



Agricultural Marketing Service

Creating Opportunities for American Farmers and Businesses

GROUPGAP for Growers

Many small and mid-sized farmers find it difficult to pay for and get the food safety certification they need to access larger markets. The USDA **GroupGAP Certification Program** makes it easier for growers of all sizes and grower groups to receive USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification.

What is GroupGAP?

GroupGAP is a robust certification program that helps producers and grower groups, such as cooperatives and food hubs, comply with retailers' requirements for on-farm food safety certification. Under this program, any group of producers or supply chain partners who come together to implement a shared food safety program is considered a group.

How does GroupGAP work?

In GroupGAP, a collection of independent farms organize together to create a food safety system. Participants identify the food safety standard best suited to the needs of their buyers. They also work together to develop safety practices and collect required documentation, provide their own internal auditing services, and participate in an external audit by the USDA Specialty Crops Inspection Division.

Why should I work as part of a group?

Working as a group allows you to:

- Share resources and certification costs,
- Operate under a single, central quality management system,
- Demonstrate a recognized commitment to food safety,
- Develop a pool of diverse product offerings, and
- Undergo an audit together to obtain GroupGAP certification.

How will GroupGAP certification benefit me?

GroupGAP certification will allow you to:

- Get USDA GAP-certified,
- Meet buyers' food safety certification requirements,
- Demonstrate your adherence to Food Safety Modernization Act requirements, and
- Open doors to new, larger, more stable, and more profitable markets.

How do I learn more about GroupGAP?

Call: 202.720.5021

Web: www.ams.usda.gov/services/auditing/groupgap

Email: GroupGAP@ams.usda.gov