

Ralph Treadway
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My name is Ralph Treadway. I am a food safety professional in the produce industry in California and Arizona. I work for a large handler, handling leafy green products in California and Arizona. I maintain the GAP and HACCP programs for our company. I compile records, perform field operations and am the point of contact for USDA/LGMA and independent auditors. I work directly with growers, handlers harvesters and auditors. I am not involved in the costing and expenses related to the agreements. I am here in support of a National Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement.

I have seen an improvement in the general awareness among both handlers and growers in the importance of good agricultural practices and food safety. This awareness has in part been due to the adoption of the metrics in both California and Arizona. Ranchers are more likely to implement changes to the ranch to improve food safety. Improvement of the awareness of food safety issues have been translated directly to action at the ranch level. Overall ranch food safety conditions are much improved.

Auditors from USDA are using a planned program that makes audits complete and repeatable. We still perform both independent third party audits and LGMA audits and they are both thorough and complete but there are differences. In the case of the third party audits there are so many different companies performing audits and their audit requirements can be different. These differences make it difficult to comply fully with their audits. Buyers also have different requirements that are both confusing and ambiguous. Auditing companies use auditor that in some cases use their requirements as a standard to be followed. The audits performed under the CA and AZ LGMA, for each state are all the same and as a result there is standardization with less ambiguity in audits.

In closing I believe that a National LGMA is in the best interest to the industry and the consumer and I fully support its implementation.

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