



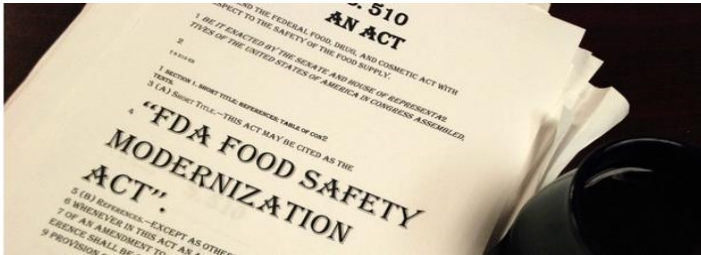
*Wishing you a Merry Christmas, and
Happy New Year from the CAC!*

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 113

November/December 2015

FDA PUBLISHES FINAL RULE ON FSMA STANDARDS FOR PRODUCE SAFETY



On November 27, 2015, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) published its final rule to implement the Standards for Produce Safety set forth in the Food Safety Modernization Act. The Produce Safety Final Rule establishes science-based minimum standards for the safe growing, harvesting, packing, and holding of produce grown for human consumption in addition to standards regarding other factors which include agricultural water. The Final Rule is effective January 26, 2016. Covered farms will typically have 2 years from the date of the Final Rule to comply (i.e. January 26, 2018). Small businesses (those with more than \$250,000 but no more than \$500,000 in average annual produce sales during the previous three-year period) must comply within 3 years of the Final Rule (i.e. January 26, 2019). Very small businesses (those with more than \$25,000 but no more than \$250,000 in average annual produce sales during the previous three-year period) must comply within 4 years of the final rule (i.e. January 26, 2020). Each of those categories of covered farms will have an additional two years to comply with certain agricultural water requirements. It should be noted that enforcement of the new regulations are still being discussed. The Commission continues to work with CDFA and FDA in order to get the latest information on the implementation of these new standards. Although industry members may have a food safety plan, many of these plans are not compliant with the new FSMA regulations. Growers should contact their food safety consultants or staff to review the new FSMA regulations in order to ensure they are in compliance with the new federal orders. Commission staff will continue to update the industry as the regulations are implemented. For additional information or questions, please contact the Commission office, or for more information regarding the Final Rule and its implementation please visit:

<http://www.pma.com/content/articles/2015/12/summaries-of-fsma-final-rules-by-kh>

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELING RULE REPEALED FOR PORK AND BEEF

In December, Congress repealed the Country of Origin Labeling rule of beef and pork after the World Trade Organization (WTO) imposed \$1 billion in retaliatory import tariffs against the United States by Canada and Mexico, which represent two large export markets for blueberries. Should this repeal not have been part of the omnibus spending bill signed by President Obama in mid-December, the blueberry industry would have been responsible for those import tariffs. For more information, please visit:

<http://www.foodsafetynews.com/>

CDFA TO HOST FSMA INFORMATIONAL SESSIONS IN JANUARY

The California Department of Food and Agriculture will host informational sessions on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Final Rules for Produce Safety and Preventive Controls for Animal Food. The Produce Safety Rule will be presented on Wednesday, January 13 beginning at 8:30AM at the International Agri-Center in Tulare, CA, and both the Preventive Controls for Animal Food Rule and the Produce Safety Rule will be presented on Thursday, January 14 beginning at 8:00AM in Seaside, CA at the Embassy Suites Hotel. Invited speakers for these sessions include: Jim Houston, Undersecretary, California Department of Food and Agriculture; and Jeff Farrar, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs and Partnerships, Office of Foods and Veterinary Medicine, Food and Drug Administration. For more information about the FSMA informational sessions, including directions, agenda, and registration, visit: www.cdffa.ca.gov/is/fsma. Due to limited space it is asked that those who plan to attend pre-register through the website provided. Additionally, the CAC will be represented at the Tulare FSMA session by Research Coordinator, Carrie Schellenberg.

SPECIALTY CROP TAX INCENTIVES INCLUDED IN OMNIBUS SPENDING BILL

Several federal tax provisions of importance to the specialty crop investments are included in the omnibus spending bill that was passed this December. The tax provision will make Section 179 expensing permanent and will extend bonus depreciation until 2020. In addition, there is a new specialty crop tax provision for fruit trees and vines. For the first time, 50 percent depreciation can be claimed by farmers for any fruit tree or vine that is planted. Fruit trees and vines which are planted after December 31, 2017 will be permitted 40 percent depreciation in 2018 and 25 percent

depreciation in 2019; with the incentive lasting until January 1, 2020. Lastly, charitable contributions to agricultural research organizations will be encouraged by new improved tax language. To review the new tax provisions of the omnibus bill, please visit <http://waysandmeans.house.gov/>

USDA DESIGNATES 12 CALIFORNIA COUNTIES AS PRIMARY NATURAL DISASTER AREAS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has designated 12 counties in California as primary natural disaster areas due to damages and losses caused by the ongoing drought. These counties are: Fresno, Madera, Santa Barbara, Trinity, Kern, Marin, Santa Clara, Tulare, Kings, San Benito, Sonoma, and Ventura. All counties listed were designated natural disaster areas on Dec. 23, 2015, deeming all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), should they meet eligibility requirements. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the EM loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity. For more information regarding these programs, please visit: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/>

FRESH APPLE HOLDINGS TOTALED AT 106.3 MILLION BUSHELS

Included in US Apple's December edition of Market News was a summary of inventory reports from more than 250 storage facilities in all major apple producing states as of December 1, 2015. According to this report, U.S. fresh-market apple holdings totaled 106.3 million bushels on December 1, 2015, which was 18 percent lower than the December 2014 holdings of 129.9 million bushels and 2 percent above the five-year average of 104.3 million bushels. For more information please visit: <http://usapple.org/index.php>

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APPLE BITES

Apple-Loaded Shortbread Cookies

1 lb unsalted butter, room temp 4 1/4 cups all-purpose flour, sifted
1 1/4 cups granulated sugar 2 tsp kosher salt
1 1/4 tsp vanilla extract 1 1/3 cups fresh California apples,
skin on, small dice

1. In stand mixer, add butter and sugar. Blend with paddle attachment or electric beaters until mixture is light yellow. 2. Add vanilla. Sift in flour and salt. Add small pieces of apple and continue blending, using hands, until incorporated. 3. Remove dough, use a little flour (if needed), and work into a long roll (dough log). Wrap dough in plastic and chill for 45-60 minutes until butter sets. 4. Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees. Remove dough from fridge. Slice into 1/2 inch circles and place onto ungreased baking sheet. Bake for 20 minutes, or until golden. Remove from oven and cool. Cookies will harden as they cool. 5. Top with Apple Cider & Mascarpone Frosting. Recipe courtesy of U.S. Apple Association; <http://www.usapple.org>

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **CDFA FSMA Informational Session**
-Date: January 13, 2016
-Location: Tulare, CA
- **Fruit Logistica**
-Date: February 3-5, 2016
-Location: Berlin, Germany
- **U.S. Apple Capitol Hill Day**
-Date: March 3, 2016
-Location: Washington, D.C.



California Apple Commission

2565 Alluvial Ave, Ste. 182

Clovis, CA 93611

PH: (559) 225-3000

FAX: (559) 456-9099

calapple@calapple.org

www.calapple.org