The California Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement
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

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)
• 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
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
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
• 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
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

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
- Minor Deviation
- Major Deviation
- Flagrant Violation

Corrective Actions
LGMA audits are not ‘scored;’ the LGMA requires that corrective action be completed for all cited non-conformities
• 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
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)
  - 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?

• 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