

Understanding and Using Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)

*Food quality and Food Safety with SPS, GAP, HACCP and Value
chains*

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Good Agriculture Practice (GAP)

- FAO description of GAP (FAO 2003)
- “practices that address environmental, economic and social sustainability for on-farm processes, and result in safe and quality food and non-food agricultural products”

Good Agriculture Practice (GAP)

- GAP is often confused with increasing farm productivity and while GAP can help in productivity, the aim to improve food safety, traceability and returns to farmers by improving quality and reliability of food and, increasing market opportunities
- GAP works with farmers to understand their practices and why they do these and, find ways to improve these to best fit into a quality management system
- This relies on the documentation of on farm activities and the verification of these through an audit system.

Good Agriculture Practice (GAP)

- GAP applies to on farm activities where contamination of the product is possible such as fertilisers and manures, pesticides, and water
- GAP also applies to handling and storage of products on farm and before they are sold and move along the value chain.
- GAP works best where there is an advantage to farmers from adoption
- GAP does not fix all food safety issues, especially where issues such as mycotoxins are concerned (with ground nut, farmers can implement GAP with appropriate harvest, drying and on farm storage in clean bags in pest proof structures, however, if the product is sold and stored inappropriately with contaminated bags, they will be re-infected and contaminated).

Good Agriculture Practice (GAP)

- GAP is therefore the start of a larger quality management system for food that follows the flow of food through a value chain.
- Each crop and growing area can have a different set of GAP practices because conditions vary across areas. This is also why farmers need to be involved in building Manuals
- While it is easy to say GAP may not be necessary for very short value chains such as fresh produce for local markets, this is not true, think about E.coli and other faecal contamination from washing fresh produce in contaminated water!!

Good Agriculture Practice (GAP)

- GAP is a progressive and iterative process- starting with local markets and on farm health and safety for immediate sale and use
- This can be built in regional markets and processing
- Exports require a higher standard in most areas and new concepts including timeliness are introduced (for example time in storage/transit for groundnut is very important in managing mycotoxins, rancidity in sunflowers and ground nut for oil and in sesame for acidity)

Good Agriculture Practice (GAP)

- Benefits of GAP are many although there is a time and cost involved in implementation of GAP, especially for many individual small farmers because of limited time and resources to work with individuals from extension agents and similar people
- GAP works best with a group of farmers with mutual interest and possible benefit because there is an incentive to change and adopt/adapt new practices
- While GAP can be legislated enforcement can be difficult with diverse and dispersed small farmers although the majority of the worlds farmers are small scale.

Good Agriculture Practice (GAP)

- Advantages of GAP- “ the benefits of GAP codes, standards and regulations are numerous, including food quality and safety improvement; facilitation of market access and reduction in non-compliance risks regarding permitted pesticides, MRLs and other contamination hazards” (FAO 2003)
- Question who are the main beneficiaries?

Good Agriculture Practice (GAP)

- The main challenges with GAP
- “The main challenges related to GAP implementation include an increase in production costs, especially record keeping, residue testing and certification, and inadequate access to information and support services” (FAO 2003)
- Questions for later discussion in afternoon
- How to implement GAP for oil seeds?
- Is there a clearly defined target group/s
- How to access and service these ?