U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Compliance Contacts
Contact the following individual(s) to get more information on complying with USDA regulations:

Christine Chavez
Phone: 202-720-7117
christine.chavez@osec.usda.gov

Compliance Resources
The following agencies and offices provide compliance resources for small businesses:

- Agricultural Marketing Service
- Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
- Food and Nutrition Service
- Food Safety Inspection Service
- Foreign Agricultural Service
- Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA)
- Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization

Agricultural Marketing Service

- Dairy Program Services and Resources
  Information on the Agricultural Marketing Service's Dairy Program.
- Plant Variety Protection Office
  Information on the Plant Variety Protection Act (PVPA), which involves issuance of Certificates of Protection. The Act provides legal intellectual property rights protection to developers of new varieties of plants which are sexually reproduced (by seed) or tuber-propagated.
- Pesticide Recordkeeping Program
  Information on the Federal Pesticide Recordkeeping Program, which requires all certified private applicators to keep records of their use of federally restricted use pesticides (RUP) for a period of 2 years.
- Seed Regulatory and Testing Programs
  Information on the Federal Seed Act which regulates the interstate shipment of agricultural and vegetable seed.
- Meat Grading and Certification Branch
  Information on meat grading and certification requirements and services.
- Livestock Mandatory Reporting Compliance Information
  Information on the requirement for livestock packers, livestock processors, and importers covered under the act to report specific data on livestock purchases and boxed beef and lamb sales.
- Livestock Quality Systems Verification Programs
  Information on services for the Quality System Verification Programs (QSVP). The QSVP are voluntary, user-fee, audit-based programs that are available to suppliers of agricultural products and services. The QSVP are designed to provide independent verification that special processes or marketing claims are clearly defined and verified by an independent third party.
- How to Read an Inspection Certificate
  Provides a typical fruit/vegetable inspection certificate, broken out by major sections. The user may click on each section of the inspection certificate to get a complete explanation of its content.
- Steps in Developing a Fruit and Vegetable Marketing Order or Marketing Agreement Program
  This document explains the steps involved in establishing a marketing order or agreement for a given commodity.
- Small Business Guide for Complying with Marketing Agreements and Orders for Fruits, Vegetables and Specialty Crops
  This document provides an overview of marketing agreements and orders. It addresses how these instruments help balance the availability of quality product with the need for adequate returns to producers and the demands of consumers.
- Product Grading and Quality Inspection Program Overview
  This overview of the Agricultural Marketing Services Product Grading and Quality Inspection Program includes an explanation of how grading services are provided as well as the inspection fees for grading.
Understanding Cotton Classification Results
This document explains the approach and criteria for classifying cotton. Detailed guidance is provided on the various components of the classification process.

Agricultural Transportation Services
Information on training and assistance available to help exporter be successful in exporting ventures.

Organic Production and Handling Requirements
These questions and answers provide information about the National Organic Program and many of the requirements for declaring a product "organic."

Country of Origin Labeling Examples
Examples of records that may be useful for COOL verification purposes.

Country of Origin Labeling: FAQs
A series of frequently asked questions regarding the Country of Origin Labeling Program and its requirements.

Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act Licensing
Guidance for obtaining a license under the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA).

Labeling Packaged Organic Products
Guidance on product labeling requirements for various organic categories.

National Organic Program: Fact Sheets
A series of fact sheets describing the National Organic Program and its requirements.

National Organic Program FAQs
A series of frequently asked questions regarding the National Organic Program and its requirements.

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Animal and Animal Product Import and Export Information
Find information on the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's activities and services to support import and export of animals, animal products, and biologicals.

Electronic Freedom of Information Act Reading Room
An electronic reading room for accessing a variety of documents related to Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service programs.

Center for Veterinary Biologics Forms and Permits
Forms and permits to meet the requirements of the Virus-Serum-Toxin Act of 1913.

National Veterinary Accreditation Program
Information on the National Veterinary Accreditation Program which certifies private veterinary practitioners to work cooperatively with Federal veterinarians and State animal health officials.

Agricultural Select Agent Program
Information on the requirements for businesses and individuals possessing, using, or transferring agents or toxins deemed a severe threat to public, animal or plant health, or to animal or plant products.

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service - Program Publications
This webpage provides access to all the publications currently available from the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). The publications presented here are organized into the following categories: APHIS General Information, Animal Health, Plant Health, Biotechnology, Wildlife Damage, and Animal Welfare. Whenever possible, publications are made available in both English and Spanish.

Animal Care Standards
Information on the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's Animal Care (AC) program, which provides leadership for determining standards of humane care and treatment of animals. AC implements those standards and achieves compliance through inspection, education, and cooperative efforts.

Biotechnology Regulatory Services
Information on the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's Biotechnology Regulatory Services (BRS), which protects America's agriculture and environment using a dynamic and science-based regulatory framework that allows for the safe development and use of genetically engineered organisms.

Phytosanitary Certificates and the Import and Export of Plants and Plant Products
A list of frequently asked questions regarding the regulations for importing plant and plant products into the United States and the use of phytosanitary (plant health) certificates to ensure that products imported are free of pests.

Plant Protection and Quarantine
Information on the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's efforts to safeguard agriculture and natural
resources from the risks associated with the entry, establishment, or spread of animal and plant pests and noxious weeds to ensure an abundant, high-quality, and varied food supply.

- **Plant Protection and Quarantine Manuals**
  Domestic plant protections and import restrictions.
- **How APHIS Facilitates Agricultural Exports**
  Information on the role the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service plays in the exportation of agricultural products.
- **How APHIS Facilitates Agricultural Imports**
  Information on the role the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service plays in the importation of agricultural products.
- **Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Permits**
  Provides information on the various permits that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service issues as well as online access for acquiring those permits.

**Food and Nutrition Service**

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program : Info for Retailers**
  This page is for retailers or individuals who want to apply to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly the Food Stamp Program) to become an authorized retailer.

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program : Training Guide for Retailers**
  Provides rules for retailers and answer common questions about the program.

**Food Safety Inspection Service**

- **Compliance Assistance : Labeling Guidelines**
  Labeling guidance, policies, inspection methods, and other documents related to FSIS' labeling programs that are aimed at protecting consumers from misbranded and economically adulterated meat, poultry, and egg products which ensure that all labels are truthful and not misleading.
- **Food Safety Compliance Assistance : New Technologies**
  Information on new technologies that companies may employ to ensure that their use is consistent with Agency regulations and will not adversely affect product safety, inspection procedures, or the safety of FSIS inspectors.
- **Small and Very Small Plant Outreach Materials**
  Information on a variety of documents aimed at helping small and very small food processing plants comply with food safety and HACCP regulations.
- **Food Production and Inspection Fact Sheets**
  A series of Fact Sheets on a variety of food safety, production, and inspection topics.
- **Fact Sheets on Food Labeling**
  A series of Fact Sheets about food labeling terms and requirements.
- **Resources for Small & Very Small Plants**
  Guidebook for the Preparation of HACCP Plans and Generic HACCP Models
- **State HACCP Contacts and Coordinators**
  Telephone numbers and addresses for key personnel, district offices, and information lines within the Food Safety and Inspection Service
- **Food Safety and Inspection Service Compliance Guides**
  FSIS instructions and information provided to producers and agricultural businesses in maintaining compliance with mandatory food safety and inspection legislation.

**Foreign Agricultural Service**

- **Market Development Programs**
  Information on Foreign Agricultural Service sponsored programs designed to assist in the expansion of export opportunities.
• [Foreign Agricultural Service Fact Sheets](#)
  Information on a variety of topics related to exporting agricultural commodities. Specific information on programs the Foreign Agricultural Service sponsors is also available.

• [Food Export Certificate Project](#)
  Information on food export certificates which are paper or electronic documents requested by an importing nation that describes and/or attests to animal health or product safety, production, or processing methods, packaging, labeling, or specific attributes of a food/food ingredient intended for international destinations.

• [Biotechnology and U.S. Agricultural Trade - Questions and Answers](#)
  Information on the concept of biotechnology, who regulates biotechnology, and the impact of biotechnology on foreign trade.

• [Import Programs for Agriculture Products](#)
  Information on programs the Foreign Agricultural Service offers to promote import requirements and opportunities.

• [U.S. Exporter Assistance : Pricing, Quotes, and Negotiations](#)
  Information on proper pricing, complete and accurate quotations, and choice of terms for the sale of exports so that selling products in foreign markets is successful.

• [Export Enhancement Program Fact Sheet](#)
  Information on the Export Enhancement Program (EEP), which is designed to help U.S. farm products meet competition from subsidizing countries, especially the European Union.

• [General Sales Manager Online System](#)
  The General Sales Manager Online System enables U.S. exporters and U.S. banks to submit required documentation online, or electronically, for the GSM-102, Supplier Credit Guarantee and Facility Guarantee Programs. These programs facilitate commercial financing of U.S. agricultural exports.

• [U.S. Exporter Assistance : Shipping Documentation, and Requirements](#)
  A series of documents outlining the shipping documentation required to export commodities and other requirements.

• [Exporter Assistance for Agriculture and Forestry Industries](#)
  A series of resources, products, and services that can help companies explore the potential for international sales.

• [Supplier Credit Guarantee Program](#)
  Information on how exporters can sell U.S. food products overseas through insuring short-term, open account financing.

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**Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA)**

• [Rights under the Packers and Stockyards Act](#)
  Information on which sellers and growers are protected under the P&S; Act's trust provisions and what to do if you don't get paid. Publications are also available for downloading and submission to GIPSA and the packer or live poultry dealer who owes you for livestock or poultry as notification to preserve trust benefits.

• [Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration - Educational Materials](#)
  Educational brochures in PDF format for online viewing related to all of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration sponsored programs.

• [Packer Responsibilities](#)
  Information on basic responsibilities for packers, as stipulated in the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921, as Amended and Supplemented, and the Regulations issued there under, for a complete list of legal responsibilities.

• [Live Poultry Dealer Responsibilities](#)
  Information on the basic responsibilities for live poultry dealers as stipulated in the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921, as Amended and Supplemented, and the Regulations issued there under, for a complete list of legal responsibilities.

• [Market Agency Buying on Commission, Dealer, and Clearing Agency Responsibilities](#)
  Information on basic responsibilities for market agencies buying on commission, dealers, and clearing agencies as stipulated in the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921, as Amended and Supplemented, and the Regulations issued there under, for a complete list of legal responsibilities.

• [Market Agency Selling on Commission and Stockyard Owner Responsibilities](#)
  Information on the basic responsibilities for market agencies selling on commission, and stockyards owners...
as stipulated in the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921, as Amended and Supplemented, and the Regulations issued there under, for a complete list of legal responsibilities.

- **Livestock, Meat & Poultry : Regulated Entities**
  A description of regulated entities’ roles under the Packers and Stockyards Act

- **Grain Inspector Standardization Program**
  Information on the Inspector Standardization program that provides inspectors with online learning tools, which when used in combination with hands-on-training, will help inspectors properly grade market samples and improve inspection consistency nationwide.

- **Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration - eLearning Materials**
  A variety of multimedia CDs created for the official system to the U.S. grain industry.

- **GIPSA Official Service Providers: Licensing**
  The licensing site contains study materials, examinations, and score sheets for official agency personnel to use for administering licensing exams for samplers and technicians who perform official functions under the Agricultural Marketing Act (AMA) and/or United States Grain Standards Act (USGSA).

- **GIPSA - Laws and Regulations (Directives and Notices)**
  Every customer of the official grain inspection and weighing system, wherever they are located, receives consistent, accurate service. That's because every official service provider operates under uniform standards and procedure that are communicate to all official system partners through issuances called directives and notices.

- **Official Service Providers - Grain Inspection and Weighing Services**
  The Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration delegates qualified State agencies to inspect and weigh grain at certain U.S. export port locations; and designates qualified State and private agencies to inspect and weigh grain at interior locations.

- **Grain, Rice & Pulses : Designation Information and Applications**
  The United States Grain Standards Act allows GIPSA to designate persons, States, or local governments to provide official inspection and weighing services for a period up to a 3 years.

- **Packers and Stockyards Program**
  General regulatory information for poultry growers and firms.

- **Livestock Producers and Firms**
  General information and links relating to the Packers and Stockyards Program (PS&P;) and the Packers and Stockyards Act.

- **Swine Contract Library**
  The Swine Contract Library is intended to aid in the price discovery process and provide equal access to market information for all market participants.

- **Inspection Services**
  GIPSA's Federal Grain Inspection Service provides inspection services on grains, pulses, oilseeds, and processed and graded commodities. These services facilitate the efficient and effective marketing of U.S. grain and other commodities from farmers to domestic and international end users.

- **Grain Exporter Registration**
  The United States Grain Standards Act requires the registration of all persons engaged in the business of buying grain for sale in foreign commerce. In addition, those individuals who handle, weigh, or transport grain for sale in foreign commerce must register.

- **Exporting Grain**
  Information on requirements that must be met by individuals or companies exporting grain, oilseeds, or related commodities from the United States. The requirements vary based on whether the commodity is covered by the United States Grain Standards Act (USGSA) or the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (AMA).

- **Official Weighing Services**
  A summary of the official grain weighing process for the Grain Inspectors, Packers and Stockyard Administration of USDA.

**Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization**

- **Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization**
  This link provides information on opportunities for small businesses to participate in USDA contracting activities.