United States Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Marketing Service
Fruit and Vegetable Programs

Fresh Products Branch Directive

FPB 701
07/26/10

MINIMUM AUDITOR CRITERIA FOR FEDERAL AND FEDERAL- STATE PERSONNEL LICENSED TO PERFORM AUDITS

I. PURPOSE

To outline the minimum requirements needed by Fresh Products Branch (FPB) employees and federal-state personnel in order to meet the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) auditor requirements, and outline the requirements to maintain auditor status.

II. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This Directive supersedes FPB Directive 701 dated 4/23/08 and makes obsolete FPB Directive 704 dated 9/22/08. Please discard Directive 704 dated 9/22/08.

III. AUTHORITY

The AMS Industry Services Audit and Accreditation Program (ISAAP) is responsible for developing AMS policy and procedures for the management of AMS audit-based services. These policies include a standard set of criteria for training, licensing, and maintaining of auditor status. The purpose of developing uniform auditor criteria is to demonstrate that AMS auditors have received appropriate training and are qualified to provide auditing services. FPB is responsible for ensuring that all licensed auditors meet these requirements.

IV. POLICY

FPB shall adopt the policies outlined in AMS ISAAP documentation pertaining to auditor criteria. This Directive does not restate all policies outlined in ISAAP documentation, but highlights key criteria, as well as establishes Branch policy for FPB specific audit programs. All Branch personnel and federal-state licensees should review the following ISAAP documents for a full explanation of auditor criteria.

- AMS 1C- AMS ISAAP Auditor Criteria
- AMS 1C1- Performance and Training Evaluation Procedures for AMS Auditors
- AMS 1C1A- AMS Auditor - in - Training Evaluation Worksheet
- AMS 1C1B- AMS Auditor Performance Evaluation Worksheet
- AMS 2A- AMS Process Audit Program

Distribution: EM

Originating Office: Office of the Chief

File Maintenance Instructions: Remove Directive 701 dated 4/23/08 and file this one in its place. Discard Directive 704 dated 9/22/08.

IV. POLICY
Continued

The Good Agricultural Practices and Good Handling Practices (GAP&GHP), Identity Preservation (IP), and Partners in Quality (PIQ) programs are all defined as process based audits and must meet the requirements under AMS 2A. For the purposes of FPB audit programs, any commodity specific audit program for good agricultural practices falls under the umbrella of the generic GAP&GHP program.

Qualified Staff. In addition to meeting the criteria outlined in AMS 1C, a potential auditor must be either a USDA employee or an employee of an entity which has entered into a cooperative agreement with FPB, typically a state department of agriculture, in order to be licensed by FPB as an auditor. The potential auditor must be recommended by the cooperating agency's program manager in writing for consideration, and must be accountable to the state program manager when performing audits on behalf of FPB.

AMS Auditor Criteria. The specific criterion which a potential auditor must meet is outlined in AMS 1C. It covers five core auditor requirements; personal attributes, education, work experience, auditor training, and audit experience.

Fundamental Requirements. All requirements listed under AMS 1C section 3.1 must be met in order for staff to be recognized as an auditor-in-training. In addition, FPB requires the following specialized requirements in order to be licensed to perform audits:

- Section 3.1.1c- *Have completed a minimum of 3 years experience post high school which shall be in an agricultural related field.* All potential auditors shall demonstrate knowledge of the production, handling, and marketing of fruit, vegetable and other specialty crops through appropriate work experience. A resume outlining work experience in order to meet this requirement must be submitted to FPB. FPB will review documentation to determine if the potential candidate meets work experience requirements and at its discretion interview potential auditors to determine suitability. In addition, the combination of work experience and educational requirements remain in effect. However, the work experience must meet the same requirements as outlined above.

  Section 3.1.1f- *Have successfully completed Specific Audit Program Management Training and/or Specific Accreditation Program Training as defined by the Branch.* This training shall consist of the training courses for the appropriate FPB audit program(s). In addition, any potential auditor who is not licensed by FPB to perform inspections must demonstrate knowledge of the role of the inspection program within the fruit

and vegetable industry, including an understanding of AMS ethical standards, customer service standards, and mission statement. All licensed auditors shall participate in annual refresher training as defined by FPB management.

- Once a potential auditor has met the Fundamental Requirements, he/she shall be considered an auditor-in-training.

Auditor Evaluations. The policies for performing auditor evaluations is addressed in AMS 1C1. Evaluators may be Federal Program Managers/Supervisors, delegated FPB staff, Officers-in-Charge, or federal-state licensees to which supervisory authority in auditing has been delegated. The evaluator must have completed an AMS - approved ISO 9001 Lead Auditor training course in order to act in this capacity.

- Section 7.2.1 addresses the frequency of evaluations. Evaluations shall be completed by an evaluator at least annually for each specific program (GAP&GHP, IP or PIQ) in which the AMS Branch considers the auditor qualified. The evaluation shall be recorded on the AMS Auditor Performance Evaluation Worksheet 1C1B. A desk or witness evaluation (shadow audit) shall be performed at least annually. All auditors must be evaluated using a witness evaluation (shadow audit) at least once every three years for each specific program. In addition, a witness evaluation (shadow audit) must be conducted at least annually on FPB licensed auditors with less than 2 years audit experience, any auditor who receives less than a satisfactory rating on their previous audit evaluation, or any auditor who has performed less than 6 audits over the previous two year period.
- The results of the auditor evaluations shall be used in determining the auditor's overall performance evaluation.
- The original copy of the auditor evaluation shall be kept on file according to FPB or State personnel retention policy. For state personnel, these will be reviewed as part of the Branch Internal Quality Management System review.
- For the Federal State Inspection Program (FSIP), a copy of the completed audit evaluation shall be sent to the appropriate Federal Program Manager; for federal employees a copy shall be sent to the Audit Program Coordinator

Continual Professional Development. To maintain AMS auditor status, auditor must meet the criteria listed in AMS 1C, Section 6 regarding continual professional development. Any non-USDA sponsored courses or training used toward continual professional development must be approved prior to attendance using the form FPB 701a (attached). Documentation of completion of the 80 hours of continual professional development must be submitted to the appropriate Federal Program

IV. POLICY
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Manager/Supervisor (for federal-state licensees) or the Audit Program Coordinator (for federal employees) by the end of the 3rd fiscal year (October 1st) after the issuance of the auditor's license. Failure to do so may result in the auditor not being licensed. The documentation must show at a minimum the class, training course, or event name, location, date(s), total number of approved hours, and the auditor and supervisor's signatures that the 80 hours have been met. Form FPB 701b (attached) can be utilized for this purpose; however States may utilize their own forms to document this requirement as long as it meets the minimum criteria noted above.

Identity Preservation Program. In addition to meeting the AMS ISAAP auditor requirements, the following requirements must be met in order to be licensed by FPB to perform IP audits:

- Licensed to perform GAP&GHP audits
- Complete FPB Train the Trainer class within 1 year of performing first IP audit
- Complete an AMS approved ISO 9001 Lead Auditor Training class within one year of performing first IP audit.
- Perform a minimum of three IP audits under the supervision of an IP auditor, with a minimum of two acting as the lead auditor
- Receive at least a "satisfactory" rating on an auditor evaluation performed by the manager of the IP program or designee.

Cheri Courtney
Branch Chief

Attachments:

- AMS 1C- AMS ISAAP Auditor Criteria
- AMS 1C1- Performance and Training Evaluation Procedures for AMS Auditors
- AMS 1C1A- AMS Auditor – in - Training Evaluation Worksheet
- AMS 1C1B- AMS Auditor Performance Evaluation Worksheet
- AMS 2A- AMS Process Audit Program
- FPB Form 701a Pre-approval Form for Continual Professional Development Activities
- FPB Form 701b- Documentation of Completion of Continual Professional Development