



PRESS RELEASE
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The California citrus industry has completed work on a food safety guidance handbook for growers. The *FOOD SAFETY GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES (GAPs) FOR CALIFORNIA CITRUS GROWERS* is the end product of several months work. The technical working group (TWG) is led by California Citrus Quality Council President Jim Cranney. Members of the TWG include California Citrus Mutual's Director of Industry Relations Bob Blakely, the Citrus Research Board, shippers, growers, and representatives from UC Cooperative Extension. Several members of the TWG are food safety specialists for their respective companies. The group also concurrently developed companion guidelines for citrus harvesters.

The Food Safety GAPs have been posted on industry websites and will be distributed to growers and harvesters at Citrus Mutual's 2010-11 Marketing Session workshop, and annual educational program, at the Visalia Convention Center on November 18, 2010, and at other industry events during the season.

The TWG is now developing sample food safety templates that will be provided to growers and harvesters to use in writing food safety plans and standards that are consistent with the harmonized food safety standard being developed by the fresh produce industry.

The Food and Drug Administration has been seeking specific commodity input from the produce industry, as it works on updating food safety regulations. The California citrus industry plans to submit the *FOOD SAFETY GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES (GAPs) FOR CALIFORNIA CITRUS GROWERS* and the accompanying standards to FDA for their review and consideration in advance of the Proposed Rule anticipated in 2011.

"These industry representatives are to be commended for this effort;" notes CCM President Joel Nelsen. "While our industry has an enviable record in this area we cannot let down our guard and we are obligated to protect our customer whether it be the consumer or the receiver purchasing the commodity. By adopting this document we believe the industry is satisfying demands emanating from the marketplace and government. Our collective goal now is to have it 100% adopted and implemented by our growers and shippers."

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