



Scholarship Opportunity for MA Specialty Crop Growers for Better Process Control School (BPCS) – Starts January 6th



Value-Added Processing – Farmers are invited to Apply: UMass Extension and MA Department of Agricultural Resources encourage farmers who grow specialty crops with an interest in value-added processing to apply for this scholarship opportunity to participate in Better Process Control School. The primary objective of this scholarship is to increase the food safety processing skills for farmers interested in producing shelf stable low-acid and acidified specialty crops (examples include: acidified foods, glass container closures, retorting, etc.).

Course Date: January 6-9, 2014 from 7:30AM to 5PM

Location: UMass Amherst, Campus Center

Tuition Fee for Scholarship Participant: \$150

Please note: Tuition fee includes administrative costs, course materials, continental breakfast & lunch. Students are responsible for their own meals and lodging outside of the class.

Eligibility:

- Candidates must own or be employed at a specialty crop farm
- Candidates must presently process or intend to process canned foods using specialty crops (high acid, low acid and/or acidified products)
- Candidates must be willing to attend the entire course program
- Must be willing to participate in 4 survey assessments

Course Details:

Producing healthy, convenient and safe value-added processed foods is a way to further extend specialty crops throughout the year and provide new product offerings to consumers. However, in order to produce safe, quality foods, there are a variety of core food safety principals that need to be identified and controlled when processing. Through the support of the MDAR Specialty Crop Block grant, UMass Food Science Extension invite 10 specialty crop farmers that are interested in producing value-added products to participate in a 3.5 day course, “Better Process Control School” to learn the key food safety processing fundamentals.

By law, all commercial processors, when first engaging in the manufacturing, processing, or packing of **low acid or acidified foods** in any state must register with the FDA on Form FDA 2541 (Food Canning Establishment Registration; 21 CFR 108.25). In order to be approved as a registered process, businesses need to operate with a certified supervisor on the premise when processing.

Better Process Control School offers instruction which fulfills the FDA and USDA Good Manufacturing Practice requirements to certify supervisors of acidification, thermal processing and container closure evaluation operations during the canning of low-acid or acidified foods. Throughout the course six basic topics will be covered and with a passing score that will be acknowledged through a certificate.

Application:

All interested applicants are required to contact Amanda Kinchla, Food Science Extension via email (amanda.kinchla@foodsci.umass.edu) or by fax: 413.545.1262. Participants must meet all of the requirements listed in the “Eligibility” section of this form. Each applicant must include the following information:

- Name:
- Business Name:
- Description of your involvement with specialty crops (i.e. farmer, employee, processor, etc.):
- Specialty Crops Grown and/or Value-Added products manufactured:
- Annual production volume estimate for 2012 (in pounds):
- Have you completed or are you certified any of the following food safety programs (Yes/No):
 - o Good Agricultural Practices (GAP):
 - o Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points (HACCP):
 - o ServSafe:
 - o Safe Quality Food (SQF):
 - o Other:
- Brief description of your interest in BPCS (less than 200 words):