

# VEGETABLE CROPS HOTLINE

A newsletter for commercial vegetable growers prepared by the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service



Issue 610 - April 14, 2016

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## Status of Chateau Label in Indiana

(Dan Egel, [egel@purdue.edu](mailto:egel@purdue.edu), (812) 886-0198) & (Stephen C Weller, [weller@purdue.edu](mailto:weller@purdue.edu), (765) 494-1333)

The herbicide Chateau SW<sup>®</sup> is labeled for several vegetable crops including asparagus, mint, onion, and sweet potato. Recently, several growers asked Purdue University whether this product could be labeled in Indiana for cucurbit production. The answer is that Chateau<sup>®</sup> is not and will not be labeled for Indiana cucurbit production. We want to use this opportunity to explain why Chateau<sup>®</sup> will not be available for use by cucurbit growers in Indiana.

The reason that the product Chateau<sup>®</sup> came to the attention of cucurbit growers in Indiana is that in other states Chateau<sup>®</sup> is available for use. These states include Florida and Georgia. The manner in which Chateau<sup>®</sup> is labeled in these other states is via third party indemnification. That is, the company that registers Chateau<sup>®</sup> makes an agreement with a grower's organization in that state to limit liability for the registrant, Valent U.S.A. Valent U.S.A. has stated that they will not register Chateau<sup>®</sup> in Indiana without a third party indemnification. Again, this is to limit the liability of Valent U.S.A.

However, the Indiana State Chemist will not allow the third party indemnification of Chateau<sup>®</sup> or any other product. They point to language on the U.S. EPA website that prohibits the use of agreements requiring '...a grower, as a condition of lawful use of a product, to waive any right he or she may have to bring a civil action against the applicant'. The text goes on to say that 'The FIFRA enforcement scheme should not be used...as a means of

enforcing private agreements regarding product liability.' The entire text of the website may be found linked below. <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/guidance-fifra-24c-registrations#addendum>

The crux of the matter is the interpretation of the U.S. EPA ruling. The Indiana State Chemist interprets the ruling as prohibiting third party indemnification. Other states interpret the ruling differently. The unfortunate result is that Chateau<sup>®</sup> is labeled in some states, but not in Indiana.

Purdue University will continue to work with vegetable growers to manage their pest problems, including weeds. However, Chateau SW<sup>®</sup> is not labeled and is not an option for weed control in Indiana on cucurbit crops.

Growers with questions about weed management should contact Steve Weller ([weller@purdue.edu](mailto:weller@purdue.edu)) or Liz Maynard ([emaynard@purdue.edu](mailto:emaynard@purdue.edu)). Questions about the status of Chateau<sup>®</sup> registration in Indiana should be addressed to Steve Weller or Dan Egel.

## Kerb SC Labeled for Leaf Lettuce

(Wenjing Guan, [guan40@purdue.edu](mailto:guan40@purdue.edu), (812) 886-0198)

U.S. EPA approved a supplemental label to use Kerb SC<sup>®</sup> herbicide in leaf lettuce. Kerb<sup>®</sup> is a selective herbicide for control of certain annual grasses and broadleaf weeds. It can be used in direct seeded or transplanted leaf lettuce. Application can be made before or after planting but must be made prior to weed emergence. It may be applied at the rate of 1.25 to 5.0 pints of product (0.5 to 2 lb active ingredient) per acre broadcast application. Depending on application rates, 25 to 55 days of preharvest intervals are required. Refer to the label for more application information <http://www.cdms.net/ldat/ld9R3003.pdf>.

## Effects of Nitrogen Fertilizers on Soil pH

(Wenjing Guan, [guan40@purdue.edu](mailto:guan40@purdue.edu), (812) 886-0198)

Soil pH plays an important role in plant nutrition. However, we might not be familiar with how nitrogen fertilizers influence soil pH over time. This article explains how nitrogen fertilizers influence soil pH over time and discusses some considerations in choosing N fertilizers.

Plants can take up N in two forms: ammonium and nitrate. Ammonium (NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>) is positively charged, while nitrate (NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>) is

negatively charged. When plant roots take up a charged ion, they typically release an ion with identical charges to maintain a balanced pH in plant cells. Following this rule, plants release a hydrogen ion ( $H^+$ ) when taking up an ammonium ion; and release a hydroxide ion ( $OH^-$ ) when taking up a nitrate ion. As a result, the net effect of taking up nitrate-N is to increase soil pH around root zones; taking up ammonium-N reduces rhizosphere soil pH.

Nitrogen fertilizers contain N in the forms of ammonium, nitrate and urea. Upon application to the soil, urea-N rapidly hydrolyzes to ammonia, thus it shares similar characteristics as ammonia-based N fertilizers. When nitrate-N based fertilizers are applied to the soil, plants take up N in nitrate forms. When ammonium-based N fertilizers are applied to soil, soil bacteria convert ammonium into nitrate under aerobic conditions and with warm temperatures. Therefore, nitrate is still the primary nitrogen form taken up by plants in ideal crop production conditions. The nitrification process (bacteria convert ammonium to nitrate) releases hydrogen ions ( $H^+$ ), which react with hydroxide ions ( $OH^-$ ) released by plants during the process of taking up of nitrate. The overall effect on soil pH is close to neutral. However, in reality, we often over apply ammonium-based N fertilizers to compensate for the nitrate leached from the soil, thus soil pH is reduced over time, partly because of the accumulation of  $H^+$  released through nitrification process.

In field vegetable production, the choice of N fertilizers is often determined by price. In most cases, urea is used because of the low cost, easy application, and high N content. While in greenhouse/high tunnel production, fertilizer costs only represent a small portion of the total production cost, and fertilizer leaching normally is not a big concern. The relatively more expensive nitrate-based N fertilizers such as potassium nitrate and calcium nitrate are more commonly used. They are highly soluble and provide other essential nutrients that are in high demand by greenhouse crops such as tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers etc. However, the constant use of nitrate-N based fertilizers increases soil/substrate pH. Ammonium-N based fertilizers such as nitrogen solutions (a mixture of ammonium nitrate and urea dissolved in water) are used to maintain pH in the desirable slightly acidic range.

Plants often take up extra N and store it in plant cells for later use as we apply most nitrogen fertilizers at the beginning of the season. It is safe to store nitrate but storing too much ammonium in plant cells could lead to ammonium toxicity. Ammonium toxicity is more likely to occur when ammonium-N based fertilizers were applied in cool weather. When the temperature is below 60° F, soil bacteria can not convert ammonium into nitrate, and plants tend to take up and store too much ammonium. Ammonium toxicity is a physiological disorder that may inhibit root growth, and cause interveinal chlorosis and necrosis of young leaves. Increasing the temperature, using nitrate-N based fertilizers and leaching of the soil/substrate may alleviate the problem. Nevertheless, it should be noted that plants do take up and use ammonium without harm as long as it is not at toxic levels.

## Importance of Water and Soil Analysis for High Tunnel Growers

*(Petrus Langenhoven, plangenh@purdue.edu, (765) 496-7955)*

Census data showed that in 2014 Indiana (12 acres), Illinois (11 acres) and Kentucky (13 acres) dedicated a very small portion of their food crop acreage to production under protection. According to the USDA National Agriculture Statistical Service 2014 Horticulture Specialties Census, of all the states surrounding Indiana, Ohio and Michigan have grown and sold the most food crops under protection, 24 and 25 acres, respectively.

The use of high tunnels for vegetable production seems to be a novelty in the Midwest. But it can be a very important tool for every vegetable grower as it can be used to modify the growing environment for crop earliness, to protect the growing crop against environmental stress, to reduce disease and insect pressure and to extend the growing season. Covering the soil with a high tunnel prevents natural rainfall from washing or leaching nutrients and soluble salts from the soil, can lead to very dry soil, can elevate the soil temperature and prevent the soil from freezing during the winter. The lack of rainwater to flush soluble salts can lead to an increase in soil salinity over time, which in turn has a negative impact on crop growth and production. The increased soil temperature in the high tunnel can lead to the quick breakdown of organic matter, releasing uncontrolled amounts of nitrogen and other nutrients into the soil. As a result the application of excessive levels of compost may also increase soil salinity. High soil salinity can be prevented and managed through a carefully planned soil fertility management plan.

As a first step, it is very important for an effective high tunnel soil fertility management plan to have soil and water samples analyzed. The results are crucial to design a management plan that ensures high productivity with minimal to low environmental impact. Soil sampling can be done prior to the production season. If your water source is a well then it will be appropriate to analyze the water several times during the production season. The analysis of stagnant water in the well at the beginning of the growing season can be very different from water sampled later in the growing season.

Optimum soil organic matter content for vegetables should be 3% to 6% or higher, nitrogen 20-40 ppm, available phosphorus 25-50 ppm, potassium 150-300 ppm, magnesium 60-120 ppm, calcium 1000-2500 ppm and sulfur 10-20 ppm. The pH of the soil should be 6.0 to 7.0 and the cation exchange capacity 5-35 milliequivalent (meq) per 100 g soil. Concern should be high when the irrigation source water has an EC (electrical conductivity) of more than 1.5  $dS.m^{-1}$ , when the pH is below 5.0 or above 7.0 or when the total hardness (dissolved Ca and Mg) is below 50 or above 150 ppm. Optimum values can differ for different vegetable crops. Therefore, it is important that prior to planting your crop in a high tunnel you consult with your nearest laboratory to get your soil and water tested.

# Minimum Temperatures from April 9-11

(Wenjing Guan, [guan40@purdue.edu](mailto:guan40@purdue.edu), (812) 886-0198)

We went through an unseasonably cold period in early April (Figure 1). In southern Indiana, a few high tunnel tomato growers have already planted their crops. These plants may need some extra help. In Vincennes, IN, we used row covers to cover the newly planted tomatoes in high tunnels the past few nights, our recorded lowest temperature was 37 °F under row covers. Plants all look good. However, the temperature is apparently too cold for cucumbers. The majority of the early planted cucumbers in our high tunnels were dead. We are waiting for the weather to warm up (soil temperature at least above 60 °F) to reset the cucumbers.

Please let us know if you also ran into problems in the past a few days because of the low temperature. It might be issues in the greenhouse, the high tunnels, or even the field. We would appreciate you sharing your experiences with us.

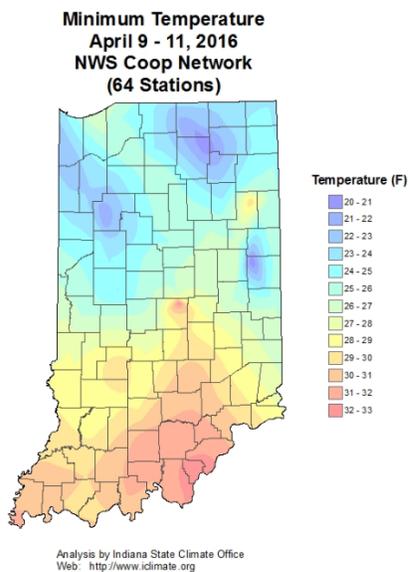


Figure 1. Minimum temperatures in Indiana from April 9 to 11, 2016

through the USDA Specialty Crops Block Grant Program.

The grant also includes funds for audit cost-sharing for Indiana fruit and vegetable growers who receive passing scores on their third party food safety audits. The audit cost-share program will reimburse at least 40% of the cost of a third party food safety audit, up to a maximum reimbursement of \$750 per farm.

To apply for consulting or audit cost-share, fill out and return the application by May 1, 2016. Applications may be downloaded from

[ag.purdue.edu/hla/foodsafety/Documents/PurdueFoodSafetyCostShareConsultApp2016.pdf](http://ag.purdue.edu/hla/foodsafety/Documents/PurdueFoodSafetyCostShareConsultApp2016.pdf), or applicants may fill out the online form at [tinyurl.com/fs-cost-share-2016](http://tinyurl.com/fs-cost-share-2016).

In addition to these programs, Purdue food safety Extension experts Amanda Deering and Scott Monroe are available to conduct mock-audits for produce farms on request. Contact Scott at (812) 886-0198 or Amanda at (765) 494-0512.

For more information contact Liz Maynard at (219) 548-3674 or [emaynard@purdue.edu](mailto:emaynard@purdue.edu).

## Produce Rule Training Requirements

(James Scott Monroe, [jmonroe@purdue.edu](mailto:jmonroe@purdue.edu), (812) 886-0198)

In January 2016, *Standards for the Growing, Harvesting, Packing, and Holding of Produce for Human Consumption*, otherwise known as the Produce Rule, became law. This rule, as part of the Food Safety and Modernization Act, sets a standard for produce food safety. Not all growers are covered by the rule. An excellent flowchart to help determine coverage may be found at <http://www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/UCM472499.pdf>. For those growers who are covered by the rule, there is a training requirement. Growers will have from 2-4 years, depending on farm size (defined by gross sales), to comply with training requirements.

The general requirement of the produce rule is that all personnel who handle covered produce (i.e. commodities covered under the rule) or food contact surfaces or are engaged in supervision of those personnel must receive adequate training, appropriate to the person's duties, upon hiring and at least once annually thereafter. The rule goes on to say that personnel must have a combination of education, training, and experience necessary to perform their assigned duties in a manner that assures compliance with the rule. Training must be conducted in a manner that is easily understood by personnel being trained. The rule also requires that training be repeated as necessary and appropriate in light of observations or information indicating that personnel are not meeting standards established by the rule.

At a minimum, training should include:

1. Principles of food hygiene and food safety.
2. The importance of health and personal hygiene for all personnel and visitors, including the recognition of symptoms of a health condition that is reasonably likely to result in contamination of produce or food contact surfaces.

## Food Safety On-Farm Consulting and Audit-Cost Share Programs

(Liz Maynard, [emaynard@purdue.edu](mailto:emaynard@purdue.edu), (219) 548-3674)

Purdue University is pleased to offer Indiana fruit and vegetable farmers a farm walk-through with a private food safety consultant. This opportunity is open to any farm that sells fresh produce and has attended a produce safety educational program. A consultant paid by Purdue will visit your farm to walk through and address your specific farm and packinghouse food safety questions. Growers who participated in the consulting program in 2015 reported it was very helpful. Funds for the consulting come from a grant from the Indiana State Department of Agriculture

3. Standards established in the produce rule that are applicable to the employee's job responsibilities.

Additionally, for those workers who are involved in harvest activities, training should include:

1. Recognition of produce that should not be harvested due to potential contamination with known or reasonably foreseeable hazards.
2. Inspection of harvest containers and equipment to ensure proper function and cleanliness.
3. Correction and reporting of problems with harvest containers and equipment.

Also, at least one supervisor or responsible party per farm must have successfully completed food safety training at least equivalent to that received under the standardized curriculum recognized as adequate by the FDA. The standardized curriculum has been developed by the Produce Safety Alliance (PSA). Presently, as stated in the produce rule, FDA intends that the PSA curriculum will be the only curriculum officially recognized by FDA. The rule does allow for other curricula to be used as long as it is equivalent to the PSA curriculum. Presently, no mechanism exists to assure the equivalency of other curricula to the officially recognized curriculum.

Currently, PSA has delayed all training programs until September 2016. This was done in order to allow FDA time to review the official curriculum. Once training begins, training for those who are delivering the curriculum will commence. In Indiana, at least eight individuals have started the process of becoming certified lead trainers who are able to offer this curriculum on a statewide basis. Once PSA resumes trainings, certifications will be completed and trainings will be offered shortly thereafter.

As stated previously, each covered farm will need to have at least one supervisor or responsible party complete training. The rule does not take into account any previous trainings that growers may have had. Based on the most current information that I have, trainings will be managed through the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO). Pricing will be \$50 for registration and materials and \$35 for a certificate at the conclusion of the training.

As we gear up for the 2016 season, please feel free to contact me at (812) 886-0198 or [jmonroe@purdue.edu](mailto:jmonroe@purdue.edu) if you have any questions concerning food safety training. I am available to discuss training issues and to assist with any on-farm training needs that you may have.

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## Food and Drug Administration Issues Request for Comments

*(James Scott Monroe, [jmonroe@purdue.edu](mailto:jmonroe@purdue.edu), (812) 886-0198)*

The Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Rule addresses many issues with regard produce food safety. One issue not addressed is the issue of biological soil amendments of animal origin (i.e. manure). When issuing the rule, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) chose to leave blank those portions of the

rule dealing with the required interval between manure application and harvest of covered crops pending a comprehensive risk assessment by the agency.

FDA has initiated its comprehensive risk assessment process by publishing a request for scientific data, information, and comments in the Federal Register on March 4. There will, most likely, be other requests for comments as FDA investigates the issue and incorporates its findings into the produce rule.

The entire request, along with instructions for submitting comments, can be found at <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2016/03/04/2016-04712/risk-assessment-of-foodborne-illness-associated-with-pathogens-from-produce-grown-in-fields-amended>

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## USDA Announced Value Added Producer Grants (VAPG)

*(Wenjing Guan, [guan40@purdue.edu](mailto:guan40@purdue.edu), (812) 886-0198)*

The VAPG program helps agricultural producers enter into value added activities related to the processing and marketing of bio-based, value-added products. Independent producers, agricultural producer groups, farmer- or rancher-cooperatives and majority-controlled producer-based business ventures are eligible to apply for the program. Beginning farmer or rancher, a small or medium-sized farm or ranch structured as family farm receive priority. The total program funding is \$44 million, 50% matching funds are required. Grant and matching funds can be used for planning activities or for working capital expenses related to producing and marketing a value-added agricultural produce. Application deadline is July 1, 2016 (paper application) and June 24, 2016 (electronic application). More information about the grants can be found at

<http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants>.

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## Upcoming Events

*(Wenjing Guan, [guan40@purdue.edu](mailto:guan40@purdue.edu), (812) 886-0198)*

### High Tunnel Tour at SWPAC

Location: Southwest Purdue Agricultural Center, 4369 North Purdue Road, Vincennes, IN 47591

Date: May 9, 2016, 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM EST

Please join us for a high tunnel tour at Southwest Purdue Agricultural Center. You will see state-of-the-art high tunnels, learn about season extension of strawberry production under high tunnels and early season frost protection by using row covers. We will also discuss the potential of grafted tomatoes and cucumbers grown in high tunnels. The tour is free, to register please call (812) 886-0198. For more information please contact Wenjing Guan at [guan40@purdue.edu](mailto:guan40@purdue.edu).

## Hops Workshop

Location: 8508 Trentman Road, Fort Wayne, IN 45816

Date: April 16, 2016, 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM EST

Topics to be covered include: obtaining and establishing rhizomes and transplants; soil tests and nutrient management plans; weed management; downy mildew management plans; when and how to train bines. The workshop is free. Registration by April 14 to [afthompson@purdue.edu](mailto:afthompson@purdue.edu) or (812) 349-2575

## Beginning Farmer Tours

Location: South Circle Farm in Indianapolis

Date: May 26, 2016. 10:45 AM to 4:00 PM EST

Learn about key farm tools for small, intensively managed acres while touring this urban farm that produces fresh, healthy foods using organic practices. Lunch will be served. The tour is free, but registration is required. Please sign up at [https://www.edustore.purdue.edu/wk\\_rules.asp?itemID=22361](https://www.edustore.purdue.edu/wk_rules.asp?itemID=22361)

Location: Silverthorn Farm, near Rossville, Indiana

Date: June 25, 2016 time has not been finalized

The farm uses organic practices to produce a wide variety of fruits and vegetables and pastured pork. The tour will include a session on working with restaurants. A meal will be served. The tour is free, but registration is required. Please sign up at [https://www.edustore.purdue.edu/wk\\_rules.asp?itemID=22362](https://www.edustore.purdue.edu/wk_rules.asp?itemID=22362)

## Food Safety Workshop

A series of workshops will help produce marketers better understand food safety practices to lower the risk of contamination by a foodborne illness. Workshop “On-Farm Food Safety for Produce Direct Marketers” will be held on the following dates and locations (all times local):

\* **April 26:** Morgan County Administration Building, 180 S. Main St., Martinsville; 7:00 PM.; Amanda Dickson, (765) 342-1010.

\* **April 28:** Posey County Fairgrounds, 111 Harmony Township Road, New Harmony; 7:00 PM. Jon Neufelder, (812) 838-1331.

There is no cost, registration is available at <http://bit.ly/1nhXZyt>. For any additional questions, contact Monroe at [jmonroe@purdue.edu](mailto:jmonroe@purdue.edu) or (812) 886-0198.

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Editor: Wenjing Guan - 4369 N. Purdue Road Vincennes, IN 47591 | (812) 886-0198 | [guan40@purdue.edu](mailto:guan40@purdue.edu)

# Southwest Purdue Ag Center (SWPAC)

4369 N. Purdue Road Vincennes, IN 47591

Monday May 9, 2016

## “High Tunnel Tour”

3:00 PM – 5:00 PM (EST)

### Topics to be covered:

- Tour state-of-the-art high tunnels.
- Learn about season extension of strawberry production under high tunnels and early season frost protection by using row covers.
- Discuss the potential of grafted tomatoes and cucumbers grown in high tunnels.

Tour is free, to register please call:

Southwest Purdue Ag Center

(812) 886-0198

For more information please contact:

Wenjing Guan

guan40@purdue.edu

*Purdue University is an equal  
opportunity/equal access/affirmative  
action institution.*



# Food Safety Consulting and Audit Cost-share Program

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Purdue University offers Indiana fruit and vegetable farmers a farm walk-through with a private food safety consultant. This opportunity is open to any farm that sells fresh produce and has attended a produce safety educational program. Funds for the consulting come from a grant from the Indiana State Department of Agriculture through the USDA Specialty Crops Block Grant Program.

The grant also includes funds for audit cost-sharing for Indiana fruit and vegetable growers who receive passing scores on their third party food safety audits.

## What is the program?

- On-farm consulting: A private food safety consultant paid by Purdue will visit your farm to walk-through and address your specific farm and packing house food safety questions.
- Cost-sharing: The program will reimburse at least 40% of the cost of a third party food safety audit, up to a maximum reimbursement of \$750 per farm.

## What do you need to do?

- Complete the attached application and submit to arrive no later than May 1, 2016. Growers may choose consulting or cost-sharing, or both.
- We will contact you within two weeks of receipt to confirm your eligibility for a consultant visit and/or cost-sharing.
- For audit cost-sharing: Make your own arrangements for a food safety audit. Go through the audit process. After the audit is complete, submit the following documents by October 31, 2016, to receive cost-sharing funds:
  - A copy of the food safety certificate received from the audit provider.
  - Proof of payment for the audit, for instance a receipt or a copy of a cancelled check.
  - If payment is to an individual: Payee Certification form.
  - If payment is to a business: an invoice **and** a W-9 form.

## Submit all materials to

Liz Maynard  
Purdue University  
600 Vale Park Rd.  
Valparaiso, IN 46383

*or*

Submit application online at: [tinyurl.com/fs-cost-share-2016](http://tinyurl.com/fs-cost-share-2016) **and**

For cost-sharing, mail required documents to above address by Oct. 31, 2016, to receive reimbursement.

Questions? Contact Liz Maynard at 219-548-3674.

## **Application for Food Safety Consulting or Audit Cost-share**

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Farm/ Organization Name \_\_\_\_\_

US Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Farm to be audited (if different from above) \_\_\_\_\_

Primary phone \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred method of contact: \_\_\_\_\_

### **To request on-farm consulting, complete the following**

Acreage of fruits \_\_\_\_\_ Acreage of vegetables \_\_\_\_\_

Primary crops: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the item that best describes the level of food safety education and activity at your operation:

- Attended GAPs Training                       Completed Self-Audit  
 Completed Farm Self-Assessment             Completed Third Party Audit  
 Drafted Food Safety Plan

### **For audit cost-sharing, complete the following**

What audit certifications do you plan for 2016?

In 2016, are you planning to obtain audit services that are new in any way—i.e., first time audit, different scope, different crop, different level, different provider?

**Form must be complete and received no later than May 1, 2016. Return to: Liz Maynard, Purdue University, 600 Vale Park Rd., Valparaiso, IN 46383 or emaynard@purdue.edu**