

Farm Management – Traceability

Traceability is essential for identifying food safety problems at source.



1. Traceability is the ability to maintain an unbroken record of a crop as it moves through the agricultural production and distribution system. This covers everything from the time a crop is planted in the field to the time it reaches the consumer.

2. A well-documented traceability system facilitates the withdrawal of contaminated produce, thereby enhancing public food safety, and helps farmers track down problems and limit the impact in the event of unwanted contamination or a new plant pest/disease outbreak.

3. As part of a full-chain traceability system, farmers should identify and record all inputs and produce throughout the production process so that they can be traced backward to the original supplier and forward to the next level in the distribution chain.



About “GAP- CROP”

The GAP-CROP provides guidelines on local sustainable production of safe, healthy vegetables and fruits. It focuses on reducing the risk of chemical contamination (e.g. by pesticide and heavy metal) at farm level. This article is the last of a series of 12 Codes of Practice (COP) making up the GAP-CROP. Farmers may voluntarily follow this COP, identify potential problems in their farms, take appropriate control/mitigation measures, and monitor the effectiveness of such measures.





4. Farmers should have a well-documented mechanism for marking or identifying the produce and following them from the farm to the end user. Examples of such mechanisms include assigning a lot number to the field/plot/bed of the production area and a batch code to the produce grown and marketed. Farmers should link the identification of outputs to the identification of the field/plot/bed where the outputs are produced.



5. To allow for comparison over time, the lot number assigned to a specific field/plot/bed of the production area should not be changed. All farm activities information, such as date of production, fertilizer and pesticide application, source and type of raw materials used, should be collected and maintained for every lot. Management records on harvest practices, post harvest handling, storage and transportation for every lot should also be maintained.

6. Farmers should ensure that they can readily share the traceability information with the next level in the food supply chain and the relevant agricultural and/or food safety authorities as and when required.

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