



## **Instructions for the Use of the Good Agricultural Practices & Good Handling Practices (GAP&GHP) Audit Verification Program Logo**

This document outlines the requirements for the use of the official USDA GAP&GHP program logo. This document applies to participants of GAP & GHP audits approved and performed under USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) oversight, including, but not limited to USDA GAP&GHP, Harmonized GAP and commodity specific GAP programs such as the Tomato Audit Protocol. In addition, the GAP&GHP logo is only permitted for use by participants that meet the GAP&GHP program logo use requirements below.

### **A. Background**

The Good Agricultural Practice and Good Handling Practice (GAP&GHP) Audit Verification Program is a voluntary program that provides participants with independent verification that their operations are adhering to the Food and Drug Administration's *Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables*, industry developed guidelines, and generally recognized good agricultural and/or good handling practices.

### **B. Procedures**

1. The participant must formally submit Form FV-652, "Logo Use Request for Audit Programs," to request permission to use the logo.
  - a. The participant must have attained "approved" GAP&GHP program status by meeting the acceptance criteria for all audit scopes applicable to their operation. For example, a farming operation that grows, harvests, packs, and ships fruits and vegetables must be audited to the scope of the audit for each of those four activities.
    - (1) All GAP&GHP audits must be conducted by a USDA-AMS licensed auditor under Federal oversight.
    - (2) The audit must cover all commodities grown, handled, or processed by the operation.
  - b. The participant must have an active, verified traceability and recall program.
    - (1) The USDA GAP&GHP logo can only be displayed on packages, containers, or consumer units that are traceable.

- (a) All containers or labels that bear the GAP&GHP logo are accountable items and must be included in the operation's inventory log. Accountability is verified during the GAP&GHP audit process.
    - (2) Packinghouses, distribution centers, and other post-farm gate operations must provide documentation of an approved supplier program that, at a minimum, verifies that all suppliers of fresh produce have successfully completed and met the requirements of a USDA-approved GAP&GHP audit.
  - c. The participant must provide documentation showing procedures for the GAP&GHP logo included in their food safety or similar type of quality manual.
  - d. The participant must submit any language they plan to use in conjunction with the logo.
    - (1) USDA will verify that this language is factual.
    - (2) USDA must approve it in writing prior to its use on company websites, invoices, and other material.
2. With USDA's written approval of the request, use of the logo is approved as long as the participant remains active in the USDA GAP&GHP program.
  - a. The commitment may be terminated at any time by either party by written request submitted at least 30 days prior to the expected termination date.
3. The logo may only be used on packages, containers, and labels that are clean and bright in appearance, without marks, stains, or other evidence of previous use.
  - a. The participant may not use or create any other similar logo or design to indicate participation in the GAP&GHP program or as a brand name, trademark, product name, company name, or any other descriptive material without prior written approval from USDA. See regulations 7 CFR 51.51
4. USDA may verify the use of the logo at any time, including during any audit conducted by a USDA-AMS licensed auditor, at the expense of the logo user.
5. USDA will notify a company found using the logo not in compliance with this policy, and provide 5 business days for the participant to take corrective action. If after 5 business days, the participant does not take corrective action to comply with logo use instructions, USDA will revoke the right to use the logo until the non-conformance(s) is rectified.
  - a. If a participant fails to meet the acceptance criteria during an annual validation audit or subsequent verification visit by not meeting minimum scoring requirements, the participant has 14 calendar days to address any nonconformance, take corrective action, and apply for another validation audit.

- (1) If the participant does not meet established acceptance criteria during the subsequent audit, USDA will suspend use of the logo until the participant meets the acceptance criteria on a validation audit.
  - b. Operations in a USDA GAP&GHP group certification program can only use the logo when the party responsible for the group certification has met the requirements for certification.
    - (1) If, at any point, an individual member of the group is determined to be out of compliance, the responsible party has 5 days to take corrective action or USDA will withdraw the right to use the logo.
  - c. If a participant fails an annual validation audit or subsequent verification visit due to an imminent threat of microbial contamination, USDA will immediately suspend use of the logo until the participant takes corrective action to address the non-conformity, and applies for and passes a new validation audit.
  - d. If a participant fails a validation audit or verification visit a second time within 12 months of the first infraction, USDA will suspend use of the logo for 60 days, and until the applicant applies for and meets the acceptance criteria on a new validation audit.
  - e. If a participant fails a validation audit or verification visit a third time, the participant will be banned from using the logo, and must surrender or destroy all preprinted labels or stickers, preprinted containers, or other logo markings, and remove the logo from any websites, invoices, and other materials.
6. USDA will notify an operation if its audit has expired in writing or by email, and provide 14 days to resume the audit program.
    - a. Operations that decline to use USDA GAP&GHP audit program services will be notified in writing of revocation of permission to use the logo.
      1. After such notification, the participant may not display the logo on any labels, containers, or other materials.
      2. The operation may cover or dispose of, any pre-printed or labeled containers.
  7. Use of the GAP&GHP logo is subject to the labeling terms under the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act and 7 CFR §51.59, which requires that all labels or marks on a container be truthful.
    - a. If a company is reported using the Logo, and it is not a USDA GAP&GHP program participant and/or it was not officially approved to use the USDA GAP&GHP Logo, the Logo Use Program Manager will report the

company to the USDA-AMS Compliance and Analysis Program as a violation of USDA policy.

- b. USDA will investigate any unauthorized use of the label.