



Developing a Farm Based Traceability System

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Introduction

As food borne illnesses capture the headlines of daily news sources, the topic of food safety has become the “buzz word” for the nation’s food production system. In order to insure the source and quality of our food, traceability has become a driving force in development of a reliable food safety system. Being able to trace back to the source of food in the case of a food borne illness is the emphasis of many types of food, one of which is fruits and vegetables. Every step of the food production chain must be able to trace and be responsible for all products passing through its doors. Each farm must be able to trace “one step back” and “one step forward”. This activity must be documented to insure that all products have been accounted for.

Since the farm or greenhouse signifies the first step of the production chain, traceability responsibility begins at this level. Growers large and small must be able to perform this operation at the farm level just like any other level in the food chain.

One Step Back

In order to begin the traceability process, the first activity is to develop a system to assign a **lot number** to harvested products. Lot numbers are a series of numbers or letters representing various parts of the farm’s production. Harvested products should be identified according to (1) the date of harvest, (2) the particular crop harvested and (3) the field where the crop was grown. Each marketable unit of



product harvested from the farm- whether it is a box, pallet, sack, bin, clamshell, etc., must have a corresponding lot number to accompany the product all the way through the various steps of the production/processing chain.



Putting together a lot number should follow a protocol that can be easily remembered and consistent over a sustained period of time. It should be expandable so that it does not have to be “re-invented” each year and lastly, use a minimum number of digits in order to be manageable.

An example of a phrase to remember how to set up the lot number would be as follows:

“On **date and year**, I harvested **crop** from **field number**.”

The sequence of numbers to make a lot number would look like this:

000-00-00-00

Example: On June 25 2012, I harvested cabbage from the Jones Farm. Your lot number might look like this: **176-12-08-04**

- Date- 000
 - Many businesses including the produce industry use the Julian calendar to assign a date. This calendar assigns a number to each date of the year with January 1 equal to Day 001 through December 31 equal to Day 365. (See Table 1 and 1a) *Example, If you are harvesting product on July 11, the date would be 192.*
- Year- 00
 - Using the last two digits of the harvest year will allow product date labeling for crops including those that may be carried over from year to year. Example, potatoes, onions.
- Crop- 00
 - Crops produced on the farm or in the greenhouse should have a two digit number assigned to each crop or sub-type. (See Table 2)
 - Important!! Growers should plan and develop their crop code list with care as there can be impacts beyond assigning just a lot number. Should a product recall occur, the crop code may help to separate product so that an entire field or crop could avoid being quarantined. The economic impact of a recall procedure might determine a farm’s ability to continue to be profitable.
 - Perennial crops (grown in one location for more than one year) such as tree or small fruits, asparagus, etc., should be coded by variety.

Jun	158	7-Jul	188	7-Aug
Jun	159	8-Jul	189	8-Aug
Jun	160	9-Jul	190	9-Aug
Jun	161	10-Jul	191	10-Aug
Jun	162	11-Jul	192	11-Aug
Jun	163	12-Jul	193	12-Aug
Jun	164	13-Jul	194	13-Aug
Jun	165	14-Jul	195	14-Aug
Jun	166	15-Jul	196	15-Aug

- Certain annual crops that are harvested as different types such as tomatoes, should be separated by type (example, standard, roma, cherry or grape)
 - Seasonal crops of the same type should be separated (example, summer squash should be broken down to groups or variety- yellow crook neck, yellow, zucchini.)
 - Always add new crops to the existing list using the next available crop code number. Do not re-number your crop codes. This will allow you to use this list over several years.
 - Remember!! When developing this list, it should reflect what you are growing on your farm and be customized accordingly.
- Field- 00
 - Each growing location on the farm or in the greenhouse must have an assigned two digit number. A greenhouse may serve as a field when assigning code numbers. (See Table 3)
 - Important!! Again, growers should plan and develop their field numbers with care as there can be the same types of related impacts as mentioned previously.
 - If fields have differences in elevation or geographical features such as a wetland area or riparian buffer, they should be designated as separate fields.
 - Each field should be labeled with signage to designate the field number assigned. This can avoid confusion when spraying or harvesting. You or your family may know it by various names or designations but a new or non-English speaking worker may not be familiar with your naming system.
 - Again, add new fields using the next available field code number. If you leave a production field fallow, do not change or remove the field code number as it may come back into production the following year.



*The time devoted to the development of this activity
can pay dividends over the life of the farm operation.*

One Step Forward

For most farms, this step is already in place. When a farm delivers products to a packer or buyer, they include an invoice or bill of sale. This invoice contains certain pieces of information that not only are used for billing but are also required to capture the “one step forward” component of traceability.

Many farms have computerized accounting systems or pre-printed invoice books- whatever system used by a farm operation is acceptable.

- Vendor Name and Address
 - Include your name, address, town, state, ZIP, and phone
- Customer Name and Address
 - Include the buyer's name, address, town, state and ZIP
 - Customer phone should be in your records but not necessary on your invoice
- Shipping Date
 - This should be the date that the product is delivered to your customer
- Item
 - Item name will give details of the product. Use information based on your crop code descriptions along with sub-type information (Example, Pumpkin, Jack-O-Lantern)
- Quantity/ Marketable Unit
 - Number of units plus unit description (Examples, 5 bins, 6 pallets, 20 boxes, 1 truckload)
- Lot Number
 - This will be the same lot number that you have assigned during harvest
- Signature of Receiver of Product
 - A signature or initial on the invoice representing the buyer or their representative when product is delivered signifies a transfer of ownership.

ABC Farms		431200	
102 Sunny Way			
Anywhere, Virginia 12345			
Customer's	September 1, 2011		
Order No.	DATE _____		
SOLD TO	Mainline Packing Company		
ADDRESS	State Route 21, Freeway, Virginia		
SALESMAN	TERMS _____		
CASH	CHARGE	C. O. D.	PAID OUT
			RETD. MDSE.
			RECD. ON ACOT.
QUAN.	DESCRIPTION		PRICE
	PUMPKINS		AMOUNT
6	BINS 242-11-37-05		
<small>All claims and returned goods MUST be accompanied by this bill.</small>			
SIGNATURE _____			

The traceability responsibility of the grower ends when product is transferred to the next level whether it be the buyer or packer. At this point, the responsibility for traceability transfers to the next level. Packers and buyers will have a list of growers who they purchase product from. You, the grower will have an assigned grower number. The packer or buyer may add the grower number to the incoming lot number to make this a unique identifying number as it passes through their facility. This number will then be used to identify product when it is invoiced to the next level- wholesale distribution or retailer.

Documenting Your Traceability System

Once a system has been developed to assign lot numbers and invoicing, a record of organized documentation must be followed. This documentation does not have to be a complicated procedure but some method must be in place. One method that completes the traceability system includes a Production/Distribution Report.

Farm Name _____
Harvest Year _____

FARM PRODUCTION-DISPOSITION REPORT
Commodity _____

PRODUCTION

Lot ID	Quantity	Unit	Notes:

DISPOSITION

Lot ID	Quantity	Unit	Customer	Ship Date

UNSOLD PRODUCT

Lot ID	Quantity	Unit	Location	Disposal Date

- This report is a simple form of an accounting balance sheet (See Table 4). It can be used as a daily harvest report or a commodity harvest report. Whichever method works best for your farm is acceptable.

- The top half of the sheet helps to document product as it is harvested. A lot number and quantity of harvested product serves as the entry on the form for each item harvested. This satisfies the “one step back” requirement.

- The quantity may be any marketable unit that you use to harvest your product. In many cases, only one lot number and count will serve for an entire day’s harvest.

- If you grade and repack produce, you may use the Notes Section to list new graded quantities. This will become the documented quantity on your production report.

- Any product that has been assigned a lot

number must be accounted for.

- The lower section helps you to account for where your product is sold or delivered. It must “balance” with the quantities harvested in the upper section. This part satisfies the “one step forward” requirement.
- If you sell to multiple buyers, each buyer transaction goes on a separate line.
- Selling to Direct Markets must be listed also. These might include farmer’s markets, roadside stands, pick your own, or community supported agriculture (CSA’s). No additional accounting (individual customer’s name) is needed.
- A section is also listed for unsold product. This would include spoiled or damaged product as well as product that was not sold but donated or consumed in another manner.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Does each box have to be labeled? *No, each marketable unit must have a label. This means that if you stack boxes on a pallet and wrap the pallet with plastic, then the pallet becomes the marketable unit and only the pallet needs to have a label. You may at your option still label each of the boxes on the pallet. Also, you may have to abide by what your buyer requires as far as labeling.*
2. What type of labeling should be used? *Many different methods of labeling have been used to identify harvested product. They may be as simple as labeling with a permanent marker, a rubber stamp with permanent ink, or a generated computer label. Whatever can be devised on your farm is acceptable.*

3. Do I have to use a bar code? *At this time, no bar codes are required for produce harvested on the farm. The food safety law states that if identified with bar code, it still must have an alpha numeric code that can be read by any person.*
4. What if I am already using a system developed by myself? *This will work without any problem as long as you have incorporated the required pieces of information as described in this publication. The auditor wants to see that you have a system and will ask you to describe it to them. You will need to be able to describe how you have your system set up to trace your products.*

The GAP Plan of Action Manual

A major component of the GAP Plan of Action Manual is the traceability plan. This includes a standard operating procedure describing the traceability plan. It also calls for a plan to test the plan called a mock recall. This activity is designed to test the traceability plan to make sure that product can be traced back to the farm and field where it was produced. It is a procedure that must be conducted annually. Samples of standard operating procedures for traceability and mock recall are included in this publication. (Appendix)

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following individuals, farms and agencies who have been instrumental in helping to develop this publication.

Dr. Allen Straw, Extension Specialist, Small Fruits and Vegetables, Virginia Cooperative Extension

Amber Vallotton, Extension Agent, Horticulture, Virginia Cooperative Extension

Joanna Radford, Extension Agent, North Carolina Cooperative Extension

Dodd's Acres Farm, Mechanicsville, Virginia

Cole Berry Farm, Vernon Hills, Virginia

Light's Farm Inc., Laurel Fork, Virginia

Valley Farming LLC, Dayton, Virginia



Appendix

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Table 1.

TRACEBACK DATE CODES

Based on Julian Calendar- Regular Year

1-Jan	1	1-Feb	32	1-Mar	60	1-Apr	91	1-May	121	1-Jun	152	1-Jul	182	1-Aug	213	1-Sep	244	1-Oct	274	1-Nov	305	1-Dec	335	
2-Jan	2	2-Feb	33	2-Mar	61	2-Apr	92	2-May	122	2-Jun	153	2-Jul	183	2-Aug	214	2-Sep	245	2-Oct	275	2-Nov	306	2-Dec	336	
3-Jan	3	3-Feb	34	3-Mar	62	3-Apr	93	3-May	123	3-Jun	154	3-Jul	184	3-Aug	215	3-Sep	246	3-Oct	276	3-Nov	307	3-Dec	337	
4-Jan	4	4-Feb	35	4-Mar	63	4-Apr	94	4-May	124	4-Jun	155	4-Jul	185	4-Aug	216	4-Sep	247	4-Oct	277	4-Nov	308	4-Dec	338	
5-Jan	5	5-Feb	36	5-Mar	64	5-Apr	95	5-May	125	5-Jun	156	5-Jul	186	5-Aug	217	5-Sep	248	5-Oct	278	5-Nov	309	5-Dec	339	
6-Jan	6	6-Feb	37	6-Mar	65	6-Apr	96	6-May	126	6-Jun	157	6-Jul	187	6-Aug	218	6-Sep	249	6-Oct	279	6-Nov	310	6-Dec	340	
7-Jan	7	7-Feb	38	7-Mar	66	7-Apr	97	7-May	127	7-Jun	158	7-Jul	188	7-Aug	219	7-Sep	250	7-Oct	280	7-Nov	311	7-Dec	341	
8-Jan	8	8-Feb	39	8-Mar	67	8-Apr	98	8-May	128	8-Jun	159	8-Jul	189	8-Aug	220	8-Sep	251	8-Oct	281	8-Nov	312	8-Dec	342	
9-Jan	9	9-Feb	40	9-Mar	68	9-Apr	99	9-May	129	9-Jun	160	9-Jul	190	9-Aug	221	9-Sep	252	9-Oct	282	9-Nov	313	9-Dec	343	
10-Jan	10	10-Feb	41	10-Mar	69	10-Apr	100	10-May	130	10-Jun	161	10-Jul	191	10-Aug	222	10-Sep	253	10-Oct	283	10-Nov	314	10-Dec	344	
11-Jan	11	11-Feb	42	11-Mar	70	11-Apr	101	11-May	131	11-Jun	162	11-Jul	192	11-Aug	223	11-Sep	254	11-Oct	284	11-Nov	315	11-Dec	345	
12-Jan	12	12-Feb	43	12-Mar	71	12-Apr	102	12-May	132	12-Jun	163	12-Jul	193	12-Aug	224	12-Sep	255	12-Oct	285	12-Nov	316	12-Dec	346	
13-Jan	13	13-Feb	44	13-Mar	72	13-Apr	103	13-May	133	13-Jun	164	13-Jul	194	13-Aug	225	13-Sep	256	13-Oct	286	13-Nov	317	13-Dec	347	
14-Jan	14	14-Feb	45	14-Mar	73	14-Apr	104	14-May	134	14-Jun	165	14-Jul	195	14-Aug	226	14-Sep	257	14-Oct	287	14-Nov	318	14-Dec	348	
15-Jan	15	15-Feb	46	15-Mar	74	15-Apr	105	15-May	135	15-Jun	166	15-Jul	196	15-Aug	227	15-Sep	258	15-Oct	288	15-Nov	319	15-Dec	349	
16-Jan	16	16-Feb	47	16-Mar	75	16-Apr	106	16-May	136	16-Jun	167	16-Jul	197	16-Aug	228	16-Sep	259	16-Oct	289	16-Nov	320	16-Dec	350	
17-Jan	17	17-Feb	48	17-Mar	76	17-Apr	107	17-May	137	17-Jun	168	17-Jul	198	17-Aug	229	17-Sep	260	17-Oct	290	17-Nov	321	17-Dec	351	
18-Jan	18	18-Feb	49	18-Mar	77	18-Apr	108	18-May	138	18-Jun	169	18-Jul	199	18-Aug	230	18-Sep	261	18-Oct	291	18-Nov	322	18-Dec	352	
19-Jan	19	19-Feb	50	19-Mar	78	19-Apr	109	19-May	139	19-Jun	170	19-Jul	200	19-Aug	231	19-Sep	262	19-Oct	292	19-Nov	323	19-Dec	353	
20-Jan	20	20-Feb	51	20-Mar	79	20-Apr	110	20-May	140	20-Jun	171	20-Jul	201	20-Aug	232	20-Sep	263	20-Oct	293	20-Nov	324	20-Dec	354	
21-Jan	21	21-Feb	52	21-Mar	80	21-Apr	111	21-May	141	21-Jun	172	21-Jul	202	21-Aug	233	21-Sep	264	21-Oct	294	21-Nov	325	21-Dec	355	
22-Jan	22	22-Feb	53	22-Mar	81	22-Apr	112	22-May	142	22-Jun	173	22-Jul	203	22-Aug	234	22-Sep	265	22-Oct	295	22-Nov	326	22-Dec	356	
23-Jan	23	23-Feb	54	23-Mar	82	23-Apr	113	23-May	143	23-Jun	174	23-Jul	204	23-Aug	235	23-Sep	266	23-Oct	296	23-Nov	327	23-Dec	357	
24-Jan	24	24-Feb	55	24-Mar	83	24-Apr	114	24-May	144	24-Jun	175	24-Jul	205	24-Aug	236	24-Sep	267	24-Oct	297	24-Nov	328	24-Dec	358	
25-Jan	25	25-Feb	56	25-Mar	84	25-Apr	115	25-May	145	25-Jun	176	25-Jul	206	25-Aug	237	25-Sep	268	25-Oct	298	25-Nov	329	25-Dec	359	
26-Jan	26	26-Feb	57	26-Mar	85	26-Apr	116	26-May	146	26-Jun	177	26-Jul	207	26-Aug	238	26-Sep	269	26-Oct	299	26-Nov	330	26-Dec	360	
27-Jan	27	27-Feb	58	27-Mar	86	27-Apr	117	27-May	147	27-Jun	178	27-Jul	208	27-Aug	239	27-Sep	270	27-Oct	300	27-Nov	331	27-Dec	361	
28-Jan	28	28-Feb	59	28-Mar	87	28-Apr	118	28-May	148	28-Jun	179	28-Jul	209	28-Aug	240	28-Sep	271	28-Oct	301	28-Nov	332	28-Dec	362	
29-Jan	29			29-Mar	88	29-Apr	119	29-May	149	29-Jun	180	29-Jul	210	29-Aug	241	29-Sep	272	29-Oct	302	29-Nov	333	29-Dec	363	
30-Jan	30			30-Mar	89	30-Apr	120	30-May	150	30-Jun	181	30-Jul	211	30-Aug	242	30-Sep	273	30-Oct	303	30-Nov	334	30-Dec	364	
31-Jan	31			31-Mar	90			31-May	151			31-Jul	212	31-Aug	243			31-Oct	304				31-Dec	365

Table 1a.

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Based on Julian Calendar - Leap Year

1-Jan	1	1-Feb	32	1-Mar	61	1-Apr	92	1-May	122	1-Jun	153	1-Jul	183	1-Aug	214	1-Sep	245	1-Oct	275	1-Nov	306	1-Dec	336	
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11-Jan	11	11-Feb	42	11-Mar	71	11-Apr	102	11-May	132	11-Jun	163	11-Jul	193	11-Aug	224	11-Sep	255	11-Oct	285	11-Nov	316	11-Dec	346	
12-Jan	12	12-Feb	43	12-Mar	72	12-Apr	103	12-May	133	12-Jun	164	12-Jul	194	12-Aug	225	12-Sep	256	12-Oct	286	12-Nov	317	12-Dec	347	
13-Jan	13	13-Feb	44	13-Mar	73	13-Apr	104	13-May	134	13-Jun	165	13-Jul	195	13-Aug	226	13-Sep	257	13-Oct	287	13-Nov	318	13-Dec	348	
14-Jan	14	14-Feb	45	14-Mar	74	14-Apr	105	14-May	135	14-Jun	166	14-Jul	196	14-Aug	227	14-Sep	258	14-Oct	288	14-Nov	319	14-Dec	349	
15-Jan	15	15-Feb	46	15-Mar	75	15-Apr	106	15-May	136	15-Jun	167	15-Jul	197	15-Aug	228	15-Sep	259	15-Oct	289	15-Nov	320	15-Dec	350	
16-Jan	16	16-Feb	47	16-Mar	76	16-Apr	107	16-May	137	16-Jun	168	16-Jul	198	16-Aug	229	16-Sep	260	16-Oct	290	16-Nov	321	16-Dec	351	
17-Jan	17	17-Feb	48	17-Mar	77	17-Apr	108	17-May	138	17-Jun	169	17-Jul	199	17-Aug	230	17-Sep	261	17-Oct	291	17-Nov	322	17-Dec	352	
18-Jan	18	18-Feb	49	18-Mar	78	18-Apr	109	18-May	139	18-Jun	170	18-Jul	200	18-Aug	231	18-Sep	262	18-Oct	292	18-Nov	323	18-Dec	353	
19-Jan	19	19-Feb	50	19-Mar	79	19-Apr	110	19-May	140	19-Jun	171	19-Jul	201	19-Aug	232	19-Sep	263	19-Oct	293	19-Nov	324	19-Dec	354	
20-Jan	20	20-Feb	51	20-Mar	80	20-Apr	111	20-May	141	20-Jun	172	20-Jul	202	20-Aug	233	20-Sep	264	20-Oct	294	20-Nov	325	20-Dec	355	
21-Jan	21	21-Feb	52	21-Mar	81	21-Apr	112	21-May	142	21-Jun	173	21-Jul	203	21-Aug	234	21-Sep	265	21-Oct	295	21-Nov	326	21-Dec	356	
22-Jan	22	22-Feb	53	22-Mar	82	22-Apr	113	22-May	143	22-Jun	174	22-Jul	204	22-Aug	235	22-Sep	266	22-Oct	296	22-Nov	327	22-Dec	357	
23-Jan	23	23-Feb	54	23-Mar	83	23-Apr	114	23-May	144	23-Jun	175	23-Jul	205	23-Aug	236	23-Sep	267	23-Oct	297	23-Nov	328	23-Dec	358	
24-Jan	24	24-Feb	55	24-Mar	84	24-Apr	115	24-May	145	24-Jun	176	24-Jul	206	24-Aug	237	24-Sep	268	24-Oct	298	24-Nov	329	24-Dec	359	
25-Jan	25	25-Feb	56	25-Mar	85	25-Apr	116	25-May	146	25-Jun	177	25-Jul	207	25-Aug	238	25-Sep	269	25-Oct	299	25-Nov	330	25-Dec	360	
26-Jan	26	26-Feb	57	26-Mar	86	26-Apr	117	26-May	147	26-Jun	178	26-Jul	208	26-Aug	239	26-Sep	270	26-Oct	300	26-Nov	331	26-Dec	361	
27-Jan	27	27-Feb	58	27-Mar	87	27-Apr	118	27-May	148	27-Jun	179	27-Jul	209	27-Aug	240	27-Sep	271	27-Oct	301	27-Nov	332	27-Dec	362	
28-Jan	28	28-Feb	59	28-Mar	88	28-Apr	119	28-May	149	28-Jun	180	28-Jul	210	28-Aug	241	28-Sep	272	28-Oct	302	28-Nov	333	28-Dec	363	
29-Jan	29	29-Feb	60	29-Mar	89	29-Apr	120	29-May	150	29-Jun	181	29-Jul	211	29-Aug	242	29-Sep	273	29-Oct	303	29-Nov	334	29-Dec	364	
30-Jan	30			30-Mar	90	30-Apr	121	30-May	151	30-Jun	182	30-Jul	212	30-Aug	243	30-Sep	274	30-Oct	304	30-Nov	335	30-Dec	365	
31-Jan	31			31-Mar	91			31-May	152			31-Jul	213	31-Aug	244			31-Oct	305				31-Dec	366

Table 2.

TRACEBACK CROP CODES

01	Asparagus	51	
02	Basil	52	
03	Beans: Lima	53	
04	Beans: Snap	54	
05	Beets	55	
06	Broccoli	56	
07	Brussel Sprout	57	
06	Cabbage	58	
07	Cauliflower	59	
08	Celery	60	
09	Collards	61	
10	Kale	62	
11	Kohlrabi	63	
12	Carrots	64	
13	Cucumber	65	
14	Eggplant	66	
15	Garlic	67	
16	Garlic: Elephant	68	
17	Greens: Mustard	69	
18	Greens: Turnip	70	
19	Leeks	71	
20	Lettuce	72	
21	Endive	73	
22	Escarole	74	
23	Muskmelon	75	
24	Okra	76	
25	Onion	77	
26	Onion: Green	78	
27	Parsley	79	
28	Cilantro	80	
29	Parsnip	81	
30	Peas: English/Garden	82	
31	Peas: Southern	83	
32	Pepper	84	
33	Potato: Irish	85	
34	Potato: Sweet	86	
35	Pumpkin	87	
36	Squash: Winter	88	
37	Squash: Summer	89	
38	Strawberry	90	
39	Radish	91	
40	Rutabaga	92	
41	Turnip	93	
42	Spinach	94	
43	Sweet Corn	95	
44	Tomato	96	
45	Watermelon	97	
46		98	
47		99	
48			
49			
50			

THIS TABLE IS FOR SAMPLE ONLY.

Table 3.

TRACEBACK FIELD CODES

01	Creek field
02	Old flat
03	Pierce farm main field
04	Jones farm
05	New field
06	
07	
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THIS TABLE IS FOR SAMPLE ONLY.

Table 5.

Doc.No. _____

Title: Product Traceability Plan

Effective Date: April 8, 2010, revised May 19, 2010

Reviewed by: _____ GAP Coordinator, Date: _____

1. All products produced by the farm will be assigned a traceability code (Lot number) based on harvest date, crop, and field number (See SOP-16)
2. Lot numbers with inventory will be recorded on daily production-disposition sheets as product is harvested from the field.
3. Harvested product will be tagged, stamped or labeled by marketing unit (example, bin, box, pallet, bag, etc.) with the assigned lot number.
4. All product is invoiced as it is shipped from the farm.
5. Invoices include farm name and information, buyer name and information, and inventory amounts transferred/ exchanged.
6. Invoice should be signed or initialed by the customer (receiving party) when product is delivered
7. All unused/ unsold inventory is accounted for (production-disposition sheet) including quantity, date and method of disposal.
8. An annual "Mock Recall" shall be performed during the first full week of crop production each growing season.

**This standard operating procedure is a sample. If you customize your plan, you must alter this SOP to conform to what you do on your farm.*

Developed by: Wythe Morris, Dr. Allen Straw, ARHC participants, and GAP Training Class at Surry Community College, Dobson, NC.

Table 6.

Doc.No. _____

Title: Assigning Traceback Codes on the Farm

Effective Date: February 20, 2010

Reviewed by: _____ GAP Coordinator, Date: _____

1. Traceback codes will be assigned to all commercial crops produced on the farm
2. The code will include (1) the date harvested, (2) crop and (3) field number.
3. The following protocol will be followed in assigning traceback codes:
“On **date & year**, I harvested **crop** from **field number**.”
4. The three digit date will be assigned using the Julian calendar format.
5. The harvest year will be the last two digits of the current year.
6. The crop code will be a two digit number assigned by the grower based on crops grown.
7. A two digit number will be assigned to all production fields under the management of the grower (These numbers will be posted in the field.)
8. The assigned traceback code will be set up as follows: 000-00-00-00
9. The traceback code will follow that crop from time of harvest through final disposition from the farm.
10. All products will carry the assigned traceback code on boxes, pallets or designated harvest container and will be recorded on daily production/disposition sheets and invoices.

**This standard operating procedure is a sample. If you customize your plan, you must alter this SOP to conform to what you do on your farm.*

Developed by: Wythe Morris, Dr. Allen Straw, Appalachian Regional Horticulture Conference participants, Abingdon, VA