



Produce Safety
ALLIANCE



Produce Safety Inspection Calibration Program



Produce Safety Educator's
Call #59
February 28, 2022



Instructions

- All participants are muted.
- There will be time for questions and discussion at the end of the meeting.
- Feel free to use the chat box to ask questions as well!
- This session will be recorded and the presentation will be shared via the listserv and on our website after the call.



Speaker Introduction

- **Kristin Esch**
 - Produce Safety Expert, FDA CFSAN Produce Safety Network (North Central Region)

Produce Safety Inspection Calibration Program

FDA FOOD SAFETY
MODERNIZATION ACT



THE FUTURE IS NOW

Produce Safety Calibration

Background



The Challenge

Consistency is paramount when it comes to understanding, applying and communicating the Produce Safety Rule during produce safety inspections.

How do we promote national and international consistency in the PSR program?

Produce Safety Calibration

Background



Addressing the Challenge

A produce safety inspection calibration scheme, developed in conjunction with our state and association partners.

Inspection Calibration Workgroup

Membership from:

- FDA
- Associations (AFDO and NASDA);
- States (CA, TX, MI, FL, and VT) (2nd phase WA, MN, NY, KY, TN).

Produce Safety Calibration

Background



Objectives of Calibration

- Consistent understanding and application of the Produce Safety Rule;
- Consistent understanding of the underlying science;
- Consistent and effective use of communication and education to elicit voluntary compliance; and
- Consistent understanding of the public health significance for inspectional observations.



Produce Safety Calibration

What does the calibration process look like?

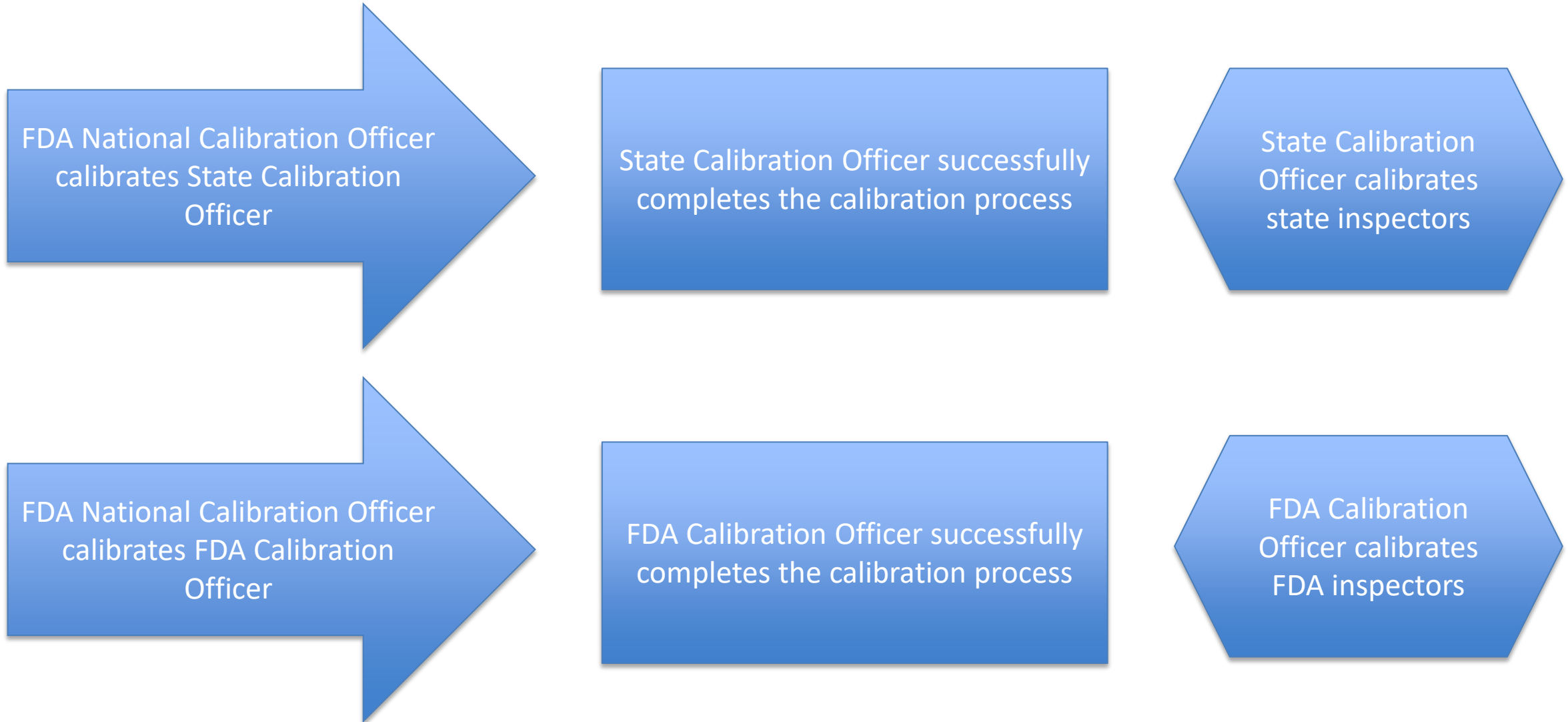
The calibration process is designed and intended to enable:

- Calibration of FDA produce safety program staff by a FDA National Calibration Officer;
- Calibration of State Calibration Officer by a FDA National Calibration Officer; and
- Calibration of state produce safety program staff by a State Calibration Officer.

Produce Safety Calibration



What does the calibration process look like?



Produce Safety Calibration

Performance Areas



Produce Safety Rule:

- Provisions;
- Industry Guidance;
- Underlying Science and Significance of Observations;
- Inspection equipment;
- Communication.

Produce Safety Calibration

During the Calibration Exercise



Role of the Candidate

- Takes the lead, makes introductions and determines who the responsible party is at the beginning of each inspection.
- Records all observations and inspection data collected during the inspection.
- May be asked by the calibration officer to perform specific tasks, such as explaining regulation provisions, identifying the most appropriate Produce Safety Rule provision(s), or reviewing required records to demonstrate proficiency in each area.

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During the Calibration Exercise



Role of the Calibration Officer

- Confirms the Calibration Candidate's ability:
 - To conduct a routine inspection in realistic timeframes
 - To recognize the key pathways through which fresh produce may be contaminated at the farm
 - To communicate conditions on the farm which may not meet the standards of the PSR and/or may lead to conditions of public health significance
 - To demonstrate effective communication skills
 - To, if necessary, push for voluntary and immediate correction of significant observations

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Pilot Phase



- Conducted a two-phase pilot process with several states and one from FDA.
 - Phase one: TX, CA, MI
 - Phase two: NY, KY, TN, MN, WA, OR (FDA)
- With the exception of Oregon, these pilot calibration inspections were conducted and led by state personnel.

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What Can a Farm Expect



- On farm
 - Two Participants
 - One inspector that will conduct farm inspection
 - One calibration officer that will shadow the state or FDA inspector
 - The Inspector
 - Will conduct the inspection
 - The Calibration Officer
 - Will remain silent for most of the inspection
 - Casual conversation
 - May have a discussion with the inspector
 - May point out examples that illustrate Produce Safety Rule provisions or guidance, interpretations or industry changes.
 - Candidate may be asked by the calibration officer to perform specific tasks, such as explaining regulation provisions, identifying the most appropriate Produce Safety Rule provision(s), or reviewing required records to demonstrate proficiency in each area.

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What Can a Farm Expect



- The Calibration Officer is there to evaluate the inspector
 - Not the farm or the farmer
 - The Calibration Officer will only act if the Candidate fails to identify a potential situation that may lead to a condition of public health significance
- After the calibration exercise
 - Following each calibration inspection, the Calibration Candidate and Calibration Officer will compare findings
 - This will not be done on the farm

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Status and Next Steps



- A rollout plan has been developed for spring 2022.
 - Develop and provide educational webinars for stakeholders regarding the process, winter 2021-2022
 - Call for volunteer states, spring 2022
 - Begin calibrations, spring and summer 2022



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Questions?



Panelist Introductions

- **Panelists:**
 - Kristin Esch
 - Produce Safety Expert, FDA CFSAN Produce Safety Network
 - Rene Nieto
 - Produce Safety Program Coordinator, Texas Department of Agriculture
 - Amber Matulis
 - Produce Safety Unit Manager, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development



Questions for the panelists

- Who is offering inspections in your state?
- What impact do you think this calibration program will have within your state?
- Why do you think it is important to highlight this calibration program to educators?



Questions for participants

- Have you received feedback from growers about concerns regarding consistency of inspections?
- Do you think any of the information you heard today would be valuable to share with growers?
 - If so, what parts?
 - How might FDA message this effort to help farmers?



Questions for panelists

- Do you anticipate farms being concerned with having additional inspectors on the farm (especially FDA representatives)? How can you alleviate those concerns?
- Do you have any other thoughts or questions about the produce safety inspection calibration process?



Introducing: Mariana Villarreal Silva

- PSA's newest member!
- Spanish-Language Extension Associate
- Ph.D. and M.Sc. in Food Science and Technology from Texas A&M University
- Diverse background in food and public health-related work groups





Spanish-language Subpart E Office Hour #2

- Based on the success of the first Spanish-language Subpart E Office hour, we have decided to host an additional session
- Date: Monday, March 21 at 3pm EST
- Register here:
<https://cornell.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUrcO-orDgpHtE4if4E4aGCQt44qnilLFf4>



Spanish-Language Educator's Call Series

- Reminder that we launched a Spanish-language Educator's Call series
- <https://es.producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/recursos/grupo-de-educadores-sobre-la-inocuidad-de-los-productos-agricolas-frescos-en-espanol-notas-y-recursos-de-las-reuniones/>
 - Please share the link with anyone who may be interested in joining the listserv!



We're Hiring!

- Interested in joining a motivated produce safety team?
- PSA Southwest Regional Extension Associate

– For position description, visit:

<https://academicjobsonline.org/ajo?joblist---981-20848>



The PSA Website

<http://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/>

En español: es.producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Produce Safety Alliance website. At the top, the title "Produce Safety Alliance" is displayed in a red serif font. Below it is a navigation menu with links for "Training", "PSA Curriculum", "Resources", "News", "Food Safety Modernization Act", "The Alliance", and "Contact Us". The main content area features a large photograph of a farmer operating a red tractor in a field with a center pivot irrigation system. Below the photo is a red banner with the text "WELCOME TO THE PRODUCE SAFETY ALLIANCE WEBSITE!". To the left of this banner is the Produce Safety Alliance logo, which consists of the words "Produce Safety" in a green sans-serif font above the word "ALLIANCE" in a smaller, all-caps green sans-serif font. Below the logo is a short paragraph: "Providing fundamental, science-based, on-farm food safety knowledge to fresh fruit and vegetable farmers, packers, regulatory personnel and others interested in the safety of fresh produce." To the right of the main photo is a smaller thumbnail image of a field with irrigation, with the text "Water Summit Meeting" and a short paragraph below it: "The Produce Safety Alliance hosted a Water Summit on February 27-28, 2016 at the".



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