



Agricultural Marketing Service
Fruit and Vegetable Programs

Good Agricultural Practices & Good Handling Practices Audit Verification Program

*Penn State Mushroom Industry
Conference*

Avondale, PA

September 21, 2009





Agricultural Marketing Service
Fruit and Vegetable Programs



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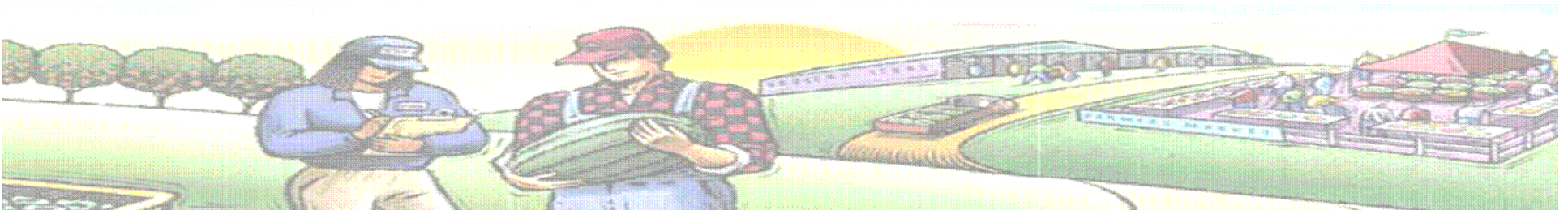




Agricultural Marketing Service
Fruit and Vegetable Programs

Agricultural Marketing Service

- Facilitates the strategic marketing of agricultural products in domestic and international marketplace.
- Develops voluntary standards and administers Federal Marketing Orders and Agreements.
- Provides independent third party inspection and auditing services.
- Non regulatory agency in regards to Food Safety (FDA & FSIS).



Agricultural Marketing Service Fruit and Vegetable Programs

- Provides inspection and auditing services to both the fresh and processed fruit and vegetable industry.
- Works in cooperation with state departments of agriculture to provide these services.



Food Safety Related Activities

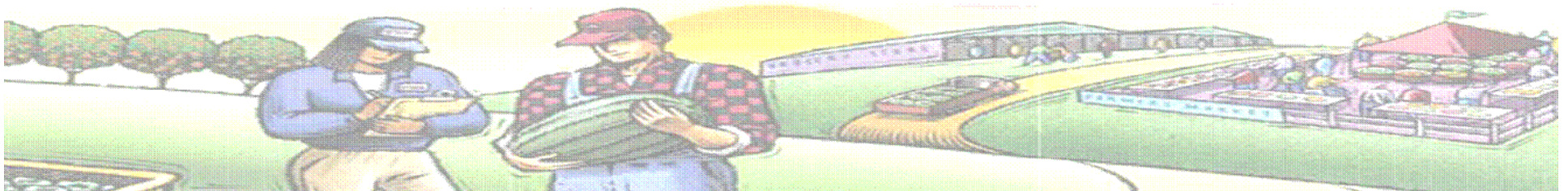
Food Safety Related Audit Programs

- » Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)
- » Good Handling Practices (GHP)
- » Food Defense
- » Supplier Audits
- » Identity Preservation
- » Warehouse Audits



What is the USDA GAP & GHP Audit Program?

- Established at industry request
 - Retailers began requiring suppliers to meet FDA's GAP & GHP, and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP).
- Voluntary, competitively priced user fee
- Verifies participant's efforts to minimize microbial hazards in fresh fruits and vegetables

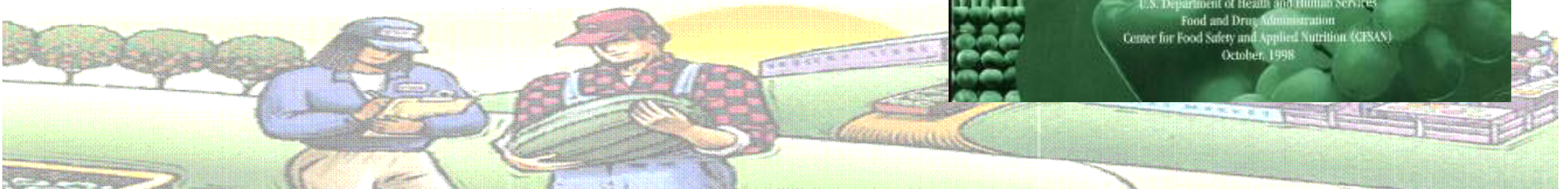
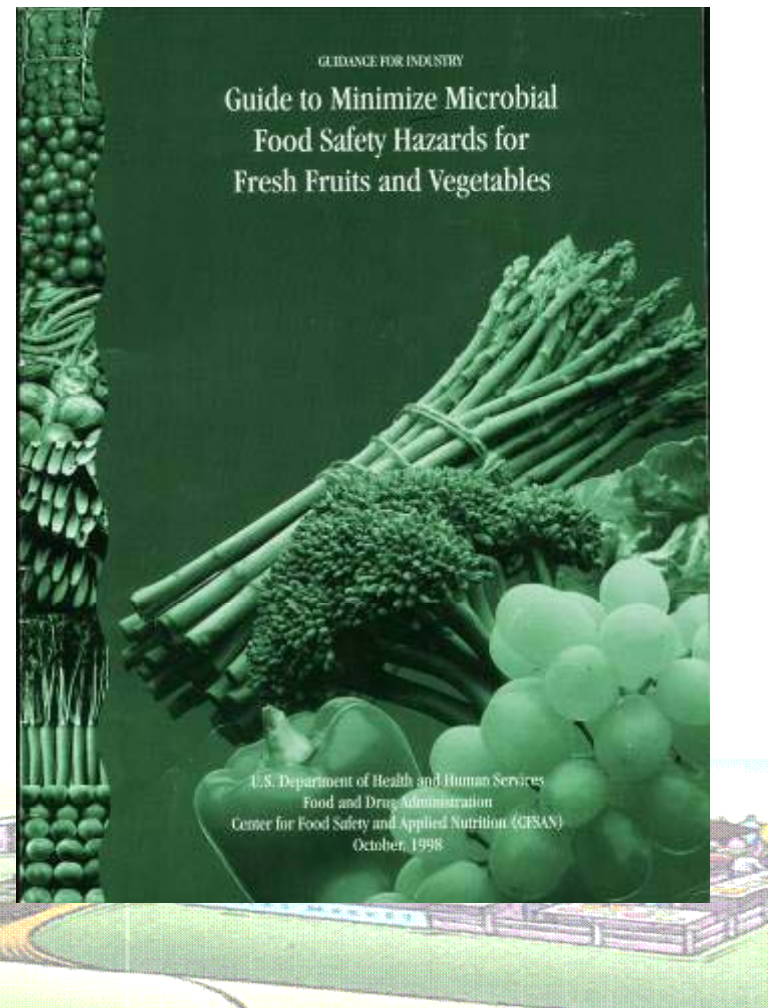




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GAP & GHP Audit Program

- USDA's Audit program is based on established scientific principles and utilizes the Food Drug Administration's (FDA) guidance document
- Published in October 1998



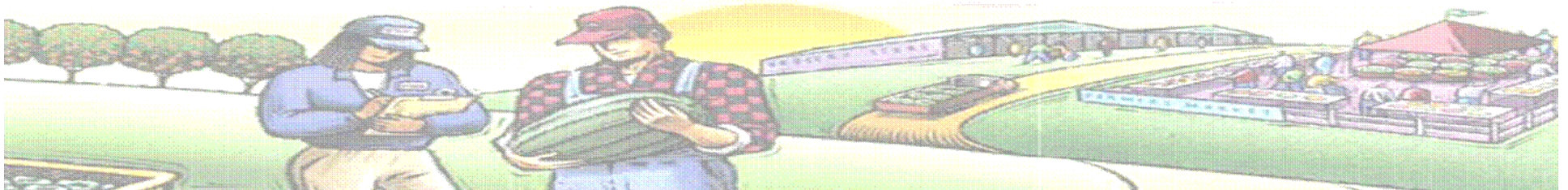


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Additional FDA Guidance Documents

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

<http://www.fda.gov>

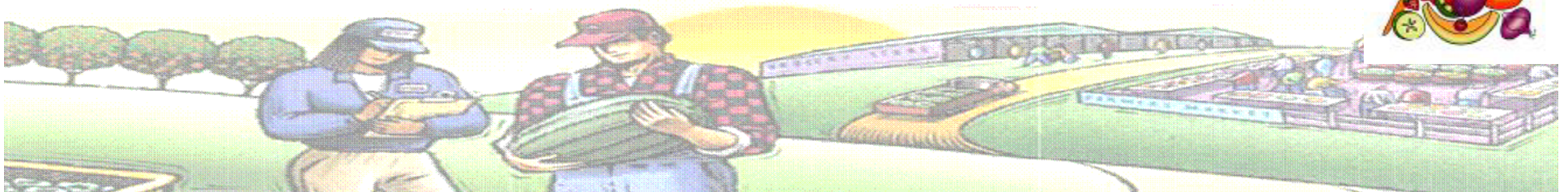




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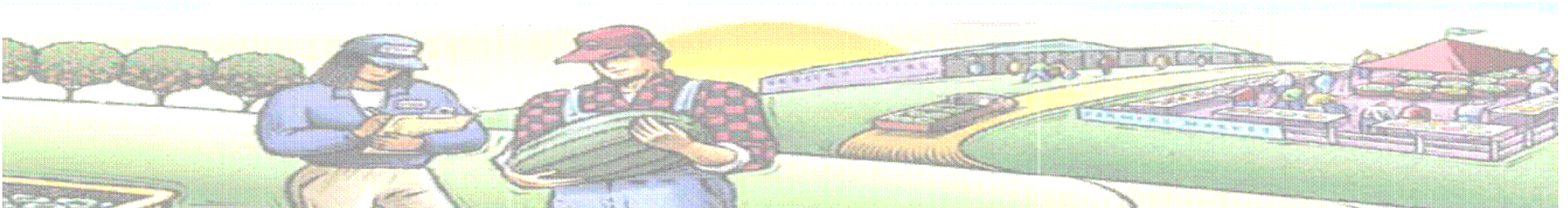
GAP & GHP Audit Program

- USDA works closely with:
 - Other USDA Programs such as the Agricultural Research Service
 - Academia; specifically the National Good Agricultural Practices Program based at Cornell University
<http://www.gaps.cornell.edu>
 - Association of Fruit and Vegetable Inspection and Standardization Agencies (AFVISA)



GAP & GHP Audit Program

- Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO)
- Industry Food Safety Councils
- Trade Associations



GAP & GHP Program

- USDA GAP & GHP audits are a requirement for all fresh fruit and vegetable purchases by the USDA, AMS, Commodity Procurement Branch. These purchases typically go into the domestic feeding programs such as the school lunch program.





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GAP & GHP Program

At the request of individual commodity groups, commodity specific audit checklists have been developed for use based on established industry best practices.

- Leafy Greens
- Tomatoes
- Mushrooms





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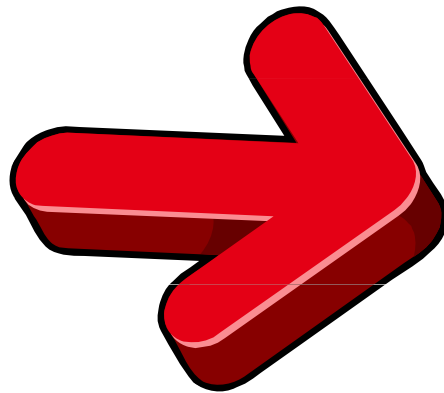
USDA M-GAP Audit Program

- Summer 2007, American Mushroom Institute approached AMS Fruit and Vegetable Programs.
- Fall 2007, AMI and PSU submitted draft of mushroom best practices to AMS.
- Fall 2008, USDA approves audit checklist based on mushroom best practices



GAP & GHP Program

- Program covers entire production chain “farm to fork” and is broken down into 6 sections or “scopes”.
- Optional food defense scope.





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General Questions

- Mandatory component of all audits
- Covers employee & visitor hygienic practices
- Training of employees
- Sanitation of farm/facility



Good Agricultural Practices Scopes

- Part 1 - Farm Review
 - Water
 - Manure
 - Animal/Wildlife
 - Land Use



Good Agricultural Practices Scopes

- Part 2 - Field Harvest and Field Packing
 - Field Sanitation
 - Field Harvesting and Transportation



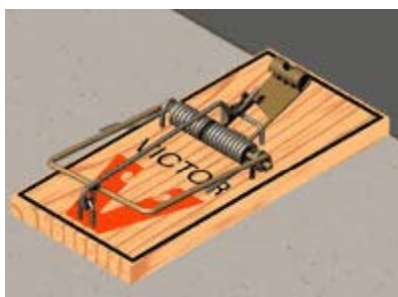
Good Handling Practices Scopes

- Part 3 - House Packing Facility
 - Water use
 - Packing Line Operation
 - General Sanitation



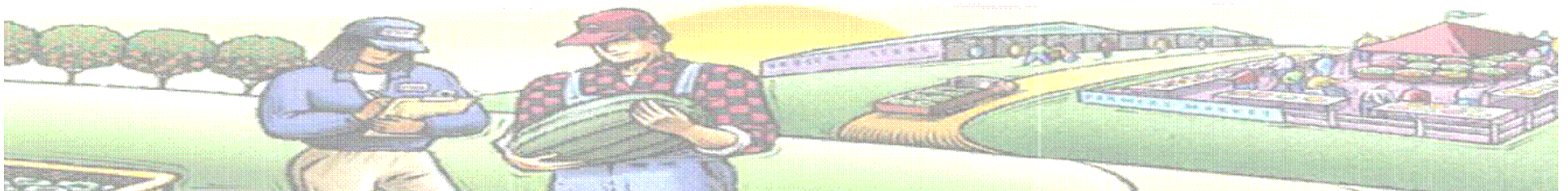
Good Handling Practices Scopes

- Part 4 - Storage and Transportation
 - Containers and Pallets
 - Pest Control
 - Temperature Control
 - Transportation/Loading



Good Handling Practices Scopes

- Part 6 Wholesale Distribution Center/Terminal Warehouses

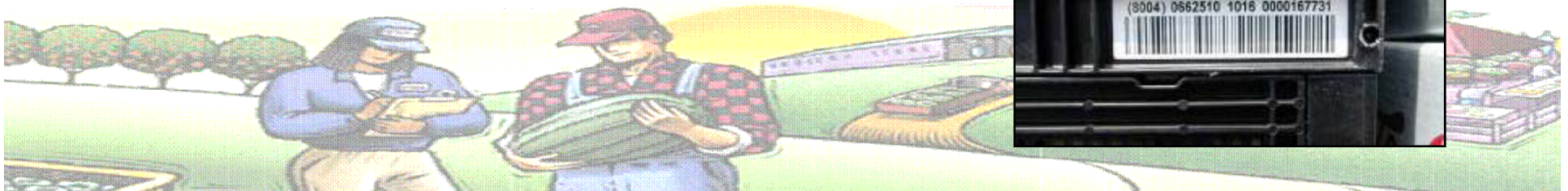




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Traceback

- Part 5 Traceback
- Part 6a Traceback for Wholesale Distribution Center
 - Track produce containers from the farm, to the packer, distributor, and retailer
 - Should indicate date of harvest, farm identification, and who handled the produce



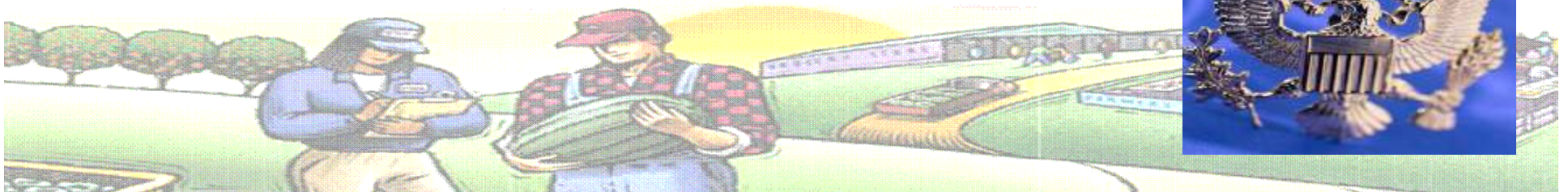


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Preventive Food Defense Procedures

- Based on the U.S. FDA's Food Producers, Processors, and Transporters: Food Security Preventive Measures Guidance for Industry
- Audit-based
 - Included as part of GAP & GHP audit; or Food Defense section only



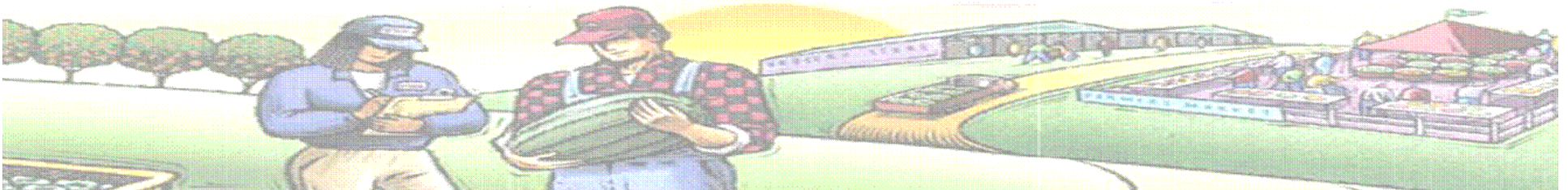


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Prerequisites

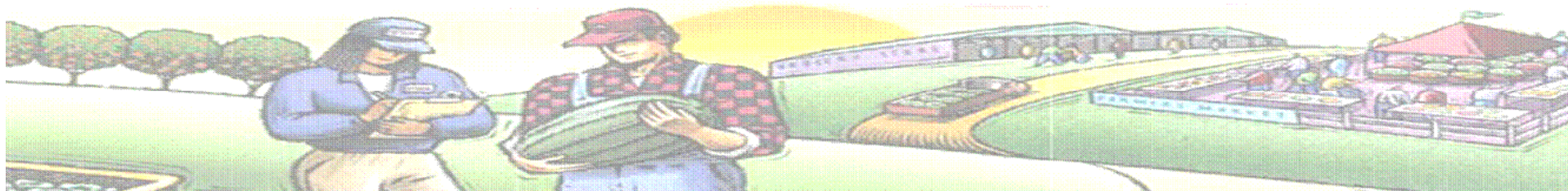
- Must have implemented a food safety program (Question G-1).
- Must have a designated person(s) to oversee implementation of program (Question G-2).

On Farm
Food Safety
Manual



Passing Score

- Must achieve a minimum passing score of 80% for each scope audited in order to “pass” the audit.
- Five automatic unsatisfactory conditions
 - Immediate food safety risk is present when product is grown, processed, packed, or held under conditions that promote or cause the product to become contaminated



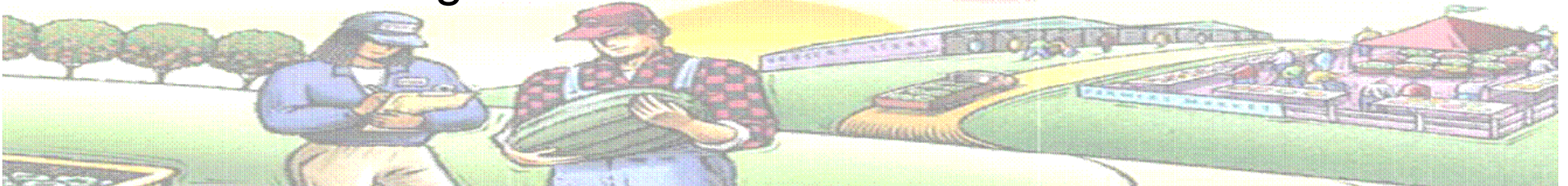


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Passing Score

Automatic Unsatisfactory-Continued

- Presence or evidence of rodents, excessive amount of insects or other pests in the produce during packing, processing, or storage
- Observation of employee practices that jeopardize or may jeopardize the safety of the produce
- Falsification of records
- Answering General Questions 1 or 2 “no”

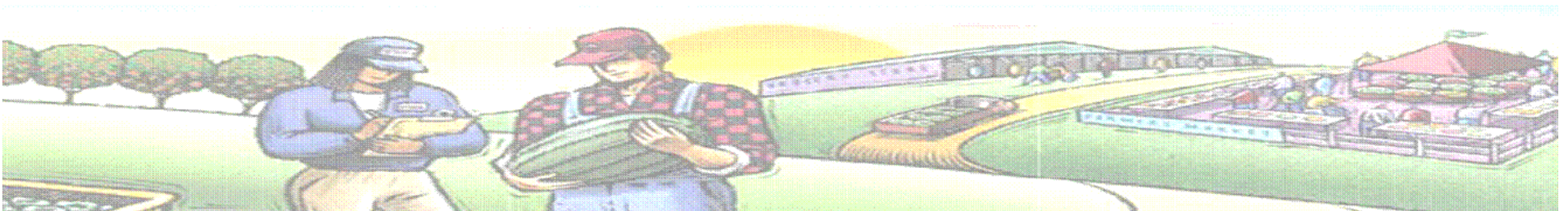




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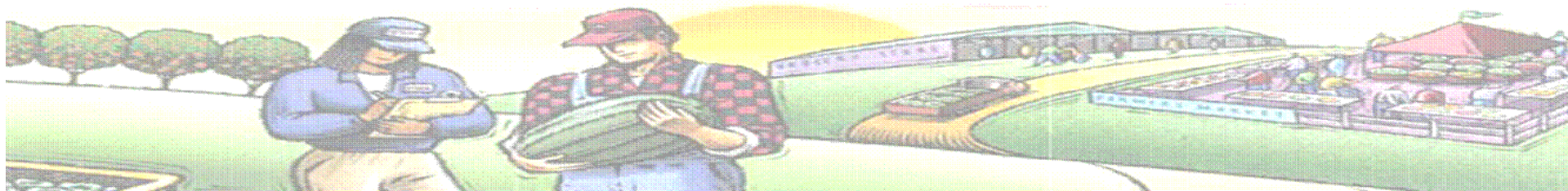
Program Requirements

- Agreement between auditee and USDA
 - Allows for unannounced verification visits
 - Outlines expectations for each party
 - Must be signed before audits can commence



Program Requirements

- Unannounced verification visit.
 - 1 announced yearly audit as close to beginning of season as practical.
 - At least 1 unannounced verification visit performed sometime during the remainder of 12 month cycle.





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Program Requirements

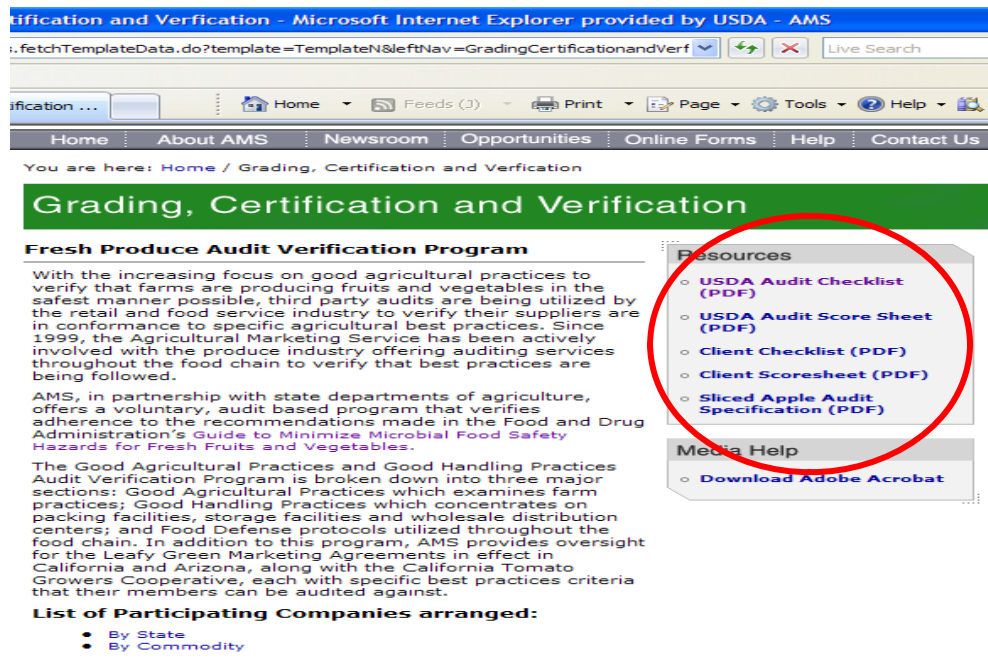
- Corrective Actions
 - Any audit that does not meet minimum score or has an automatic unsatisfactory must file corrective action report before being re-audited.
 - Short term
 - Root cause





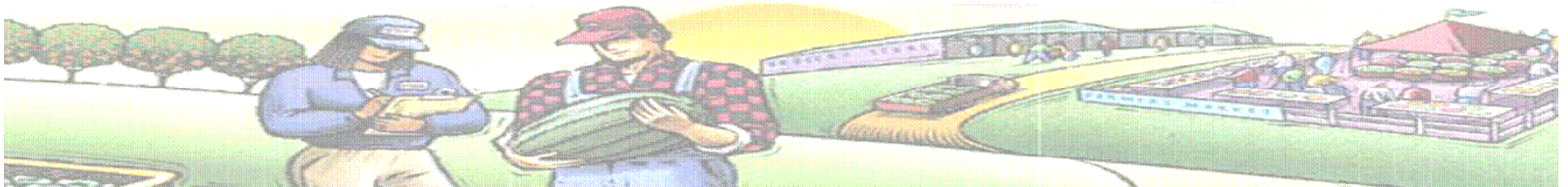
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Website



- Program information
- Current audit checklist and score sheet
- Specific audit specifications

<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

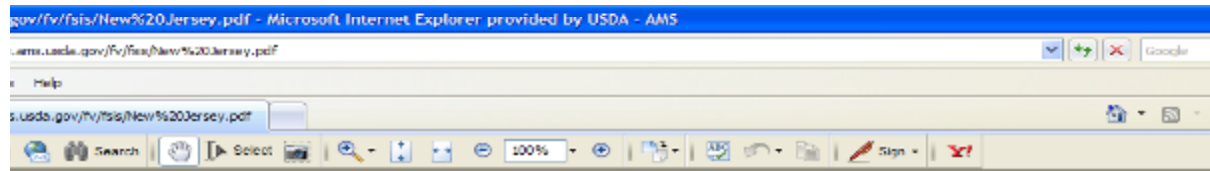
- [Download Adobe Acrobat](#)

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



Agricultural Marketing Service
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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 | 8/28/2007 | 8/28/2007 | n/a | n/a | n/a | Peelables |
| Hersal Farms | Box 150, 984 Tuckahoe Rd | Milmsy, New Jersey | 11/20/2007 | 11/20/2007 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | Cabbage, Collard Greens |
| M. D'Otavio Produce | P.O. Box | Minotola | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | 5/22/2007 | n/a | Fruits and |

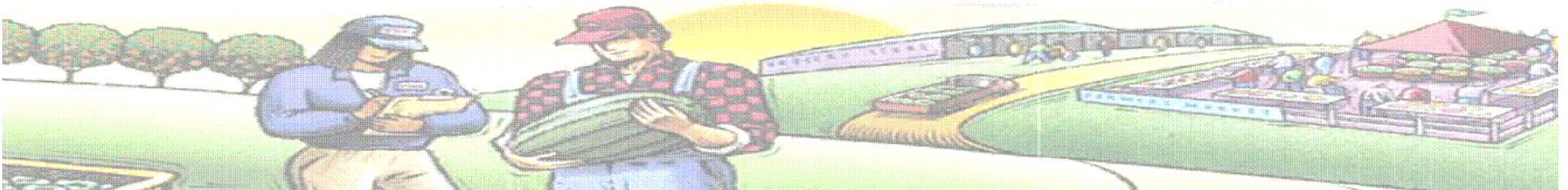
Downloadable .pdf files for each commodity/state showing individual farm/facilities and the audit scopes.



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Website Posting

- Auditee must pass all scopes requested in order to be posted to USDA website.
- Any auditee which does not meet a passing score on an unannounced verification visit will be removed from the website until corrective actions are taken and re-audited.





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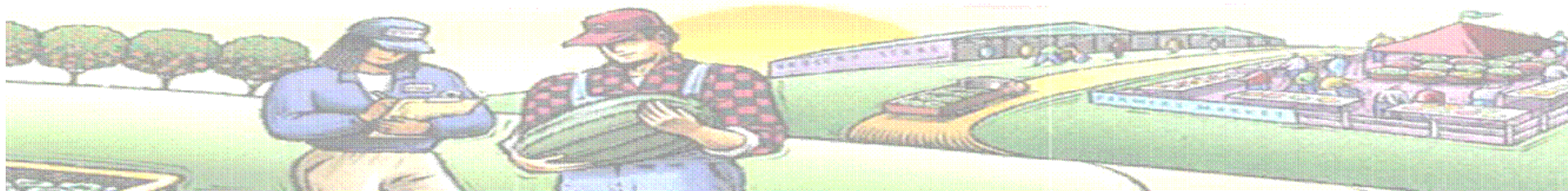
Auditors

- All auditors must meet uniform baseline requirements established by AMS in order to perform audits
 - Work experience and education
 - Program specific training
 - Perform a minimum number of audits
 - Be evaluated by program management



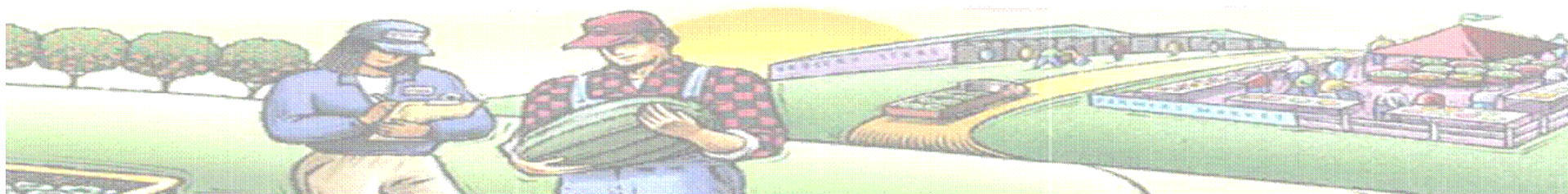
Auditors

- Training
 - Established curriculum ensures integrity and nationwide uniformity
 - Training based on leading-edge food safety related audit methods and procedures
 - Commodity specific training for commodity specific audit programs
 - 80 hours of continual professional development every three years



Auditors

- Must take annual ethics training
- Annual refresher training
- Must be a licensed fruit and vegetable inspector.





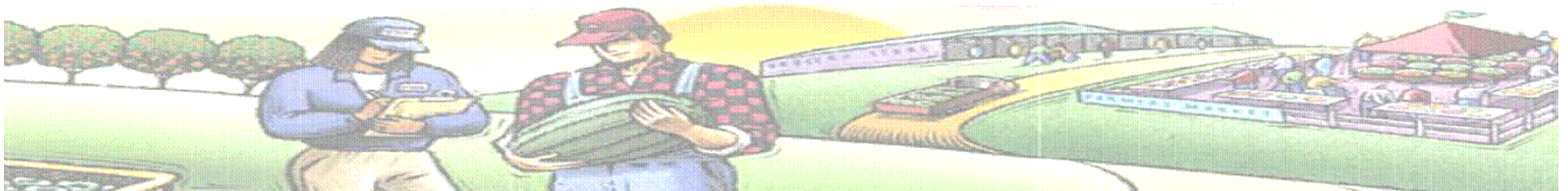
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Requesting an Audit

Contact your local USDA or state
inspection office

Or call USDA Fresh Products Branch
in Washington DC

(800) 560-7956





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Thank you!

Questions?

www.ams.usda.gov/fv

