

# COMMUNIQUÉ CANADAGAP® COMMUNIQUÉ

**To:** CanadaGAP Stakeholders  
**Date:** August 15, 2022  
**Subject:** Summary of CanadaGAP Town Halls in 2022

CanadaGAP program participants were invited to participate in one of a series of virtual Town Hall sessions hosted by CanadaGAP in February and March 2022. Members had the opportunity to ask questions and engage in an open discussion with CanadaGAP. CanadaGAP offered four hour-long Town Hall sessions, three in English and one in French. The French session was offered during the “Journées horticoles” webinar on food safety, presented by MAPAQ (Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec).

The town hall sessions cumulatively drew approximately 220 people. This document is provided as a summary of the Q&A periods during the Town Hall sessions. Responses to questions have been grouped to provide clarity around the main subjects about which program participants were still unsure and required more information. The PowerPoint presentation has been posted to the CanadaGAP website at [www.canadagap.ca/publications/presentations/](http://www.canadagap.ca/publications/presentations/). A recording of one of the Town Halls is also available [www.canadagap.ca/publications/presentations/](http://www.canadagap.ca/publications/presentations/).

General questions on the new certification options (E and F) were asked, and CanadaGAP provided the following answers:

- Program participants are strongly encouraged to check with your buyer(s) before making any changes to your certification option. If your buyer is unsure, they can be directed to the CanadaGAP website as well to make an informed decision.
- Most big retailers are aware of the changes in the CanadaGAP certification options. Retailers are generally hesitant to make any blanket statements of what they will accept from suppliers. Acceptable options may differ by supplier. A packer might need a GFSI-recognized certification option, while a grower may not. Always check with your customer(s).
- There is no cost to change from Option C to Option E, or from Option D to F. The annual program fee is also the same for Options C and E, or for Options D and F.

A number of questions sought clarification on changes to the audit process and administrative matters. Clarifications on these changes included:

- Certificates will now indicate whether the certification option is GFSI-recognized or not.
- Operations certified under a GFSI-recognized option (B and C) that have both production AND packing in their scope of certification will need to have both harvesting and packing activities seen each year. In some cases, this may require two audits in one year. When two audits are required for certification, that incurs two separate costs for the audit. For operations with multiple commodities, the number of required audits may change from year to year, as the certification body still needs to see all crops over time.

*CanadaGAP® is a program developed in Canada to promote Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) for fruit and vegetable suppliers.*



Requests for additional information on unannounced audits yielded the following responses:

- If you have already had an unannounced audit, your Certification Body (CB) will take that into account. They select a different 10% of their clients each year.
- All certification options have an unannounced audit component.
- For an unannounced audit, whether or not the audit can be conducted during unusual circumstances (e.g., a rainy day for a harvest audit) depends on what else is going on at the operation. It is a case-by-case decision by the auditor and CB. If nothing is taking place on the farm/facility and the auditor has to come back, extra costs are incurred by the operation.
- Good communication with your CB will help to narrow down the window during which your unannounced audit will occur.
- If you are selected for an unannounced audit, and you require two audits in the same year, one of those audits will be unannounced; the other will be announced. The CB will advise you which will be a regular audit and which will be an unannounced audit.

Some additional questions revolved around accessing information. Participants were advised of the following:

- CanadaGAP continues to communicate to program participants directly via communiques; they are also posted on the CanadaGAP website at [www.canadagap.ca](http://www.canadagap.ca).
- The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the website have been updated.
- New web pages have been posted to explain the new certification options, and the certification options page updated to include a chart for comparison.
- Documents including the CanadaGAP Program Management Manual, enrolment form, change of status form, and audit checklist have been updated.
- The CanadaGAP Program Management Manual is available on the website, as well as a document summarizing the main changes.

Finally, there were questions about program requirements:

- No changes are planned for the CanadaGAP Food Safety Manuals beyond the correction notices already issued for 2022. To update your manual, sign and date the confirmation log as you perform the annual review. The Manuals are expected to be updated for 2023.
- Questions in the audit checklist are weighted so that you can see the relative importance of all items. Corrective actions should be submitted to the CB for review within 60 days of receiving the audit report or before the end of your season – whichever is sooner. Some items may require more time to correct and should be discussed with the Certification Body. Use of a corrective actions plan may be a possibility for certification options B, C, D, E and F. Once a plan is approved, the CB will check for completion of corrective actions during the next audit.
- Clarification was requested and provided on a few specific requirements:
  - The use of Form 9 of the HACCP model.
  - How traceability is established.
  - How traceability is established through forms for the mock recall.
  - How soil testing is conducted and who has the expertise to provide advice.

We thank all those who took the time to participate in the Town Halls. Please visit the FAQs section of the website or contact the CanadaGAP office at [info@canadagap.ca](mailto:info@canadagap.ca) if you have questions or require further information.

