



Good Agricultural Practices & Good Handling Practices Certification program.

Beginning in 2013, Gritt's Midway Greenhouse has completed and passed its yearly audits of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), Good Agricultural Practices & Good Handling Practices (GAP&GHP) audit verification program. We are currently one of 7 producers in West Virginia to have received the certification. Last year, the USDA Audit Program performed audits in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and Canada, covering over 90 commodities.

Increased concerns about foodborne illness from fresh produce is one reason the USDA formally implemented the GAP&GHP audit verification program in January 2002. This voluntary program is offered to the fruit and vegetable industry to verify an operation's efforts to minimize the risk of contamination of produce by microbial pathogens. Program participants must take proactive measures in its production, packing, handling, and storage of their products to reduce the risk of contamination. This is accomplished by adhering to the recommendations made in the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, and to generally recognized industry best practices.

For more information on this program you may visit the USDA website, <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/auditing/gap-ghp>

or at the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition website, <http://sustainableagriculture.net/publications/grassrootsguide/food-safety/good-agricultural-practices-and-good-handling-practices-audit-verification-program/>