

production, handling, or processing, and related commodity experience. GIPSA also maintains a team of highly trained Technical Experts who can accompany auditors when specific expertise is required to complete the audit.

Cost

The Process Verified Program is user-fee funded. GIPSA charges an hourly fee for all review and audit services, and for travel costs at the Government-approved reimbursement rate. The exact cost of service varies based on the scope of the process(es) being audited, the number of participating parties, and other factors. Detailed cost estimates are provided prior to providing service.

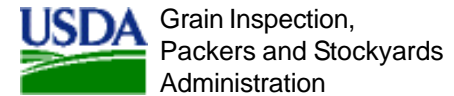
For More Information

For more program details or to apply to participate in this program, visit GIPSA's Web site at:

<http://www.usda.gov/gipsa/programsfgis/inspwgh/pvp/pvp.htm>

or contact:

Process Verified Program Manager
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Room 2409 - S, Stop 3630
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Process Verified Program

Confirming
Your Quality
Management
System

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Meeting the Needs of a Changing Market

American agriculture, once driven solely by supply, is now moving to a consumer-driven market. In the global marketplace, export vessels that once carried a single commodity now sail with a diverse load of quality grains to meet international buyers' specific needs. In America, crops are being segregated to meet food processors' needs for specific ingredients. In both markets, new and more complex production and marketing processes are evolving to provide greater crop quality differentiation from farm to final consumer.

USDA's Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) is part of today's evolving market. GIPSA's traditional role was to help America market its grain and related products by testing post-harvest crops for physical condition, impurities, contaminants, and some intrinsic quality attributes, and by maintaining more than 1,400 different quality assessment terms used in trade. While these services and standards still play important roles in grain marketing, we are taking on an exciting new role to support the emerging practices being used to market U.S. grain.

GIPSA is introducing a new Process Verified Program. Our program supports the market's increased use of identity preservation and similar activities that add

value, and provides a way to capture the full value of your products. The Process Verified Program is available to any grain or oilseed farmer, handler, or processor -- large or small -- whether the value-adding activity is identity preservation, testing, product branding, or any other marketing goal.

The Process Verified Program

Under the Process Verified Program, GIPSA provides independent, third-party certification of the written quality practices and production processes used to provide consistent-quality products. Individuals and organizations, e.g., farmers, handlers and processors, not GIPSA, develop and implement quality management systems based on internationally recognized standards and value-adding processes that satisfy their customers' expectations. Prior to granting certification, GIPSA performs a desk audit to evaluate conformance to all quality management requirements. The agency then confirms what is written about the quality management system and manufacturing processes through an onsite audit. Additional periodic, announced and unannounced audits, including document reviews, major system audits, and surveillance audits, will be performed to verify continuing conformance. Through this program, GIPSA verifies the processes used to ensure quality, not the quality of the final product.

Benefits

Organizations that meet the Process Verified Program requirements can market their product as "**USDA PROCESS VERIFIED**". They also will receive a USDA Certificate of Conformance for use in marketing their products, and their approval will be posted, with permission, on GIPSA's Web site to further substantiate their certification.

The Process Verified Program provides an economical, efficient way to ensure product quality, and to reduce risk and associated costs. It is less expensive to give customers what they want by ensuring quality throughout production and handling rather than by simply testing the end product to determine if it meets their needs. Finding alternative outlets for finished products that fail to meet customers' needs reduces profits. The Program also validates a company's quality practices for both domestic and international customers, increasing their confidence in a company's products.

GIPSA Auditors

GIPSA quality auditors are each fully trained ISO 9000 Lead Auditors with more than 6 years' experience as an auditor. All of the auditors have an agricultural or food processing background that includes grain