



United States Department of Agriculture

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**USDA**

**Specialty Crops Inspection Division**

**Audit Verification Programs**

**NGFN National Hub Collaboration**

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**Donna Burke-Fonda, Assistant Branch Chief**

**Audit Services Branch, Specialty Crops Inspection Division**



# **Good Agricultural Practices & Good Handling Practices**

# Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)

- Facilitates the strategic marketing of agricultural products in domestic and international marketplaces
- Develops voluntary standards
- Administers Federal Marketing Orders and Agreements

# Agricultural Marketing Service

- Administers the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA)
- Provides independent third-party inspection and audit services
- Non regulatory agency in regards to food safety
  - Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates fruits and vegetables, and seafood
  - USDA, Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) regulates meat and poultry

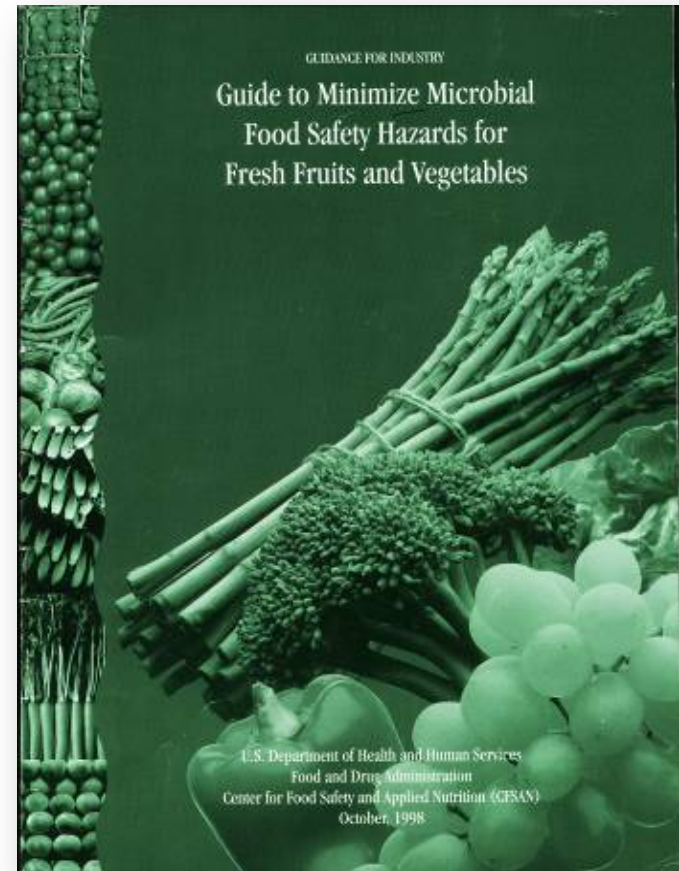


# The USDA GAP & GHP Audit Program

- Established in 2001 at industry request
- Voluntary, competitively priced user fee program
- Verifies participant's efforts to minimize microbial hazards in fresh fruits and vegetables

# Audit Program Development

- USDA's audit programs are based on established scientific principles and utilizes the FDA's guidance document
- Published in October 1998



# Audit Program Development

## Additional FDA Guidance Documents:

- Fresh Cut Fruits & Vegetables
- Lettuce & Leafy Greens
- Melons
- Fresh Tomatoes
- To obtain copies of FDA guidance documents:



<http://www.fda.gov>



# Audits Types Conducted

- Generic USDA GAP&GHP Audit
- Produce GAPs Harmonized Food Safety Audit





# Audits Types Conducted

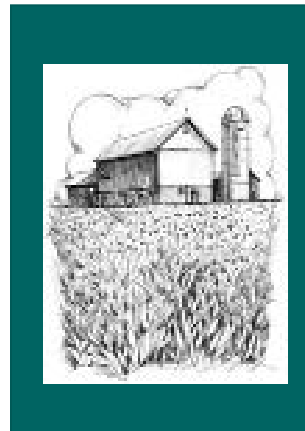
- CA & AZ Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement
- Tomato Food Safety Audit Protocol
- Mushroom GAP
- Cantaloupe Audits

# Audits Types Conducted

- Which audit do you choose?
- Often decided by your customer
- The commodity or process will also influence your selection

# Audit Program - Prerequisites

- Must have implemented a food safety program
- Must have a designated person(s) to oversee implementation of program



<http://www.ams.usda.gov/gapghp>



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## Grading, Certification and Verification

### Fresh Produce Audit Verification Program

With the increasing focus on good agricultural practices to verify that farms are producing fruits and vegetables in the safest manner possible, third party audits are being utilized by the retail and food service industry to verify their suppliers are in conformance to specific agricultural best practices. Since 1999, the Agricultural Marketing Service has been actively involved with the produce industry offering auditing services throughout the food chain to verify that best practices are being followed.

AMS, in partnership with state departments of agriculture, offers a voluntary, audit based program that verifies adherence to the recommendations made in the Food and Drug Administration's [Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables](#).

The Good Agricultural Practices and Good Handling Practices Audit Verification Program is broken down into three major sections: Good Agricultural Practices which examines farm practices; Good Handling Practices which concentrates on packing facilities, storage facilities and wholesale distribution centers; and Food Defense protocols utilized throughout the food chain. In addition to this program, AMS provides oversight for the Leafy Green Marketing Agreements in effect in California and Arizona, along with the California Tomato Growers Cooperative, each with specific best practices criteria that their members can be audited against.

**List of Participating Companies arranged:**

- [By State](#)
- [By Commodity](#)

**Resources**

- [USDA Audit Checklist \(PDF\)](#)
- [USDA Audit Score Sheet \(PDF\)](#)
- [Client Checklist \(PDF\)](#)
- [Client Scoresheet \(PDF\)](#)
- [Sliced Apple Audit Specification \(PDF\)](#)

**Media Help**

- [Download Adobe Acrobat](#)

Website lists farms & facilities that have successfully passed an audit. It is broken down by state and commodity.

# Website

**USDA Agricultural Marketing Service  
GAP/GHP Audit Verification Program  
New Jersey**

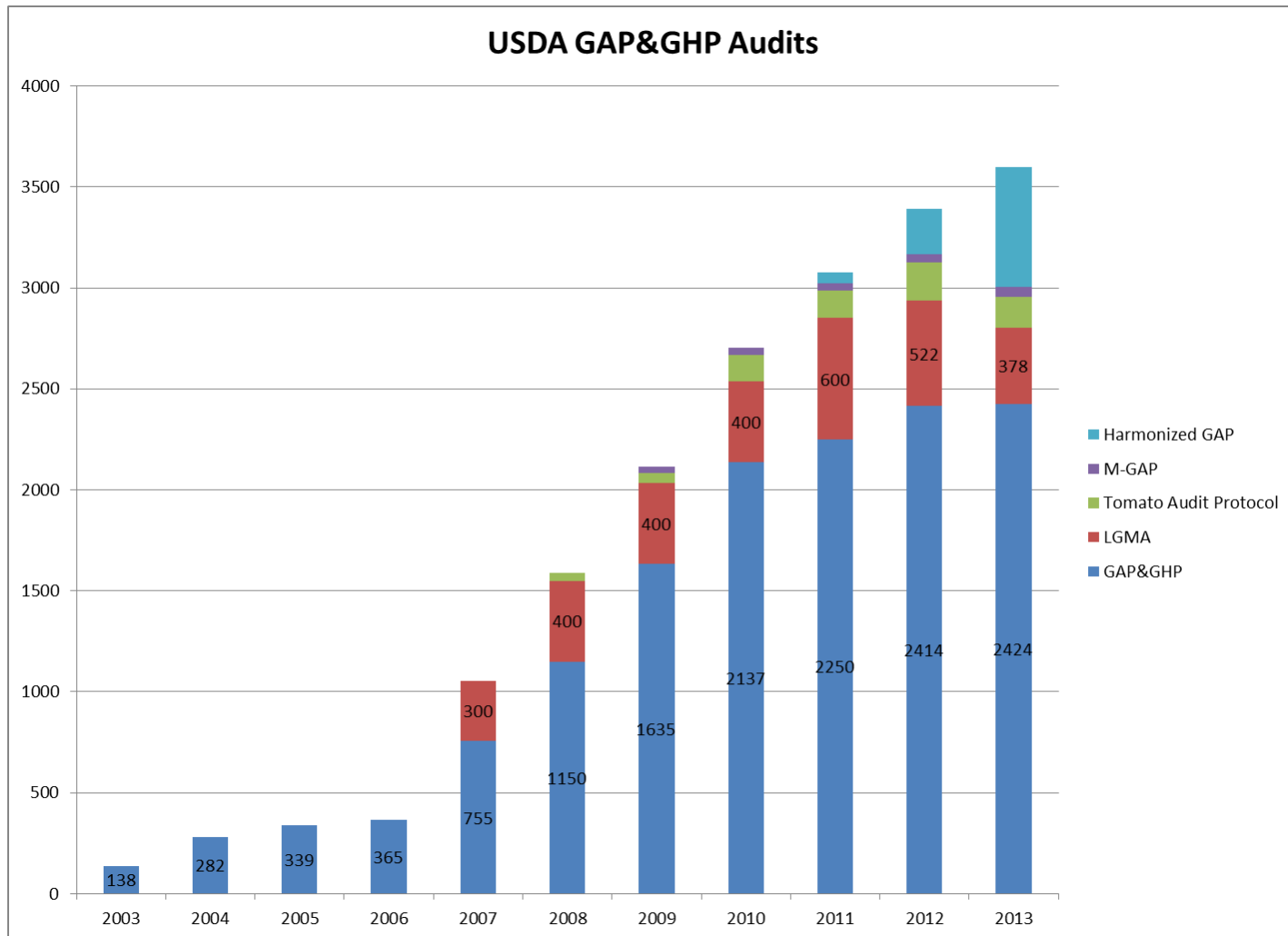
The following table shows companies that have successfully passed an initial audit under the voluntary Good Agricultural Practices & Good Handling Practices for the scopes and commodities shown. Dates in a particular column indicate that the participant demonstrated an acceptable level of adherence with the Food and Drug Administration's "Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables." The audit results are valid for one (1) year from the date shown, and are validated through the use of unannounced audit(s) throughout the growing/packing season. "N/A" means that process was not audited.

Company	Address	City, State	Farm Review Part 1	Field Harvest Packing Part 2	House Packing Part 3	Storage & Transportation Part 4	Traceback Part 5	Wholesale Distribution Center / Terminal Warehouses Part 6	Traceback A Part 6A	Commodities Covered by Audit
Eastern Fresh Growers Inc	340 Sayers Neck Rd	Cedarville, New Jersey	n/a	n/a	n/a	5/30/2007	5/30/2007	n/a	n/a	Asparagus, Romaine Lettuce, Iceberg Lettuce
Fresh Wave, The	1404 East Oak Rd	Vineland, New Jersey	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	7/20/2007	n/a	Fruits and Vegetables
Gloucester County Packing	535 Glassboro Rd	Woodbury, NJ	n/a	n/a	8/29/2007	8/29/2007	n/a	n/a	n/a	Potatoes
Harsel Farms	Box 150, 584 Tuckahoe Rd	Milroy, New Jersey	11/20/2007	11/20/2007	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Cabbage, Collard Greens
M. D'Ottavio Produce Inc.	P.O. Box 535	Minotola	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5/22/2007	n/a	Fruits and Vegetables
Nardall Bros	54 Main Street	Cedarville, New Jersey	10/9/2007	n/a	10/9/2007	10/9/2007	n/a	n/a	n/a	Fall/Winter Squash, Snap Beans

Downloadable PDF report for each commodity/state showing individual farm/facilities and the audit scopes.



# Audits Performed



# Audit Program - Alternatives

The traditional USDA GAP & GHP Audit Program requires:

- One Audit – One Farm
- Certification goes to audited farm (auditee)
- Auditee is responsible for:
  - Developing food safety plan
  - Performing risk assessments for water, soil, wildlife, etc.
  - Training employees
  - Payment for audit

## Audit Program - Alternatives

Another option is the coordinated audit request

- A group of producers with similar commodities or processes establish timing for multiple audits
- Auditor's travel costs are shared by the group
- Individual auditees may still be responsible for same items stated earlier



## Audit Program - Alternatives

A third option is the USDA Group GAP Audit Program, which involves:

- One System Audit – One Group
- USDA certification goes to Group
- Group can take responsibility for developing food safety plan and training, performing risk assessments, and payment
- Requires Group to develop a Quality Management System



## Questions?

**Donna Burke-Fonda**  
**[dburkefonda@ams.usda.gov](mailto:dburkefonda@ams.usda.gov)**  
**202-690-0628**

**[www.ams.usda.gov/gapghp](http://www.ams.usda.gov/gapghp)**