



Educators' Call

Produce Safety Educators' Call #76

May 14, 2026

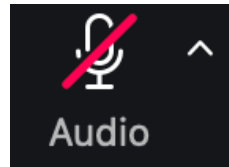
Crisis Management: It's Not Just About Food Safety

With Dr. Betsy Bihn

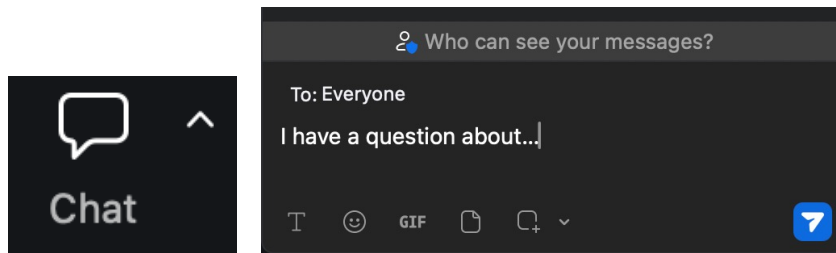


Instructions

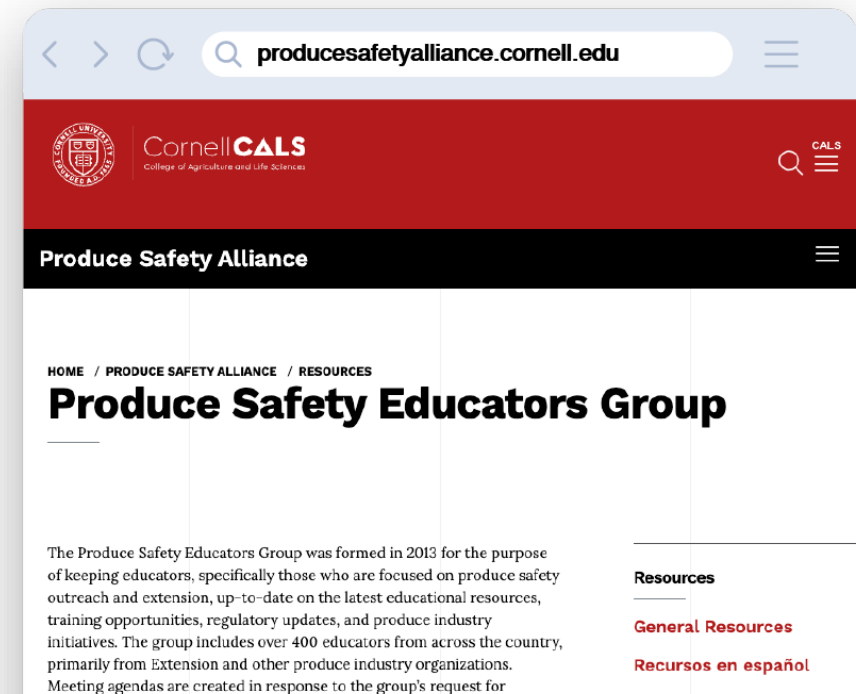
- 1
 - All participants are muted
 - There will be time for questions and discussion at the end of the presentation



- 2
 - Feel free to use the chat box to ask questions as well



- 3
 - This session will be recorded, and the presentation will be shared via the email list and on our website after the call



Welcome Back!

- We are very excited to be able to continue these webinars in both English and Spanish!
- Funding for this series of English Educators Calls is provided by the Local Food Safety Collaborative
- We really appreciate all your engagement AND the participation of content experts so we can discuss topics important to you



Agenda



Introductions



Dr. Betsy Bihn

Crisis Management: It's Not Just About Food Safety



Q&A session



PSA updates and upcoming events

Dr. Betsy Bihn

- PSA and National GAPs Program Director
 - Been at Cornell University for over 26 years
 - Feels fortunate to work with people who are truly committed to improving food safety on farms and in packinghouses
 - Hopes today expands thinking about how to support farms in their food safety journey
 - Education:
 - B.S in Zoology, Ohio State University
 - M.S. in Horticulture, University of Florida
 - Ph.D. in Food Science, Cornell University



Produce Safety

ALLIANCE



Crisis Management: It is Not Just About Food Safety



Dr. Betsy Bihn, Ph.D.
PSA and National GAPs Program Director

Today's Focus

- An educator's evolving perspective on presentations and training
- Need for crisis management planning
- Step to develop a functional crisis management plan
- Supporting the entire farm by developing positive food safety culture

Input and interaction is encouraged and expected!

Less Talk, More Action

- Based on evaluation data and interactions, my perspective on training is evolving
 - Feeling compelled to be very concise but thorough
 - Acknowledge that evaluations also show an appreciation for relevant stories, so need to be careful to not be overly concise
 - Build interactions or provide opportunity for audience engagement
 - Even small interactions are valuable
 - Getting less afraid of dead air
 - Still gathering feedback, even if 3 short questions at end of new talks
 - This approach has been very effective
- Developed this presentation based on concern for growers who have had crises and being prepared could have made things better

What is a Crisis?

A crisis is an unstable, dangerous, or pivotal situation that disrupts normal functioning, often occurring suddenly and requiring immediate, decisive action. It represents a turning point for better or worse, involving high levels of stress, anxiety, or emotional, cognitive, or behavioral inability to cope.

Merriam-Webster

- A crisis requires an immediate response
- May persist for an undetermined amount of time
- Could be natural, staged, accidental or deliberate event
- Impacts the farm, and usually not in a good way

In the chat box, please share a crisis that you/farms you work with have experienced

The Need for Crisis Management Planning

Q1



- Crises are likely to happen on farms
 - Accidents (e.g., tractor accidents, machine entanglements, chemical spills)
 - Health events and injuries (e.g., heart attacks, heat stroke)
 - Catastrophic environmental event (e.g., fire, flood, tornado, hurricane)
 - Food safety issues **Order not chosen randomly!**
 - Purposeful adulteration/deliberate actions
- Being prepared for a crisis helps ensure the crisis has as little impact as possible
 - A crisis will have an impact, the issue is limiting the negative consequences
- There are ways to prepare
 - Develop a plan, communicate the plan, practice the plan
 - 5 Ps (Proper planning prevent poor performance)

<https://resources.producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/documents/Educators-Call-Worksheet-for-Crisis-Management.docx>

Crisis Management Plan Pieces

- Crisis Management Team
- Training
 - Crisis management team, farm personnel, and media training
- Farm Operations Priority List
- Critical contact list
- List of Farm Resources
- Develop Crisis Management Process



Assemble Crisis Management Team



- Small, nimble, effective, responsive
- Must have people with authority to make decisions
 - Other support personnel should be listed
- Represent critical areas of your business
- Not limited to employees
 - Outside experts; legal, industry, communication
- Communicate and confirm participation



Conduct Crisis Management *TRAINING*

- Crisis Management Team
 - Clear understanding of plan and process in a crisis
 - Understand their responsibilities within the process
- Employees outside of Crisis Management Team
 - Plan to communicate crisis to farm personnel
 - Who are key contacts for them in a crisis
- Have at least one person on the farm trained in how to manage the media
 - A Crisis is 24 hours a day; Two people is better
 - External expertise is also an option
 - Everyone on the farm should know who the media contact person is



Media Training



- Working with the media is a skill
 - A bad media interaction can make something small into a much larger issue
 - A good media interaction can have positive impact even if the situation is bad
- Complex media landscape
 - Managing online interactions is a challenge
- Know the media's role
 - Not always as straight forward as in the past
- Tell the truth, if you don't know- say so!
- Avoid “no comment”
- Be prepared and respond promptly
- Make key points

**In chat box, have you attended Media Training?
If so, please share one key point you took away**

If asked, respond even if you are not ready

- "We are aware of the situation and are currently focused on learning more so we can provide accurate information and resources to both the media and the public. If I can take down your contact information, we will be back in touch when we have more to share."

From Dan Barber webinar

Create Farm Operations Priority List

Q4

- Identify key farm operations that must continue even in a crisis
 - Animal care, payroll
- Identify how often key priorities need to be done
 - Daily, weekly, monthly
- What can be ignored/delayed?
 - For how long?
- Who can assume some of the responsibility for operations?
 - Employees
 - Family members/close friends/neighbors
 - External support

Identify Resources and Critical Contact List Q5

- Identify farm resources (e.g., AED, tractors, those with CPR training)
- Identify people people that you may need during a crisis
 - Be sure to have their contact information
 - Ensure they are aware they are on the list
- Include internal as well as external individuals and companies
 - Buyers
 - Suppliers
 - Lawyers
 - Industry/ Trade group representatives
 - Media experts

Develop Crisis Management Process

Q6

- Plan to contact and gather the team
- Identify tools that may help assess the situation
- Outline how to inform all farm personnel so they know there is a crisis
- Develop a strategy
- Launch response
- Monitor
- Assess and recover



Value of a Positive Food Safety Culture

- A positive food safety culture establishes a team you can count on, even when things get tough
- Farms with a positive food safety culture are nimble and can make changes when it matters most
- Recent example was COVID-19
 - Amazing to watch farms with a positive food safety culture quickly adapt to new requirements; lower stress, less trauma
 - Several reported having the best economic year ever!
 - Changes made were projected to be sustained.

Food Safety Culture

Food Safety Culture is the shared values, beliefs and norms that affect mindset and behavior toward food safety throughout an organization. It is the result of the commitment from leadership and focus across the organization.

- Taken from Intertek SAI GLOBAL

Key Thoughts

Q7

- A crisis can occur at any time
- Preparing for a crisis before it happens improves the ability to respond quickly and effectively
- Is important for farms, families, and employees
- Supports food safety and other farm goals

Did I overlook anything in thinking about Crisis Management Planning?

National Good Agricultural Practices Program

- ABOUT - COURSES & TRAININGS - RESOURCES - COLLABORATORS & LINKS



Contacts



<https://cals.cornell.edu/national-good-agricultural-practices-program>



Purchase GAPs Educational Products Online

- * Posters
- * Decision Trees
- * Photonovellas
- * Coloring books
- * DVDs
- * Pamphlets, magnets, and more!

Online and In-Person Training Available

- GAPs Online Course
- GAPs Trainings
- GroupGAP
- Produce Safety Certificate Program
- Postharvest Water Management, Sanitation, and Traceability Workshop

Contact Us

Shifting efforts will be housed under National GAPs Program Website!

PSA Updates

- V2 PSA Grower Training Pilots are complete
 - Thanks to all of you who volunteered and/or participated
 - Overall, positive feedback but lots of edits to be made
 - Intend to have it complete by the end of August 2026
- PSA funding for next year has been communicated
 - Objectives and funding not yet in place
 - PSA high priority requests will be reopening Lead Trainer/ToT Portals and launching V2
 - Please add any other priorities you would like to see in chat or unmute to share

Our Next Educators' Call

Through the bugs' lens: Insights into bacterial persistence and dynamics on fruit and vegetables



- Dr. Shirley Micallef, University of Maryland
- June 25th, 2026; 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. ET
- Registration link will be shared through our contact list and social media channels

Join our
Produce Safety
Educators' group!

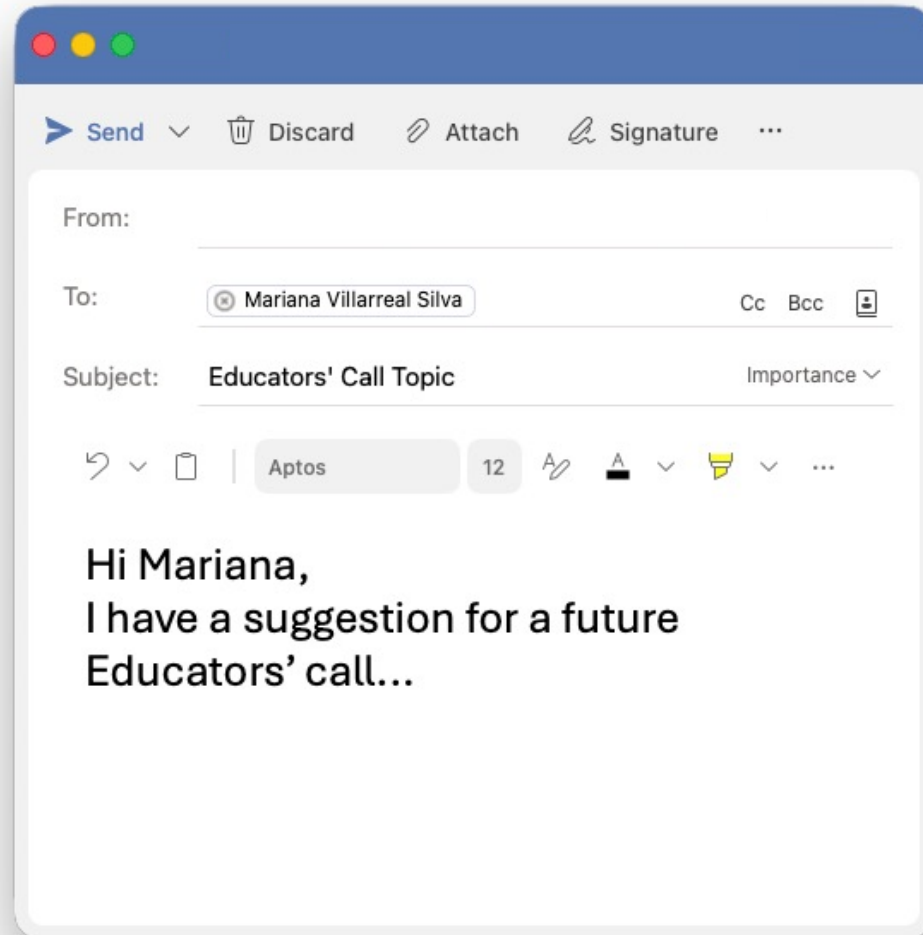
English



Spanish



Input welcome on future Educators' Call topics

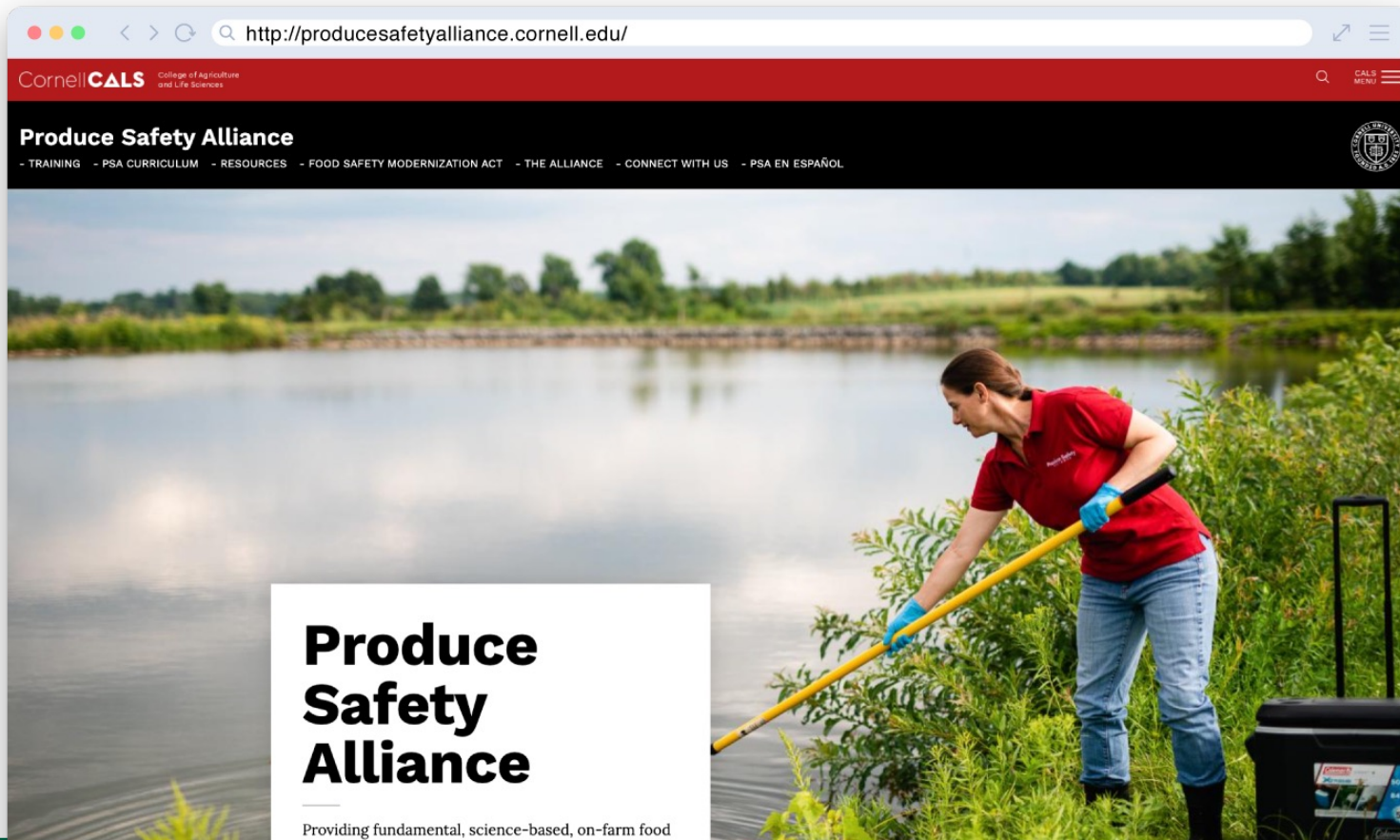


Is there a webinar topic that you would like to see? Please email:

- Mariana Villarreal Silva
- mv378@cornell.edu

PSA Website

- English: <http://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/>
- En español: <http://es.producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu>



Follow along
@producesafetyalliance

