Expanding Market Access: Financial Assistance through USDA's Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops (FSCSC) Program
Panelists

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Agenda

1. Food Safety Certification Requirements for Specialty Crop Growers
2. NASDA/AMS GAP Toolkit
3. Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops (FSCSC) Program
4. Additional Resources/links
Produce Safety Requirements

FSCSC Webinar

November 3rd, 2022
Why does Produce Safety Matter to Farms?

• Public Health
  • Federal (and state) regulations
  • Buyer requirements/market access audits
Public Health

• Each year in the United States an estimated 9 million people get sick, 56,000 are hospitalized, and 1,300 die of foodborne disease caused by known pathogens.

• Between 2012-2017 Produce accounted for:
  ➢ 46.3% of *Salmonella* outbreaks in the US
  ➢ 59.3% of *E. coli* O157 in the US

*The Interagency Food Safety Analytics Collaboration (IFSAC) – 2019 Report*
Why does Produce Safety Matter to Farms?

- Public Health
- Federal (and state) regulations
- Buyer requirements/market access audits
• Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)

- Set of regulations that were signed into law on January 4, 2011
- FSMA is enforced by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
The Produce Safety Rule, outlined in Section 105 of FSMA, was published on November 27, 2015.

The rule establishes science-based minimum standards for safe production and harvesting of fresh fruits and vegetables. These standards are based on a foundation of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs).

The rule applies to anyone who grows, harvests, packs, or holds fresh produce.
Produce Safety Rule

• Key exemptions and exclusions include:

  ➢ The rule does not apply to certain specified produce commodities that are rarely consumed raw.

  ➢ The rule does not apply to produce that is used for personal or on-farm consumption, or that is not a Raw Agricultural Commodity (RAC).

  ➢ The rule provides an exemption for produce that receives commercial processing that includes a kill step.

  ➢ The rule does not cover produce farms that have an average annual value of produce sold during the previous 3-year period of $25,000 or less.

  ➢ The farm must have food sales averaging less than 500,000 per year during the previous 3 years, and The farm’s sales to qualified end-users must exceed sales to others.
Produce Safety Rule

• The rule is divided into several parts, including standards for:

  ➢ Worker health, hygiene, and training

  ➢ Agricultural water, both for production and post-harvest uses

  ➢ Biological soil amendments (e.g., compost, manure)

  ➢ Domesticated and wild animals

  ➢ Equipment, tools, buildings, and sanitation

  ➢ Production of sprouts
Why does Produce Safety Matter to Farms?

- Public Health
- Federal (and state) regulations
- Buyer requirements/market access audits
Buyer’s Requirements

• Expectations of compliance to voluntary standards, such as the Global Food Safety Initiative.
  
  o Market access 3\textsuperscript{rd} party audits can be used to verify compliance to food safety standards

• Specific labeling, packing, packaging, or production practice requirements.
Inspections vs. Audits

• Audits – Different types include:

  ➢ 1\textsuperscript{st} party or self-audits. This is when a grower performs an audit of their own operation, to assess if things are occurring as planned.

  ➢ 2\textsuperscript{nd} party audits. These are performed by a buyer, and is an assessment of a supplier’s procedures and operation, to see if they meet the buyer’s expectations.

  ➢ 3\textsuperscript{rd} party audits. These are performed by a disinterested and un-biased audit agency or company, to assess if a producer is following regulations and established procedures, and meets the requirements of a contract or purchase agreement.
Market Access

- Audit requirements will depend on the audit scheme and certification body

- USDA is one option for 3rd party GAP audits; however, there are other private audit certifiers

- Choice of audit depends on auditee preference, availability of auditors, buyer requirements, etc
USDA GAP audits

USDA GAP Checklist

Version 3.0 of the USDA GAP checklist must be used for any audits performed after July 31, 2022.

- USDA GAP Checklist (V. 3.0) (xlsx)
- USDA GAP Checklist (V. 3.0) (pdf)

The previous USDA GAP checklist is available here for unannounced audits associated with audits performed before August 1, 2022.

- USDA GAP Checklist (V. 2.1) (xlsx)
- USDA GAP Checklist (V. 2.1) (pdf)

Program Resources

- GAP&GHP Audit Verification Program User’s Guide (pdf)
- GAP Audit Program Scope (pdf)
- GAP Audit Billing Policy (pdf)
- GAP Audit Uploads
- GAP Program Logo

Additional Resources

www.ams.usda.gov/gapghp
## USDA GAP Audits

### GENERAL QUESTIONS (G)

#### G-1: Management Responsibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Req. #</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>DOC</th>
<th>MAN</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Verification</th>
<th>Corrective Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G-1.1</td>
<td>A food safety policy shall be in place.</td>
<td>WP</td>
<td></td>
<td>A written policy shall outline a commitment to food safety, in general terms, how it is implemented and how it is communicated to employees, and be signed by Senior Management.</td>
<td>The auditor observes the food safety policy, observes that it is signed by Senior Management, and observes that it has been communicated to all employees in a manner that can be understood.</td>
<td>The Operation creates or revises the policy, or its communication to employees, to be in compliance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-1.2</td>
<td>Management has designated individual(s) with roles, responsibilities and resources for food safety functions.</td>
<td>WP</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Food Safety Plan shall designate who has the responsibility and authority for food safety, including a provision for the absence of key personnel. Twenty-four hour contact information shall be available for these individuals in case of food safety emergencies. These roles and responsibilities shall be communicated within the organization.</td>
<td>Auditor observes that the Food Safety Plan has identified individual(s) for key food safety activities. Auditor verifies that procedures include provisions for when the identified individual is not present.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is a disciplinary policy for food safety violations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Operation identifies individual(s) for key food safety activities in the Food Safety Plan. Operation identifies actions to be taken when the identified individual(s) are not present.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specialty Crops Inspection Division
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For market access, I need to show:</th>
<th>The USDA GAP service for you</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) technical equivalence</td>
<td>USDA Harmonized GAP Plus+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDA FSMA Produce Safety Rule alignment</td>
<td>USDA Harmonized GAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produce GAP Harmonization Initiative alignment</td>
<td>USDA GAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adherence to industry and FDA best practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Market Access Audits

• Compliance with an audit may require:
  ➢ Developing a Food Safety Plan
    o Policies
    o Objectives
    o Risk assessments and mitigation plans
    o SOPs
    o corrective actions

  ➢ Establishing Records
Market Access Audits

• Compliance with an audit may require:
  ➢ Developing a Food Safety Plan and Records (resources)
    o Consultants
    o Extension
      o www.producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu
      o https://foodsafetyclearinghouse.org/home
      o Food Safety | National Farmers Union (nfu.org)
      o https://onfarmfoodsafety.org/
Market Access Audits

• Compliance with an audit may require:

➤ Training

  o All employees must be trained on food safety and employee health and hygiene
  o Employees need food safety training relevant to their job
  o Supervisors also need food safety training
  o At least one responsible person should attend comprehensive, regulatory food safety training
Produce Safety Alliance

- Includes a training requirement.

  - The rule states that at least one supervisor or responsible party for a farm must have successfully completed food safety training at least equivalent to that received under standardized curriculum recognized as adequate by the Food and Drug Administration.

  - Produce Safety Alliance.

  - [www.producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu](http://www.producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu)
• Compliance with an audit may require:
  - Evaluating current tools and equipment for suitability
  - Assessing current buildings and facilities for food safety risks
  - Developing effective cleaning and sanitizing procedures
Market Access Audits

• Compliance with an audit may require:
  ➢ Water testing
    o Preharvest water, including irrigation
    o Postharvest water, including wash water, sinks, flumes, etc
  ➢ Soil or soil amendment testing
  ➢ Product testing
Market Access Audits

- Compliance with an audit may require:
  - Monitoring for animals
  - Traceability and recall
Market Access Audits

• Remember:
  ➢ Audit certifiers make their requirements known ahead of time
  ➢ Choose the right audit for your farm and buyers
  ➢ Resources are available to help you prepare
  ➢ USDA, states, and others have programs available to help offset costs
Thank you.

Any questions?
Education and Outreach:
Removing Barriers to USDA GAP Programs

OVERVIEW
USDA-AMS Cooperative Agreement

Develop and pilot a strategy to address barriers
  - GroupGAP
  - Historically underserved growers

Promote USDA GAP audit programs with the strategy
  - Partnership model for delivery
  - Toolkits as resources to provide education + outreach

Photo credit: Michael Howard, Eden Place Farms
Top Misconceptions

1) The FSMA Produce Safety Rule and USDA GAP are the same and GAP certification exempts a grower from an FDA inspection.

2) Pursuing GAP certification is ONLY for growers who want to sell to large retailers.

3) Private 3rd party certifiers are more likely to have an unbiased auditor who is more willing to work with growers.
Partnership Model

Education and Outreach: Removing Barriers to USDA GAP Programs
Stakeholder Toolkit

Designed as a resource for our stakeholders outlining the education and outreach program to address barriers to USDA GAP Audit Programs

- Build and Assess Partnerships
- Learn and Apply the Grower Toolkit
- Highlight GAP Funding and Marketing
- Guide for Program Implementation
Grower Toolkit

Designed for growers as a resource of information about USDA GAP Audit Programs, including GroupGAP

- Define GAP Standards and Audit Options
- Key Information and Benefits
- Cost Breakdown and Funding Assistance
- Grower GAP Needs
- Important Contacts
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Misconceptions
- Additional Resources
The GAP Audit Program

MARKET ACCESS TOOL
- Purpose of GAP certification
- Buyer driven
- Voluntary versus regulatory

ADVANTAGES of GAP + GroupGAP
- Market access
- Shared use savings – operations and technical support
- Food safety culture

GROWERS SEEKING INDIVIDUAL CERTIFICATION

INDIVIDUAL GROWERS JOINING TOGETHER TO FORM A GroupGAP GROUP
Helping Growers Achieve Certification

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- Federal GAP Reimbursement
- RMA Harmonized GAP Assistance Program
  (select states) CT, DE, HI, ME, MD, MA, NV, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, UT, VT, WV, WY
- Federal Grants
  o FMPP/LMPP
  o Urban/Indoor Agriculture
- State Funding
  o Specialty Crop Block Grants
  o Cost-Share/Reimbursements
Helping Growers Achieve Certification

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

- Getting started
- Who is available to help?
  - State Departments of Agriculture
  - Cooperative Extension
  - Non-government Organizations
- How can they help?
Technical Assistance Provided by Extension and NGOs

- Food Safety Modernization Act Compliance Training
  - Produce Rule and Preventative Controls
- GAP Preparedness Training
  - Food Safety Plan Writing
  - Quality Management Systems
- GAP Audit Certification Mentoring & Training
- Risk-Based On-Farm Food Safety Principles & Assessments
- Production & Marketing Knowledge & Skills
- Direct Market Training
- Opportunity to Connect with Other Growers
RESOURCES

Wallace Center

The Food Safety and Quality Community of Practice Discussion Group -
https://foodsystemsleadershipnetwork.org/groups/food-safety-and-quality/forum/

Monthly Call Series -
https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYqfuGtqTggHdExCSGQRxVL1YzTRIUJ_rEM

Quality Management Systems Training for Food and Farm Businesses (NEW and FREE) -
Removing Barriers to USDA GAP Programs

This toolkit was designed as a resource of information about USDA GAP Audit Programs, specifically GroupGAP. It provides important contacts, highlights available training and mentoring resources, defines key terms, and addresses misconceptions to clarify the details of GAP certification.

- PILOTED IN 7 STATES
- GROWER AND STAKEHOLDER TOOLKITS
- AVAILABLE ON WEBSITE, PDF, HARD COPY
FOOD SAFETY CERTIFICATION FOR SPECIALTY CROPS (FSCSC)
Funding and Authority

• $200 million is provided through the CCC Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 714c(e))

• Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) published June 21, 2022
Signup Period

• Program year 2022: June 27, 2022, through January 31, 2023

• Program year 2023 will be announced at a later date.
Eligibility
Eligible Applicants

To be eligible for FSCSC, the applicant must meet all of the following:

- Be a specialty crop operation;
- Be a small business or very small business;
Small business

An applicant that had an average annual monetary value of specialty crops the applicant sold during the 3-year period preceding the program year of more than $250,000 but not more than $500,000.
Very small business

An applicant that had an average annual monetary value of specialty crops the applicant sold during the 3-year period preceding the program year of no more than $250,000.
Eligible Applicants Continued

• Have obtained or renewed a:
  • 2022 food safety certification that was issued between June 21, 2022, and December 31, 2022; or
  • 2023 food safety certification issued during the 2023 calendar year; and

• Have paid eligible expenses (described in future slide)

• Be located in the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.
Ineligible Applicants

• An applicant that does not meet the definition of small business or very small business
• An operation that is not located in the US or US Territories
• An applicant that has not paid eligible expenses related to a 2022 or 2023 food safety certification
Eligible Expenses

- Developing a food safety plan for first-time food safety certification
- Maintaining or updating an existing food safety plan
- Food safety certification
- Certification upload fees
- Microbiological testing (up to 5 per category)
- Training

**NOTE:** All expenses must have been paid at the time of the application or they are not eligible.
Eligible Expenses

• Applicants are not required to apply for all categories
• Expenses should cover all audits related to certification
• Applicants can come back and modify their application if they incur more expenses after they file the application.
Developing a food safety plan for first-time food safety certification

- FSCSC will cover a percentage of the costs of seminars and tools used by specialty crop operations to create a food safety plan.

- FSCSC will also cover a percentage of the consulting fees and other associated expenses incurred if the specialty crop operations hires a consultant to develop a food safety plan.

- For specialty crop operations certified through a group, this category of expenses will cover a percentage of their share of the cost for developing a food safety or quality management system for the group.
Maintaining or updating an existing food safety plan

• FSCSC will cover a percentage of the costs of maintaining and updating existing food safety plans.

• For specialty crop operations certified through a group, this category of expenses will cover a percentage of their share of the cost for maintaining or updating an existing food safety management system for the group.
Food safety certification

FSCSC will cover a percentage of the cost of obtaining food safety certification issued by a certifier, including application fees, inspection costs, inspection fees (including travel costs and per diem for certifiers), and user fees or certifier sales assessments.

Note: The Certification must have been received on or after June 21, 2022, in order to be eligible.
Food safety certification continued

• Producers may not have expenses for certification due to:
  • RMA-AMS Harmonized GAP Assistance that may cover that cost for producers in 16 states
  • Other assistance funded through USDA Specialty Crop Block Grants

• Connecticut • Delaware • Hawaii • Maine • Maryland • Massachusetts • Nevada • New Hampshire
• New Jersey • New York • Pennsylvania • Rhode Island • Utah • Vermont • West Virginia • Wyoming
Certification upload fees

FSCSC will cover a percentage of the cost to upload audit reports and certification documentation into commercial audit databases.
Microbiological testing

FSCSC will cover a percentage of the cost of microbiological testing for products, soil amendments, and water as specified by a food safety plan or food safety management system.

A maximum of 5 tests per category will be covered.
Training

FSCSC will cover the cost of food safety training for the specialty crop operation.
Ineligible Expenses

• Infrastructure improvements (such as improvements to buildings, cold storage, flooring, restrooms, and handwashing stations)
• Equipment (such as grading/packing lines and sanitation equipment)
• Supplies (such as sanitation and cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment)
• Salaries and benefits of employees or other costs for labor, except for expenses for consultants
• Fees or penalties for late payment.
Methods to Apply

• May apply at any USDA Service Center Nationwide

• Can apply by:
  • In person
  • Mail (must be postmarked by the deadline)
  • Email
  • Fax
  • Farmers.gov/fscsc
How to Apply

• Applicant will complete the FSA-888 for each category

• Expenses must be paid prior to applying

• Applications may be amended or withdrawn at any time until the end of the application period
  • Add additional categories and/or expenses
  • Remove categories and/or expenses
**FSA-888**

**FOOD SAFETY CERTIFICATION FOR SPECIALTY CROPS PROGRAM (FSCSC)**

**NOTE**

The following data is required under regulations with the Food Safety Program (FSCSC) and the Public Health Information Network (PHIN) and Public Health Tracking (PHIT). The agency is collecting the information only for the purpose of ensuring the safety of specialty crops.

**Public Health Information Network (PHIN) Act.** As required in the PHIN Act, no agency may introduce or disseminate a crop or crop product that has not been authorized to be distributed to the public.

**PART A – APPLICANT INFORMATION**

9. Applicant’s Name

6. Address (City, State and Include Zip Code)

7. Have you participated in FSA programs? [ ] Yes [ ] No

8. Phone Number (Including Area code)

10. Email Address

**PART B – CERTIFICATION INFORMATION & EXPENSES**

19. Category of Expenses (Check all that apply) and Expenses (reimbursements must include columns 10A, 10B, 10C, and 10D)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Expenses</th>
<th>10A: Expenses</th>
<th>10B: Number of Tests</th>
<th>10C: Other Reimbursement for Expenses Received</th>
<th>10D: Other Reimbursement for Expenses Received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Safety Certification</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Safety Plan Development (1st time)</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining or Updating Food Safety Plan</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification Fees</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microbiological Testing – products</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microbiological Testing – soil amendments</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microbiological Testing – water</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Are you a small business? [ ] Yes [ ] No

(Small business means a farm that had an average annual monetary value of specialty crops the farm sold during the 3-year period preceding the current year of $500,000 or more but not more than $1,000,000)

13. Are you a very small business? [ ] Yes [ ] No

(Typical very small business means a farm that had an average annual monetary value of specialty crops the farm sold during the 3-year period preceding the current year of $500,000 or more)

**DATE STAMPED**
# FSA-888

**PART C - APPLICANT CERTIFICATION STATEMENT**

Each applicant must submit a complete application to an FSA county office to be eligible to receive program benefits. A complete application includes this form FSA-888, and forms AD-2047, SF-3881, and CCC-889 (if applicable) if the latter were not previously filed with FSA. By signing this application, applicant:

1. Has completed the food safety plan and certification process and agrees to provide FSA with any documentation required to determine eligibility, and to verify and support all information provided, including applicant's food safety certificate or plan, if requested by FSA;
2. Understands the application may be disapproved if the applicant fails to provide a complete application or any information requested by FSA within 30 days of the request;
3. Agrees to comply with, and acknowledges the applicant is subject to, all provisions of FSCSC as published in the applicable Notice of Funds Availability published in the Federal Register, and all applicable rules and regulations;
4. Understands that FSCSC payments are subject to the availability of funds and are subject to proration if total calculated payments to all eligible applicants exceed available funds. Further understands that late-filed applications received after all funds are obligated will not be paid;
5. Acknowledges that, if determined eligible and funds are available, the applicant’s expenses may be adjusted, as determined by the FSA County Committee, from the amounts entered in Item 10 to reflect the eligible expenses as verified by documentation submitted to support the application, if requested by FSA;
6. Acknowledges that FSA will issue payments for the 2023 program year as applications are processed and approved, but payments for the 2023 program year will not be issued until after the end of the application period for the FSA National Office to determine if payments for the 2023 program year are subject to proration.

I certify that:

1. The above information provided by me, or my legal representative is true and correct;
2. I understand that failure to provide true and correct information may result in the invalidation of this application, a determination of noncompliance or ineligibility, or other remedies or sanctions. By signing this form, I further acknowledge and understand that any false representation or claims are subject to civil and criminal penalties including, but not limited to, those under 18 U.S.C. 1001.
3. I understand that I may not receive duplicate benefits totaling more than 100% of cost for the same eligible expenses and program year from multiple agencies, including FSA. If it is determined that I have received duplicate benefits, I have no right to retain those payments.

| Applicant's Signature (if any) | 110. Title of Relationship of the Individual Signing in the Representative Capacity
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------
|                               | 113. Date signed (DD/MM/YYYY) |

**PART D - COUNTY COMMITTEE (CCC) DETERMINATION**

In accordance with Federal civil rights laws 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, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, familial status, political beliefs, or against or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all agencies apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or activity.

In accordance with Federal civil rights laws 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, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, familial status, political beliefs, or against or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all agencies apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or activity.

Pursuant to Title 42, Section 12205 of the U.S. Code, and to achieve the goal of ensuring equal access to all qualified persons, any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against by an agency, office, or employee of USDA should contact the USDA Office of Civil Rights at (202) 720-5955 or file a complaint with the USDA, USDA’s Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (866) 632-9992 (Toll-Free Voice); (855) 632-8132 (Toll-Free for Hearing Impaired); or (877) 833-3366 (Toll-Free TTY). A copy of the official complaint form is available online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html. If a person who is deaf or hard of hearing wishes to complain of discrimination, such person should contact the USDA Office of Civil Rights in writing at the same address or by calling (202) 720-2700, (866) 632-9992 (voice), (855) 632-8132 (Toll-Free Voice), or (877) 833-3366 (Toll-Free TTY).
Additional Information

- Any additional information requested by FSA must be received within 30 days of the request or the application will not be processed.
- Producers must maintain documentation for 3 years after application period.
Payments
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Eligible Expenses</th>
<th>Historically Underserved Applicants</th>
<th>All Other Applicants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of a food safety plan for first-time certification</td>
<td>75 percent (no maximum)</td>
<td>50 percent (no maximum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining or updating a food safety plan</td>
<td>75 percent, up to a maximum of $375</td>
<td>50 percent, up to a maximum of $250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food safety certification</td>
<td>75 percent, up to a maximum of $2,000</td>
<td>50 percent, up to a maximum of $2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification upload fees</td>
<td>75 percent, up to a maximum of $375</td>
<td>50 percent, up to a maximum of $250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microbiological testing – products</td>
<td>75 percent, up to 5 tests</td>
<td>50 percent, up to 5 tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microbiological testing – soil amendments</td>
<td>75 percent, up to 5 tests</td>
<td>50 percent, up to 5 tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microbiological testing – water</td>
<td>75 percent, up to 5 tests</td>
<td>50 percent, up to 5 tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>100 percent, up to a maximum of $300</td>
<td>100 percent, up to a maximum of $200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Historically underserved farmer or rancher

Includes all of the following:

• Beginning farmer or rancher
• Limited resource farmer or rancher
• Socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher
• Veteran farmer or rancher.
Payment Calculation

Payments are calculated as follows:

The applicant’s eligible expense $\times$ the percentage for the applicable category, not to exceed the maximum payment amount for the category, if applicable.

Note: An applicant must report any previous cost share assistance received for the expenses included on their application. The amount of the applicant’s FSCSC payment plus the reported additional cost share assistance cannot exceed the total amount of eligible expenses for each category.
Payment Information

• 2022 payments will be issued nightly, as the application is approved

• 2023 payments will not be issued until after the signup period is over. A factor may apply if funding is short.
Spot Checks

- All expenses are subject to spot check
- All documentation is required to be maintained for 3 years after the end of the application period.
Spot Checks continued

• Examples of supporting documentation may include:
  • Food Safety Certification
  • Food Safety Plan
  • Paid Invoices
  • Test results
  • Training Certificates
  • Audit report
  • Proof of payment
  • Statement of audit charges
Online Applications
Online Access

- FSCSC software allows applicants to apply online from home by accessing the Farmers.gov portal

- Must have an eAuthentication account to use this option

- An email notification is sent to the county office when an applicant applies online
Online Applicant Selection

The following is the Applicant Selection Screen when an applicant logs in from home.

![Applicant Selection Screen](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>App ID</th>
<th>Producer</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Application Status</th>
<th>COC Determination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Signature Authority-SSN Owner of LLC</td>
<td>Cancelled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>BRO</td>
<td>Signature Authority-SSN Owner of Revocable Trust</td>
<td>Initiated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td>Entity Membership</td>
<td>Not created</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FSCSC Application

• Users can easily navigate throughout application using tabs across the top of screen
• “Save and Continue” navigates to the next screen after the data entered on the screen is saved.
• “Continue” navigates the user to the next screen without saving any data
• “Save” saves the data that has been entered and leaves the user on the current page
• “Exit” returns the user to the application selection screen without saving any data
**FSCSC Application**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part A &amp; Part B</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Year: <strong>2022</strong></td>
<td>County: <strong>Alachua (001)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant: [Image]</td>
<td>Application Status: <strong>Initiated</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording State: <strong>Florida (12)</strong></td>
<td>Recording County: <strong>Alachua (001)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Application ID: <strong>1152</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 of 2 Steps

- Exit
- Save
- Continue
- Save and Continue
Part A & Part B Sections

- Enter Part A information for applicant information
- Enter Part B information for expenses
- Categories will be disabled until the check box next to each is selected
Summary Screen - Top

• Displays all information entered.

PART A - APPLICANT INFORMATION
Have you participated in FSA programs? YES
(If "NO", please fill out AD-2047 and SF-3881)

PART B - CERTIFICATION INFORMATION & EXPENSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Expenses</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>Number of Tests</th>
<th>Other Reimbursement for Expenses Received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food Safety Certification</td>
<td></td>
<td>200.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COC USE ONLY
• Answer both small business questions

**Note:** At least one must be answered yes before being able to approve
Check the box to electronically sign the application
Click “Save and Continue”
Result Screen

- Displays the status of the application.
- Click “View Form” to view and print application.

Program Year: 2021
State: Pennsylvania (42)
County: Adams (001)
Application Status: Initiated

Application status successfully updated to Initiated for [masked]

Your FSCSC Application has successfully been submitted and an email notification has been sent to the applicable county office.

To view/print the FSCSC Program form (FSA-888) or the Estimated Calculated Payment Report (ECPR) click on "View Form" or "ECPR" button.
Working with USDA:

Connect:

• with your local USDA Service Center
• utilizing the USDA Service Center Locator
• visit farmers.gov

FSA Call Center: 877-508-8364

You will be able to visit one-on-one with Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service Center (NRCS) staff.
Additional USDA Programs & Resources

• Farmers.gov

• Grant & Funding Opportunities:
  • Urban Agriculture and Innovation Production (UAIP) Grants: https://www.usda.gov/topics/urban/grants
  • Local Food Promotion Program (AMS): https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/lfpp
  • Regional Food System Partnerships (RFSP): https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/rfsp
Helpful Links & Resources

• NASDA Toolkit: https://www.nasda.org/gap-overview/
• FSCSC website: https://www.farmers.gov/pandemic-assistance/food-safety
• How to find a local Service Center: https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/service-center-locator
• To set up a Level 2 eAuthentication ID: https://www.eauth.usda.gov/eauth/b/usda/home
Webinar Recording

FSA Outreach webinar recordings can be found here: https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/outreach-and-education/webinars/index