



GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES (GAPs)

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Maui County

Lynn Nakamura-Tengan, statewide

lynnnaka@hawaii.edu

Kylie (Wong)Tavares, Maui

kylielw@hawaii.edu

808-878-1213

Jennifer Hawkins, Molokai

hawkinsj@ctahr.hawaii.edu

808-567-6935

O'ahu County

Joshua Silva

jhsilva@hawaii.edu

808-453-6050

Amjad Ahmad

alobody@Hawaii.edu

Jari Sugano

suganoj@ctahr.hawaii.edu

Jensen Uyeda

juyeda@hawaii.edu

808-622-4185

Hawai'i County

Sharon Motomura Wages

smotomur@hawaii.edu Kiersten

Akahoshi (DHHL)

kiersten@hawaii.edu

808-981-5199

Kaua'i County

Emilie Kirk

erkirk@hawaii.edu

Roshan Manandhar

roshanm@Hawaii.edu

808-274-3471

What's GAP?

Good Agricultural Practices are science-based guidelines for growing, harvesting, packing, and holding of fruits and vegetables. These guidelines can reduce the risk of on-farm microbial contamination of fruits and vegetables.

Why adopt GAP?

As the first step in the food production and distribution system, growers play a key role in providing healthy and safe food for our community. Adopting GAP can also provide market opportunities and protect farms from economic losses of food contamination.

Who does it affect?

Commercial growers and home gardeners can adopt GAP guidelines to grow safer produce. Retailers, food handlers, and consumers can do their part by safely handling food during preparation and storage.

FOOD SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY!



<http://manoa.hawaii.edu/ctahr/farmfoodsafety>



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Land Use

Biological, chemical, and physical contamination to produce may be possible based on current and past uses of farm land and surrounding area. Growers should assess contamination risks, create a farm map and consider runoff controls such as berms, ditches, or grassways.

Agricultural Water

Water used in food production is a transmission source for biological contaminants. Water is used for irrigation, pest control, personal hygiene, washing produce, and cleaning and sanitizing. Water testing provides useful information to help growers match the water use with the quality of the water. Water testing requirements vary for different water sources and purposes, such as FMSA, GAP, or 3rd party audit.

Soil Amendments

Biological soil amendments like raw manure and compost can harbor human pathogens. Inorganic fertilizers may pose a chemical hazard. Using proper composting methods, compost testing, fertilizer analysis, pre-harvest intervals, and application records can help manage risks associated with soil amendments.

Worker Health and Hygiene

Sick workers handling crops can spread illnesses. Growers should provide training on farm policies to reduce microbial contamination and protect workers' health. Clean, well-maintained hand hygiene and toilet facilities can help reduce the food safety risks associated with workers.

Domesticated and Wild Animals

Animals can carry human pathogens. Growers should keep domesticated animals out of production and packing areas. While wildlife cannot be completely excluded from fields, growers should monitor and document actions taken to minimize wild animal access.

Crop Protection

Safely used pesticides can control economically damaging pests while managing chemical risks to crops, workers, and the environment. Growers should use microbially clean water and follow all label directions when using pesticides. "THE LABEL IS THE LAW"!

Any surface that produce contacts represents a potential source for contamination. This includes unclean wash water, packing containers, food surfaces, and transport vehicles.

Post-Harvest

Growers can prevent cross-contamination by:

- Using clean and sanitized harvest tools and containers after each harvest
- Using clean water and food grade sanitizer in wash water
- Discarding dropped or damaged produce
- Avoiding reusing contaminated packing containers

Equipment, Tools, and Buildings

Growers should:

- Use surfaces that can be cleaned and sanitized
- Maintain, monitor, and document refrigeration equipment

Transportation

Growers should:

- Inspect vehicles for cleanliness, odors and debris
- Keep cleaning and maintenance logs for all produce transport vehicles

Traceability

If produce is contaminated, a tracing system will track the produce back to the growing field and forward to all buyers. Growers with a field map linked to invoices will allow them to recall produce in a timely manner and reduce negative economic and health impacts.

