

Title Harmonising GAP programs for fresh produce in Asean region
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Abstract

Many forces are driving the global demand for assurance that fruit and vegetables are safe to eat and of the right quality, and are produced and handled in a manner that does not cause harm to the environment and the health, safety and welfare of workers. The impact of these driving forces is that retailer requirements for suppliers to comply with Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) is increasing and governments are strengthening legal requirements for food safety, environmental protection, and worker health, safety and welfare. The implementation of GAP programs currently within the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) region varies, with some countries having government certified systems and others beginning the journey with awareness programs for farmers. Under a project funded by the ASEAN Australia Development Cooperation Program, a standard for ASEAN GAP has been developed to harmonise GAP Programs in the region. The goal is to facilitate trade between ASEAN countries and to global markets, improve viability for farmers, and help sustain a safe food supply and the environment. ASEAN GAP is an umbrella standard that individual member countries will benchmark their national programs against to gain equivalence. The scope of ASEAN GAP covers the production, harvesting and postharvest handling of fresh fruit and vegetables on farm and postharvest handling in locations where produce is packed for sale. ASEAN GAP consists of four modules covering food safety, environmental management, worker health, safety and welfare, and produce quality. Each module can be used alone or in combination with other modules. This enables progressive implementation of ASEAN GAP, module by module based on individual country priorities.