



WHAT IS A GAP AUDIT?

The **USDA, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) audit program** is a verification that a farm is following science based best practices for food safety during the growing, harvesting, packing, storage and transportation of food.



Mississippi Minority Farmers Alliance Launches

GAP CERTIFICATION PROGRAM



TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Training and technical assistance is supported by a grant from the **USDA, National Institute of Food and Agriculture**. In addition, the **Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce** is now offering a cost-share program for Mississippi farmers to provide financial assistance to cover the cost of certification.

More information on this at:

www.mdac.state.ms.us/departments/marketing/gap_ghp.htm



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***"Farming is the way we GROW!"
(God, Resources, Opportunity, Willpower)***

*The **Mississippi Minority Farmers' Alliance, Inc.** has developed a partnership with **Alcorn State University and Broader Horizons Management Consulting** to provide meaningful solutions to one of the key challenges facing growers in the region, food safety. The program is designed to provide classroom and hands-on training to individuals and groups seeking assistance.*



www.msminorityfarmers.org

WHY ADOPT GAP?

As the first step in the food production and distribution system, growers play a key role in providing healthy and safe food for our community. Adopting GAP can also provide market opportunities and protect farms from economic losses of food contamination.

WHO DOES IT AFFECT?

Food borne illnesses can result in hospitalization and even death. Food safety starts on the farm with growers, handlers and transporters. Wholesalers and retailers must adopt best practices to reduce food related illnesses.

WHO REQUIRES THE AUDIT?

Wholesale distributors or large grocery chains, require an audit in addition to food hubs, schools, hospitals, or other institutions. Some buyers may accept other verification such as providing a written food safety plan.

Contacting the Mississippi Minority Farmers Alliance is your first step in implementing a successful food safety program.

WHAT PRODUCTS DO YOU WANT AUDITED?

If you are growing fresh produce for human consumption, food safety standards should be used. It is your product (e.g. cucumbers, green beans, tomatoes) that actually gets the audit, not your farm. The audit occurs during the harvest and packing activities related to each product specified in the food safety plan. While the product is growing, the auditor will examine harvest and packing practices and certify crops as long as the crop is in the field or hoop house.

WHAT KIND OF AUDIT DOES YOUR BUYER REQUIRE?

Food safety certification requires written documentation of a food safety program, including standard operating procedures and logs of farm chores such as worker training, bathroom cleaning, and container cleaning. If you are just starting the process and this is your first audit, start with the basic USDA GAP audit. Check with your buyer to ensure that this audit is acceptable. The checklist contains everything the audit will cover.



Mississippi Minority Farmers Alliance

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