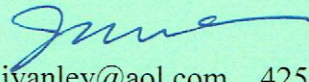


Aloha Avocado Farmer,

We at the Hawaii Avocado Association are glad to provide the enclosed information that might make your farming effort a little easier.

Contacting you by email would be preferable. If you agree that paperless is better, please send your email address to June, email below. And, of course, we welcome your comments and suggestions about how we can be of help to farmers.



John App, President

June van Leynseele, Treasurer

jvanley@aol.com 425-501-3118

From: Hurd, Sharon K <Sharon.K.Hurd@hawaii.gov>

Sent: Friday, December 07, 2018 6:35 PM

Subject: Update: Hawaii among 16 states selected for Harmonized GAP audit financial assistance

Aloha,

Growers interested in obtaining a USDA Harmonized GAP audit in 2019--read this USDA press release:

[USDA Announces \\$3.7 Million in Financial Assistance to Fruit and Vegetable Growers in 16 States](#)

WASHINGTON, Dec. 4, 2018 — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced it will provide \$3.7 million of assistance to fruit and vegetable growers in 16 states through a GAP Assistance Program to enhance market access by defraying costs of undergoing voluntary USDA Harmonized Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) audits in 2019.

“These audits help producers meet Produce Safety Rule standards and will also improve their ability to sell into markets that expect growers to demonstrate that they have incorporated a culture of food safety into their operations,” said Marketing and Regulatory Program Undersecretary Greg Ibach. “We are excited to be able to support producers pursuing these audits in the 2019 season.”

Buyers are increasingly requiring rigorous third-party food safety certifications from produce growers to gain market access. USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) offers several different types of GAP audits to suppliers throughout the produce production and supply chain that focus on best agricultural practices to verify that fruits and vegetables are produced, packed, handled and stored in the safest manner possible to minimize risks of food safety hazards. Producers pay fees that cover audit and administration costs, including auditor travel time and expenses.

Beginning Jan. 2, 2019, USDA’s Risk Management Agency will provide Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) funds to cover up to 100% of the cost of the Harmonized GAP audit and the Harmonized GAP Plus+ audit for farmers in the following 16 states which are authorized by Congress to receive financial assistance for conservation and financial risk mitigation: Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia and Wyoming. The funding will be available to assist producers in 2019 or longer, depending on availability of funds.

If an AMA-eligible state is currently using a Specialty Crop Block Grant to offer GAP Cost Share to its producers, the state may request to reallocate the funds to other eligible expenditures.

The AMA funding is focused on Harmonized GAP and the Harmonized GAP Plus+ audits -- the two most comprehensive audits USDA offers -- to give farmers the best market options for their products while reducing the cost of separate audits for different buyer requirements.

Both audits are aligned with the technical provisions in FDA’s Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety Rule, meet the requirements for the Produce GAP Harmonization Initiative and demonstrate adherence to industry and FDA best practices. The USDA Harmonized GAP Plus+ audit additionally meets buyer requirements for Global Food Safety Initiative audits.

More information is available in [Questions and Answers about the GAP Assistance Program](#) on AMS’ [Harmonized GAP](#) webpage and by contacting AMS’ Specialty Crops Inspection Division, Audit Services Branch at (202) 720-5021 or SCAudits@ams.usda.gov.

Kylie (Wong) Tavares

Edible Crops, Sustainable Agriculture, and Farm Food Safety Extension

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