



**MASSACHUSETTS
FARM TO SCHOOL**

School Garden Food Safety 101

March 8, 2022

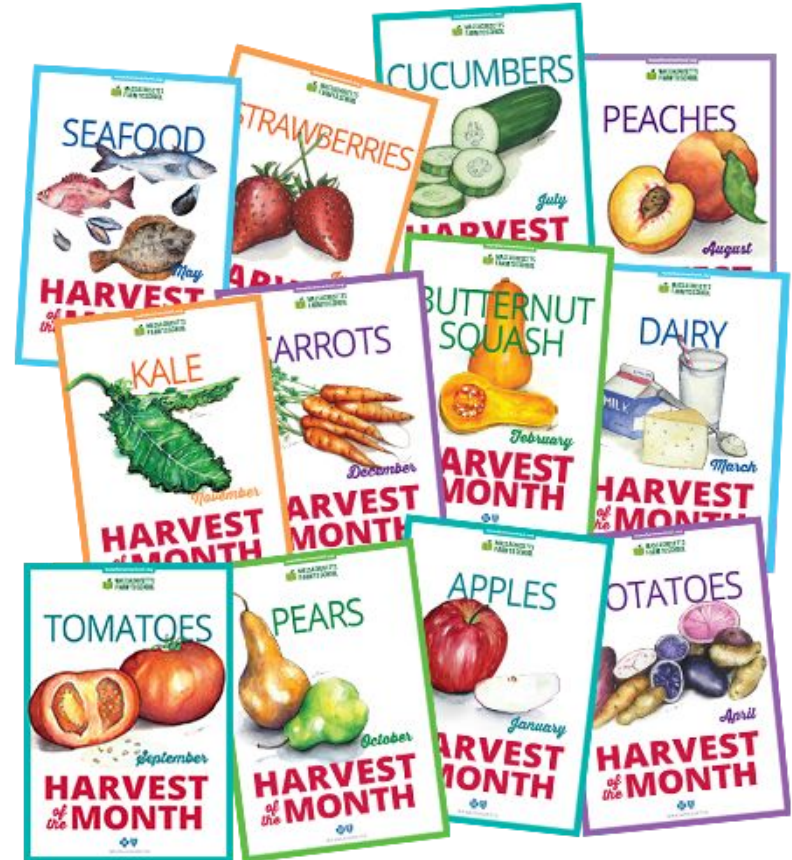


MASS. FARM TO SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Mass. Farm to School strengthens local farms and fisheries and promotes healthy communities by increasing local food purchasing and education at schools.

Get involved through our:

- Professional learning opportunities
- Networking
- Policy/Advocacy
- Communications
- Subscribe to our newsletter and stay up to date on upcoming webinars and other professional learning opportunities
- www.massfarmtoschool.org



MASS. FARM TO SCHOOL CONFERENCE



During May 16-21st, Massachusetts Farm to School (MFTS) will host our 6th statewide gathering, the MA Farm & Sea to School Conference. MFTS and planning partners aim to center the conference on youth leadership and empowerment.

The conference will be a hybrid event with virtual workshops daily and weekend in-person field trips across the state. More information can be found [here](#).

MASS. FARM TO SCHOOL INSTITUTE OVERVIEW

The Massachusetts Farm to School Institute is a year-long professional learning opportunity for school (or school district) teams from across Massachusetts. The Institute kicks-off with a Fall Retreat. Benefits of participation include: Farm to School Program Development; School-Year Coaching; and Teacher & Nutrition Staff Professional Development.

Applications for the 2022-2023 School Year are now open! Consider creating a team for your school to apply. Visit our [website](#) for more information.



Food Safety Trivia Questions

1. Since only the inside of melons (such as watermelon) is eaten, does their outer rind need to be washed?
2. How long should your hands be washed with soap and hot water?
3. What should you do after washing fruits and vegetables?
4. How many known foodborne illnesses are there?
5. What part of the rhubarb is inedible?
6. What part of the cherry should you never eat?
7. Should maple syrup be stored in the fridge?



SCHOOL GARDEN FOOD SAFETY WORKSHOP OVERVIEW



- Review CQP materials
- Best practices around garden food safety
- Explore ways to use the CQP materials in your school

Our speakers today are:

- Chetna Naimi, Partnership Director, Farm to School Program Coordinator, Codman Academy Charter Public School
- Erik Stenfors, MDAR Food and Drug Inspector, Produce Safety Division

CQP Material Overview

- The CQP was developed by Mass. Farm to School and the Mass. Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) with support from a USDA Farm to School grant. The manual contains a standard framework and assessment for maintaining food safety in the school garden aligned with MDAR's [Commonwealth Quality Program](#) (CQP)
- The School Garden Food Safety Checklist and Appendix have been developed to support school garden programs by providing resources needed to ensure best practices are being followed around garden food safety. The material is meant as a self-assessment tool. For schools that wish to be CQP certified, there is information on how to work directly with MDAR.
- The materials are designed to be used as a way to train anyone working in the school garden and includes print-ready resources.

[PDF of CQP Material](#) and [CQP Website](#)

School Garden Food Safety Assessment Tools, Resources, and Procedures



School gardens throughout Massachusetts have grown in number over the past ten years. As more school gardens are built, developed, and maintained, food safety within the school garden has become increasingly important. The **School Garden Food Safety: Assessment Tools, Resources, and Procedures** manual was developed by Mass. Farm to School and the Mass. Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) with support from a USDA Farm to School grant. The manual contains a standard framework and assessment for maintaining food safety in the school garden aligned with MDAR's Commonwealth Quality Program (CQP) (<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/commonwealth-quality-program-cqp>) for farms. Mass. Farm to School, in conjunction with MDAR, have developed a series of school garden safety webinars available to view at www.massfarmstoschool.org.

Contents

- Background
- Why Have School Gardens?
- Safety Checklist
- Checklist Appendix
- Student Best Practices Checklist
- Staff Best Practices Checklist
- Soil & Water Log
- Compost Log
- Cleaning & Sanitizing Log
- Training Log
- Garden Signs

Garden Advisory Committee

Kate Bailey *Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources*
Kelly Cronin *Witchcraft Heights Elementary School*
Kendra Dawsey *Healthy Chelsea*
Isis Feliciano *Community Educator and Advocate*
Hope Guardenier *School Sprouts Educational Gardens*
Dinah Mack *Massachusetts Farm to School*
Chetna Naimi *Codman Academy Charter Public School*
Erik Stenfors *Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources*



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FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)

Signed into law by President Obama on Jan. 4, 2011

This Act enables the FDA to:

- ❖ better protect public health by strengthening the food safety system.
- ❖ focus more on prevention than reaction.
- ❖ enforce compliance with prevention and risk-based food safety standards and to better respond to and contain problems when they do occur.
- ❖ hold imported foods to the same standards as domestic foods.
- ❖ build an integrated national food safety system in partnership with state and local authorities.



Implementing the FSMA



Photo courtesy of Mass Audubon

- There are seven major rules to implement FSMA, recognizing that ensuring the safety of the food supply is a shared responsibility among many different points in the global supply chain for both human and animal food.
- The FSMA rules are designed to make clear specific actions that must be taken at each of these points to prevent contamination.

The Produce Safety Rule (PSR)

- The Produce Safety Rule (PSR) is one of the seven rules to implement FSMA.
- The PSR establishes science based minimum standards for the safe growing, harvesting, packing, and holding of fruits and vegetables for human consumption.
- The standards apply to fruits and vegetables normally consumed raw (Covered), such as apples, carrots, lettuce, onions, and tomatoes.
- The PSR does not apply to produce rarely consumed raw (Non-covered) (such as winter squash) or produce grown for personal consumption.



Produce Safety Rule

The Produce Safety Rule establishes standards for:

- **Agricultural Water:** Farmers have to ensure that water that is intended or likely to contact produce or food-contact surfaces is safe and of adequate sanitary quality, with inspection and periodic testing requirements.
- **Biological Soil Amendments of Animal Origin:** The rule specifies types of treatment, methods of application, and time intervals between application of certain soil amendments — including manure and composted manure — and crop harvest.
- **Health and Hygiene:** Farm personnel have to follow hygienic practices, including hand washing, not working when sick, and maintaining personal cleanliness.
- **Domesticated and Wild Animals:** With respect to domesticated animals, the rule requires certain measures, such as waiting periods between grazing and crop harvest, if there is a reasonable probability of contamination. With respect to wild animals, farmers must monitor for wildlife intrusion and not harvest produce visibly contaminated with animal feces.
- **Equipment, tools, and buildings:** The rule sets requirements for equipment and tools that come into contact with produce, as well as for buildings and other facilities.
- **Training:** The rule requires training for supervisors and farm personnel who handle produce covered by the rule.
- **Sprouts:** The rule establishes separate standards for sprout production, including treatment of seed before sprouting and testing of spent irrigation water for pathogens.

What does CQP mean? (Commonwealth Quality Program)



- Accompanying these standards are certain record keeping requirements that document adherence to the standards, including for training, agricultural water, biological soil amendments of animal origin, and sprouts.
- Commonwealth Quality, a brand designed by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, serves to identify locally sourced products that are grown, harvested, and processed in Massachusetts using practices that are safe, sustainable, and environmentally friendly.

What does CQP mean for a school garden?



Commonwealth Quality-certified growers, producers, harvesters, and processors not only meet stringent federal, state, and local regulatory requirements, but also employ best management practices and production standards that ensure consumers receive the most safe and wholesome products available.

To become a CQP certified school garden, a school can schedule a voluntary garden food safety audit. Upon completion of a successful audit, the school garden will receive a certificate verifying compliance with best management practices and good agricultural practices based on the standards of the Commonwealth Quality Program. This certificate can be presented as proof of meeting third-party audit requirements for ensuring safe and sustainable products.

Why is garden food safety important?

Over 50% of outbreaks are related to produce (mostly fresh produce).

Food safety is the act of taking preventative measures to reduce the risk of people from getting sick from food that was mishandled at any point throughout the food supply chain (e.g., growing, harvesting, packing, processing, cooling, etc.). When dealing with food safety, the goal is to use preventative measures to reduce any chance of an outbreak, recall or foodborne illness from occurring, instead of having to deal with the repercussions after the fact.

Different crops can have their own set of issues that go along with the generic food safety. For example, cantaloupe rind has an outer netting where pathogens can hide and grow. This can become an issue for the consumer when they take the cantaloupe home and cut into it because any pathogens on the outer rind can potentially spread to the inner, edible portion of the fruit. However, when you compare this to an apple, you do not have the same issue because apples have a smooth exterior with no exterior netting.

Just as you want the person preparing your food in a restaurant to wash their hands after using the restroom and before touching your food, this is the same idea with the students who are harvesting your food. Not only do we worry about suffering from a foodborne illness, but we should also care about what happens to our produce before it makes it to our kitchen, regardless of whether or not it makes us sick.

Let's talk: Using the CQP document in your school?

Lettuce Grow Codman Codman Academy Farm to School Program

Chetna Naimi

637 Washington Street, Dorchester, MA 02124

- Make this CQP a tool to empower teachers and students
- Make food growing an inspiration for future profession
- Measure and replicate the impact
- Make it your own, just like your garden, it's yours to grow!
- Make it visible and accessible
- Make it connected to the school curriculum, biology, chemistry and humanities



Integrating CQP in your school:

Train, Teach and Tell- Creating a culture of food safety and health

Who: Find a champion

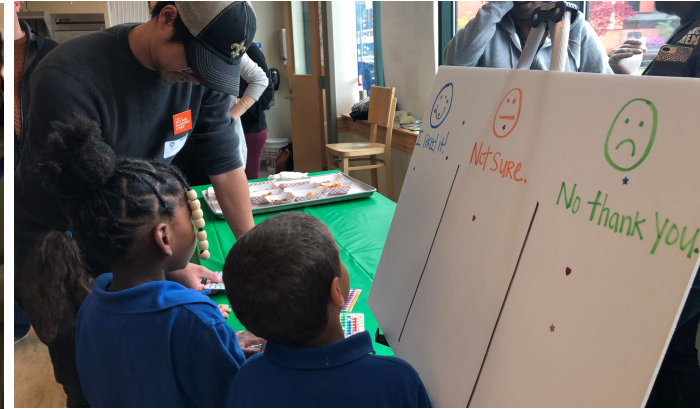
- School garden coordinator,
- Food Service Director
- FTS Coordinator and farm educator
- Science Teacher(s)

When: Anytime!

- Beginning of the school year.
- During FTS meetings,
- High school students field work projects.
- New science teacher hire

Where: Built in system

- Kitchen staff annual meeting
- School wellness team meeting



Codman- Connecting fresh produce in real time- where does food safety apply?

- Field Trip and outdoor learning for each grade.
- Fresh fruit and vegetable salad bar.
- Deli and salad days:
- Staff eating with students
- In class menu presentations
- Student Food Ambassadors
- School compost program
- Increased involvement of parents and families
- Hands on cooking classes for middle and high school students



Food Safety Integration in STEAM

Creating learners in the garden with vision and inspiration for health, safety and earning potential



THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF GARDEN FOOD SAFETY- 4Cs

CLEAN SOIL - CLEAN WATER CLEAN HANDS - CLEAN SURFACES

- Incorporating food safety in STEAM will equip students to address food safety challenges by teaching them to combine concepts and skills from multiple disciplines to generate solutions.
- High-school-aged youth are an integral part of the workforce, especially in jobs involving food handling.
- Increase food safety knowledge in the school garden work, that can go further to protect themselves in their home and the public they serve in their jobs.

Make it your own, just like your garden, it's yours to grow!

Make it visible and accessible

How:

- Culture of food safety within school wellness plan
- Create opportunity and space for the school wellness team, school kitchen team, high school youth, FTS (if funded) team to discuss not only safety in school lunch preparation but in your school garden
- Create ownership of the garden food safety plan.
- Create space: Create access for easy use.s
- Tie in your school garden food safety plan into your school's food guidelines and safe food handling documents, for e.g. *the food safety requirements of the National School Lunch Act*



Why is this relevant? Food safety is a lifelong skill-



Let us empower each other. Thanks

Food Safety Trivia Answers

1. Yes. Bacteria present in soil can contaminate the outside of melons. When melons are cut, these bacteria are transferred to the part we eat.
2. According to the USDA, you should wash your hands with hot, soapy water for at least 20 seconds to get rid of bacteria.. It doesn't hurt to scrub longer!
3. Research has shown that patting fruits and vegetables dry increases the level of bacteria removed from the produce. Take the time to make sure your newly washed fruits and vegetables are properly dried before you put them away.
4. The World Health Organization reports that there are around 200 known types of foodborne illnesses around the world.
5. Although you can make pies and jams from the stalk of the rhubarb, you should never eat the leaves. They contain a corrosive acid that is dangerous to humans and animals.
6. You should never eat the pit of a cherry. While one might not hurt you, a handful of them contains enough cyanide to cause you serious harm.
7. Store maple syrup in the fridge to lessen the chances of yeast, bacteria, and mold. It should be good for 6 months to a year.



STAY IN TOUCH!



Visit us online: www.massfarmtoschool.org

Or reach out for any more support:

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Upcoming workshops in this series:
Best Practices in the School Garden: March 31
State-wide School Garden Tours in May Dates TBD
School Gardens 101 Webinar Video