

Produce Industry Crisis Management Preparedness



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Background

- GFVGA Awarded USDA Block Grant Administered by Georgia Dept of Agriculture
- GFVGA Contracts with Sahlman Williams firm to Orchestrate Crisis Management Plan



Background

- GFVGA Conducts Crisis Questionnaire of GA Fruit and Vegetable Industry
 - What and/or Where could a crisis begin?
 - Food Safety, Labor, Pest Control, Water, etc.
- GFVGA Finalizes Crisis Management Plan for Produce Industry



Background

- GFVGA Collaborates with other Produce Industry Associations
 - Having Association Staff that does not change annually, GFVGA can be the initial point of contact
 - GFVGA will then contact all other Organizations that need to be involved
- Hosted 2 Crisis Preparedness Workshop Trainings
 - Vidalia and Tifton



Crisis Management Overview

- Definition of a Crisis
 - Unexpected
 - Unknown and Escalating Intensity
 - Interrupts Normal Business Operations
 - Impacts an Organization's External Reputation
 - Impacts an Industry's and Organization's Financial Performance



Crisis Management Overview

- Scenarios for Potential Negative Exposure for GFVGA Members:
 - Contamination
 - Product Recall
 - Consumer Illness
 - Labor Issues
 - Weather-Related Crop Failures



Crisis Management Overview

- Warning Signs of a Developing Crisis
 - Contact From Other Industry Contacts
 - Consumer Complaints
 - Notification of a Legal Issue
 - Contact From News Media Outlet
 - Contact From a Regulatory Agency
 - Contact From a Customer
 - Media Reports – Published and Online



GFVGA Crisis Objectives

- Maintain Industry's Reputation
- Identify Roles and Responsibilities of Crisis Team
- Centralize Control and Flow of Information
- Act Quickly and Consistently at Onset of Potential Crisis in Honest and Forthcoming Way
- Protect Industry's Market



Key Stakeholders

- Grower/Shippers
- Industry Associations
- Regulatory Agencies
- Retailers/Wholesalers
- Consumers
- Media



Crisis Communications Process

- Qualify the Crisis
- Contact GFVGA Staff
- Assemble/Mobilize Crisis Team
- Assess the Situation
- Determine a Course of Action
- Communicate with Appropriate Audiences
- Evaluate and Re-Evaluate



Basic Crisis Questions for Industry

- Who First Learned of Problem?
- When Did You Know About Problem?
- Will Industry Change or Stop What Led to Crisis?
- Has Anyone Fallen Ill or Died?



Crisis Communication Tools

- Crisis Contact Card
 - Emergency Information (see below)
- Crisis Guidelines
 - What to do if Media Calls (see below)
- Crisis Risks and Issues Team
 - Meet Periodically to Monitor Issues and Potential Crises



Crisis Communication Tools

- **Crisis Contact Card for Food Safety Crisis**
 - Emergency Information
 - For a copy, please download from GFVGA Website or contact GFVGA Staff

If you have a product food safety crisis and/or media inquiry, please contact one of the following:

**Georgia Fruit & Vegetable
Growers Association**

**1-877-888GFVGA
(43842)**

Charles Hall, *Executive Director* / 706-255-5655
Beth Bland, *Food Safety Director* / 706-881-0092 or 706-540-2886
Rebecca Smith, *Member Services Director* / 706-302-0215

Crisis Communication Tools

- **Crisis Guidelines**
 - What to do in a Food Safety Crisis if Media Calls
- For a copy, please download from the GFVGA Website or contact GFVGA Staff

Georgia Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association

FOOD SAFETY CRISIS MEDIA GUIDELINES

If the media calls you regarding a food safety crisis, here are the guidelines suggested by the Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association (GFVGA):

1. Stay Calm

When a crisis occurs, reporters are assigned the story at the last minute and are trying to learn as much as they can under a very tight deadline. Even though they are under a lot of pressure and demand quick information from you, **PLEASE REMAIN CALM**. Remember that you do not have to match their emotional state. Simply **remain respectful** and **gather their information** in a manner free from agitation, excitement or passion.

2. Gather the Facts

Please **take notes** of what the reporter has communicated to you regarding the crisis. He or she may ask some preliminary questions about the crisis and want immediate reaction from you. Please remember that **everything you say to a reporter should be treated as "on the record"** so please only gather their information and **DO NOT RESPOND ON THE SPOT** to their questions. Tell them you or someone else will **get back to them as soon as possible** because you have to learn more about what happened. After receiving the inquiry, please **immediately report it to your supervisor and the GFVGA**.

3. Contact GFVGA

Please **CONTACT THE GFVGA IMMEDIATELY** after receiving a media inquiry. Utilize your crisis contact cards for updated information. Please share the following information with GFVGA:

1. Name of reporter
2. Name of media outlet
3. Reporter's contact info (phone numbers, e-mail)
4. Deadline for story
5. Reporter's questions



4. Monitor the Situation

IMMEDIATELY SHARE NEW INFORMATION you learn regarding the crisis and media inquiries with the GFVGA. GFVGA is the initial contact and will communicate with each specific commodity group in the produce industry. The open flow of communication between your organization and the GFVGA is critical during a time of crisis. We want to present a **united and effective voice** to the media during a crisis. It is important for everyone in your organization to follow these crisis guidelines because it helps our industry communicate our key messages effectively with the media and the public at large.

What To Do In a Crisis

- Contact the Georgia Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association
- GFVGA will contact any other Organizations that need to be involved
- GFVGA will help you through the Crisis



Thank You!

Georgia Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association

Charles Hall, Executive Director

Rebecca Smith, Operations Coordinator

Beth Bland, Program Coordinator

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