



**AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE, SPECIALTY CROPS PROGRAM
AGREEMENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN AUDIT VERIFICATION SERVICES**

Company Information

I, _____, a duly authorized representative of

(Insert Name)

(Name of Company)

(Street Address, City, State, and Zip Code)

hereinafter referred to as the applicant, agree to be audited under a voluntary USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Specialty Crops Inspection Division (SCI) audit service. The audit will include verification of the company's farm(s), packing facilities, storage facilities, wholesale distribution centers, processing facilities, and other locations, as applicable to the audit scope(s).

1. The applicant agrees:

- a. Laws, Regulations, Statutes** - To conform with all applicable Federal, State, and local government laws, regulations, and statutes, including Agricultural Marketing Service Audit Verification and Accreditation Programs (7 CFR, Part 62), any other pertinent regulations, and any AMS instructions covering audits and certification.
- b. Audit Request** - To contact SCI to schedule the audit with the appropriate Federal or Federal-State inspection office using the SC-237A form. The request for the initial audit must be made in advance of the audit and no later than 2 weeks prior to the end of the growing/harvesting/packing season.
- c. Records** - To maintain all records required by the specific audit program and associated regulations. These include, but are not limited to, the quality manual, food safety manual, water test results, employee training records, manure use records, laboratory testing results, and other records as required by the quality manual, food safety manual, or specific audit program requirements. The applicant must make these records available to USDA Federal and/or Federal-State auditors.
- d. Access to Facilities** - To disclose and grant permission for AMS-authorized personnel to enter any and all farms and/or facilities covered within the scope of the audit for the purposes of conducting the audit. This includes the initial audit and any unannounced or interim audits that may be required by the program.
- e. Payment** - To pay with credit card, check, draft, or money order drawn to the order of the appropriate Federal or Federal-State agency for this agreement's services on or before the due date specified on billing statements. Charges for audits include, but are not limited to: audit fees, travel expenses for the initial audit, travel expenses for any unannounced or interim audits that the program requires, and fees associated with optional services. Failure to pay for services will result in decertification.

2. AMS agrees to:

- a. Perform Audit** – To provide objective third-party verification of the applicant's adherence to the requirements of the applicant's selected audit program using internationally recognized audit principles.
- b. Opening and Exit Interviews** - To discuss the audit with the applicant prior to the audit; to report the results and observations to the applicant after each audit; and to provide a timeframe for SCI to provide a copy of the completed audit report or checklist.
- c. Reports** - To issue the applicant reports of all audits and evaluations the applicant's specific audit program requires and provide written notification of any deficiencies found.
- d. Confidentiality** - To consider and treat any trade secrets or confidential information as proprietary and confidential. To consider any records and related information provided to AMS as information that is voluntarily submitted to AMS because of their participation in the specific audit program.
- e. Issuance of Certificate and Posting and Sharing Audit Results** - To issue a certificate to the applicant and to post audit results on the USDA website, when posting is included as part of the audit program and when the applicant meets the USDA acceptance criteria for each scope being audited. NOTE: Any applicant who does *not* want their company's information posted on the USDA website must put that request in writing. To provide the audit report to other parties or web-based systems only at the written request of the applicant (See the *Optional* section on page 2 of this form). NOTE: Reports containing a compilation of audit information may be shared with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and AMS will notify FDA of any imminent food safety risk.

f. Billing – To issue a bill to the applicant for the charges for the audit activity according to the current AMS fee schedule. Audit activities include audit performance, report review, certification, maintenance of the certification information on the USDA website, travel expenses, and optional services.

3. It is mutually agreed that:

- a. Length of Service** - The results of audits are valid for one year from the date of certification, provided that the USDA acceptance criteria are met on any unannounced or interim audits that the service may require. Please see the specific audit program policy for additional information on the length of service. This agreement shall remain in effect for the length of time the auditee remains a participant in the specific audit program.
- b. Maintaining Certification** - A company's information will only remain on the USDA website if all unannounced or interim audits show satisfactory adherence to the program requirements. If the unannounced or interim audits fail to show satisfactory adherence to the service requirements, the company's information will be removed from the USDA website until a follow-up audit is conducted by AMS verifying that effective corrective actions have been taken and the company shows satisfactory adherence to the program requirements on all appropriate scopes of the audit.

Approved By:

Company Representative

Name of Applicant (Print): _____ **Title:** _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

AMS Representative (Federal or Federal-State Inspection Program Supervisor):

Name of Representative (Print): _____ **Title:** _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

(OPTIONAL) The applicant requests that AMS release audit results to:

a. Web-based Systems- The auditee designates the audit report to be loaded into the following database:

Azzule Systems

b. Other Parties - The auditee designates the specific applicant checklist and audit results to be sent to:

_____ (Name of Company/Representative)

_____ (Email Address)

_____ (Phone)

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0125. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 2 minutes/hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

Non-Discrimination Policy: In accordance with Federal civil rights law 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, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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