



# The California Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement





## The LGMA

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Operating with oversight from the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the LGMA is a mechanism for verifying through **mandatory government audits** that farmers follow accepted food safety practices for lettuce, spinach and other leafy green products.



# The LGMA

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## Overview:

- The LGMA enforces mandatory food safety practices audited by government inspectors
- Entering year three of operation, over 1,000 inspections completed
- Has become a model for food safety programs in other States (Arizona, Florida) and for other industries (tomatoes, mushrooms)



## The LGMA

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- California handlers of leafy green products
  - 115 members
  - Handlers agree to market product only from growers who use the accepted food safety practices
  - Members pay assessments to fund the program
  - Detailed info on the program is always available at:

[www.lgma.org](http://www.lgma.org)



## The LGMA

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### Consumer Research Results:

2008 research shows that the LGMA approach is popular with consumers:

- 89% of consumers had favorable opinion when they were told about the food safety practices and mandatory government audits being implemented
- 70% of consumers said the LGMA program increased their confidence in leafy green products



# Food Safety Practices

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- The LGMA-accepted Food Safety Practices represent the best practices available today to prevent food borne illnesses
- Commodity-specific and science-based
- Developed by university and industry scientists, food safety experts, farmers, shippers and processors. Reviewed by state and federal government health agencies
- Will evolve as science advances



# Food Safety Practices

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- The LGMA Metrics:
  - Are farm-based: The objective is to reduce the risk of contamination in leafy greens fields
  - Focus on key risk areas, as identified by regulatory agencies: Compliance and Traceback plan, Water Use, Soil Amendments, Environmental Conditions, Worker Hygiene and Harvest Observation
- View online in our Trade Downloads section @ [www.lgma.org](http://www.lgma.org)



# Mandatory Government Audits

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## LGMA Audits

The mandatory government audits required by the LGMA are conducted by CDFA inspectors who received USDA training and certification

- LGMA auditors are agricultural inspectors with extensive experience in produce
- LGMA auditors are trained and supervised by the US Department of Agriculture, under the auspices of the USDA GAP/GHP Program





# Penalties & Compliance

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## Lack of Compliance Leads to Decertification

If a member is found out of compliance through an audit they are issued a citation at one of four levels:

Minor Infraction

Major Deviation

Minor Deviation

Flagrant Violation

## Corrective Actions

LGMA audits are not 'scored;' the LGMA requires that corrective action be completed for all cited non-conformities



## Certification

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- LGMA Certification:
    - Once an LGMA signatory has been audited by government inspectors and has completed all required corrective actions, the company is certified as a member in good standing
      - Certification is maintained through regular and random government audits, including unannounced audits
      - Decertification is the result of flagrant violations of the marketing agreement's standards



# Certification

- How can a buyer know that a supplier of Leafy Greens is LGMA-certified?
  - Members use the LGMA Service Mark on all bills of lading
    - The Service Mark assures customers that products have been produced in accordance the best food safety practices available today
  - Full list of Certified Members is kept on the LGMA website ([www.lgma.org](http://www.lgma.org))
    - List of decertification actions taken is also posted at all times
  - LGMA issues Certificates of Compliance to all members
    - Available from suppliers on request
  - LGMA eUpdate service alerts buyers to any significant actions taken
    - Including decertifications, new members, changes to the metrics, etc.





## What's Next?

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- LGMA is beginning third year of operation
    - All existing handlers are still members
  - National Program effort is underway
    - Eventually, all leafy greens marketed in the US should be certified through the program
  - LGMA as Food Safety Model
    - Industry-driven program with government oversight and inspection



## Questions

For more information visit:

[www.lgma.org](http://www.lgma.org)