



## Domestic Origin Verification System (DOVS) Program Requirements and Procedures

USDA, AMS, Fruit and Vegetable Programs  
USDA Commodity Purchases

### General Information

DOVS is an AUDIT-based program to verify contractors', subcontractors', suppliers', or processors' systems for ensuring that fruits, nuts, and vegetables sold to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service (USDA, AMS) are of 100 percent U. S. origin. It is a fee-for-service program open to all suppliers and their subcontractors. Contractors may choose DOVS in place of the document trace-back otherwise required for each contract. The USDA, AMS, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Commodity Procurement Branch announcements and invitations define the domestic origin requirements.

### Eligibility

DOVS is available to all applicants (contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, processors, etc.) that provide a fruit or vegetable product or a product component in response to commodity or product invitations from USDA, AMS, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Commodity Procurement Branch.

### Basic Requirements

The applicant must operate a documented system that will ensure that fruit, nut, or vegetable products supplied to the USDA, AMS are of 100 percent domestic origin and agree to provide AMS with such information and access to records, personnel, and facilities, as AMS may need to verify the system's effectiveness. To help suppliers determine what they have to do to participate in the DOVS program, the DOVS Questionnaire was developed based on the DOVS requirements and is the foundation for the audit. Completing the questionnaire is the first step in the DOVS program. Most applicants already have many of the requirements in place. Key elements are:

1. Establishing and implementing procedures to ensure that fruit, nut, or vegetable components or products meet the USDA's domestic origin requirement, and that these products can be traced back to their domestic origin. This includes products and components supplied by subcontractors. The applicant's suppliers can choose to either request the DOVS program or provide trace-back on each contract.
2. Developing and using a segregation plan for keeping all non-domestic components or product separate from domestic product if applicants or their suppliers handle non-domestic fruits, nuts, or vegetables similar to or the same as those supplied to the USDA.
3. Taking corrective action on nonconformities and deficiencies.
4. Checking the adequacy of their internal system of ensuring domestic origin where the applicant may perform trace-backs or other checks on their recordkeeping procedures for domestic origin verification.
5. Instructing employees in the domestic origin requirement.
6. Maintaining records relating to the applicant's domestic origin verification system.



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### Pre-Audit

1. The applicant will request the DOVS program service by obtaining the questionnaire from the DOVS Coordinator and then submit the completed questionnaire at [dovs.fv@usda.gov](mailto:dovs.fv@usda.gov). If electronic submission is not possible, the completed DOVS Questionnaire can be faxed to (402) 742-9155 or mailed to the Audit Coordinator, USDA, AMS, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, 121 South 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite FL3, Lincoln, NE 68508.
2. AMS will:
  - a. Assess the completed DOVS Questionnaire and request any necessary additional information needed from the applicant prior to the audit.
  - b. Schedule a validation audit with the applicant.

### System Validation Audit

1. The applicant will:
  - a. Make pertinent DOVS information available, which may include, but is not limited to:
    - Company organizational chart,
    - Production/Process flow chart(s) for USDA, AMS product,
    - Procedures and work instructions not attached to the completed questionnaire,
    - Quality records,
    - Purchase records,
    - Grower records,
    - Production records,
    - Shipping records, and
    - Supplier records and trace-back documents.
  - b. Make the following resources available:
    - Applicant's receiving, production, and distribution sites,
    - Interview time with key personnel,
    - Opportunity to talk with production-level employees on-site,
    - Working space for the DOVS auditor(s), and
    - Appropriate management personnel for the audit and the closing meeting.



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### Post- Audit

1. The auditor will:
  - a. Furnish a copy of the "DOVS Audit Checklist and Summary" and "Corrective Action Requests" to the applicant and to the Audit Coordinator.
  - b. Track "Corrective Action Requests" and the company's responses.
  - c. Provide a recommendation to the Audit Coordinator for approval, denial, or suspension into the DOVS program when all corrective action responses are received and evaluated.
  - d. Conduct follow-up audits, as needed.
  
2. The applicant will:
  - a. Submit written responses to the "Corrective Action Requests" within the designated timeframe.

### Approval Procedures

1. Approval. If approved for the DOVS program, the company may agree to have its name, address, and products applicable to DOVS to be posted on the USDA Website identifying it as an "Approved DOVS Program Participant" at [www.ams.usda.gov/fv/ppb.html](http://www.ams.usda.gov/fv/ppb.html).
  
2. Suspending or denying approval. USDA, AMS may suspend or deny DOVS program approval for any of the following reasons:
  - a. Failure by the company to follow procedures described by its DOVS Questionnaire including a change in products identified for inclusion in the program, the contact person, or if its sources (suppliers) of fruits, nuts, or vegetables change.
  - c. Presenting false or misleading information at any point, including in the submission of the DOVS Questionnaire, during the audit, or program participation.
  - d. Denying USDA reasonable access to its facilities and records within the scope of the DOVS program.
  - e. Failure to respond to the "Corrective Action Requests" in the timeframe provided.
  - f. Failure to pay USDA, AMS audit, grading, or other certification fees.
  - g. Deemed in the best interest of the USDA, AMS, which includes, but is not limited to, the inability to provide the required domestic origin documentation, a request by the Commodity Procurement Branch to suspend the applicant for inability to meet contract requirements, or customer complaints.
  
3. Cancellation. The applicant may cancel service at any time by notifying USDA, AMS. Applicants that cancel service may reapply and be reassessed for DOVS program participation.



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### Annual DOVS Approval Process and Follow-up Audits

1. System Validation Audits. On an annual basis, all applicants will be required to submit an up-dated questionnaire and participate in a System Validation Audit.
2. Follow-up Audits. USDA may periodically audit DOVS participants to verify the applicant's adherence to its domestic origin verification system as identified in its questionnaire. The frequency and subject of follow-up audits will depend on USDA's assessment of general or specific risk of non-compliance.

### Questions

To request service or obtain more information, visit our Website at [www.ams.usda.gov/fv/ppb.html](http://www.ams.usda.gov/fv/ppb.html) for a list of field office locations or contact:

**Renee Wassenberg at (402) 742-9154**  
**E-mail: [dovs.fv@usda.gov](mailto:dovs.fv@usda.gov)**

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