



From Fresh to Finish

with Sysco QA

Bridging the Gap to the highest food safety standards.



Protecting our customers and their guests from food-borne pathogens is a top priority.

At Sysco, we hold ourselves and our suppliers to the highest standards of food safety and product quality. This dedication applies to every product and service Sysco provides, but is especially important when dealing with the harvesting, handling and processing of fresh produce—all of which carry a high risk for contamination.

To help protect our customers and their guests from potential food-borne pathogens, Sysco requires that all suppliers of high-risk, ready-to-eat produce items meet the stringent safety and quality standards outlined in Sysco's Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) initiative. GAP applies to every Sysco produce supplier regardless of size—from small local purveyors to large-scale suppliers.

In order to be a Sysco supplier, compliance to Sysco GAP is mandatory. Suppliers of high-risk items must have a current and acceptable Good Agricultural Practices audit uploaded into the Sysco GAP database for all ranches and farms used to supply Sysco-owned companies with ready-to-eat fresh produce. Every GAP audit is monitored and maintained by Sysco's QA Department and must be conducted by Sysco-approved third-party auditing agencies. This allows us to assess and report supplier compliance based on a number of key parameters, including product type, growing region, audit results and individual supplier.

To date, more than 580 suppliers are actively involved in the Sysco GAP program, and our internal monitoring system houses more than 60,000 current and complete audits from every corner of the globe. Good Agricultural Practices mean good business for our suppliers and even better produce for our customers. Sysco GAP is one of the many ways we live up to our company's vision to become "our customers' most valued and trusted business partner." Because when we say "Good things come from Sysco," it's more than a promise—it's our guarantee.

Quality Control from farm field to shipment

To ensure continued compliance and customer satisfaction, Sysco performs routine visits (announced and unannounced) to evaluate product quality and food safety.

As the leading supplier of fresh produce in North America, Sysco employs the largest and most active QA Department in the industry. At more than 100 strong, our QA professionals constantly evaluate products for flavor, appearance, condition, nutrition, packaging, convenience and more—all to make sure our customers receive the best quality and value available.



When it comes to fresh produce, we do more than just inspect the harvest as it comes out of the field, we inspect the fields themselves. We conduct detailed assessments of adjacent land use, irrigation water quality, soil amendment processes and sanitation practices in fields, plants and storage facilities.

Before a supplier can provide Sysco-branded produce of any kind, they must pass a rigorous auditing and inspection process that exceeds current government standards. To ensure continued compliance and customer satisfaction, Sysco performs routine visits (announced and unannounced) to evaluate product quality and food safety.

We go to great lengths to verify that all produce suppliers throughout our supply chain—from the field to customer delivery—maintain full compliance with GAP (Good Agricultural Practices), GMP (Good Manufacturing Practices), HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points) and other specific food safety and traceability programs. Our suppliers of processed produce are also required to perform daily pre-operational sanitation inspections of processing equipment (tables, lugs, wash lines, knives, trays, walls, floors, refrigeration equipment, etc.) prior to the start of each production day.

To many in the food industry, our efforts may seem extreme. Even obsessive. To us, it's all in a day's work. Because at Sysco, our QA Department is dedicated to delivering products that meet the most stringent standards in terms of quality, safety and consistency—from fresh to finish.



From Fresh to Finish

with Sysco QA

Local Food Initiatives Are A Growing Trend



Sysco has programs in place to connect local food producers with restaurants that value local ingredients.

Local food initiatives are more than an emerging trend; they represent a growing social movement—and for good

reason. Locally grown produce is delivered at the peak of freshness, which means products are flavorful and crisp. Supporting local farmers also helps our local operating companies build stronger ties to the communities they serve. Plus, foodservice operations that support local growers and producers tend to attract a like-minded and more loyal customer base.

That's why Sysco has programs in place to connect local food producers with restaurants that value local ingredients. This allows Sysco to deliver the freshest foods to our customers while contributing to the success of local farms, niche producers and the communities in which we live, work, play and dine.

So far, the program has been a great success. For example, every summer in Kansas City, Missouri, Sysco distributes more than 8,500 cases of fresh farm products made by Amish Farmers and Old World Mennonites based in Rich Hill and Stanberry, Missouri. In Grand Rapids, Michigan, our local produce program has steadily increased over the past eight years, which attracted Michigan State University as a new customer—a profitable arrangement for all parties involved.

Because even our smallest suppliers must be held to the highest standards in quality and food safety, Sysco has joined forces with the Produce Marketing Association (PMA) and PrimusLabs.com to develop and deliver regional Good Agricultural Practices training seminars. To date, Sysco QA has co-hosted nine seminars, with the potential for more sessions in the coming year. Offering Good Agricultural Practices training and reduced-cost audits helps small growers across North America develop and maintain farm food safety programs that will be of great benefit to their operation in everything they do, not just in doing business with Sysco.

Although these partnerships with local suppliers may not represent a high percentage of Sysco's overall business, we have learned that working with niche producers and small farms has benefits that extend well beyond financial viability. By providing the best in local fare, Sysco benefits our customers, their guests, local businesses and the entire community at large. That's not just a win-win situation, it's a win-win-win-win-win situation.

Did You Know?

Sysco QA employs more than **100 quality experts** — that makes us the largest and most active in-house QA department in the industry!



Ask for a copy of our latest
QA brochure -
FOOD SAFETY
from Fresh to Finish

