



Safe Wisconsin Produce

Fall 2022

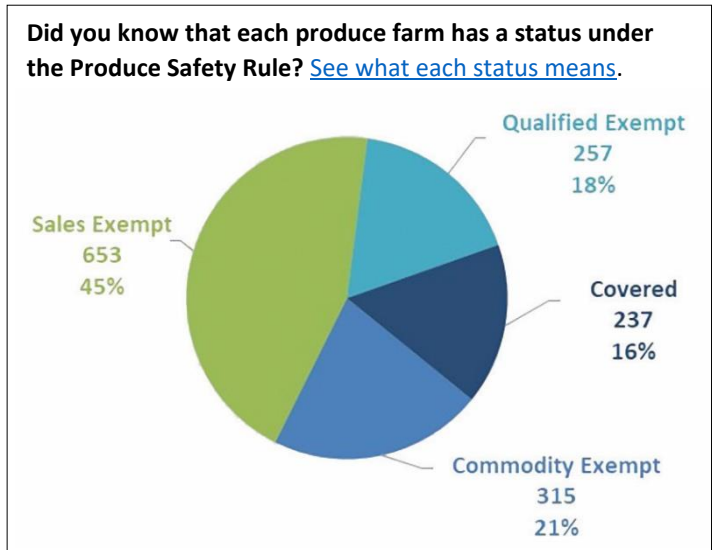
Produce Survey Results & What's New for 2023

Thank you to all who participated in the 2022 Safe Wisconsin Produce (SWP) survey. Your responses help us provide services that are essential to farmers and a system that ensures Wisconsinites have safe and enticing food. Since SWP began in 2015, it has directly confirmed 1,462 active produce farms in the state.

What does the total inventory of verified produce farms look like?

While SWP strives to reach 100% of identified produce farms annually, the actual number of produce farms is estimated to be more than double that amount. In fact, according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service, Wisconsin ranks in the top 10 nationally on multiple counts:

- **Fourth** (5.8%) in percent of produce acres harvested after California (26.8%), Idaho (8.1%) and Washington (7.5%).
- **Fifth** in number of produce farms (3,157) after California (4,858), Pennsylvania (4,218), New York (3,544) and North Carolina (3,456).
- **Top 10** by the number of acres for 46 different types of produce harvested.
- **First** nationwide in production of ginseng.



CLEANING VS. SANITIZING: The Produce Safety Rule requires that you “clean, and when necessary and appropriate, sanitize all food contact surfaces” (Subpart L §112.123(d)(1)). **CLEANING** involves physically removing soil from a food contact surface, sometimes with water and detergent, and should be done, at minimum, when a surface is visibly dirty. **SANITIZING** is always done after cleaning and must be done with a sanitizer labeled for use on food contact surfaces and mixed to the appropriate concentration. [Learn more](#)

SWP Aims to Simplify Survey Process

Farms that are already verified will receive a statement of their farm’s information and are asked to make any changes or corrections.

Farms that have not yet been verified, are temporarily inactive, or that have not reported in three years will receive both the SWP Activity Survey and 2023 Produce Survey and Registry in one communication. Farms are asked to complete the first part, and then proceed to the second part as applicable for the farm’s operation. All farms will have the option to sign up for our non-regulatory services at that time.

Education, Outreach & Technical Assistance

Jan. 23 to March 6, 2023, (Mondays) 3:30-5:30 p.m.

- Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) Grower Training with Northeast Wisconsin Technical College.
- Virtual. Contact Valerie Dantoin at valerie.dantoin@nwtc.edu to register.
- \$160.30/person, earning PSA certificate and one college credit for attending.

Jan. 24, 2023, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

- PSA Grower Training sponsored by DATCP and Wisconsin Farmers Union.
- Wrightstown Village Hall, 352 High St., Wrightstown, WI
- Free, [sign up here](#)

Jan. 30-31, 2023

- Wisconsin Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Conference
- Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells, WI
- SWP will have an educational booth available.

Feb. 7-9, 2023

- Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association & UW-Madison Division of Extension Grower Education Conference & Industry Show
- Holiday Inn Hotel & Convention Center, 1001 Amber Ave., Stevens Point, WI
- SWP intends to have an educational booth available.

Feb. 23-25, 2023

- 34th annual Organic Farming (Marbleseed) Conference
- La Crosse, WI
- SWP will have an educational booth available and intends to serve on a panel discussing the importance of food safety verification processes.

February to March, 2023

- Additional PSA Grower Trainings
- Baldwin, Mondovi, Black River Falls and Wausau, WI. Details to be announced.
- Check safeproduce.wi.gov or contact SWP to learn more.

Even if you have already received PSA training it remains important as food producers, handlers and consumers to continue to gain knowledge on the best food safety practices. Subpart C § 112.21 of the Produce Safety Rules states, “All personnel (including temporary, part time, seasonal, and contracted personnel) who handle covered produce or food contact surfaces, or who are engaged in the supervision thereof, must receive adequate training, as appropriate to the person's duties, upon hiring, and periodically thereafter, at least once annually.”

The SWP [resource page](#) includes a range of training materials. Refer to the FDA fact sheet: Required training for covered farms ([English](#) | [Spanish](#)) for guidance on which trainings are needed on your farm. SWP anticipates Subpart E-Agricultural Water to be finalized in the coming months; with this, we expect supplemental education to be released.

‘An Expectation of Compliance without Education is Unfair’

— *Anonymous grower*

The world is constantly changing, and what drives those changes is knowledge. Wisconsin produce farmers are fixtures within our communities and progress can benefit them, but they cannot grow without guidance. Proper implementation of produce safety requires education, instruction and support.

Our work at Safe Wisconsin Produce is not unlike other roles that benefit our community: teachers, social workers and health professionals. We all contribute to identifying challenges and finding solutions to create a strong, healthy environment for the people of Wisconsin.

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2022 Onsite Visit Overview

The Safe Wisconsin Produce (SWP) program has a primary objective of providing opportunities for education, outreach and technical assistance to all produce farms. The program promotes an understanding of the Produce Safety Rule, its required elements, and its relevance to specific operations as a foundation for all produce farms.

In 2022, the SWP team visited more than 300 farming operations. In addition, the team also connected with dozens of other establishments to understand their structuring and confirm whether they should be included in the group's efforts. Farm visits were made statewide as is illustrated below (**image 1**) over the course of eight months (**image 2**). Please note that while northern Wisconsin appears to have no activity, that portion of the state contains fewer farms due to the natural environment and regional population.

To best connect with farms in an effective, meaningful manner, a diverse, multi-strategy approach was implemented. Farms received outreach through at least one of the following activities:

- **On-Farm Readiness Reviews.** Free, voluntary, conversation-based assessments of specific farming practices. Farms are provided with resources at the conclusion, but observations and discussions are generally not documented.
- **Safe Wisconsin Produce Audits.** Free, voluntary, documented assessment of specific farming practices in reference to the Produce Safety Rule. These are available for farms that are exempt and, therefore, not eligible for inspection.
- **Collaborative Workshops.** Onsite presentations often presented by multiple agencies/divisions on specific topics. Examples include a completed series of Hmong-targeted field days and a potential water assessment group activity.
- **Onsite Verification/Resource Visits.** Drop-in farm visits with operations that SWP has been otherwise unable to connect with. These are utilized to share physical resources, to make introductions, and to verify/confirm farm specifics to aid in future outreach, inspection planning, and required program reporting.

All of these options, as well as participation in the SWP Farm Registry, will continue into the 2023 growing season. If you are interested and eligible for any of these resources, please contact the SWP team.

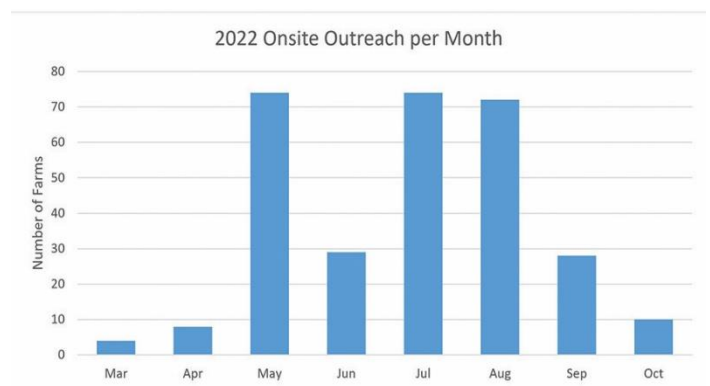
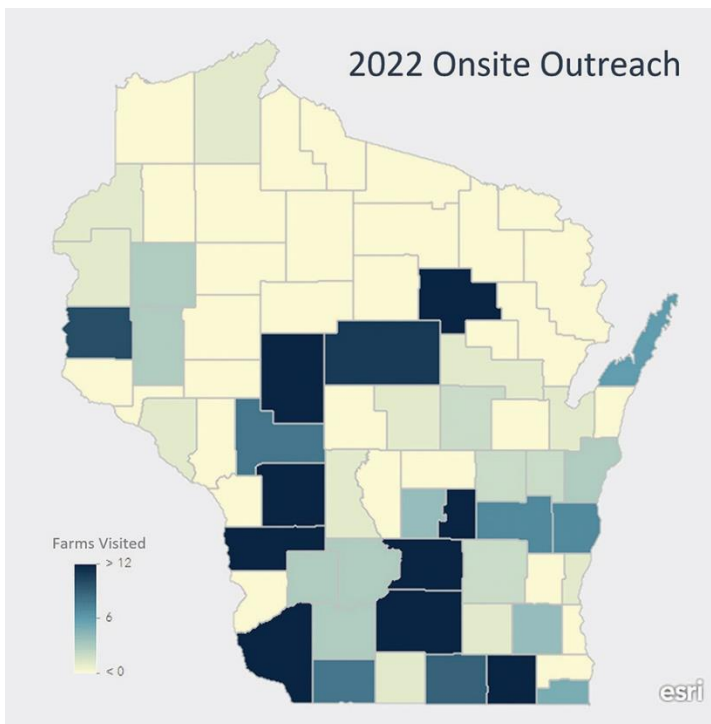


Image 1, left. Density map showing outreach efforts by number per county.

Image 2, above. Outreach timeline, noting that efforts continued into November but are not illustrated due to a delay in reporting.

Produce Illness Outbreaks in Wisconsin

During the past six years, produce grown or sold in Wisconsin was connected to seven outbreaks resulting in nearly 70 illnesses and numerous hospitalizations. While most individuals think of larger states or other countries as the primary source of foodborne sicknesses, Wisconsin growers are not immune due to the natural risk associated with growing fresh, ready-to-eat commodities. For this reason, it is critical that all Wisconsin growers work to identify and minimize risk at every step in their process by following the Produce Safety Rule, either as required by law or as requested or recommended by buyers, consumers and the Safe Wisconsin Produce (SWP) team.

As growers strive to minimize the number of outbreaks, SWP is responding to all complaints via onsite investigations, follow-up inspections and sampling assignments (i.e. environmental swabbing and product collection). **Only a joint effort will assist in preventing families, friends and neighbors from being impacted by contaminated produce.**

Year	Pathogen	Commodity	Confirmed/Probable Cases
2017	Salmonella Thompson	Shelled peas	19
2020	Salmonella Oranienburg	Shelled peas	5
2021	Salmonella Oranienburg	Shelled peas	8
2022	Salmonella Newport	Shelled peas	14
2022	Salmonella Hartford	Shelled peas	8
2022	Shiga Toxin-Producing E.coli	Apples	10
2022	Salmonella Typhimurium	Cantaloupe	FDA response due to interstate commerce

Meet Produce Safety Advisory Council Member Jenna LaChance



The Produce Safety Advisory Council (PSAC) provides opportunities for people affected by agency decisions to participate in the decision-making process. Each newsletter edition will introduce a new stakeholder representative. This issue, the featured member represents consumers. More information about the council is available on the [PSAC webpage](#).

I'm Jenna LaChance, the produce member and production manager for CROPP Cooperative, makers of Organic Valley products.

I began my work at CROPP Cooperative after receiving a master's degree in plant pathology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

My primary responsibility is to align our farmers' production to meet consumer demand. I have been highly involved with developing the co-op's produce food safety program and educating our farmers on implementing the program on their farms. Additionally, I have delivered several Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) trainings to Wisconsin farmers after becoming a Produce Safety Alliance trainer.

Wisconsin produce farmers take great pride in their production and are committed to providing safe, healthy food to consumers. However, it had been more than 70 years since the United States reformed its food safety laws. In that time, the global food system has significantly changed, and the FSMA was signed into law to move toward a preventative approach to food safety. DATCP and SWP have been integral in educating farmers about how this new legislation affects their farms. More importantly, they have supported farmers in enhancing their on-farm food safety programs.

I look forward to engaging in my new role to hear from consumers and answer questions about on-farm practices, as well as relaying thoughts back to the council and farming community.

The PSAC is accepting nominations for two vacancies: a representative of a nonprofit education institution, and a representative of an underserved community (Among community members encouraged for nomination). [Learn more](#), and [download the nomination form](#).