USDA Agricultural Marketing Service

~facilitating the competitive and efficient marketing of agricultural products for 125 years

The Breadth of Conformity Assessment Activities in the Federal Arena

NIST Conformity Assessment Workshop
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U.S. Agriculture

- 2.2 Million Farms
  - Produce 262% more food with less inputs than in 1950
  - Sold $297 billion in agricultural products in 2007, a 48% increase since 2002

- One-Third of Agricultural Products are Exported
  - Positive agricultural trade balance = more opportunities
  - $115 billion in agricultural products exported in 2010
    - 2012 Estimates are set at $137 billion

- Agriculture Creates Jobs
  - Employs 15% of the U.S. workforce

Sources: 2007 Census of Agriculture, American Farm Bureau Federation, and USDA Outlook on U.S. Agricultural Trade
USDA Agricultural Marketing Service

- Committed to Supporting U.S. Agriculture
- Offer Conformity Assessment Services
  - Commodity Grading
  - Inspection
  - Testing
  - Certification
  - Accreditation
- Focus on Commodity Grading & Accreditation
USDA Commodity Grading

- Authorized by Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946
  - "to encourage uniformity and consistency in commercial practices"
- AMS’s Core Service
- Verify that Products meet U.S. Grade Standards
- Applied by Federally Licensed Graders
- Voluntary – User Paid Service
- Quality Grades
  - Serve as a “language” between buyers and sellers
  - Differentiate products in the marketplace &
  - Allow consumers to make purchase decisions
USDA Commodity Grading
Conformity Assessment System

Grading
USDA Operational Requirements
7 CFR Parts 27-204

Cotton, Dairy Products (butter, cheese, milk products), Eggs, Fruits & Vegetables (nuts & oils), Livestock (wool & mohair), Meat, Poultry, Rabbits & Tobacco

500+ U.S. Grade Standards
In 2011, USDA Graded approximately:

- 1 billion lbs of butter
- 18 million bales of cotton
- 76 billion lbs of fruits & vegetables
- 20 billion lbs of beef & lamb
- 65 billion lbs poultry
- +2 billion doz shell eggs
- 60 million kg tobacco
USDA National Organic Program

Authority
- Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) of 1990
- National Organic Program (NOP) Regulations 2001

Mission
- To facilitate domestic and international marketing of fresh and processed food and assure consumers that such products meet consistent, uniform standards

Scope
- All aspects of food production, processing & retail sales
- DOES NOT address food safety or nutrition
USDA National Organics Program
Conformity Assessment System

NOP
USDA Operational Requirements

Certifiers
7 CFR Part 205
+ specific requirements
(91 ACAs)

Operations
7 CFR Part 205
(~17500 COs)

Assessments conducted with Grading & Verification Division
- NVCASE Program Recognized
- Organic Production/Processing

On Product Mark
Positive Impacts

A Codified National Standard
- Common framework to market U.S. organic foods
- Replaced numerous standards within the U.S.

Program Growth
- Certified Operations increased 6.7% between 2009 - 2011
- Organic Foods Retail Value grew 9.5% in 2011
- Organic foods = 4.2% of the U.S. Food Sales in 2010

Removal of Trade Barriers
- Canada 2009
- European Union 2012
AMS Facilitates the Marketing of Agricultural Products

- Commodity Grading Services & the National Organic Program
- And So Many More….  
  - Good Agriculture Practices & Good Handling Practices
  - USDA Export Verification Programs
  - USDA Process Verified Program
  - USDA ISO Guide 65 Program
  - Laboratory Approval Program
  - Accredited Seed Programs
  - Product Certification
  - Equipment Review

- Visit us on www.ams.usda.gov