## Specialty Crops Program

### Program and Division

**AMS Specialty Crops Program**  
**Office of the Deputy Administrator**  
www.ams.usda.gov/fv

**USDA AMS Specialty Crops Program (SCP)** provides customized solutions to enhance the competitive, efficient, and transparent marketing of all specialty crops. We offer a full range of quality assurance and audit verification services providing our clients and their customers with confidence that products are grown, processed, and distributed under the most favorable conditions. Our range of services include:

- Commodity Standards Development
- Grading, Inspection, Certification and Audit-based Verification Services
- Commodity and other technical training programs
- Domestic and International Commodity Market News
- Marketing Order and Agreements administration
- Research and Promotion program administration
- Economic Analysis
- Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA) enforcement

### Contacts

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### Specialty Crops Inspection Division

Serving the fresh, processed and fresh-cut fruit and vegetable and specialty crops industry with:

- Fresh and processed produce quality/condition inspection and grading services.
- Audit-based solutions to enhance food safety practices, including Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for growers, Good Handling Practices (GHP) for packers, shippers, and distributors, and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) for processor’s and fresh-cut operations.
- Quality Monitoring Program (QMP) to verify supplier contract compliance.
- Identity Preservation Program for clients with unique, value-added products.
- Food Defense Surveys to verify a farm, packinghouse or processor food defense program.
- Qualified through Verification (QTV) program to assist food processors enhance their hazard analysis critical control point (HACCP) plan.
- U.S. Grade Standards.
- Industry training.

### Contacts

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### Market News Division

Collects and disseminates detailed information on market conditions for hundreds of agricultural commodities at major domestic and international wholesale markets, production areas, and ports of entry. Price and movement data and related services.

### Contacts

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### Specialty Crops Program

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| Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA) Division       | Proactively works for the fruit and vegetable industry promoting interstate and foreign commerce through dispute resolution, mediation, arbitration, licensing, and outreach programs facilitating fair trade practices. The PACA enforces federal regulations outside the civil court system by upholding contract requirements, mandating full and prompt payment, by removing unscrupulous individuals from the trade when needed, and providing advice on trust protection. | Judith Rudman, Director  
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John Koller, Business Development  
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| Marketing Order and Agreement Division                        | Helps fruit, vegetable and specialty crop producers and handlers achieve marketing success through industry driven programs. Marketing orders and agreements improve returns to producers by:  
- Targeting domestic and foreign markets with industry funded promotion, advertising, publicity, production and marketing research, and market information programs;  
- Maintaining a consistently high quality of produce on the market;  
- Standardizing packages and containers;  
- Regulating the flow of product to market. | Michael Durando, Director  
(202) 720-2491  
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(202) 720-9914  
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Richard Lower, Assistant to the Director  
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| Promotion and Economics Division                              | Administration of nationwide research and promotion programs for the fresh fruit and vegetable industry. Authorized by federal legislation, Research and Promotion Programs are designed to strengthen the position of the industry in the marketplace and to maintain and expand domestic and foreign markets. The programs are all fully funded by industry assessments. Analysis of economic information and programs related to federal food purchase and other programs. | Heather Pichelman, Director  
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Patricia Petrella, Deputy Director  
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| AMS Commodity Procurement Division                           | Purchase of fresh and processed products from approved vendors for school lunch and other government food programs. | David Tuckwiller, Director  
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