

**News Release**  
**1-15-14**

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ANNOUNCES FOOD SAFETY CLASSES FOR EARLY 2014**

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) will offer Good Handling Practices/Good Agricultural Practices (GHP/GAP) classes next week to help West Virginia food producers protect consumers from food-borne illnesses. The courses will be offered in three different West Virginia locations.

**Friday, January 24, 2014** - This program will be held the day prior to the Farm Opportunities Days program on Saturday, January 25, at Glenville State Colleges' WACO Center on the Mineral Road Campus from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. For additional information about the GHP/GAP and conference program, visit <http://goo.gl/5tNUUO> . To register for the GHP/GAP class, contact Rob Hinton at [rob.hinton4@gmail](mailto:rob.hinton4@gmail.com) or (303) 703-0328.

**Saturday, January 25, 2014** - Held for the first time on the campus of West Virginia State University (WVSU), this day long class is facilitated by WVSU Extension Agent Brad Cochran. To register and receive additional course details, contact Cochran at [bcochran2@wvstateu.edu](mailto:bcochran2@wvstateu.edu) or (304) 541-3301.

**Wednesday, February 26, 2014** - As a part of the pre-conference offerings at the 2014 West Virginia Small Farm Conference, the one-day GHP/GAP course takes place at the Morgantown Waterfront Place Hotel. Visit [www.smallfarmcenter.ext.wvu.edu/conference](http://www.smallfarmcenter.ext.wvu.edu/conference) for additional information and online registration. Please note that registrants should be sure they are checking the GHP/GAP training. Lunch for this class will not be included in the registration fee.

Those who successfully complete a one-day training will become eligible for the West Virginia GHP/GAP Audit Reimbursement Program providing a 75% reimbursement for the successful preparation and completion of a federal site visit and inspection for firms in fruit and vegetable production. While neither the classes, nor the audits, are required by the state, some wholesalers and institutions require suppliers to have GHP/GAP certification.

The class prepares producers for the GHP/GAP audit program. Dr. Robert Williams from Virginia Tech will be the instructor for all three courses.

The classes are sponsored by the WVDA, the WVU Extension Service, Glenville State College, and the West Virginia Value Chain Cluster. They are funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Specialty Crop Block Grant program.

For more information, contact Melissa Beller at 304-558-2210 or [mbeller@wvda.us](mailto:mbeller@wvda.us).

*The West Virginia Department of Agriculture protects plant, animal and human health through a variety of scientific, regulatory and consumer protection programs, as mandated by state law. The Commissioner of Agriculture is one of six statewide elected officials in West Virginia. For more information, visit [www.wvagriculture.org](http://www.wvagriculture.org).*