USDA United States Department of Agriculture

Expanding Market Access: Financial Assistance through USDA's Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops (FSCSC) Program

Farm Service Agency

fsa.usda.gov

Panelists

Audrey Draper: Liaison to FDA on Produce Safety Issues, Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Specialty Crop Program, Audrey.Draper@udsa.gov

Janna Spruill: Project Manager, The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA Foundation), janna.spruill@nasda.org

Jamie Garriott: Program Manager – FSCSC, Safety Net Division (SND), Farm Service Agency, jamie.garriott@usda.gov

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

Agenda

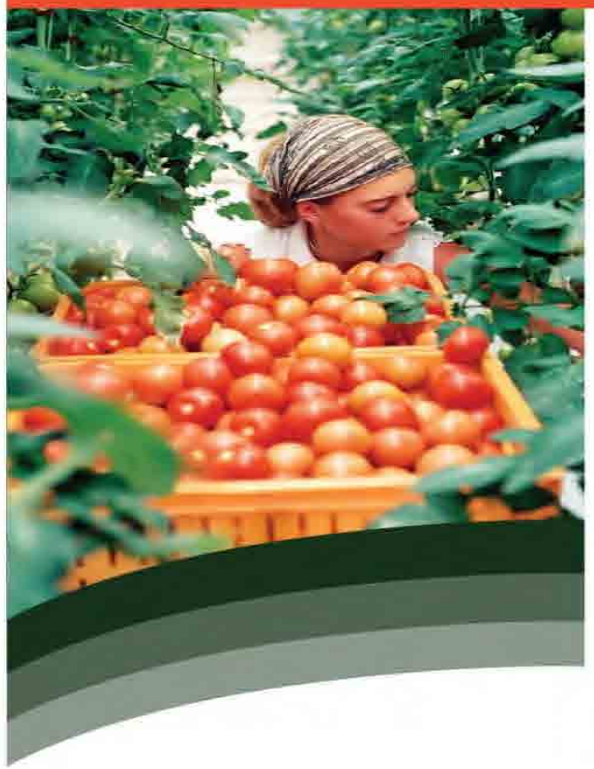
1. Food Safety Certification Requirements for Specialty Crop Growers
2. NASDA/AMS GAP Toolkit
3. Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops (FSCSC) Program
4. Additional Resources/links

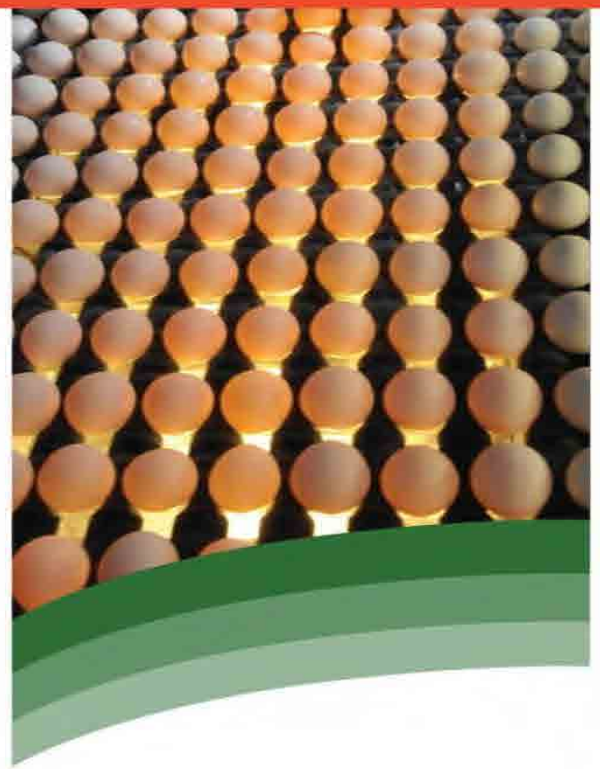
USDA

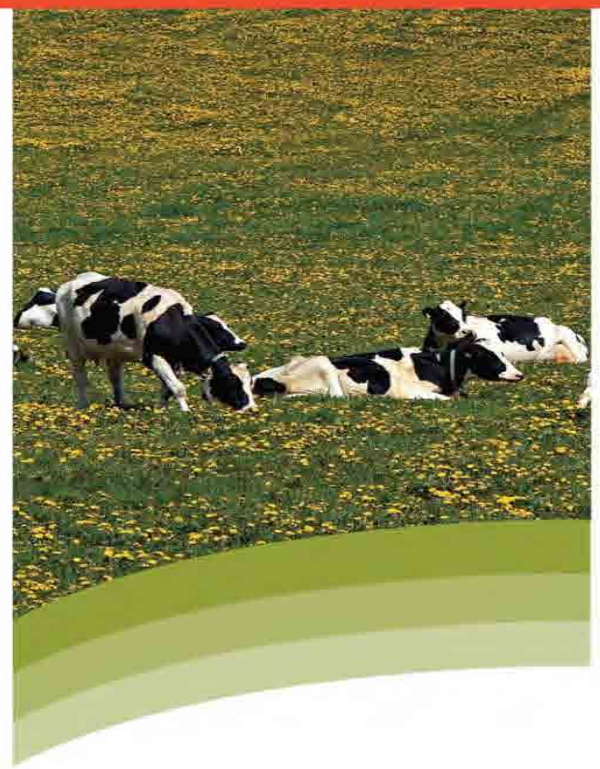
United States Department of Agriculture

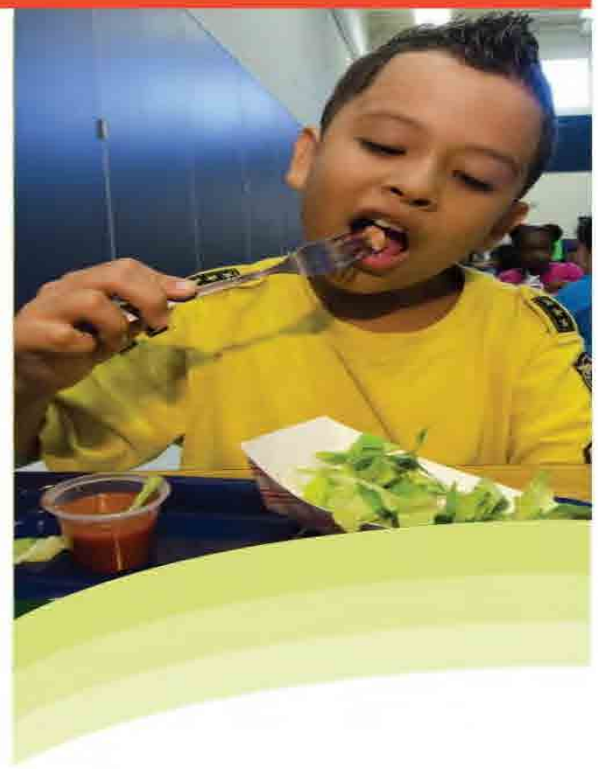
Agricultural Marketing Service

Creating Opportunities for American Farmers and Businesses









Produce Safety Requirements

FSCSC Webinar

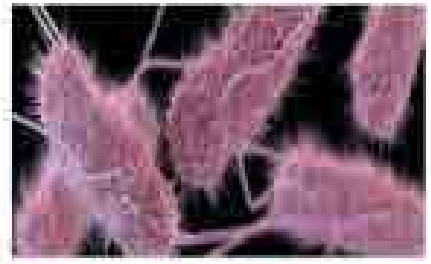
November 3rd, 2022

Why does Produce Safety Matter to Farms?

- **Public Health**
- Federal (and state) regulations
- Buyer requirements/market access audits

Public Health

- Each year in the United States an estimated 9 million people get sick, 56,000 are hospitalized, and 1,300 die of foodborne disease caused by known pathogens.
- Between 2012-2017 Produce accounted for:
  - ➢ 46.3% of *Salmonella* outbreaks in the US
  - ➢ 59.3% of *E. coli* O157 in the US



*The Interagency Food Safety Analytics Collaboration (IFSAC) – 2019 Report

Why does Produce Safety Matter to Farms?

- Public Health
- **Federal (and state) regulations**
- Buyer requirements/market access audits

Regulations

- Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)
  - ➢ Set of regulations that were signed into law on January 4, 2011
  - ➢ FSMA is enforced by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

Produce Safety Rule

- The Produce Safety Rule, outlined in Section 105 of FSMA, was published on November 27, 2015.
- The rule establishes science-based minimum standards for safe production and harvesting of fresh fruits and vegetables. These standards are based on a foundation of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs).
- The rule applies to anyone who grows, harvests, packs, or holds fresh produce.

Produce Safety Rule

- Key exemptions and exclusions include:
  - The rule does not apply to certain specified produce commodities that are rarely consumed raw.
  - The rule does not apply to produce that is used for personal or on-farm consumption, or that is not a Raw Agricultural Commodity (RAC).
  - The rule provides an exemption for produce that receives commercial processing that includes a kill step.
  - The rule does not cover produce farms that have an average annual value of produce sold during the previous 3-year period of $25,000 or less.
  - The farm must have food sales averaging less than 500,000 per year during the previous 3 years, and The farm's sales to qualified end-users must exceed sales to others.

Produce Safety Rule

- The rule is divided into several parts, including standards for:
  - ➢ Worker health, hygiene, and training
  - ➢ Agricultural water, both for production and post-harvest uses
  - ➢ Biological soil amendments (e.g., compost, manure)
  - ➢ Domesticated and wild animals
  - ➢ Equipment, tools, buildings, and sanitation
  - ➢ Production of sprouts

Specialty Crops Inspection Division

Why does Produce Safety Matter to Farms?

- Public Health
- Federal (and state) regulations
- **Buyer requirements/market access audits**

Buyer's Requirements

- Expectations of compliance to voluntary standards, such as the Global Food Safety Initiative.
  - Market access 3rd party audits can be used to verify compliance to food safety standards
- Specific labeling, packing, packaging, or production practice requirements.

Inspections vs. Audits

- Audits – Different types include:
  - 1st party or self-audits. This is when a grower performs an audit of their own operation, to assess if things are occurring as planned.
  - 2nd party audits. These are performed by a buyer, and is an assessment of a supplier's procedures and operation, to see if they meet the buyer's expectations.
  - 3rd party audits. These are performed by a dis-interested and un-biased audit agency or company, to assess if a producer is following regulations and established procedures, and meets the requirements of a contract or purchase agreement.

Market Access

- Audit requirements will depend on the audit scheme and certification body
- USDA is one option for 3rd party GAP audits; however, there are other private audit certifiers
- Choice of audit depends on auditee preference, availability of auditors, buyer requirements, etc

USDA GAP audits

USDA GAP Checklist

Version 3.0 of the USDA GAP checklist must be used for any audits performed after July 31, 2022.

- USDA GAP Checklist (V. 3.0) (xlsx)
- USDA GAP Checklist (V. 3.0) (pdf)

The previous USDA GAP checklist is available here for unannounced audits associated with audits performed before August 1, 2022.

- USDA GAP Checklist (V. 2.1) (xlsx)
- USDA GAP Checklist (V. 2.1) (pdf)

Program Resources

- GAP&GHP Audit Verification Program User's Guide (pdf)
- GAP Audit Program Scope (pdf)
- GAP Audit Billing Policy (pdf)
- GAP Audit Uploads
- GAP Program Logo

Additional Resources

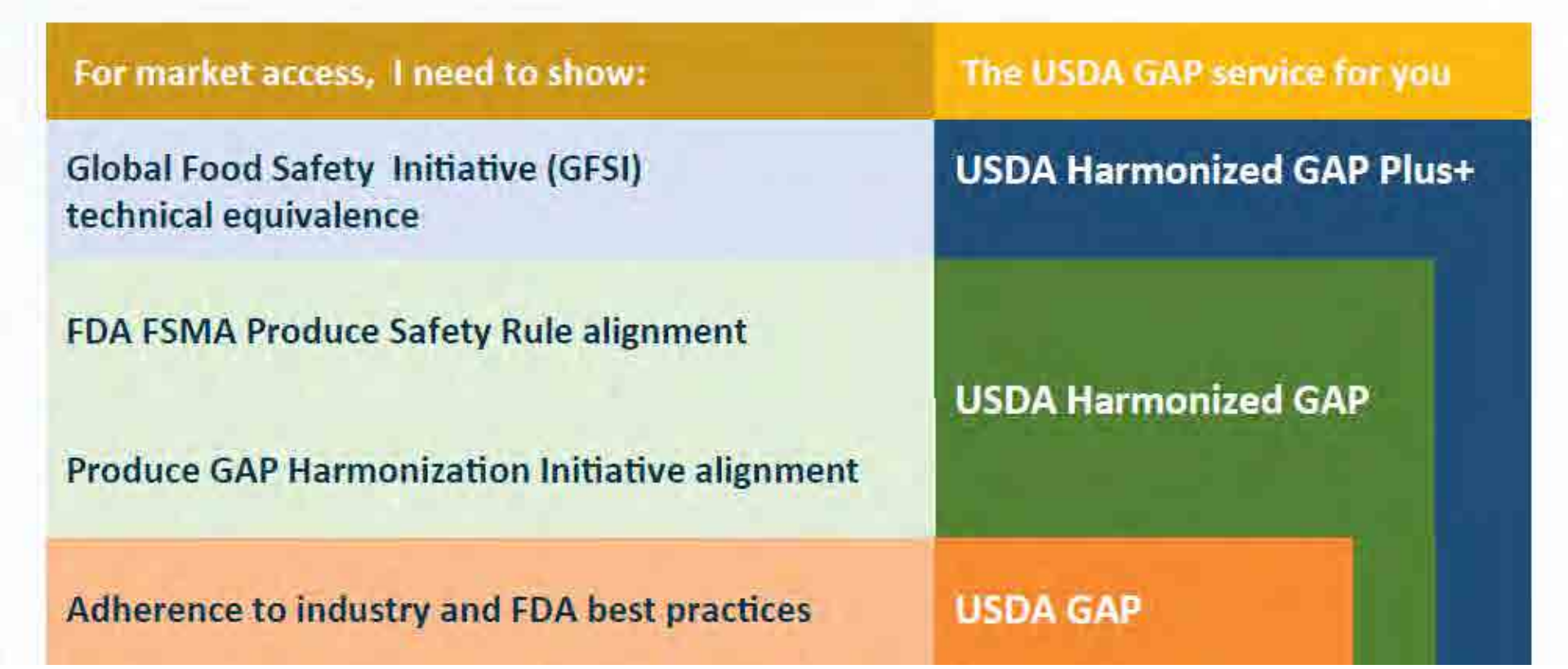
www.ams.usda.gov/gapghp

USDA GAP Audits

GENERAL QUESTIONS (G)

G-1: Management Responsibility

Req. #	Requirement	DOC	MAN	Procedure	Verification	Corrective Action
G-1.1	A food safety policy shall be in place.	WP	•	A written policy shall outline a commitment to food safety, in general terms, how it is implemented and how it is communicated to employees, and be signed by Senior Management.	The auditor observes the food safety policy, observes that it is signed by Senior Management, and observes that it has been communicated to all employees in a manner that can be understood.	The Operation creates or revises the policy, or its communication to employees, to be in compliance.
G-1.2	Management has designated individual(s) with roles, responsibilities and resources for food safety functions.	WP	•	The Food Safety Plan shall designate who has the responsibility and authority for food safety, including a provision for the absence of key personnel. Twenty-four hour contact information shall be available for these individuals in case of food safety emergencies. These roles and responsibilities shall be communicated within the organization.	Auditor observes that the Food Safety Plan has identified individual(s) for key food safety activities. Auditor verifies that procedures include provisions for when the identified individual is not present.	Operation identifies individual(s) for key food safety activities in the Food Safety Plan. Operation identifies actions to be taken when the identified individual(s) are not present.
G-1.3	There is a disciplinary policy for food safety violations.			There shall be a policy that establishes corrective actions for personnel who violate established food safety policies or procedures.	Auditor observes the policy and checks for examples of enforcement.	The Operation creates or revises the policy, or its communication to employees, to be in compliance.


For market access, I need to show:
The USDA GAP service for you
Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) technical equivalence
USDA Harmonized GAP Plus+
FDA FSMA Produce Safety Rule alignment
Produce GAP Harmonization Initiative alignment
USDA Harmonized GAP
Adherence to industry and FDA best practices
USDA GAP

Market Access Audits

- Compliance with an audit may require:
  - ➢ Developing a Food Safety Plan
    - o Policies
    - o Objectives
    - o Risk assessments and mitigation plans
    - o SOPs
    - o corrective actions
  - ➢ Establishing Records

Market Access Audits

- Compliance with an audit may require:
  - ➢ Developing a Food Safety Plan and Records (resources)
    - o Consultants
    - o Extension
    - o www.producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu
    - o https://foodsafetyclearinghouse.org/home
    - o Food Safety | National Farmers Union (nfu.org)
    - o https://onfarmfoodsafety.org/
    - o https://www.carolinafarmstewards.org/usda-harmonized-gap-handbook-and-recordkeeping-templates/

Market Access Audits

- Compliance with an audit may require:
  - Training
    - All employees must be trained on food safety and employee health and hygiene
    - Employees need food safety training relevant to their job
    - Supervisors also need food safety training
    - At least one responsible person should attend comprehensive, regulatory food safety training

Produce Safety Alliance

- Includes a training requirement.

  - The rule states that at least one supervisor or responsible party for a farm must have successfully completed food safety training at least equivalent to that received under standardized curriculum recognized as adequate by the Food and Drug Administration.

  - Produce Safety Alliance.

  - www.producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu

Market Access Audits

- Compliance with an audit may require:
  - ➢ Evaluating current tools and equipment for suitability
  - ➢ Assessing current buildings and facilities for food safety risks
  - ➢ Developing effective cleaning and sanitizing procedures

Market Access Audits

- Compliance with an audit may require:
  - ➢ Water testing
    - o Preharvest water, including irrigation
    - o Postharvest water, including wash water, sinks, flumes, etc
  - ➢ Soil or soil amendment testing
  - ➢ Product testing

Market Access Audits

- Compliance with an audit may require:
  - ➢ Monitoring for animals
  - ➢ Traceability and recall

Market Access Audits

- Remember:
  - Audit certifiers make their requirements known ahead of time
  - Choose the right audit for your farm and buyers
  - Resources are available to help you prepare
  - USDA, states, and others have programs available to help offset costs

Thank you.

Any questions?

NASDA FOUNDATION

Education and Outreach: Removing Barriers to USDA GAP Programs

OVERVIEW

USDA-AMS Cooperative Agreement

Develop and pilot a strategy to address barriers

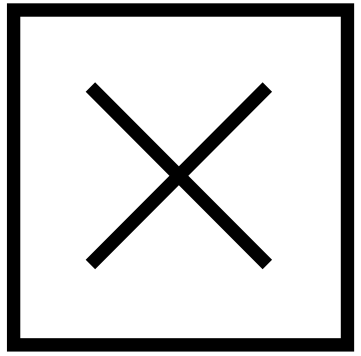
- GroupGAP
- Historically underserved growers

Promote USDA GAP audit programs with the strategy

- Partnership model for delivery
- Toolkits as resources to provide education + outreach

Photo credit: Michael Howard, Eden Place Farms

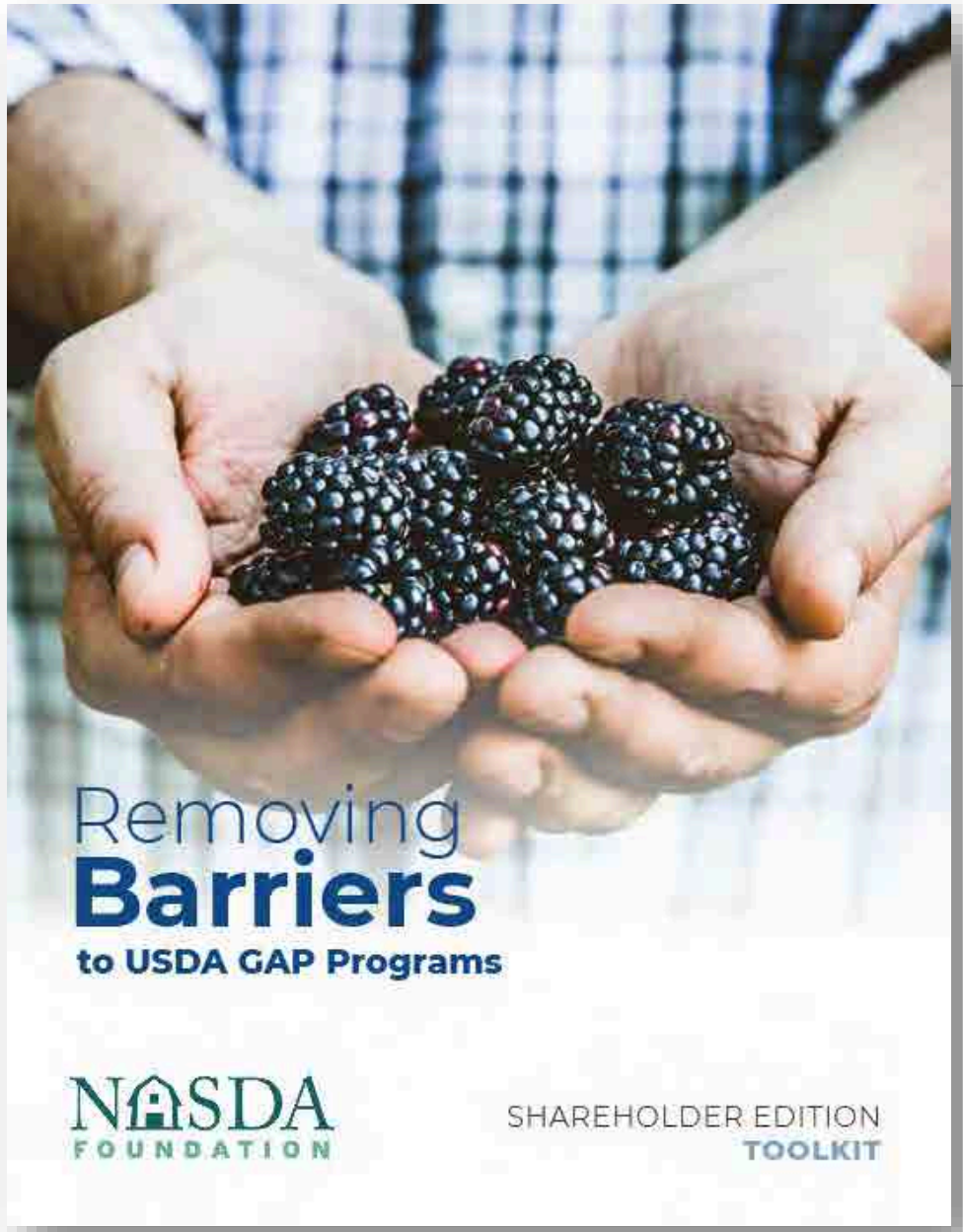
Top Misconceptions



1) The FSMA Produce Safety Rule and USDA GAP are the same and GAP certification exempts a grower from an FDA inspection.
2) Pursuing GAP certification is ONLY for growers who want to sell to large retailers.
3) Private 3rd party certifiers are more likely to have an unbiased auditor who is more willing to work with growers.

Partnership Model

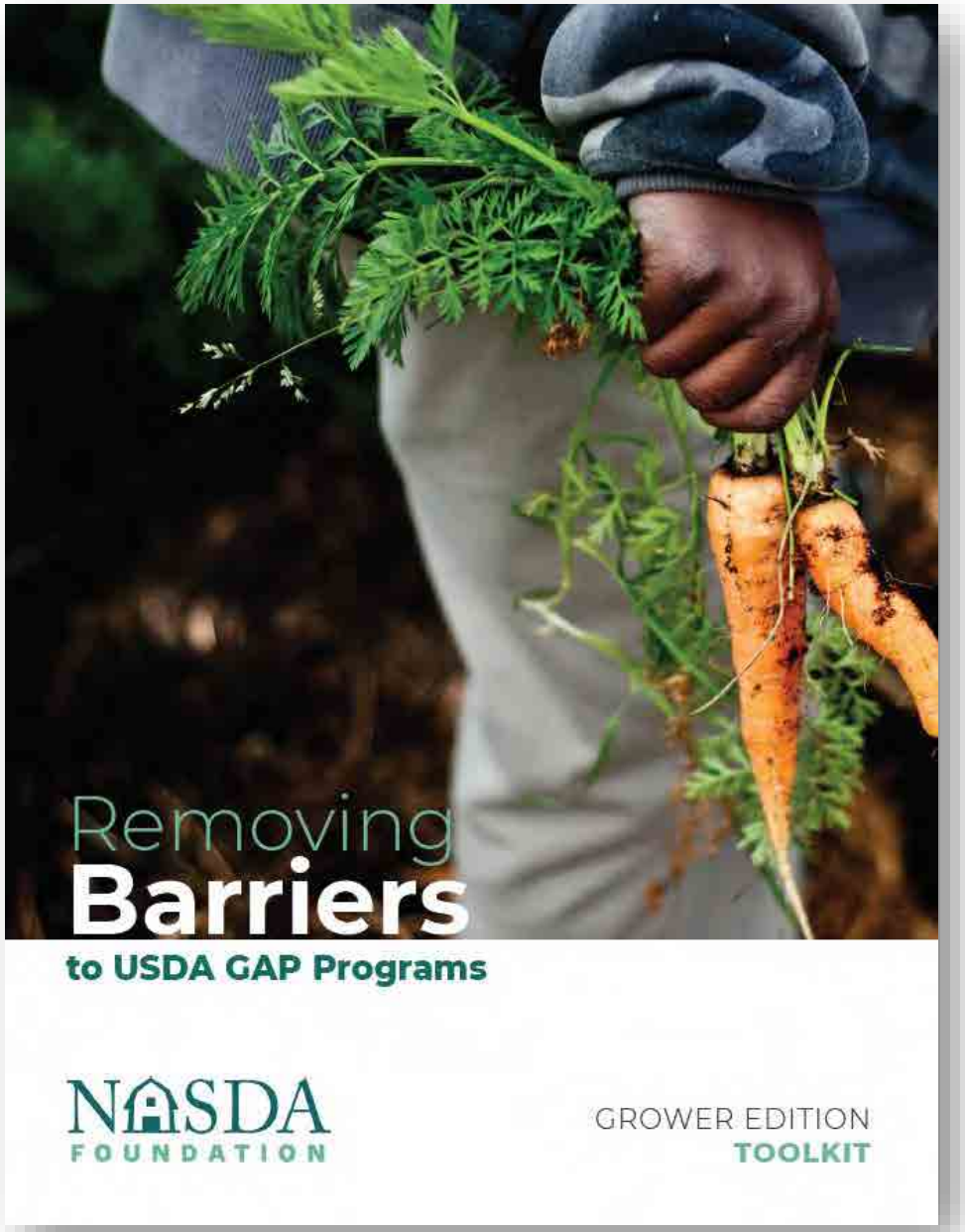
Education and Outreach: Removing Barriers to USDA GAP Programs



Stakeholder Toolkit

Designed as a resource for our stakeholders outlining the education and outreach program to address barriers to USDA GAP Audit Programs

- Build and Assess Partnerships
- Learn and Apply the Grower Toolkit
- Highlight GAP Funding and Marketing
- Guide for Program Implementation



Grower Toolkit

Designed for growers as a resource of information about USDA GAP Audit Programs, including GroupGAP

- Define GAP Standards and Audit Options
- Key Information and Benefits
- Cost Breakdown and Funding Assistance
- Grower GAP Needs
- Important Contacts
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Misconceptions
- Additional Resources

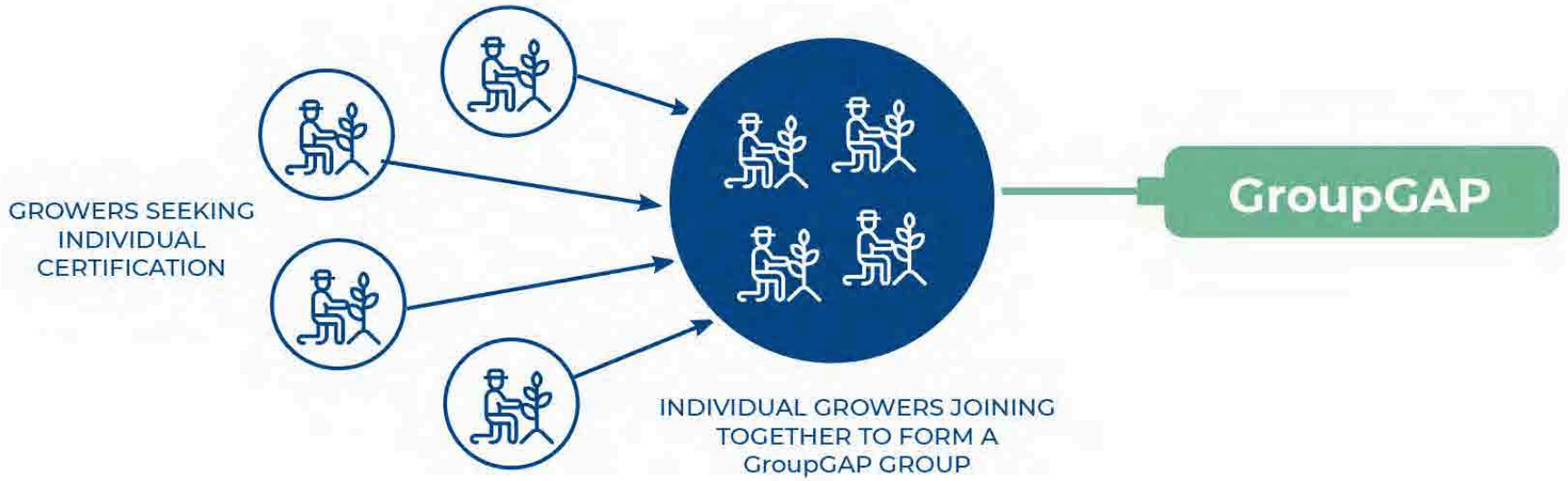
The GAP Audit Program

MARKET ACCESS TOOL

- Purpose of GAP certification
- Buyer driven
- Voluntary versus regulatory

ADVANTAGES of GAP +GroupGAP

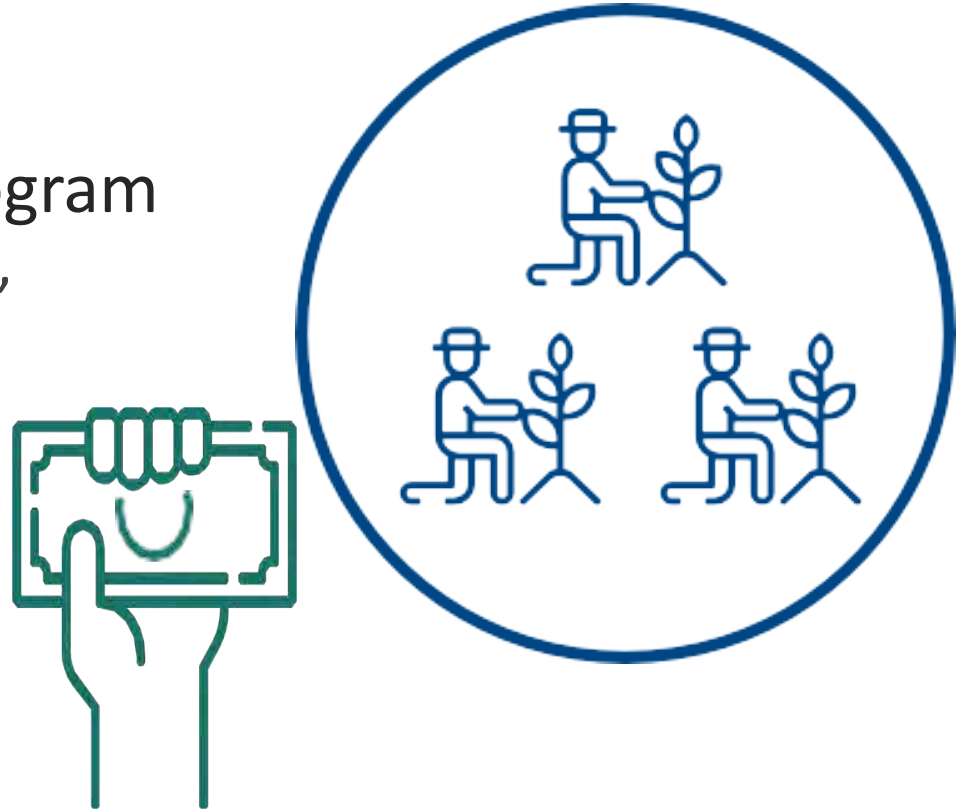
- Market access
- Shared use savings – operations and technical support
- Food safety culture



Helping Growers Achieve Certification

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- Federal GAP Reimbursement
- RMA Harmonized GAP Assistance Program
  (select states) CT, DE, HI, ME, MD, MA, NV, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, UT, VT, WV, WY
- Federal Grants
  - FMPP/LMPP
  - Urban/Indoor Agriculture
- State Funding
  - Specialty Crop Block Grants
  - Cost-Share/Reimbursements



Helping Growers Achieve Certification

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

- Getting started
- Who is available to help?
  - State Departments of Agriculture
  - Cooperative Extension
  - Non-government Organizations
- How can they help?

Technical Assistance Provided by Extension and NGOs

Food Safety Modernization Act Compliance Training
- Produce Rule and Preventative Controls

GAP Preparedness Training
- Food Safety Plan Writing
- Quality Management Systems

GAP Audit Certification Mentoring & Training

Risk-Based On-Farm Food Safety Principles & Assessments

Production & Marketing Knowledge & Skills

Direct Market Training

Opportunity to Connect with Other Growers

RESOURCES

FOOD SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP NETWORK

Wallace Center
https://foodsystemsleadershipnetwork.org/resource-library/topic-areas/food-safety-and-quality/

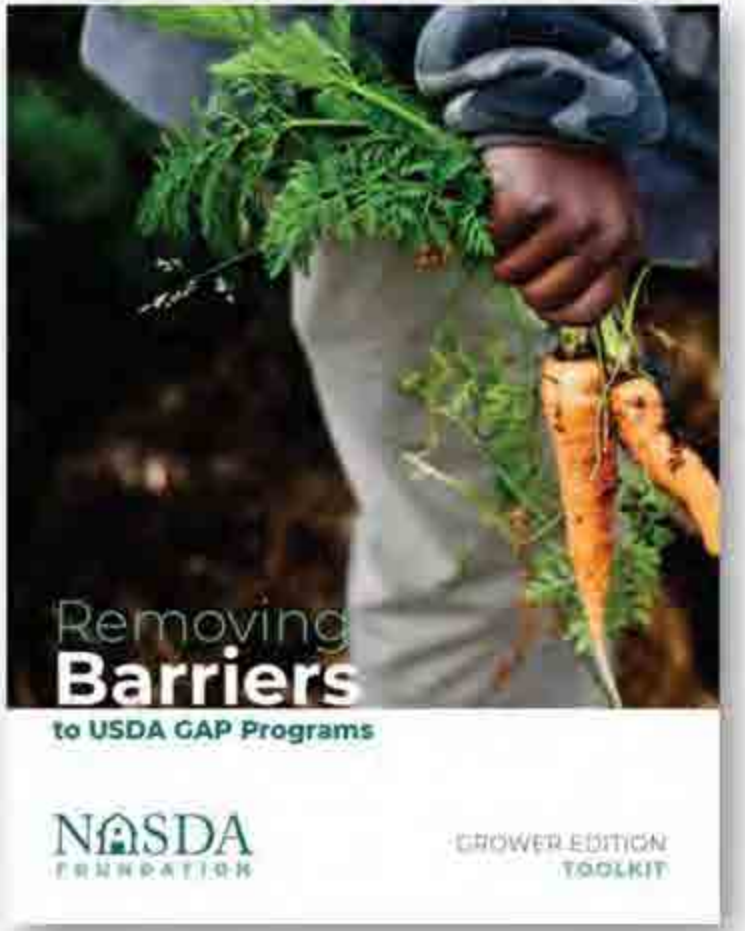
The Food Safety and Quality Community of Practice Discussion Group - https://foodsystemsleadershipnetwork.org/groups/food-safety-and-quality/forum/

Monthly Call Series - https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYqfuGtqTgqHdExCSGQRxVL1YzTRIUJ_rEM

Quality Management Systems Training for Food and Farm Businesses (NEW and FREE) - https://foodsystemsleadershipnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Quality-Management-Systems-A-Guide-for-Food-Farm-Businesses.pdf

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Removing Barriers to USDA GAP Programs



This toolkit was designed as a resource of information about USDA GAP Audit Programs, specifically GroupGAP. It provides important contacts, highlights available training and mentoring resources, defines key terms, and addresses misconceptions to clarify the details of GAP certification.

- **PILOTED IN 7 STATES**
- **GROWER AND STAKEHOLDER TOOLKITS**
- **AVAILABLE ON WEBSITE, PDF, HARD COPY**

USDA

United States Department of Agriculture

FOOD SAFETY CERTIFICATION FOR SPECIALTY CROPS (FSCSC)

Farm Service Agency

fsa.usda.gov

Funding and Authority

- **$200 million is provided through the CCC Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 714c(e))**

- **Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) published June 21, 2022**
  - https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2022-06-21/pdf/2022-13014.pdf

Signup Period

- **Program year 2022: June 27, 2022, through January 31, 2023**

- **Program year 2023 will be announced at a later date.**

Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

To be eligible for FSCSC, the applicant must meet all of the following:

- **Be a specialty crop operation;**
- **Be a small business or very small business;**

Small business

An applicant that had an average annual monetary value of specialty crops the applicant sold during the 3-year period preceding the program year of more than $250,000 but not more than $500,000.

Very small business

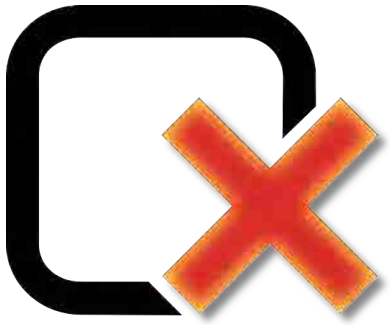
An applicant that had an average annual monetary value of specialty crops the applicant sold during the 3-year period preceding the program year of no more than $250,000.

Eligible Applicants Continued

- **Have obtained or renewed a:**
  - 2022 food safety certification that was issued between **June 21, 2022**, and December 31, 2022; or
  - 2023 food safety certification issued during the 2023 calendar year; and
- **Have paid eligible expenses (described in future slide)**
- **Be located in the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.**

Ineligible Applicants

- **An applicant that does not meet the definition of small business or very small business**
- **An operation that is not located in the US or US Territories**
- **An applicant that has not paid eligible expenses related to a 2022 or 2023 food safety certification**



Eligible Expenses

- **Developing a food safety plan for first-time food safety certification**
- **Maintaining or updating an existing food safety plan**
- **Food safety certification**
- **Certification upload fees**
- **Microbiological testing (up to 5 per category)**
- **Training**

NOTE: All expenses must have been paid at the time of the application or they are not eligible.

Eligible Expenses

- **Applicants are not required to apply for all categories**
- **Expenses should cover all audits related to certification**
- **Applicants can come back and modify their application if they incur more expenses after they file the application.**

Developing a food safety plan for first-time food safety certification

- **FSCSC will cover a percentage of the costs of seminars and tools used by specialty crop operations to create a food safety plan.**

- **FSCSC will also cover a percentage of the consulting fees and other associated expenses incurred if the specialty crop operations hires a consultant to develop a food safety plan.**

- **For specialty crop operations certified through a group, this category of expenses will cover a percentage of their share of the cost for developing a food safety or quality management system for the group.**

Maintaining or updating an existing food safety plan

- **FSCSC will cover a percentage of the costs of maintaining and updating existing food safety plans.**

- **For specialty crop operations certified through a group, this category of expenses will cover a percentage of their share of the cost for maintaining or updating an existing food safety management system for the group.**

Food safety certification

FSCSC will cover a percentage of the cost of obtaining food safety certification issued by a certifier, including application fees, inspection costs, inspection fees (including travel costs and per diem for certifiers), and user fees or certifier sales assessments.

Note: The Certification must have been received on or after June 21, 2022, in order to be eligible.

Food safety certification continued

- **Producers may not have expenses for certification due to:**
  - **RMA-AMS Harmonized GAP Assistance that may cover that cost for producers in 16 states**
  - **Other assistance funded through USDA Specialty Crop Block Grants**

- Connecticut
- Delaware
- Hawaii
- Maine
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New York
- Pennsylvania
- Rhode Island
- Utah
- Vermont
- West Virginia
- Wyoming

Certification upload fees

FSCSC will cover a percentage of the cost to upload audit reports and certification documentation into commercial audit databases

Microbiological testing

FSCSC will cover a percentage of the cost of microbiological testing for products, soil amendments, and water as specified by a food safety plan or food safety management system.

A maximum of 5 tests per category will be covered.

Training

FSCSC will cover the cost of food safety training for the specialty crop operation.

Ineligible Expenses

- **Infrastructure improvements (such as improvements to buildings, cold storage, flooring, restrooms, and handwashing stations)**
- **Equipment (such as grading/packing lines and sanitation equipment)**
- **Supplies (such as sanitation and cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment)**
- **Salaries and benefits of employees or other costs for labor, except for expenses for consultants**
- **Fees or penalties for late payment.**

Application Process

Methods to Apply

- **May apply at any USDA Service Center Nationwide**
- **Can apply by:**
  - In person
  - Mail (must be postmarked by the deadline)
  - Email
  - Fax
  - Farmers.gov/fscsc

How to Apply

- **Applicant will complete the FSA-888 for each category**
- **Expenses must be paid prior to applying**
- **Applications may be amended or withdrawn at any time until the end of the application period**
  - Add additional categories and/or expenses
  - Remove categories and/or expenses

FSA-888

Form Approved - OMB No. 0560-XXXX
Expiration Date: xx/xx/xx

FSA-888 (XX-XX-22)	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Farm Service Agency (FSA) Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC)	1. Recording State Name/Code	2. Recording County Name/Code
	FOOD SAFETY CERTIFICATION FOR SPECIALTY CROPS PROGRAM (FSCSC)	3. Program Year	4. Application No.

NOTE: *The following statement is made in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 552a - as amended). The authority for requesting the information identified on this form is the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 714c(e)). The information will be used to determine the applicant's ability to participate in and receive benefits under the Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program. The information collected on this form may be disclosed to other Federal, State, and Local government agencies, Tribal agencies, and nongovernmental entities that have been authorized access to the information by statute or regulation and/or as described in applicable Routine Uses identified in the System of Records Notice for USDA/FSA-2, Farm Records File (Automated). Providing the requested information is voluntary. However, failure to furnish the requested information will result in a determination that the applicant is unable to participate in and receive benefits under the Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program.*

Public Burden Statement (Paperwork Reduction Act): *According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is **0560-XXXX**. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 60 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The provisions of criminal and civil fraud, privacy, and other statutes may be applicable to the information provided.* ***RETURN THIS COMPLETED FORM TO YOUR COUNTY FSA OFFICE.***

PART A – APPLICANT INFORMATION

5. Applicant's Name	6. Address *(City, State and Include Zip Code)*	7. Have you participated in FSA programs? ☐ YES ☐ NO *(If "NO", please fill out AD-2047 and SF-3881)*	8. Phone Number *(Including Area code)* 9. Email Address

PART B – CERTIFICATION INFORMATION & EXPENSES

10. Category of Expenses *(Check all that apply)* and Expenses *(applicant completes columns 10A, 10B, 10C, and 10E)*:

10A. Category of Expenses	10B. Expenses	10C. Number of Tests	10D. COC Adjustment of Expenses	10E. Other Reimbursement for Expenses Received	10F. COC Adjustment of Other Reimbursement for Expenses Received
☐ Food Safety Certification	$		$	$	$
☐ Food Safety Plan Development (1st time)	$		$	$	$
☐ Maintaining or updating Food Safety Plan	$		$	$	$
☐ Certification Upload Fees	$		$	$	$
☐ Microbiological Testing – products	$		$	$	$
☐ Microbiological Testing – soil amendments	$		$	$	$
☐ Microbiological Testing - water	$		$	$	$
☐ Training	$		$	$	$

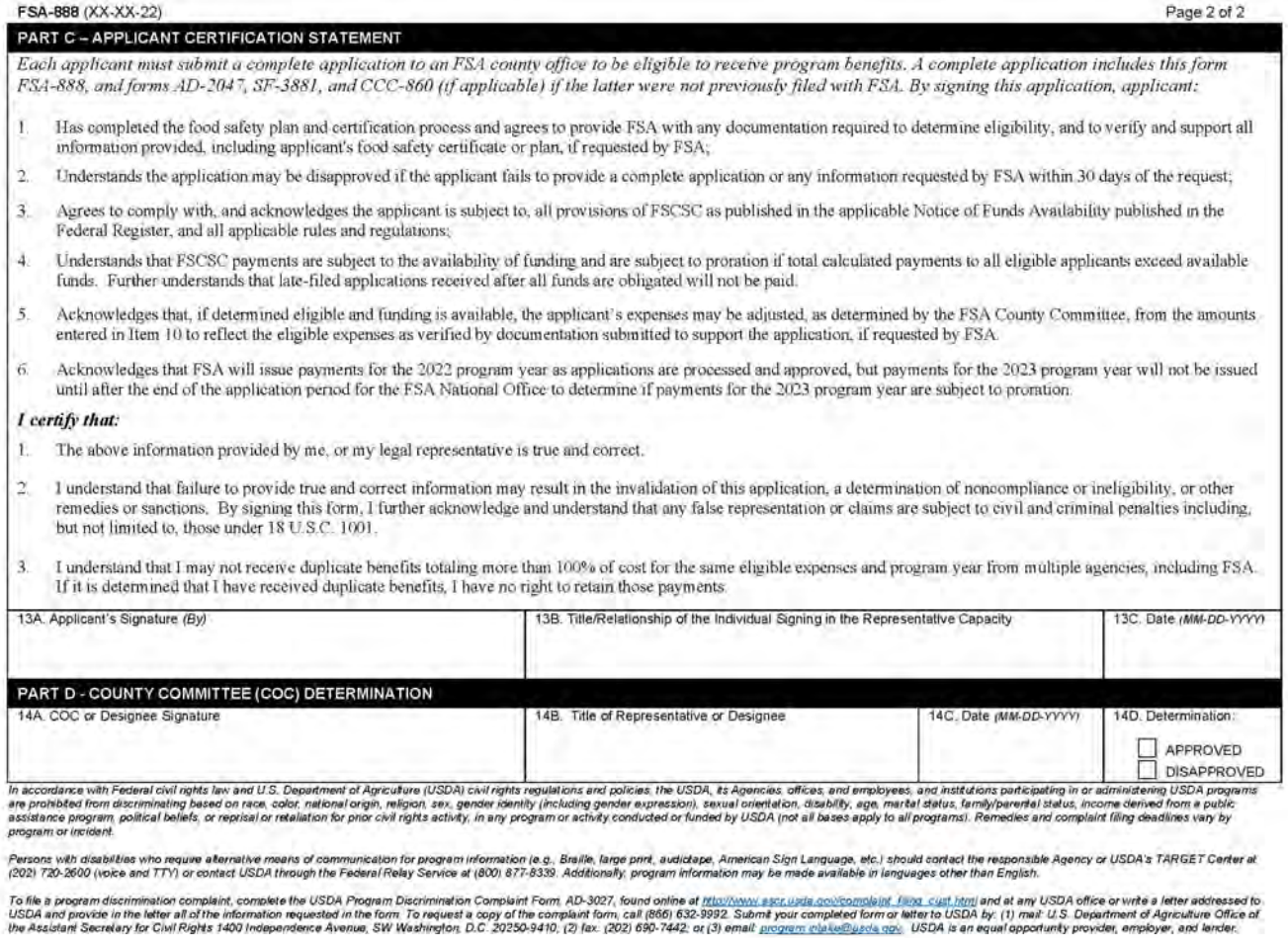
11. Are you a small business? ☐ YES ☐ NO *(Small business means a farm that had an average annual monetary value of specialty crops the farm sold during the 3-year period preceding the program year of more than $250,000 but not more than $500,000.)*

12. Are you a very small business? ☐ YES ☐ NO *(Very small business means a farm that had an average annual monetary value of specialty crops the farm sold during the 3-year period preceding the program year of no more than $250,000.)*

DATE STAMPED

Farm Service Agency
fsa.usda.gov

FSA-888



FSA-888 (XX-XX-22) Page 2 of 2

PART C – APPLICANT CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

Each applicant must submit a complete application to an FSA county office to be eligible to receive program benefits. A complete application includes this form FSA-888, and forms AD-2047, SF-3881, and CCC-860 (if applicable) if the latter were not previously filed with FSA. By signing this application, applicant:

1. Has completed the food safety plan and certification process and agrees to provide FSA with any documentation required to determine eligibility, and to verify and support all information provided, including applicant's food safety certificate or plan, if requested by FSA;
2. Understands the application may be disapproved if the applicant fails to provide a complete application or any information requested by FSA within 30 days of the request;
3. Agrees to comply with, and acknowledges the applicant is subject to, all provisions of FSCSC as published in the applicable Notice of Funds Availability published in the Federal Register, and all applicable rules and regulations;
4. Understands that FSCSC payments are subject to the availability of funding and are subject to proration if total calculated payments to all eligible applicants exceed available funds. Further understands that late-filed applications received after all funds are obligated will not be paid.
5. Acknowledges that, if determined eligible and funding is available, the applicant's expenses may be adjusted, as determined by the FSA County Committee, from the amounts entered in Item 10 to reflect the eligible expenses as verified by documentation submitted to support the application, if requested by FSA.
6. Acknowledges that FSA will issue payments for the 2022 program year as applications are processed and approved, but payments for the 2023 program year will not be issued until after the end of the application period for the FSA National Office to determine if payments for the 2023 program year are subject to proration.

I certify that:

1. The above information provided by me, or my legal representative is true and correct.
2. I understand that failure to provide true and correct information may result in the invalidation of this application, a determination of noncompliance or ineligibility, or other remedies or sanctions. By signing this form, I further acknowledge and understand that any false representation or claims are subject to civil and criminal penalties including, but not limited to, those under 18 U.S.C. 1001.
3. I understand that I may not receive duplicate benefits totaling more than 100% of cost for the same eligible expenses and program year from multiple agencies, including FSA. If it is determined that I have received duplicate benefits, I have no right to retain those payments.

13A. Applicant's Signature *(By)*	13B. Title/Relationship of the Individual Signing in the Representative Capacity	13C. Date *(MM-DD-YYYY)*

PART D - COUNTY COMMITTEE (COC) DETERMINATION

14A. COC or Designee Signature	14B. Title of Representative or Designee	14C. Date *(MM-DD-YYYY)*	14D. Determination: ☐ APPROVED ☐ DISAPPROVED

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Additional Information

- **Any additional information requested by FSA must be received within 30 days of the request or the application will not be processed.**
- **Producers must maintain documentation for 3 years after application period.**

Payments

Category of Eligible Expenses	Historically Underserved Applicants	All Other Applicants
Development of a food safety plan for first-time certification	75 percent (no maximum)	50 percent (no maximum)
Maintaining or updating a food safety plan	75 percent, up to a maximum of $375	50 percent, up to a maximum of $250
Food safety certification	75 percent, up to a maximum of $2,000	50 percent, up to a maximum of $2,000
Certification upload fees	75 percent, up to a maximum of $375	50 percent, up to a maximum of $250
Microbiological testing – products	75 percent, up to 5 tests	50 percent, up to 5 tests
Microbiological testing – soil amendments	75 percent, up to 5 tests	50 percent, up to 5 tests
Microbiological testing – water	75 percent, up to 5 tests	50 percent, up to 5 tests
Training	100 percent, up to a maximum of $300	100 percent, up to a maximum of $200

Historically underserved farmer or rancher

Includes all of the following:

- **Beginning farmer or rancher**
- **Limited resource farmer or rancher**
- **Socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher**
- **Veteran farmer or rancher.**

Payment Calculation

Payments are calculated as follows:

The applicant's eligible expense X the percentage for the applicable category, not to exceed the maximum payment amount for the category, if applicable.

Note: An applicant must report any previous cost share assistance received for the expenses included on their application. The amount of the applicant's FSCSC payment plus the reported additional cost share assistance cannot exceed the total amount of eligible expenses for each category.

Payment Information

- **2022 payments will be issued nightly, as the application is approved**

- **2023 payments will not be issued until after the signup period is over. A factor may apply if funding is short.**

Spot Checks

Spot Checks

- **All expenses are subject to spot check**

- **All documentation is required to be maintained for 3 years after the end of the application period.**

Spot Checks continued

- **Examples of supporting documentation may include:**
  - Food Safety Certification
  - Food Safety Plan
  - Paid Invoices
  - Test results
  - Training Certificates
  - Audit report
  - Proof of payment
  - Statement of audit charges

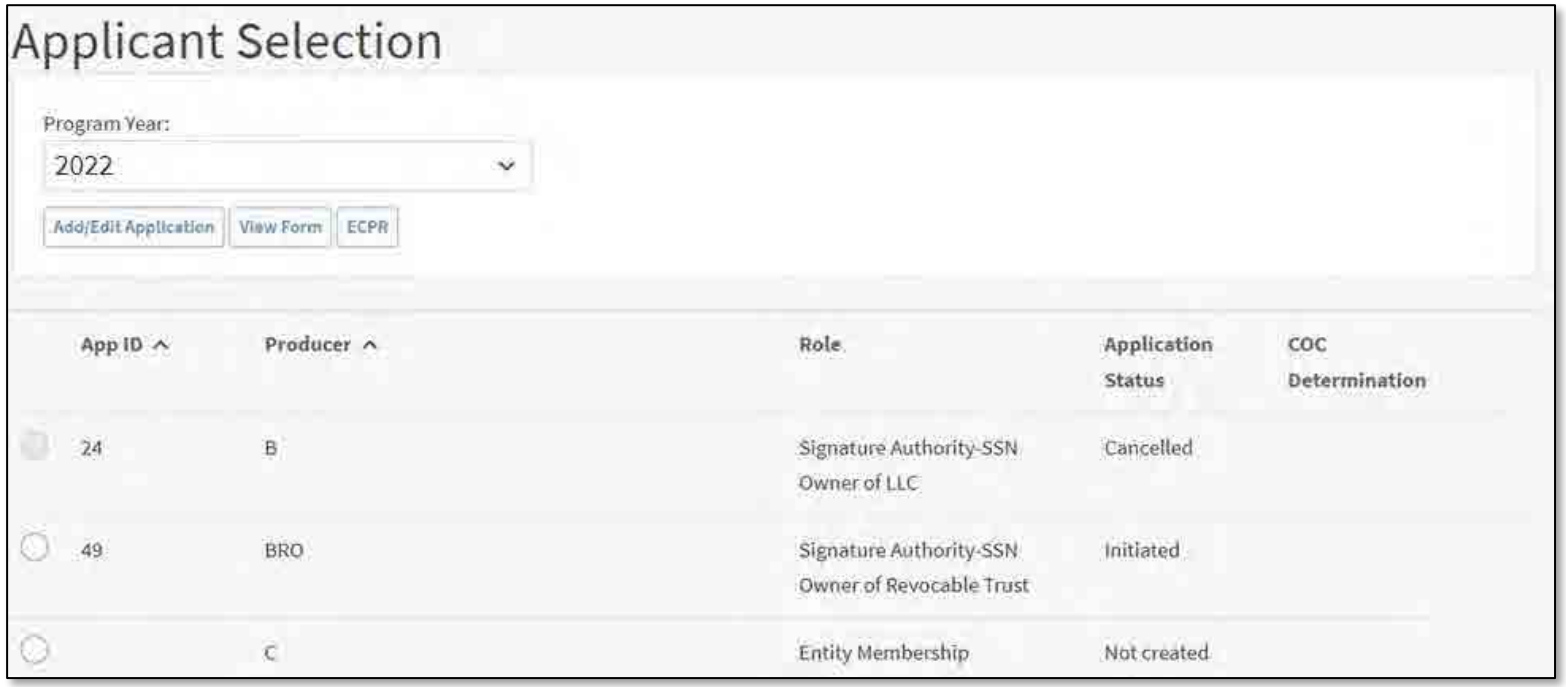
Online Applications

Online Access

- **FSCSC software allows applicants to apply online from home by accessing the Farmers.gov portal**
- **Must have an eAuthentication account to use this option**
- **An email notification is sent to the county office when an applicant applies online**

Online Applicant Selection

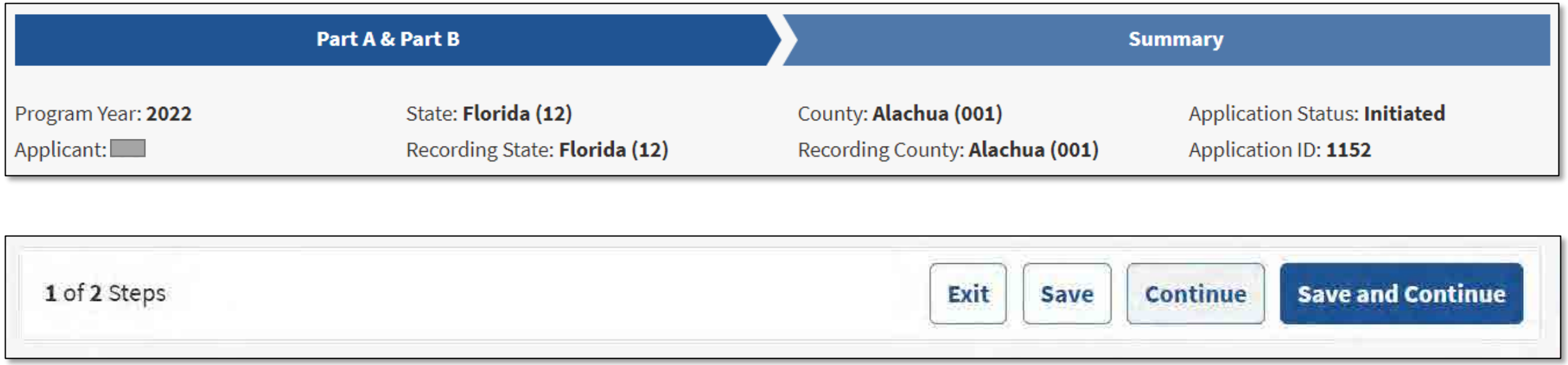
The following is the Applicant Selection Screen when an applicant logs in from home.



FSCSC Application

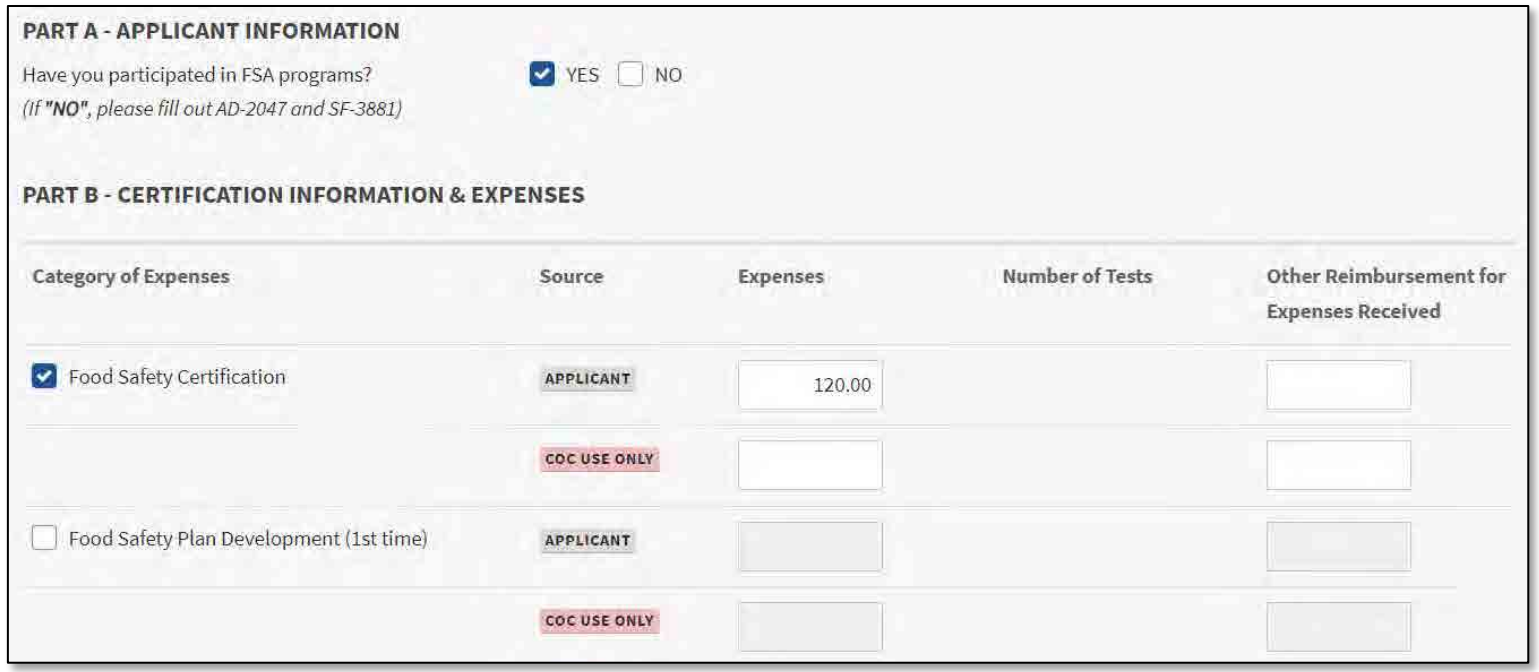
- **Users can easily navigate throughout application using tabs across the top of screen**
- **“Save and Continue” navigates to the next screen after the data entered on the screen is saved.**
- **“Continue” navigates the user to the next screen without saving any data**
- **“Save” saves the data that has been entered and leaves the user on the current page**
- **“Exit” returns the user to the application selection screen without saving any data**

FSCSC Application



Part A & Part B Sections

- Enter Part A information for applicant information
- Enter Part B information for expenses
- Categories will be disabled until the check box next to each is selected



PART A - APPLICANT INFORMATION

Have you participated in FSA programs? ☑ YES ☐ NO

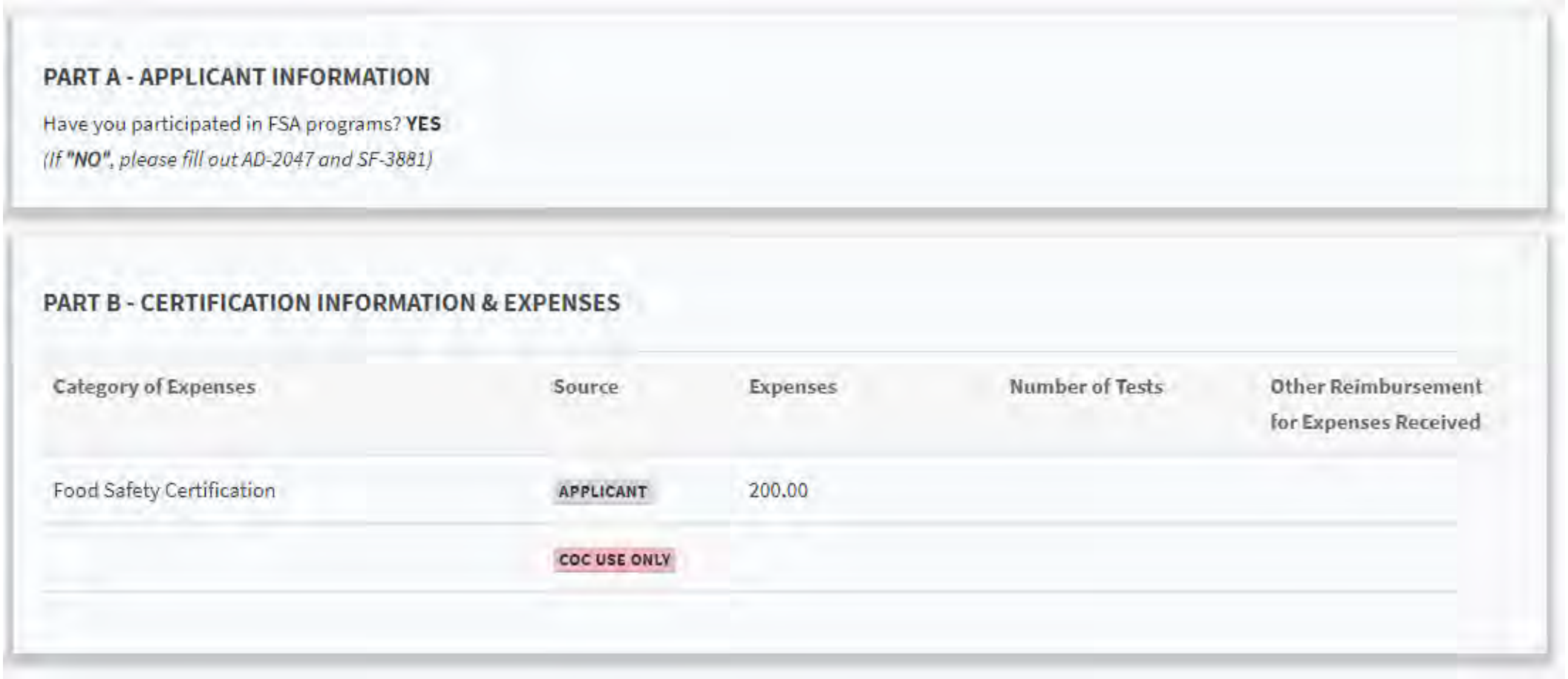
*(If **"NO"**, please fill out AD-2047 and SF-3881)*

PART B - CERTIFICATION INFORMATION & EXPENSES

Category of Expenses	Source	Expenses	Number of Tests	Other Reimbursement for Expenses Received
☑ Food Safety Certification	APPLICANT	120.00		
	COC USE ONLY			
☐ Food Safety Plan Development (1st time)	APPLICANT			
	COC USE ONLY			

Summary Screen -Top

- **Displays all information entered.**



PART A - APPLICANT INFORMATION

Have you participated in FSA programs? **YES**

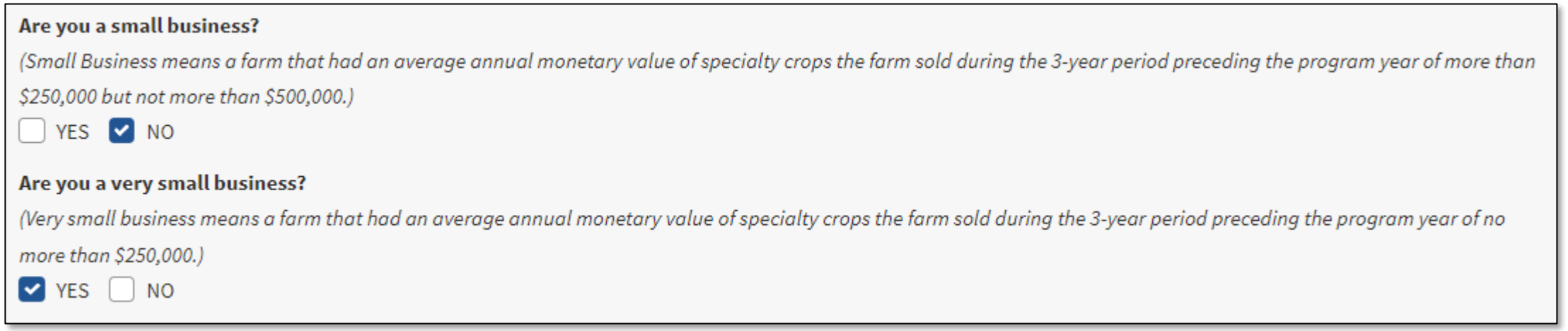
*(If **"NO"**, please fill out AD-2047 and SF-3881)*

PART B - CERTIFICATION INFORMATION & EXPENSES

Category of Expenses	Source	Expenses	Number of Tests	Other Reimbursement for Expenses Received
Food Safety Certification	APPLICANT	200.00		
	COC USE ONLY			

Summary Screen - Bottom

- **Answer both small business questions**



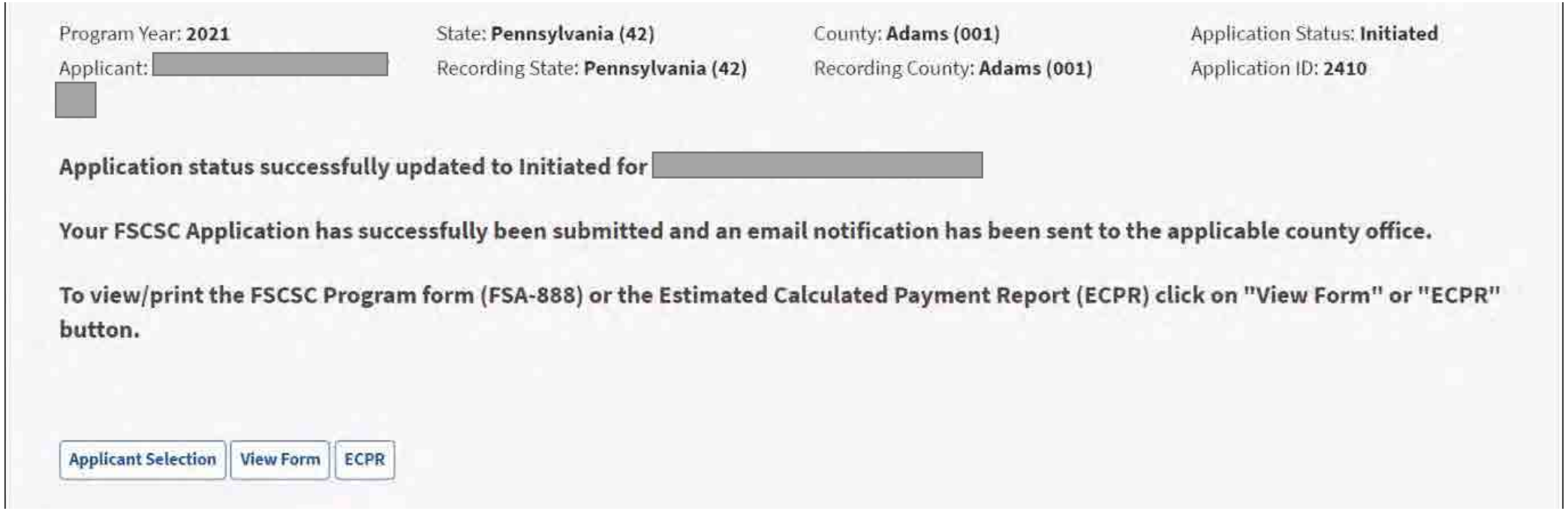
Note: At least one must be answered yes before being able to approve

Summary Screen - Bottom

- **Check the box to electronically sign the application**
- **Click “Save and Continue”**

Result Screen

- **Displays the status of the application.**
- **Click “View Form” to view and print application.**



Additional Resources

How to work with FSA, Grants & Opportunities, Links & Contact Information

Working with USDA:

Connect:

- **with your local USDA Service Center**
- **utilizing the USDA Service Center Locator**
- **visit farmers.gov**

FSA Call Center: 877-508-8364

You will be able to visit one-on-one with Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service Center (NRCS) staff.

Farm Service Agency

fsa.usda.gov

Additional USDA Programs & Resources

- **Farmers.gov**
- **Grant & Funding Opportunities:**
  - Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production (UAIP) Grants: https://www.usda.gov/topics/urban/grants
  - Local Food Promotion Program (AMS): https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/lfpp
  - Regional Food System Partnerships (RFSP): https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/rfsp
  - Organic Certification Cost Share Program: https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/occsp/index

Helpful Links & Resources

- **AMS Food Safety Webpage: https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/local-regional/food-sector/food-safety**
- **NASDA Toolkit: https://www.nasda.org/gap-overview/**
- **FSCSC website: https://www.farmers.gov/pandemic-assistance/food-safety**
- **How to find a local Service Center: https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/service-center-locator**
- **To set up a Level 2 eAuthentication ID: https://www.eauth.usda.gov/eauth/b/usda/home**

Webinar Recording

FSA Outreach webinar recordings can be found here: https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/outreach-and-education/webinars/index