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AIM
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Series

Federal Field Office and Federal-State Cooperative Market Field Office Review

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**Federal Field Office and Federal-State Cooperative Market Field Office Review
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INTRODUCTION

This instruction establishes Specialty Crops Inspection (SCI) Division procedures for conducting field office reviews of Federal Area Offices, Sub-Offices, and Inspection Point offices and Federal-State Cooperative Market field offices not covered under a Branch Internal Quality Management System (BIQMS). This instruction includes field office review procedures for planning, documenting, reporting, and distributing of reports. Field office reviews are conducted to ensure SCI's policies, regulations, procedures and instructions for grading, certification, and overall administration for its programs are implemented and working as intended. These reviews provide essential information to SCI and Federal-State management for continual Quality Management System (QMS) improvement.

These field office reviews are conducted annually at each field office location. The frequency of the review process may be modified in concurrence with the Associate Director of Inspection Operations depending on the extent of controls necessary to ensure operational procedures and processes are working as intended. Federal-State Cooperative Market supervisors need to work through the Federal-State Inspection Management (FSIM) Branch Chief and their respective Federal Program Managers (FPM) if modification is needed.

Primary field office Reviewer responsibility for scheduling and conducting these systematic on-site reviews unless otherwise directed by the Associate Director of Inspection Operations are listed in the table below.

Field Office Type	Field Office Reviewer¹	Final Review Report Issued to
Federal Area Office	Inspection Operations Regional Branch Chief (RBC)	Officer in Charge (OIC), RBC (if not the reviewer), HQ Inspection Operations Chief of Staff and Associate Director of Inspection Operations
Federal Sub-Office	OIC	Sub-Area Supervisor (SAS), OIC (if not the reviewer), and RBC
Federal Inspection Point	OIC	Inspector in Charge (IIC), OIC (if not the reviewer) and RBC
Federal-State Cooperative Market Office	FPM	Fed-State OIC, Federal-State Supervisor, FSIM Branch Chief and FPM (if not the reviewer)

¹ Federal field office reviewer responsibility may be delegated to other qualified RBCs, Assistant RBCs, Headquarters Inspection Operations staff members, OICs, Assistant OICs, FSIM Branch Chief, Assistant FSIM Branch Chief, or FPM as needed to better ensure efficient and cost effective reviews.

To better ensure uniformity each RBC and Assistant RBC will annually assist and participate in at least one Area Office Review outside of their respective regional territory. Each FPM will annually assist and participate in at least one Federal-State Cooperative Market Field Office review outside of their respective regional territory.

Specific office functions and performance measures will be evaluated for compliance with established policies. Non-conformities identified will be addressed via corrective action procedures. Additional procedures or programs may be included in the review at the request of SCI Management or the RBC.

GUIDE FOR ELECTRONIC USAGE

The AIM system of instructional manuals is available electronically in Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format (PDF) at the following intranet address:

<https://ems-team.usda.gov/sites/AMS/AMS-SCI/AIM/SitePages/Home.aspx>

When accessed electronically, AIM materials have hyperlinks and hypertext (visible as underlined [blue text](#)) available to the PDF user. Clicking on a hyperlink takes the reader to a web site with information relating to the subject. Hypertext links the reader to a different page within the current manual, or a different manual, with information relating to the subject. For example, the hypertext in the Table of Contents allows a reader to go directly to the section of interest in the manual by clicking on the section title.

PDF offers a variety of tools depending on the Adobe version the reader has. The newer the version, the more tools available. PDF documents are easily searchable for content within a document or within multiple documents. To learn about the variety of PDF search options:

- Click on the “Help” tab on the top of any page in Adobe Acrobat,
- Then click on the “Adobe Acrobat Help” bar,
- Type the word “Search” in the “Search” box, and click on the “Search” button,
- A series of options will become available,
- Click on the “Access Search Features” link and follow the instructions for the type of search you are interested in.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Field Office Reviewer

Federal

- A. Provide OIC, SAS, or IIC with sufficient advance notice of the proposed review date to arrange for visits to processing plants and inspection points.
- B. Prepare necessary worksheets for conducting the review, of procedures or programs requested by SCI Management or the Associate Director of Inspection Operations, if not included in the Federal Field Office Review report.
- C. Identify and document the findings and categorize into (1) positive findings, (2) non-conformances, and (3) observations.
 - 1. Custodial Activities pertaining to USDA Contracts for Area Office reviews will be evaluated separately by HQ Inspection Operations. The USDA Contracts related questions on the Federal Field Office Review report will be completed by the HQ Inspection Operations reviewer at the time of this review.
 - 2. Determine if there are non-conformances of a serious nature which need to be immediately elevated to the attention of the RBC or Associate Director of Inspection Operations and, if so, notify same.
- D. Document the non-conformances that affect the ability of SCI to achieve its stated quality objectives.
- E. Conduct an exit briefing of all findings with the OIC, SAS, or IIC.
- F. Prepare the Federal Field Office Review report, including the Corrective Action Tracking section for identified non-conformities not corrected at time of review.
- G. Distribute the report to the respective RBC, OIC, SAS, or IIC, within 15 working days of the start of the review.
 - 1. Include the Executive Summary sheet for Area Office reviews.
- H. Respond back to the OIC, SAS, or IIC within 15 working days of reception, acceptance of the proposed corrective actions and proposed timeline of implementation. Track, follow-up and verify effectiveness of corrective actions taken until completion and close out.

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- I. Distribute the completed report to the Chief of Staff for Inspection Operations and the Associate Director of Inspection Operations once all corrective actions have been completed and closed out;
 1. Include the completed Executive Summary sheet for Area Office reviews.

Federal-State Cooperative Market

- A. Provide Fed-State OIC with sufficient advance notice of the proposed review date to arrange for visits to inspection points.
- B. Prepare necessary worksheets for conducting the review, of procedures or programs requested by SCI Management or the FSIM Branch Chief, if not included in the Federal-State Cooperative Market Field Office Review report.
- C. Identify the findings and categorize into (1) positive findings, (2) non-conformances, and (3) observations.
 1. Determine if there are non-conformances of a serious nature which need to be immediately elevated to the attention of the FSIM Branch Chief or Associate Director of Inspection Operations and, if so, notify same.
- B. Document the non-conformances that affect the ability of SCI to achieve its stated quality objectives.
- C. Conduct an exit briefing of all findings with the Fed-State OIC.
- D. Prepare the Federal-State Cooperative Market Field Office Review report, including the Corrective Action Tracking section for identified non-conformities not corrected at time of review.
- E. Distribute the report to the respective Federal-State Supervisor and Fed-State OIC, within 15 working days of the start of the review.
- F. Respond back to the Fed-State OIC within 15 working days of reception, acceptance of the proposed corrective actions and proposed timeline of implementation. Track, follow-up and verify effectiveness on corrective actions taken until completion and close out;
- G. Distribute the completed report to the FSIM Branch Chief and respective FPMs once all corrective actions have been completed and closed out.

IIC and SAS

- A. For reviews conducted in their respective offices:
 - 1. Provide any assistance, documents, or records needed for the review;
 - 2. Submit proposed corrective actions for all non-conformities not corrected at the time of the review within 15 working days of receipt of the review report; and
 - 3. Initiate all approved corrective and/or preventive actions.

Federal OIC

- A. Continually assess their Inspection Points' and Sub-Offices' fiscal activities including contracts and agreements; evaluating the efficiency of inspection and grading with respect to established policies and procedures; reviewing administrative operations and procedures; and evaluating supervisory skills and abilities.
- B. Coordinate scheduling with the RBC for each of their Inspection Points and Sub-Offices to be reviewed annually and provide the RBC the annual schedule by January 15th, including the proposed date for each review.
- C. For reviews conducted in their respective offices:
 - 1. Provide any assistance, documents, or records needed for the review;
 - 2. Submit proposed corrective actions for all non-conformities not corrected at the time of the review within 15 working days of receipt of the review report; and
 - 3. Initiate all approved corrective and/or preventive actions.

Federal-State OIC

- A. Continually assess their Federal-State Cooperative Market field offices' activities including contracts and agreements; evaluating the efficiency of inspection and grading with respect to established policies and procedures; reviewing administrative operations and procedures.
- B. For reviews conducted in their respective offices:
 - 1. Provide any assistance, documents, or records needed for the review;

2. Submit proposed corrective actions for all non-conformities not corrected at the time of the review within 15 working days of receipt of the review report; and
3. Initiate all approved corrective and/or preventive actions.

Regional Branch Chief

- A. Continually assess their Area Offices' fiscal activities including contracts and agreements; evaluate the efficiency of inspection and grading, with respect to established policies and procedures; review administrative operations and procedures; and evaluate supervisory skills and abilities.
- B. Review Inspection Point and Sub-Office field office review reports completed by OICs in offices within their respective regional territory.
- C. Coordinate scheduling for each of their Area Offices to be reviewed annually and provide the Associate Director of Inspection Operations and the Chief of Staff for Inspection Operations the annual schedule by January 15th, including the proposed date for each review.

Federal Program Managers

- A. Continually assess their Federal-State Cooperative Market activities including contracts and agreements; evaluating the efficiency of inspection, grading and auditing with respect to established policies and procedures; reviewing administrative operations and procedures; and evaluating supervisory skills and abilities.
- B. Coordinate scheduling for each of their Federal-State Cooperative markets to be reviewed annually and provide the FSIM Branch Chief the annual schedule by January 15, including the proposed date for each review.

Federal State Inspection Management (FSIM) Branch Chief

- A. Review completed Federal-State Cooperative Market Field Office Review reports for all Federal-State Cooperative market offices.
- B. Ensure that significant non-conformances are on the agenda for the next FSIM Management Review meeting for further discussion and resolution, or calling a management meeting to discuss the issues.

Chief of Staff for Inspection Operations and Associate Director of Inspection Operations

- A. Review completed Federal Field Office Review reports for all Area Offices.

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- B. Ensure that significant non-conformances are on the agenda for the next SCI Management Review meeting for further discussion and resolution, or calling a management meeting to discuss the issues.

REPORT MANAGEMENT

All completed Field Office Review reports and any additional follow-up correspondences must be saved electronically together in a designated SCI share drive folder and retained for 6 years.

APPENDIX I – SC-398 FIELD OFFICE REVIEW REPORT

[Electronic version of the SC-398 Field Office Review Report](#)



**SPECIALTY CROPS INSPECTION DIVISION
FIELD OFFICE REVIEW REPORT**

FIELD OFFICE TYPE:		LOCATION:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Area Office <input type="checkbox"/> Sub-Office <input type="checkbox"/> Inspection Point				
NAME OF OIC, SAS, OR IIC:		DATE:		
REVIEWERS:				
CATEGORY	CONFORMS?			REVIEWERS' NOTES
	Yes	No	N/A	
I. FISCAL ACTIVITIES				
A. DEBT MANAGEMENT REPORT (DMR)				
1.	Is the DMR report being reviewed on a monthly basis?			
2.	Are delinquent account procedures followed?			
B. TRANSACTION REGISTER REPORTS (TRD)				
1.	Does the OIC know where to access the TRD?			
2.	Is the TRD being reviewed on a monthly basis?			
3.	Are errors to the TRD being reported?			
4.	Are errors corrected?			
C. REVENUE TRACKER (TMI Services)				
1.	Is the Revenue Tracker completed and processed according to Division instructions?			
D. BILLING – IN-PLANT (Processed Services)				
1.	Is there an adequate system in place to verify accuracy of billings?			
2.	Do billings agree with supporting documents?			
3.	Is the billing turn-around time 10 days or less?			
4.	Are fee billings submitted by the established cutoff date?			
E. BILLING – LOT (Processed Services)				
1.	Is there an adequate system in place to verify that the bills sent to applicants are accurately reflected in the TRD?			
2.	Are charges appropriate for product groups?			
3.	Do bills include the minimum ½ hour charge for preparation?			
4.	Is the billing turn-around time 10 days or less?			
F. CODs				
1.	Are CODs (checks/money orders) kept in a secure location and routinely submitted to the Service Center or lockbox?			
2.	Does the office maintain a copy of all checks or money orders sent to the Service Center until receipt is confirmed?			
II. CUSTODIAL ACTIVITIES				
A. GSA/GOV VEHICLES				
1.	Are all vehicles assigned to specific locations properly identified by the correct FMMI code?			

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**APPENDIX II – SC-400 FEDERAL-STATE COOPERATIVE MARKET OFFICE
REVIEW REPORT**

[Electronic version of the SC-400 Federal-State Cooperative Market Office Review Report](#)



**SPECIALTY CROPS INSPECTION DIVISION
FEDERAL-STATE COOPERATIVE MARKET OFFICE REVIEW REPORT**

FIELD OFFICE TYPE:		LOCATION:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal-State Cooperative Market Office				
NAME OF SUPERVISOR, OIC:		DATE:		
REVIEWERS:				
CATEGORY	CONFORMS?			REVIEWERS' NOTES
	Yes	No	N/A	
I. CUSTODIAL ACTIVITIES				
A. OFFICE PROCEDURES				
1.	Are records and files well established and maintained?			
2.	Are all pertinent files filed by fiscal year?			
3.	Are files so orderly that anyone could locate needed material in a reasonable amount of time?			
4.	Is record disposal in accordance with instructions?			
5.	Are employees without e-mail access kept current with AIM and other Division information?			
6.	Is personal identifiable information (PII) and customer's information being properly safeguarded?			
7.	Is a file maintained for appeal inspections?			
8.	Have instructions and for disposition of obsolete materials and forms been followed?			
9.	Is the Supervisor familiar with and using the SQL reports?			
10.	Are shipper copies of market certificates being mailed/faxed/emailed according to Division policy?			
A. MANDATORY POSTINGS				
1.	Are all materials listed on the SCI SharePoint Required Office Postings Checklist posted within the office?			
B. CERTIFICATE ACCOUNTABILITY				
1.	Is the Carton Log up to date with accurate entries?			
2.	Is the Record of Assignment and Completion of Serially Numbered Forms accurate and up to date?			
3.	Are certificates filed according to Division policy?			
4.	Are there missing FEIRS certificates listed on the office's Missing Certificate SQL report from this review period?			
5.	Have missing FEIRS certificates been reported to FSS and FPM's?			
6.	Do inspectors have open certificate on their FEIRS computer?			
7.	Are FEIRS certificates being transmitted at a minimum of twice a week?			
8.	Are SC-237's being properly filed?			

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APPENDIX III – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET

[Electronic version of the Review Executive Summary Sheet](#)



**SPECIALTY CROPS INSPECTION DIVISION
FEDERAL FIELD OFFICE REVIEW EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

FIELD OFFICE TYPE:		LOCATION:
<input type="checkbox"/> Area Office <input type="checkbox"/> Sub-Office <input type="checkbox"/> Inspection Point		
NAME OF OIC, SAS, OR IIC:		DATE:
REVIEWERS:		
NON-CONFORMITIES (completed by Reviewer)		
CURRENT REVIEW		
1. Total number of non-conformances noted during this Review		
2. Number of non-conformances corrected during this Review		
3. Number of remaining non-conformances needing corrective actions		
OFFICE ACTIVITY (completed by OIC)		
1. Primary type of services being provided		
2. Top four commodities inspected (by number of issued certificates)		
3. Top four commodities inspected (by weight)		
4. Area of Coverage (metro areas, State areas, etc.)		
5. Number of full-time staff		
6. Number of mixed-tour staff		
7. Is office currently fully staffed?		
8. If not, under staffed by how many and which positions?		
9. Major changes to office operations occurring since last review		
10. Major changes to applicant operations occurring since last review		
11. At time of review office financial summaries showed office operating at a profit or loss? List net profit/loss		
GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND SUMMARY OF OFFICE OPERATIONS (completed by Reviewer)		