

Understanding Fresh Produce Purchasing Considerations to Increase Access by Local Producers to Virginia's Market Sectors



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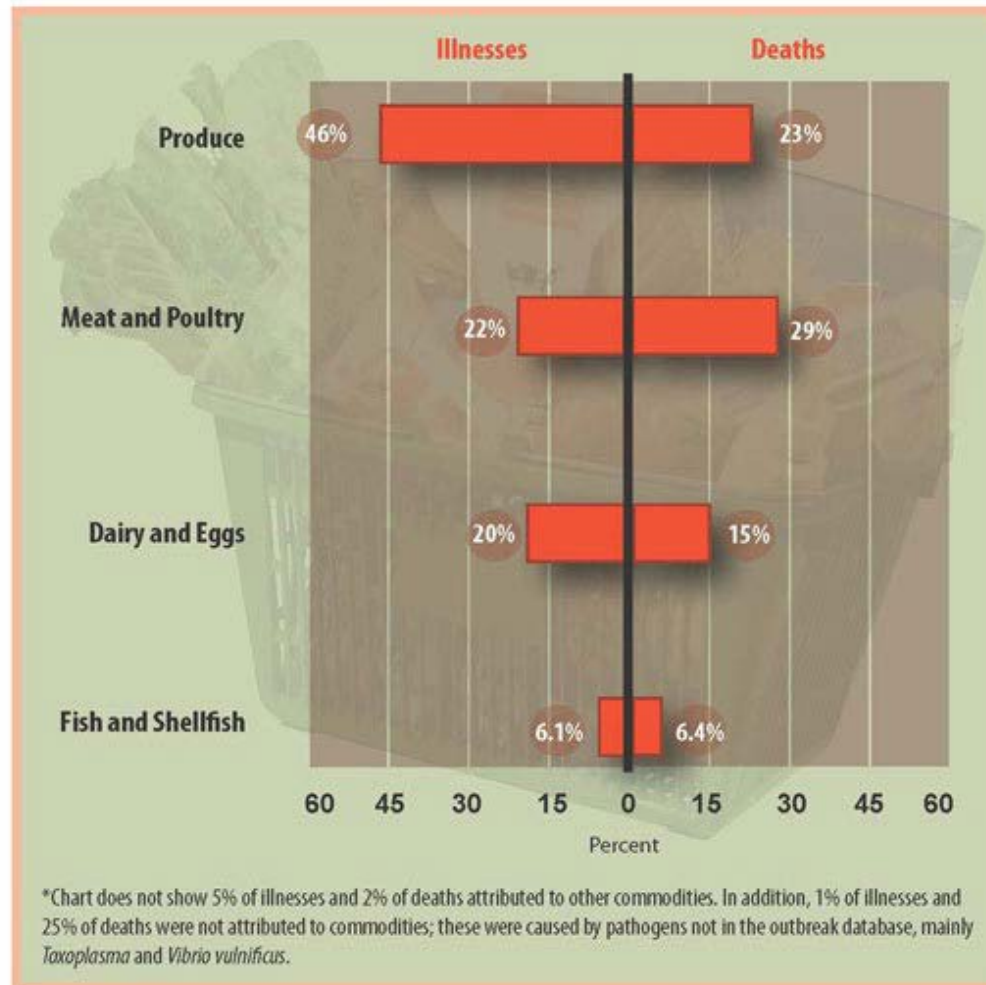


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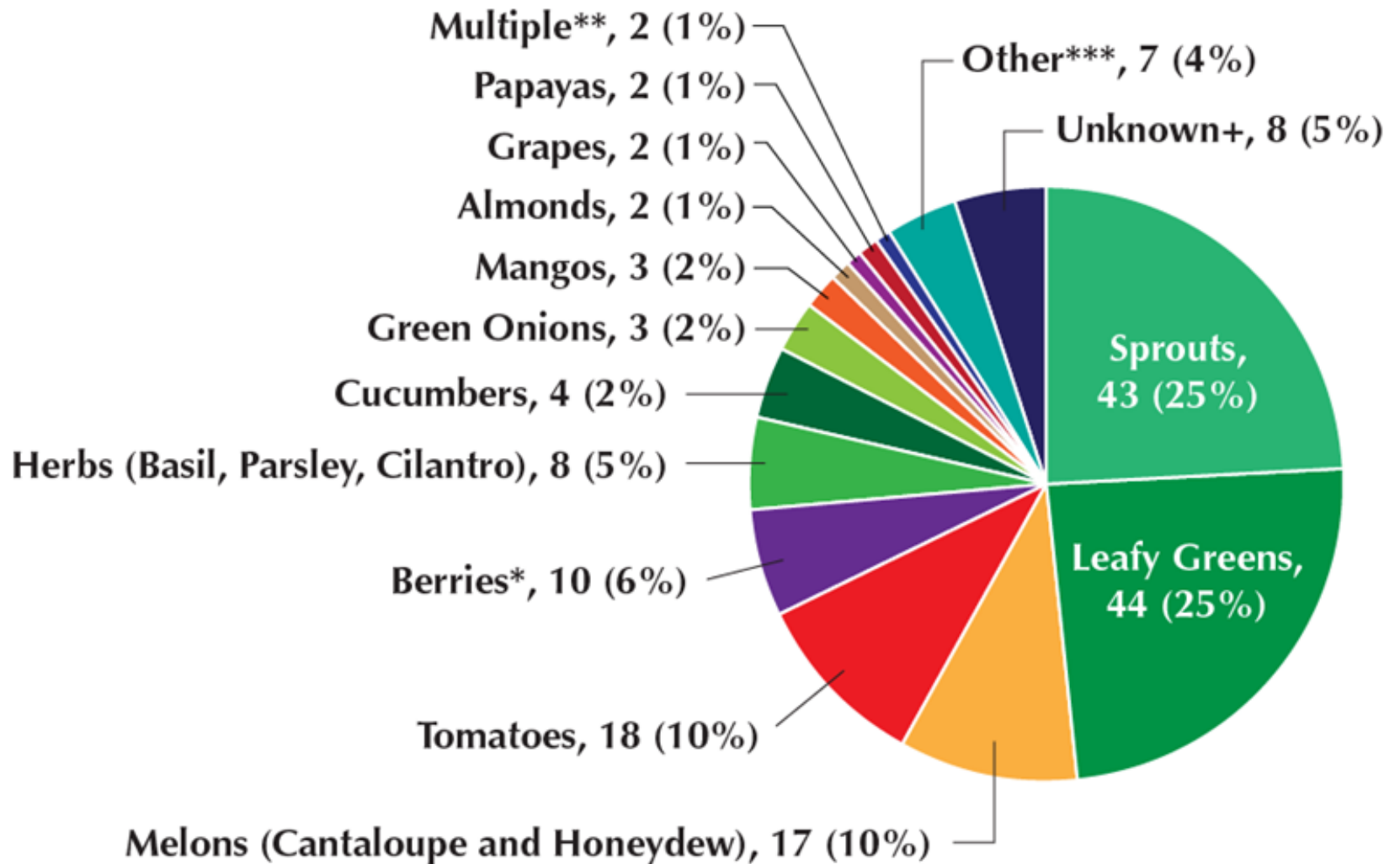
SETTING THE STAGE

Figure 1. Contribution of different food categories to estimated domestically-acquired illnesses and deaths, 1998-2008*



Source: Painter JA, Hoekstra RM, Ayers T, Tauxe RV, Braden CR, Angulo FJ, Griffin PM. Attribution of foodborne illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths to food commodities by using outbreak data, United States, 1998–2008. *Emerg Infect Dis* [Internet]. 2013 Mar [date cited]. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3201/eid1903.111866>

FDA Outbreaks Linked to Produce Contamination Likely Prior to Retail: 1996–2014

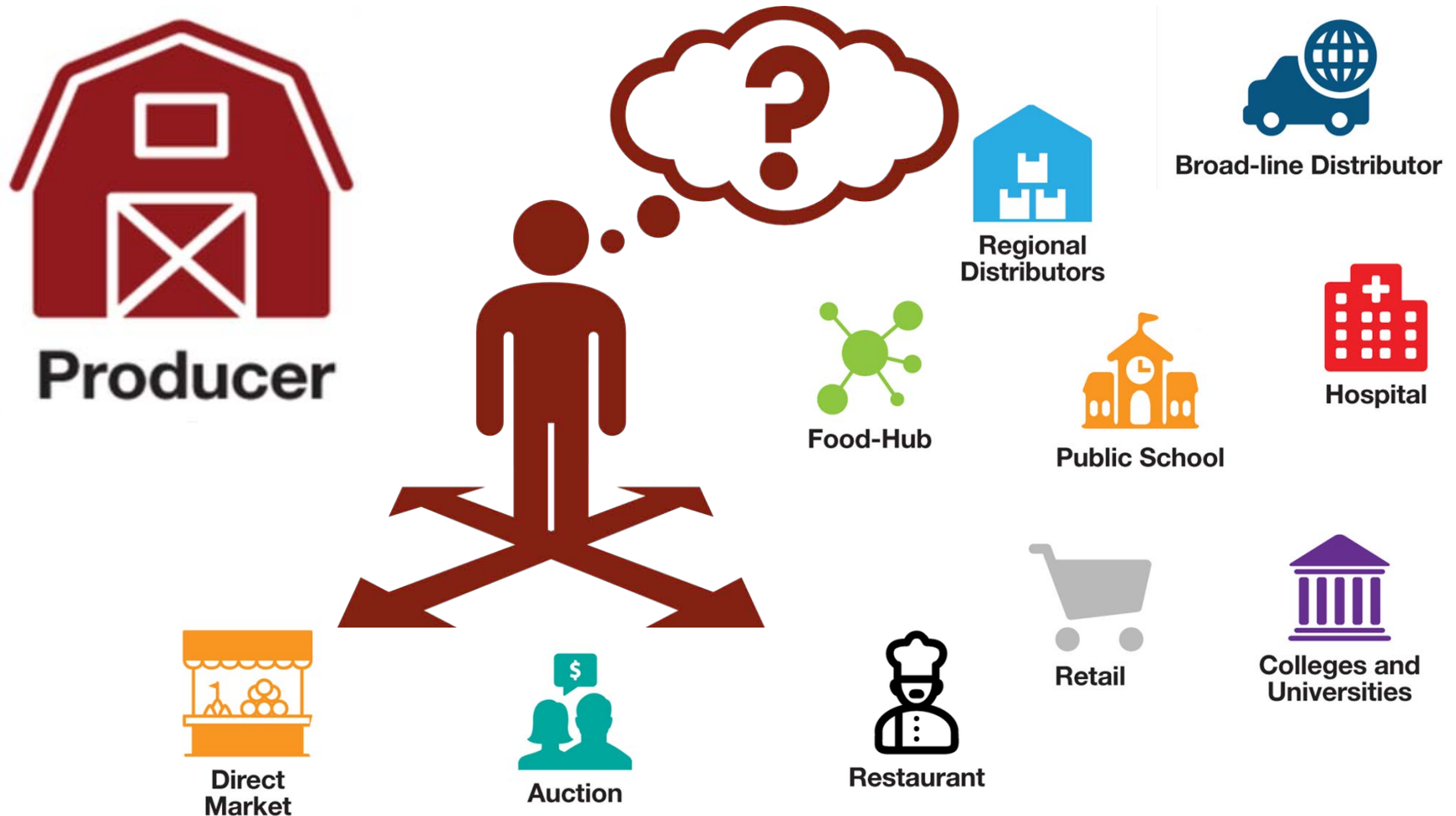


SETTING THE STAGE

- Given these food safety concerns, there are various buyer expectations, policies, and requirements
- These pose significant barriers for producers trying to tap into new markets (scale up)
- This is especially true for institutional buyers, constrained by corporate policies



HOW DO PRODUCERS NAVIGATE BUYER FOOD SAFETY REQUIREMENTS WHEN A “ONE SIZE FITS ALL” STANDARD DOESN’T EXIST???



VIRGINIA MARKET ASSESSMENT

- In 2015-2016, Virginia Fresh Produce Food Safety Team conducted a state-wide market assessment
- To better understand current expectations and perceptions across multiple market sectors in Virginia
 - Direct markets
 - Colleges/Universities
 - Hospitals
 - Public Schools (K-12)
 - Restaurants
 - Retailers
 - Wholesalers



VIRGINIA MARKET ASSESSMENT

On-line Survey Questions focused on principal buyers of various markets:

- Purchasing roles
- Produce sources used
- Frequency of purchasing during peak and off season
- Annual fresh produce expenditures
- Virginia-grown produce sourced
- Purchasing Priorities & Barriers
- Food Safety Requirements
- Recommendations



VIRGINIA MARKET ASSESSMENT

- Online survey coupled with subsequent Focus Groups (FG)
- Response rate lower than anticipated within some sectors like hospitals and colleges & universities
- Supplemented survey and FG data with literature review and recorded interviews to corroborate



VIRGINIA MARKET ASSESSMENT

Survey data used to:

- Offer recommendations for both producers and buyers to **bring better alignment** between on-farm food safety practices and requirements within different marketplaces
- Provide stronger foundation for on-going training and outreach efforts
- Create cross sector comparison and sector factsheets, infographics, project report, and content for FPFST website and social media



KEY LESSONS LEARNED

- Although survey specifically targeted food safety perceptions and expectations, other constraints related to purchasing were consistently mentioned
- Food safety certifications and liability ranked higher in public schools, colleges & universities, and hospitals
- Hospitals exemplified most complex system with extensive hierarchy of management, personnel, and policy hurdles

Product characteristic ranked from most to least important across all sectors

- Quality
- Availability
- Price
- Delivery Consistency
- Product Variety
- Quantity
- Food Safety Certification
- Grower Proximity to Buyer (market)
- Product Liability Insurance

KEY LESSONS LEARNED

- Across sectors and sometimes within sectors, food safety requirements were inconsistent given varied procurement strategies, i.e. schools
- Different kinds of certifications required
- Where certifications were not required, distributors purchasing local produce often verified supplier adherence to food safety practices and overcame logistical challenges
- In other cases, buyers purchasing directly often relied solely on verbal assurances and established relationships to address food safety and quality assurances



KEY LESSONS LEARNED

- Regardless of market sector, purchasing direct from producer was prioritized, but logistical hurdles faced were also substantial
- Perception that intermediaries like food hubs could streamline access to local foods
- Regardless of market sector, **communication of requirements, expectations, needs, and priorities by buyers to producers was THE KEY take-home message!**
- **Communication by producers to buyers** as to how they meet or don't meet marketplace criteria was **also critically important!**



We are here to assist you
through the process!



<https://ext.vt.edu/offices.html>



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Meat, Poultry, & Seafood Handling:

- Aquaculture and Good Aquaculture Practices (GAQP)
- Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) and Risk Assessment

On-Farm Fresh Produce Food Safety:

- Enhancing the Safety of Locally Grown Produce (Direct Marketer farmers)
- Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)(Best production, harvest, and post-harvest handling practices)
- GAP Certification Preparation Mentoring
- Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Compliance Training for Produce Rule
- Animal production and antibiotic resistance in livestock

Marketplace Handling:

- Enhancing the Safety of Locally Grown Produce (Vendors & Market Managers)

Processing:

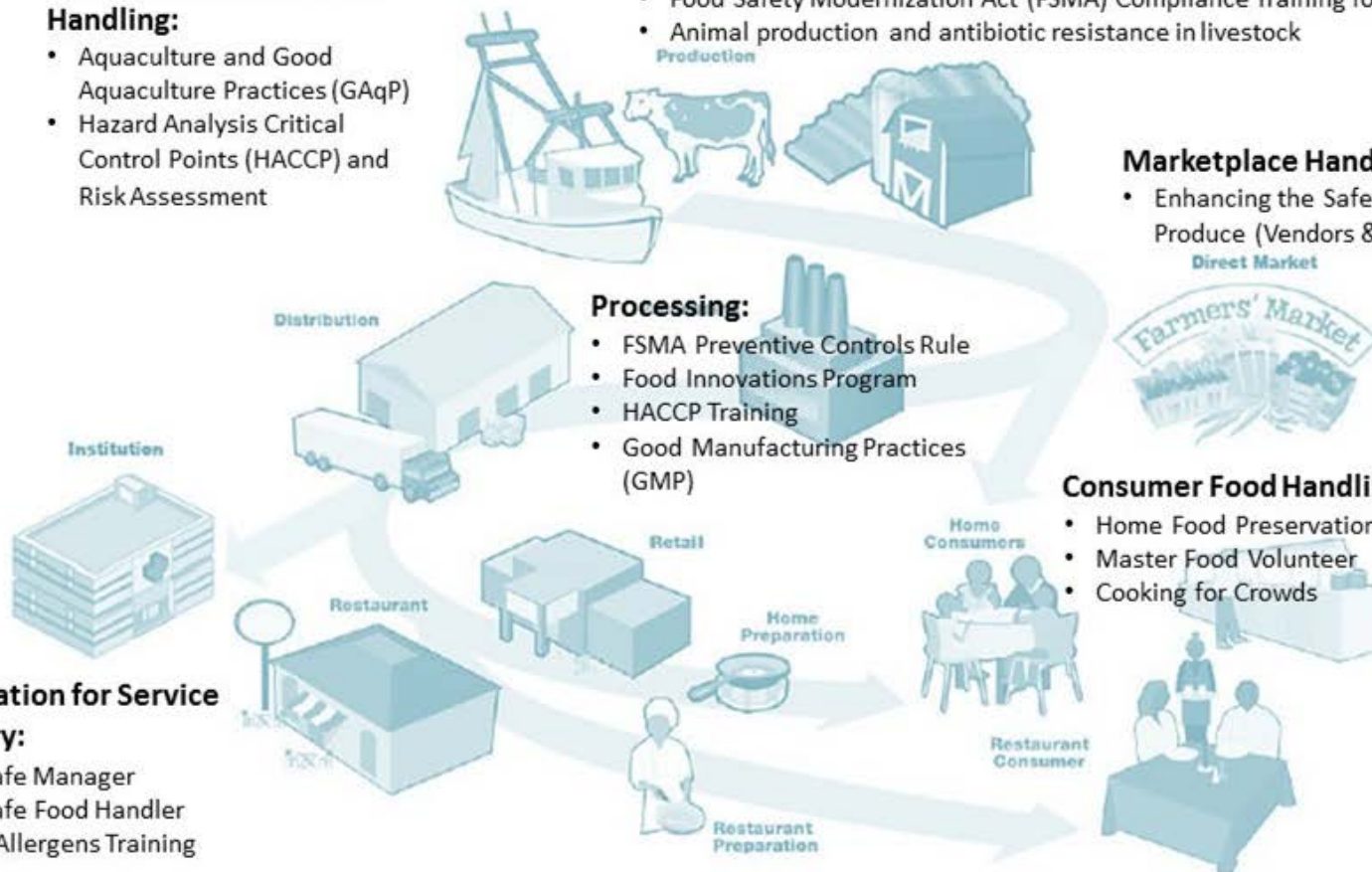
- FSMA Preventive Controls Rule
- Food Innovations Program
- HACCP Training
- Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)

Consumer Food Handling:

- Home Food Preservation
- Master Food Volunteer
- Cooking for Crowds

Preparation for Service Industry:

- ServSafe Manager
- ServSafe Food Handler
- Food Allergens Training

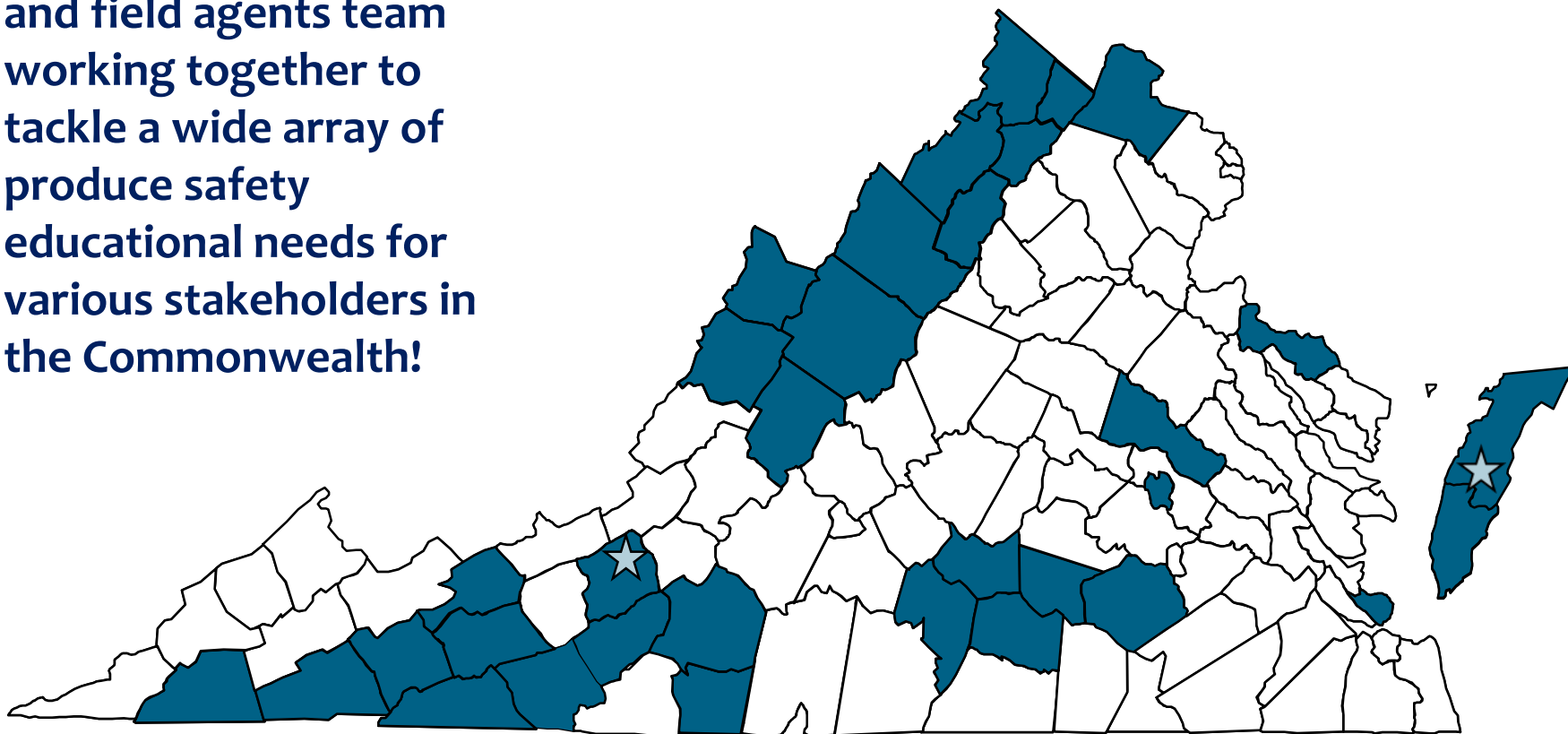


Adapted from CDC "Food Production Chain: How Food Gets Contaminated" graphic.
<http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/outbreaks/investigating-outbreaks/production-chain.html>

VCE Food Safety Programming from Farm to Fork

VIRGINIA'S FRESH PRODUCE FOOD SAFETY TEAM

VCE extension specialists
and field agents team
working together to
tackle a wide array of
produce safety
educational needs for
various stakeholders in
the Commonwealth!



RESOURCES

- **Virginia Produce Safety website**
- Has wealth of resources to help producers navigate **various levels** of food safety requirements
- **Producer Accessing Markets** section!
- Blog/Calendar of events
- Research Projects



<http://www.hort.vt.edu/producesafety/>

ACCESSING MARKETS RESOURCES



HOME ABOUT ▾ EXPLORE ▾ NEWS ▾ RESEARCH

Produce Safety: Producers

Accessing Virginia's Markets

Despite the growing demand and support for local food, there can often be significant barriers for growers trying to tap into new markets, given specific food safety expectations, policies, and requirements. This trend is particularly true for institutional buyers, who are often constrained by far-reaching institutional and/or corporate policies. While there are lots of market opportunities in Virginia, navigating the landscape for produce growers can be daunting, since buyer food safety requirements are not a "one size fits all" standard for all markets. To better understand current expectations and perceptions across multiple market sectors in Virginia, and help producers better align their on-farm practices with these marketplaces, the Fresh Produce Food Safety Team conducted a state-wide market assessment in 2015-2016.



The purpose of this section of the website is to provide you with the results of that work, in order to offer insights into various buyer specifications and associated priorities, barriers, and recommendations of different market outlets, especially if you are considering selling to a particular market. Information is

Producer Links

- [Producer Home](#)
- [Producer Accessing Markets](#)
- [Producer Decision Tree](#)
- [Producer FAQs](#)
- [Producer Resources](#)



<http://www.hort.vt.edu/producesafety/producers/markets.html>

QUESTIONS??????

