



DON'T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF?!

Tips While Preparing for a Food Safety Audit



Why Do We Need Food Safety Certification?

- **Food Quality is an option.**
Good quality is something we hope for and base buying practices upon.
- **Food Safety is an entitlement!**
We have the right to expect that food is safe!



Eliminate All Risk...
IMPOSSIBLE!

PREVENTION
PREVENTION
PREVENTION

Prevention of any contamination of fresh produce is favored over corrective action once contamination has occurred



What Can We Do To Minimize Risks?

**Focus on risk reduction,
not risk elimination.**

“Current technologies cannot eliminate all potential food safety hazards associated with fresh produce that will be eaten raw.”

*Guide to Minimize Microbial Food
Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and
Vegetables*



Take Home...

Your unique operation needs to
have GAPs that are
tailored to your commodity(s),
your management practices &
your workers
in order to effectively reduce and
prevent contamination on your farm.

Basis of it All: Evaluate the Whole Operation

Pre-plant



Product



Harvest



Post Harvest

- Irrigation and Wash Water Sources
- Manure Source, Use and Handling
- Employee Training and Hygiene
- Farm and Equipment Sanitation



Contamination Can Occur Anywhere...

- **In fields or orchards**
- **During harvesting and transport**
- **During processing or packing**
- **In distribution and marketing**
- **In restaurants and food service facilities**
- **In the home**

FARM to FORK

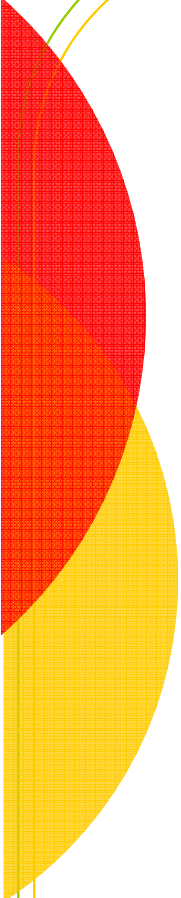


Be Active and Be Ready

- **Make changes to management practices as needed.**
- **Keep good records of all production practices.**
- **Teach employees the importance of prevention strategies and provide proper facilities.**
- **Work with upstream neighbors and local watershed committees on management goals.**
- **Update your plan regularly.**



The Audit



Audit = Anxiety

- Almost all of you are doing at least 80% of audit requirements
 - Just not documented
- The **AUDIT** is greatest point of anxiety for EVERYONE!
- A few tips....



1st Things 1st....

- **Deep Breaths**
- **Attend a food safety course if possible**
 - Bring key farm/office staff with you
- **Designate a food safety point person for your operation**
 - ONE person ***cannot*** do it all, but at least one person needs to know what to do, how, why, when, etc.



Learn the Lingo

- **GAP – Good Agricultural Practices**
 - Primarily used in the field
- **GMP – Good Manufacturing Practices**
 - Primarily used in the packing facility
- **HACCP – Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points**
 - Primarily used in processing
- **SOP – Standard Operating Procedure**
 - Written directions...What you are gonna do, how you are gonna do it, and who's gonna do it



Attitude

- **Understand that this is a lifestyle change, not a once a year clean up**
- **Accept the challenge**
 - You don't have to like it, but most of the time you can't stop it. Look at it as a challenge...one that you will beat!
- **First year is the most difficult**



Perspective

Take things...

- *One step at a time*
- *One question at a time*
- *One SOP at a time*

Perspective

Take

- One
- One
- One





'Points' of view

- **All audit scores are based on PERCENTAGE points, not actual points**
 - Example:
 - An audit may have total possible points of 1000.
 - Most customers require you to score 80% or greater. Anything below 80% is failing.
 - 800 points is 80% of 1000 total possible points



‘Points’ of view

- **There may be some high point questions that you may not feel are worth your time, money or efforts**
 - Constructing anti-personnel fencing around your fields or facility - \$\$\$
- **There may be several lower point questions that you can earn quickly and easily**
 - Food Safety Committee
 - Key Holder List
 - Glass Registry



Documentation

- **Almost everyone is doing at least 80% of everything asked on an audit...it is just not DOCUMENTED**
 - Not a federally mandated program, but it is run like one...
 - If it's not documented, you didn't do it
- **One person cannot do it all**
- **Delegate responsibility among your employees**



Documentation

- **Most firms will give you generic SOPs and documentation examples**
 - Use the resources and tailor them to your operation
- **Create checklists and documentation that works for you**
- **Don't cheat...you will always get caught**

Daily Sanitation Checklist

Line: Cucumber/Pepper Packing Line Date: 05/14/07 Inspector: Lane N. Spector

Line Item	Cleaned / Sanitized	Needs Cleaning	Comments
Dump hopper			
Inclined belt			
Sprayer nozzles			
Pre-grader			
Brush washer			
Grading belts			
Moisture eliminator			
Pack out tables			
Pallets, bulk bins			
Hydraulic lift			
Fork lifts			
Produce totes			
Staging area			

Reviewed by: _____

Manni Ger

Chlorine/pH Daily Monitoring

Packing Line:

Tomato grading line

Specific Location:

Water in dump tank

Control Limits:

Chlorine = 100-150 ppm/ pH = 6.5-7.5

Date	Chlorine Level				pH		Chlorine, Acid/Base Added	Comments	Operator Initials
	Time	Time	Time	Time	Time	Time			

Verified by: _____

Tomato Line Supervisor



Preparation

- **Checklists, checklists and checklists**
 - Review the audit checklists made available by most certification firms to help you or your farm staff understand what to expect during an audit.
- **Give your operation a self audit**
 - Print out the audit and take it *truthfully*. This will prevent most surprises.
 - Some auditing firms have Audit Scoring Guidelines that give details in awarding and deducting points.



Insider Trading

- **Auditors love organization!**
 - Signs, Signs and more Signs
 - Directional signs for visitors, shipping, office, etc.
 - Bathroom signs to wash hands, to put toilet paper in the toilet, not to use the field or woods
 - Authorization/Warning Signs
 - Color coded signs for cleaning equipment
 - No eating/drinking/tobacco signs around facility



Insider Trading

- **Auditors love organization!**

- Label all trash container “Trash” in English and any other primary language spoken in the operation
 - Includes trash cans, boxes, bins, etc.
- Keep EVERYTHING off the ground.
 - Boxes
 - Packaging
 - Stickers
 - Brooms, Mops, Shovels – hang or in drums
 - PRODUCE



Insider Trading

- **Auditors love organization!**
 - Draw lines on the floors with yellow paint to delineate barriers
 - Sign-In Logs
 - Visitor Name Tags
 - Get to know any special field and/or packing practices for your commodity(s) and region
 - Florida Tomato Food Safety Initiative
 - Leafy Green Food Safety Initiative



School's In

- **Training is KEY.**

- All workers, supervisors, etc. must undergo training
 - Health & Hygiene
 - Sanitation of the packing line
 - Pesticide Application
 - Fork lift safety
- Most auditing firms want ON GOING training
 - <http://ohioline.osu.edu/atts/modules.html>
 - Gemplers Tailgate Training – www.gemplers.com

“007”...(Double ‘0’, 7)

- Primus Labs
 - www.primuslabs.com
- FDA
 - www.foodsafety.gov
- Western Growers Association
 - <http://www.wga.com/>
- United Fresh Produce Association
 - www.unitedfresh.org
- Florida Tomato Committee
 - www.floridatomatoes.org
- USDA
 - <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateN&page=GAPGHPAuditVerificationProgram>
- AIB
 - <https://www.aibonline.org/auditservices/foodsafety/index.html>
- Georgia GAP
 - www.gfvga.org
- UC Davis
 - <http://ucgaps.ucdavis.edu/>
- National GAPs Program
 - www.gaps.cornell.edu



Building Your Own Food Safety Program

- Food Safety is an **integral** part of any produce operation
- Food Safety programs are **dynamic** in nature requiring **ongoing review and change**
- **Success** comes in making Food Safety the **responsibility of all employees**, not just management



Questions?

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