
Services Available to Growers Under USDA's Fruit and Vegetable Programs

Friday, January 12, 2008, 2:00 pm

Moderator: Mr. Brian Tankersley

**DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND INSPECTION SERVICES UNDER FRUIT
AND VEGETABLE PROGRAMS AT USDA**

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Marketing a crop of fruit and vegetables may provide as many challenges as planting and harvesting. The most successful harvest is worthless if the product cannot be marketed. Dealing with the challenges of out state receivers, contracts, grower's agents, and inspections can be daunting. Fruit and Vegetable Programs of the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service administer programs that can help.

The Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act (PACA) provides a framework of fair trading practices for wholesale traders of fruit and vegetables, fresh or frozen, and provides a forum for dispute resolution involving mediation and arbitration. The trust provisions of the PACA Statute, provide a unique opportunity for sellers of produce to preserve their priority rights to be paid in the event of a buyer's bankruptcy or business closure.

Understanding the US Grade Standards for Fruit and Vegetables and how those standards are applied and reported on an

inspection certificate is fundamental in dealing with contract issues especially when growers and receivers are across the country from each other. In the current market place, Participation in the Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) and/or Good Agricultural Handling Practices (GHP) audit programs can add value to a grower's product by assuring buyers of the production and handling methods used in bringing the product from field to table.

More information about the services available from Fruit and Vegetable Programs at USDA can be obtained from:

Fruit and Vegetable Programs
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