

MANUAL ON FRESH AND PROCESSED VEGETABLES CERTIFICATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

Josefina M. Lantican¹, Rene Cris P. Rivera², Jude Ray P. Laguna³

¹ Technical Adviser, Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research, Diliman, Quezon City

² Technical Support Staff, Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research, Diliman, Quezon City

³ Technical Support Staff, Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research, Diliman, Quezon City

FOREWORD

This manual is a component of the project conducted by the Philippine Department of the Agriculture – Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR) in collaboration with the United Nations- Centre for the Alleviation of Poverty through Secondary Crops’ Development in Asia and the Pacific (UN-CAPSA). The project, “Adding Value to Fresh and Processed Produce through Product Certification”, aimed to study and identify specific benefits that could be derived from the rapid growth of the dynamic vegetable market. The study presents post-harvest practices in the semi-temperate vegetable production system, market linkages, and opportunities that could be tapped, in the context of product certification, by secondary crops farmers living in medium-altitude areas of the Philippines.

Users of this resource material are given a brief orientation and guided on the rationale, legal basis, procedures on Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and organic agriculture certification, requirements, issues, as well as policy, responsibility, product certification, and programs in the Philippines. In addition to this, is a section on the initiative being carried out by the Philippine government and the private sector for the smooth operation of the process (i.e. standards setting and certification) such as research and development and provision of the necessary infrastructure, credit, and training. The last chapter of the manual presents the issues raised and suggested policies and programs from various stakeholders in the semi-temperate vegetable industry, who are to benefit from GAPs and organic agriculture certification. These are outputs of the workshop on “Adding Value to Fresh and Processed Produce through Product Certification” conducted last December 17-18, 2009 at the EDSA Shangri-la Manila Hotel. It is the aim of the group that these proposed plans and programs are adopted by the industry to ensure food safety and security and production sustainability.

The project team is grateful to the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards, Department of Trade and Industry-Bureau of Product Standards and the Organic Certification Center of the Philippines for providing the resource materials for the preparation, to a large extent, of this manual. These materials provide the principles and more in-depth information on the past and current efforts in GAPs and organic agriculture certification and products standard setting in the Philippines. These information serve as guide and ultimately form part of this manual. The BAR management is, likewise, grateful to UN-CAPSA for providing the funds for the project.

We hope the readers of this document will become more enlightened and aware of the certification principles and processes, current programs, issues, and policy recommendations concerning GAPs and organic agriculture . It is our aspiration that all stakeholders in the semi-temperate vegetable industry benefit further from the information presented herein and help contribute to the growth of the industry. In the end, it is both the producers and the consumers who are to gain from the information compiled in this manual.

NICOMEDES P. ELEAZAR, CESO IV
Director
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
Department of Agriculture
PHILIPPINES

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I. Introduction

A. Background

The changing consumer preference for safe and quality food provides opportunities for highland vegetable farmers to take advantage of the emerging market. The farmers could carve niches in cold chain stores or supermarkets which have been expanding towards major and secondary cities and municipalities. The demand for quality vegetables is viewed to be ably supplied by local farmers, banking on the premise that it is the state policy that all sectors involved in the production, processing, distribution and marketing of food and non-food agricultural and fisheries products adhere to and implement the use of product standards in order to ensure consumer safety and promote the competitiveness of agriculture and fisheries products. It is along this line that the Philippine Department of Agriculture established the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards (BAFPS) in December of 1997. The BAFPS was given the responsibility to formulate and enforce standards of quality that will ensure human health and safety and efficiency in human consumption, marketing and trade of agricultural and fisheries products, both for export and import. The Bureau, in compliance with its mandate, developed the code of practice and guidelines for the food safety and efficient trade standards in post-harvest handling. These were developed in association with the Department of Agriculture's relevant agencies, Department of Trade and Industry-Bureau of Product Standards, and concerned government agencies and other stakeholders. These cover primary and secondary processing, packaging, labeling, advertising, distribution, and marketing of agricultural and fishery products.

The formulation and enforcement of product standards for the domestic market is compounded with the advent of the global trade liberalization. The increase in the global trade in fruits and vegetables in the ASEAN region and throughout the world brought about by the World Trade Organization regime has made product certification necessary as a means for local growers to fare better in the international market. It became imperative for traders to cater to the demands of consumers which have been changing worldwide due to preferences for safe and good quality produce, environmental concern, and protection of workers' health, safety and welfare.

Trade liberalization spells tough competition in the international market, particularly in fruits and vegetables trading. It is therefore important that safe and good quality of fruits and vegetables demanded by consumers are ensured by suppliers. The best approach to maintain the wholesome nature and safe consumption of horticultural produce is to systematically identify and establish management practices that minimize the chances of external and internal contamination from the farm-to-fork chain. It is therefore necessary for the government to develop and enforce the Code of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) throughout the country in close collaboration with stakeholders. Providing specific guidelines in GAP certification is a must to assure adherence to the required product standards among farm producers and handlers along the supply chain.

At present, the BAFPS has set the standards for fruits, vegetables, and cut- flowers. So far, vegetables cover broccoli, bulb onions, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, lettuce, tomato, and taro leaves. These standards were formulated following the existing regulations set by local, ASEAN, and international standards, harmonized with the Euro-GAP. Aside from food safety, the standards established give due consideration to concerns for environmental impacts, workers' health, safety, and welfare, and product quality. GAP certification in the country is still in its infancy. Regional trainers' trainings on good agricultural practices are being conducted by BAFPS to promote awareness among stakeholders of the processes involved in product certification and of the importance of adhering to product standards.

It was only in 2005, through Administrative Order 25 (Guidelines on the Certification of Good Agricultural Practices for Fruits and Vegetable (FV) Farming that the Department of Agriculture

(DA) formulated and enforced the standards of product quality to ensure human health and safety in human consumption and efficiency in marketing and trading of agricultural and fishery products, both for export and import. This was in compliance to the state policy (as enshrined in the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act of 1997) that all sectors involved in the production, processing, distribution and marketing of food and non-food agricultural and fisheries products shall adhere to and implement the use of product standards in order to ensure consumer safety and promote competitiveness of local produce. The DA, through the newly then created Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards, established the code of practices and guidelines governing food safety and efficient food standards on post-harvest handling, primary and secondary processing, packaging, labeling, advertising, distribution, and marketing of agriculture and fisheries products. Formulated in consultation with concerned government institutions and stakeholders, these were aimed at minimizing the chances of external and internal contamination of food from farm-to-fork chain.

Organic agriculture (OA) standards for crop and animal production, particularly on labeling and consumer information, has likewise been developed and formulated. Standards follow the International Organic Agricultural Farming Movement (IFOAM). Certification is granted by the Organic Certification Center of the Philippines (OCCP), a private agency accredited by the government to inspect organic farms. The OCCP has certified a number of farmers growing chicken, herbals, rice, vegetables, and vinegar around the country. So far 14 farms around the country have been certified.

B. Objectives

This manual was prepared with the primary intention of providing information on the production, post-harvest and marketing activities which highland vegetable farmers in the Philippines could engage in to improve the quality and add value to their produce. It is viewed that the opportunities that can be offered by producing high quality and safe products would be taken advantage of by farmers in order for them to command premiums in the market, thus increasing their incomes.

The specific objectives of the manual are to:

1. To provide information on the benefits that could be derived by highland vegetable farmers and other stakeholders from producing safe and high quality products through third party guarantee system;
2. To provide farmers information on the rudiments of product standards setting and certification and the processes involved in getting certified;
3. To inform farmers on the support given by the government to improve product quality through the provision of the necessary post-harvest infrastructure and facilities, relevant trainings, and credit;
4. To inform policy-makers of the problems constraining farmers to apply for product certification.

II. Good Agricultural Practices Certification

Food safety has gained significant attention from the consumers in recent times. Microbial and pesticide contamination on various agricultural products, which, has caused illnesses in the previous years, has raised awareness among consumers on the importance of food safety and its effect on human health. The recent contamination incidences have caused uncertainty which has resulted in a drastic and

substantial decline in the demand for many agricultural products. This is further exacerbated by the inability of many agricultural producers to guarantee consumers of the safety and quality of their produce.

A. Ensuring safety through Good Agricultural Practices

Good Agricultural Practices are a set of consolidated safety and quality procedures that improve the value and reduce the risk of microbial and pesticide contamination in agricultural products. These are composed of a set of recommendations on improving production systems which ensure the safety and quality of the produce grown.

Certain biological hazards like bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites primarily cause illnesses. These are usually present in the soil, air and water which grown produce is commonly exposed to. The practice of using manure as fertilizer and some other unsanitary practices increase further the risk of contamination. With the help of GAP, a safety plan could be made in order to reduce the risk of microbial contamination in agricultural produce.

B. The Philippine GAP Program

The Philippine GAP Program is being implemented by the Department of Agriculture through the BAFPS. Created pursuant to Republic Act 8435 or the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act of 1997 (AFMA), BAFPS is mandated to formulate and enforce standards of quality in processing, preservation, packaging, labeling, importation, exportation, distribution and advertising of agriculture and fisheries products.

The aim of the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Program is to provide safe food products for the consumers, focused on the reduction of the risk of microbial and pesticide contamination. The program promotes efficient production of agricultural produce, as well as workers' safety and protection of the environment.

C. The Good Agricultural Practices for Fruits and Vegetables

The Good Agricultural Practices for Fresh Fruits and Vegetable Farming (GAP-FV) is a set of consolidated safety and quality standards on fruit and vegetable production, formulated by the Department of Agriculture (DA) based on the concept of Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points (HACCP) and quality management principles. The GAP program covers the areas of production, harvesting and post-harvest handling. Not covered in the scope of the program are the products that present high risk to food safety concerns like sprouts and fresh cut products. It is being used for all types of production systems but does not serve as a standard for certification of organic products or genetically modified organisms (GMO) free products.

This code of practices puts emphasis on the following key areas:

1. *Farm Location* - The land must be evaluated to be suitable for agricultural land use in order to identify potential hazards. Environment impact assessment and preventive measures introduced by farmers or technical expert are of great help.

2. *Farm Structure* - Cleanliness should be maintained in the cultivation, storage and packing areas. Irrigation system should be maintained to provide effective delivery. All equipment used in cultivation, harvesting and storage of vegetables should be well maintained in optimal operating conditions. There must be existence of clear demarcations and labels in the vegetable growing plots.

3. *Farm Environment (soil/nutrients)* - The soil must not be contaminated with heavy metals, pathogenic organisms and other toxic chemical substances. The primary and secondary sources of water should be well identified. Pond water used for agricultural purposes (i.e. irrigation of plants or used in pesticide applications) must be of good quality.

4. *Farm Maintenance (hygiene and cleanliness)* - Animal proof and adequate pest control measures should be implemented. Packaging area/shed must be maintained clean. Toilets must be provided for the farm workers and must be properly maintained.

5. *Farming Practices (pesticide and fertilizer application, pest and disease management, post harvest handling)* – Planting materials used should be free of disease and properly recorded. Pesticide usage during vegetable production must comply with the regulations set by the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA). Proper processing and application of natural fertilizers should be maintained. Agrochemicals must be carefully applied as recommended on the manufacturer's label. A pest and disease management programme must be put in place. Harvesting must minimize damage and contamination of vegetables with soil, compost, microbial pathogens, fertilizers or pesticides. Packers maintain proper hygiene and wear the entire necessary garment when handling produce. Packing equipment and materials used should be kept clean and well maintained. Cold storage facility used should undergo appropriate sanitary procedures.

6. *Farm Management (farm records, tractability, staff training)* - The farm must identify a coordinator to deal with matters associated with GAP-FV certification. All farm records required under the GAP-FV certification must be updated. Records of a lot number must be maintained for all produce leaving the farm. Staff training records must be maintained

D. GAP Certification

To assure that agricultural farms are adhering to GAP, the government created specific guidelines for GAP Certification through the Administrative Order No. 25 Series of 2005. The said guidelines established the rules applied by the Department of Agriculture (DA) for granting, maintaining and withdrawing Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Certificate to individual growers or farms in the fresh fruit and vegetable sector or to their Produce Marketing Organizations (PMOs) that market and/or trade the produce.

Objectives

GAP Certification is being promoted by the government in order to attain the following objectives:

- a) Increase the market access of horticultural products both in the local and foreign markets;
- b) Empower farmers to meet the demands of consumers in terms of food safety and quality;
- c) Facilitate farmer adoption of sustainable agricultural practices;
- d) Uplift GAP-FV farmers profile as member of the nationally recognized list of vegetable farmers who are setting the benchmark for the production of safe and quality fruits and vegetables; and
- e) Enable consumers exercise the option of buying quality fruits and vegetable from traceable and certified sources.

Administrator

All the applications for GAP certification are being reviewed by the GAP Certification Committee. The committee is composed of the Directors of attached agencies of the Department of

Agriculture (DA), representatives from the private sector, non-government organization, and academe.

Composition of the committee:

Chairperson: Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards (BAFPS)

Co-chairperson: Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI)

Members: Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA)

Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI)

Bureau of Soil and Water Management (BSWM)

GMA-High Value Commercial Crops (HVCC) Program

Representative, Private sector

Representative, NGO/PO

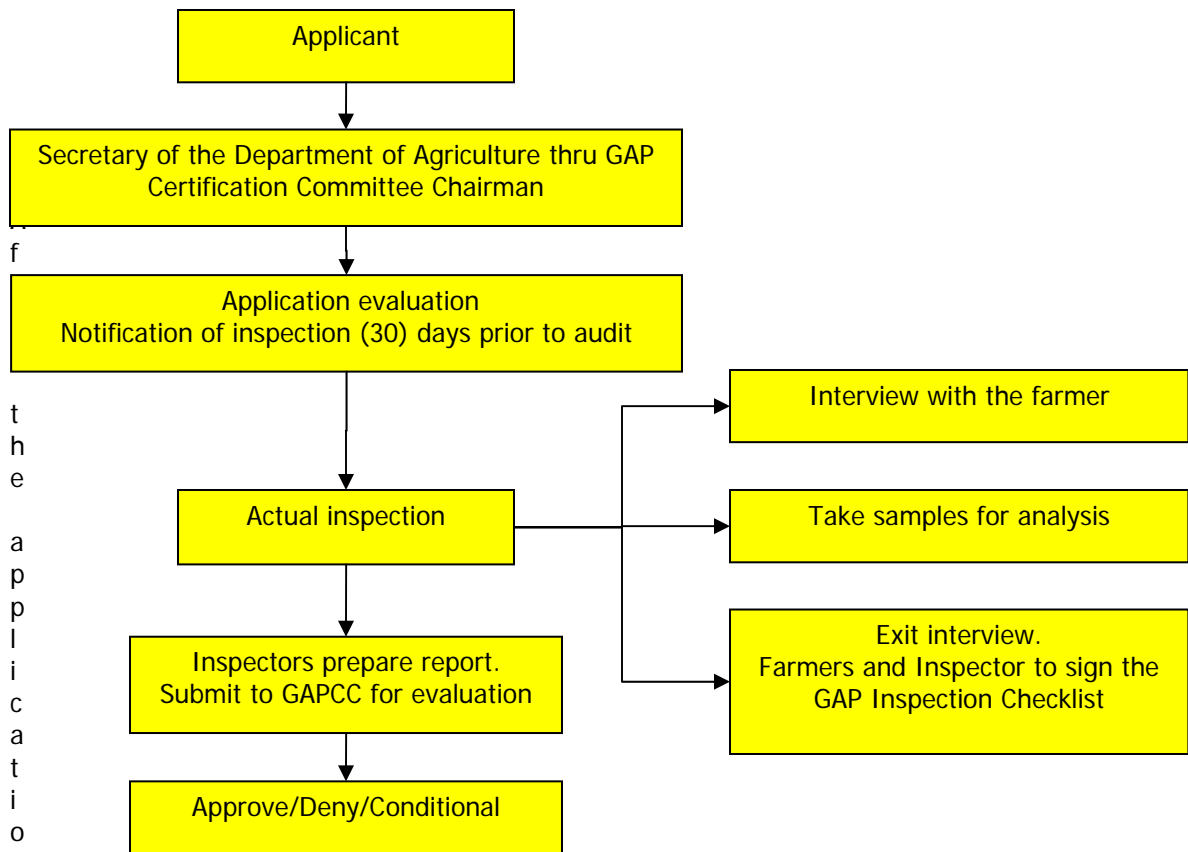
Representative, Academe

The committee is tasked to review and approve applications. It endorses to the Secretary a list of applicants to be issued a GAP certificate. It reviews as well and approves any changes in standards and fees, and hears appeals. It annually reviews investigations of complaints about abuses in the production and sale of products that do not adhere to GAP, and determines penalties for abuse of standards or mark. It negotiates satisfactory settlement of complaint and reimbursement for the investigation cost.

All the qualified national and regional inspectors are being designated by the committee. The National Inspectors based at the Central Offices are composed of identified technical personnel duly designated by the respective directors of the Bureau of Plant Industry , Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority Bureau of Animal Industry , Bureau of Soils and Water Management , and the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards . BAFPS serves as the secretariat of the GAP Certification Committee.

Application

The DA Certification Scheme is based on three options, depending on the type of organization that is requesting certification (i.e. the applicant being (1) an individual grower, (2) produce marketing organization (PMO) or (3) a company/corporation that applies a national or company scheme). The applicant must submit the completed application form to the Secretary of DA through the GAP Certification Committee. The accomplished form should be accompanied by the farm/organization's profile, company/corporation's certificate of registration, and the track record of the farm or company/corporation. PMOs must be able to illustrate its 100% control of the registered growers of the group requesting for certification. All individual growers must operate under the same management systems and adhere to the DA Code of Good Agricultural Practices.



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The Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Procedure

After the application is evaluated, the Certification Committee notifies the applicant within 30 days on the exact date of the farm audit to be conducted. During the farm inspection, the inspector takes samples of water, soil, plant tissue and other important matters for testing. And for these, a receipt is given to the producer. All the materials are tested and the results of the analyses are given back to the producer. An ordinary inspection usually requires a minimum of three items to be tested. The first sampling on the first certification is free while the rest is borne by the applicant. Aside from the laboratory testing, an exit interview with the applicant or authorized representative is being conducted by an inspector to discuss all the potential problems indicated in the inspection form.

All applicants must comply with the Code of Good Agricultural Practices in order to qualify for certification. They must implement a transparent and traceable system to keep track of the production from sowing to harvesting/packaging. All farm management activities should be well-documented to help trace the history of the farm produce. All farm records should be kept for two years. For new applicants, three months of farm records is required. After the inspection, the Certification Committee reviews the inspection report to decide whether to approve, deny or put the application in pending. If the application was denied or put in pending, the committee chairperson notifies the applicant within fifteen days. Once approved, the certification committee endorses the issuance of the certification to the Office of the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture. Once the Secretary of Agriculture approves the issuance of certification, the Program Certification Committee assigns a permanent registration number and issues certificate to the applicant.

Renewal

The certification is being renewed every year through submission of new application a month before the certificate expires. Inspection and issuance of new certificate is done within thirty days after the receipt of the renewal request. The renewal is preferred to be done on growing or packing season.

Advertisement

Once certified, farms are enabled to use the Good Agricultural Practice for Fruits and Vegetable Farming mark on the produce. The farms are allowed to use the mark in advertising and to put it in their letterheads. All materials with the mark are submitted to the Certification Committee for approval.

Revocation of GAP Certificate

Certification Guidelines are being observed with strictness. Certified farms should continuously comply with the Code of Good Agricultural Practices. Non-compliance with the code results in the revocation of the certification. Non-compliance, depending on the degree, may also result in payment of fines, suspension or withdrawal of award, which are publicly announced.

E. Status of GAP Certification in the Philippines

Since the start of the program implementation on 2006, three trainings for the inspectors were already conducted by BAFPS. Various trainings on the Good Agricultural Practices were also conducted in different areas nationwide. The Department of Agriculture has also signed an administrative order for the accreditation of speakers/trainers/lecturers for GAP. It has approved already the procedural guidelines for the accreditation of speakers.

The government has also started with benchmarking of the Philippine GAP (PhilGAP) with the GLOBALGAP. It has initiated contact with accredited consultancy firm of GLOBALGAP in Asia. It plans to revise the existing Philippine standards to fit the requirements of GLOBALGAP.

F. Government Support

The Department of Agriculture, through the Bureau of Post-harvest Research and Extension implements the Philippine National Cold Chain Program which utilizes the traditional and alternative routes for fresh semi-temperate vegetables. The program covers the Mountain Province - and Benguet - La Trinidad through the Halsema Highway. Vegetables brought from La Trinidad to Metro Manila and other provinces of Luzon traverse the La Trinidad – Manila line, passing through the provinces of Pangasinan, Tarlac and Pampanga before reaching the large city markets and supermarkets.

The Philippine National Cold Chain Program was implemented to minimize post-harvest losses in vegetables, which is placed at 40-60 percent. The main target of this program is the Cordillera Administrative Region, as well as the plateaus of the provinces of Bukidnon and Misamis Oriental, where most of the highland vegetables in Mindanao are grown. This was conceived since private investment on refrigerated vans and reefer trucks are too prohibitive for the average farmer/grower to afford. Information about the benefits of the technology is limited, such that it is necessary to demonstrate to stakeholders how the cold chain technology works by piloting it in key transportation routes for fruits, vegetables, livestock, poultry and fishery products. The

program's main components and trade routes for temperate and semi-temperate vegetables cover pre-coolers, packing houses, cold storages, refrigerated trucks and refrigerated container vans. The different components minimizes significantly the losses in vegetables right after harvest and during transit by providing the favorable atmosphere and conditions necessary for preserving the freshness of the produce.

Republic Act 7900 was passed with the aim of providing smallholder farmers with the opportunity to compete in both domestic and international markets. The Act, known as the High Value Commercial Crops Law promotes the production and marketing of high value crops by providing PHP 1 billion fund for the allocation of credit.

The Ginintuang Masaganang Ani-High Value Commercial Crops Program (GMA-HVCC) provides support in the marketing of highland vegetables to the farmers. Aside from policy advocacy and technology development, the program undertakes market development and promotion, infrastructure support, investment and financing, and information education communication (IEC) in collaboration with the relevant staff bureaus/units of the DA and state colleges and universities. Aside from providing cold chain system, the DA provides timely information, facilitation and linkages, better regulatory services, including certification, pest and food safety and analysis in collaboration with the DA's relevant agencies. Moreover, the program established the RO-RO (roll-on-roll-out) Strong Republic Nautical Highways which facilitate the transport of agricultural products within the three major islands of the country, namely Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

Further, the Department's relevant staff bureaus/units could be tapped by the farmers in CAR and in Northern Mindanao, as well as in other regions, to give them support in strengthening the vegetable marketing system as well as improve yields. One example is the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Division (AMAD) which is mandated to facilitate and coordinate programs related to agribusiness development and marketing. Its responsibility includes market intelligence/assessment, dissemination of market-related information, and giving support to market linkages. BAFPS , conducts trainings on certification in all regions of the country. Its mission encompasses: 1) total confidence in Philippine products, 2) protection of consumers against unsafe and defective agricultural and fishery products, and 3) promotion of competitiveness of all local produce through implementation of quality assurance standards.

III. Organic Agriculture Certification

A. *What is organic agriculture and why go "organic"*

"Organic agriculture is a production system that sustains the health of soils, ecosystems and people. It relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles adapted to local conditions, rather than the use of inputs with adverse effects. Organic agriculture combines tradition, innovation and science to benefit the shared environment and promote fair relationships and a good quality of life for all involved.." - The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM).

An alternative definition by the National Organic Standard Board of the US Department of Agriculture defines it as *"an ecological production management system that promotes and enhances biodiversity, biological cycles and soil biological activity. It is based on minimal use of off-farm inputs and on management practices that restore, maintain and enhance ecological harmony"*

Organic agriculture is essentially reverting to the natural practice of farming or agriculture practice that is closest to nature, without reliance on chemicals to enhance growth and yield or control pests and diseases. Organic agriculture encourages the application of crop rotation, green manure, composting, biological pest management and mechanical cultivation to enhance soil productivity. A word of caution on organic fertilizer application and composting, when using chicken or cow manure, is that it should be allowed to reach sterilizing temperature or processed properly to eliminate potential harmful bacteria that might find their way onto the produce.

According to the Agriculture and Agri-Food Department of Canada, organic produce can be classified under six (6) categories: 1. Organic: no chemicals have been used for more than three years; 2. Organic in transition: no chemicals have been used for a period between six months and three years; 3. No pesticides: no chemical pesticides have been used; 4. Reduced pesticides: the use of chemical pesticides is reduced more than 50 percent of the average pesticide application; 5. No chemical fertilizer grown: products grown without chemical fertilizer; and 6. Reduced fertilizer grown: products where the use of chemical fertilizers is reduced to less than 50 percent of the average fertilizer use.

Factors contributing to the growth in popularity of organic farming have been the health and environmental hazards that have arisen from years of excessive application of chemicals to the farm and their adverse effects on farmers and consumers. Some critics have argued about the high production costs of organic farming, which to a typical small-scale farmer may seem impractical to adopt.

This guide is intended for organic production of vegetables, particularly semi-temperate produce.

Why opt for organic?

Organic agriculture or farming has important benefits such as economic, environmental, health and social.

Economic

First and foremost, every farmer's goal is to get the highest reasonable price for his crops. Price premiums on organic produce have evidently been higher compared to conventionally grown produce, not to mention the growing demand for organic products. With organic farming, dependence on imported and expensive fertilizers and pesticides is minimized. The use of organic fertilizers such as compost and manure utilizes farm by-products that used to be discarded, saving production costs and augment income for those farmers that have excess amount of organic wastes that could be sold to other farms. Value-adding is the main draw of going organic, where farmers get additional benefits from practicing organic farming.

Environmental

Organic farming leads to less air and soil pollution. It minimizes the leaching of harmful chemicals into water tables and drinking sources for animals and humans. With less and less inorganic fertilizer in the soil, lands are allowed to become productive again and beneficial organisms in the environment are allowed to go on with their natural cycle that benefits production of crops such as bees, worms, frogs and fish. Improvement in soil conditions allows it to better trap harmful greenhouse gases such as carbon monoxide, eventually leading to cooler temperatures and thwarting the ever growing threat of global warming. The practice of cover cropping would minimize soil erosions and sedimentation in rivers. Crop rotation and green manure help control the spread of pests and diseases and do away with

the use of harmful chemicals and help in saving environmental biodiversity, by allowing natural occurring process to take place.

Health

Farmers that have adopted organic farming have seen improvements in their health as well as the health of their families. Farmers can spend more time in their fields without the risk of inhaling or being contaminated by harmful chemicals. Organically grown produce have been found to contain higher levels of vitamins and minerals compared to conventionally grown crops due to higher fertility levels in the soil coming from organic matter. Should a community venture into adopting organic farming, precious amounts of safe drinking water could be saved, not to mention the prevention of sickness and diseases that could emanate from contaminated water.

Social

Land conversion is an important element in organic farming. A proposed lot, which has previously been used for conventional farming, is required to be fallow for 3-5 years before using it for organic farming. It commonly takes five (5) years of land conversion for cases where the use of synthetic fertilizers has been intensive. The rule of thumb is that the soil should be fallowed according to the number of years inorganic fertilizer has been applied to the soil (e.g. 5 years of application = 5 years of fallow). In the case of clearing new land or virgin land for organic agriculture, the conversion requirement is waived.

B. The Organic Certification Center of the Philippines (OCCP)

Organic agriculture in the Philippines was born out of the 4th International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) Asia Conference and General Assembly held in Tagaytay City in 1999. Organic agriculture in the Philippines has caught on the global trend through the initiatives of the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (CITEM) under the Department of Trade and Industry. CITEM is responsible for implementing the Organic Agriculture Certification and Inspection Program. Due to the growing demand of the local and export markets, and the need to train the local stakeholders in the organic movement, the CITEM created the Organic Working Technical Committee (OWTC). In December of 2000 at the IFOAM conference in Brussels, Belgium; Switzerland offered assistance to help develop the organic certification of the Philippines. The main agencies that helped the Philippines were FiBL (Research Institute of Organic Agriculture), a Swiss research center with expertise in biological agriculture and the leading information and documentation centre for organic agriculture. Likewise, bio. inspecta, an internationally known organic agriculture certifying body (also based in Switzerland), assisted in the organic certification development in the Philippines.

The training of local stakeholders in the local organic movement brought together members of the academe (Benguet State University, Central Luzon State University and the University of the Philippines at Los Baños), non-governmental organizations (Philippine Development Assistance Program, Philippine Network of Rural Development Institutes, Inc or PhilNet-RDI, Sibol ng Agham at Technolohiya, Inc or SIBAT and other farmer organizations) and government agencies (The Philippine Department of Agriculture and the Philippine Coconut Authority). The results of the workshop included common grounds on concepts, priorities, strategies, and goals of the national certification and inspection program. In June of 2001, during the National Organic Agriculture Conference, the final draft of the Philippine Basics Standards was reviewed, specifically, the Manual of Operations and Certification and Inspection. The Philippine Basics Standards was later on renamed Certification Standards of the Philippines. The body tasked to carry-out the implementation of these standards was formed, giving birth to the Organic Certification Center of

the Philippines (OCCP). OCCP is the only accredited certifying body recognized by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM). It is a non-stock, non-profit organization that is responsible for setting standards, as well as a certifying and inspection body. It is duly recognized by the DA-BAFPS.

Certification/Standards

The OCCP carries out independent certification, where members of the certifying body have no vested interest nor are in any way connected to one or more of parties in a business transaction (buyer and producer/supplier). Usually, it is the supplier that hires the services of the certifying body to ensure that the farming process involved in the production of the crop passes the local and international certification standards. It has to be noted that it is the process that is labeled organic and not the quality of the product, which many a consumer is not aware of. The certification process begins from the seeds up along the supply chain until they reach the hands of the supplier or ultimately the consumer and not just with the end product.

Overview of the Certification Process

In the production of crops like vegetables, there are minimum standards set for organic agriculture. In order to enhance sustainability, self-reliance, and biodiversity value of farms; a wide range of crops and varieties are encouraged to be grown (crop rotation). High priority is given to the use of certified organic seeds and plant materials. But in the absence of organic seeds, conventional planting materials are allowed to be used only in some given conditions and requirements. To retain the natural method of reproduction, plant varieties are allowed to be bred through conventional methods.

For soil management, documentation of crop rotation patterns is required. There is a minimum of one legume crop in rotation within three (3) years for farms with intensive vegetable cultivation. Tillage and cultivation implements should be used to maintain or improve the physical and biological quality of soil and to minimize erosion. There must be an establishment of appropriate conservation measures which include best management practices that would prevent wind and water erosion. For fertilization program, high priority is given to the use of biodegradable materials of microbial and of plant or animal origin produced on organic farms. But when the amount of biodegradable materials from organic farms is not sufficient, materials from the non-organic farms may be used but should not be greater in proportion. Supplementary application of fertilizers must be organic or adhere to the set requirements. Raw manure should be applied properly to avoid contaminations.

There is a strict prohibition with the use of synthetic pesticides in management of weeds, pests and diseases. Products prepared at the farm from local plants, animals and microorganisms are allowed for application. Thermic weed control (such as mulching) and physical methods for pest, weeds and disease management are allowed. Spraying equipment must be exclusive for the use of organic farms application. The use of synthetic products like growth regulators and dyes is not permitted.

Processing and handling of organic produce must be done separately from processing of non-organic products. When not labeled, organic produce should not be stored and transported together with non-organic products. Storage facilities should be well maintained and used appropriately to preserve the good quality of the produce. It must be assured that there are no contaminants in the storage facilities that would affect the produce. Pesticides and other chemical treatments should be avoided in controlling pests in the storage facilities. The packaging materials to be used must not contaminate the produce and maintain its aseptic condition.

Legal Basis for Organic Agriculture and Procedures for Certification

In 2003, the Department of Agriculture issued Administrative Order (AO) 13, Series of 2003, issuing the Guidelines in the Accreditation of Certifying Bodies for Standards on Organic Agriculture. This was in relation to the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act of 1997 or Republic Act 8435, particularly Sections 60 and 63, Chapter 7, mandating the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards to enforce standards of quality in the processing, preservation, packaging, labeling, importation, exportation, distribution and advertising of agriculture and fisheries products. In addition, it recognized that in order for the government to effectively enforce quality and safety standards throughout the Philippines, it needed to work closely with the private sector, non-government organizations and other agencies that exhibited competency and experience in organic agriculture.

In 2005, the Office of the President of the Philippines signed Executive Order 481, otherwise known as the Promotion and Development of Organic Agriculture in the Philippines.

The Department of Agriculture in 2006 issued an administrative order outlining the implementing rules and regulations for Executive Order 481 for the promotion and development of organic agriculture in the Philippines. This IRR prescribes the implementing procedures, processes and networking arrangements with the various stakeholders to promote, develop and sustain organic, agriculture in accordance *with* the National Organic Agriculture Program. The IRR, likewise, prescribes the functions, duties and powers of the National Organic Agriculture Board (NOAB), the National Technical Committee (NTC) and the Technical and Administrative Secretariat of the NOAB and the NTC; and the responsibilities of government departments and agencies and other entities with respect to the implementation of this Administrative Order.

C. *Procedures on Organic Agriculture Certification*

Since OCCP is the only accredited certifying body in the Philippines, as recognized by the IFOAM and the DA-BAFPS, the prohibitions, requirements, and other elements of organic farming are presented for the information of potential farmers seeking organic certification. These elements are focused on crop production of semi-temperate vegetables (Details of certification for animal husbandry and fishery can be found on the official website of OCCP, <http://www.occpphil.org>).

The OCCP National Standards

- Chemical and synthetic inputs are prohibited
- Genetically modified organisms are prohibited
- Green manure for annuals is required
- Cover cropping for perennials is required
- Setting up of buffer zones is required
- Soil erosion control measures in place
- Nutrient management established

Elements of the Certification System

- Standards
- Contracts
- Inspection
- Certification, approval
- Management
- Labelling
- Information

Requirements for Certification

- Compliance with the organic standard
- Contracts with producers/processors if applicable
- Record keeping
- Annual production and/or processing plan
- Attendance to trainings and seminars on Organic Agriculture and Certification

Procedure for Certification

- Inspection on Site
- Report
- Evaluation of the report
- Decision of certification
- Issuance of certificate
- Follow-up-Transaction-Export-Import Documents
- Unannounced Inspection

Steps in Certification

1. *Pre-inspection Questionnaire* - The operator describes his/her activity and his/her production and/or processing and/or trade and/or exportation operation (using applicable application forms).
2. *Commitment to the Organic Production Process* - First time applicants sign a service contract including their commitment to the organic production process. OCCP sets specific schedules for the inspection visit/s and certifications.
3. *Inspection/validation* - OCCP assigns an inspector who sets an appointment for the visit. Inspection consists of an evaluation of the contracted operator's compliance with organic standards. In case of groups, a percentage lower than 100% of production units or standing crops shall be externally inspected. It is mandatory to have a functional and appropriate internal control system (ICS). An inspection report is written and handed to the operator indicating all findings of the inspection and listing all non-compliances and analysis of results may also be included.
4. *Certification* - after the inspection, the report is passed on to the OCCP Certification Committee. A certification decision is sent to the operator along with the inspection report. Conformities, non-compliance, corrective action demands or sanctions are clearly stated in the certification decision.

Factors that may influence the price of the certification process:

- Inspection fees
- Certification fees
- Travel costs
- Inspection plan
- Analysis

D. Issues in organic agriculture certification

- High cost of certification - most farmers in the Philippines are small holders that makes it difficult for them to avail of the certification process
- High opportunity cost of converting to organic as opposed to traditional/conventional farming practices
- The medium demand for organic products and the high cost of the organic farming practices makes it unattractive to most farmers to convert.
- A significant number of produce labeled as organic were found to be tainted with pesticide residue based on surveys carried out by the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards.
- According to OCCP, some consumers have the misnomer that organic products are tantamount to herbal produce/products.
- Given the growing demand in the international market for organically grown produce, the cost for international certification is still too much for small to medium scale farms

E. Government Support

Aside from the DA-BAFPS, the Department of Agriculture through the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) supported the efforts of the OCCP in the development and promotion of organic agriculture in the Philippines, such as phase 1 of the organic urban agriculture research. In January 2009, the provincial government of Ifugao, Cordillera Organic Agriculture Development Council, Inc and the Ifugao State College of Agriculture and Forestry sponsored the Organic congress for the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) in Nayan, Lamut, and Ifugao to advocate organic agriculture awareness in the region. The BAR provided Php 1.2 million to finance two (2) local projects in Ifugao, which will focus on the organic production of tilapia. These projects are part of BAR's initiative to encourage farmers to use traditional technologies through the community-based participatory action research (CPAR) and commercialization of processing technologies in target communities.

The Philippine legislative, through a number of senators, authored and sponsored various bills for the development and promotion of organic agriculture in the Philippines. To further strengthen these laws and ensure that all stakeholders are consulted, the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food created a technical working committee composed of various experts from the Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Land Reform (DLR), Department of Health (DoH) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and from their respective units, bureaus, agencies and institutes that are at the frontline of agriculture and fisheries development. Regional and zonal consultations are to follow to solicit the comments and suggestions of other stakeholders around the Philippines.

F. Strategies for the Sustainability of Organic Agriculture in the Philippines and Future Plans and Programs

- More advocacy and awareness programs
- Encourage the grouping/clustering of small farms to defray the high cost of certification such as cooperatives or associations/federations
- Conduct of free or discounted trainings for farmers planning to convert to organic farming, such as farm record keeping, internal control systems to prepare them for organic certification
- Promotion and advocacy of organic products to promote market demand locally
- Collaboration between the OCCP and international certifying bodies to help local farms jump to the international market, where there is a growing demand for organically grown produce.

An advantage to the Philippines is that it is rich in natural and agricultural resources which are significant contributor to the country's economy.

IV. Processed Vegetables Certification

The Bureau of Product Standards

The standardization of food products is under the responsibility of the Bureau of Product Standards (BPS), a government agency under the Department of Trade and Industry. BPS is the national standards body of the Philippines established by Republic Act No. 4109 (Philippine Standardization Law) and Executive Order No. 133. Its mandate is to develop, implement, and coordinate standardization activities in the Philippines. It is primarily involved in standards development, product certification, and standards implementation/promotion to raise the quality and global competitiveness of Philippine products, at the same time to protect the interests of consumers and businesses.

In order to develop reliable and market-driven standards in all sectors, the BPS focuses its efforts on the implementation of the Philippine Standardization Strategy (PSS), the standardization of the country, which intends to help strengthen competitiveness abroad, build upon existing public/private partnership to further the use of standards and to address key quality of life issues such as safety, health, and the environment.

Realizing the benefits of international standards to Philippine trade and industrial development, the BPS ensures that the Philippine National Standards (PNS) developed are at par with international standards. It has been actively participating in international and inter-regional standardization activities so as to increase the competitiveness of the Philippine products and services. The strategic linkages of BPS include its membership to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and to the regional bodies like the Association of Pacific Economic Cooperation-Sub-Committee on Standards and Conformance (APRC-SCSC) and the ASEAN Consultative Committee for Standards and Quality (ACCSQ).

The BPS, through its Product Certification Scheme ensures that conformity is strictly observed by the industry in providing safe and world-class products scheme, products that are covered by mandatory certification are subject to inspections and tests in accordance with the requirements of a standard prior to selling and distribution. The Department of Trade Industry issues the PS (Philippine Standard) License and the Import Commodity Clearance to manufacturers and importers, respectively, which have complied with the scheme.

Moreover, BPS acts as the Enquiry Point and Notification Authority relative to the implementation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT). It notifies WTO of all proposed technical regulations, standards, and assessment procedures in the Philippines. It provides stakeholders with copies of proposed standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures issued by WTO members. It also receives comments on proposed standards/regulations and responds to questions on standards, technical regulations and conformity assessment activities.

A. BPS programs and Services

- Standards Development
- Standards Promotion and Information
 - WTO TBT Enquiry Point
- Technical Assistance and Training
- Product Testing
- Consumer Welfare Enhancement

- Special Projects and Registration of Quality Assessors

B. Standardization Strategy(2002-2007/10)

5 KEY RESULT AREAS (KRAs)

- KRA 1: Standards Development and Harmonization
- KRA 2: Standards Promotion and Information Dissemination
- KRA 3: Standards and Conformance Technical Infrastructure (Product Inspection, Testing and Certification and Accreditation Programs)
- KRA 4: Public-Private Partnership Program
- KRA 5: Legislative Agenda

C. BPS Product Certification Schemes

- Products under mandatory product certification are subjected to testing and certification of the BPS prior to distribution in the market and selling.
- A manufacturer or importer whose product is under mandatory product certification cannot sell or distribute without the license and clearance from BPS authorities to use the **PS Mark** or the **ICC Mark**.
- **PS (PHILIPPINE STANDARD) MARKS - DAO 1: 1997**

BPS issues the PS license to a manufacturer whose product has successfully passed the requirements of a Philippine National Standard. With the license, the manufacturer affixes the **PS Mark** on his product or product package.

D. Main Features of the Expanded PS Certification Scheme

- Product Quality Improvement (ISO 9000)
- Consumer Protection (PNS)

BPS Mandate

As mandated by **Republic Act 4109 Section 9**, the BPS shall have charge of the establishment of standards for, and inspection of, all agricultural, forest, mineral, fish, industrial and all other products of the Philippines for which no standards have as yet been fixed by law, executive order, rules and regulations.

Republic Act 7393 Article 5a mandates BPS to develop and provide safety and quality standards for consumer products, including performance or use-oriented standard codes of practice and method of tests.

Implementing Agencies

- The Department of Health with respect to food, drugs, cosmetics, devices, and substances;
- The Department of Agriculture with respect to product related to agriculture; and
- The Department of Trade and Industry with respect to other consumer products not specified above.

E. Philippine Standard (PS) Networking/Strategic Alliance for Standardization of Food Products

Network Members :

- DTI-BPS
- Department of Agriculture – Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards
- Department of Health - Bureau of Food and Drugs
- Academe
- Government Agencies (Philippine Coconut Authority, Bureau of Animal Industry, Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority, University of the Philippines Los Baños, Bureau of Plant Industry, etc.)
- University of the Philippines – College of Human Ecology
- Philippine Council for Industry and Energy Research and Development (PCIERD)
- Industrial Technology Development Institute (ITDI)

International Linkages

Codex Alimentarius Commission

- Department of Agriculture
- Bureau of Food and Drugs

International Organization for Standardization (ISO)

- Bureau of Product Standards
 - ISO/TC 34 food products

F. Standards Development Policies

- As a WTO member body BPS has adhered to the policy of harmonizing PNS with international standards where appropriate
- Standards are developed on consensus basis taking into consideration the interests of all stakeholders
- Through the Technical Committee process with representatives from various sectors or through the fast track method

Technical Committee

Composition:

- Government
- Industry
- Trade
- Academe
- Professionals
- Consumer

Stakeholders

- Academe
- Trade/Industry
- Consumer
- Professional Groups
- Research institution(s)
- Government agencies
- Testing institution(s)

G. Current National Programs

Priority Product Focus

1. Products Included in the Department of Trade and Industry Top 10 Revenue Streams

- Information technology
- Marine products
- Wearables
- Electrical/Electronic products
- Home furnishings
- Motor vehicle parts
- Construction materials
- Giftware/holiday decors
- Food and food products
- Organic and natural products

APEC/ASEAN Commitments

- Electrical and electronic appliances
- Food
- Rubbers products
- Machinery
- ISO/IEC guides

Work Program

- BFAD/ITDI
 - Standards for sauces
 - Fish sauce, soy sauce, vinegar, oyster sauce, tomato sauce, etc
 - Fish and fish products
 - Smoked fish
 - Alcoholic beverages
 - Basi (fermented alcoholic beverage made from sugarcane)
 - Fruit wines
 - Pastries
- BAFPS
 - Sugars
 - Seaweeds

2. *List of Philippine National Standards (PNS) for Agricultural Food Products*

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>Fresh Fruits</i> | <i>saba</i> (cooking banana), pineapple, pomelo, durian, mango, calamansi, mangosteen, papaya, lanzones, jackfruit, melon, watermelon |
| <i>Fresh Vegetables</i> | common onion, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, head lettuce, tomato, carrots, okra, ginger, eggplant, potato, ampalaya (bitter gourd), cucumber and garlic |
| <i>Fish, fish products and other marine products</i> | frozen <i>bangus</i> (milkfish), frozen tilapia, dried fish, dried <i>danggit</i> , frozen squid, frozen shrimp/prawn |
| <i>Other agricultural food products</i> | code of good agricultural practices for fresh fruits and vegetable farming, green coffee beans, pili nuts, taro leaves, table eggs, <i>nata de coco</i> , organic rice, desiccated coconut, virgin coconut oil, etc. |

3. *List of PNS for Processed Food Products*

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Fruits</i> | banana chips, dried tropical fruits, dried mango, sweet preserves |
| <i>Fish and fish products</i> | thermally processed fish, dried salted fish |
| <i>Beverages</i> | mango beverage, citrus beverage |
| <i>Other processed food products</i> | flour sticks |

4. *List of Management System Standards Related to Food Products*

- PNS ISO 22000:2005 Food Safety Management Systems – Requirements for any organization in the food chain
- PNS ISO 22004: 2007 Food safety Management Systems – guidance on the application of ISO 22000:2005

5. *HALAL FOOD*

- **Memorandum Order No. 201 issued by the office of the President on 23 December 2005**

- Directing the following government agencies to harmonize all government programs related to Halal trade in order to ensure compliance with international standards and the effective implementation of the Halal Export Trade development program:

- Department of Trade and Industry (lead agency)
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Health
- Department of Science and Technology
- Department of Tourism
- Office of Muslim Affairs

6. . *PNS 2067:2008 HALAL FOOD – GENERAL GUIDELINES*

SCOPE -

- PNS 2067:2008 provides general guidelines for the food industry on the preparation and handling of halal food, including food supplements and to serve as a fundamental requirement for food product and food trade in the Philippines. This standard should use together with acceptable food safety systems such as HACCP and its prerequisites.
- The application of halal system to food shall cover “from farm to plate” – that in essence is the whole coverage of food halal quality assurance to promote hygiene and good health, as prescribed by Allah (SWT) and Prophet Mohammad (SAW).

V. Workshop on Adding Value to Fresh and Processed Produce through Product Certification in the Philippines

EDSA Shangri-la Manila Hotel
17-18 December 2008

- To present specific policy recommendations and strategies that would promote the adoption of product certification, a workshop was conducted.
- Participants were grouped into two: Group 1 (Policy and Implementation) and Group 2 (Users and Stakeholders of Certification).
- There were 26 participants, 12 of which belonged to Group 1 and 14 for Group 2. Each group has a facilitator and a rapporteur.
- To guide the direction of the discussion, two questions were posed: 1) How are we going to harmonize the different laws and policies on assuring quality products, process, practices in agriculture and fisheries? 2) What specific programs do we need to adopt to ensure the quality of our fresh and processed produce through product certification?
- One member was assigned to present the group outputs in a form of a recommendation/suggestion.

- **GROUP I**

Facilitator:

Dr. Togar Napitupulu – UN-CAPSA

Members:

Corazon Rapera – University of the Philippines at Los Baños (UPLB)

Michelle Ramiscal – Organic Producers Trade Association (OPTA)

Judith Manahan – National Food Authority (NFA)

Edna Guiang – Department of Agriculture – Bureau of Plant Industry (DA-BPI)

Marie Klondy Dagupen – Benguet State University

Bayani Santos – Local Government Unit (LGU) -Lantapan, Bukidnon

Mayra Magabilin –Bureau of Product Standards

Maria Clavelia Olito – DA-Bureau of Postharvest Research and Extension

Arianne Aldeza – DA-Gintong Masaganang Ani-High Value Commercial Crops (GMA-HVCC)

Fred Rufino – LGU-Atok, Benguet

Jennifer Baguinang – LGU-Claveria, Misamis Oriental

Agbessi Amewoa- UN CAPSA

Rapporteur:

Rita dela Cruz – Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR)

- **GROUP II**

Facilitator:

Dr. Ronnie S. Natawijaja – Padjadjaran University, Indonesia

Members:

Rodel Maghirang – University of the Philippines Los Baños

Edralina Serrano - University of the Philippines Los Baños

Nicasio Baucas – DA- Regional Field Unit (RFU) - Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR)

Manuel Ching – DA-Bureau of Plant Industry

Catherine Posas – Dizon Farms
Rio Cacatian – Super Shopping Market
Delinia Juan – Office of the Provincial Agriculturist, Benguet
Patricio Ananayo – DA-RFU-CAR
Archie Alamban – NorMin Veggies
Maria Lilith Turan – LGU, Bukidnon
Arlene Sagayo – DA-RFU (CAR)
Josefina Lantican – DA-BAR
Ed Jarcia – NFA
Rudy Cacatian – OPTA

Rapportuers:

Marlowe Aquino - BAR
RC Rivera - BAR

SUMMARY OF GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are the six (6) major issues/concerns which came out during the discussions and the recommendations as suggested and agreed by both groups.

1) Tedious and expensive product/process certification

Recommendations:

- a) Establish a protocol on alternative guarantee system (AGS) wherein BAFPS (for GAP) will provide full subsidy towards certification for three years and two years for OA. Subsequent application for certification will be shouldered by the farmer/s .
- b) Provision of a continuous capability building for GAP and OA stakeholders and institute an advocacy on AGS to consumers.

2) Lack of information campaign on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Organic Agriculture (OA), their costs and benefits both to the producers and consumers, and agencies involved in the certification

Recommendations:

- a) Allot funds specific for IEC program and activities in the promotion of GAP and OA to the public
- b) Massive information campaign on healthy and safe food to educate both policymakers and consumers
- c) Enhance assistance on the effective promotion of organic farming in the region/province specifically to create a focal person on organic farming and assist farmers on proper networking
- d) Government to provide a complete listing of all the laws and policies on certification through a booklet or manual that contains all the necessary and specific information distinguishing each of them including the agencies/institutions responsible.
- e) Develop and prepare IEC materials in different dialects to cater to the local people particularly the farmers in the rural areas. This may come in the form of broadcast media to promote GAP/OA and a booklet that is specific on the certification fees and the duration of the process.

3) Inadequate incentive package on the part of the government to support DA's programs on GAP and OA

Recommendations:

- a) Revisit the strategic plan of DA specifically on GAP and OA programs and reinforce and strengthen these
- b) There must be a separate funds for R&D, extension and training, and regulatory functions
- c) Provision of a capability building program for farmers who are into GAP/OA

4) Certification is a demand driven issue. Economies of scale is important in applying for certification where the average size of the farm should not be less than one hectare. How this can be resolved (setting a business- oriented and demand- responsive conglomerates that can ably supply the quantities of safe produce required by both local and international markets).

Recommendations:

- a) Create Cooperatives/Organized Groups (clustering of farmers) especially those engaged and practicing GAP and are into OA.
- b) Develop a mindset of "real farmer" – professionalizing farming responsive to the global demand given the proper technologies and support at hand.

5) Low participation in the certification program of the government (since its inception in 2005 only one farm has been GAP certified)

Recommendations:

- a) Identify a farm in the community that has been successful in organic farming as a model
- b) Promote the use of GAP and OA through the provision of incentives for farmers engaged in the appropriate farming activity
- c) Emphasize "there is money in going organic and certified" including low costs, domestic and international demand, new livelihoods for support services/inputs, and employment
- d) Strengthen program on organic agriculture down to the barangay level (in strong partnership with local government units and regional DA units)

6) Private monopoly of a certifying agency for organic agriculture

Recommendations:

- a) Create other validating and evaluating agencies that follow the protocol and procedure of GAP and OA certification.
- b) Rationalize and lower the certification fees for more participation.

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Appendix

- Republic Act No. 4109 - AN ACT TO CONVERT THE DIVISION OF STANDARDS UNDER THE BUREAU OF COMMERCE INTO A BUREAU OF STANDARDS, TO PROVIDE FOR THE STANDARDIZATION AND/OR INSPECTION OF PRODUCTS AND IMPORTS OF THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES
- Executive Order No.481 - PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN THE PHILIPPINES
- Administrative Order No. ___ - IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS OF EO 481 OR PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN THE PHILIPPINES
- Administrative Order No. 25 - GUIDELINES ON THE CERTIFICATION OF GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES (GAP) FOR FRUITS AND VEGETABLE (FV) FARMING

REPUBLIC ACT NO. 4109

REPUBLIC ACT NO. 4109 - AN ACT TO CONVERT THE DIVISION OF STANDARDS UNDER THE BUREAU OF COMMERCE INTO A BUREAU OF STANDARDS, TO PROVIDE FOR THE STANDARDIZATION AND/OR INSPECTION OF PRODUCTS AND IMPORTS OF THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

- SECTION. 1. The Division of Standards under the Bureau of Commerce is hereby converted into a Bureau of Standards under the Department of Commerce and Industry.
- SECTION. 2. The Bureau shall have as its head a Director of Standards and two Assistant Directors, one for technical matters and the other for administrative matters, who shall be appointed by the President of the Philippines with the consent of the Commission on Appointments. There shall be in the Bureau such officials and employees to be appointed by the Secretary of Commerce and Industry as may be necessary to carry out the purpose of this Act: provided that, personnel of the Bureau whose duties and functions are technical in nature shall be exempt from the operation of the Wage and Position Classification Office.
- SECTION. 3. The Bureau shall have charge of the establishment of standards for, and inspection of, all agricultural, forest, mineral, fish, industrial and all other products of the Philippines for which no standards have as yet been fixed by law, executive order, rules and regulations; and the inspection and certification of the quality of commodities imported into the Philippines, to determine the country of origin of the articles which are the growth, raw materials, manufacture, process, or produce, and to determine if they satisfy the buyer's or importer's requirements or specifications for domestic consumption; and to prohibit the discharge and/or release of any article which are the growth, raw materials, manufacture, process, or produce of countries without trade relations with the Philippine government. Physical, biological and/or chemical tests or analyses necessary for the examination of products under the provisions of this Act may be undertaken in any branch of the Government having facilities for the purpose until such time as the Bureau may have its own facilities.
- SECTION. 4. Subject to the general supervision and control of the Secretary of Commerce and Industry, the Director of Standards shall possess the general powers conferred by law upon Bureau Chiefs, and the following specific powers and duties which he may perform personally or through his duly authorized representatives:
- (a) Under such rules and regulations as the Director of Standards may promulgate which the Secretary of Commerce and Industry must approve within one year, to establish standards for the products within the purview of Section three of this Act; to inspect in order to sample and determine the standards of said products, and to certify the inspection and standard thereof:
 - (b) Before the government, including government owned or controlled corporation, make any purchase of any of the products within the purview of Section three of this Acts, and/or the producer, manufacturer and/or dealer offers for sale any commodity which affects the life, health and property of the people, to inspect and sample in order to determine if, and to certify that the products satisfy the requirements as to kind, class, grade, quality or standard in accordance with the provisions of sub-section (a) above;

- (c) Before the exportation or shipment abroad of any of the products within the purview of Section three of this Act for which no standard has or shall have, as yet, been established in accordance with the provisions of sub-section (a) above, to inspect and sample in order to determine if, and to certify that, the whole shipment satisfies the buyer's or importer's requirements as to kind, class, grade, quality or standard: provided, however, that shipments which are not standardized but conforms to buyer's or importer's requirements, shall have their corresponding customs or shipping papers or documents stamped conspicuously with caption "not under government commodity standardization" and may be released by the Collector of Customs in accordance with the existing Tariff and Customs Laws.
- (d) Before any commodity imported into the Philippines is discharged and/or released by the Bureau of Customs, to inspect such commodity in order to sample and determine the country of origin where the articles are the growth, raw materials, manufacture, process or produce, and to certify that, the whole shipment satisfies local buyer's importer's requirements as to kind, class, grade, quality or standard which may be indicated on the corresponding customs or shipping papers or commercial documents: provided, however, that imports which are not shown to be covered by, or do not conform to, buyer's or importer's requirements, shall be labeled or stamped conspicuously with the caption "do not conform to buyer's or importer's specifications": provided, further, that imports of any article which are the growth, raw materials, manufacture, process or produce of countries wherein the Philippines has no trade agreement shall be confiscated and/or seized at the disposal of the government.
- (e) To fix and collect fees for the services of inspection and certification of inspection and standard, and/or testing or analyzing samples and certification of tests or analyses, and other services, the nature of which require scientific and/or technological knowledge and skill.
- (f) To take testimony or evidence on matters of official business relating to the exercise of his powers, the performance of his duties, and the accomplishment of the purpose of this Act or any of the rules and regulations promulgated in accordance therewith.
- (g) To initiate and undertake official investigation to determine the nature of organization and business methods of any entrepreneur, person, corporation, association, partnership or firm engaged in the manufacture, marketing and distribution of the products within the purview of Section three of this Act: provided, however, that this power shall be exercised only in connection with any known or reported violation of any provision of this Act, or non-compliance with any rule or regulation promulgated in accordance therewith.

SECTION. 5. Any person who fails or refuses to comply with a legal summon, or subpoena, or subpoena duces tecum, of the Director of Standards or his duly authorized agent or representative, or refuses to be sworn to, prior to giving testimony or refuses to answer pertinent questions, or gives false or misleading data or information or willful concealment of a material fact, in any investigation made pursuant to subsection (c), (d), (e), (f), and (g) of Section four of this Act, shall be punished by imprisonment of not less than two or more than six months, and by a fine of not less than five hundred nor more than one thousand pesos and deportation if he is an alien, after serving the

entire period of his imprisonment: provided, however, that, if the false or misleading data or information shall have been given under oath, the maximum penalty for giving false testimony shall be imposed.

SECTION. 6. No customs export entry, import entry, declaration, release certificate, manifest, clearance, import permit, or permit to ship abroad and/or discharge shall be issued for any of the products within the purview of Section three of this Act and/or imported commodity, unless it is first inspected in accordance with provisions of sub-sections (b), (c), (d), and/or (e) of Section four of this Act: provided, however, that no product of the Philippines for which a standard has been established and promulgated by virtue of this Act shall be sold and/or disposed of in any manner and/or exported unless and until its standard shall have been certified by the Director of Standards or his duly authorized representatives as conforming to the standard set for, either for local distribution and/or for export: provided, further, that no such certification shall be required upon application under oath by the manufacturer and/or exporter to the Director of Standards that the shipment is in small quantity and the product is not for sale but for private use or consumption only. It shall be the duty and the responsibility of all collectors of customs to enforce the prohibition on the exportation and/or importation of any product hereinabove referred to.

SECTION. 7. Any public official, employee, individual, corporation, association, partnership, or firm effecting or abetting the shipment abroad and/or facilitate the discharge of distribution and/or sale for domestic consumption of any product in violation of any of the provisions of Section six of this Act or any rules and regulations issued therewith, shall be punished by imprisonment of not less than six months nor more than two years and by a fine of not less than one thousand nor more than five thousand pesos, and deportation if he is an alien after serving the entire period of his imprisonment.

Whenever the violation is committed by a corporation, association, partnership, or firm, the President and each one of the directors or managers of said corporation, association, partnership or firm who shall have knowingly permitted or failed to prevent the commission of said violation shall be held liable as principals thereof.

In case the offender is a naturalized citizen he shall, in addition to the penalty prescribed herein, suffer the penalty of cancellation of his naturalization certificate and such registration in the civil registry and immediate deportation.

In case the violation is committed by, or in the interest of a foreign judicial person duly licensed to engage in business in the Philippines, such license to engage in business in the Philippines shall immediately be revoked.

If the offender is a public officer or employee, he shall, in addition to the penalty of imprisonment and fine prescribed herein, be dismissed from office and perpetually disqualified from holding public office.

SECTION. 8. The Division of Standards under the Bureau of Commerce is hereby converted and its personnel, appropriation, and share in the appropriations of the Bureau of Commerce, funds, furniture, equipment, properties, supplies, records, assets and liabilities are hereby constituted to the Bureau: and all powers conferred upon, and all duties, functions, and activities assigned to the said division and to the Director of Commerce by virtue of the provisions of Sections one hundred fifty-five, one hundred fifty-six and one hundred fifty-seven of Executive Order Numbered ninety-four, series of nineteen hundred and forty-seven, together with the execution and enforcement of Commerce

Administrative Orders on Standardization and inspection of Philippine products already promulgated in accordance with the provisions of the said sections of the executive order, are hereby transferred to the Director of Standards.

SECTION. 9. In addition to such funds and appropriation as may be transferred to the Bureau as provided in Section eight of this Act, there is hereby appropriated, out of any funds in the National Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the amount of one million pesos for the salaries, wages, sundry and other expenses, furniture, and equipment of such personnel of the Bureau as will be needed and required to carry out the purpose of this Act.

SECTION. 10. Twenty-five per centum of all receipts and collections accruing from the enforcement of this Act and the rules and regulations on inspection and certificate of inspection and standard shall be set aside and be available for disbursement for salaries, wages, sundry and other expenses, furniture, and equipment of such additional personnel as may be needed and required to intensify or extend the activities and services of the Bureau. Any amount thus set aside, or so much thereof as may be needed for the intensification or extension of activities and services, shall be itemized in special budget to be approved by the President upon recommendation of the Secretary of Commerce and Industry; and any such special budget thus approved for the ensuing fiscal year for the consideration of the Congress in its regular or special session. Unitemized and unexpended balances of amounts thus set aside shall be cumulative from year to year, and shall constitute, a special fund to be called "Philippine Standardization and Inspection Funds" to be used for the purposes herein stated, and for such other aims and projects as may render the services of the Bureau efficient and effective.

SECTION. 11. All Acts, executive orders, administrative orders and proclamations or parts thereof inconsistent with any of the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly. If any part of this Act shall, for any person, be adjudged by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall not affect the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in its operation to the part directly involved in the controversy in which such judgment shall have been rendered.

SECTION. 12. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved: June 20, 1964

MALACAÑANG

Manila

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 481

PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN THE PHILIPPINES

WHEREAS, it is a declared policy of the State to promote agriculture development, conserve environmental resources and promote social equity and product access to foreign and domestic markets of agriculture and fishery commodities;

WHEREAS, the development of Organic Agriculture nationwide as a farming scheme enhances global competitiveness, environmental integrity, food security and safety, and increases productivity and alleviate poverty;

WHEREAS, the State recognizes the potential of Organic Agriculture in increasing value-added in agricultural export and local consumption products;

WHEREAS, the stakeholders have recognized the potential of certified organic farming as a way to lower input costs, utilization of local raw material inputs, conserve non-renewable resources, mainstream into high-value markets and improve farm income;

WHEREAS, the stakeholders of Organic Agriculture have manifested their strong interest to aggressively promote organic agriculture with support from the government on the research, development and extension activities.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO, President of the Republic of the Philippines, by the virtue of the powers vested in me by the Constitution and existing laws, do hereby order:

- SECTION. 1. Declaration of Objectives – This Executive Order shall have the following objectives:
- (a) promote organic agriculture as a farming scheme especially in rural farming communities;
 - (b) forge effective networking and collaboration with the stakeholders involved in the production, handling, processing and marketing of organic agriculture products;
 - (c) guarantee food and environmental safety by means of an ecological approach to farming; and
 - (d) ensure the integrity of organic products through the approved organic certification procedures and organic production, handling and processing standards.
- SECTION. 2. The National Organic Agriculture Program (NOAP) – The Department of Agriculture National Organic Agriculture Program shall focus on, but not limited to:
- (a) Regulations and Guidelines
 - (b) Certification and Accreditation

- (c) Market Promotion and Networking
- (d) Organic Information for Producers, Handlers and Processors
- (e) Research, Development and Extension

SECTION. 3. The National Organic Agriculture Board (NOAB) – There is hereby constituted the National Organic Agriculture Board, hereinafter referred to as the NOAB. The NOAB shall be composed of the following:

- (a) The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture as Chairperson;
- (b) The Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry as Vice-Chair;
- (c) The Secretary of the Department of Health as Vice-Chair;
- (d) The Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government;
- (e) The Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources; and
- (f) The Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology.

There shall be appointed to the NAOB seven (7) representatives engaged in the practice of organic agriculture. Such representatives may be taken from, but not limited to the recommended sectors listed below:

- (a) Three from the private sector who operate an organic farm; organic handling and processing; and establishment with significant trade in organic products;
- (b) Two from the NGO/PO who represents public interest or consumer interest;
- (c) One from organic certifying body as identified under Section 6 of this E.O.;
- (d) One from the academe with expertise in areas of environmental protection and resource conservation, toxicology and biochemistry.

A member of the Board shall serve for a term of 3 years. A member cannot serve consecutive terms unless such member served an original term that was less than 3 years.

A National Technical Committee (NTC) shall be created as an implementing arm of the policies, programs and projects identified and approved by the Board. It shall be drawn from the Department of Agriculture, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Land Reform, representative from the private sector and civil society.

The Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards (BAFPS) of the Department of Agriculture shall serve as the Technical and Administrative Secretariat of the Board and the NTC with the member agencies providing additional staff support as the need arises.

SECTION. 4. Functions, Duties and Responsibilities of the NOAB and the NTC – The NOAB shall have the following function, duties and responsibilities:

- (a) Formulate policies, plans, programs and projects to promote and develop Organic Agriculture;
- (b) Oversee the successful implementation of the Organic Agriculture programs and projects;
- (c) Call upon any government agency to carry out and implement programs and projects identified by the Board;
- (d) Call upon private sectors, people's organizations (Pos) and non-government organizations. (NGOs), and the academe to provide advise on matters pertaining to organic agriculture;
- (e) Identify sources of financing to expand organic agriculture; and

- (f) Submit annual and other periodic reports to the Office of the President.

The National Technical Committee shall:

- (a) Implement Organic Agriculture programs and projects approved by the Board;
 - (b) Update the Board on the status of the programs, projects and activities undertaken for the promotion and development of organic agriculture;
 - (c) Forge effective networking with the various stakeholders involved in organic production; and
 - (d) Perform such other functions, duties and responsibilities as may be necessary to implement this Executive Order.
- Section. 6. Compliance Requirements for Organic Standards. – Adoption of the Philippine National Standard for Organic Agriculture (PNS/BAFPS) 07:2003 ICS.65.020 specifically listed in ANNEX “A” shall be mandatory throughout the country for the sectors involved in the production and marketing organic agriculture products.
- Section. 7. Organic Accreditation. – The Department of Agriculture through Administrative Order 13 Series of 2003 listed in ANNEX “B”, otherwise known as the “Guidelines in the Accreditation of Certifying Bodies for Standards on Organic Agriculture” shall accredit certifying bodies as prescribed in the guidelines.
- Section. 8. Labeling of Organic Produced Products. – In addition to the requirements for labeling of organic products, commodities, goods and merchandise pursuant to PNS/BAFPS 07:2003 ICS.65.020 listed in ANNEX “A”, the products, commodities, goods and merchandise must contain contents prescribed in this Executive Order.
- Section. 9. Research, Development and Extension. – The DA, DOST, SCUs and other appropriate agencies such as but not limited to scientific/professional organizations and research institutions shall develop, enhance, support and consolidate activities and related technologies to protect the environment and improve organic matter depleted agricultural soils, reduce cost of production, improve product quality and increase value-added for global competitiveness of Organic Produce.
- Section. 10. Appropriations. – The Department of Agriculture shall allocate from its present budget such amount not less than Five Million Pesos (P5,000,000.00) may be taken from the Presidential Social Fund for the initial year of implementation of the program. Thereafter, the Department of Agriculture shall include and appropriate amount in the General Appropriations Act following its enactment and every year thereafter.
- Section. 11. Implementing Guidelines. – The Board, within ninety (90) working days in consultation with other agencies and stakeholders concerned shall formulate the implementing rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Executive Order.
- Section. 12. Separability Clause.- If any of the provisions of the Executive Order is declared invalid, the remainder shall remain operative.
- Section. 13. Effectivity. – This Executive Order shall take effect immediately after publication in a newspaper or general circulation.

DONE, in the City of Manila, on this 27th day of December, in the year of our Lord twenty hundred and five.

By the President:

GLORIA M. ARROYO

EDUARDO R. ERMITA

Executive Secretary

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this Executive Order, the following definitions of terms shall apply:

Agricultural inputs – all substances or materials used in the production or handling of organic agricultural products

Agricultural products – any agricultural commodity or product, whether raw or processed, including any commodity or product derived from livestock for human or livestock on consumption

Certified operation – a crop or livestock production, wild-crop harvesting or handling operation, or portion of such operation that is certified by an accredited certifying agent such as utilizing a system of organic production.

Conventional agriculture – farming systems dependent on the input of artificial fertilizers and/or pesticides or failing to conform to the Philippine National Standards in any other way.

Farm unit – an agricultural area or production managed organically, which a farmer or a-group owns or in any other way is responsible for

Label – a display or written, printed, or graphic material on the immediate container of an agricultural product or any such material affixed to a bulk container containing an agricultural product, except for package liners or a display of written, printed, or graphic material which contains only information about the weight of the product.

Labeling – any written, printed, or graphic presentation that is present on the label of a product accompanies the product or displayed near the product.

Livestock – any cattle, sheep, goat, swine, poultry, or equine animals used for food or in the production of food, fiber, feed, or other agricultural-based consumer products; wild or domesticated game; or other non-plant life, except such term shall not include aquatic animals for the production of food, fiber, feed, or other agricultural-based consumer products.

Organic – in this text the word refers to the particular farming and processing systems described in these standards and not in the classical Chemical sense (The latter shall be clearly marked with a + for ease of identification). The term Organic is nearly synonymous in other languages to “Biological” or “ecological”.

“Organic” is also a labeling term that denotes products according to organic standards.

Organic Agriculture – “includes all agricultural systems that promote the environmentally, socially and economically sound production of food and fibers. These systems take local soil fertility as a key to successful production. By respecting the natural capacity of plants, animals and the landscape it aims to optimize quality in all aspects of agriculture and the environment. Organic agriculture dramatically reduces external inputs by refraining from the use of chemo-synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and pharmaceuticals. Instead it allows the powerful laws of nature to increase both agricultural yields and disease resistance. “ Definition of IFOAM (International Federation of Agricultural Movements).

Standards – are norms, sets of guidelines, requirements and principles that are used as in organic agricultural and processing. The term “standards”, as used here refers to Philippine National Standards relevant to local agro-ecosystems production.

Restricted inputs – inputs for which there are conditions for the use imposed by the certification program.

Administrative Order No. _____
Series of 2006

**SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 481
FOR THE PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE
IN THE PHILIPPINES**

WHEREAS, it shall be the declared policy of the State to promote, develop and sustain organic agriculture as a farming technology in agricultural communities, establish effective networking and collaboration with the stakeholders in the organic agriculture supply chain, guarantee food and environmental safety by means of an ecological approach to farming and ensure the integrity of organic products through approved organic certification procedures;

WHEREAS, on December 27, 2005, Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo approved the Executive Order 481 for the Promotion and Development of Organic Agriculture in the Philippines;

WHEREAS, under Section 10 of the Executive Order 481, the Department of Agriculture, through the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards shall formulate the implementing rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of the said Executive Order;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DOMINGO F. PANGANIBAN, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, by virtue of the powers vested in me by the existing laws, do hereby issue this Order governing the promotion and development of Organic Agriculture in the Philippines:

**PART I.
GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**RULE I
PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS**

Section 1. Scope

This IRR prescribes the implementing procedures, processes and networking arrangements with the various stakeholders to promote, develop and sustain organic agriculture in accordance with the National Organic Agriculture Program; the functions, duties and powers of the National Organic Agriculture Board (NOAB), the National Technical Committee (NTC) and the Technical and Administrative Secretariat of the NOAB and the NTC; and the responsibilities of government departments and agencies and other entities with respect to the implementation of this Administrative Order.

**RULE II
DEFINITION OF TERMS**

Section 2. With respect to the technical terms, this IRR adopts the definitions contained in the Philippine National Standards for Organic Agriculture (PNS/BAFPS 07:2003 ICS.65.020)

For the purpose of the IRR, the following other terms and phrases are hereby defined. Also, some terms covered by the PNS/BAFPS 07:2003 have their definitions restated for ready reference:

- 1) Agricultural inputs – all substances or materials used in the production or handling of organic products

- 2) Agricultural products – any agricultural commodity or product, whether raw or processed, including any commodity or product derived from crops or livestock, for human or livestock consumption
- 3) Certified operation - a crop or livestock production, wild-crop harvesting or handling operation, or portion of such operation that is certified by an accredited certifying agent such as utilizing a system of organic production
- 4) Conventional agriculture – farming systems dependent on the input of inorganic fertilizers and/or “synthetic” pesticides or failing to conform to the Philippine National Standards in any other way
- 5) Farm unit – an agricultural area or production managed organically, which a farmer or a group owns or in any other way is responsible for
- 6) Label – a display of written, printed, or graphic material on the immediate container of an agricultural product or any such material affixed to a bulk container containing an agricultural product, except for package liners or a display of written, printed, or graphic material which contains only information about the weight of the product.
- 7) Labeling – any written, printed, or graphic presentation that is present on the label of a product accompanies the product or displayed near the product
- 8) Livestock – any cattle, sheep, goat, swine, poultry, or equine animals used for food or in the production of food, fiber, feed, or other agricultural-based consumer products; wild or domesticated game; or other non-plant life, except such term shall not include aquatic animals for the production of food, fiber, feed, or other agricultural-based consumer products
- 9) Organic – in this text, the word refers to the particular farming and processing systems described in these standards and not in the classical chemical sense (The latter shall be clearly marked with a + for ease of identification). The term Organic is nearly synonymous in other languages to “biological” or “ecological”. “Organic is also a labeling term that denotes products according to organic standards.
- 10) Organic Agriculture – “includes all agricultural systems that promote the environmentally, socially and economically sound production of food and fibers. These systems take local soil fertility as a key to successful production. By respecting the natural capacity of plants, animals and the landscape it aims to optimize quality in all aspects of agriculture and the environment. Organic agriculture dramatically reduces external inputs by refraining from the use of chemo-synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and pharmaceuticals. Instead it allows the powerful laws of nature to increase both agricultural yields and disease resistance.” Definition of IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements).
- 11) Standards – are norms, sets of guidelines, requirements and principles that are used as in organic agriculture and processing. The term “standards”, as used here refers to Philippine National Standards relevant to local agro-ecosystems production.
- 12) Restricted inputs – inputs for which there are conditions for the use imposed by the certification program

- 13) NGO - A non-governmental organization (NGO) is any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organized on a local, national or international level
- 14) Civil Society - All institutions and organizations outside of Government. In the context of welfare this includes: trade unions, consumer organizations, the formal and informal welfare sectors, non governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs), religious organizations delivering welfare services, corporate social investment, employee assistance programs, occupational social work and social workers in private practice.

PART II MAJOR PROVISIONS

RULE II ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL ORGANIC AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

- Section 3. The Department of Agriculture shall hereby establish a separate and distinct program known as the "National Organic Agriculture Program" which shall primarily focus on, but not limited to the following:
- 1) Regulations and Guidelines
 - 2) Certification and Accreditation
 - 3) Market Promotion and Networking
 - 4) Information on Organic Agriculture for Producers, Handlers and Processors
 - 5) Research, Development and Extension
- Section 4. The National Technical Committee shall review and recommend for approval by the National Organic Agriculture Board, regulations and guidelines formulated pursuant to the implementation of this Administrative Order.
- Section 5. Regulations and Guidelines. A Standards Committee shall be created, composed of representatives from the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards (BAFPS), Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI), Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA), Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM), Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD) of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) of the Department of Health (DOH), academe, certification body, organic practitioners, Non-government Organizations and consumer organizations. Consistent with its mandate under the AFMA, BAFPS shall chair the Standards Committee of the Philippine National Standards for purposes of elaborating standards on organic agriculture production, processing and retailing from raw, fresh, and primary, up to tertiary processed commodities.
- Section 6. Market Promotion and Networking. The Bureau of Export Trade Promotion (BETP) of the Department of Trade and Industry, and the Agribusiness Marketing Assistance Service (AMAS) of the Department of Agriculture (DA) shall identify marketing and promotional strategies to better access organic agriculture products in the domestic and export markets, as well as establish and sustain linkages between local producers and traders, and domestic and foreign buyers.
- Section 7. Information on Organic Agriculture for Producers, Handlers and Processors. The secretariat of the National Technical Committee (NTC) and the National Organic Agriculture Board (NOAB), which is lodged with the BAFPS and in collaboration with PCARRD shall serve as the data information center and shall integrate and

disseminate these data through electronic and other means to interested stakeholders through the Phil-Organic Network.

Section 8. Research, Development and Extension. The Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) of the DA and the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD) of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) shall identify, prioritize and implement through its collaborating agencies research projects and related activities on organic agriculture while the Bureau of Plant Industry, Bureau of Animal Industry, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Bureau of Post-harvest Research and Extension and such other agencies shall primarily focus its assistance on the development of organic farming systems pursuant to their organizational mandates. The Agricultural Training Institute of the DA shall undertake technology transfer and related extension activities.

Likewise, the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) of the DA shall primarily focus on soil and water conservation measures and other strategies to enhance soil productivity and fertility.

RULE IV CREATION OF THE NATIONAL ORGANIC AGRICULTURE BOARD

Section 9. A National Organic Agriculture Board, hereinafter referred to as the NOAB, is hereby created and is to be chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture. The NOAB hereby created shall be composed of six (6) representatives from the public sector and seven (7) from the private sector. Representatives from the government shall be composed of the Secretaries of the following departments or their duly authorized representatives, as ex-officio members:

1. The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA) as Chairperson;
2. The Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) as Vice-Chair;
3. The Secretary of the Department of Health (DOH) as Vice-Chair;
4. The Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG);
5. The Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR);
6. The Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST);
7. Representative, Private Sector operating an Organic Farm;
8. Representative, Private Sector involved in Organic Handling and Processing;
9. Representative, Private Sector involved in Trade of Organic Products;
10. Representative, NGO/PO representing consumer interest;
11. Representative, NGO/PO representing consumer interest;
12. Representative, Organic Certifying Body; and
13. Representative, Academe.

Section 10. The appointment to the NOAB of three (3) representatives coming from the three (3) major islands of the country, representing the private sector presently operating an organic farm, engaged in organic handling and processing, and directly involved in trading organic products with significant volume, shall be done through a broad consultative process among the major players of the organic sector called for by the Secretariat. A list of nominees shall be identified from which the NOAB Secretariat shall recommend the sector representative for appointment by the DA Secretary.

Section 11. The DTI shall require the association or groups to identify one representative from the NGO/PO who nationally represents consumer interests while the DA shall require NGO/POs to identify and recommend persons to represent public interest.

Section 12. The DA through the BAFPS shall recommend a representative to the NOAB from the organic agriculture certifying body after due consultation with the Accreditation Committee.

- Section 13. For NOAB members from the academe, DOST in cooperation with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall propose a list of nominees, from which the Board Secretariat shall recommend the sector representative for appointment by the DA Secretary.
- Section 14. Non ex-officio members of the NOAB shall be appointed by the Secretary of the DA consistent with the provisions of Section 14, 15, 16 and 17 of this IRR.
- Section 15. The NOAB shall hold semi-annual meetings and special meetings when necessary. The presence of at least seven (7) including the chairperson of the NOAB shall constitute a quorum. In all cases, the presence of the Chairperson or his duly authorized representative shall be required.
- Section 16. Whenever the exigencies of the service demand, as determined by the Chairperson and the NOAB, for any valid reason, the NOAB cannot be convened to a meeting, the Director of the BAFPS, is hereby authorized to submit any matter for resolution for the concurrence of a majority of the NOAB members or their duly designated representatives.
- Section 17. The chairperson and members of the NOAB shall be entitled to honoraria and other allowable emoluments as may be fixed by the NOAB for every meeting actually attended, subject to existing laws, rules and regulations.
- Section 18. The NOAB Secretary coming from the BAFPS as designated by the Chairperson shall keep all records relative to the meetings of the NOAB. He/she shall head the Secretariat and shall be responsible for administrative requirements of the NOAB. The NOAB Secretary shall be entitled to honoraria similar to that of a regular member of the NOAB.
- Section 19. The appointed member of the NOAB shall serve a term of three (3) years. A member cannot serve consecutive terms unless such member served an original term that was less than 3 years.
- Section 20. There shall be created a National Technical Committee (NTC) to be chaired by the Director of BAFPS from among the agencies of the DA, DENR, DAR and a representative from the private sector and civil society. The members shall be drawn from:
1. Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards;
 2. Agricultural Training Institute;
 3. Bureau of Plant Industry;
 4. Bureau of Soils and Water Management;
 5. Bureau of Agricultural Research;
 6. Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau, DENR;
 7. Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Development Bureau , DAR;
 8. Philippine Council for Agriculture , Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD), DOST;
 9. Representative, Private Sector/ Civil Society from Mindanao;
 10. Representative, Private Sector/ Civil Society from Visayas; and
 11. Representative, Private Sector/ Civil Society from Luzon.
- Section 21. The appointment to the NTC of three (3) representatives from the private sector and civil society shall be done through a broad consultative process among the major players of the organic sector representing each from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. A list of nominees shall be identified from which the NOAB Secretariat shall recommend the sector representative for appointment by the DA Secretary.
- Section 22. The NTC shall hold regular quarterly meetings and other special meetings when necessary. The presence of one-half plus one of its members shall constitute a quorum. In all cases the presence of the chairperson of the NTC shall be required.
- Section 23. The Chairperson and the members of the NTC shall be entitled to honoraria and other emoluments as may be fixed for every meeting actually attended, subject to existing laws and regulations.

Section 24. The BAFPS of the DA shall serve as the Technical and Administrative Secretariat of the NOAB and the NTC with the member agencies providing additional staff support as the need arises.

Section 25. The NTC shall consult and work with the Office of Policy and Planning of the DA for policy and guideline formulation.

**RULE V
FUNCTIONS, DUTIES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NOAB AND THE NTC**

Section 26. The NOAB is a policy making and oversight body and in the exercise of its functions, duties and responsibilities has the power to delegate the authority to concerned entities as deputized entities to implement the provisions of the Administrative Order.

Section 27. The NOAB shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

1. Formulate policies, plans, programs and projects to promote and develop Organic Agriculture;
 - 1.1. formulate, issue and implement local rules and regulations and programs following prescribed national standards;
 - 1.2. prepare to negotiate equivalency agreements and assure political recognition of standards and certification;
 - 1.3. ensure that the PNS shall be regularly monitored and enforced; and
 - 1.4. ensure the issuance of certificates, seals, stickers and other means to preserve the integrity of organic agriculture.
2. Oversee the successful implementation of the Organic Agriculture programs and projects;
 - 2.1. monitor the compliance of the different sectors with respect to standards and certification;
 - 2.2. issue policies, procedures, and guidelines for the above monitoring activities based on existing laws, rules and regulations; and
 - 2.3. foster effective exchange of information and coordination of programs, projects and activities.
3. Call upon any government agency to carry out and implement programs and projects identified by the NOAB;
 - 3.1. Seek assistance of any department, bureau, office, agency or instrumentality of the government, or other private entities and organizations for cooperation in the performance of its functions.
4. Call upon private sectors, peoples' organizations (POs) and non-government organizations (NGOs), and the academe to provide advise on matters pertaining to organic agriculture;
5. Identify sources of financing to expand and further promote organic agriculture such as recommending to the President for a reasonable amount of resources for the implementation of the program; and
6. Submit annual and other periodic reports to the Office of the President.

Section 28. The NTC shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

1. Implement Organic Agriculture programs and projects approved by the NOAB;
 - 1.1. provide advisory services to support the adoption of organic agriculture and to help both farmers and organic processors meet the quality requirements of organic products;
 - 1.2. encourage, plan, monitor and assess the opportunities to develop organic agriculture production;
 - 1.3. develop coordinating and advocacy institutions to advance organic agriculture;

- 1.4. establish regional market facilitators that shall link buyers and sellers within the regions;
- 1.5. comment on standards for the control of production, marketing, storage, transport, labeling, distribution and retailing of organic goods; and formulate proposals for additional activities concerning organic agriculture.
2. Update the NOAB on the status of the programs, projects and activities undertaken for the promotion and development of organic agriculture;
3. Forge effective networking with the various stakeholders involved in organic production;
 - 3.1. enlist the positive involvement of conventional farms, extension and research organizations in organic farming development;
 - 3.2. explore opportunities to tap local institutions concerned about issues related to organic farming; and
 - 3.3. identify key public sector institutional purchasers whose purchasing requirements for organic products can drive market development and public profile to further enhance consumption of organic products.
4. Perform such other functions, duties and responsibilities as may be necessary to implement this Administrative Order; and
5. Review and recommend for approval of the NOAB, regulations and guidelines formulated pursuant to the implementation of this Administrative Order.

**RULE VI
COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR ORGANIC STANDARDS**

- Section 29. The Philippine National Standards for Organic Agriculture (PNS/BAFPS 07:2003 ICS.65.020) listed in ANNEX A is recognized as mandatory throughout the country for the sectors involved in the production and marketing of organic agriculture products. Compliance with PNS shall be established through certification by an accredited local certifier.
- Section 30. The NOAB upon recommendation of the BAFPS shall maintain the accuracy of their standards through periodic review and harmonization with international standards.

**RULE VII
ORGANIC ACCREDITATION**

- Section 31. Administrative Order 13 Series of 2003, otherwise known as the "Guidelines in Accreditation of Certifying Bodies for Standards on Organic Agriculture" is hereby strengthened and recognized under this IRR as the National Accreditation Guidelines.
- Section 32. The accreditation body, herein called as the National Accreditation Body is shall have members taken from but not limited to the following offices:
1. Director, Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards
 2. Director, Bureau of Plant Industry
 3. Director, Bureau of Agricultural Research
 4. National Agriculture and Fisheries Council Representative
 5. Representative from Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources
 6. Research and Development
 7. Representative from the Department of Interior and Local Government
 8. Representative from the Department of Trade and Industry
 9. Representative from the Department of Education
 10. Representative from the private sector/industry organic producer

11. Representative from the NGO/PO
12. Representative from the academe/research institutions
13. Representative from the civil society

BAFPS shall be designated as chair of the Organic Accreditation Committee and shall approve or deny applications for accreditation as a certifying entity and regulate the same in accordance with the accreditation guidelines hereto attached.

- Section 33. The above agencies shall be represented by a duly designated representative, preferably those involved in accreditation or other form of recognition of farming technologies. As necessary, other entities may be identified to become members of the Accreditation Body as a resolution by the NOAB.
- Section 34. The structure and operation of the Accreditation Body shall be such as to give confidence to its accreditation, and shall be organized and operated to safeguard the objectivity and impartiality of its activities.
- Section 35. International certifiers doing business in the country, whether as sole or in partnership with local certifiers, must first secure clearance from the BAFPS of the DA prior to any business transaction related to organic certification.

Likewise, these certifiers shall submit to the NOAB Secretariat, in addition to the other legal requirements of foreign nationals doing business in the country, their credentials, local business address, names of their agents, local and foreign inspectors.

- Section 36. Organic produce to be sold within the country's territory shall be certified only by the duly accredited certifying agencies recognized and accredited by the BAFPS of the DA.
- Section 37. Assistance shall be extended to the duly accredited certifier(s) to seek and get international accreditation and recognition to certify exports of organic produce.

RULE VIII LABELING

- Section 38. In addition to the requirements for labeling of organic products, commodities, goods and merchandise pursuant to PNS/BAFPS 07:2003 ICS.05.020) listed in ANNEX A. and Republic Act 7349, otherwise known as "The Consumer Act of the Philippines", the products commodities, goods or merchandise shall be labeled pursuant to this Administrative Order.
- Section 39. It shall be unlawful for any person, firm or corporation to sell products with claims or labels as organic without the approval of the certification body pursuant to the Philippine National Standards on Organic Agriculture.
- Section 40. False or Misleading Marks and Labels. No article shall be sold or offered for sale to any person, firm or corporation, in commerce, under any name or other marking or labeling which is false or misleading.
- Section 41. It shall be unlawful for any dealer to import into the Philippines or advertise any product that has applied to it a label that contains any false or misleading representation relating to or that may reasonably be regarded as relating to that product.
- Section 42. If the NOAB or any competent authority has reason to believe that any marking or labeling with respect to any article is false or misleading, the product shall be withheld after due process and subject to the provisions of the Consumer Act of the Philippines 1991 unless the marking or labeling is modified in such manner that it will not be false or misleading.

RULE IX RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND EXTENSION

- Section 43. This IRR shall cover all existing networks of research and development, and extension centers and institutions that are of public character or are supported by public funds.

- Section 44. The DA, DOST, SCUs and other appropriate agencies such as but not limited to scientific/professional organizations and research institutions shall develop, enhance, support and consolidate activities and related technologies.
- Section 45. Appropriate technologies shall be used to protect the environment, reduce cost of production, improve product quality and increase value added for global competitiveness.
- Section 46. Research, development and extension activities consistent with the National Organic Agriculture Program shall be multi-disciplinary and shall involve farmers, fisherfolk and their organizations, and those engaged in food and non-food production and processing, including the private and public sectors.
- Section 47. The DA and other research agencies are encouraged to go into co-financing agreements with the private sector in the conduct of research, development and extension activities provided that the terms and conditions of the agreement are beneficial to the country.

**RULE X
APPROPRIATION**

- Section 48. The Department of Agriculture shall allocate from the budget such amount not less than Five Million Pesos (PhP 5,000,000.00) for the initial operation of the NOAB and its Secretariat. A portion of the amount thereof may be taken from the Presidential Social Fund for the initial year of implementation of the program.
- Section 49. The DA shall include an appropriate amount in the General Appropriations Act, for the year following the effectivity of the IRR and every year thereafter.
- Section 50. The DA shall include the Board's financial requirements in its submission of the Department's proposed budget to the Department of Budget and Management for the year following the IRR, and every year thereafter. The amount shall be determined based on the Work Program approved by the NOAB consistent with the National Organic Agriculture Program.

**PART III
EFFECTIVITY**

**RULE XI
SEPARABILITY CLAUSE**

- Section 51. The provisions of this IRR are declared severable. If for any reason, a particular provision is declared unconstitutional, the other provisions of the IRR that are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

**RULE XII
EFFECTIVITY**

- Section 52. This IRR shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation. The UP Law Center's Office of National Administrative Register shall be provided copy of this IRR.

Issued this _____ day of _____ 2006 in Quezon City, Philippines.
APPROVED:

DOMINGO F. PANGANIBAN
Secretary

02 August 2005

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER No. 25

Series of 2005

SUBJECT: GUIDELINES ON THE CERTIFICATION OF GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES (GAP) FOR FRUITS AND VEGETABLE (FV) FARMING

The Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards (BAFPS) created pursuant to Republic Act 8435 of the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act of 1997 (AFMA) is mandated to formulate and enforce standards of quality in processing, preservation, packaging, labeling, importation, exportation, distribution and advertising of agriculture and fisheries products. Recognizing liberalization of fruit and vegetable trade and the incessant need to compete in the international market, it is important that safety and quality of fruits and vegetables, which are consumed fresh, are ensured. The best approach to maintain the wholesomeness nature and safe consumption of edible horticultural produce is to systematically identify and establish management practices that minimize chances of external and internal contamination from the farm-to-fork chain. Consequently, the government has to develop and enforce the Code of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) throughout the country in close collaboration with stakeholders. To assure that agricultural farms are adhering to GAP, there is an imperative need to provide specific guidelines in GAP Certification.

1. **Objectives of Certification.** The certification of agricultural farms is aimed to attain the following:

- 1.1 To increase the market access of horticultural products both in the local and foreign markets
- 1.2 To empower farmers to respond to the demands of consumers that specific criteria to achieve food safety and quality be met
- 1.3 To facilitate farmer adoption of sustainable agricultural practices
- 1.4 To uplift GAP-FV farmers profile as member of the nationally recognized list of vegetable farmers who are setting the benchmark for the production of safe and quality fruits and vegetables
- 1.5 To enable consumers exercise the option of buying quality fruits and vegetable from traceable and certified sources

2. **Scope of Guidelines.** The establishes the rules applied by the Department of Agriculture (DA) for granting, maintaining and withdrawing Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Certificate to individual growers or farms in the fresh fruit and vegetable sector or to their Produce Marketing Organizations (PMOs) that market and or trade the produce.

3. Administrator

- 3.1 **Composition.** The Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Certification Committee shall be composed of the Directors of attached agencies of the Department of Agriculture (DA), representatives from the private sector, non-government organization, and academe.
Chairperson: Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards (BAFPS)

Co-chairperson: Bureau of Plant Industry
Members: Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA)
Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI)

Bureau of Soil and Water Management (BSWM)
GMA-High Value Commercial Crops (HVCC) Program
Representative, Private sector
Representative, NGO/PO
Representative, Academe

- 3.2 Tasks. The Committee shall be tasked to:
- 3.2.1 Review and approve applications
 - 3.2.2 Endorse to the Secretary a list of applicants to be issued a Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Certificate
 - 3.2.3 Review and approve any changes in standards and fees
 - 3.2.4 Hear appeals
 - 3.2.5 Annually review investigations of complaints about abuses in the production and sale of products that do not adhere to GAP
 - 3.2.6 Determine penalties for abuse of standards or mark
 - 3.2.7 Negotiate satisfactory settlement of complaint and reimbursement for the investigation cost
 - 3.2.8 Designate qualified National and Regional Inspectors
- 3.3 Secretariat. The Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards (BAFPS) shall act as secretariat of the GAP Certification Committee.
- 3.4 Inspectors. The National Inspectors based in the Central Offices shall be composed of identified technical personnel duly designated by the Directors of the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA), Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) and Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) and the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Product Standards (BAFPS). Regional Inspectors replicating the composition of the National Inspectors duly recommended by their respective Regional Heads, if any, shall be constituted as the need arises.

4. Application

- 4.1 Nature of applicants. The Department of Agriculture (DA) Certification Scheme shall be based on three (3) options, depending on the type of organization that is requesting certification.
- 4.1.1 Individual grower
 - 4.1.2 Produce Marketing Organization (PMO)
 - 4.1.3 A company/corporation that applies a national or company scheme
- 4.2 The applicant shall submit the completed application form to the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (DA) through the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Certification Committee.
- 4.3 Supporting Documents. Accompanying the accomplished form are:
- 4.3.1 Farm/Organization profile
 - 4.3.2 Company/corporation Certificate of registration
 - 4.3.3 Track record of the farm or company/corporation
 - 4.3.4 For Produce Marketing Organizations (PMOs). The PMOs must illustrate that it has 100% control of the registered growers of the group requesting for certification, all individual growers operate under the same management systems and adhere to the Department of Agriculture (DA) Code of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP).
- 4.4 Fees
- 4.4.1 The Certification Committee shall establish the guidelines to fix reasonable fees and charges to cover the administrative expenses to be incurred during the evaluation, inspection and audit.

- 4.4.2 The charge for the first certification will cover administrative expenses incurred by the Committee during evaluation and audit expenses of inspectors.
- 4.4.3 Re-certification requires the re-audit of farm on the GAP-FV guidelines and will be conducted one (1) month prior to the expiry of the existing certification.

5. Certification

- 5.1 Audit/Inspection
 - 5.1.1 After the Certification Committee has evaluated the application, the Committee will notify the farm within thirty (30) days on the farm audit date prior to the certification or the renewal of the application
 - 5.1.2 The inspector may take samples of water, soil, plant tissue, plants etc. for testing. A receipt will be given to the producer; the producer will not charge the GAP Program for the sample taken. The applicant will pay the cost of testing, and the applicant will receive a copy of the analysis.
 - 5.1.3 Inspectors shall conduct an "exit" interview with the applicant or authorized representative upon completion of the inspection process. The inspector shall cover all potential problem areas noted on the inspection form.
- 5.2 Issuance of GAP Certificate
 - 5.2.1 The awarding of GAP-FV Certification is based upon compliance set in the Code of Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) pertaining to farm structure, environment and maintenance, farming practices and farm management during farm checks and the diligent observation of the regulations of GAP-FV certification. The compliance criteria include:
 - 5.2.1.1 Compliance to the Code of Practice of Good Agricultural Practice (GAP)
 - 5.2.1.2 Implementation of a transparent and traceable system to keep track of safe and quality vegetable production from sowing to harvest/packaging
 - 5.2.1.3 Documentation of farm management to help trace the history of farm produce. The farm must also identify a coordinator to represent the farm in the certification matters. The farm records must be kept for two (2) years. New farm applying for certification must have three (3) months of farm records.
 - 5.2.2 Upon the review of the inspection report, the GAP Certification Committee shall approve, deny or place an application in pending. If placed in pending or denied, the Chairperson will have fifteen (15) days to notify the applicant.
 - 5.2.3 Upon approval of application, the report of the GAP Certification Committee together with the recommendation to issue GAP Certificate to the applicant shall be endorsed to the Office of the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture for approval.
 - 5.2.4 After the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture has conceded, the GAP Program Certification Committee shall assign an unequivocal permanent registration number and issues a GAP Certificate.
 - 5.2.5 The GAP Certification award entitles the applicant to use an official mark "Good Agricultural Practice for Fruits and Vegetable Farming" in accordance with the provision set out herein.

6. Renewal of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Certificate

- 6.1 Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Program participants shall renew GAP Certificate by submitting a new application three (3) years after it has been issued. Application for renewal shall be done one (1) month prior to the anniversary date of the certificate.
- 6.2 Upon receipt of the renewal request, a new certificate shall be issued and an inspection shall be performed within the following thirty (30) days, preferably during the growing or packing season.

7. Advertisement

- 7.1 The "Good Agricultural Practice for Fruits and Vegetable Farming" Mark is an official Mark to be put on fruits and vegetables produced by certified farms. It is an offense for any farm or company to use the Mark to advertise the farm fruits and vegetables not produced by the farm or when farm is not certified.
- 7.2 Certified farm are allowed to advertise with the Mark. This privilege will be withdrawn in the event of non-compliance with the regulations and guidelines.
- 7.3 The Mark may be used on letterheads of the company and in advertisement materials such as brochures and packaging bags for promotion of the farm and must adhere to the given specifications.
- 7.4 All materials containing the Mark shall be submitted to GAP Certification Committee for approval in their use and release to the public.

8. Revocation of GAP Certificate

Certified farms must observe and comply with the GAP Certification Guidelines. Farms must comply with all major criteria as specified in the Code of Good Agricultural Practice. Noncompliance with the Code of GAP shall result in the loss of approval. Failure to comply with any part of the guidelines may involve fines, suspension or withdrawal of award, which will be publicly announced.

9. Confidentiality

All employees, contractors, and committee members must adhere to the principles of confidentiality. Information submitted by applicants for approval will not be released to the public, including production practices, ingredients, costumer list, complaint log, etc. without written permission of the applicant. However, the following information may be released.

- 9.1 the name, address and telephone number of the applicant
- 9.2 to confirm whether or not the applicants operation was approved on a specific date
- 9.3 any information to comply with a court order
- 9.4 any information to comply with a request from a GAP Certification Committee investigating an alleged complaint

10. Conflict of Interest

Conflict of interest is defined as having an economic interest with a producer or packer under review for approval one year prior to, during or one year after work or employment was concluded. Staff, contractors and committee members with a conflict of interest must make the conflict known and not participate in discussion or decisions regarding the producer or packer under review.

11. Additional Regulations

Other regulations may be introduced and notified when they become necessary to ensure production of safe and quality vegetables in certified farms.

12. Effectivity

This Order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its filing with the UP Law Center.

APPROVED:

DOMINGO F. PANGANIBAN
Secretary