Suggestions for improvements to this Code are encouraged from all parties. Written comments are to be sent to SQFI at 2345 Crystal Drive, Suite 800, Arlington, VA, 22202, USA.

Contents

Part A: Introduction and Code Protocols

Introduction
The SQF family of food safety and quality codes are designed to meet industry, customer and regulatory requirements for all sectors of the food supply chain from primary production through to food retailing and the manufacture of food packaging. The food safety codes are recognized by retailers, manufacturers and food service companies when assessing the food safety programs for their suppliers. The codes are also benchmarked against the requirements for food safety standards from the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI).

The stakeholders of GFSI recognized that the full requirements of the benchmarked standards, including SQF's codes, were difficult to achieve for small and less developed farms and businesses. As a result, a more step-wise approach to building food safety programs that could lead to certification in a full GFSI recognized standard was created. It is called the GFSI Global Markets programme and SQF has aligned some of it introductory codes to this programme. The primary production (farming) sector can use the basic and intermediate SQF Fundamental codes as certifications that ultimately can lead to certification to the full SQF Food Safety Code for Primary Production.

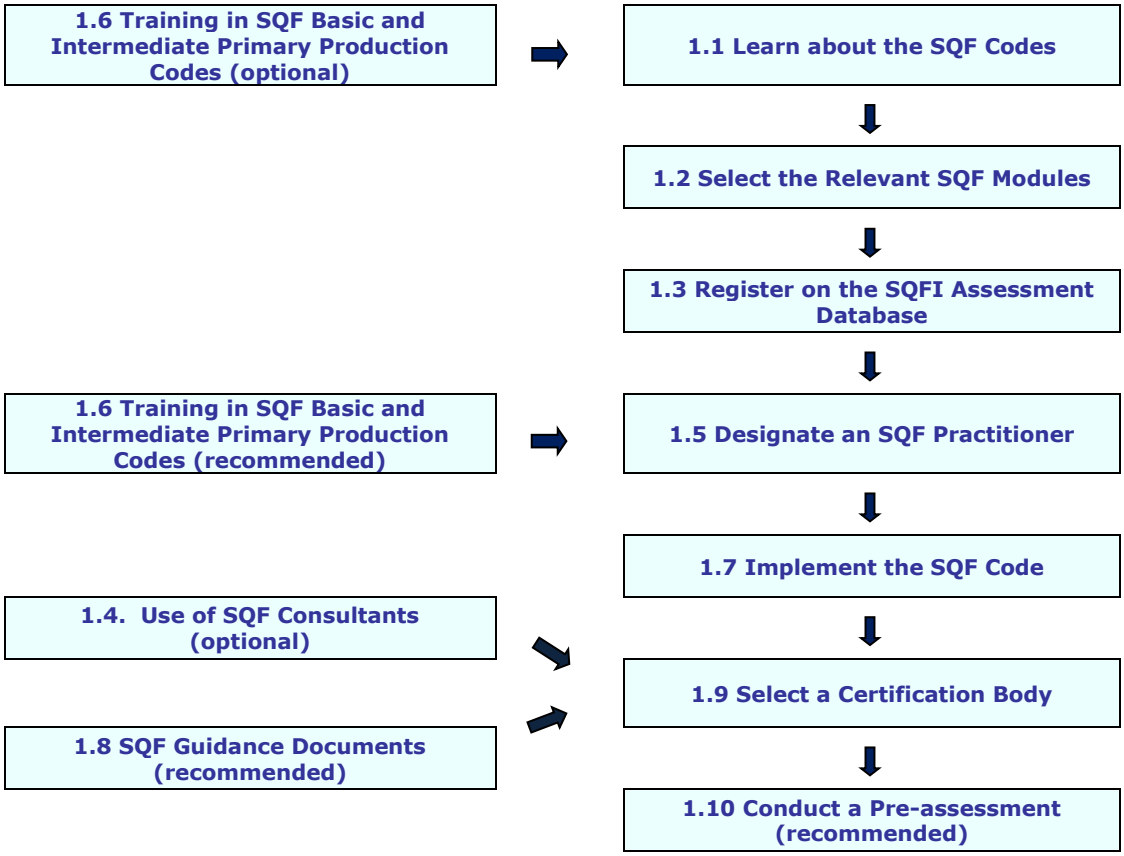
Benefits of the SQF Basic and Intermediate Fundamental Primary Production Codes (SQF Code)
Primary production (farm) site can benefit from certification to the SQF codes in the following manner:

- Alignment with GFSI Global Markets progamme which can be supported or approved by customers and regulators.
- Provides certification under an accredited 3rd party audit program, i.e. SQFI, that ensures auditors and certification bodies are competent and approved.
- Certificates and audit reports can be available to buyers through the SQF database.
- Provides sites with a framework to document their Good Agricultural Practices (GAP's) and build on them to achieve certification to the SQF Food Safety Code for Primary Production.

The SQF Basic and Intermediate Primary Production Codes are aligned with the full Primary Production code in that modules required for certification (see below) are similarly numbered as are the requirement sections. The SQF codes are separate such that certification can be granted to each separately. The intermediate code builds on the basic code and any additional requirements will be ***bolded and italicized***.

1. Preparing for Certification

Figure 1: Steps for Certification



1.1 Learn about the SQF Codes

There are several ways to learn how to implement the SQF Codes within your site. The following options are available:

- Attend a training course "SQF Basic and Intermediate Primary Production Codes" (refer Part A, 1.6) through a licensed SQF training center (recommended);
- Take the online training course "SQF Basic and Intermediate Primary Production Codes"" available from the SQFI website (sqfi.com);
- Train yourself by downloading the SQF Basic and Intermediate Primary Production Codes from the SQFI website (sqfi.com) free of charge, and read how to apply it to your industry sector.

1.2 Select the Relevant SQF Modules

SQFI recognizes that Good Agricultural Practices differ depending on the food safety risk to the product, commodity and the location, and has designed the SQF Codes to meet the individual requirements of each industry sector.

The SQF food sector categories and applicable modules for primary production are listed in full in Appendix 1. It includes a more detailed description with examples, level of risk, and the relationship with the GFSI industry scopes outlined in the GFSI Requirements Document.

However the following provides a guide to the SQF Codes and modules that apply to each primary production sector or groups of industry sectors.

SQF Food Sector Category (FSC) and applicable module		
FSC	**Category**	**Applicable GMP Modules**
3	Growing and Production of Fresh Produce and Nuts	Module 2 – System Elements and Module 7: GAP for farming of plant products (fruit and vegetables)

1.3 Register on the SQF Database

To be considered for SQF certification, sites are required to register in the SQFI assessment database. The database can be accessed from the SQFI website (sqfi.com).

Registration is annual, and there is a fee per site payable at registration and renewal. The fee scale is dependent on the size of the site as determined by gross annual sales revenue. The fee scale is available on the SQFI website (sqfi.com).

Sites must register with SQFI prior to achieving certification, and must remain registered at all times to retain their certification. If the site fails to maintain registration, the certificate will be invalid until the site is properly registered in the SQFI assessment database.

1.4 Use of SQF Consultants

Sites can choose to develop and implement their SQF code using their own qualified resources or they can utilize the services of a registered SQF consultant. All SQF consultants are registered by the SQFI to work in specific food sector categories (refer Part A, Table 1 and Appendix 1). They are issued with an identity card indicating the food sector categories in which they are registered. Sites are encouraged to confirm an SQF consultant's registration details on the SQFI website (sqfi.com) before engaging their services. The criteria outlining the requirements necessary to qualify as an SQF consultant and the application forms are available on the SQFI website (sqfi.com). The SQF Consultant Code of Conduct outlines the practices expected of SQF consultants.

1.5 Food Safety Responsibility

Whether or not an SQF consultant is used, the SQF code requires that every site has a suitably qualified full time employee to oversee the development, implementation, review and maintenance of the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). The requirements for a qualified person responsible for implementing and maintaining the SQF code are described in the system elements, 2.1.3.

Some sites may choose to have more than one person responsible for the SQF System to meet shift and operational requirements.

1.6 SQF Training

A SQF training course is available through the SQFI network of licensed training centers. Employees who are responsible for designing, implementing and maintaining the requirements of the SQF code are encouraged to participate in a training course. Details about the training centers and the countries in which they operate are available on the SQFI website (sqfi.com). The dates and locations of the courses can be obtained by contacting the training centers.

The SQF training course is not mandatory for the person responsible for implementing and maintaining the SQF code, but is strongly recommended.

The SQFI also has an SQF online training course which can be accessed from the SQFI website (sqfi.com). The online training solution is a web-based education portal where staff can enroll and complete SQF Systems training in their own time and at their own pace.

Training in other food industry disciplines, such as HACCP, Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Internal Auditing may also be required and licensed SQF training centers can provide details of the other training courses they provide.

1.7 Implementing the SQF Code

To achieve SQF certification, the site must implement the system elements and the GAP Modules of the SQF code(refer Part A, 1.2). This requires the site to understand the "must haves" in each of the two modules and ensure that food safety risks are being managed through the application of GAP's. Record keeping is required for some basic and/or intermediate code requirements and sites must ensure that records match the relevant activities occurring on the farm.

SQFI recommends that a minimum of two months of records be available before a site audit is conducted or at least coverage of all activities from planting through to harvesting of crops

1.8 SQF Guidance Documents

Guidance documents are available for some SQF modules and food sector categories from the SQFI website (sqfi.com). These documents are available to help the site interpret the requirements of the SQF Code and assist with implementation. The documents are developed with the assistance of food sector technical experts.

The guidance documents are available to assist the site, but are not auditable documents. Where there is a divergence between the guidance document and the SQF
Code, the SQF Code in English prevails.

1.9 Select a Certification Body

Certification bodies are licensed by SQFI to conduct SQF audits and issue the SQF certificate. SQFI licensed certification bodies are required to be accredited to the international standard ISO/IEC 17065:2012 (or subsequent versions as applicable) and be subject to annual assessments of their certification activities by SQFI licensed accreditation bodies.

The site is required to have an agreement with a certification body in place at all times which outlines the SQF audit and certification services provided. These include as a minimum:

i. The scope of certification (refer Part A, 2.2);
ii. The expected time to conduct and finalize the audit and the reporting requirements;
iii. The certification body's fee structure;
iv. The conditions under which the SQF certificate is issued, withdrawn or suspended; and
v. The certification body's appeals, complaints and disputes procedure.

A current list of licensed certification bodies is available on the SQFI website (sqfi.com). Certification bodies are also listed in the SQFI assessment database and sites can request a quote or select a certification body online once they have registered.

Sites that are participating in an SQF multi-site program (refer Appendix 4 of the SQF Food Safety Code for Manufacturing) must have contractual agreements with the packinghouse (central site) that is managing the multi-site certification. This agreement must indicate what certification body has been designated by the central site to conduct the certifications required.

1.10 Conduct a Pre-assessment Audit

A pre-assessment audit is not mandatory, but is recommended to provide a "health check" of the site's implemented SQF code. A pre-assessment audit can assist in identifying gaps in the site's compliance to the SQF code so that corrective action can occur before engaging the selected certification body for a full certification audit. It can be conducted using internal resources, a registered SQF consultant, or a registered SQF food safety auditor. Self-assessment checklists are available on the SQF website for assistance in the pre-assessment audit.

2. The Initial Certification Process

2.1 Selection of the SQF Auditor(s)

SQF food safety auditors must be employed by or contracted to an SQFI licensed certification body, and must be registered with the SQFI.

The certification body shall select the most appropriate qualified SQF food safety auditor(s) for the site's SQF certification audit, including vertically integrated sites. The certification body shall ensure no SQF food safety auditor conducts audits of the same site for more than three consecutive certification cycles.

The certification body must advise the site of the name of the SQF food safety auditor at the time that the SQF audit is scheduled.

2.2 Identifying the Scope of Certification

The scope of certification shall be clearly identified and agreed upon between the site and certification body prior to the initial certification audit and included in the scope of the initial certification audit and all subsequent audits (refer Part A, 2.4). The scope of certification shall determine the relevant system elements and GAP modules to be implemented by the site and audited by the certification body, and cannot be changed during or immediately following a certification or re-certification audit.

For requirements on changing the scope of certification, refer Part A, 5.1.

The scope of certification shall include:

> **The site -** SQF certification is site specific. The entire site, including all buildings, storage areas, harvesting and growing fields must be included in the scope of certification. Where a site seeks to exempt part of the farm, the request for exemption must be submitted to the certification body in writing prior to the certification audit, detailing the reason for exemption. If approved by the certification body, exemptions shall be listed in the site description in the SQFI assessment database and in audit reports(s). However, all parts of the farm that are involved with the growing, harvesting, storage, packaging and shipping of products/commodities included in the scope cannot be exempted.

When activities are carried out at a different farm but are overseen by the same senior, operational, and technical management, and are covered by the one GAP management system, the site can be expanded to include those premises.

Exempted parts of the site must not be promoted as being covered by the certification. Instances where promotion of exempted products, equipment or areas of the site are identified and substantiated (either by regular audit or by other means) shall result in immediate withdrawal of the SQF certification.

> **The products -** SQF certification is product/commodity specific. The food sector category(ies) and products/commodities handled on site shall be identified and agreed in the scope of certification. Where a site seeks to exempt any products handled on site, the request for exemption must be submitted to the certification body in writing prior to the certification audit, explaining the reason for exemption. If approved by the certification body, product exemptions shall be listed in the site description in the SQFI assessment database and in audit reports(s).

2.3 Identifying the Scope of the Audit

The site and the certification body shall agree on the audit scope before the certification audit begins. The scope of the audit shall include:

- The agreed scope of certification including any approved exemptions (refer Part A, 2.2);
- The version of the SQF Code (Basic or Intermediate), and the applicable GAP Modules;
- The audit duration (refer Part A, 2.5);
- The designated registered SQF food safety auditor; and
- The certification body's fees structure including travel time, report writing, ancillary costs, and costs for close-out of non-conformities.

Once the audit scope is agreed between the site and the certification body, it cannot be changed once the audit has commenced.

2.4 Audit Duration Guide

Once the certification body and site have agreed on the scope of certification, and relevant information to support the scope, the certification body shall provide the site with an estimate of the time it will take to complete the certification audit.

The audit times will vary according to the size and complexity of the site operations. Factors that can impact on the audit duration include:

i. The scope of the audit;

ii. The size of the site (acreage) and the types of commodities;

iii. The level of mechanization and labor intensiveness;

iv. The ease of communication with company personnel (consider different languages spoken);

v. The cooperation of the site's personnel.

Tables 1 and 2 provide a guide to the duration of an SQF certification audit. Justification is required if the certification body deviates from this guide by greater than thirty (30) percent.

This is a guide only, and the certification body must determine the duration of each certification audit based on the scope of certification, the food safety risk, and the complexity of the processes.

Table 1: SQF Basic Fundamental Primary Production Site Audit Duration Table

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
	Duration (days) (includes up to three commodities/animal species)	Additional Days based on Number of employees
Farm business employing less than 10 people	.25	1 to 50 = 0 51 to 100 = 0.25 101 to 500 = .5 > 500 = .75
All other farm businesses	.5	
Additional time for greater than 3 commodities/animal species	0.25 day per additional 3 HACCP plans or 3 crops/commodities/animal species	

Table 2: SQF Intermediate Fundamentals Primary Production Site Audit Duration Table

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
	Duration (days) (includes up to three commodities/animal species)	Additional Days based on Number of employees
Farm business employing less than 10 people	.33	1 to 50 = 0 51 to 100 = 0.33 101 to 500 = .75 > 500 = 1.0
All other farm businesses	.75	
Additional time for greater than 3 commodities/animal species	0.33 day per additional 3 HACCP plans or 3 crops/commodities/animal species	

In addition to audit time, the certification body shall provide the site with the time and expected costs for planning, travel, report writing, and close out of non-conformities.

2.5 The Site Audit

The site audit is conducted on site by the SQF food safety auditor appointed by the certification body. It is conducted at a time agreed between the site and the certification body when harvesting and/or field packaging is occurring. The site audit must include a review of the entire site, including the inside and outside of the buildings, regardless of the scope of certification and agreed exemptions.

The site audit determines if the SQF Codes effectively implemented. It establishes and verifies the:

i. Effectiveness of the application of the SQF Code;

ii. Food safety hazards are effectively identified and controlled;

iii. Level of commitment demonstrated by the site to maintaining an effective SQF Fundamental system and to meeting their food safety regulatory and customer requirements; and

iv. The exempted products or areas of the site do not pose a food safety risk to the products covered under certification.

2.6 Seasonal Production

Certification audits for sites involved in seasonal production (i.e. a period in which the major harvesting activity is conducted over not more than five consecutive months) shall be conducted during the peak harvestingl part of the season.

Where sites seek to include more than 1 distinct product/commodity, within the same season and within their scope of certification, the site and certification body shall agree to conduct the initial certification audit during the harvesting of the highest risk and/or highest volume product/commodity. Records for other seasonal products shall be reviewed as part of the certification audit. Subsequent certification audits will focus on other products that have been included in the scope of certification.

2.7 Non-conformities

Where the SQF food safety auditor finds deviations from the requirements of relevant modules of the SQF Code, the SQF food safety auditor shall advise the site of the number, description, and extent of the non-conformities. Non-conformities may also be referred to as non-conformances.

Non-conformities against the SQF Code shall be graded as follows:

- **A minor non-conformity** is an omission or deficiency from the SQF Codethat produces unsatisfactory conditions that if not addressed *may* lead to a risk to food safety but *not likely* to cause a system element breakdown.
- **A major non-conformity** is an omission or deficiency from the SQF Code producing unsatisfactory conditions *that carry* a food safety risk and *are likely* to result in a system element breakdown.
- **A critical non-conformity** is a breakdown of control(s) at a critical control point, a specific GAP, or other growing or harvesting step and judged likely to *cause a significant public health risk* and/or where product is contaminated.

A critical non-conformity is also raised if the site fails to take effective corrective action within the timeframe agreed with the certification body, or if the certification body deems that there is systemic falsification of records relating to food safety (GAP) controls.

Timelines for the resolution of corrective actions are addressed in Part A, 3.2.

2.8 Audit Evidence Record and Audit Report

The SQFI provides the certification body with the electronic audit checklist to be used by the SQF food safety auditors when conducting SQF Code audits. The SQF audit checklist is available from the SQFI assessment database and is customized for the SQF industry sector. The SQF checklist is designed to ensure the uniform application of SQF Code audit requirements. It is used by SQF food safety auditors to record their findings and determine the extent to which site operations comply with stated requirements (i.e. the audit evidence record).

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) modules(s) shall be assessed as part of the certification audit. Where an element is not applicable and appropriately justified, it shall be stated as "not applicable" (N/A) by the SQF food safety auditor in the audit report.

Within the system elements, all elements are designated as “Mandatory” and cannot be reported as “not applicable” or “exempt” and must be audited and compliance/non-compliance reported.

Non-conformities identified during the SQF audit shall be accurately described in the SQF audit report and shall fully describe the clause of the SQF Code and the reason for the non-conformity. Non-conformity reports shall be provided to the site by the SQF food safety auditor before the close of the site audit.

The electronic audit report shall be completed by the SQF auditor and provided to the certification body for technical review.

The certification body shall review and approve the audit report and make it available to the site within ten (10) calendar days from the last day of the audit. A final audit report, with completed and approved corrective actions shall be made available to the site before the final certification decision is made (45) calendar days from the last day of the site audit (refer Part A, 3.4). The SQF audit report shall remain the property of the site and shall not be distributed to other parties without the permission of the site.

3. The Initial Certification Decision

3.1 Responsibility for the Certification Decision

It is the responsibility of the certification body to ensure that audits undertaken by their SQF food safety auditors are thorough, that all requirements are fulfilled, and the audit report is complete. The audit report is in draft form and the audit evidence is only recommended until technically reviewed and approved by the authorized certification manager of the certification body.

The certification decision shall be made by the certification body based on the evidence of compliance and non-conformity recommended by the SQF food safety auditor during the SQF audit. Although SQFI provides guidance on certification, the certification body is responsible for deciding if certification is justified and granted based on the objective evidence provided by the SQF food safety auditor.

Any certification decisions that are made outside the scope of this clause require the certification body to provide written justification to SQFI.

3.2 Site Audit Corrective Actions

All non-conformities and their resolution shall be documented by the SQF food safety auditor. The close-out timeframe for major and minor non conformities are identified below.

- **A minor non-conformity** shall be corrected, verified and closed out by the SQF food safety auditor within thirty (30) calendar days of the completion of the site audit. Extensions may be granted by the certification body where there is no immediate threat to product safety, and alternative, temporary methods of control are initiated. The site shall be advised of the extended timeframe. Where an extension is granted, the non-conformity shall still be closed out and the SQF food safety auditor shall document all details of justification of the extension, how the risk is being controlled, and the agreed completion date.
- **A major non-conformity** shall be corrected and appropriate corrective action verified and closed out within thirty (30) calendar days of the completion of the site audit.

  In circumstances where the corrective action involves structural change or cannot be corrected due to seasonal conditions or installation lead times, this period can be extended provided the corrective action time frame is acceptable to the certification body and temporary action is taken by the site to mitigate the risk to product safety. However, in such cases, the non-conformity shall be closed out and the SQF food safety auditor shall document all details of justification of the extension, how the risk is being controlled, and the agreed completion date.
- If the SQF food safety auditor considers that a critical non-conformity exists during a certification audit, the SQF food safety auditor shall immediately advise the site and notify the certification body. A critical non-conformity raised at an initial certification audit results in an automatic failure of the audit, and the site must re-apply for certification (refer Part A, 3.5).

3.3 Audit Score and Rating

There is no score or rating issued for SQF Basic and Intermediate Fundamentals Primary Production Code audits. The score and ratings that apply to SQF Food Safety Code certification audits do not extend to the SQF Basic and Intermediate Fundamentals Primary Production Code audits. Where a score or audit rating is required by site customers then the certification body will apply the scoring/rating system used for SQF Food Safety Codes (see appropriate SQF Food Safety Codes available on the SQFI website).

3.4 Granting Certification

Sites are deemed to have successfully implemented the SQF Code if:

i. The site closes out all non-conformities within thirty (30) days.

The certification decision shall be made within forty-five (45) calendar days of the last day of the SQF Code audit. The site's unique certification number shall apply to their certification of completion.

Within ten (10) calendar days of granting certification, the certification body shall provide an electronic and/or hard copy of the site's certificate of completion. The certificate is valid for seventy-five (75) days beyond the anniversary of the initial certification audit date. The certificate shall be in a form approved by the SQFI and include:

i. The name, address and logo of the certification body;

ii. The heading "certificate of completion;"

iii. The phrase "(site name) is registered as meeting the requirements of the SQF Basic or Intermediate Fundamentals Primary Production Code, edition 1;"

iv. The food sector categories and products included in the scope of registration;

v. Dates of audit (last day), date of next re-certification audit, date of certification decision, and date of certificate expiry;

vi. The SQF logo; and

vii. Signatures of the authorized officer and issuing officer.

Certified sites information shall be posted to the SQFI website.

3.5 Failure to Comply

Where a site fails to close out non-conformities within the required timeframe, the site is considered to have failed the SQF Code certification audit. The site must then re-apply for another site audit.

4. Surveillance and Re-certification

4.1 Maintaining Certification

To maintain SQF certification sites must ensure that surveillance and/or re-certification audits occur within the required timeframe, ensure that no critical non-conformities are raised at surveillance or re-certification audits, and that all major and minor non-conformities are corrected within the time frame specified.

All re-certification audits shall be considered announced unless otherwise indicated as unannounced on the audit report and certificate.

4.2 Surveillance Audit

The surveillance audit is conducted when the site has two (2) or more major deviations and/or ten (10) or more minor deviations raised at a certification or re-certification audit. (Note that all non-conformities must be closed out within 30 days to achieve or maintain certification. Refer Part A, 3.4).

The surveillance audit shall be conducted within forty-five (45) calendar days either side of the six (6) month anniversary of the last day of the previous certification or re-certification audit.

The surveillance audit is intended to:

i. Verify the continued efficacy of corrections and corrective actions closed out at previous audits;

ii. Verify that GAP's continue to be implemented;

iii. Consider and take appropriate action where changes to the site's operations are made and the impact of those changes on the site's GAP's;

iv. Confirm continued compliance with the requirements of the SQF Code; and

v. Contribute to continued improvement of the site's GAP's and business operation.

Major or minor non-conformities raised at the surveillance audit shall be closed out as indicated in Part A, 3.2.

The site's certificate shall be suspended by the certification body if:

i. The site fails to permit the surveillance audit within the required timeframe; or

ii. The site fails to close out non-conformities, raised at the surveillance audit within the agreed timeframe.

4.3 Surveillance Audit – Seasonal Operations

Seasonal operations are sites whose major activity is conducted over not more than five consecutive months in any calendar year.

Where the due surveillance audit date falls within the operational season, the surveillance audit shall occur within forty-five (45) days either side of the six (6) month anniversary of the last day of the previous certification or re-certification audit.

Where the due date of the surveillance audit falls outside the operational season, the certification body shall conduct a pre-operational audit no less than forty-five (45) days prior to the next season. The pre-operational audit shall comprise a full review of corrective actions from the last audit, and preparedness for the next re-certification audit.

4.4 Re-certification Audit

The re-certification audit of the SQF System is undertaken to verify the continued effectiveness of the site's SQF System in its entirety.

The re-certification audit shall be conducted within forty-five (45) calendar days either side of the anniversary of the last day of the initial certification audit.

Written approval by the SQF Compliance Manager is required to issue a temporary extension to a site's re-certification audit timeframe and certificate expiry date including instances in extreme circumstances such as acts of nature or extreme weather. Seasonal sites shall refer to Part A, 4.5.

Situations that require a permanent change to the re-certification audit date require written approval by the SQF Compliance Manager and the site's new re-certification date may be moved earlier than the anniversary and the new re-certification date fixed as the new initial certification audit date.

All extension requests shall come from the certification body that issued the site's SQF certificate.

The purpose of the re-certification audit is to:

i. Verify the continued efficacy of corrections and corrective actions closed out at previous audits;

ii. Verify that the GAP's continue to be implemented;

iii. Verify that internal audits*, annual reviews of the crisis and food defense plans* and recall system, and management reviews have been effectively completed; (* for Intermediate code only)

iv. Verify that corrective and preventative actions have been taken on all non-conformities;

v. Consider and take appropriate action where changes to the site's operations are made and the impact of those changes on the site's GAP's;

vi. Verify the overall effectiveness of the GAP'sin its entirety in the light of changes in operations;

vii. Verify that the site continues to demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the effectiveness of the SQF Code and to meeting regulatory and customer requirements; and

viii. Contribute to continued improvement of the site's GAP's and business operation.

4.5 Re-certification Audit – Seasonal Operations

The re-certification audit of seasonal operations shall follow the requirements of Part A, 4.4. However, where there is a significant change in seasonal operations whereby the re-certification audit sixty (90) day window cannot be met, the certification body and site shall temporarily reset the re-certification audit date so that it falls during the peak operational part of the season.

If the site wishes to permanently change the re-certification audit date due to seasonal conditions, the request must be made to the SQF Compliance Manager in writing as per Part A 4.4.

4.6 Suspending Certification

The certification body shall suspend the SQF certificate if the site:

i. fails to permit the re-certification or surveillance audit,

ii. fails to take corrective action within the timeframe specified for major non-conformities,

iii. fails to take corrective action within the timeframe specified in Part A, 3.2,

iv. where in the opinion of the certification body, the site fails to maintain the requirements of the SQF Code.

Where the site's certificate is suspended, the certification body shall immediately amend the site details on the SQFI assessment database to a "suspended" status indicating the reason for the suspension and the date of effect; and in writing:

i. inform the site of the reasons for the action taken and the date of effect;

ii. copy the SQF Compliance Manager on the notice of suspension sent to the site,

iii. request that the site provides to the certification body, within forty-eight (48) hours of receiving notice of the suspension, a detailed corrective action plan outlining the corrective action to be taken.

When the site's certificate is suspended, the certification body shall, upon receipt of the detailed corrective action plan:

i. Verify that the immediate correction has been taken by the means of an on-site visit within thirty (30) calendar days of receiving the corrective action plan;

ii. When corrective action has been successfully implemented, re-instate the site status on the SQFI assessment database and give written notice to the site that their certificate is no longer suspended;

iii. Not more than six (6) months after suspension, the certification body shall conduct a further unannounced site visit to verify the effective implementation of the corrective action plan and that the site's SQF System is achieving stated objectives; and

iv. Copy SQFI on the notice indicating lifting of the suspension sent to the site.

When a certification body has suspended a site's SQF certificate, for the duration of suspension, the site shall not represent itself as holding an SQF certificate.

4.7 Withdrawing Certification

The certification body shall withdraw the certificate when the site:

i. Has been placed under suspension and fails to submit approved corrective action plans as defined by the certification body within forty-eight (48) hours of receiving notice of the suspension, or fails to take approved corrective action as determined by the certification body within the time frames specified;

ii. Has falsified its records;

iii. Fails to maintain the integrity of the SQF certificate; or

iv. Has an administrator, receiver, receiver and manager, official manager or provisional liquidator appointed over its assets or where an order is made or a resolution passed for the closure of the site (except for the purposes of amalgamation or reconstruction) or the site ceases to carry on business or becomes bankrupt, applies to take the benefit of any law for the relief of bankrupt or insolvent debtors or makes any arrangement or composition with its creditors.

When the site's certificate is withdrawn, the certification body shall immediately amend the site's details on the SQFI assessment database to a "withdrawn" status indicating the reason for the withdrawal and the date of effect; and in writing:

i. Inform the site that the SQF certificate has been withdrawn, the reason for such action and the date of effect;

ii. Copy SQFI on the notice of withdrawal sent to the site; and

iii. Instruct the site to return the certificate within thirty (30) days of notification.

A site that has their certificate withdrawn will not be permitted to apply for certification for twelve (12) months from the date the certificate was withdrawn by the SQFI certification body. The withdrawn site will be posted on the SQFI website (sqfi.com) for twelve (12) months.

5. Obligations of Sites and Certification Bodies

5.1 Changing the Scope of Certification

When a site wishes to add food sector categories or new products/commodities to their scope of certification, the site may request the increased scope of certification in writing to the certification body.

The certification body shall conduct a site audit of the additional r products/commodities and shall either issue a new certificate, or advise the site in writing why the new certificate cannot be issued.

An audit for an increase in scope shall not change the re-certification date or certificate expiry date. When a new certificate is issued, the re-certification audit date and certificate expiry date shall remain as per the original certificate.

The certification body shall make the appropriate scope changes to the site record in the SQFI assessment database.

Where the scope change is a new, commodity or a significant change in personnel, inputsor packing materials, the certification body shall be advised in writing.

Where the request is received within thirty (30) days prior to the re-certification audit window, the certification body shall defer the scope extension to the next re-certification audit and shall advise the site. No new certificate shall be issued until after a successful re-certification audit.

5.2 Changing the Certification Body

A site can change its certification body after one certification cycle and only when there has been closure of all outstanding non-conformities, provided that the certification is not suspended or under threat of suspension or withdrawal.

Sites that require a surveillance audit are permitted to change certification bodies only after the surveillance audit is conducted or by written approval from the SQFI Compliance Manager.

When a site changes certification bodies, the certificate issued by the previous certification body remains valid until the expected expiration date.

The certification number and re-certification date are transferred with the site to the new certification body.

The new certification body shall undertake a pre-transfer review of the site's certification to:

i. Confirm the certificate is current, valid and relates to the SQF System so certified;

ii. Confirm the site's food sector category falls within the new certification body's scope of accreditation;

iii. Confirm any complaints received are actioned;

iv. Review the site's audit history (where the site can demonstrate such history to the satisfaction of the new certification body by way of copies of audit reports completed by any previous certification body) and the impact of any outstanding non-conformities;

v. Confirm the stage of the current certification cycle.

When a site changes their certification body, the site shall make the last re-certification audit report and surveillance audit report (where applicable) available to the new certification body.

5.3 Notification of Product Recalls and Regulatory Infringements

Upon identification that a certified site initiates a food safety event that requires public notification (such as Class l or Class ll recall, or the receipt of a regulatory warning letter), the site shall notify the certification body and the SQFI in writing at foodsafetycrisis@sqfi.com within twenty-four (24) hours of the event.

The site's certification body and SQFI shall be listed in the site's essential contacts lists as defined in system element 2.6.3 of the SQF Code.

The certification body shall notify the SQFI within a further forty-eight (48) hours of any action it intends to take to ensure the integrity of the certification.

5.4 Compliance and Integrity Program

To meet the requirements of SQFI's Compliance and Integrity Program, SQFI may from time to time monitor the activities of the certification bodies and their auditors. These monitoring techniques include, but are not limited to validation audits and/or witness audits. While conducting these additional monitoring activities, sites shall be required to allow additional SQFI-authorized representatives, staff or auditors into their site during the audit or after the audit has taken place. The attendance of an SQFI representative shall not interfere with operations, or

result in additional audit time or non-conformities, and will not increase the cost charged by the certification body for the audit.

5.5 Change of Ownership

When a certified site's business has been sold and the business name is retained, the new owner shall, within thirty (30) calendar days of the change of ownership, notify the certification body and apply to retain the SQF certification and the existing certification number. In cases where the ownership of a certified site changes, but the staff with major responsibility for the management and oversight of the GAP's has been retained, the certification body may retain the existing audit frequency status. In making this application, the certification body shall determine that staff with major responsibility for the management and oversight of the GAP's has been retained.

If there are significant changes in site management and personnel, the certification body shall complete a certification audit and issue a new certificate and a new certification number. The audit frequency applicable to a new certification shall apply.

5.6 Relocation of Premises

When a certified site relocates their business premises, the site's certification does not transfer to the new site. A successful certification of the new premises must be conducted. Although the site's certificate number shall remain the same, a certification audit of the new premise shall apply.

5.7 Language

The certification body shall ensure that the SQF food safety auditor conducting the audit can competently communicate in the oral and written language of the site being audited.

In circumstances where a translator is required, the translator shall be provided by the certification body and shall have knowledge of the technical terms used during the audit; be independent of the site being audited and have no conflict of interest. The site shall be notified of any increase in audit duration and cost associated with the use of a translator.

For the purpose of resolving a conflict, the English version of the SQF Code shall be the deciding reference.

5.8 Conflict of Interest

The certification body shall ensure that all certification activities are separately controlled and managed (including the development of policy and practices) from any consulting activity. It shall preclude any prospective SQF food safety auditor from undertaking any audit in relation to the certification that constitute a conflict of interest as outlined below or any other condition that could lead to a conflict of interest.

SQF food safety auditors shall not audit anywhere they have participated in a consulting role involving the site in question, or anybody related to the site, within the last two (2) years (considered to be participating in an active and creative manner in the development of the GAP's to be audited, including the development of food safety plans). Consulting includes, but is not limited to, activities such as:

i. Producing or preparing food safety plans, manuals, handbooks or GAP's;

ii. Participating in the decision making process regarding GAP's;

iii. Giving advice – as a consultant or otherwise – toward the design, documentation, development, validation, verification, implementation or maintenance of GAP's; and

iv. Deliver or participate in the delivery of an "in-house" food safety training service at which advice and instruction on the development and implementation of food safety plans and GAP's for eventual certification is provided.

The certification body shall ensure that an SQF food safety auditor discloses any existing, former or proposed link between themselves or their organization and the site.

The certification body shall ensure through organizational structure that no potential conflict of interest, consulting, or training occurs from auditors contracted or employed by the certification body to existing or potential sites within the SQF Program.

A site can refuse the service of an SQF food safety auditor when they consider the auditor has a conflict of interest, or for other reasons. In such circumstances, the site shall outline the reasons in writing to the certification body.

5.9 Complaints, Appeals and Disputes

The certification body shall document, and provide to the site, its procedure for handling and resolving appeals, complaints and disputes made by a site, or made by another party about a site.

When a site has cause to register a complaint about a certification body's activities, or appeals or disputes a decision made by a certification body, including the activities and decisions of its auditors, the certification body shall investigate and resolve these matters without delay and keep a record of all complaints, appeals and disputes and their resolution.

When a certification body receives a complaint about a site from other parties, the certification body is required to investigate and resolve the matter without delay and keep a record of all complaints, appeals and disputes and their resolution.

Appeals regarding decisions on the suspension and/or withdrawal of the SQF certification by a certification body shall not delay the decision to suspend or withdraw the certification.

When upon investigation of a complaint it is determined that there has been a substantiated breakdown of a site's GAP's or any other condition not in accordance with the SQF Code and/or other supporting documents, the certification body shall suspend certification as outlined in Part A, 4.8.

Where a complaint is registered about the conduct or behavior of an auditor or certification body personnel, the certification body shall investigate and resolve the complaint without delay and keep a record of all complaints and their resolution.

Records of complaints made to certification bodies and their investigations shall be available to the SQFI upon request. Where a complaint, appeal or dispute cannot be satisfactorily resolved between the site and the certification body, the matter shall be referred to the SQFI complaints and appeals procedure via the SQF website (sqfi.com). Complaints and comments about the SQF Code, the SQF assessment database, SQF training centers and consultants can also be registered at this address.

Part B: The SQF System Elements for SQF Intermediate Fundamentals Primary Production (SQF Code)

2.1 Management Responsibility

2.1.1 The senior site management shall be responsible for reviewing, verifying and documenting the completion of:

i. An annual review of the SQF System to ensure control measures for identified hazards have been completed and are appropriate;

ii. A policy statement that states the commitment to supply safe food;

iii. Corrective actions and/or records that support compliance to relevant food legislation in the country of its origin and destination.

2.1.2 The senior site management shall ensure adequate resources are available to achieve food safety objectives and support the development, implementation, maintenance and ongoing improvement of the SQF System.

2.1.3 Senior site management shall designate a person who shall:

i. Be employed by the site (farm) on a full-time basis;

ii. Be responsible for the development, implementation and maintenance of the SQF food safety system;

iii. Have an understanding of the SQF Food Safety Fundamentals and the requirements to implement and maintain SQF System relevant to the site's scope of certification.

2.2 Document Control and Records

2.2.1 Documents shall be controlled in a manner that ensures employees use up to date and current policies, procedures and forms when documenting food safety related activities.

2.2.2 All records shall be legible and suitably authorized or signed by those undertaking activities to demonstrates that inspections, analyses and other essential activities have been completed.

2.2.3 Records shall be readily accessible, retrievable, securely stored to prevent damage and deterioration and shall be retained in accordance for periods specified by a customer or regulations.

2.3 Specification and Supplier/Input Approval

2.3.1 Specifications for agricultural inputs and packaging materials including, but not limited to agricultural chemicals, hazardous chemicals, propagation products, soil amendments and intermediate or final products from suppliers, that impact on finished product safety shall be documented, comply with relevant legislation, and kept current.

2.3.2 Finished product specifications shall be documented, current, approved by the site and their customer (if applicable), accessible to relevant staff and may include:

i. Microbiological and chemical limits; and

ii. Labeling and packaging requirements.

2.3.3 Agricultural inputs, packaging materials, and services that impact on finished product safety shall meet the agreed specifications and be supplied by an approved supplier (see also 7.7.3 Purchasing Chemicals).

2.4 Food Safety System

2.4.1 A description of the products, processes, packaging and conditions of storage and handling shall be documented for the scope of operations at the farm location.

2.4.2 A risk assessment (hazard analysis) shall be completed for the operation that identifies all food safety hazards that can reasonable occur during the production of agricultural products. Hazards that pose a significant hazard to products shall have control measures applied that eliminates or reduces the hazards to acceptable levels. The risk assessment (HACCP-based Food Safety Plan or specific Good Agricultural Practices) shall be completed by a multidisciplinary team, documented and reviewed on an annual basis or when significant changes occur.

2.5 System and Product Verification

2.5.1 The responsibility and methods for corrective actions resulting from food safety non-conformities and complaints, generated either internally or from customers, shall be documented and implemented. Records shall be maintained to include issues, complaint or the cause of food safety incidences and resulting corrective actions to resolve them.

2.5.2 Non-conforming product, inputs, work-in-progress, packaging or equipment shall be quarantined, handled, re-worked or disposed of in a manner that minimizes the risk of inadvertent use, improper use or risk to the integrity of finished product. Records of the handling and disposal of non-conforming product shall be maintained.

2.5.3 The sampling, inspecting and/or analyzing and release of finished product shall be documented and implemented. The procedures applied shall ensure:

- ***i. Inspections and analyses are completed at regular intervals as required and to agreed specification (e.g. MRL's as per 1.3.2) and regulatory and labeling requirements;***
- ***ii. All analyses are conducted to nationally recognized methods or alternative methods which are validated as equivalent to the nationally recognized methods;***
- ***iii. Release of products to customers is approved by authorized personnel;***
- ***iv. On-site personnel that conduct product testing shall participate in an applicable proficiency testing program at least annually to ensure accuracy of results; and***
- ***v. Where external laboratories are utilized to conduct input or product analysis, the laboratories shall be accredited to ISO 17025 or an equivalent national standard.***

2.5.4 The methods and responsibility for scheduling and conducting self-assessment and/or internal audits to verify the effectiveness of Good Agricultural Practices shall be documented and implemented. Internal audits or self-assessment shall be conducted at least annually. The methods applied shall ensure:

- ***i. Assessment is conducted during production periods and includes harvesting practices, buildings, storage and equipment; and***
- ***ii. Records of assessment and any corrections and corrective action taken shall be maintained.***

2.6 Product Identification, Traceability, Withdrawal and Recall/Crisis Management

2.6.1 A product identification system shall be implemented to ensure:

- i. Product is clearly identified during all stages of receipt, production/harvesting, storage and dispatch;
- ii. Finished product is labeled to the customer specification and/or regulatory requirements;
- iii. Product identification records are maintained.

2.6.2 A ***documented and implemented*** product trace system shall ensure:

- i. Finished product is traceable to the customer (one up) and provides traceability throughout the process starting from the date of receipt of inputs and food contact packaging and materials (one back);
- ii. The effectiveness of the product trace system is reviewed and tested at least annually; and
- iii. Records of inputs and packaging material receipt and use, and finished product dispatch and destination shall be maintained.

2.6.3 The site (farm) shall outline the methods (plan & contact lists) and responsibility for notifying their customers and other essential bodies where circumstances arise that require product to be withdrawn or recalled from distribution. This could include failures in food safety system or a crisis caused by unplanned events, such as floods, water advisory, fire etc. Records of all product withdrawals, recalls and mock recalls shall be maintained.

2.7 Food Defense

2.7.1 The methods, responsibility and criteria for preventing food adulteration caused by a deliberate act of sabotage or terrorist-like incident shall be documented, implemented and maintained. A food defense plan shall include:

i. The name of the senior site management person responsible for food defense;

ii. The methods implemented to ensure only authorized personnel have access to equipment, vehicles, operations and storage areas through designated access points;

iii. The methods implemented to protect sensitive operational points from intentional adulteration;

iv. The measures taken to ensure the secure receipt and storage of Agricultural/aquaculture inputs, packaging, equipment and hazardous chemicals;

v. The measures implemented to ensure agricultural/aquaculture inputs, packaging materials, work-in progress and finished products are held under secure storage and transportation conditions; and

vi. The methods implemented to record and control access to the premises by employees, contractors, and visitors.

2.7.2 The food defense plan shall be reviewed and challenged at least annually and appropriately documented.

2.8 Allergen Management

This element is not required for SQF Basic Fundamentals

2.9 Training

2.9.1 An employee training program shall be documented and implemented. It shall outline the necessary competencies for specific duties and the training methods to be applied for those staff carrying out tasks associated with:

i. Developing and applying Good Agricultural Practices;

ii. Personal hygiene; and

iii. Applying food regulatory requirements.

2.9.2 Instructions and training materials shall be available in the languages relevant to the staffthat explain how all tasks critical to meeting regulatory compliance, the maintenance of food safety and hygiene practices are met.

2.9.3 The training program shall include provision for identifying the refresher training needs of the organization which shall include all temporary, seasonal and full time employees/contractors Refresher training shall minimally include personal hygiene, allergen awareness, and site security. Records of attendance must be completed for all training conducted.

Module 7: SQF Basic Fundamentals Primary Production-Good Agriculture Practices for Farming of Plant Products

This section covers the Good Agriculture Practices requirements for the growing and harvesting of fruits and vegetables and nuts.

Applicable food sector categories (FSCs) are:

FSC 3: Growing and production of fresh produce and nuts

All applicable elements of this section shall be implemented. Where an element is not applicable a request for exemption must be appropriately justified and submitted to the certification body in writing before the audit.

7.1 Site Requirements

7.1.1 Property Location

7.1.1.1 The farm and facilities shall be such that adjacent and adjoining buildings, operations and land use do not interfere with the safe and hygienic operations on the property. Where risks are identified, control measures shall be implemented to reduce the identified hazards to an acceptable level and risk analysis shall be re-evaluated in the event of any circumstance or change that may impact on the production of safe product.

7.1.1.2 Production and growing sites shall have a risk assessment conducted to evaluate and document the risk to crops due to prior land use, adjacent land use, and other environmental factors including structures and equipment. Consideration shall be given to the following:

i. History of land use;

ii. Topography;

iii. Adjacent land use; and

iv. Other factors that may impact on the ability to supply safe product.

7.1.1.3 Records shall be maintained for each production site that indicates what crops have been planted and harvested.

7.2 Buildings, Storage and Equipment

7.2.1 Field and Storage Buildings

7.2.1.1 All buildings used to store equipment, field chemicals, field packaging materials or field product shall be designed and constructed so as to permit compliance to good hygiene practices and avoid product contamination.

7.2.1.2 Buildings designated to store field product or field product packaging materials shall be of durable construction. Internal surfaces shall be smooth and impervious with a light colored finish and shall be kept clean.

7.2.1.3 Storage rooms shall be designed and constructed to allow for the separate, hygienic storage of harvesting and packing utensils, harvesting rigs, equipment, conveyors, totes, trays containers and utensils away from farm machinery and hazardous chemicals and toxic substances.

7.2.2 Greenhouses, Hydroponics and Mushrooms

7.2.2.1 Sites that grow produce indoors shall be designed so that there is no food safety risk to the product, including control of glass and other foreign objects.

7.2.3 Controlled Temperature and Atmosphere Storage

7.2.3.1 ***Chilling, cold storage and controlled atmosphere facilities shall be*** of suitable size, construction and design and is capable of effective operational ***and temperature control*** performance. This shall ensure that sufficient refrigeration and controlled atmosphere capacity shall be available to chill or store the maximum anticipated throughput of product with allowance for periodic cleaning of storage rooms.

7.2.3.2 Floors shall be constructed of smooth, dense impact resistant material that is impervious to liquid and easily cleaned. Floors shall be effectively graded, to allow the effective removal of all overflow or waste water under normal conditions.

7.2.3.3 Wall, ceilings, doors, frames and hatches shall be of a solid construction. Internal surfaces shall be smooth and impervious with a light colored finish.

7.2.3.4 Lighting shall be shatter-proof or provided with protective covers.

7.2.3.5 Discharge from defrost and condensate lines shall be controlled and discharged to the drainage system.

7.2.3.6 Chilling, cold storage and controlled atmosphere facilities shall be fitted with temperature monitoring equipment or suitable temperature monitoring device that is located so as to monitor the warmest part of the room and is fitted with a temperature gauge that is easily readable and accessible.

7.2.3.7 Chill, cold storage and controlled atmosphere loading dock areas shall be appropriately sealed, drained and graded.

7.2.4 Storage of Hazardous Chemicals, Toxic Substances, and Petroleum Products

7.2.4.1 Hazardous chemicals, toxic substances, and petroleum products shall be stored so as not to present a hazard to employees, product, product handling equipment or areas in which product is handled, stored or transported.

7.2.4.2 Product contact chemicals such as pesticides and herbicides; rodenticides, fumigants and insecticides; sanitizers and detergents shall be stored separately and in their original containers.

7.2.4.3 The storage of hazardous chemicals, toxic substances and petroleum products in areas (separate lockable or otherwise contained) shall not occur inside food handling areas, product and packaging storage rooms.

7.2.5 Vehicles, Product Handling Equipment and Utensils

7.2.5.1 Equipment, vehicles, tools, utensils and other items or materials used in farming operations that may contact produce are identified and are in good repair, kept clean and sanitized, and stored in such a way as to avoid contamination.

7.2.5.1 The use of harvest containers for non-harvest purposes will be clearly identified and not returned to use for harvest.

7.2.5.3 Vehicles used for the transport of produce shall be adequate for its purpose and shall not be used to carry waste materials, manure, chemicals or other hazardous substances that could cause produce contamination without thorough cleaning and inspection.

7.2.5.4 Tractors, harvesters, field packing equipment and machinery driven over ground crops shall be fitted with drip trays to prevent contamination of the crop by lubricants and oils.

7.2.6 Maintenance and Calibration

7.2.6.1 The maintenance of equipment and buildings shall be planned, scheduled and carried out in a manner that prevents any risk of contamination of product or equipment and to ensure good working condition

7.2.6.2 The calibration and re-calibration of chemical application, measuring, test and inspection equipment used in the growing and harvesting process shall be completed at least annually

7.2.7 Animal Control

7.2.7.1 Measures shall be implemented and monitored that control domestic and wild animals in the growing fields and does not allow the presence of domestic or wild animals in greenhouses and all storage and product handling areas.

7.2.8 Pest Prevention

7.2.8.1 The property adjacent to buildings, storage facilities, machinery and equipment shall be kept free of waste or accumulated debris so as not to attract pests and vermin.

7.2.8.2 Buildings and storage facilities used in product handling, product storage or food packaging storage shall be equipped with pest prevention devices such as traps and bait stations.

7.2.8.3 Harvested products and food contact packaging materials shall be free of evidence of pest and vermin infestation.

7.2.9 Cleaning and Sanitation

7.2.9.1 The cleaning and sanitizing (if necessary) of product contact surfaces, field harvesting equipment and sanitary facilities shall be completed at a frequency sufficient to minimize occurrences of product contamination. The documented and implemented sanitation procedure shall include:

i. What is to be cleaned;

ii. How it is to be cleaned;

iii. When it is to be cleaned;

iv. Who is responsible for the cleaning (see 2.9.1 for training and qualification), and

v. Who is responsible for the evaluation of cleaning activities.

A record of cleaning and sanitation activities shall be maintained.

7.2.9.2 Cleaning chemicals shall be approved for use on food equipment and contact surfaces and must be stored separately to prevent contamination of products. (see also 7.2.4)

7.2.9.3 A schedule shall be prepared indicating the frequency of verifying the effectiveness of the cleaning of product contact surfaces, field harvesting equipment and sanitary facilities and indicating who is responsible for completing verification activities.

7.3 Personal Hygiene

7.3.1 Personnel Practices

7.3.1.1 A documented and implement personal hygiene procedure shall ensure that personnel engaged in the handling of product observe appropriate personal practices. It includes:

i. Jewelry and other loose objects that pose a threat to the safety of the product shall not be worn or taken onto any growing, product handling or storage operations.

ii. Fingernail polish, artificial nails, and long nails, shall not be permitted where product is handled with bare hands;

iii. False eyelashes and eyelash extensions shall not be permitted

iv. Smoking, chewing, eating, drinking (except for water) or spitting is not permitted in any growing areas including on field harvesting rigs and during harvesting and packing operations.

Personnel and visitor practices shall be routinely monitored for compliance and any resulting corrective actions shall be implemented and recorded for personnel who violate food safety practices.

7.3.1.2Personnel suffering from, or are carriers of, an infectious disease, which can be carried with food as a vehicle, shall not engage in growing, product handling or field harvesting operations.

7.3.1.3 A medical screening procedure shall be in place for all employees who handle product or food contact materials.

7.3.1.4 Personnel with exposed cuts, sores or lesions shall not be engaged in handling product or food contact materials. Minor cuts or abrasions on exposed parts of the body shall be covered with a suitable waterproof dressing and dispensed from readily accessible and stocked first aid kit.

7.3.1.5 Procedures shall be in place for the handling of product or product contact surfaces that have been in contact with blood or other bodily fluids.

7.3.2 Sanitary Facilities and Hand Washing

7.3.2.1Toilet facilities shall be provided and designed, constructed and located in a manner that minimizes the potential risk for product contamination.

i. Toilets shall cater for the maximum number of employees and be constructed so that they can be easily cleaned and maintained;

ii. Hand wash basins with clean, potable water, hand soap, disposable towels or effective hand drying device, waste bins and a tank that captures used hand wash water for disposal (if not connect to drains) shall be provided inside or adjacent to toilet facilities;

iii. Signage in appropriate languages shall be provided adjacent to hand wash basins instructing people to wash their hands after each toilet visit;

iv. Racks for protective clothing used by farm employees shall be provided;

v. Toilets shall be located so as to provide easy access for farm workers;

vi. Toilet and wash stations shall be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition.

7.3.2.2 Personnel shall have clean hands and hands shall be washed by all personnel:

i. Before handling product;

ii. Before putting on gloves;

iii. After each visit to a toilet;

iv. After using a handkerchief, handling dirty or contaminated material; and

v. After smoking, eating or drinking.

7.3.3 Protective Clothing

7.3.3.1 Protective clothing shall be effectively maintained, stored, laundered and worn so as to protect product from risk of contamination.

7.3.3.2 Where applicable, clothing (any outer garment), including footwear, shall be effectively maintained, cleaned and sanitized, and worn so as to protect product from risk of contamination.

7.3.3.3 If rubber or disposable gloves are used, the operation shall have a glove use policy and personnel shall adhere to the hand washing practices outlined above.

7.3.4 Visitors

7.3.4.1 All visitors shall be required to remove jewelry and other loose objects and wear suitable protective clothing when entering product growing, harvesting, or storage areas.

7.3.4.2 Visitors exhibiting visible signs of illness shall be prevented from entering any growing or product handling or field harvesting operation.

7.3.4.3 Visitors must follow all personnel practices as designated by the site for employees within various areas of fields, sheds, packing facilities or storage locations.

7.3.4.4 Unsupervised children shall not be permitted to enter any harvesting, packing, or food storage areas.

7.3.5 Amenities

7.3.5.1 Provision shall be made to store employee personal belongings away from crops, harvesting, field and packing operations, and harvesting equipment.

7.3.5.2 Areas for meal breaks shall be designated and located away from a food contact/handling zones and harvesting equipment.

7.3.5.3 Drinking water shall be available to all field employees.

7.4 Harvesting, Field Packaging, Product Handling Practices and Transport

7.4.1 Harvesting and Field Packing Personal Practices

7.4.1.1 Appropriate personnel practices shall be employed by field packing employees which include:

i. Aprons and gloves shall be kept clean;

ii. Aprons and gloves shall not be left on product, work surfaces, equipment or packaging material but hung on apron and glove racks provided;

iii. All product and packaging material shall be kept off the ground and the floor of the transport vehicle;

iv. Waste shall be contained in the bins identified for this purpose. Waste shall not come in contact with produce and be removed on a regular basis and not left to accumulate.

7.4.1.2 Commodity specific handling and field packaging of produce shall assure that:

i. Damaged or decayed produce is not harvested or culled;

ii. Product that contacts the ground shall not be harvested (unless that product typically contacts the ground or is specially designated for further processing and is approved for use by the customer);

iii. Measures to inspect for physical hazards and procedures to remove physical hazards are in place;

iv. Cloths, towels, or other cleaning materials that pose a risk of cross-contamination shall not be used to wipe produce;

v. The use and storage of harvesting containers minimizes food safety hazards; and

vi. Knives and cutting instruments used in harvesting operations shall be controlled, and kept clean and well maintained.

7.4.1.3 Packaging materials shall be appropriate for their intended used and stored in a manner that prevents contamination. A written policy shall be in place that identifies how packing materials are permitted in direct contact with soil.

7.4.1.4 Materials that come in contact with the produce shall be clean and in good repair. Food contact harvest containers and pallets shall be inspected prior to and during harvesting to ensure they do not pose a risk to food safety.

7.4.2 Transport

7.4.2.1 The loading, transport and unloading of crops shall ensure that product integrity is maintained. Practices include:

i. Verification of cleanliness and functionality of shipping units;
ii. Appropriate storage conditions during transportation to final destination;
iii. Prevention of cross contamination with other hazards and spoilage; and
iv. Appropriate stock rotation and traceability practices.

7.4.3 Product Handling Areas

7.4.3.1 Lighting in product handling areas shall be covered or be of shatter-proof materials and be of adequate intensity to allow for inspection, handling and sanitation activities. Glass breakage procedures shall be

7.5 Water Management

7.5.1 Water Systems

7.5.1.1 The sources of all water used on site and at various production blocks and distribution systems used to convey water to its end use or storage shall be maintained and/or treated to prevent contamination and ensure appropriateness for its purpose.

7.5.1.2 An annual risk assessment shall be performed and documented that takes into consideration the historical testing results of the water source, water system control and protection, the characteristics of the crop, the stage of the crop, and the method of application. Where risks have been identified, corrective actions to reduce the risks have been documented and implemented.

7.5.1.3 Agricultural water shall be sourced from a location and in a manner that is compliant with prevailing regulations.

7.5.1.4 Water system intended to convey untreated human or animal waste shall be separated from conveyances utilized to deliver agricultural water.

7.5.2 Irrigation Water

7.5.2.1 Agricultural water shall be drawn from a known clean source or treated to make it suitable for use

7.5.2.2 In circumstances where irrigation water is treated to render it acceptable, the water, after treatment shall conform to the microbiological standards as outlined in element 7.5.3.

7.5.2.3 Water used for hydroponics culture shall be frequently changed to minimizes microbial or chemical contamination. Delivery systems shall be designed so they can be maintained and cleaned.

7.5.3 Water Management

7.5.3.1 Water used for washing and treating product, producing ice that directly contacts product, cleaning food contact surfaces, mixing sanitizer solutions and washing hands shall comply with potable water microbiological and chemical standards in the country of production and destination.

7.5.3.2 Water testing shall comply with current industry standards or regulations for the commodity being grown. Water quality testing shall:

- ***i. Be monitored, at least annually, to verify it complies with the established water microbiological and chemical standard or criteria established and includes production (making) of ice;***
- ***ii. Have a verification schedule prepared indicating the location and frequency of monitoring, which shall be decided by the risk assessment, best practices within country of production, or applicable legislation;***
- ***iii. Be analyzed by an approved laboratory accredited to ISO 17025 or equivalent;***
- ***iv. Have a corrective action plan developed when monitoring shows that water does not meet established criteria or standards. The plan can include additional treatment for water, additional sources for water, product identification and disposition or other alternative actions to adequately control the identified hazards.***

7.7 Soil Management

7.7.1 Fertilizer Management

7.7.1.1 Inorganic (chemical) and organic (manure) soil amendments shall be identified, assessed for risk, isolated and stored separately so as not to pose a food safety risk or cross contamination with agricultural chemicals. Storage locations shall consider:

i. Provisions for the storage of concentrated and diluted liquid soil amendments in tanks designed to retain at least 110% of total volume or as per local regulations. ii. Storage separate from crop, field or irrigation water sources such that contamination from run off is avoided either by locating of the soil amendment a suitable distance from the crop or by the utilization of other physical barriers.

7.7.1.2 Organic and inorganic soil amendment applications shall be shall be recorded and include:

i. Date of application;

ii. Type of amendment;

iii. Operator or applicator details;

iv. Method of treatment and application (see 7.7.2) (see 7.2.8 for equipment calibration); and

v. Field, orchard or greenhouse where application took place.

7.7.2 Soil Amendment Treatment and Application

7.7.2.1 A soil amendment procedure shall be documented, implemented and designed to prevent contamination of product. The treatment of manure and other untreated organic fertilizers shall ensure:

i. Treatment methods applied inactivate pathogens in organic soil amendments and are verified as being in compliance with approved or recommended methods;

ii. No raw untreated manure or human sewage is used unless local regulations allow its use and it does not pose a food safety risk;

7.7.2.2 Organic soil amendment applications are timed to pose minimum risk to product safety and human health including:

i. All applications of soil amendments are in accordance with national or local guidelines best practices and codes of Good Agriculture Practice;

ii. Signage complies with national and local codes of practice; and

iii. Recording of soil amendment applications as per 7.7.1.2.

7.7.3 Purchasing Chemicals

7.7.3.1 Only chemicals approved for use in the country of production and the country of destination shall be purchased. Purchased chemicals shall be labeled with the active ingredient(s), applicable dosage rates, and application instructions. Where no regulations or partial regulations govern the use of chemicals, the site shall have a documented risk assessment on the justification for use of non-regulated chemicals.

7.7.3.2 Chemicals that are specifically banned for use in the country of production or the country of destination shall not be purchased or stored.

7.7.3.3 A current inventory of all chemicals purchased and used shall be maintained.

7.7.4 Agricultural Chemicals

7.7.4.1 A spray or crop protection program indicating the applications used for a target pest or disease and the threshold levels that initiate application shall be documented and implemented.

7.7.4.2 The person making decisions on chemical application of agricultural chemicals shall:

i. Demonstrate knowledge of, and access to, information regarding chemical applications and the maximum residue limits allowable in destination markets;

ii. Use only chemicals approved for cultivation of the specified products, and approved for use in the intended market;

iii. Demonstrate competence and knowledge of chemical application (minimally as per label instruction) and crop withholding periods;

iv. Ensure application equipment is calibrated and accurate (see 7.2.6) and that surplus application mix and/or tank washing is disposed of as per 7.8.1.

7.7.4.3 Records of all chemical applications shall be maintained and include:

i. The specific chemical used;

ii. The crop sprayed;

iii. The concentration;

iv. The date, method and frequency of application; and

v. Evidence that the timing between chemical application and harvest complies with the approved harvest interval for the chemical application.

7.7.4.4 Biological controls that are approved for the cultivation of the specified products, shall be used in accordance with instructions or as per expert recommendations.

7.8 Waste Disposal

7.8.1 Dry, Liquid and Unsanitary Waste Disposal

7.8.1.1 1Waste shall be regularly removed from the farm, field, packing facility and the surrounds so as not to pose a food safety risk to finished product or growing, harvesting and packing operations.

7.8.1.2 A written procedure shall be documented and implemented that describes the effective and efficient disposal of all solid waste, including inedible material, unusable packaging, including trademarked material, and liquid and unsanitary waste.

7.8.1.3 Inedible waste designated for animal feed shall be stored and handled so as to not cause a risk to the animal or further processing for human consumption.