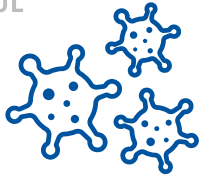


Guiding produce growers marketers through the COVID-19 pandemic

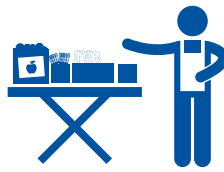


UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION

ISSUE



The COVID-19 pandemic impacted produce growers selling fresh market vegetables.



DIRECT MARKETERS
needed to modify sales methods to protect the public and employees.



WHOLESALE GROWERS
needed to keep workers safe.

RESPONSE



9 ARTICLES

Articles on marketing strategies and work environment safety were published in internal, local and national publications.



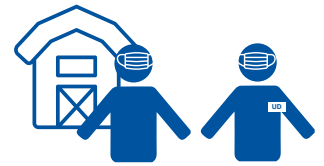
SAFETY GUIDANCE

UD personnel advised the DE Farm Bureau and Lewes Farmers Market on safety measures. They also helped inform the statewide plan for farmer's markets



GROWER TRAINING

The Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training saw 21 virtual attendees for eight hours of safety education



24 CONSULTATIONS

Extension agents conducted consultations to assist growers with implementing safety measures

IMPACT



>1,000 EDUCATED

More than 1,000 professionals received marketing and safety information related to COVID-19.



SAFER PRACTICES

Direct marketers and wholesale growers altered their practices to meet new guidelines



\$3M PROTECTED

These efforts protected an estimated 3 million dollars in sales statewide



PREVENTING ILLNESS

Safety efforts helped prevent the spread of illness among wholesale growers.

ISSUE

Throughout the past year, wholesale and direct-marketing produce growers were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Wholesale growers needed information on keeping their employees safe. Direct marketers needed advice about adjusting sales methods to protect both the patrons and employees of farm stands, farmer's markets and pick-your-own operations.

RESPONSE

UD Cooperative Extension published two "Vegetable Grower" columns in the Delmarva Farmer, a regional newspaper that boasts a circulation of more than ten thousand copies. The first article, "Managing in a Time of Uncertainty," featured information on the basic safety precautions necessary for produce growers and marketers. This article was also picked up nationally in the Vegetable GRowns News. Further, "COVID-19 and Wholesale Produce Farms" addressed issues facing the produce industry, such as alternative marketing strategies and organizing a safe work environment.

Six articles were published in the "Weekly Crop Update," a newsletter and blog produced by University of Delaware Cooperative Extension read by more than 300 subscribers and accessed online by hundreds of produce growers and industry professionals. Topics included:

- COVID-19 Considerations for Delaware Fruit and Vegetable Growers,
- COVID-19 Resources for Delaware Producers and Food Providers,
- Continuing Produce Sales with COVID-19
- COVID-19 Resource Links,
- Gloves and COVID-19, and
- Use of Face Masks Now Recommended for Reducing COVID-19 Spread.

Dr. Gordon Johnson and Dr. Kali Kniel also advised the Lewes Farmers Market and the Delaware Farm Bureau on safely opening farmer's markets, recommendations that were incorporated into the statewide plan. Dr. Gordon Johnson and Dr. Kali Kniel incorporated COVID-19 information into a two to eight-hour Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training, with 37 attending remotely. UD Extension also provided 24 individual consultations with Delaware growers seeking expert advice on safely opening their farmer's market and establishing best practices for u-pick operations.

IMPACT

The published and presented information has reached more than one thousand growers and produce industry professionals. As a result, safety improvements were made in sales practices, direct marketing and wholesale produce farm operations throughout the state. By helping farmer's markets and on-farm markets reopen safely, Delaware was able to protect an estimated \$3 million in sales and prevent many COVID-19 illnesses.
