



**What it can
do for you.**

QUALIFIED THROUGH VERIFICATION (QTV) PROGRAM

*“Diversified to meet the needs of the
Fresh-Cut Produce Industry”*

U.S. Department of Agriculture's "Qualified Through Verification" Program -- QTV -- can help food processors and buyers produce and distribute wholesome and safe fresh-cut fruits, vegetables, and related products.

QTV is a voluntary, user-fee program. Under QTV, USDA experts work with company management to validate the facility's Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan and, through on-site audits, verify its effectiveness. HACCP is a scientific, analytical, and economical approach to ensure food is safe and wholesome. QTV provides for reduced auditing costs where a facility has established a documented and verified plant history of compliance with its QTV plan.

Firms operating under QTV can use the USDA QTV shield designed for recognition by value-oriented customers.

QTV is presently applied only to the fresh-cut fruit and vegetable industry. An applicant determines those processes to be covered by QTV.

QTV fosters a proactive approach for identifying process deficiencies during production rather than after production is completed. Under QTV, AMS technical specialists review and assess the suitability of the HACCP plan developed by a company and, through unannounced on-site audits, verify the plan's continuing effectiveness.



What does it cost?

QUALIFIED THROUGH VERIFICATION PROGRAM (Continued)

The QTV program is funded entirely through user fees. This fee is charged for the time required by AMS personnel to travel to and from an audit site, complete the audit, and perform associated administrative activities. Costs for analytical work regularly performed by a firm or an outside provider to support a firm's QTV program are the firm's responsibility. The overall cost of the QTV program for a participating firm is based on the frequency of the QTV audits. This frequency is based in turn on a firm's level of performance as determined by the periodic QTV audits. After validation, all firms begin at a "level four" rating which requires an unannounced QTV audit every two weeks.

How to apply?

To apply for services, schedule an on-site formal presentation to senior management, or obtain additional information, please contact:

**Chief, Processed Products Branch
Fruit and Vegetable Programs
Agricultural Marketing Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Room 0709-S, Stop 0247
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-0247
Telephone: (202) 720-4693
Fax: (202) 690-1527**

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