2010 Farm Walk Program
Education for Farmers by Farmers

WSU Puyallup Field Day & Farm Walk
July 26, 2010

Presented by
Tilth Producers of Washington and
WSU Small Farms Program

www.tilthproducers.org
http://smallfarms.wsu.edu
Monday April 26 – Black Sheep Creamery, Chehalis, Sheep Dairy, Farm Emergency Plans and Agencies - 12:30pm-4pm, www.blacksheepcreamery.com, Paid pre-registration required

Monday, May 10th – Hedlin Family Farm, La Conner, Row Crop Production, High Tunnel and Greenhouse Cropping, Succession Planning - 12:30pm-4pm, www.sustainablenorthwest.org/stories/hedlin-family-farm


Monday, June 7 – Tonnemaker Hill Farm, Royal City, Orchard Diversification and Organic Transition, Fresh Market Vegetables - 12:30pm-4pm, http://tonnemaker.com

Wednesday, June 16 – WSU Field Day and Organic Farm, Pullman Wheat Variety Trials & Organic Diversified CSA Farm - 9am-3pm, www.css.wsu.edu/organicfarm, farm Walk is free, pre-registration required for lunch

Monday, July 26 – WSU Field Day and Organic Farm, Puyallup, On-Farm Mock GAP Certification Process - 12:30pm - 4pm, www.puyallup.wsu.edu/soilmgmt

Monday, September 6 – Manuel Mendoza Orchard, Quincy, Apple and Cherry Orchard, Latino Landowner Challenges and Opportunities - 12:30-4:00pm, http://www.tilthproducers.org/ManuelMendozaOrchard.pdf

Monday, September 27 – Filaree Farm, Omak, Biodiversity, Cooperative Marketing Model, Seed Saving - 12:30pm-4pm, www.filareefarm.com

Monday, October 11 – Boistfort Valley Farm, Curtis, Low Input Season Extension, Organic Row Crop Production - 12:30pm-4pm, www.boistfortvalleyfarm.com, paid pre-registration required

Thursday, November 11 – Pre-Conference Farm Walk – Stay tuned for details.
Tilth Producers Annual Conference, Fort Worden, Port Townsend, November 12-14, 2010
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CD- Sample Policies, Documents, and Standard Operating Procedures,
Washington State Potato Commission and Michigan State University
Extension GAP Assistance Manual
DVD- GAP Worker Health and Hygiene Training Video, Washington State
Potato Commission.

**Mock Good Agricultural Practices Audit**

Cosponsored by WSDA Farm-to-School Program

Farm to School Evaluation Form...
Please fill out and leave at the site
THANK YOU!!!
Pesticide Disclaimer

Documents included in this packet may contain information regarding pesticides used in states other than Washington. It is the responsibility of the reader to determine whether those active ingredients or pesticide products are registered for use in Washington State.

Readers are reminded that all pesticide products, including products certified for use in organic production systems, must be registered by the Washington State Department of Agriculture's Pesticide Division in order to be legal.
Our Goal:
The goal of our program is to build soil productivity, support local agriculture, protect water quality, and facilitate recycling of organic wastes, by applying soil science principles to agricultural, development, and waste management issues.

Overview:
Land application of organic wastes
Many organic wastes contain nutrients and organic matter that can benefit plant growth and soil productivity. Recycling these materials onto land captures nutrients that would otherwise be lost, and helps sustain our resource base. They are also a source of organic matter for soils, building and maintaining soil quality. Organic wastes may contain pathogens and small amounts of toxic materials, which can become pollutants if the materials are not managed properly. Over-application of some organic wastes can result in excessive levels of nutrients in the soil, which can harm crop production or water quality. We study nutrient availability from organic materials, to enable us to determine appropriate rates and timing of applications for crop production. We also evaluate short and long term effects of organic amendments on soil quality in agricultural and urban soils.

Organic farming systems

http://www.puyallup.wsu.edu/soilmgmt/
Beginning in 2002, we expanded our focus to organic farming systems, including organic amendments, cover crops, and soil quality. We are working with an interdisciplinary team studying a range of issues important to small scale, direct-market, and organic agriculture, including nutrient management, and soil quality, weed management, economics, marketing, and on-farm research.
WSDA Farm-to-School Program

Created by the Washington State Legislature in the Local Farms-Healthy Kids Act of 2008, the WSDA Farm-to-School Program is dedicated to fostering relationships between schools and agricultural producers in the state. Our goal is to support expanding economic opportunities for farmers while educating students about the connections between food, farming, health, and the environment. The program provides information, inspiration, assistance, and policy solutions for those working to supply healthy Washington-grown food and related education to youth in our State. We work in partnership with many agencies and organizations around the state to facilitate and improve farm-to-school connections. Some of our partners are the Small Farm & Direct Marketing Program, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, WSU Small Farms Team and many others.

Our programs, services and outreach are designed to assist and support farms, schools and communities – whether they are active in farm-to-school programs or are just getting started.

Schools and institutions may be a great market for your farm.

Schools around the state are increasingly interested in connecting with and purchasing from local farms. Schools want to include more locally grown food in their lunches and salad bars, and are eager to partner with area farmers for events like harvest dinners, farm visits, and Taste Washington Day. These may be a great market opportunities for your farm – schools can offer a steady market, medium and large volume sales, agreements for planning production, and competitive prices. Selling to schools also enables you to contribute directly to the improved health of Washington’s kids!

WSDA Farm-to-School Program Services to farms and schools:

Farms
- Introductions and assistance in selling to school buyers, either directly or through existing supply chains.
- Working in partnership with farms and organizations around the state to explore options for processing and distribution.
- Providing trainings and workshops to help farmers expand their operations to school and institutional markets.

Schools
- Help identifying local farms and Washington grown products that meet foodservice needs.
- Identify model district and school policies that support healthy, local foods and garden projects.
- Planning and problem-solving for farm-to-school, and a listserv for sharing methods.
- Web-based resources for school gardens, funding opportunities, and education on food, farming, health, and the environment.
WSDA Farm-to-School Projects

Taste Washington Day (Sept 29, 2010)
Schools around the state will be serving a locally-sourced meal and providing education and activities to celebrate the farms that feed us. WSDA Farm-to-School Program will provide support to match up farms, schools and distributors to facilitate the purchasing process.

Farm-to-Prison Pilot (2010-2011)
Partnering with the Department of Corrections, this pilot is a direct purchasing program between farmers and two correctional facilities. This program may provide a great institutional sales opportunity, as the correctional facilities are able to work with all sizes of farms and receive product directly from the field, with minimal to no packing.

Mobile Tours – Localized introductions for farms and schools
Mobile tours provide an opportunity for farms and schools to see each other in action and learn about the realities of operations on farms and in school kitchens. Travel time allows for interaction among participants and encourages potential cooperation to develop supply chain solutions specific to their region.

Farm and School Food Service Trainings
We are developing and providing farm trainings on institutional markets, including product needs, how to approach schools, and food safety and insurance requirements. School food service trainings include direct purchasing, preparing fresh produce, and seasonal menu planning. We are constantly seeking feedback regarding what trainings would be most helpful to farms and schools.

OSPI Partnerships - Farm Visits, Cafeteria Tastings, and other Community Connections
In addition to working with Nutrition Services on school meals and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grants, we partner with the Environmental & Sustainability Program, Family & Consumer Science Program and Agriculture & Horticulture program on school gardens, community partnerships, and integration of Farm-to-School education in curriculum.

Regional Farm-to-School Conferences and Farm-to-Table events
Learn more about what schools in your area are looking for, and find possible connections at buyer-seller meet and greets. Join the Farm-to-School Connections listserv at www.agr.wa.gov/farmtoschool.

Highly desirable products for school foodservice:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vegetables</th>
<th>Fruits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broccoli — florets</td>
<td>Apples — a range of varieties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage — Green &amp; Purple, whole, shredded</td>
<td>Apricots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrots — baby, sliced, shredded, matchstick</td>
<td>Blueberries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn — on the cob, kernels</td>
<td>Cherries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cucumbers — whole or sliced</td>
<td>Kiwis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cauliflower — crowns, florets</td>
<td>Melons — all kinds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mushrooms</td>
<td>Peaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onions — diced</td>
<td>Pears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>Pluots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red and green peppers</td>
<td>Plums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salad greens — iceberg, romaine, Spinach</td>
<td>Strawberries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomatoes — grape, cherry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Action Steps
to build purchasing relationships with a School Food Service

1. **Start small.** To develop a reputation as a reliable vendor, commit to a realistic sales volume and develop a realistic delivery schedule that suits you and the school food service.

2. **Identify and set up business appointments with the directors of school food service** (rather than school cafeteria managers), since they are typically responsible for making final procurement decisions.

3. **Invite the food service director and employees to visit your farm.** Your best selling point is your farm and your products. When food service staff visit, they will see how you care for your farm and the work it takes to produce the food they want. Food service directors need to develop menus that accommodate what grows seasonally in your region, and visiting your farm will help make this point.

4. **Offer free samples.** Think about offering potential school food service customers samples that they can test in their school food programs.

5. **Make sure you are considering the labor costs and product costs** to ensure your program is sustainable in the long run.

6. **Develop a sales strategy that offers a variety of ways the food service can incorporate local products.** You might suggest recipes for some of your more uncommon foods such as hubbard squash.

7. **Be aware of how your farm liability insurance interfaces with the school food service’s food safety program.** Every school food service has a strict food safety program that is based on the Hazard Analysis and
Critical Control Point (HACCP) principals. Temperature control of fresh and cooked products is very important. Therefore, arrange for proper refrigeration of merchandise during storage and distribution. Also, incorporate strict quality standards when assembling and packaging products.

8. Supply products that are difficult to obtain from long-distance shippers, such as highly perishable fruits or small-quantity products.

9. Consider growing a different variety of crops to serve more of the daily needs of the school food service. Cherry tomatoes, for example, only require washing; they store well, and are easy to serve. Talk to schools as early as possible to plant vegetables accordingly.

10. Consider washing and even cutting and bagging your product. A “value-added” product could make you more money and save the food service time.

11. Work with the school food service on meeting their nutrition guidelines, which dictate what can be on menus. Because menus are developed a month ahead of time, substituting products can be difficult. Devise a system with the food service director for supply replacements, such as putting “local fresh seasonal vegetable” on the menu to accommodate the ebb and flow of your vegetables.

12. Develop fact sheets for food service and the school community throughout the season. A weekly fact sheet could include information about: product availability, size of food items, quality descriptions, estimated quantity and price per unit, other timely news that would provide food service directors with factors necessary to make good purchasing decisions. It could also contain a farm profile to further connect the farm to the school community.

A Purchasing Agreement with the School Food Service should include:
- The total estimated volume of each item to be delivered.
- Amount and price of standing order items.
- Delivery schedule: time of day, frequency, and location.
- Packing requirements: standard box, grade, loose pack, bulk, etc.
- Post-harvest handling practices; is the product pre-cooled? How clean should the product be?
- Cost per unit, payment terms, payment process.
- Names and phone numbers of the contact people for ordering and billing.
13. **Clearly establish a payment schedule plan.** School districts often have a payment cycle of 30-90 days or longer. As a farmer, however, you may be used to presenting an invoice and receiving payment upon delivery. This difference in operation needs to be worked out between a school district and the farmer before purchasing begins.

14. **Stay in touch to inform the school what crops will be harvested.** If you can let them know what products to expect one to two weeks ahead, they can plan. Try to get a standing order by offering a discount. When each party is familiar with the challenges and opportunities that the other party faces, a working relationship is more likely to flourish.
Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs)

Introduction

Good agricultural practices (GAPs) and good handling practices (GHPs) encompass general procedures that producers and packers of fresh fruits and vegetables should follow to ensure the food safety of their product. GAPs usually deal with preharvest practices (i.e., in the field), while GHPs cover postharvest practices, including packing and shipping. Here the term GAP will generally cover pre- and postharvest practices associated with the safe handling of produce, both fresh and minimally processed.

This fact sheet is intended to review generally recognized principles of GAPs as they relate to produce, primarily at the farm level.

Are GAPs Required

From a regulatory standpoint, GAPs are considered guidelines and are therefore not mandatory. However, it is plausible that recent produce-related foodborne illness outbreaks may encourage a shift toward some type of regulatory requirement. From a commercial standpoint, purchasing requirements and approved vendor programs may require that a particular grower or packer have a formal documented GAPs program in place. This is often true for large, national customers, as well as for products that are intended for export to other countries. Additionally, some states and some commodities operating under specific Marketing Orders may have specific requirements related to GAPs or GAPs-like programs.

Background

In 1998 the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) published the Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (also referred to as the Guide, and available at [1]). This document was intended to assist domestic and foreign producers, packers, and shippers of unprocessed or minimally processed (raw) fresh fruits and vegetables by increasing awareness of potential foodborne hazards and providing suggestions for individual operations. The FDA stated that these guidelines were broad based and voluntary. The topics outlined in the Guide form the basis for GAPs, as outlined below.

Concurrently, Cornell University launched a major program called the National GAPs Program ([2]) with the objective of serving as the main university-based clearinghouse for GAPs research and extension...
information. This program's Web site serves as a valuable resource about GAPs for producers, packers, and trainers. Another resource for growers based on the Guide is at the site. The document, Food Safety Begins on the Farm–A Grower's Guide, can be downloaded from [3]. This pamphlet is written in easily understood language and is available in both English and Spanish.

**GAPs Topics**

The following GAPs statements and explanatory comments should be considered in any comprehensive produce food-safety program. The accompanying checklist can be used as a preliminary assessment tool for individual operators.

- Water
- Manure and Municipal Biosolids
- Worker Health and Hygiene
- Sanitary Facilities
- Field Sanitation
- Packing Facilities
- Transportation
- Traceback

**References**


This resource area was created by the: Extension Disaster Education Network community

These resources are brought to you by the Cooperative Extension System and your Local Institution. eXtension provides objective and research-based information and learning opportunities that help people improve their lives. eXtension is an educational partnership of 74 universities in the United States.

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GAP/GHP Audit and Certification

What is a USDA Good Agricultural/Good Handling Practices Audit?

The GAP/GHP Audit Verification Program is a voluntary program to demonstrate that the participating company has adhered to Food and Drug Administration's Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables. A successful audit shows commitment by management and employees to follow and maintain the guidelines to help minimize the potential risk for microbial contamination of the product. The GAP/GHP audit is conducted by officials of state departments of agriculture and the USDA.

Because the program is voluntary, an audit is performed only at the request of the applicant.

GAP Certification

While the GAP/GHP Audit Verification program is voluntary, an increasing number of markets are requiring third party food safety certifications to ensure that suppliers are in conformance with specific agricultural best practices. Receiving GAP/GHP certification may enable your operation to participate in a more diversified range of markets.

The GAP/GHP audit is conducted by state departments of agriculture and the certification is granted by the USDA. Upon successful completion of the audit, the operation will receive documentation stating they have been awarded GAP/GHP certification and their business will be listed on the USDA website as a Participating Company. Certification is valid for one year and the company must undergo a successful audit annually to maintain certification status.

Requesting an Audit

If you would like to participate in this voluntary audit program, you must schedule an audit by calling your local district office. A request for your initial audit must be made no later than two (2) weeks prior to the end of the growing/harvesting/packing season. Participation in this program requires a signed Agreement for Participation in the GAP/GHP Audit Verification Program.

To Schedule an Audit, please call your local district office:

Yakima District Office: (509) 249-6900
Wenatchee District Office: (509) 662-6161
Audit Process and Scoring

Each Audit contains a series of questions pertaining to each section of the audit checklist. Each question within an audit section has a point value assigned to it. Auditors answer either YES, NO, NA (Not Applicable to this audit) or DOC (which means documentation is required for that question). If the question is given a YES by the auditor, the applicant receives the total points available for that question. If the question is given a NO by the auditor, the applicant receives no point value for that question.

Each audit requires 80 percent of the total points available for that section to achieve a passing score. An audit is good for one calendar year.

Required Documentation

- A written standard operating procedure (SOP) -- This will explain or demonstrate how your farm or production company complies with each audit section.
- A standard sanitary Operating Procedure (SSOP) -- This will document written procedures for cleaning or treating areas where it is possible to reduce or eliminate the possibility of microbial contamination.
- Records for specific actions that are taken, such as regular cleaning of food contact surfaces, refrigeration areas or transportation machinery.
- Records of periodic and scheduled self-audits or internal audits of the program.
- The person designated to oversee the food safety program.

Who To Contact for additional information:

Jim Quigley, Program Manager  
Fruit & Vegetable Inspection Program  
Commodity Inspection Division  
Washington State Department of Agriculture  
jquigley@agr.wa.gov  
(360) 902-1833
What to Expect on the day of a GAP & GHP Audit

Step 1 – Audit Overview
There is an initial sit down between the auditor and the participant to review the Good Agricultural Practices and Good Handling Practices Audit Program. *Note: there are no points awarded in the section.*

- Review the GAPs & GHPs Audit process
- Explanation of the GAP Audit Checklist
- Completion of pages 1 & 2 of the audit form, which covers basic farm bio information.
- Participant indicates what parts of the audit process they are requesting to be reviewed. Each section of the audit stands on its own. The audit includes the following parts the participant can choose from:
  o Part 1 – Farm Review
  o Part 2 – Field Harvest & Field Packing Activities
  o Part 3 – Packing House Worker Health & Hygiene
  o Part 4 – Storage and Transportation
  o Part 6 – Wholesale Distribution Center/Terminal Warehouse Receiving

Step 2 – General Questions: Implementation of a Food Safety Program
The review of the General Questions also takes place during the sit down session, prior to walking through the facility.

- Completion of General Questions on pages 4 & 5.
- Review and evaluation of the Food Safety Program of the participant.
  *Note: This includes reviewing documents (D), reports (R), and policies (P)/standard operating procedures (SOPs) required in the participants Food Safety Program*
- Farm must pass General Questions before moving onto the Farm Review.

Step 3 – Farm Review and Facility Walkthrough
The auditor and participant walk through the farm and facility together, reviewing each part of the audit and compare it with the participants Food Safety Program.

Step 4 – Conclusion and Follow-up
At the end of the farm review and facility walkthrough, the participant will receive a copy of the completed audit form with comments. The auditor will notify the participant if an ‘Unannounced Follow-up Site Visit’ is required. Upon successful completion of the GAPs/GHPs audit, the participating business will be listed on the USDA website. A form will also be provided that the participant can provide to buyers for proof of certification.
Traceability and Recall

Adapted from the
Georgia GAP Food Safety Program
(http://gfvga.org/GAGAP/)
&
Kimberly R & E Center of University of Idaho College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
(http://www.kimberly.uidaho.edu/potatoes/gap/GAPwebpage/gapPDF08/Documentation.pdf)

Traceability:
The ‘ability to trace the history, application or location of an entity by means of recorded identifications’ as defined by The International Organization of Standardization. The FDA requirements for a tracking system must be for “one step back, one step forward.”
Traceability may relate to:
- The origin of produce and ingredients
- The product history
- The distribution and location of the product after delivery.

Traceability and Recall Plan:
A documented, systematic plan that indicates how an organization will track and recall produce. The system should enable trace back one step and trace forward one step to occur in the event of a recall. Included in the plan are traceability and recall procedures, recall team roles with contact information, and contacts for product destinations. Additionally, the plan should have ready-to-use documents such as trace back/recall customer contact forms (stating who was called, date and time, and the purpose of the recall), crop history records, traceability logs, etc. These forms will be used to trace the origin of a product and account for all other products distributed from that same point of origin that falls under the recall scenario.

Mock Recall:
A mock recall is an internal exercise to test a company’s ability to trace and recall product or ingredients using their documented traceability and recall plan. When performing a “mock recall” one need to create a scenario of a problem with a delivered product. An operation then follows the traceability and recall plan, tracking date and time of contact. The mock recall should have as close to 100% reconciliation of all implicated product as possible. Make copies of all supporting materials to show how reconciliation occurred. BE SURE TO WRITE OR STAMP THE PHRASE, “MOCK RECALL,” ACROSS ALL COPIES OF SUPPORTING MATERIALS.
**Sample Mock Recall Statement**

(Write or stamp ‘Mock Recall’ across all documents distributed.)

__________ called to say that ________________ with traceability code ____________

(Buyer) (product) (traceability code)

had a ________________ contamination. According to the Traceability Checklist,

(describe contamination)

_____________ were harvested on _______ from ________________ and given

(product and weight) (date) (production area)

traceability codes. These items were delivered to _______________ on ____________.

(destination) (delivery date)

_____________ and ______________ confirmed the tags of the purchase and agreed on

(grower/GAP designee) (buyer)

the pick-up and disposal of the product. The pick-up of product occurred on ___________ and

(date of pick-up)

disposal method of _______________ occurred on ________________.

(disposal method) (date of disposal)

The following _______________ with traceability codes ____________ delivered to ____________

(product) (traceability code) (destination)

were identified as having the same origin as the products recalled above. ________________ was

(buyer)

contacted and informed of the recall on __________. _______________ and ________________

(date) (grower/GAP designee) (buyer)

confirmed the tags of the purchase and agreed on the pick-up and disposal of the product. The pick-up

of product occurred on ________________ and disposal method of ______________ occurred on

(date of pick-up) (disposal method)

__________.

(date of disposal)
## Sample Traceability Checklist Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Harvest Date</th>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Field or Production Area</th>
<th>Traceability Code</th>
<th>Vehicle ID</th>
<th>Outgoing Date</th>
<th>Delivery Destination and Contact</th>
<th>Amount in Delivery</th>
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<td>Squash</td>
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<td>Mid</td>
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Unplugged fan 15 Mar 10 for CKW 10.
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<th>LFT</th>
<th>LST</th>
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<td>(Turned 8-9AM)</td>
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Good Agricultural Practices
Irrigation Water and Irrigation Systems

Karen Killinger, Craig Cogger, Andy Bary and Dick Dougherty   7/30/09

Why is irrigation water important to food safety for fruits and vegetables?

• Irrigation water can serve as a vehicle for foodborne pathogens and has been identified as a contributing factor in recent produce outbreaks, including *E. coli* O157:H7 in spinach and *Salmonella* in peppers. Once pathogens contaminate the surface of produce, these microscopic organisms are difficult to remove.

• Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) is a program to assess and address practices on the farm that are important for food safety, including irrigation water quality, manure management, worker hygiene as well as harvesting, transportation and storage practices.

How can producers address irrigation water quality and improve food safety?

• Steps to address irrigation water quality are: assessment, sampling, documentation and reassessment.

• Assessment involves identifying all water sources (well water, surface water, municipal water) as well as storage practices for water delivery systems on the farm. Water sources for handwashing and post-harvest produce washing must be potable water sources (municipal drinking water standards apply).

• Irrigation water delivery systems (direct water contact with edible product versus indirect contact) and type of crops should be considered. Upstream influences that could affect water quality should be noted. Topography that might result in run-off from animal pastures or composting areas into irrigation water sources should be considered.

• Sampling irrigation water sources over time to establish baseline values is recommended. When initiating a sampling program, collecting samples at the beginning and middle of irrigation season as well as a few weeks prior to harvest if irrigation is still occurring is recommended. Water quality, especially for surface waters, can vary over time so assessment over several growing seasons is necessary. Water quality can be affected by weather events, run-off, domestic animal farming practices and wildlife.

• Samples should be collected as close to point of water delivery to the crops as possible. Be sure to discuss appropriate sample collection practices with the laboratory performing the analysis. In the pictures below, irrigation water is collected in a bucket that has been washed with soap, sanitized with bleach and thoroughly rinsed and dried. A sample for analysis was collected in a sterile container and shipped on ice for laboratory testing.
In general, for laboratory bacterial testing, fecal coliforms or generic *E. coli* using approved American Public Health Standard methods are considered appropriate and valid. Fecal coliforms are a class of bacterial organisms that indicate fecal contamination and increased likelihood of pathogen presence. Generic *E. coli* is a specific organism within the fecal coliform group.

Currently recommendations for irrigation water quality vary; some recommendations are provided below.

- Washington State Department of Ecology standards for fecal coliform levels in secondary contact recreation water (many surface water irrigation sources are in this category) are 200 colonies/100ml with not more than 10% of all samples exceeding 400 colonies/100ml.
- The California leafy greens handler marketing agreement recommends average generic *E. coli* levels <126 MPN or cfu/100ml for foliar applications (potential product contact) with all single samples <235 MPN or cfu/100ml.

Document all assessment activities identifying water sources and uses. Site maps can be useful to document upstream or neighboring influences as well as topography issues. Sampling dates, collection locations and results should be kept and utilized to document baseline values over several growing seasons.

Based on the initial assessment and water quality testing results, alterations in irrigation and other farming practices may be necessary or advised. For example, if irrigation water quality consistently exceeds recommended water quality levels, it may be prudent to switch from overhead irrigation to drip or furrow irrigation systems to reduce the risk of pathogen contamination on edible product. Also, physical barriers such as berms or moving composting areas further from irrigation water sources and crops to reduce the risk of run-off may be appropriate.

Reassessment should be performed on at least an annually to address changes in farming systems.

If you have additional questions, please contact Karen Killinger (509) 335-2970 karen_killinger@wsu.edu, Craig Cogger (253) 445-4512, cogger@wsu.edu, or Andy Bary (253) 445-4588, bary@wsu.edu.
WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

USDA Good Agricultural and Good Handling Practices

An Audit Verification Program for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Industry
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Introduction

Washington State Department of Agriculture’s Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Program team is always seeking ways to provide services that will benefit the industry it serves. Thus, joining forces with the United States Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Marketing Service, as well as other states, Washington State adopted and offers the United States Department of Agriculture’s Good Agricultural/Good Handling Practices audit program to Washington state growers, producers and shippers.

What is a USDA Good Agricultural/Good Handling Practices Audit?

The purpose of the Good Agricultural/Good Handling Practices (GAP/GHP) audit program is a voluntary, audit-based program that verifies conformance to generally recognized good agricultural practices and good handling practices as outlined in the Food and Drug Administration’s Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables. Because the program is voluntary, an audit is only performed at the request of the auditee and is valid for one year. Participants that meet the requirements of the USDA audit program will receive a certificate and are listed on the USDA website.

The information provided in this section will provide a brief overview of each scope of the audit checklist that is used to perform an audit. Sections of the audit checklist covered in this publication:

- General Questions
- Part 1—Farm Review
- Part 2—Field Harvest and Field Packing Activities
- Part 3—House Packing Facility
- Part 4—Storage and Transportation
- Part 5—[Not in use at this time]
- Part 6—Wholesale Distribution Center/ Terminal Warehouse
- Part 6A—Traceback for Part 6
- Part 7—Preventative Food Defense Procedures

General Questions and Parts 1 through 6A are centered around unintentional possibilities of contamination. Part 7 covers areas of concern for intentional possibilities of contamination.

The USDA GAP/GHP Audit program also offers audits that are commodity-specific.

Prior to the start of an audit the applicant must agree and sign an “Agreement to Participate” document. This document contains an explanation of the guidelines of the audit as well as an agreement allowing unannounced visits.

An unannounced visit consists of a follow up of a previously passed USDA GAP/GHP audit. The purpose of this visit is to verify that the applicant is still in compliance with a passed USDA GAP/GHP audit.
After a successful GAP/GHP audit and your business is in operation for a period of:

- 30 days or less, they may receive an unannounced visit.
- 31-90 days, they will receive a minimum of one unannounced visit.
- 91 days or more, they will receive a minimum of two unannounced visits.

An unannounced visit consists of a brief visit with the contact person for the facility, a walkthrough of the farming/packing operation, and a review of any changes made to the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) or verification of proper training for any newly hired employees.

A note on the audit process and scoring

Each audit contains a series of questions pertaining to each section of the audit checklist. Each question within an audit section has a point value assigned to it. Auditor’s answers to each question are YES, NO or NA (not applicable to this audit). Under the DOC column, you will need one of the following to satisfy the question, a Record (R), a Policy (P) or Documentation (D). If the question is given a YES by the auditor, the applicant receives the total points available. If the question is given a NO by the auditor, the applicant receives no points. If a question is designated as an NA, the point value for that question will be deducted from the total possible points available for that section, and will create a new total possible points available for that section.

Each audit section requires 80 percent of the total points available for that section to achieve a passing audit score.

To contain audit costs, be prepared with all required documentation. Having all required documentation including standard operating procedures, training information, cleaning records, water tests and the like in a file or binder will allow the audit to progress more quickly.

Auditor Qualifications

All auditors must meet minimum USDA-AMS auditor standards that include specialized training in performing audits, food safety, and ethical standards. All auditors must be federal or state employees who are USDA licensed fruit and vegetable inspectors, have a minimum of 36 months of work experience in the fruit and vegetable field or a bachelor’s degree, and go through specialized auditor training based on the ISO 19011 standard Parts 4 & 6. Additionally all auditors must go through yearly refresher training, be evaluated by a USDA-approved evaluator annually, and complete 80 hours of continual professional development every 3 years in order to maintain auditor status.
General Questions

This section covers the applicant’s food safety program, traceback, and worker health and hygiene.
Food Safety Program

This section consists of reviewing the applicant’s documented food safety program addressing the GAP/GHP specifications. The food safety program would include the following items:

➢ A written standard operating procedure (SOP). The SOP will explain or demonstrate how your farm or production company complies with each audit sections.

➢ A standard sanitary operating procedure (SSOP) including written procedures for cleaning or treating areas where it is possible to reduce or eliminate the possibility of microbial contamination.

➢ Records for specific actions that are taken, such as regular cleaning of food contact surfaces, refrigeration areas or transportation machinery.

➢ A record of periodic and scheduled self-audits or internal audits of the program.

➢ A person designated to oversee the food safety program.

Traceability

Operations must have an established Traceback program and perform a Mock Recall. If the audit is only for Farm Review and/or Harvest, a mock recall is not required during the first year in the program. Packing operations must perform a Mock Recall within 12 months of requested audit.

Worker Health and Hygiene

This section covers the availability of approved water, proper training on sanitation and hygiene practices for employees and visitors, cleaning of restroom areas, smoking and eating areas, and handling of employees showing symptoms of illness or diseases.

Approved water:

➢ Is clean water that is safe to drink.

➢ Meets microbial requirements of EPA standards.

➢ Must be available for hand washing as well as drinking.

Proper Hygiene and sanitation training is very important:

➢ All staff and visitors must comply with safe practices.

➢ All staff must have documented training in this area.

➢ Training includes washing of hands, wearing outer garments, personal cleanliness, unsecured jewelry, wearing of gloves and storing of clothing.

➢ Understandable signs must be posted to instruct staff and visitors to wash hands prior to starting or returning to work from breaks or handling of product.

➢ Restrooms must be properly supplied with water that meets microbial requirements of EPA standards, soap and single use towels.
Premises must be kept clean and have designated smoking and eating areas away from where the product is being handled.

Staff with symptoms of illness or infectious diseases must not be allowed to work or must not handle any product and must be moved to a different work site where possible contamination of the product cannot occur.

All injuries must be reported promptly, and staff must seek prompt treatment if necessary.

Company personnel/contracted personnel must be properly licensed while handling Pre-harvest/Post-harvest regulated materials and must be properly trained while handling non-regulated materials.
Part 1—Farm Review

This section covers water usage, sewage treatment, animals, and manure and municipal biosolids, previous land use, and traceback.
Water Usage
Source of the water must be known.
Water must come from a recognized water source with the quality known to be adequate for the crop irrigation method.
The water must meet microbial requirements of EPA standards.
Water testing must be performed to verify the water quality and the testing records must be available. Testing must be done three times annually for surface water and annually for wells. Surface water tests should be conducted at the start of the growing season, one mid-season, and one near the end of the irrigation season or harvest.
Measures must be taken to prevent contamination of irrigation water from outside sources at all times.

Sewage Treatment
Indicate what type of sewage system the farm uses
If a septic tank or drain field is used the location must be identified.
The auditor must check to see if a sewage treatment facility is adjacent to the farming operation.

Animals/Wildlife/Livestock
Crops and water sources must be protected from contamination from the presence of animals or livestock. Crop production areas must be monitored to verify the presence or absence of animals and to determine if there is a need to take measures to reduce the activity in the crop production area.
Feed lots or animal production facilities adjacent to crop production areas can be of a concern depending on location and drift.

Manure and Biosolids
The auditor must be made aware if the operation is using manure or biosolids. If it is, the operation must have documentation that the manure has been properly treated and stored to minimize the risk of contamination.
Manure lagoons must be maintained to prevent leaking or over flowing.

Soils
Auditors must review the previous use of the land with the applicant. In most cases the land has been used for farming for long periods of time and has minimum risk for contamination.
If previous land use indicates prior use as a waste site, feed lot, old homestead, subjected to flooding or something that might cause concern for contamination, the applicant must have the soil tested for microbial contaminants and adjust the use of the land for crops that have minimal contact with the surface.
Part 2—Field Harvest and Field Packing

This section covers field sanitation and hygiene, field harvesting and transportation, and traceback.
**Field Sanitation and Hygiene**

Applicant must perform a pre-harvest assessment of all crop production sites. This may include areas such as water that meets microbial requirements of EPA standards supplied to workers, unlawful entry onto property, care of equipment, harvesting containers, etc.

Applicant must ensure that all employees are properly trained and take necessary precautions to avoid microbial contamination of the product.

Applicant should make sure that all State/Federal safety and health standards have been met.

Restrooms or portable toilets must be properly supplied and maintained on a regular basis and this must be documented.

All sanitation facilities must include water that meets microbial requirements of EPA standards to wash with, soap and single-use towels.

Applicant must have a response plan if a spill were to occur as to how they would clean it up or contain it.

Signs should be posted in the appropriate language for the employees to instruct them to wash their hands after the use of the restroom facility.

**Field Harvesting and Transportation**

This section covers harvesting trays, tables, baskets, totes and other harvesting equipment used during harvesting and transportation.

All equipment used should be cleaned or sanitized prior to use and kept as clean as practicable during harvest to prevent contamination.

All equipment should not be used for any other purpose during harvest.

Any damaged or soiled harvesting containers that are not repairable must be discarded to reduce the possibility of microbial contamination. Harvesting containers must be new or sanitized for field packing operations and protected from contamination.

Water used during the harvesting operation must meet microbial requirements of EPA standards.

Any bulbs or glass on harvesting or transportation equipment must be protected from breakage, and there must be a written policy/procedure on what to do if breakage occurs.

Tarping or hauling in closed containers is required if moving crops from crop production area.

Product moving out of field must be uniquely identified to enable traceback.
Part 3—House Packing Facility

This section addresses receiving, the washing and/or packing line, worker health and personal hygiene, packinghouse general housekeeping, pest control and traceback.
Receiving

Products that are transported from the field to the packing house in both bulk and packed form that leaves the immediate growing area and travels on a county or state highways, must be covered.

Products must be protected from contamination from other vehicles, overhead contamination from overpasses, from birds or other means during transport.

Harvested product must be properly stored after delivery to the packing facility.

Mesh-type coverings are not considered adequate cover.

Washing/Packing Line

Water used during washing or packing must meet microbial requirements of EPA standards during first use.

Water that is used for processing of fresh fruit and vegetables either for washing or as a way to dilute and apply cleaners, waxes, fungicides or other processing chemicals must meet microbial requirements of EPA standards.

Re-use of washing or packing water is acceptable as long as there are measures in place to ensure and maintain water quality.

Periodic water sampling or changing of the water as necessary should be done to maintain sanitary conditions.

Clean and sanitized water-contact surfaces such as dump tanks, flumes, wash tanks and hydro coolers as often as necessary to ensure the protection of the produce against possible contamination.

Install backflow devices and legal air gaps, as needed, to prevent contamination of clean water with potentially contaminated water.

Water treatment strength levels must be tested and records of this testing must be available.

The packing facility should be cleaned on a daily basis. Documentation of cleaning is required.

Other areas of possible contamination could include open-mesh catwalks over the product flow zone, motors without catch pans, dirty ceiling and pipes.

If ice or hydro cooled water is used for cooling of the product, the water needs to meet microbial requirements of EPA standards in order to prevent possible contamination.
**Worker Health and Personal Hygiene**

Areas within the packing facilities that are designated for the employees to prepare for work, taking of breaks and eating of lunches must be kept clean and in an area away from the production line.

Employee areas may be within the packing room and designated by signs, lines painted on the floor or may be a separate room.

Employee designated areas outside of the packing facility is also an acceptable practice.

An applicant may have a written policy in its SOP that refers to wearing of hair and/or beard nets and the wearing of, or restriction of, the type of jewelry they will allow to be worn by the employees. If this policy is in an applicant’s SOP, the policy must be followed by everyone.

**Packinghouse General Housekeeping**

General Housekeeping is very important. Poor sanitation practices can significantly increase the risk of contamination to the product being handled. Packers should employ good sanitization practices as a standard operating procedure to maintain control throughout the packing operation.

Food grade approved lubricants must be used in areas where lubricating agents may come into contact or have the potential to contaminate the product.

- Lubricant containers must state that they are an approved food grade lubricant or make reference that they meet applicable FDA or other government standards.
- Non-food grade lubricants may be used as long there is no risk for contamination or there are safeguards in place to prevent contamination, such as catch pans under gear boxes.

Food grade and non-food grade lubricants must be stored separately either in separate rooms or segregated within the same room to prevent misuse or accidental use of the products.

The grounds in the immediate vicinity of the packing facility should be kept clear of waste, litter and reasonably free of standing water.

- Garbage receptacles and dumpsters need to be maintained and emptied on a regular basis.
- All receptacles/dumpsters that are located outside and located sufficiently close to the facility entrances must have a closure.

The area surrounding the garbage receptacles/dumpsters must be maintained in a clean and orderly manner.

Packing facilities must be enclosed to exclude or reduce the possibility of contamination from rodents and pests.

- Doors that are used for forklift or foot traffic and are left open during normal working hours are considered part of the normal packing operation and this is acceptable.
The packinghouse interior must be clean and maintained.

- During packing operations some evidence of dirt and debris will be visible, but there should be no evidence that it has accumulated over time and been ignored on walls, ceilings, equipment and the like.
- All floor drains must be free of obstructions to prevent water build-up and harboring of pests.

All glass material that is in the product flow zone must be protected in case there is a breakage. This can be done with the use of shatter proof bulbs, a protective sleeve around the bulbs or covers that will protect the bulb.

Packing containers must be new or sanitized prior to use. Pallets must be clean and in good condition.

There must be a documented and established pest control program in place.

- The program may be a self-designated program or by a commercial operator.
- Traps may be numbered and a map available to show the location of the traps.
- There should be a pest control log that includes dates of inspection, inspection report and steps that are taken to eliminate any problems.

**Traceability**

Records are kept recording the source of incoming product and the destination of outgoing product. All product is uniquely identified to enable traceback.
Part 4—Storage and Transportation

This section covers the use of containers and pallets, pest control, ice, storage and/or temperature control, transportation and loading, worker health and hygiene, and traceback.
**Product, Containers and Pallets**

There must be a policy addressing product that comes in contact with the floor or that has been contaminated with a foreign substance.

Packing containers and other packing material should be stored and properly covered to prevent the possibility of contamination from birds, rodents and other outside elements.

Packing containers should not be stored directly on the floor.

Pallets should be in good repair and clean. There should be no foreign material present on the pallets while being used.

**Pest Control**

There must be a documented and established pest control program in place.

➢ The program may be a self-designated program or by a commercial operator.

➢ Traps may be numbered and a map available to show the location of the traps.

There should be a pest control log that includes dates of inspection, inspection report and steps that are taken to eliminate any problems.

**Ice**

All water used for cooling and/or making ice must meet microbial requirements of EPA standards.

**Storage and Temperature Control**

All storage facilities must be clean and maintained in an orderly manner. Bulk storage facilities must be inspected for foreign material prior to use. Storage facilities and buildings must have the ability to be closed or sealed to protect from possible external contamination. The areas surrounding storage facilities and other buildings must be reasonably free of standing water and debris. Non food-grade substances such as paint, etc., must not be stored in close proximity to the product.

All equipment used during storage must be clean and maintained to prevent contamination of product.

Refrigeration systems must be working properly and the probes or thermometers must be checked or calibrated on a regular basis.

**Transportation and Loading**

Produce items should be shipped only with other produce items. There are cases when this is not feasible, but precautions must be taken to minimize the risk for contamination.

Prior to loading, the trailer must be inspected to ensure it is clean, in good condition, free from disagreeable odors and free from dirt and debris.
The desired temperatures of the product while being transported must be stated on the bill of lading.

Trucks and trailers should be loaded in a manner to minimize damage to the product.

All Transportation and Loading items above require documentation.

**Worker Health and Personal Hygiene**

Employees’ lunch and break areas must be separate from storage facilities, shipping areas and receiving areas. If there are policies in your Standard Operating Procedures regarding hair/beard nets and the wearing of jewelry, they must be followed by everyone unless otherwise stated.

**Traceability**

Records must be kept of incoming product and the destination of outgoing product to enable traceback.

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*Part 5—[Reserved]*

This section not in use at this time.
Parts 6 and 6A—Wholesale Distribution Center/Terminal Warehouse and Traceback

These two sections cover facilities that handle fresh produce and then redistribute the product.
**Wholesale Distribution Center/ Terminal Warehouse**

Major focus of concerns:

- Cleanliness of conveyances delivering product
- Refrigeration and temperatures for both conveyances and facility
- Cleanliness of facility and employee break rooms
- Location of break rooms
- Proper handling of product
- Product flow zones properly protected from sources of contamination
- Pest control
- Water that meets microbial requirements of EPA standards for all uses, water treatment being monitored
- Policy regarding the use of hair nets and jewelry
- Shipping and transportation

The operation must have a procedure for recalling of product, as well as a list of responsible individuals for this action. A “Mock Recall” must be performed within 12 months of the requested audit.
Part 7—Preventative Food Defense Procedures

This section covers an operation having a Food Defense plan covering all aspects of their operation.
**Food Defense Training/Access Control**

All personnel must have proper training on Food Defense, including knowing who the assigned contact person is.

The facility must have a visitor check in log. Staff must know the purpose of the visit and have someone escort all visitors while on the premises.

The facility must control all vehicles coming and going from their operation, and this must include staff vehicles.

Assigned staff must perform routine security checks of the entire facility.

The perimeter of the operation must be secured by fencing or other deterrent.

Assigned staff must control the deliveries and returns of products.

Segregate product from outside of the United States. Also, segregate all known allergens, such as peanut oil.

Management must have a floor plan and product flow chart available.

**Employee Access**

The facility’s management must know which employees are allowed on the premises, limit staff access to the area of their job function, where they store their personal belongings and issue I.D. badges. I.D. badges and issued uniforms or name tags should be collected at the termination of employment with the facility.

Management must control all computers and mail room.

All keys to the facility must be accounted for.

The majority of the issues in this section require documentation.
Reporting the Results of the Audit

At the conclusion of the audit, there will be an exit interview:

- An interview will be conducted with the operation contact person to present and discuss the findings of the audit.
- A detailed copy of the audit checklist will be delivered to the applicant and it will report any non-conformities along with the final scoring of the audit.
- The audit report will have a detailed explanation for any question answered “No” or “Not Applicable”.
- If there is a section of the audit that fails to meet the 80% minimum passing score, the auditor will issue a “Corrective Action Report” showing the areas that caused the failure. The areas shown on this report must be corrected prior to requesting another audit. An applicant may request to redo a failed audit at any time that they have corrected the non-conforming areas. The auditor may give a timetable to redo an audit if there is a requirement of documentation to satisfy the question.
- The report may provide recommendations for improving an area of concern.
- It is important to remember the audit is not designed to find fault. It is to present to management areas where the system can be improved or corrected.

A successful audit shows commitment by management and employees to follow and maintain the guidelines to help minimize the potential risk for microbial contamination of the product.
Additional Sources

Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceComplianceRegulatoryInformation/GuidanceDocuments/ProduceAndPlanProducts/ucm064458.htm

Fresh Produce Audit Verification Program
http://www.ams.usda.gov/fv/fpbgapghp.htm

WSDA Good Agricultural & Good Handling Practices
http://agr.wa.gov/inspection/fvinspection/gapghp.aspx

Good Manufacturing Practices for the 21st Century – Food Processing
For More Information

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