Opening Markets: Identifying barriers and developing guidance for GAP certification

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“We don’t have an unsafe food supply… but we have gone overboard with this food safety business… we become preoccupied with things that don’t generate any product, takes people’s time, …money,…energy and it saps their enthusiasm…. so I am very frustrated in that sense.”

http://gapsmallfarmsnc.wordpress.com/
Objective

To observe current on-farm practices and cost of GAP implementation to better understand barriers, and direct strategies and resources to better enable market access.

Farm to School Program

- Sourcing local produce
- Requires USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification
Methods

- Quantitative and qualitative data
- Case study
  - 12 NC farms (≤ 30 acres)
- One hour visits
  - Onsite evaluation
  - Risk score survey

- Self diaries
  - Flip cam
- Open source research
- Determining the economic impact and benefit
  - Tracking activities

Yin, 1997; Hamel, 1993

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The process

- The USDA GAP audit consists of 7 sections
  - PART 1 & 2
  - PART 3 & 4
- Cost ($92/hour)
  - Conducting the audit, travel time and prep time
- Scoring
  - 80% to pass
## Farm characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farm</th>
<th>Organic certification</th>
<th>House bathroom</th>
<th>Dog on property</th>
<th>Livestock on property</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Well water</th>
<th>No fencing</th>
<th>Risk score</th>
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## Results
Risk score

- Preliminary onsite surveys were conducted to compare current practices to USDA GAP guidelines resulting in a risk practice score
  - Focusing on risk reduction practices

- 81 questions selected from General section and
  - Part 1 - Farm review
  - Part 2 - Field harvest and field packing activities
  - Part 3 - House packing facility
  - Part 4 - Storage and transportation

A toilet facility is readily available for all workers in the field

A previous land use assessment has been performed

Water applied to harvested product is as safe as possible

Crop production areas are monitored for the presence or signs of wild and/or domestic animals entering the land

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Barriers from the literature

- Interpretation of GAP questions
- Education
- Time
- Documentation
- Water
  - Testing and treatment

Violaris et al., 2008; Da Cruz et al., 2006; Yapp & Fairman, 2006; Taylor, 2001

Barriers

- Livestock with produce (50%)
- Animals used for weed/pest/wildlife control (58%)
  - How do you mitigate feces?
Barriers

- House bathrooms (50%)
  - Signs or cleaning schedule

Barriers

- Manure application
  - Raw manure (58%)
  - Composted manure (16%)
  - No manure (25%)
- National organic program guidelines
Barriers

- Traceability
  - Farmer’s markets (83%)
  - Community supported agriculture (75%)
  - Wholesale (33%)
  - Restaurants (25%)

- Facilities
  - Open (75%)
  - Enclosed (25%)
Barriers

- Storage
- Cleaning/sanitizing packaging (50%)
  - Reusing wax boxes

Limitations

- Farm selection and size
- Documentation
- Time of season
Conclusions

- Good Agricultural Practices certification can be attained
- Ultimately reducing risks on the farm regardless of GAP implementation is important

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Thank You

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