



GLOBALG.A.P. General Regulations

Rules for Plants Scope



ENGLISH VERSION 6.0_SEP22

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*Date on which IFA v6 GFS requirements become obligatory depends on GFSI recognition and will be confirmed

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1 INTRODUCTION

This document, part of the GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations (GR), applies to the Integrated Farm Assurance version 6 Smart (IFA Smart) edition, the Integrated Farm Assurance version 6 GFS (IFA v6 GFS) edition, the Harmonized Produce Safety Standard (HPSS), and the Produce Handling Assurance (PHA) standard.

These rules for the plants scope shall be used in combination with the GLOBALG.A.P. GR and apply to the production of all products listed under the plants scope in the GLOBALG.A.P. product list. For HPSS, this document shall be used in addition to the HPSS addendum to the GR.

The term “shall” is used throughout the GLOBALG.A.P. normative documents to indicate mandatory provisions.

2 CERTIFICATION SCOPE

2.1 GLOBALG.A.P. product list

The plants scope includes the following product categories:

- Fruit and vegetables (specialty crops)
- Combinable crops (field crops)
- Flowers and ornamentals
- Plant propagation material
- Tea
- Hops

Products classified as herbs are generally listed in the GLOBALG.A.P. product list as individual products with separate identification numbers.

However, where more than one herb product is grown, residue testing does not have to be performed on each individual product (herb) but is based on the risk of the group of herbs.

The use of plant protection products on herbs likewise applies to herbs as a group and not for each individual product (herb).

For fruit and vegetables products grown in pots, if the intention is to grow mature plants in pots and sell them to the end consumer (even without mature fruit), the product shall be registered under the fruit and vegetables category. When the edible part of the plant is not present at the time of sale, residue testing is not required. If seedlings are grown in pots and sold as seedlings to producers, the seedlings shall be registered under the plant propagation material category.

In the production of nuts and similar products, “hulling” means removing the outer softer or leafy part of, for example, nuts. This process is also called “husking.” The process is covered under certification because it can be seen as a similar activity to trimming. In contrast, “shelling” means removing the hard brown shell (e.g., of nuts), and this process is not covered by IFA. There is a similar interpretation for products such as rice.

Any plants used solely for their therapeutic, medicinal, or recreational purposes are not covered under the plants scope. Medicinal purposes are defined as any plant used with the specific intent of treating a specific physical illness, disease, and/or mental distress.

2.2 Harvest exclusion

- a) If the product is sold in the field before harvest and the buyer is responsible for harvesting, the harvest-related principles and criteria (P&Cs) can be excluded from the scope of certification.
- b) In any cases where the harvesting process (whether carried out by the producer or outsourced) takes place while the product belongs to the producer, all P&Cs relating to harvest shall be included in the (certification body) CB audit and in the scope of certification.
- c) “Harvest exclusion” applies where the product no longer belongs to the producer prior to harvest commencing and the producer has no control over the harvesting process. The exclusion does not apply if the harvest is simply outsourced by the producer.
- d) During registration, the producer shall apply for harvest exclusion per product with a detailed justification.
- e) The CB shall exclude the harvest process only if the producer has a contract with the buyer that states that the harvester/buyer will do all the following:
 - (i) Take ownership of the product before harvesting
 - (ii) Take responsibility for ensuring that harvest takes place only after the preharvest interval has been observed
 - (iii) Handle the product after harvest (not just during harvest)
 - (iv) Buy all the product (harvest exclusion is not possible if the producer harvests some part of the product and sells another part before harvest)
- f) If the producer does not know the buyer at the time of registration with GLOBALG.A.P., the following shall be provided:
 - (i) A declaration from the producer to inform the harvester/buyer about the preharvest interval
 - (ii) A contract with the buyer, as soon as the harvester/buyer has been identified, that includes all issues under point e)
- g) If harvesting is excluded for a product, product handling shall also be excluded for that product.

2.3 Postharvest product handling exclusion

- a) Product handling includes any type of postharvest handling of products such as storage, chemical treatment, trimming, washing, or any other handling where harvested product may have physical contact with other materials or substances. Details of the specific processes for each product shall be included in the checklist notes.
- b) If a product stays in a collection point in the farm during the day, waiting to be picked up, this is not considered storage. If product is stored overnight or longer, this is considered storage and the relevant requirements apply.
- c) If product handling does not take place under the ownership of the producer, this fact shall be declared during registration per product and indicated on the certificate.
- d) Product handling shall not be included when harvesting is excluded (see section 2.2 [Harvest exclusion](#) above).

- e) Product handling shall always be included in cases where the product belongs to the producer during handling (by the producer or a subcontractor) unless there is written evidence (e.g., contract, agreement) that the producer has no control over the packing/handling/storage/labeling, the product is not returned to the producer, and the producer is no longer responsible for the product. In this latter case, for the product to keep its GLOBALG.A.P. certification status, the legal entity doing packing/handling/storing/labeling shall have Chain of Custody (CoC) certification.
- f) If the product handling unit (PHU) already has a post-farm gate food safety certification recognized by GFSI for scope BII “Farming of grains and pulses” and/or BIII “Preprocess handling of plant products” (www.mygfsi.com), the GLOBALG.A.P. approved CB auditor shall audit, as a minimum, segregation and traceability, as well as postharvest treatments, if applicable. In cases of doubt, the CB can reaudit all other applicable P&Cs.
- g) If the PHU is covered by a PHA certificate (e.g., subcontracted PHU), the IFA P&Cs related to product handling are considered covered. There is no need of auditing further traceability or postharvest treatment requirements and the PHU can be included in the IFA certificate annex.
- h) If a producer performs product handling not on the farm, but at the PHU of another producer who does have GLOBALG.A.P. certification (including product handling for the same products), the CB can accept another CB’s certificate, or the CB can decide to perform its own CB audit of the PHU.

3 CB AUDIT

3.1 CB audit timing

The following rules apply together with the rules described in the section “Initial vs. subsequent audit” in the “GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations – Rules for individual producers” and “GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations – Rules for producer groups and multisite producers with QMS.”

3.1.1 Initial CB audits

- a) The initial CB audit shall cover harvesting activities of each product to be included for certification, as well as product handling, if included. Other field work can be audited at a different time where feasible, but this is not obligatory.
- b) The CB audit shall take place as close to harvest as possible to include as many P&Cs as possible
- c) If the CB audit takes place before harvest, it will not be possible to audit certain P&Cs. As a result, a follow-up CB audit shall be required. No certificate shall be issued until all applicable P&Cs have been audited and all non-conformances have been closed.
- d) If the CB audit takes place after harvest, the producer shall retain evidence of compliance with P&Cs related to that harvest; otherwise, it may be impossible to audit those P&Cs, and certification shall not be possible until the following harvest.
- e) If harvest is excluded, the CB audit shall be conducted at a time when relevant agronomic activities are being carried out.

- f) Multiple products: The producer may seek certification for more than one product, and the products may not all have the same seasonal timing – that is, the harvest of one product does not necessarily coincide with the harvest of other products. The requirements above apply to product groupings based on similarities in production and harvest processes and their risks. The CB auditor shall audit all applicable P&Cs for each product in these groupings before the product(s) can be added to the certificate. An on-site CB audit of the harvest and product handling processes is obligatory for at least one product in each product grouping.

Example: A visit during apple harvesting is not required if apples are being added to a certificate that already includes pears. However, the apples can be added to the certificate only once all P&Cs applicable to them have been verified. Adding spinach to the certificate would require an additional on-site CB audit during the spinach harvesting period.

3.1.2 Subsequent CB audits

- a) The CB audit shall be carried out at a time when relevant agronomic activities and/or handling (but not only storage) are being carried out. CB audit timing shall allow the CB to gain confidence that all registered products, even if not available at the time of the CB audit, are handled in compliance with the certification requirements. CB audits in the off-season or when the farming activities are minimal shall be avoided.
- b) If product handling is included in the certification scope, the product handling in the field(s)/facility(ies) shall be audited annually. This CB audit shall be carried out while the product handling process is in operation. Only if the CB has carried out a risk assessment that clearly shows that the risk is low can product handling be audited during operation once every two years. The risk assessment shall take into account the product(s) being handled as well as known food safety incidents related to the respective product(s) and any directives from GLOBALG.A.P. to look at specific criteria. The CB shall keep justification of the reason for the chosen CB audit timing on record. This exception applies only to Option 1 individual producers without QMS.
- c) If product handling is excluded from the certification scope, the CB audit shall be scheduled during harvest season at least every two years. In the respective year, the harvest season of at least one registered product per product grouping shall be audited on-site. Product groupings are based on similarities in production and harvest processes and their risks. The CB shall keep written justification of the reason for the chosen CB audit timing and the product groupings used.
- d) Product groupings can be based on the following process descriptions:
- (i) Mechanical harvest (Where this is the only method of harvesting, there is no need to observe the harvest while in operation. It is sufficient to check only the machine and harvesting machine operation–related records after or before the harvest.)
 - (ii) Manual harvest of products not classified as high-risk in the GLOBALG.A.P. product list
 - (iii) Manual harvest of products classified as high-risk in the GLOBALG.A.P. product list
 - (iv) Packing in field
- e) If the producer does not commit to continuing with the certification for the next cycle, the CB shall make sufficient provisions to avoid situations where one certificate could be used to cover more than one harvest and growing cycle of the same annually harvested crop (e.g., by shortening the certificate validity). The CB can set the deadline for reconfirmation according to the harvest period of the product.

Example: Harvest season for blueberries is the entire month of October. The initial CB audit takes place during October 2022 and the certificate is issued from the end of November 2022 to the end of November 2023. This certificate could cover the harvest and sale of both the 2022 and 2023 harvests. Therefore, the CB shall set the deadline for reregistration of the producer for this product, e.g., for October 1, 2023. If the producer does not reregister by that date, the CB shall shorten the validity of the certificate.

- f) **Multiple consecutive products:** During the CB audit, the production process of all products included in the certification scope shall be audited on-site, including interviews with the producer and workers, review of documents and records, etc. The producer shall keep evidence of compliance with the applicable P&Cs for all registered products.

In the years during which there is no requirement to carry out the CB audit during harvest season and/or in cases where products do not have the same seasonal timing, the CB shall select a date where relevant agronomic activities can be observed on-site for at least one of the products.

Additional CB audits can be conducted for harvest-specific requirements if the difference between harvest seasons of registered products is longer than four months or cannot be covered during certificate validity extension

3.2 Audit of PHUs (Option 2 producer groups and Option 1 multisite producers with QMS)

See the “GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations – Rules for producer groups and multisite producers with QMS,” section 6.1, “CB audits” and GLOBALG.A.P. general regulations – Rules for certification bodies,” section 7.3.4, “CB audit of PHUs (producer group/multisite producers).”

3.3 CB farm audit duration

- a) The CB farm audit duration shall allow for an opening meeting with farm management, a complete evaluation of all relevant GLOBALG.A.P. standard requirements, completion of the applicable checklist, and the presentation of the results to the producer.
- b) The usual CB farm audit duration for the GLOBALG.A.P. IFA standard, plants scope is between three and eight hours on-site (for an Option 1 individual producer without QMS).
- c) The minimum duration of three hours shall apply to the simplest circumstances (one production site, one or few products, simple machinery, few workers, no product handling, subsequent CB farm audit, well-organized documentation, etc.). This minimum duration excludes preparation, travel (during the CB audit) and the GRASP assessment or any other add-on CB audit included in the registration scope.
- d) CB farm audit duration is a minimum two hours per producer group member/production site of an Option 2 producer group or Option 1 multisite producer with QMS in simple circumstances. However, shorter time duration may be justified for particular circumstances, depending on the complexity of the farming situation.
- e) Factors that will increase the CB farm audit duration beyond the minimum of three hours (the list is not exhaustive and applies both to production sites of Option 2 producer group members and Option 1 individual producers) include the following:
 - (i) Initial CB farm audit
 - (ii) Addition of new products during subsequent CB farm audits
 - (iii) Addition of new locations during subsequent CB farm audits
 - (iv) Storage included
 - (v) Product handling included
 - (vi) Different types of products

- (vii) Different types of harvests (harvesting methods)
- (viii) Multiple sites and locations
- (ix) Subcontractors used

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