

**ALMOND BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
DIRECT VERIFIABLE (DV) PROGRAM AUDITORS
AUDITS OF DV USER ALMOND TREATMENTS**

Each DV User facility that treats almonds shall be audited by a Board¹ approved auditor:

- Within 1-2 months after the start of treatment, and
- At least every 12 months thereafter.

These on-site audits of almond treatment facilities shall include procedures to determine if:

1. The DV User, if appropriate, has a letter issued by a Board-approved process authority that established the treatment achieves in total a minimum 4-log reduction of *Salmonella* bacteria pursuant to §981.442 (b) of the marketing order
2. Facility personnel and procedures ensure all critical factors and the treatment parameters required in the process identified above are followed, controlled appropriately, monitored and recorded; treated almonds are not subject to recontamination prior to shipment; and appropriate corrective actions are followed for all almonds associated with treatment deviations.
3. Records are retained in files and document all almonds are appropriately treated prior to shipment or untreated (or inadequately treated) almonds are properly disposed of through non-edible channels. This includes review of calibration records to determine if equipment is calibrated properly, monitoring records to determine if all almonds are treated prior to shipment, and corrective action records to ensure product dispositions are based on appropriate evaluations.

A summary audit report of the DV User's treatment facility shall be sent to the Board within ten (10) days of each audit. The summary should be a document that contains:

- Facility name, location, primary contact during audit
- Current audit date and auditor name, past audit date and auditor name
- Auditor statement on Overall Rating
- Description of quantities of almonds received and processed
- Description of process for handling/storage of almonds
- Description of facility sanitation and food safety programs including HACCP/GMP/Pathogen Environmental Monitoring and Sanitation SSOP's
- Summary of findings from production records review for process critical factors verification
- Summary of findings from production observation for process critical factors verification
- Description of practices to prevent post process contamination
- Summary of corrective actions taken (if any)
- Specific points that must address the following areas:
 - o Process letter on file from Board-approved process authority
 - o Treatment parameters controlled, monitored, and recorded
 - o Product not subject to recontamination
 - o Corrective actions followed for any deviations
 - o Records retained
 - o Compliance with regulation

If the audit determines that there are issues with non-compliance with the items mentioned above, the procedures are as follows:

1. For minor infractions², no action will be taken beyond correspondence by the Board with the DV User to determine the cause(s) of non-compliance and to ensure the remedies have been put in place to correct the problem(s).
2. For major infractions³, the situation will be communicated with company personnel to determine cause(s) and to ensure that remedies have been put in place. The Board will follow up with the DV User to ensure that effective procedures are put in place to correct the problem(s). Audit frequency may increase to at least every two months until it is evident that the problem(s) has been resolved, at which time the audit frequency will return to at least once every 12 months.
3. If there are repeated major infractions the DV User will only be able to ship or use almonds treated at the facility if, prior to shipment or use, a process authority has reviewed the records and conditions at the facility, and determined on a lot-by-lot basis that the almonds were treated to yield at least a minimum 4-log reduction of *Salmonella* and handled in a manner after treatment to prevent recontamination, and that appropriate records related to the treatment were kept. When the DV User can show that they can consistently meet the requirements for treating almonds, the DV User may petition the Board to return to be audited at least once every two months for six months and subsequently to at least once every year.
4. If the process authority's review of procedures and treatments, or audit results indicates, continued major infraction and/or inadequate means to control treatment or recontamination, DV User status will be revoked.
5. If the company disagree with a Board decision, it may appeal the decision in writing to the Board, and ultimately to USDA

Note: Should the Board request further information from the DV auditor applicant to process an application, an initial response must be received within 30 days to keep the application open. Failure to respond within 30 days will result in a rejected application. Correspondence thereafter must be received in a timely fashion as determined by the Board.

¹ Board refers to the Almond Board of California, its staff or designated agent.

² Minor Infractions: Any infraction that does not compromise overall compliance with the minimum 4-log reduction in *Salmonella*.

³ Major Infractions: Any issue that is associated with the recontamination, recordkeeping and/or shipment of almonds that does not comply with the minimum 4-log reduction in *Salmonella*.

ALMOND BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
DIRECT VERIFIABLE (DV) PROGRAM AUDITORS APPLICATION FORM

Pursuant to authority provided in § 981.42 of almond marketing order – 7 CFR Part 981, and as specified in § 981.442(b) of the marketing order’s regulations, handlers must subject their almonds to a treatment process or processes that have been determined to achieve in total a minimum 4-log reduction of Salmonella bacteria. Handlers may treat the almonds prior to shipment, ship untreated almonds labeled as unpasteurized to locations outside the United States, Canada, and Mexico, or ship untreated almonds labeled as unpasteurized under the DV program to approved manufacturers within the United States, Canada, or Mexico, who agree to treat the almonds. Such manufacturers are subject to audit by approved DV auditors. The Almond Board of California (Board or ABC) administers the marketing order locally, with oversight by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In consideration of the approval of this application, the following applicant requests approval as a DV Program Auditor for almonds for _____ (crop year).⁴

Date _____ Company _____
Name _____
Address _____
Telephone (_____) _____ Fax (_____) _____
Email Address _____

Please complete the following (attach a curriculum vitae and additional pages, if needed):

- Professional Affiliation(s) and Education:
Length of time as an auditor:
Products/Equipment/Processes for which you have audited:
Experience conducting audits for food industry:

For ABC Use:

Table with 2 columns and 4 rows: Date Received by ABC, Date Approved by ABC, Effective for Crop Year, Date DV Auditor Notified of Approval.

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 OMB 0581-0242. 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.

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.

⁴ Applicant may be an organization or a person. Applications will be reviewed and approved by ABC’s Technical Expert Review Panel (TERP). Should the applicant disagree with TERP’s decision, it may appeal the decision in writing to the Board, and ultimately to USDA.