

**[ADMINISTRATIVE CIRCULAR NO. 01, S. 2018,
January 26, 2018]**

**RULES AND REGULATIONS ON THE CERTIFICATION OF
PHILIPPINE GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES (PHILGAP) FOR
CROPS, SUPERSEDING ADMINISTRATIVE CIRCULAR NO. 10
SERIES 2013**

*Adopted: 16 January 2018
Date Filed: 26 January 2018*

Pursuant to Article III, Section 5 a (2, 3, 4) and Article V, Section 16.E of Republic Act No. 10611, otherwise known as the Food Safety Act of 2013, "An Act to Strengthen the Food Safety Regulatory System in the Country to Protect Consumer Health and Facilitate Market access of Local Foods and Food Products, and For Other Purposes" and the ASEAN Good Agricultural Practices for the production of fresh fruits and vegetables in the ASEAN Region, this Circular is hereby promulgated.

**ARTICLE I
OBJECTIVES**

SECTION 1. This Administrative Circular aims to achieve the following:

- 1.1 Facilitate the adoption of the four (4) GAP modules: food safety; produce quality, environmental management; and worker's health, safety and welfare.
- 1.2 Facilitate availability and access of Philippine agricultural crops to neighboring ASEAN markets and other foreign markets.

**ARTICLE II
SCOPE AND COVERAGE**

SECTION 2. This Circular establishes the revised rules and procedures in issuing, maintaining and revoking PhilGAP Certificates for agricultural crops based on compliance with the four (4) GAP modules as stipulated in Section 1.1.

SECTION 3. This Circular covers farms and packing facilities with agricultural crops harvested at a point in their growth stages intended for human consumption or to be used as raw materials for processed products for food purpose. This applies to agricultural crops with available Philippine National Standards (PNS) guide.

SECTION 4. Producers can apply for certification under any of the two (2) options.

4.1 Individual certification - where an individual producer, who will be the certificate holder, applies for certification based on its currently practiced farm management system.

4.2 Group Certification - where a group, (i.e. cooperative, corporation, institution or organization/ association) who will be the certificate holder, applies for certification based on its currently practiced quality management system (QMS) or internal control system (ICS), whichever is applicable.

SECTION 5. This Circular also establishes the composition and tasks of the Certification Committee, PhilGAP Inspectors, Monitoring Inspectors, Program Secretariat and Regional GAP Team.

ARTICLE III DEFINITION OF TERMS

SECTION 6. As used in this circular, the following words, terms and phrases shall be construed to mean as follows:

6.1 Agricultural Crops refers to cultivated plants of which products are harvested at some point in their growth stage intended for human consumption.

6.2 Applicant refers to any person or individuals and groups (cooperative, corporation, institution or organization/association) that are involved in crop production applying for PhilGAP certification.

6.3 Application Form refers to a document to be filled out by the applicant applying for PhilGAP certification, which also specifies the list of documentary requirements.

6.4 Certification refers to the issuance of PhilGAP certificate with a formal procedure by which a competent authority evaluates and verifies applications in accordance with the established requirements or standards.

6.5 Certification Committee refers to a group chaired by the BPI Assistant Director tasked to evaluate and review applications to recommend qualified applicants to the BPI Director for approval.

6.6 Conflict of interest refers to as having an economic interest with the applicant under review for approval one year prior to, during or one year after work or employment was concluded.

6.7 Farm refers to an area that is devoted primarily to agricultural processes with the primary objectives of producing agricultural crops.

6.8 Food Safety refers to the assurance that food will not cause harm to the consumers when it is prepared or eaten according to its intended

use.

6.9 Food Safety Act of 2013 also known as “Republic Act No. 10611” refers to an act that strengthens the food safety regulatory system in the country to protect consumer health and facilitate market access of local foods and food products and for other purposes.

6.10 Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) refer to the practices that address environmental, economic and social sustainability for on-farm processes, and which result in safe and quality food and nonfood agricultural products.

6.11 Inspection refers to the examination of food, food production facilities or establishments, and the management and production systems of food businesses, including the examination of documents, finished product testing and registration, and of the origin and destination of production inputs and outputs to verify compliance with legal requirements or relevant standard by an agency mandated to perform food safety regulatory and/or enforcement functions.

6.12 Inspection Checklist refers to a document developed based on existing Philippine National Standards (PNS) that provide guidance to inspectors in verifying compliance based on the approved standards.

6.13 Inspection Plan refers to a document that provides the details of the inspection that include its activities, timelines and members of the inspection team.

6.14 Inspection Report refers to a record that summarizes the observations and findings during the conduct of inspection.

6.15 Inspection Team refers to a group of designated PhilGAP inspectors, which may also include the program secretariat, tasked to inspect and assess compliance of a farm with the established standards.

6.16 Monitoring refers to conducting a planned sequence of observations or measurements to assess whether control measures are operating as intended.

6.17 Monitoring Inspector refers to duly designated technical personnel from BPI tasked to monitor PhilGAP certified farms with regard to their compliance to established provisions.

6.18 PhilGAP Inspector refers to duly designated technical personnel from BPI, various regional field offices and other agencies tasked to conduct actual inspection relevant to initial or renewal inspection, and to prepare and submit inspection report.

6.19 Production Record refers to documentation of activities from primary

production and postharvest handling up to distribution.

6.20 Program Secretariat refers to duly designated Plant Product Safety Services Division (PPSSD) personnel that are tasked, among others, to prepare and transmit official communication, to prepare inspection plan, coordinate with relevant agencies and facilitate submission of qualified applicants for certification.

ARTICLE IV ADMINISTRATION

SECTION 7. PhilGAP Certification Committee (PhilGAPCC)

7.1 The BPI Assistant Director shall chair the PhilGAPCC composed of the chiefs of Plant Product Safety Services Division (PPSSD) as co-chair, National Plant Quarantine Services Division (NPQSD), and National Seed Quality Control Services Division (NSQCSD) and/or their designated representatives. There shall be designated permanent members wherein a Special Order is signed by the Secretary.

7.2 The PhilGAPCC is tasked to perform the following functions:

7.2.1 After initial evaluation of applicants by the PhilGAP Inspectors, the PhilGAPCC shall undertake final evaluation of and make appropriate recommendations to the BPI Director regarding applications;

7.2.2 Endorse to the BPI Director the qualified applicants for certification;

7.2.3 Act on filed complaints about abuses in the production and sale of products that do not adhere to PhilGAP provisions, including the use of PhilGAP certified mark; review the reports of investigations, and make the appropriate recommendations to the BPI Director whether or not to revoke, or cancel a previously issued PhilGAP certification;

7.2.4 Recommend to BPI Director the list of qualified PhilGAP inspectors as identified and endorsed by the directors of the various agencies or by the DA Regional Field Offices (RFOs), for approval to the Office of the Secretary;

7.2.5 Undertake annual review of the program, set priorities and endorse the proposed strategic plan to the BPI Director for approval; and

7.2.6 Undertake annual review of the guidelines, its inspection procedures and propose changes, when necessary.

SECTION 8. Pool of PhilGAP Inspectors,

8.1 The BPI shall maintain a pool of inspectors. The current pool of inspectors as provided by relevant Special Orders shall remain valid until amended or revoked.

8.2 The pool of PhilGAP Inspectors is tasked to perform the following functions:

8.2.1 Set-out the inspection plan;

8.2.2 Conduct actual inspection;

8.2.3 Collect samples for laboratory analysis, as deemed necessary;

8.2.4 Prepare inspection report;

8.2.5 Coordinate with the applicant regarding compliance and non-compliance with items reflected in the inspection report;

8.2.6 Conduct follow-up inspections, if necessary; and

8.2.7 Submit the inspection report and checklist to the Certification Committee through the Program Secretariat.

8.3 Designated PhilGAP inspectors shall hold a degree in agriculture or other related science courses with training and experience in any of the following: basic food safety principles, crop management, integrated pest management, postharvest techniques and handling aspects, and environmental management.

8.4 The BPI may collaborate with the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards (BAFS) in training the PhilGAP inspectors on the provisions of the Philippine National Standards (PNS).

8.5 The budget for the inspection and training activities shall be charged to the BPI GAP Program, subject to availability of funds and government accounting rules and regulations.

SECTION 9. Pool of PhilGAP Monitoring Inspectors.

9.1 The Plant Product Safety Services Division (PPSSD) shall head the pool of Monitoring Inspectors.

9.2 The pool of Monitoring Inspectors is tasked to perform the following functions:

9.2.1 Monitor compliance of PhilGAP certified farms, and;

9.2.2 Conduct investigations of filed complaints.

9.3 Designated Monitoring Inspectors shall hold a degree in agriculture or other related science courses with training and experience in any of the following: basic food safety principles, crop management, integrated pest management, postharvest techniques and handling aspects, and environmental management.