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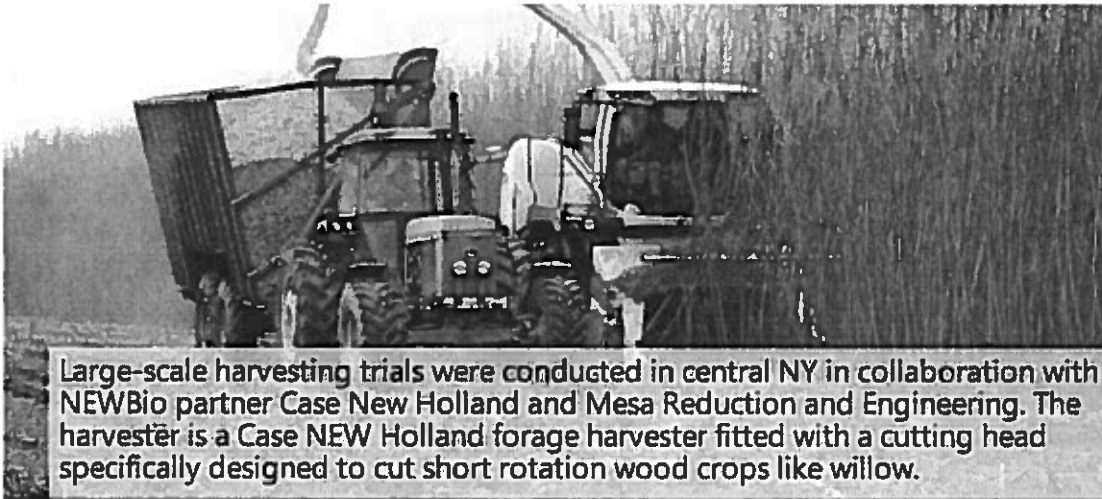
Members' Portal

United States
Department of
AgricultureNational Institute
of Food and
Agriculture

NEWBio

Northeast Woody/Warm-season Biomass Consortium

HOME ABOUT PARTNERS EDUCATION EXTENSION PUBLICATIONS OPPORTUNITIES



Large-scale harvesting trials were conducted in central NY in collaboration with NEWBio partner Case New Holland and Mesa Reduction and Engineering. The harvester is a Case NEW Holland forage harvester fitted with a cutting head specifically designed to cut short rotation wood crops like willow.

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Upcoming Events

August 16-18, 2016
Ag Progress Days
Russell E. Larson Agricultural
Research Center
Rock Springs, PA
[More information](#)

August 22-25, 2016
Biochar 2016: The Synergy of
Science and Industry
Corvallis, OR
[More information](#)

October 11-13, 2016
Short Rotation Woody Crops
Operations Working Group 11th
Biennial Conference
Fort Pierce, FL
[More information](#)

October 26-27, 2016
Designing Sustainable,
Working Landscapes with
Perennial Crops for Bioenergy
and Ecosystem Services
New Short Course!
State College, PA
[Course information and online
registration forthcoming](#)



To meet project goals, NEWBio focuses efforts in eight areas: **human systems, feedstock improvement, harvest-preprocessing-logistics, sustainability, safety and health, extension, education, and leadership-stakeholder involvement.**

[More in the news »](#)

In the Spotlight

Perennial Crops for Bioenergy & Ecosystem Services

Offered by Penn State Extension in partnership with Penn State Biomass Energy Center and the NEWBio bioenergy consortium, **Designing Sustainable, Working Landscapes with Perennial Crops for Bioenergy & Ecosystem Services** will provide an in-depth look at opportunities for the use of perennial biomass crops in accomplishing conservation and rehabilitation goals on a landscape scale.

This short course will run on **October 26 (1:00-4:30 pm)** and **October 27 (8:20 am-4:00 pm)** at **The Penn Stater Conference Center in State College, PA**. For more information and registration, please refer to the event website.

Registration closes Thursday, October 13, 2016.

Bioenergy in the CPP Webinar for August 11, 2016

NEW Safety and Health LearnNow Video

New Safety & Health Resource for Biomass Producers

Bioenergy in the CPP Webinar...



The Legal Landscapae for the U.S. Clean Power Plan

Lara B. Fowler

Senior Lecturer, Penn State Law

Assistant Director, PSIEE

The Pennsylvania State University

If the video doesn't play, please click here, or copy/paste the link below:

<https://youtu.be/KZIo8k2I-aY>

Hazards of Biomass Producti...



Hazards of Biomass Production on Marginal Land

If the video doesn't play, please click here, or copy/paste the link below:

<https://youtu.be/vJFtGO2sLQ0>



This best practices manual provides risk-reduction information and resources for agricultural entrepreneurs and will help biomass producers plan for effective safety and health management programs. This program planning manual has five units of recommended safety and health best practices for biomass production.

Click here for more information.



In Case You Missed It...

News Archives

Check out what's been in the NEWBio news.

NEWBio Research Summaries Results of NEWBio research activities are summarized in laymen's terms and available on the national Farm Energy eXtension website.

Factsheets

Read up on the latest research with these quick factsheets.

Webinar Archives

Miss the last webinar? Visit the video archive for all past webinar recordings.

Other Publications

Check out our list of other publications for additional information.

Announcements

NEWBio 2016 Annual Meeting

NEWBio will hold its annual meeting on Penn State's University Park campus this coming July. The meeting is for Project Team members and invited guests, who will gather to discuss project outputs and results on research, education and extension activities to date. The work plan for NEWBio's fifth and final year will also be reviewed. Registration is restricted to team members and invited guests. Information is available online: <http://www.newbio.psu.edu/annualmeeting.asp>

New Publications of Interest

Switchgrass biofuel production on reclaimed surface mines: I. Soil quality and dry matter yield.

Brown, C., T. Griggs, T. Keene, M. Marra, and J. Skousen.

Switchgrass yield and quality on reclaimed surface mines in West Virginia: II. Feedstock Quality and Theoretical Ethanol Production.

Brown, C., T. Griggs, and J. Skousen.

Planting rates and delays during the establishment of willow biomass crops.

Bush, C., T.A. Volk, M.H. Eisenbies.

Changes in feedstock quality in willow chip piles created in winter from a commercial scale harvest.

Eisenbies, MH, TA. Volk, A. Patel.

Genotype by environment interactions analysis of North American shrub willow yield trials confirms superior performance of triploid hybrids

Fabio, E.S., Volk, T.A., Miller, R.O., Serapiglia, M.J., Gauch, H.G., Johnson, G.A, van Rees, K.C.J., Labrecque, M., Amichev, B.Y., Hangs, R.D., Kuzovkina, J.A., Ewy, R.G., Kling, G.J. and Smart, L.B.

Recently Bred Willow (*Salix* spp.) Biomass Crops Show Stable Yield Trends Over Three Rotations at Two Sites

Sleight, N. and T. Volk.

Directional liquefaction coupling fractionation of lignocellulosic biomass for platform chemicals.

Xu, J., X. Xie, J. Wang, J. Jiang

Registration for Bioenergy 2016 is now open!

Coming up July 12-14 is Bioenergy 2016, an annual conference sponsored by DOE. Registration this year is \$75 (for non-profits like universities), with a 10% discount if you also register for the \$50

2016 CAPS Now in Progress!

APRIL 6, 2016MAY 31, 2016 / HESTRIN / LEAVE A COMMENT



As of our April 1 deadline, the 2016 VVBGA's CAPS (Community Accreditation for Produce Safety) is now in progress. Here are the numbers:

- o 68 farms have registered, paid and submitted CAPS produce safety plans for review,
- o 23/25 of the 2015 pilot farms have continued with 2016 CAPS (92% retention)
- o 5 of 2016 CAPS farms will participate in the Hannaford "Turbo" CAPS Pilot (wherein VVBGA, Hannaford, VAAF, and UVM Extension develop a more-rigorous distributor-tier version of CAPS)
- o 17 additional farms have plans submitted or in progress at capsvt.org, but have not registered for accreditation.
- o CAPS has engaged growers with approximately 1,500 acres of vegetable production and an estimated value of \$9 million in annual sales to date

Get on CAPS by April 1!

MARCH 23, 2016 / HESTRIN / LEAVE A COMMENT



For CAPS accreditation, you must complete a few tasks before April 1!

This April 1 deadline (to submit your produce safety plan draft) is firm and automated—like a grant application. If you miss it, you must wait till next year for another shot! ...so DON'T wait until the last minute ...and NO Stress—it can be a ROUGH draft—you will have the merry month of May to revise it!

If you already have an updated produce safety plan, it will likely take you 1-2 hours to complete the tasks for April 1. If you don't have a current plan, it may take you 2-4 hours to complete. You can work in small bursts or all at once.

If you have yet to and can, please take 5 minutes RIGHT NOW to get started with task #1 below!

CAPS tasks—to complete by April 1:

1. If you have yet to, create an account at capsvt.org (<http://ciids.org/vvbga/farmer/>) and set up your farm folder. This is free, easy and only takes a couple minutes. DO THIS NOW if possible...so you can get on our auto reminder list!
2. Draft your CAPS on-line produce safety plan (think short answer (like survey monkey) describing your current practices. If you have a current plan, cut and paste into the short answer input fields, revising and adding as needed. This will take 1-4 hours, depending on your starting point and efficiency**. Good News: you will only need to do this once—next year your 2016 plan will auto populate for you to review and revise.
3. Submit this 2016 plan for review by April 1 at the latest—2 weeks left!! One click! Submit your draft plan even if you don't want accreditation! (If you do not register and pay for CAPS accreditation, your plan will NOT be reviewed)
4. If you have yet to, [register here for CAPS \(https://vvbga-caps.eventbrite.com/\)](https://vvbga-caps.eventbrite.com/) by April 1 and pay the \$100 fee**—this will make you official—and is a separate step from creating an account!

** technical and financial assistance is available to help make CAPS equally accessible for all VVBGA members—email [Hans \(mailto:hans@hestin@uvm.edu?subject=CAPS%20assistance\)](mailto:hans@hestin@uvm.edu?subject=CAPS%20assistance) for more info.

Feel free to contact me any time—I am here to support you with CAPS!

Hans Estrin

VVBGA CAPS Coordinator—Produce Safety Specialist, UVM Extension Brattleboro Office

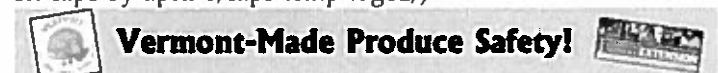
Office: 802 257 7967, Cell: 802 380 2109



CAPS

(<https://practicalproducesafetyvt.wordpress.com/2016/03/23/get-on-caps-by-april-1/caps-temp-logo2/>)

on-caps-by-april-1/caps-temp-logo2/)

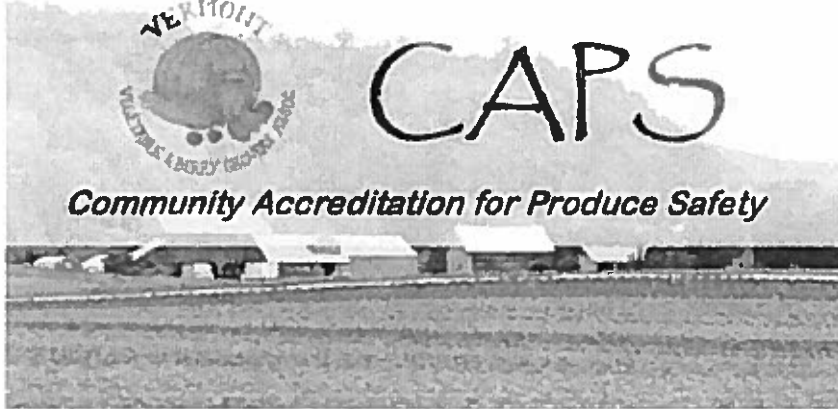


Vermont-Made Produce Safety!

(<https://practicalproducesafetyvt.wordpress.com/2016/01/29/2016-caps-is-now-open-till-april-1/vps-banner6/>)

2016 CAPS – Register by April 1!

JANUARY 29, 2016 MARCH 16, 2016 / HESTRIN / LEAVE A COMMENT



What is CAPS?

Community Accreditation for Produce Safety (CAPS) (<http://ciids.org/vvbga/farmer/>) is a voluntary, practical approach to documenting the use of practices that reduce food safety risks on farms that grow fresh produce. The CAPS advisory board of farmers and service providers has identified **18 practices that are required for accreditation** (<https://practicalproducesafetyvt.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/2016-caps-application-checklist.pdf>). CAPS uses the [capsvt.org](http://ciids.org/vvbga/farmer/) (<http://ciids.org/vvbga/farmer/>) platform to help you write a plan for these practices and subsequently you upload evidence that you implemented them. The evidence is documents and pictures that are in your on-line farm folder, which is then reviewed for completeness by your peers before accreditation is granted.

What CAPS isn't

CAPS is not a regulatory program nor is it a guarantee of food safety. CAPS is not a substitute for complying with food safety laws, though it can be a part of that compliance. CAPS is simply a system for the VVBGA to establish its own food safety best practices and recognize member farms that apply them.

Why CAPS?

Most Vermont produce farms will be exempt from FSMA (<http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/>) but they will still need some way to maintain credibility with their buyers as market expectations around food safety become more stringent. Further, CAPS will help to reduce the already low risk posed by locally-grown produce, demonstrating the commitment of our farmers to quality and accountability.

Who pays for CAPS?

The development of CAPS is supported by local produce buyers such as Black River Produce, Hanover and Middlebury Coops, and City Market. UVM Extension and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, (through a Specialty Crop grant) have also contributed. The VVBGA board has invested \$5,000 per year. Costs are primarily for a coordinator and for CAPS web site development. In 2016, grower fees will be a small but important part of the funding mix.

How do I participate in CAPS?...no commitment until April 1!

1. You must be a **VVBGA member** (<http://www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry/?Page=WelcomeVVBGA.html>) to participate in CAPS. You can use the CAPS website for free, but for CAPS Accreditation, you will **register here** (<https://vvbga-caps.eventbrite.com>) before the April 1, 2016 deadline and pay the \$100 per farm fee*. If you miss this deadline, you will need to wait till next year to get in. *Financial and technical assistance is available-contact coordinator below for more information
2. Create and **account here** (<http://ciids.org/vvbga/farmer/>) and draft your produce safety plan before April 1. Please note—you don't need to pay the fee to start CAPS now, and draft a plan.
3. You get feedback on your draft plan and will finalize it by June 1.

- 4. During the growing season you **upload the documents and photos** required to show implementation of your plan (see the [2016 CAPS Checklist \(https://practicalproducesafetyvt.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/2016-caps-application-checklist.pdf\)](https://practicalproducesafetyvt.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/2016-caps-application-checklist.pdf) for reference).
- 5. **CAPS Farm Folder is due by Tuesday, Nov 1**, when your farm folder is reviewed for completeness by a team of farmers and agricultural service providers. You will have a few weeks to fix any problems or add missing elements. Then you become accredited for the following year. At the end of each year you can 'roll over' your plan, making changes as necessary.

Who do I contact with questions about CAPS?

Han Estrin of UVM Extension is coordinating the CAPS program, contact him at hestrin@uvm.edu (mailto:hestrin@uvm.edu) or at (802) 380-2109 (phone or text). Also see CAPS info website at www.practicalproducesafetyvt.wordpress.com (<http://www.practicalproducesafetyvt.wordpress.com>)



What is VVBGA's Community Accreditation for Produce Safety (CAPS)?

CAPS is a voluntary program for the hundreds of vegetable and berry farms that due to their small size are exempt from the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). Developed by UVM Extension, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, farmers and other key stakeholders, the pilot program will accredit through the Vermont Vegetable and Berry Association (VVBGA), helping farmers to reduce risk and maintain produce safety credibility in the marketplace. CAPS is Vermont-made, by and for our farmers.

Below, VVBGA farmers writing Practical Produce Safety Plans around the kitchen table!



<https://practicalproducesafetyvt.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/pps-compressed.jpg>

Rationale for the program

Once the [Food Safety Modernization Act \(http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/\)](http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/) (FSMA) is implemented many fresh produce growers will be required to adopt and document rigorous practices to reduce food safety risks. However, the law exempts smaller farms with less than \$500,000 in annual sales of food if they sell at least 50% of that food to retail customers within a 275 mile radius. This means that the majority of Vermont growers will probably not be covered by FSMA. (The 2012 Census of Agriculture reported that nearly 800 farms in Vermont sold vegetables, but only 49 had annual gross sales of vegetables over \$250,000.)

Over time, both wholesale and retail customers will want assurance that food safety practices are being followed on ALL the farms they buy from, regardless of their size. Further, farms that are exempt from FSMA and too small to justify a GAPS (Good Agricultural Practices) audit may face

increased liability insurance costs unless they have credible food safety plans. Thus, Vermont growers will need a system of food safety 'accreditation' in order to remain competitive in the marketplace.

The groundwork for the CAPS program



(<https://practicalproducesafetyvt.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/harlow-farm.jpg>)

In 2010, UVM Extension developed the Practical Produce Safety (PPS) program

([http://www.uvm.edu/sustainableagriculture/?](http://www.uvm.edu/sustainableagriculture/?Page=whatwedo/producesafety/PPSManual.html)

[Page=whatwedo/producesafety/PPSManual.html](http://www.uvm.edu/sustainableagriculture/whatwedo/producesafety/GAPsResources/Manual3WhatIsPracticalProduceSafety.pdf)) in response to the changing food safety

landscape. Currently, PPS (consisting of a manual

(<http://www.uvm.edu/sustainableagriculture/whatwedo/producesafety/GAPsResources/Manual3WhatIsPracticalProduceSafety.pdf>),

template

(<http://www.uvm.edu/sustainableagriculture/whatwedo/producesafety/GAPsResources/Manual4PPSBlankTemplate.pdf>),

workshops) is a cost and effective strategy for growers to write simple produce safety plans and

implement practices that minimize risk while maximizing produce quality and farm

profitability. Since its creation PPS has helped more than 100 Vermont farmers write plans and

implement simple risk reduction strategies, such as hand-washing and triple-washing greens.

(<http://www.uvm.edu/sustainableagriculture/whatwedo/producesafety/GAPsResources/gapresWhyTripleRinse.pdf>)



(<https://practicalproducesafetyvt.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/vvbgalogo2.jpg>)

Accreditation through the VVBGA

The VVBGA community now offers its members an accreditation for produce safety (called CAPS). The VVBGA Board approved CAPS process including standards, fees, and statements allowed to be made by participating members. A disclaimer is associated with the program stating that CAPS is intended to provide credibility for growers seeking to improve food safety practices and easily explain these practices to their customers. CAPS has no legal or regulatory standing and it is not a guarantee of food safety.



(<https://practicalproducesafetyvt.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/new-ext-logo.jpeg>)Support from UVM Extension

UVM supports the VVBGA in developing CAPS for its members. Specifically, UVM Extension:

- o facilitates the work of an advisory board to design produce safety plan templates, policies and procedures for CAPS
- o Coordinates the development of the on-line platform for planning and verifying plan implementation
- o holds educational trainings, and
- o consults with growers to assist with writing and verifying implementation of their plans.

CAPS Advisers

CAPS Advisers are key stakeholders the guide program development, and help craft the CAPS tools and procedures. The Advisers include representatives from the VVBGA, Black River Produce (a wholesale distributor), the VT Agency of Agriculture and the VT Department of

Health.

Goals

- **Establish practical and cost-effective produce safety standards** for small and medium-scale farms
- **Maintain market integrity** by offering farmers a credible, transparent way of explaining their food safety practice to retail and wholesale customers.
- **Significantly reduce risk** from food-borne pathogens on fresh produce.
- **Improve the quality and shelf-life** of fresh produce.
- **Build a community of practice** (with over 225 farms in the program by 2016) where growers and service providers share food safety information, on-farm experience, economics and scientific information. Much of this will take place through an interactive web-based "classroom."

CAPS draws from the best programs and science-based knowledge.

CAPS development has drawn from the best existing programs, science base- evidence, and from farm-based experience of USDA GAPS, PPS and other food safety programs. Current produce safety programs are often geared towards larger and less diversified farms preparing for third-party audits, and these programs have informed standard for CAPS, which will be geared towards smaller more diversified farms. Some of the existing programs/ templates are briefly described [here \(https://practicalproducesafetyvt.wordpress.com/links/\)](https://practicalproducesafetyvt.wordpress.com/links/).

Launching a Vermont Produce Safety Accreditation Pilot Program

SEPTEMBER 2, 2014 DECEMBER 15, 2015 / HESTRIN / LEAVE A COMMENT

[CREATE A FREE WEBSITE OR BLOG AT WORDPRESS.COM.](https://practicalproducesafetyvt.wordpress.com/)