USDA Process Audit Program

A Type of AMS ISAAP Audit Program for Applicants

1 Scope

1.1 General

This document specifies the requirements for the USDA Process Audit Program. The Program is provided under the Agricultural Marketing Service, Industry Services Audit and Accreditation Program (AMS ISAAP), AMS Branch Audit Management Program.

The USDA Process Audit Program is most useful to verify conformance to standards, methods, procedures, or other requirements. It is a program that verifies processes are working within established limits. An audit of a process includes an analysis of elements of a specific process or processes and an appraisal of completeness, correctness of conditions, and probable effectiveness.

1.2 Application

All requirements of this document are generic and are intended to be applicable to all applicants, regardless of type, size, and product produced.

2 References

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

2.1 AMS Industry Services Audit and Accreditation Programs Manual (AMS 1)

3 Definitions

3.1 Process: Any activity or set of activities that uses resources to transform inputs to outputs.

4 AMS Branch Responsibilities

4.1 The AMS Branch shall establish documented requirements for a Specific USDA Process Audit Program, including the processes that shall be addressed.

Note: A guideline in itself usually does not set forth requirements. Documented requirements are necessary to verify conformance.

4.2 The AMS Branch may include additional requirements within a Specific USDA Process Audit Program, as appropriate to the industry.

4.3 The AMS Branch may use an alternative name for a Specific USDA Process Audit Program.

4.4 The AMS Branch shall not use the terms "quality management system," "quality system," "management system," or "ISO based" to identify or describe a Specific Process Audit Program. These terms are reserved for descriptions of audit programs that cover all aspects of an applicant's control system and where audits are conducted to verify, through objective evidence, whether or not the quality management system and organizational plans are indeed carried out to adequately and effectively meet the requirements set forth. The term "ISO based" may not be used in any program, instruction, or information used to describe the program as this program does not include all the

required elements of an ISO program and the term "ISO" is reserved for programs that incorporate all the elements of an ISO standard or guide.

4.5 The AMS Branch shall select an AMS Auditor who meets the AMS Auditor Criteria for the USDA Process Audit Program.

5 Applicant Responsibilities

The applicant shall develop and implement a documented program that addresses all requirements. The documented program shall include

a) Documents required by the Specific USDA Process Audit Program;
b) Documents needed by the applicant to ensure the effective planning, operation, and control of its processes; and
c) Records required by the Specific USDA Process Audit Program.

6 Frequency of Audits

The AMS Branch shall conduct the audit in accordance with a specified time frame stated in a specific USDA Process Program. However, the program audit shall be carried out at least once every 12 months.

7 Program Requirements

7.1 A Specific Process Audit Program shall include the following

a) Monitoring and Measurement of Processes: The applicant shall apply suitable methods for monitoring and, where applicable, measurement of the processes. These methods shall demonstrate the ability of the processes to achieve planned results. When planned results are not achieved, correction and corrective action shall be taken, as appropriate, to ensure conformity of the product or service.
b) Monitoring and Measurement of Product: The applicant shall monitor and measure the characteristics of the product to verify that product requirements have been met. This shall be carried out at appropriate stages of the product realization process in accordance with planned arrangements. Non-conforming product must be controlled and not used within the program.
c) Identification and Traceability: The applicant shall have a documented procedure to identify product by suitable means throughout product realization, where appropriate.
d) Corrective Action: The applicant shall take action to eliminate the cause of non-conformances in order to prevent recurrence. Corrective actions shall be appropriate to the effects of the non-conformances encountered.