

News Release

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PRODUCERS INVITED TO HACCP FOOD SAFETY TRAINING CLASS

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) and West Virginia University (WVU) invite West Virginia food growers and processors to an upcoming Hazard and Critical Control Points (HACCP) training session on September 19 and 20.

The course will be held at the Days Hotel/Flatwoods Conference Center in Sutton. The cost for the two-day program is \$50 and a block of rooms is available at the Days Hotel for a conference rate until Sept. 14. Meals are not included in the cost. Space is limited and pre-registration is required.

HACCP is a logical system for safe food handling and can be used throughout the food chain from initial production to final consumption. Many food sectors mandate the use of HACCP plans, but with the pending implementation of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), food facilities may be required to create and abide by these plans in the future. Funding for this program is provided by the USDA's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP).

Course participants will be provided with hands-on training to evaluate hazards, identify and implement preventive controls, monitor the performance of those controls, establish procedures for corrective actions, and maintain records.

West Virginia Agriculture Commissioner Walt Helmick points to the ongoing training as the cornerstone of increasing food production in the state.

"I have repeatedly pointed out that our state faces a \$7 billion dollar deficit when it comes to the amount of food our producers are able to contribute to the distribution system. In order to expand agriculture production in West Virginia, we must provide the training and skills to our producers and processors for compliance and advancement," he said.

The course begins at 8 a.m. on September 19 and will wrap up at 5 p.m. on the 20th. The registration fee covers instruction, textbooks and system templates. Dr. P. Brett Kenney of WVU's Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design will be the instructor.

For additional information and to register, contact WVDA Marketing Specialist Teresa Halloran at 304-558-2210 or thalloran@wvda.us.