



CHESAPEAKE HARVEST

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## I'm GAP certified. Am I Also FSMA Compliant?

As of today, the answer, is mostly "yes."

Understanding the difference between GAPs certification and The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) will be essential for growers. Simply put, Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) is a voluntary food safety program driven by buyers, whereas FSMA is law.

FSMA is meant to be a uniform, *minimum* requirement for food safety that all produce growers must adhere to. Even if a farm is FSMA compliant, chances are a buyer maintaining higher food safety standards will require farms to have a 3rd Party GAPs certification under one (or more) of the GAPs brands in order to sell to them. USDA's Harmonized GAPs is often acceptable for Maryland growers, but buyers define their own requirements. To the extent possible, it's important to identify your buyers (or potential buyers) and know what their standards are before choosing which GAPs audit you will pursue.

In May of 2017, USDA made changes to its Harmonized GAPs requirements in an effort to bring them in line with FSMA compliance. Decisions are still being made, at the federal level, as to what standards will be required for water quality testing and soil amendments. But, at present, USDA/Harmonized and FSMA compliance are mostly in sync.

## Important Links and Contacts:

### Maryland Department of Agriculture:

GAPs Info - [http://mda.maryland.gov/foodfeedquality/Pages/good\\_ag\\_practices.aspx](http://mda.maryland.gov/foodfeedquality/Pages/good_ag_practices.aspx)

FSMA Info - <http://mda.maryland.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

### Produce Safety Alliance:

Comprehensive FSMA Produce Safety Rule information - <https://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/food-safety-modernization-act/produce-safety-rule>

Produce Safety Rule compliance dates - <https://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/>

### National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition - FSMA Food Safety Regulations (Flow Chart)

[http://sustainableagriculture.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/2016\\_2-FSMA-Final-Rule-Flowchart-V3.pdf](http://sustainableagriculture.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/2016_2-FSMA-Final-Rule-Flowchart-V3.pdf)



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\*If you have additional questions or need further resources, please don't hesitate to contact us.

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