



Request for Proposal (RFP) – LGMA Compliance Officer

The California Leafy Green Products Handler Marketing Agreement and the Arizona Food Safety Committee (the LGMA Programs) are seeking a qualified third party to serve as Compliance Officer for both programs. The Compliance Officer is expected to begin his/her duties with the start of the winter leafy greens season, on or about November 1, 2020 in both California and Arizona. We will work with the selected firm or individual to arrange a two-month period of overlap with the current LGMA Compliance Officer, Jonathan Field.

The LGMA food safety programs use government audits to verify that handlers have implemented science-based safe farming practices. Corrective actions on audit citations are required to bring each member to 100% compliance. The programs' ultimate goal is to ensure that leafy greens are produced as safely as possible.

Duties

The LGMA Compliance Officer reviews all on-farm audits conducted under the auspices of the California and Arizona LGMA Programs. He or she assigns violations for non-conformities, and oversees corrective actions. Specifically, the Compliance Officer:

1. Reviews on-farm audits generated by the LGMA Programs in AZ and CA. It is anticipated that approximately 100 audits are conducted in Arizona each year, and about 400 are conducted in California.
2. Assigns violation levels for any non-conformities identified during the audits. Non-conformities are identified in the audit reports, but the Compliance Officer is responsible for assigning violations levels and requiring corrective action plans. Violations or non-conformities must be corrected, either at the time of the audit or prior to subsequent follow-up audits, per LGMA policy.
3. Communicates with Handlers on a timely basis about their audit results, requires and reviews Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) as required by policy.
4. Closes out audits as appropriate.
5. Works with the LGMA Directors and Technical Personnel on challenges to the audit findings, complaint resolution, and decertification processes.
6. Participates with California and Arizona LGMA Program staffs to review Food Safety Practices, revise audit checklists, and offer additional input as needed.
7. Works with AZ, CA and USDA technical staff to create, and update, a metrics and checklist expectation manual and non-conformance standardization manual.
8. Attends LGMA trainings and workshops to assure understanding of the metrics requirements.
9. Attends ongoing food safety training to stay current with best industry practices.
10. Travels within Arizona and California as needed to attend board and committee meetings, other food safety meetings as requested.
11. Provides AZ and CA LGMAs with regular (at least monthly) compliance summary updates to help the industry remain aware of audit performance and proactively address trends.

The LGMAs will contract with an independent contractor to fill the Compliance Officer Role. An independent agency or individuals ensures that:

1. Compliance in both States and under both LGMA Programs is aligned and consistent.



2. An “arm’s length” relationship between the LGMA Programs and the Compliance Officer can be maintained.
3. The Compliance Officer can take on other contracts, subject to ensuring that no conflicts of interest will be created by doing so.

Background and Timing:

The LGMA Compliance Officer works on a year-round basis, as on-farm food safety audits take place on a year-round basis. The selected individual or firm must be available to review and act on audits at least weekly throughout the year.

Arizona produces leafy greens from late October through mid-April. AZ LGMA Audits are generated throughout this time period. California produces leafy greens on a year-round basis, and CA LGMA Audits are generated throughout the year, although activity is heaviest from May through November.

Both states use the same food safety practices and audit checklist (with some exceptions that will be explained), and the on-farm audit is largely the same in both states. However, California currently maintains an on-line database to track and manage audits, while Arizona currently reports and manages audits via excel. It is estimated that review and action on each of the LGMA audits (including initial review, assignment of non-conformities and follow up action) takes from 1 – 2 hours.

California’s audits are conducted by employees of the California Department of Agriculture (CDFA), while Arizona’s are conducted by employees of the Arizona Department of Agriculture (ADA). Both sets of auditors are trained and licensed by the US Department of Agriculture.

Qualifications:

Individuals interested in the compliance officer position should have:

- A four-year degree in a food science, food safety or a related scientific field (the LGMA can consider work experience in lieu of the full education qualification)
- At least five years’ experience with the leafy greens or food industry
- Significant experience and background with food safety and on-farm food safety practices
- Produce Safety Alliance (FDA Produce Rule) certification

In addition, the LGMAs see the following as preferred Qualifications:

- Experience with food safety inspections
- Experience with food safety standards development (GFSI, LGMA Metrics, commodity standards, etc.)
- Bilingual (English and Spanish)
- Experience with root cause analysis
- A graduate degree or PHD in food science, food safety, environmental health, etc. is preferred

Submission of Proposals

Proposals should be submitted by September 14, 2020. Proposals will be reviewed by both states Marketing Agreements as each state must complete its own procurement process. Initial reviews will be conducted by the AZ and CA LGMA programs, according to the criteria outlined below. Before a final decision is made, additional



review and possible interviews will be conducted by additional members of the LGMA Technical and Compliance staffs and Boards.

The LGMAs plan to hire a Compliance Officer on an hourly fee structure for the remainder of the 2020/21 season (through March 31st, 2021). We then hope to establish a retainer fee structure for the future. A permanent retainer will be determined based on actual hours maintained by the contractor, and subject to annual review. Travel should be billed and reimbursed separately at cost.

Conflict of Interest

Potential contractors must detail any potential conflicts of interest in their proposals. The LGMA Compliance Officer potentially working with members of the leafy greens industry on food safety issues while also being asked to review their LGMA audits would be an issue of significant concern.

Potential conflicts include, but are not necessarily limited, to the following situations:

- Contracts with companies who are handler members of the LGMA
- Contracts with leafy greens growers who provide product to LGMA Handler Members
- Contracts for other companies to work on food safety issues, recalls or outbreaks

Past work will not be considered a conflict of interest, but individuals or companies who are considered as potential Compliance Officers will be asked to accept a strong conflict of interest provision in their contracts with the LGMAs.

Proposal:

Firms or individuals submitting proposals in response to this RFP should include the following:

Background

- Please provide information on the company and/or individuals who will be put forward as a potential Compliance Officer for the LGMA programs
- Explain the structure of your organization, and how it allows for the amount of time required to serve as Compliance Officer for the LGMA Programs
- Provide any other details you feel are important and relevant

Qualifications

- Details on the education and experience qualifications listed in this RFP.
- Background on educational accomplishments and an explanation of why, should the educational requirements not be met, you feel your background and experience show that you should be considered for the position.
- Details on ways you meet any of the other required or preferred qualifications listed in this RFP.
- Please address any potential conflicts of interest represented by current clientele and how you would address them as a member of the LGMA team.

Industry Knowledge

- Detailed information on your background with the leafy greens industry in California and/or Arizona
- Information on any past work experience with members of the LGMA or with growers who provide product to LGMA members in California and/or Arizona.
- Information on any relevant produce industry experience or knowledge



Food Safety Experience

- Detailed information on any work you or your company has done on food safety issues, recalls or outbreaks, including investigations.
- Details on your knowledge of the Produce Safety Rule requirements under FSMA
- Any information on your knowledge of or experience with the LGMA’s food safety practices, including:
 - Experience (if any) with on-farm food safety audits or inspection
 - Experience (if any) with risk assessment, root cause analysis or similar concepts.

Proposed Costs for Services

- Provide details on your cost proposal for this activity, including:
 - As stated in this RFP, the LGMA intends to reimburse on an hourly basis for the remainder of the 2020/21 season (through March 31, 2021).
 - Please propose an hourly rate for that time period.
 - Estimated travel costs and how they should be reimbursed

References

- Please include at least two individuals who can speak to your suitability for the position of Compliance Officer for the LGMA Programs.

Criteria for Evaluation of Proposals:

The following criteria will be used for initial review and scoring each proposal. Candidates will be scored according to the criteria in the first column, and those scores are weighted against the percentages in the second column, yielding a final weighted score in the third column.

<i>Scoring Criteria</i>	<i>Score (out of 100)</i>	<i>Weight (%)</i>	<i>Weighted Score</i>
<i>Company Background</i>		15%	
<i>Qualifications</i>		14%	
<i>Industry Knowledge</i>		19%	
<i>Food Safety Experience</i>		22%	
<i>Costs</i>		20%	
<i>References</i>		10%	
<i>TOTAL</i>		100%	

Questions can be addressed to Teressa Lopez of the Arizona Leafy Greens Food Safety Committee at TLopez@AZDA.gov or to Scott Horsfall of the California Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement at Scott@lgma.ca.gov.

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