



QCS AQUAPONICS GAPs FOOD SAFETY STANDARDS for GROWING and HARVESTING

A PRIMER FOR GROWERS

Why get certified with the QCS Aquaponics GAPs Food Safety Standard?

Supermarkets, retailers, food service business, restaurants, and consumers everywhere are looking for fresh crops and fish/shellfish that are produced in a sustainable manner minimizing food safety risks. The QCS Aquaponics GAPs Food Safety certification will bring market recognition to your aquaponics operation and demonstrate your commitment towards continuous improvement.

Aquaponic producers of any size may be certified. You decide what products to include in your application towards obtaining certification.

WHAT THE STANDARDS COVER

The standard covers aquaponic on-farm activities with requirements addressing the following issues:

GROWING AND HARVESTING.- General Management / Hygiene / Chemical Management and Storage / Documentation and Recordkeeping / Workers Training / Microbiological Sampling and Testing / Traceability / Recall Program / Self-Audits / Worker Health, Hygiene and Toilet, Handwashing Facilities / Animal Control / Feed / Animal Welfare / Vehicles, Equipment, Tools, and Utensils / Preharvest Assessment / Harvesting / Water and Ice / Containers, Bins, and Packing Materials / Packing at Point of Harvest, Storage, and Transportation (field to storage or packing house).

This document is not intended as a substitute for a complete reading and understanding of the standard that may be downloaded free of charge at <http://www.qcsinfo.org/certification>

QCS is an ISO Guide 65 accredited certifying agent. QCS cannot provide consultation services to our clients, other than to ensure compliance with the QCS Aquaponics GAPs Food Safety Standard.

For additional information contact:

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WHAT TO EXPECT (a sample of key points)

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- Documents and records demonstrating compliance with the standard must be available for no less than 60 days for an initial (first time) audit and maintained for two years thereafter. Accurate record keeping is a very important tool to demonstrate compliance with the standard.
- A written food safety policy that covers the operation.
- A self-audit or internal audit to check compliance with the standard is required annually.
- For an initial (first time) audit the auditor must audit all your production processes including harvesting of the product(s) seeking certification.
- Training of workers in food safety procedures, sanitation and personal hygiene is required.
- Product traceability must be established (one step forward – one step back).
- Recall procedures must be in place.
- The operation will have verification that the number of toilet facilities and their location relative to employees meets the more stringent of federal, state, or local regulations.
- Agricultural chemicals must be registered for such use as required by prevailing regulation, and used in accordance with label directions.
- A water testing procedure must be available.