

GAP

GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES



GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES (GAP) are voluntary audits through the USDA that verify fruits and vegetables are produced, packed, handled and stored as safely as possible to minimize risks of microbial food safety hazards.

GAP certification verifies the participant has taken proactive measures to reduce the risk of microbial contamination by adhering to generally recognized industry best practices.

While not part of the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), a GAP audit can help ready growers for legal requirements of the FSMA Produce Safety Rule.

WHY GAP?

A GAP audit is required by an increasing number of wholesalers, hospitals, retail grocery chains, higher education institutions, and others to guarantee the highest degree of food safety and traceability.

Contact the West Virginia Department of Agriculture at 304-558-2210 for more information.

Common GAP Audits

1. USDA GHP/GAP Audit

- Signifies adherence to industry and FDA Best Practices; scopes are buyer driven/demanded. There are additional requirements for FSMA compliance.

2. Harmonized GAP

- Signifies additional adherence to Produce GAP Harmonization Initiative alignment and FDA FSMA Produce Safety Rule alignment; buyer and legislatively demanded.

3. Harmonized GAP Plus

- Required by many larger buyers and institutions. Comprehensive audit that signifies highest standards implemented including alignment with Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) technical assistance; highest level of audit compliance.

STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL GAP AUDIT

1. Educate Yourself

- a. Who do I want to sell to?
- b. What are buyers requiring?
- c. Make a list of questions.
- d. Attend a Grower Training.

TO INQUIRE ABOUT UPCOMING GROWER TRAINING DATES

Contact: produce@wvda.us or 304-558-2210.

2. Self Assessment

- a. Where do I want my business to be in 5 years?
- b. What are my risk areas?
- c. What are my priorities?

3. Write your 'Farm Food Safety Plan'

- a. The WV Food Safety Team offers a separate "Writing Your Farm Food Safety Plan" session, which provides templates, operating procedures and the record keeping requirements for GAP and the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) compliance.
- b. **A written plan and record keeping is required for GAP certification and is highly recommended for all farmers.**

4. For Technical Assistance Prior to Audit

- a. Contact Jeff Most, jmost@wvda.us (304-229-5828).

5. To Request an Audit

- a. Complete an audit request form at <https://bit.ly/2Bj8Ban>
- b. Submit form directly to Derek Richard, drichard@wvda.us, (304-229-5828), to begin audit process.

WVDA COST-SHARE PROGRAM

Those participants who successfully complete a GAP audit are eligible to receive a reimbursement of up to 75% of the cost with a maximum of \$750. Reimbursement funds are issued via Specialty Crop Block Grant Funds and require attendance at an approved grower training.

This program is a reimbursement process; you must pay for your audit and then submit a reimbursement package.

Reimbursement will only be made to successful USDA audits. Payment would still need to be made for an failed audit.

West Virginia Department of Agriculture

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