits and vegetables. Massive recalls of spinach in 2006, peanut products in 2009, and eggs in 2010, all involving deadly contaminants, illustrate the need to develop GAP plans to enhance the safety of food produced on our farms.

### **Where to start with GAP?**

It is not yet known if the FDA will issue a harmonized set of GAP guidelines that farmers will be required to follow or if there will be flexibility in the guidelines for each product and operation. Many believe that it will take about five years for the process to be streamlined. In the meantime, don't wait for the FDA, and don't ignore your responsibility to produce your own guidelines even if you are exempt and even if you have never had a problem. Know all the details about how to grow, harvest, and package your product. Four major areas of GAP that need to be looked at very carefully: (1) compost and pesticides; (2) irrigation and wash water; (3) workers, facilities, and equipment hygiene; and (4) postharvest handling practices. Look for specific details about these topics in upcoming issues of this newsletter.

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## ***Fruit Production and Pest Management***

### ***2011 Midwest Tree Fruit and Small Fruit Sprays Guides Available Online***

For those who want to look over changes in pesticide registrations/recommendations online before we in Illinois distribute the new tree fruit and small fruit spray guides at our upcoming programs, these publications are now available online. Check <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1282.pdf> for the **2011 Midwest Tree Fruit Spray Guide**, and use <http://www.ag.purdue.edu/hla/Hort/Documents/ID-169-2011.pdf> to see the **2011 Midwest Small Fruit and Grape Spray Guide**. These are the updated spray guides produced by extension specialists in the Midwest, especially IL, IN, IA, KY, OH, and WI.

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## ***Vegetable Production and Pest Management***

### ***Overall Decline in Corn Flea Beetle Populations?***

In a recent conversation with Dr. Jerald (Snook) Pataky, he noted that a sweet corn seed representative recently reported decreased observations of corn flea beetles and Stewart's wilt in sweet corn at many locations. Although some systematic monitoring efforts are needed before these initial observations are accepted as hard and fast facts for the region as a whole, there is a good reason to expect that numbers are down, at least for the short term.

Corn flea beetles overwinter as adults and move to newly emerging corn (sweet corn and field corn) as it comes up in the spring. They feed on seedlings and transmit the bacterium that causes Stewart's wilt – if they picked it up from infested corn plants the previous summer and fall. One of the ways that sweet corn producers have protected plants from flea beetle damage and Stewart's wilt in recent years has been the use of seed treatments that contain a systemic neonicotinoid insecticide. Examples of such seed treatments used on various crops include Gaucho, Poncho, and Cruiser. Over the past few years, nearly all of the field corn planted in IL and surrounding states has received a neonicotinoid seed treatment, and the vast majority of corn flea beetles coming from overwintering sites has fed on treated seedlings ("treated" by way of systemic uptake of the insecticides) and been killed. In much the same way that widespread use of Bt corn has reduced populations of European corn borer populations in the region, it appears that neonicotinoid seed treatments have reduced overall populations of corn flea beetles. This does NOT mean that sweet corn growers in southern IL (where flea beetles overwinter more successfully because temperatures are warmer) should ignore the possibility of flea beetles transmitting Stewart's wilt to susceptible varieties this spring, but it does suggest that this insect – and the disease it transmits – may be becoming less of a problem. As we move into and through the spring planting season, I'll be interested to hear from sweet corn growers about their observations on the prevalence of corn flea beetles and the severity of Stewart's wilt in their fields. As the next few seasons come and go, we also need to keep in mind that the very widespread use of seed treatments that control a very large portion of the corn flea beetles in the region may also lead to resistance in this insect.

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### ***Capture LFR for Root Maggot Control in Cabbage and Related Brassica Crops***

The 2011 Midwest Vegetable Production Guide (<http://www.btny.purdue.edu/Pubs/ID/id-56/>) includes a listing for Capture LFR ("Liquid Fertilizer Ready"), a 1.5 pound per gallon formulation of bifenthrin, for application to the seed furrow in direct-seeded head and stem Brassicas (broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, cabbage, and related crops). Although this is not a new registration for the 2011 season, it is the first time we've listed it in this guide. The label calls for application of 0.39 to 0.49 fluid ounces of Capture LFR per 1,000 linear feet of row. Although the product label includes a general statement about application as a transplant water drench at the time of setting, no specific statement on such an application is provided for Brassica crops. Growers who wish to use it as a transplant drench on these crops are encouraged to check with their local FMC representative. Cabbage maggot and seedcorn maggot damage Brassica crops more often in northern Illinois than in southern Illinois. Where growers have had difficulty controlling these insects (particularly cabbage maggot) because of resistance to Lorsban and/or diazinon, Capture LFR represents an alternative mode of action and may provide better control. The Capture LFR label is available online on CDMS at <http://www.cdms.net/LDat/ld7DQ009.pdf>.

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### ***Less seriously ... haunting questions***

Can you cry under water?

Why do you have to 'put your two cents in'... but it's only a 'penny for your thoughts'? Where's that extra penny going?

Once you're in heaven, do you get stuck wearing the clothes you were buried in for eternity?

What disease did cured ham actually have?

How is it that we put man on the moon before we figured out it would be a good idea to put wheels on luggage?

Why is it that people say they 'slept like a baby' when babies wake up every two hours?

Why do people pay to go up tall buildings and then put money in binoculars to look at things on the ground?

Why do doctors leave the room while you change? They're going to see you naked anyway.

***University of Illinois Extension Specialists in Fruit Production and Pest Management***

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