

02 August 2005

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER No. 25

Series of 2005

Subject: **GUIDELINES ON THE CERTIFICATION OF GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES (GAP) FOR FRUITS AND VEGETABLE (FV) FARMING**

The Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards (BAFPS) created pursuant to Republic Act 8435 of the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act of 1997 (AFMA) is mandated to formulate and enforce standards of quality in processing, preservation, packaging, labeling, importation, exportation, distribution and advertising of agriculture and fisheries products.

Recognizing liberalization of fruit and vegetable trade and the incessant need to compete in the international market, it is important that safety and quality of fruits and vegetables, which are consumed fresh, are ensured. The best approach to maintain the wholesomeness nature and safe consumption of edible horticultural produce is to systematically identify and establish management practices that minimizes chances of external and internal contamination from the farm-to-fork chain. Consequently, the government has to develop and enforce the Code of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) throughout the country in close collaboration with stakeholders. To assure that agricultural farms are adhering to GAP, there is an imperative need to provide specific guidelines in GAP Certification.

1. **Objectives of Certification.** The certification of agricultural farms is aimed to attain the following:
 - 1.1 To increase the market access of horticultural products both in the local and foreign markets
 - 1.2 To empower farmers to respond to the demands of consumers that specific criteria to achieve food safety and quality be met
 - 1.3 To facilitate farmer adoption of sustainable agricultural practices
 - 1.4 To uplift GAP-FV farmers profile as member of the nationally recognized list of vegetable farmers who are setting the benchmark for the production of safe and quality fruits and vegetables
 - 1.5 To enable consumers exercise the option of buying quality fruits and vegetable from traceable and certified sources
2. **Scope of Guidelines.** The establishes the rules applied by the Department of Agriculture (DA) for granting, maintaining and withdrawing Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Certificate to individual growers or farms in the fresh fruit and vegetable sector or to their Produce Marketing Organizations (PMOs) that market and or trade the produce.

3. Administrator

- 3.1 Composition. The Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Certification Committee shall be composed of the Directors of attached agencies of the Department of Agriculture (DA), representatives from the private sector, non-government organization, and academe.

Chairperson:	Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards (BAFPS)
Co-chairperson:	Bureau of Plant Industry
Members:	Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA) Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) Bureau of Soil and Water Management (BSWM) GMA-High Value Commercial Crops (HVCC) Program Representative, Private sector Representative, NGO/PO Representative, Academe

- 3.2 Tasks. The Committee shall be tasked to:

- 3.2.1 Review and approve applications
- 3.2.2 Endorse to the Secretary a list of applicants to be issued a Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Certificate
- 3.2.3 Review and approve any changes in standards and fees
- 3.2.4 Hear appeals
- 3.2.5 Annually review investigations of complaints about abuses in the production and sale of products that do not adhere to GAP
- 3.2.6 Determine penalties for abuse of standards or mark
- 3.2.7 Negotiate satisfactory settlement of complaint and reimbursement for the investigation cost
- 3.2.8 Designate qualified National and Regional Inspectors

- 3.3 Secretariat. The Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards (BAFPS) shall act as secretariat of the GAP Certification Committee.

- 3.4 Inspectors. The National Inspectors based in the Central Offices shall be composed of identified technical personnel duly designated by the Directors of the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA), Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) and Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) and the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards (BAFPS). Regional Inspectors replicating the composition of the National Inspectors duly recommended by their respective Regional Heads, if any, shall be constituted as the need arises.

4. Application

- 4.1 Nature of applicants. The Department of Agriculture (DA) Certification Scheme shall be based on three (3) options, depending on the type of organization that is requesting certification.
- 4.1.1 Individual grower
 - 4.1.2 Produce Marketing Organization (PMO)
 - 4.1.3 A company/corporation that applies a national or company scheme

- 4.2 The applicant shall submit the completed application form to the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA) through the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Certification Committee.
- 4.3 Supporting Documents. Accompanying the accomplished form are:
 - 4.3.1 Farm/Organization profile
 - 4.3.2 Company/corporation Certificate of registration
 - 4.3.3 Track record of the farm or company/corporation
 - 4.3.4 For Produce Marketing Organizations (PMOs). The PMOs must illustrate that it has 100% control of the registered growers of the group requesting for certification, all individual growers operate under the same management systems and adhere to the Department of Agriculture (DA) Code of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP).
- 4.4 Fees.
 - 4.4.1 The Certification Committee shall establish the guidelines to fix reasonable fees and charges to cover the administrative expenses to be incurred during the evaluation, inspection and audit.
 - 4.4.2 The charge for the first certification will cover administrative expenses incurred by the Committee during evaluation and audit expenses of inspectors.
 - 4.4.3 Re-certification requires the re-audit of farm on the GAP-FV guidelines and will be conducted one (1) month prior to the expiry of the existing certification.

5. Certification

- 5.1 Audit/Inspection
 - 5.1.1 After the Certification Committee has evaluated the application, the Committee will notify the farm within thirty (30) days on the farm audit date prior to the certification or the renewal of the application
 - 5.1.2 The inspector may take samples of water, soil, plant tissue, plants etc. for testing. A receipt will be given to the producer; the producer will not charge the GAP Program for the sample taken. The applicant will pay the cost of testing, and the applicant will receive a copy of the analysis.
 - 5.1.3 Inspectors shall conduct an “exit” interview with the applicant or authorized representative upon completion of the inspection process. The inspector shall cover all potential problem areas noted on the inspection form.
- 5.2 Issuance of GAP Certificate
 - 5.2.1 The awarding of GAP-FV Certification is based upon compliance set in the Code of Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) pertaining to farm structure, environment and maintenance, farming practices and farm management during farm checks and the diligent observation of the regulations of GAP-FV certification. The compliance criteria include:
 - 5.2.1.1 Compliance to the Code of Practice of Good Agricultural Practice (GAP)

- 5.2.1.2 Implementation of a transparent and traceable system to keep track of safe and quality vegetable production from sowing to harvest/packaging
- 5.2.1.3 Documentation of farm management to help trace the history of farm produce. The farm must also identify a coordinator to represent the farm in the certification matters. The farm records must be kept for two (2) years. New farm applying for certification must have three (3) months of farm records.
- 5.2.2 Upon the review of the inspection report, the GAP Certification Committee shall approve, deny or place an application in pending. If placed in pending or denied, the Chairperson will have fifteen (15) days to notify the applicant.
- 5.2.3 Upon approval of application, the report of the GAP Certification Committee together with the recommendation to issue GAP Certificate to the applicant shall be endorsed to the Office of the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture for approval.
- 5.2.4 After the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture has conceded, the GAP Program Certification Committee shall assign an unequivocal permanent registration number and issues a GAP Certificate.
- 5.2.5 The GAP Certification award entitles the applicant to use an official mark “Good Agricultural Practice for Fruits and Vegetable Farming” in accordance with the provision set out herein.

6. Renewal of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Certificate

- 6.1 Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Program participants shall renew GAP Certificate by submitting a new application three (3) years after it has been issued. Application for renewal shall be done one (1) month prior to the anniversary date of the certificate.
- 6.2 Upon receipt of the renewal request, a new certificate shall be issued and an inspection shall be performed within the following thirty (30) days, preferably during the growing or packing season.

7. Advertisement

- 7.1 The “Good Agricultural Practice for Fruits and Vegetable Farming” Mark is an official Mark to be put on fruits and vegetables produced by certified farms. It is an offense for any farm or company to use the Mark to advertise the farm fruits and vegetables not produced by the farm or when farm is not certified.
- 7.2 Certified farm are allowed to advertise with the Mark. This privilege will be withdrawn in the event of non-compliance with the regulations and guidelines.
- 7.3 The Mark may be used on letterheads of the company and in advertisement materials such as brochures and packaging bags for promotion of the farm and must adhere to the given specifications.
- 7.4 All materials containing the Mark shall be submitted to GAP Certification Committee for approval in their use and release to the public.

8. Revocation of GAP Certificate

Certified farms must observe and comply with the GAP Certification Guidelines. Farms must comply with all major criteria as specified in the Code of Good Agricultural Practice. Non-compliance with the Code of GAP shall result in the loss of approval. Failure to comply with any part of the guidelines may involve fines, suspension or withdrawal of award, which will be publicly announced.

9. Confidentiality

All employees, contractors, and committee members must adhere to the principles of confidentiality. Information submitted by applicants for approval will not be released to the public, including production practices, ingredients, costumer list, complaint log, etc. without written permission of the applicant. However, the following information may be released.

- 9.1 the name, address and telephone number of the applicant
- 9.2 to confirm whether or not the applicants operation was approved on a specific date
- 9.3 any information to comply with a court order
- 9.4 any information to comply with a request from a GAP Certification Committee investigating an alleged complaint

10. Conflict of Interest

Conflict of interest is defined as having an economic interest with a producer or packer under review for approval one year prior to, during or one year after work or employment was concluded. Staff, contractors and committee members with a conflict of interest must make the conflict known and not participate in discussion or decisions regarding the producer or packer under review.

11. Additional Regulations

Other regulations may be introduced and notified when they become necessary to ensure production of safe and quality vegetables in certified farms.

12. Effectivity

This Order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its filing with the UP Law Center.

APPROVED:

DOMINGO F. PANGANIBAN
Secretary