



2023 Annual Training Report

AS OF DECEMBER 2023

CONTENTS

Introduction..... 3

2023 GAPC Annual Training for Tobacco Growers..... 3

2023 GAPC Annual Training Sponsors 6

2023 Labor Management Webinars 7

Labor Considerations For Tennessee Farmers 8

2023 Customized Farmworker Training and Cost Share Program 10

Appendix A: 2023 GAPC Annual Training Topics..... 12

Appendix B: 2023 Online GAPC Annual Training Courses 13

INTRODUCTION



One of the largest efforts by GAP Connections (GAPC) is in the education and training of growers and workers. GAPC believes it is critical to provide the information and training to help growers and workers adopt best practices that produce a quality crop while protecting, sustaining, or enhancing the environment, and ensure the safety and rights of farm laborers. This report provides data and information on GAPC's training activities in 2023.

2023 GAPC ANNUAL TRAINING FOR TOBACCO GROWERS

GAPC, in partnership with the Cooperative Extension Service, coordinates annual training where growers learn from experts about the latest crop, environmental, and labor best management practices. Presenters include specialists in crop and environmental topics such as university agronomists, entomologists, plant pathologists, economists, and specialists in labor topics, including representatives from the federal Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division and certain state departments of labor.

IN 2023, 2,839 GROWERS ACROSS 14 STATES RECEIVED GAPC ANNUAL TRAINING

Growers receive vital information from presenters at GAPC Annual Training, and have an opportunity to interact and ask questions, creating relationships that will help them now and in the future. Growers who have attended training have repeatedly indicated that GAPC Annual Training is a critical source of information to improve management practices and that positive changes have been made on their operation from the information they gained by attending.

In 2023, GAPC Annual Training was offered through in-person training or online through the Grower Dashboard. Forty-six (46) in-person training locations were scheduled in 2023. These in-person training opportunities were a combination of GAPC planned training in selected locations and training following or in conjunction with an industry partner's event such as company or grower association meeting. To see a list of 2023 in-person training topics see Appendix A.



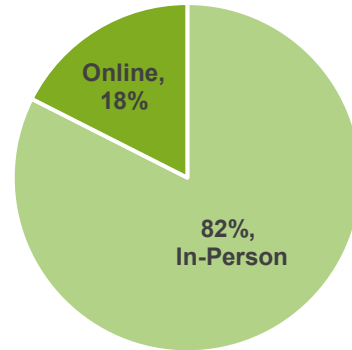
February 2023 Southern Farm Show
Raleigh, North Carolina

GAPC provided growers with the opportunity to complete annual training online through the grower dashboard. Online training could be completed by viewing a series of crop and environmental, labor, and GAPC Overview courses and successfully completing a knowledge assessment.

GAPC staff worked with extension specialists, Labor Compliance Consultants, North Carolina Agriculture & Resource Economics, North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services – Emergency Programs Division, and Kentucky Safe – OSHA for course contributions. The most viewed online training topics included cover crops for tobacco production, soil test interpretation & fertilizer reporting, and disposal of CPA’s and CPA containers for crop and environment and farm succession basics, growers and stress, and field sanitation for operation and labor. To see a list of 2023 in-person training topics see Appendix B.

GAPC Annual Training provides growers GAPC training credits in crop, environmental, and labor management best practices. The training topics are chosen each year by the GAPC Training Committee in conjunction with stakeholder input such as Cooperative Extension Educators and Specialists, Federal and State agencies and departments, and other non-governmental organizations with an interest in crop, environmental, or labor management practices. The topics are also tailored for the location to best serve and relate to the grower operations and concerns in that region.

Percentage of Growers Trained by Event Type



Farmworker Housing Training Orientation 2023 Online Training Course

Presenters and collaborators on our 2023 GAP Annual Training include:



- William Hardee III, Clemson University
- Dr. Matthew Vann, North Carolina State University
- Jeffrey Graybill, Penn State University
- Dr. J. Michael Moore, University of Georgia
- Dr. Andy Bailey, University of Kentucky
- Dr. Robert Pearce, University of Kentucky
- Dr. Mitchell Richmond, University of Tennessee
- Dr. David Reed, Virginia Tech University

January 2023, Dr. Matthew Vann,
North Carolina State University
Martin County, North Carolina



February 2023, Dr. Andy Bailey,
University of Kentucky
TN-KY Tobacco Expo
Springfield, Tennessee

**Table 1: 2023 Annual GAP Training Attendance
by Grower Location and Event Type**

State	In Person	Online	Total
FL	6	3	9
GA	59	6	65
IL	3	0	3
IN	20	1	21
KY	838	218	1,056
MO	0	4	4
NC	738	188	926
OH	21	1	22
PA	139	1	140
SC	89	1	90
TN	261	67	328
VA	162	7	169
WV	0	1	1
WI	5	0	5
Total	2,341	498	2,839

2023 GAPC ANNUAL TRAINING SPONSORS



Thanks to the support from GAPC Company Members, Associate Members, and annual sponsors, Annual GAP Training is offered each year at no cost to the growers. Annual GAP Training provides a unique opportunity for sponsors to connect and engage with growers who are invested in the tobacco industry and are interested in producing a quality tobacco crop while protecting, sustaining, or enhancing the environment and ensuring the safety and rights of farm laborers.

GAP Connections (GAPC) hosted two labor management webinars in 2023. The focus of the labor management webinars is to provide information and education on labor-related topics that are generally critical and current issues.

In April, GAPC hosted **“Understanding Workers’ Compensation”** for growers in Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. The goal of the webinars was to help growers gain an understanding and acquire knowledge of Workers’ Compensation coverage under the Migrant and Season Worker Protection Act and Employee Rights under the H-2A program. Growers learned what to do before, when, and after an accident occurs on the farm. The relevant state departments of labor partnered with GAPC to provide content and resources.

In July, GAPC hosted the second labor management webinar titled **“Human Trafficking and Farmworkers What does it mean to a grower?”** with presenters from the Polaris Project, the North Carolina Human Trafficking Commission, and the US Department of Labor. This webinar provided an in-depth look at Human Trafficking amongst the farmworker population.

Participants gained knowledge and understanding on:

- the legal and practical definitions of human trafficking, both sex and labor,
- how human trafficking looks amongst the farmworker population,
- how to recognize and report signs of Human Trafficking,
- the 3 P’s – prevention, protection, and partnerships, and
- what can a grower do?



LABOR CONSIDERATIONS FOR TENNESSEE FARMERS: STRATEGIES FOR SECURING AND MANAGING AGRICULTURAL LABOR

GAP Connections (GAPC) and University of Tennessee Agricultural and Resource Economics partnered together on a project to address financial, legal, and human risks facing farmers and agribusinesses that have labor-intensive enterprises requiring hired agricultural labor. In February 2023, the project proposal was approved and \$49,000 in grant funds were awarded from the Southern Risk Management Education Center.

The goal of the project was to educate participants on the options available for sourcing agricultural labor, the costs associated with those options, the legal and regulatory requirements of those options, and best practices for managing labor and maintaining compliance with applicable agricultural labor laws and regulations.

The training curriculum focused on:

- Labor sourcing options and costs
- Agricultural laws and regulations
- H-2A Visa program: overview, cost, and legal entities
- Farm Labor Contractors (FLC's and H-2ACL's)
- Best practices for recordkeeping, communication, training, and housing
- Workplace injuries and workers' compensation considerations

Presenters included: the US Department of Labor, Wage & Hour Division, TN Department of Labor & Workforce Development, University of Tennessee Extension, and GAP Connections.



Pictured from left to right: Amy Rochkes, GAPC, Dr. Margarita Velandia, UT Extension, Jane Chadwell, GAPC, Lance Butler, TN Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Lisa Kelly, US Department of Labor Wage & Hour Division, and Kimberly McGahey, US Department of Labor Wage & Hour Division.

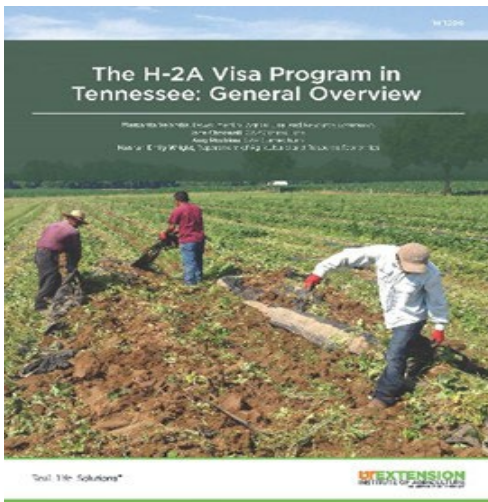
The highlight of each workshop was the grower panel. A panel of growers was assembled to share their experiences with hiring labor through either the H-2A visa program, migrant, local, or other channels. The panelists shared their success stories when hiring labor and honest feedback on what worked or didn't work. Attendees were able to ask questions of the panel to gain a better understanding of what to consider when hiring labor for the farm operation or agribusiness.

Grower Panelists included:

- George McDonald, Catesa Farms
- Bart Gilmer, Falcon Ridge Farm
- Willis Jepson, Jepson Farms
- Donald Mitchell, Woodford Burley, LLC
- Darrell Varner, Woodford Burley, LLC
- Dianna Rosa, Tosh Farms



Workshops were held in Jonesboro, TN, Clarksville, TN, and Murfreesboro, TN in November. Lunch was sponsored at the workshops by the Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation.



As a part of the project, “The H-2A Visa Program in Tennessee: General Overview” publication was developed and published to provide a general overview of the H-2A visa program in Tennessee, specifically the use of the program in terms of certified workers; the geographic distribution of these workers; the certification process, businesses or firms that could help with the certification process; and program costs for employers of H-2A workers.



SOUTHERN
EXTENSION
RISK
MANAGEMENT
EDUCATION



National Institute of Food and Agriculture
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

2023 CUSTOMIZED FARMWORKER TRAINING AND COST SHARE PROGRAM

The choice of training topics is numerous and varied to offer a full and complete package for operations that may be looking for safety and compliance training to meet different requirements. Topics range from general farm safety, worker rights and expectations, laws and regulations, to specific topics such as food safety and crop integrity. The GAPC Farmworker Training is interactive, flexible, and complete. GAPC farmworker trainers are bilingual, bicultural, and experienced in dealing with different types of farm labor and operations. Trainers are located in North Carolina, Tennessee, and California and can travel to other states.

IN 2023, THERE WERE **778** FARMWORKERS TRAINED BY GAPC TRAINERS ACROSS 5 STATES

Standard Training Topics include:

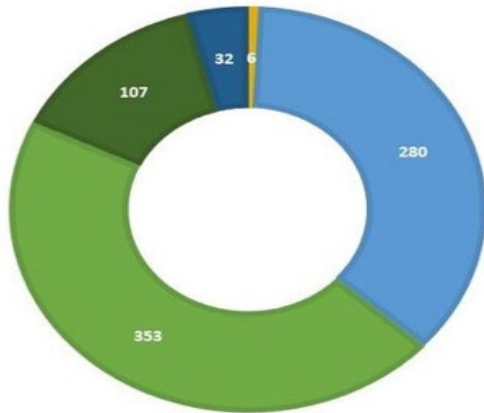
- General Farm Safety
- Safe Operation of Farm Equipment & Machinery
- Basic CPR and First Aid
- Heat Stress – Symptoms & Treatments
- Storage, Handling, Application & Disposal of Agrichemicals
- Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Recognition of Restricted Entry Interval (REI)
- Farm Emergency Plan & Emergency Response
- Sexual Harassment
- Human Trafficking Awareness & Prevention
- Food Safety
 - Health and Hygiene
- GAPC Certification
 - Worker Rights & Responsibilities
 - Worker Concern Helpline
- Prevention of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning (Fire-Cured Only)
- Green Tobacco Sickness – Symptoms & Treatments



In 2023, GAPC began offering GAPC Grower Members who grow tobacco a unique opportunity to have GAPC Customized Farmworker Training at their farm through a new cost-share program. The cost-share program allows GAPC Grower Members who grow tobacco to schedule and have farmworker training on their farm at a fifty percent (50%) discount using sponsorship funds from the tobacco industry in 2023. Thanks to the generous sponsors from the tobacco industry (listed to the right) training was able to be offered to more farmworkers at a reduced cost to the growers. This was appreciated by both growers and workers on those farms who participated in the cost-share program.

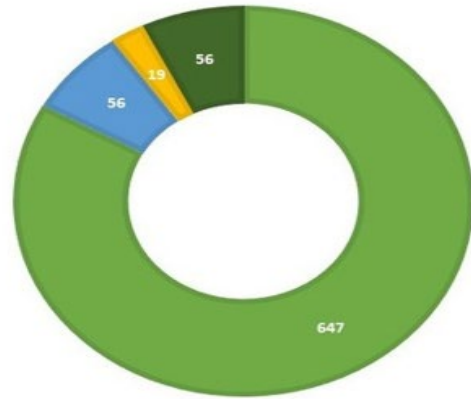
FARMWORKER TRAINING BY STATE

Georgia Kentucky North Carolina Tennessee Virginia



CLASSIFICATION OF WORKER TRAINED

H-2A Direct H-2A Indirect Local Direct Owner or Direct Employer



The Farmworker Training Cost Share Program are not possible without our partnerships and the generous sponsorships from businesses, associations, companies, and others in the agricultural industry.



“I LIKED THE WAY THE TRAINING WAS PRESENTED. IT WAS VERY ENTERTAINING AND INFORMATIVE.” – FARMWORK IN KENTUCKY

APPENDIX A: 2023 GAPC ANNUAL TRAINING TOPICS

Crop & Environmental Management Topics

- Agronomic Update
- Tobacco Curing Update
- Nematode Management
- Weed Management
- Flea Beetle and Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus Management
- Tobacco Variety Information (Flue, Burley & Dark)
- Tobacco Disease Management
- Pesticide Safety Training
- Greenhouse Transplant Production
- Greenhouse Issues and Management
- Tobacco Fertilization
- Insect Pest Management
- Burley Varieties
- Fertilizer Review
- Update on Frogeye Leafspot Research
- Timing of Burley Harvest
- Timing of MH Application
- Connecticut Broadleaf Production
- Blank Shank Management
- Tobacco Budgeting (Flue, Burley & Dark)

GAPC Update and Labor Management Topics

GAPC Update

- 2022 GAPC Certification Update
- 2023 Tobacco & Hemp Certification Application
- 2023 Certification Program Changes
- Pilot Programs: GAPC Elevate Housing Classification and GAPC Advance Labor Certification

Labor Management Best Practices

- Form I-9's
- Wage Statements
- Farm Emergency and Disaster Plans
- Heat Illness Prevention
- Housing Orientation
- Farmworker Training Program

APPENDIX B: 2023 ONLINE GAPC ANNUAL TRAINING COURSES

Crop and Environmental Online Courses:	
Cover Crops for Tobacco Production	NCSU Identifying Injury Caused by Minor Pests in Tobacco
Soil Test Interpretation & Fertilizer Reporting	NCSU Tobacco Flea Beetle Biology & Management
Disposal of CPAs and CPA Containers	NCSU Using the Tobacco Thrips Flight & TSWV Intensity Predictor
2023 UT Chemical Topping	NCSU Tobacco Budworm Biology & Significance Part 1
NCSU Tobacco Weed Management	UGA Tobacco Mosaic Virus
UKY Air-Curing Management	NCSU Tobacco Budworm Biology & Significance Part 2
2023 UT Variety Updates and Time of MH Application	NCSU Steam Generator Specifications
2023 NCSU Transplant Water Pesticide Application	UGS Cigarette Beetles in Carryover Tobacco
UKY Update Angular Leaf Spot	UGA Frenching Manganese Deficiency
UKY Fire-curing Techniques: Traditional vs. High Volume Fire-Curing	Insect Monitoring and Management for Outdoor Hemp Production
UKY Frogeye Leaf Spot Update & Management	University of Tennessee Hemp Field Trial Research
NCSU De-Lugging Programs: Agronomic and Economic Impacts	Hemp Diseases and Management
UKY Hidden Soil Compaction Impacts on Tobacco Production	2023 NCSU Nozzle Selection for MH Application
NCSU Scouting Recommendations & Methods in Tobacco	UKY Potassium Source Recommendations
Clemson Tobacco Greenhouse Disease Management	

Labor Online Courses:	
Farm Succession Basics	Terms & Conditions of Transportation for H-2A Workers
Tobacco Growers and Stress	H-2A Disclosure Record Keeping Wages and Wage Statements
Field Sanitation	Emergency Plans via Risk Management
Form I-9	Hazard + Alert + Skid Steer Loaders
What is Retaliation?	MSPA Disclosure Record Keeping Wages and Wage Statements
Housing Terms and Conditions	Forklift Safety Training
H-2A Hours Offered & ¾ Guarantee	Terms & Conditions of Transportation for Migrant & Seasonal Workers
Farmworker Housing Training Orientation	FLSA MSPA H-2A Discipline, Retaliation, Termination, Notification
H-2A Recruitment & Preferential Treatment	FLSA MSPA H-2A Coverage & Exemptions
FLC, FLCE & H-2ALC Registration and Requirements	

GAPC Update & Overview Online Courses:	
2023 Certification Program	2023 GAPC Tobacco and Hemp Certification Application: Information & Details
GAPC Labor FAQs	GAPC Labor Terms
Labor Management Best Practices and Infographic	