
PACA

- Administered by AMS, the [Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act \(PACA\)](#) protects businesses dealing in fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables by establishing and enforcing a code of fair business practices and by helping companies resolve business disputes.
- And much like you need a driver's license to operate a vehicle, the law requires that you have a PACA license to operate a produce business. A PACA license is proof to your customers and suppliers that you are a serious businessperson who can be trusted to honor the terms of your contracts.
- The PACA trust could be beneficial to growers/producers:
 - When a supplier sells produce to a buyer, the supplier becomes eligible to participate in the trust.
 - The PACA trust provisions require that buyers maintain a statutory trust on fruits and vegetables received but not yet paid for.
 - Because of how the trust works, suppliers that file for trust protection have a far greater chance of recovering money owed them when a buyer goes out of business.

National License Center

PACALicense@usda.gov

PACA Licensing:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/paca/licensing>

Market News

- AMS [Market News Services](#) are of significant benefit to a variety of ag businesses for a variety of market intelligence reasons.
- We issue thousands of reports annually (some weekly and monthly) – providing critical information on wholesale, retail and shipping data – just to name a few categories.
- Traditionally, AMS Market News captures data for fruits, vegetables & specialty crops and many commodities, including some organic products, but we are always open to meeting new reporting needs.

Market News Web:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/market-news>

Organics

- At AMS, we have the **National Organic Program (NOP)** that develops and enforces consistent national standards for organically produced agricultural products sold in the United States.
- NOP also accredits third-party organizations to certify that farms and businesses meet the national organic standards.
- And these certifiers and USDA work together to enforce the standards, ensuring confidence in the integrity of the USDA Organic Seal.
- NOP is also administering the Transition to Organic Partnership Program (TOPP).
 - Through TOPP, we've partnered with non-profit organizations who are partnering with others to provide technical assistance and wrap-around support for framers transitioning to organic (along with support for existing organic farmers).

National Organic Program

NOP.Guidance@usda.gov

Organic Insider

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/reports/organic-insider>

TOPP Web

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/organic-certification/topp>

Organic Transitioning

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/organic-certification/transitioning-to-organic>

GAP

- **Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)** Audit Services is another valuable resource.
- We offer THREE types of GAP audits:
 - The USDA GAP audit is USDA's foundational audit service that was developed at the industries request. This audit verifies adherence to industry and FDA best practices.
 - The USDA Harmonized GAP audit builds upon the foundational best practices in the USDA GAP Audit. This audit was created to harmonize GAP standards and was updated to include alignment with the FSMA Produce Safety Rule.
 - The USDA Harmonized GAP Plus+ Audit program was launched in 2018. It is based on the Harmonized GAP standard and is acknowledged by the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) for Technical Equivalence, which is important for market access.
- The most important takeaway here is the USDA GAP Audit Program is adaptable to all operations.

- This means we audit operations of all sizes, from very small to large; different specialty crop commodities; and different growing types. And our voluntary user-fee services are competitively priced.

Audit Services

SCAudits@usda.gov

Audit Web

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/auditing/gap-ghp>

USDA GAP Water FAQs

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/GAPWATERFAQS.pdf>

Grants: RFBC | RFSI | LAMP

Regional Food Business Centers

- The intent of the Regional Food Business Centers (RFBC) is to support local and regional supply chains, including linking producers to wholesalers and distributors.
- Each Center has a Lead Organization and multiple Key Partner groups representing the region's diverse food and farm, business development, finance, and education sectors.
- There are 3 components to the RFBCs:
 - Coordination - Intentional connection to USDA and other funding and resources; deepening and broadening networks and collaboration.
 - Technical Assistance - Training, consultation, and other support.
 - Capacity Building – Direct investment in small and mid-sized food and farm business through sub award program.

Subaward Funding

- Centers will fund small and mid-sized farm and food businesses through sub-awards.
- Capacity building efforts will focus on emerging regional needs and businesses that are working towards expansion and other investment.
- Centers will help local businesses and organizations build capacity to apply for funding (grants, loans) and execute successful projects.
- Centers will provide Business Builder subawards up to \$100,000.

Business Builder Grant Status

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/local-regional/rfbcp/grant-status>

RFBC: RegionalFoodCenters@usda.gov

Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program

The Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program is designed to build resilience in the middle of the supply chain and strengthen local and regional food systems by creating new, more, and better markets for small and mid-sized producers.

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/rfsi>

RFSI: RFSI@usda.gov

Local Agriculture Market Program

LAMP is a permanent farm bill program that helps expand local markets for small and mid-size farmers, increase access to nutritious local foods for consumers, and facilitate community-led partnerships to grow local food systems.

Farmers Market Promotion Program

To develop, coordinate, and expand direct producer-to-consumer markets to help increase access to and availability of locally and regionally produced agricultural products.

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpp>

FMPP and LFPP: FMLFPPgrants@usda.gov

Local Food Promotion Program

To develop, coordinate, and expand local and regional food business enterprises that engage as intermediaries in indirect producer to consumer marketing to help increase access to and availability of locally and regionally produced agricultural products.

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/lfpp>

FMPP and LFPP: FMLFPPgrants@usda.gov

Regional Food System Partnership Program

Supports the formation of multi-stakeholder partnerships that connect public and private resources to plan and develop local or regional food systems. Selected partnerships coordinate efforts to set priorities, connect resources and services, and measure progress towards common goals.

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/rfsp>

RFSP: IPPGGrants@usda.gov

AMS Grant Web

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants>

AMS General Grants

amsgrants@usda.gov

Local Food Purchase Programs

- The [Local Food Procurement Agreements \(LFPA\)](#) and [Local Food for Schools \(LFS\)](#) are two new programs at AMS created through the Food Systems Transformation framework.
 - Maintains and improves food and agricultural supply chain resiliency through non-competitive cooperative agreements to State and Federally Recognized Tribal Governments.
- States and Tribal Governments enter into non-competitive cooperative agreements with USDA for the purchase of local domestic food targeting socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers to be distributed targeting underserved communities.
- Three Overarching Goals:
 1. Provide an opportunity for States and Tribal Governments to strengthen their local and regional food system.
 2. Help to support local and underserved farmers/producers through building and expanding economic opportunities.
 3. Establish, strengthen, and broaden partnerships with producers and the food distribution community, local food networks, and non-profits- distributing fresh and nutritious foods in rural, remote, or underserved communities.

LFPA and LFS Contacts

- ✓ **Elizabeth Lober** – elizabeth.lober@usda.gov
- ✓ **Jason Fish** – jason.fish@usda.gov
- ✓ **Sarah Fong** – sarah.fong@usda.gov

[Learn more about Selling Food to USDA](#)

[Learn about the Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement Program](#)

[Learn about the Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program](#)