



## PRODUCE GAPs FOOD SAFETY STANDARDS

### FAQs

**1. What is the main difference between Produce Harmonized GAP and GLOBALG.A.P. certification?**

The main difference is that the Produce Harmonized GAP Standards are not recognized by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) while the GLOBALG.A.P. Standards for produce are GFSI recognized.

**2. What is the importance of being certified to a GFSI recognized standard?**

The importance is that your certificate should be accepted by all buyers worldwide.

The motto is “once certified, accepted everywhere.” For more information about GFSI click here:

<http://www.mygfsi.com/about-gfsi/vision-mission-objectives.html>

**3. What certification should I seek?**

You should find out directly from your buyer(s) what standards they will accept. Some buyers will accept either one while others will only accept GFSI recognized standards such as GLOBALG.A.P.

**4. I see that GLOBALG.A.P. has three standards for produce, the IFA-F&V, the PSS and the HPSS. What is the main difference among them?**

The Integrated Farm Assurance (IFA) standard for Fruit and Vegetables (F&V) is GLOBALG.A.P.’s flagship standard with a holistic approach to farm assurance including food safety, environment and biodiversity, workers welfare, and traceability requirements. All IFA standards are applicable and accepted worldwide.

The Produce Safety Standard (PSS) was exclusively developed for the USA and Canada markets, and only focuses on food safety and traceability elements. PSS is GLOBALG.A.P.’s implementation of the Produce Harmonized GAP standard at the farm level that is GFSI recognized.

The Harmonized Produce Safety Standard (HPSS) focuses on food safety and traceability elements. The main difference with the PSS is that HPSS is applicable to any producer growing and trading within the American continent. It is expected that HPSS will replace PSS once it obtains GFSI recognition in the near future. HPSS is GLOBALG.A.P.’s assimilation of the Produce Harmonized GAP standard.

**5. I see that Produce Harmonized GAP has two standards for produce, for Field Operations and Harvesting and for Post-Harvest Operations. What is the main difference between them?**

The Field Operations and Harvesting standard is applicable to produce growers including field packing and handling, and transportation from the field to storage or packing house.

The Post-Harvest Operation standard is applicable to packing houses handling fresh produce including storage, cooling, trimming, washing, and packing activities.

**6. What is the timeline of certification?**

This varies according to each individual situation. However, if you meet all certification requirements, from the time QCS receives a signed service contract, payment, and conducts the on-site audit the timeline should be less than 15 days. The entire process timeline should be less than 30 days.

**7. *What do I need to have ready for my initial (first time) audit?***

You must have conducted a self-assessment to check compliance with the standard before the day of the audit. You may download and use the self-audit checklist available at our website.

You must have documents and records available on-site demonstrating compliance with the standard for at least the past 90 days on the day of the audit.

You must schedule your audit at a time when all of your production processes including harvesting may be audited for the products you want to certify.

**8. *What should I do if I do not comply with all of the requirements in the self-audit?***

You should take corrective actions to bring your operation to a level of compliance where you think you will at least meet the minimum acceptance criteria as stated in the standard document. Doing this will improve your chance to obtain certification when you schedule a formal on-site audit.

**9. *Can I coordinate organic and food safety certifications to be inspected together and renew together?***

Yes, we will do everything possible to accommodate your needs.

**10. *When do you need to come out for an audit? If I harvest multiple crops at different times, do you need to come during each crop's harvest period?***

If your harvest process is different for your different crops the answer is yes as we must audit all of your production processes initially. For a renewal audit there may be some flexibility on a case-by-case basis.

**11. *How do I apply for this certification?***

You may download the application form as well as other informative documents from our website. Fill out the application and return it to [qcs@qcsinfo.org](mailto:qcs@qcsinfo.org). A QCS representative will send you the cost estimate and the service contract agreement once the application is received and checked.

**12. *How long is the validity of the certificate?***

The certificate is valid for 12 months from the date of the certification decision. Let's say your on-site audit was conducted on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015, and the review of your file and positive certification decision was made on August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015. In this case, your certificate would show a *valid from* date of August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014, and a *valid to* date of August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

**13. *Can I contact QCS with questions on what my operations should do to meet the compliance criteria?***

No, QCS is a third party accredited certification body and we cannot help you in that regard as we must maintain complete independence and impartiality throughout the certification process. This brings integrity, trust, and recognition to your certificate. However, if needed, you may seek advice elsewhere (e.g. consultants, growers associations, etc.).

**QCS is an ISO Guide 17065 accredited certifying agent. QCS cannot provide consultation services.**

**For additional information contact:**

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