

CALIFORNIA AVOCADO INDUSTRY

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Manual

-Farm Review-

The California Avocado Industry, comprised of 5,000 diverse growers throughout the state, is dedicated to providing consumers with consistently safe, high-quality and nutritious California avocados.

The California Avocado GAP Manual provides growers with crop-specific priorities to further ensure the safety of California avocados. This manual focuses on the grower's role in providing avocados compliant with the goals of the Food Safety Modernization Act of 2011.

Avocados are considered a low-risk commodity. This along with current regulatory oversight and complementary cultural, packing, and shipping practices provides the consumer with a safe and nutritious food.

Many practices included in this document are already implemented by growers. The purpose of the California Avocado GAP Manual is to provide growers with Crop Specific priorities for mitigating food-safety risks for California avocados.

This California Avocado GAP Manual is specific to the USDA Good Agricultural Practices & Good Handling Practices Audit Verification Checklist: Part 1 – Farm Review.

Key Avocado GAP Farm Review Elements

- Agricultural Water Use
- Worker Hygiene and Field Sanitation
- Soil Amendments and Pesticides
- Fruit Identity and Traceability

Please note: *The California Avocado GAP Manual is an advisory document. Growers are not mandated to comply with every requirement within this document. Rather, the various policies, mitigation/corrective-action measures and documentation listed in the GAP Manual serve as a suite of implementation options for growers, in response to food-safety risks. They may not prove applicable to all operations.*

Approved by CAC Board August 18, 2011

Disclaimer and Limitation of Liability

This manual provides voluntary, recommended Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and Good Harvesting Practices (GHPs) relating to the production and handling of California avocados. It represents the current thinking of the California Avocado Commission (Commission). It does not create or confer any rights for or on any person. This document is to provide currently available information on production and handling practices that are consistent with existing applicable regulations, standards and guidelines. The Commission, including its directors, officers, employees and members, do not assume any responsibility for your individual responsibility to comply with applicable laws and regulations.

These voluntary, recommended practices were not designed to apply to any specific operation. Conditions at individual farms and handling operations may differ. Consequently, it is the responsibility of the owner/operator of the farm or packinghouse to determine the specific GAPs and/or GHPs applicable to their operation. It is recommended that such owner/operator consult with their own legal and technical advisors to be sure that their own practices meet all applicable requirements for their operation. Moreover, it is likely that a grower or harvest contractor that uses these GAPs and GHPs will have to take additional steps to protect the product from contamination.

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PRODUCTION

Section 1: General Information

**Ranch Information
Traceability & Mock Recall
Mock Recall Form
Soils & Land Use**

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Ranch Information

Farm Name: _____

Farm Owner: _____

Phone Number: _____

Farm Location: _____

Farm Phone Number: _____

Fax Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Emergency Contact Number: _____

Legal Description (APN)/GPS/Latitude-Longitude of Location:

Total Acres Farmed: _____

**An aerial image/map or hand drawn map must be available that shows the crops grown in each field or production area.

Food Safety Coordinator

The food safety coordinator is responsible for implementing and overseeing the company’s food safety program. The food safety coordinator is also responsible for ensuring the program is being followed by all employees and visitors to the ranch.

Food Safety Coordinator: _____

Phone Number: _____

Traceability & Mock Recall Policies and Procedures

Purpose:

To ensure harvested produce can be traced back to the growing area in the event of a food safety recall.

Policies:

1. Each grove is identified or coded to enable traceability in the event of a recall.
2. Field Receipts containing Grower Name and Number, Date Harvested, Variety of Fruit, Number of Bins Harvested, Bin Numbers, and Condition of Fruit are issued by the packinghouse to the grower upon receiving or picking up the fruit from the field. *(See page10 for sample)*
3. Field Receipts are kept by the grower and the packinghouse.
4. In the event of a recall, the size of the area a grower can trace back to may determine the extent of produce affected. Field Receipts that include field/block names or numbers that are precise enough for growers to trace a delivery back to a lot, section or ranch is strongly encouraged as this will likely limit the overall impact of a recall.
5. A mock recall must be conducted prior to the GAP audit.

Procedures:

Mock Recall:

1. Identify how much fruit was picked from the particular area where possible “issues” may have occurred.
2. Locate Field Receipt associated with the potentially “affected” fruit in question.
3. Develop a plan of action to dispose of fruit, as an example: Notify the packinghouse of the particular fruit that may have been affected, do not harvest from this particular area until problem is corrected, etc.
4. Complete Mock Recall Form *(See next page – Mock Recall Form)*. Include all written communications such as e-mails or faxes.

Mock Recall Form

Account Name: _____

Account Number: _____

Date/Time: _____

Field Receipt Number: _____

Conducted By: _____

Grower				Step Forward
Harvest Date	Harvester	Field/Block # of affected Fruit	Amount of Fruit Picked	Where did the fruit go? (Name of Packer)
What was the final disposition of the fruit? (i.e. Notify packer of potential food safety risk)				

Note: See Traceability Policies and Procedures on page 8

Reference:

DATE GRADED	RUN NO.	PK HOUSE	221005					
MEMBER NUMBER & NAME				WHERE RECEIVED				
				P/U	DOCK	PACKING HOUSE		
				0	1	2	3	4
				BELOW MIN BIN DELIVERY			5	7
				DATE RECEIVED				
CODE	VARIETY	FULL BINS	PARTIAL	REMARKS				
20	HASS			<input type="checkbox"/> REG. PICK <input type="checkbox"/> WINDFALL <input type="checkbox"/> FREEZE DAMAGE <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER				
10	FUERTE							
30	BACON							

FIELDMAN'S COPY

DRIVER NAME/TRUCK NO.

DRIVER'S LIC. NO.

DESTINATION

BIN NOS.

VEH. LIC. NO.

RECEIVED BY

Figure 1 – Sample Field Receipt

**Soils & Land Use
Policies and Procedures**

Purpose:

To ensure the growing area is suitable for growing and harvesting commodities.

Policies:

1. Previous land use was compatible with the growing and harvesting of commodities with minimal risk of microbial or other contamination.
2. Crop production areas that have been subjected to flooding where the fruit comes in contact with potentially contaminated flood waters should be tested for microbial hazards.

Prior Land Use:

Crop Grown	Previous Land Use/Crop	# of Acres

Ownership Statement:

Regarding property located at _____ in the county of _____ Parcel # _____

Owned by _____ and farmed by _____.

To the best of my knowledge there has been no previous land use that would render this property unsuitable for agriculture. This property has never been used as a landfill, feedlot, or for industrial purposes that may have created biological or toxic waste, and it has either been fallow or used for production of food crops for the past _____ years.

Name: _____

Position: _____

Company: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Section 2:
Worker Health and Hygiene

Worker Health and Hygiene
Toilet and Hand Washing Facilities
Toilet and Hand Washing Maintenance Log
Bleeding and In-Field Illness
Hand Washing Signs

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Worker Health and Hygiene

Policies and Procedures

Purpose:

To address correct worker hygiene practices and reduce the potential for food contamination by an employee or visitor's actions, hygiene, health or habits.

Policies:

1. Potable water is available to all employees to drink and wash hands.
2. Visitors and employees who may come in direct contact with product are required to follow all sanitation and hygiene practices.
3. First aid kits must be available in the event of an injury or emergency.
4. All employees have been trained on proper sanitation and hygiene practices annually and are required to follow proper sanitation and hygiene practices (periodic refresher training should be conducted throughout the year). New employees will receive all necessary training prior to working in the grove.
5. Employees must sign documentation that they have been trained on proper sanitation and hygiene practices. *(See Section 5 , page 39– Training Log)*
6. Signs are posted in English and Spanish in the vicinity of the toilet facility [except where in home toilets are used] instructing employees to wash their hands before beginning work or returning to work. *(See next page –Sample Hand Washing Sign)*

Procedures:

Hygiene

1. Water testing records must be available for drinking water *provided* to employees showing the water is potable.
2. Employees must wash hands before work, after using the restroom and after breaks.
3. If gloves are used for food handling (this does **not** include activities such as pruning, irrigating, etc.), they must be intact, clean and in sanitary condition.
4. Eating food, chewing gum, drinking beverages (except bottled water) or using tobacco are restricted to areas outside the production area. Eating and drinking may take place at the edges of the production area, on grove roads, or in areas already harvested in current harvest cycle.

Hand Washing

Note: *Hand washing with soap and water is required. Sanitizer use alone is NOT an acceptable practice.*

1. Water testing records must be available showing the water being used for hand washing is potable.
2. All employees must wash their hands with soap and water at the beginning of the workday, after using the toilet, after eating, and after breaks.
 - a. Wet hands with potable water; apply soap and work to lather.
 - b. Rub hands together.
 - c. Rinse under clean water.
 - d. Dry hands with a single-use towel.
 - e. Dispose of towel in trash can.

NOTICE

**WASH HANDS BEFORE
RETURNING TO
WORK**

AVISO

***LÁVASE LAS MANOS
ANTES DE REGRESAR
AL TRABAJO***

Toilet and Hand Washing Facilities Policies and Procedures

Purpose:

To ensure that toilet and field sanitation facilities are maintained in good repair, condition, and placed so that fields and employees are not contaminated.

Policies:

Toilet and Hand Washing Facilities

1. Employees must have access to a toilet and hand washing facility that shall be properly stocked and have regularly scheduled cleaning. Toilet and hand washing facilities shall be located at a distance and in an area that minimizes risk of product contamination.
2. Operations must be in compliance with all applicable state and/or federal regulations dictating the number, condition, and placement of portable field sanitation units. If the number of employees does not require a portable field sanitation unit, access to a clean toilet facility must be readily available for all employees.

Procedures:

Toilet and Hand Washing Maintenance:

1. Toilet facilities must be in good repair, clean and properly stocked.
2. Cleaning and servicing must be done on a regular scheduled basis and documentation of servicing must be available.
3. Field sanitation facilities must be stocked with single use towels, soap, a place to dispose of trash and potable water for hand washing

Procedures:

Portable Toilet Facility Cleaning

Note: Toilets will have a service log.

1. Place toilet facilities at a distance and in an area that minimizes risk of product contamination.
2. Pump waste from the holding tank. Remove trash and other debris.
3. Clean floor, toilet, and urinal.
4. Add fresh solution to the tank as needed.
5. Replace and replenish toilet paper as needed
6. Sign and date “service log sticker” in each unit. Toilets should be serviced on an as needed basis.
7. Return toilet facility to appropriate location.

Portable Hand Washing Facility Cleaning

Note: Hand washing facilities will have a service log.

1. Place hand washing facilities at a distance and in an area that minimizes risk of product contamination.
2. Pump waste from the holding tank.
3. Remove trash and ensure drain is fully operational.
4. Clean and scrub surfaces with appropriate brush.
5. Add fresh **POTABLE** water to tank.
6. Replace and replenish single use towels and hand soap.
7. Sign and date “service log sticker” on each unit. Hand washing facilities should be serviced on an as needed basis.
8. Return hand washing facility to appropriate location.

Bleeding/Bodily Fluids and In-Field Illness Policies and Procedures

Purpose:

To address the potential contamination issues caused by employees who are bleeding or appear to have in-field illnesses or injuries.

Policies:

Bleeding & Bodily Fluids

1. All incidences of bleeding and vomiting are to be reported to supervisors.
2. Workers are instructed to seek prompt treatment with clean first aid supplies for cuts, abrasions or other injuries.
3. Any fruit and packaging materials contaminated with blood and/or bodily fluids must be segregated and disposed of immediately.
4. Tools and/or equipment contaminated with blood must be properly sanitized immediately.
5. Any employee having sores, cuts, boils, lesions, etc. on his/her hands shall have those areas covered with first-aid materials and/or disposable gloves.
6. If first aid material/disposable gloves do not fully cover the wound, the employee is not permitted to engage in working in direct contact with the fruit.

Illness

1. Employees showing symptoms of diarrhea, vomiting or symptoms of other infectious diseases are excluded from work assignments that involve direct contact with fresh produce. *See Section 5; page 40– Food Borne Illness Training for Supervisors.*

Procedures:

Bleeding and Bodily Fluids

1. Notify the appropriate supervisor.
2. Supervisor determines the type of injury and provides appropriate first aid. If appropriate call 911 and report emergency.
3. Cover wound with appropriate first aid materials.
4. If an injury occurs and fruit or equipment is contaminated, cordon off the immediate area.
5. Inspect the cordoned off area looking for the presence of blood.
6. Discard any fruit that may have become contaminated.
 - i. Use disposable gloves to place contaminated fruit inside disposal container.
 - ii. Remove gloves and place in disposal container.
 - iii. Wash hands with soap and water.
7. Sanitize any equipment that may have come in contact with blood.

Section 3:

Agricultural Inputs

Pre-harvest Materials
Water Usage
Water Testing Log
Composted Manure/Class “A” Biosolids (Treated) Usage
Composted Manure/Class “A” Biosolids (Treated) Application Log

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**Pre-harvest Materials
Policies and Procedures**

Purpose:

To ensure personnel applying pre-harvest pesticides, growth regulators, and fertilizers have working knowledge of all applicable Federal, State and Local laws.

Policies:

1. Copies of Qualified Applicators License and/or Pest Control Advisor should be available for review.

Procedures:

1. All employees responsible for material applications shall be properly trained and/or certified.

Water Usage

Source of Irrigation Water (Check all that apply):

- Municipal
- District
- Well
- Pond
- Reservoir
- Canals, Rivers, Ditches
- Tail Water, Run Off Water

How are crops irrigated? (Drip, sprinkler, overhead, other)

Water Usage Policies and Procedures

Purpose:

To ensure water used for irrigation, chemical applications and/or fertigation does not represent a likely source of biological contamination to fruit intended for human consumption.

Policies:

1. Water used for drinking and hand washing must be from a **POTABLE** water source.
2. The quality of water used for irrigation, chemical applications and/or fertigation must meet the standard for E. coli established by the World Health Organization.

Usage	Allowable Limits
Drinking	POTABLE WATER ONLY
Hand Washing	POTABLE WATER ONLY
Irrigation/Fertigation/Foliar Applications	Cannot exceed 1000* MPN (or CFU)/100 mL

*Source: World Health Organization - Irrigation Water Standard

3. Water sources must be tested at the required frequency for total coliform/ generic E. coli.

Source	Test	Testing Frequency
Municipal	-	Obtain water testing results from your Municipal Water Source yearly.
District	-	Obtain water testing results from your District Water Source yearly.
Wells	Total Coliform/Generic E. Coli	At least once a year.
Ponds	Total Coliform/Generic E. Coli	At least 3 times a year.
Reservoirs	Total Coliform/Generic E. Coli	At least 3 times a year.
Canals, Rivers, Ditches	Total Coliform/Generic E. Coli	At least 3 times a year.

Procedures:

Municipal/District

1. Acquire test results from the local water authority annually.
2. Municipal water supplies are regulated by law and are generally required to be potable.

Wells

1. Test, at a minimum, annually for total coliform/generic E. coli. Document testing on the Water Testing Log.
2. For wells contaminated by microorganisms, a possible corrective measure would be shocking the well with chlorine.

Open Water Sources (Pond/Reservoir/Canals/Rivers/Ditches)

1. Test, at a minimum, 3 times per year at the delivery point for total coliform/generic E. coli. Document testing on the Water Testing Log.

Water Testing Log

Procedure:

1. Conduct a total coliform/generic E. coli water test on **each** water source according to the required frequency:
 - i. Wells – at least once a year.
2. Open water sources – at least 3 times a year.
3. Document findings and attach results.

Composted Manure/Class “A”Biosolids (Treated) Usage Policies and Procedures

- No composted manure and/or Class “A” biosolids are used.

Purpose:

To ensure composted manure and/or Class “A” biosolids used as a soil amendments do not represent a likely source of biological contamination to fruit intended for human consumption.

Policies:

1. Only composted manure and/or Class “A” biosolids are used as a soil amendment.
2. Composted manure and/or Class “A” biosolids are properly stored and are protected to minimize recontamination using:
 - Barriers
 - Physical containment
 - Coverage to prevent rain leaching
 - _____
3. Composted manure stored adjacent to crop production areas is contained to prevent contamination of crops.
4. Analysis reports are available for composted manure/Class “A” biosolids along with an explanation of the method of treatments used to kill pathogens.

Procedures:

Application:

1. Obtain analysis reports for composted manure/Class “A” biosolids with an explanation of treatments. Specification sheets must contain information about the method of treatment.
2. Growers purchasing composted manure should obtain specification sheet from the supplier of EACH shipment.
3. Document rates, dates, and locations of composted manure/Class “A” biosolids applications.
(See next page – Composted Manure/Class “A” Biosolids(Treated) Application Log)

Storage:

1. Composted Manure and/or Biosolids that are stored on the ranch near the growing area must be stored in a way that ensures they do not leach or runoff into adjacent production areas or water sources.
2. Consider physical containment to secure manure storage or treatment areas where contamination from runoff, leaching, or wind spread is a concern.
3. Physical containment may include concrete blocks or soil berms, pits or lagoons. Such storage must be away from irrigation water sources.
4. Consider covering manure piles or storing manure under a roof to avoid leaching.
5. Growers may consider collecting water that leaches through the manure that is being stored or treated. Collecting leachate allows growers to control its disposal.

Section 4: Field Sanitation

**Sewage Treatment
Animal, Wildlife and Livestock
Perimeter and Water Source Monitoring**

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Sewage Treatment Policies and Procedures

Purpose:

To ensure the farm's sewage treatment system/septic system functions properly and there is no evidence of leaking or runoff.

Policies:

1. Farm sewage treatment systems must be functional and operating properly with no evidence of run-off or leaking. Septic tanks should be sealed.

Procedures:

1. If signs of leaking or runoff are detected correct the problem.

Animal, Wildlife, Livestock Policies and Procedures

Purpose:

To ensure **high concentrations** of wildlife or domestic animals do not cause a food safety issue due to significant amounts of uncontrollable animal feces.

Policies:

1. Farming operations are **never** going to be able to exclude wild and/or domestic animals from entering crop production areas. However, every effort should be made to limit their access to the production areas.
2. Wild and/or domestic animals are restricted from entering crop production areas by a variety of means including, but not limited to the following (check all that apply):
 - Fencing
 - Audible Cannons
 - Distress Calls
 - Physical Repellents
 - Other _____
 - Scare Balloons
 - Odoriferous Repellents
 - Perimeter Monitoring
3. Manure lagoons and manure storage areas are properly managed to prevent leaking, overflow, and/or run-off from contaminating crop production areas.
4. Manure stored near or adjacent to crop production areas is contained to prevent contamination of crops.
5. Measures are taken to restrict livestock access to water sources used in crop production.

Procedures:

Perimeter Monitoring:

1. Drive/walk around the growing area and water sources looking for the presence or signs of **significant, high concentrations** of wild or domestic animals/animal intrusion.
2. Where appropriate, corrective measures are taken.
3. Corrective measures may include: Removing animal fecal material, disposing of crop which comes in direct contact with fecal material, repairing fences, removing dead carcasses, etc.
4. Observations and corrective measures are logged in the Perimeter and Water Source Monitoring Log.

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Section 5: Food Safety Training

**Food Safety Training Outline
Food Safety Training Log
Food Borne Illness Training for Supervisors**

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Food Safety Training Outline

Food Safety Training for All Employees

Microorganisms and Food Handling

1. The microorganisms that cause illness are much too small to see.
2. These tiny bacteria and parasites can be transferred to foods from dirty hands or blood, especially from people who did not wash their hands after using the toilet.
3. We all eat fruits and vegetables, and we can all be made sick if somebody else who is sick or does not have clean hands has touched our food.
4. Don't eat food or chew tobacco or gum while working with fruit. Food from our mouths can transfer bacteria or parasites to food and make others sick.

Illness Reporting

1. Report any active cases of illness to your supervisor before beginning work. This includes diarrhea, vomiting, fever, or nausea. Seek medical attention and do not handle fruit.
2. Report lesions on your body such as infected wounds, draining wounds, boils or wounds seeping pus that might come in contact with produce. Obtain latex free gloves/first aid materials to cover the wound or do NOT handle produce!
3. Be familiar with symptoms of infectious diseases so that if symptoms are evident the supervisor can take appropriate steps.
4. Symptoms include diarrhea, runny nose, yellow skin or eyes, cough or fever.

Toilet Use

1. All employees must use the toilet facilities provided which must be connected to a sewage disposal system or self-contained.
2. Failure to use provided toilet facilities is grounds for dismissal.

Hand Washing

*Note: Hand washing with soap and water is required. Sanitizer use alone is **NOT** an acceptable practice.*

1. Water testing records must be available showing the water being used for hand washing is potable.
2. All employees must wash their hands with soap and water at the beginning of the workday, after using the toilet, after eating, and after breaks.
 - a. Wet hands with potable water; apply soap and work to lather.
 - b. Rub hands together.
 - c. Rinse under clean water.
 - d. Dry hands with a single-use towel.
 - e. Dispose of towel in trash can.

Bleeding Incidence

1. Any cuts or scrapes that cause the loss of blood must be reported to the supervisor immediately.
2. All fresh produce that may have come in contact with blood during an incident must be destroyed.
3. All equipment that has come in contact with blood during this incident must be cleaned and sanitized.

Provide Protection from a Lesion

1. A lesion that contains pus, such as a boil or infected wound that is open or draining and that is located on parts of the body that might have contact with produce while harvesting, sorting or packaging, will be covered by first aid material.
2. If a worker has a lesion that cannot be effectively covered in such a way to prevent contact with fresh produce or related equipment, the employee will not be allowed to work in any aspect with fresh produce or related equipment.

Ensure Visitors Follow Good Hygienic Practices

1. Ensure good hygienic practices are followed by all visitors who come into contact with fresh produce in the field.

Alternative Good Hygienic Practices

1. Single-service disposable gloves can be an important and effective hygienic practice in combination with hand washing in some circumstances. If gloves are not used properly they can become another vehicle for spreading pathogens.
2. The use of gloves in no way lessens the need or importance of hand washing and proper hygienic practices.

Worker Hygiene/Health and Food Safety Training Log

Training Topic: _____

Instructor: _____ **Date/Time:** _____

Training Details:

Training Materials Used:

Name	Signature
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	
13.	
14.	
15.	
16.	
17.	
18.	
19.	
20.	

Food Borne Illness Training for Supervisors

Infected employees, through food or food utensils, may transmit a wide range of communicable diseases and infections to consumers. An important part of an on-going program to ensure the safety of fresh produce is to institute a system of identifying employees who present a risk of transmitting food borne pathogens to fresh produce or to other employees.

Supervisors should be aware of the symptoms of food borne illnesses so that they can recognize them in workers. If any workers appear to exhibit symptoms of any of these illnesses, they should be excluded from work assignments that involve direct contact with fresh produce.

Below is a partial list of symptoms caused by infectious and communicable diseases that are transmitted through food:

Symptoms: Fever, Jaundice, Diarrhea, Vomiting, Sore throat