

participation, applicants could expect to have one document review, one major system audit, and several surveillance audits.

Cost estimates that are based on the scope of your program will be provided prior to providing service.

### Approved Processes Receive USDA/GIPSA Recognition

Organizations who have met the PVP requirements can market their product as “**USDA PROCESS VERIFIED**”. They also will receive a USDA Certificate of Conformance for use in marketing their products, and their approval will be posted, with permission, on GIPSA’s web site to further substantiate their certification.

#### For More Information

USDA, GIPSA  
Field Management Division  
Data and Information Analysis  
Branch  
1400 Independence Avenue,  
S.W. Room 2409-S, STOP 3630  
Washington, DC 20250-3630  
Telephone: (202) 720-0228

### Applicant Provides GIPSA:

- ✓ **A complete copy of their program documentation**
- ✓ **A copy of their most recent management review report**
- ✓ **An application for service**
- ✓ **Personnel to accompany GIPSA auditors**
- ✓ **Reimbursement for GIPSA’s reviews**

### GIPSA:

- ✓ **Reviews documentation and management review reports**
- ✓ **Conducts on-site process audit**
- ✓ **Certifies process and grants approval to market it as “USDA PROCESS VERIFIED”**
- ✓ **Posts certification on web site**
- ✓ **Performs surveillance audits to ensure continued conformance**

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Grain Inspection,  
Packers and  
Stockyards  
Administration

## Process Verification

*Augmenting Traditional Inspection Services*

### Meeting the Needs of a Changing Market

Rapidly changing technology and consumer demands are bringing new challenges to grain, oilseed, and related agricultural commodity merchandisers. Traditionally, USDA’s Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) offered only various grain testing services and established official grading standards. While these services and standards still play important roles in grain marketing, they no longer adequately address all emerging practices being used to market U.S. grain.

GIPSA is offering a new Process Verified Program to meet the market’s rapidly evolving needs. Under this program, GIPSA will apply internationally recognized quality management standards to verify the quality process used rather than testing the actual grain itself. The “**USDA PROCESS VERIFIED**” designation verifies the process and not the final product.

The Process Verified Program will provide industry participants with independent third-party verification of their quality processes and standards, and a way to capture values not easily identified by traditional inspection and testing.

### The Process Verified Program

By using GIPSA’s Process Verified Program, producers, marketers, suppliers, and processors will have a new way to assure their customers that the processes being used will provide products of consistent quality. Customers can have confidence in the products they buy thanks to GIPSA’s independent, third-party audits that review, confirm, and certify a company’s written manufacturing processes. Organizations using this service can market their product as “**USDA PROCESS VERIFIED.**”

- ✓ **Market Driven**
- ✓ **Complements Industry Processes**
- ✓ **Based on International Quality Management Standards**
- ✓ **USDA Certification of Your Processes**

GIPSA uses internationally recognized standards for quality management systems to evaluate all documents. This ensures consistent auditing practices and promotes international recognition of audit results.

Process verification is an alternative to GIPSA's traditional standardized test-and-certify services by providing impartial, third-party verification of any organization's processes, large or small, regardless of whether they're designed for identity preservation, testing, branding a product, or any other marketing goal.

### Why Use the Process Verified Program?

Quality criteria for commodities and their products are changing rapidly and vary widely among customers. Identity preservation of products that meet various customer needs is becoming essential to capture markets and value. The complexity or lack of testing methods makes it difficult to determine some quality attributes through traditional sampling and testing protocols.

Using a process approach gives organizations a viable means of ensuring quality while reducing risk and associated costs. It is less expensive to give customers the quality they want by taking steps to ensure quality throughout production and handling rather than simply testing the end product to determine if it meets their needs. Finding alternative outlets for finished products that fail to meet customers' needs reduces profits and can preclude organizations from marketplace price premiums.

The Process Verified Program is an economical and efficient way for organizations to assure customers that their needs will be met through a USDA-certified process.

### Process Verified Program Requirements

The program requirements focus on standards for processes, not on products. They address the criteria a quality system must meet, but do not dictate the steps an organization might take to meet the criteria. An organization has latitude and flexibility to implement processes that satisfy differing customer expectations.

The requirements provide a model against which an organization's system can be audited to give it and its customers

assurance that the system is operating effectively. Overall, the Process Verified Program assess whether an organization had done everything necessary to ensure that the product meets the customer's requirements. It also provides an organization with the opportunity to

**Six Basic Program Requirements**

- 1. Process Documentation**
- 2. Management Responsibility**
- 3. Resource Management**
- 4. Product Production/Realization**
- 5. Measurement, Analysis, and Improvement**
- 6. Control of Promotional Materials**

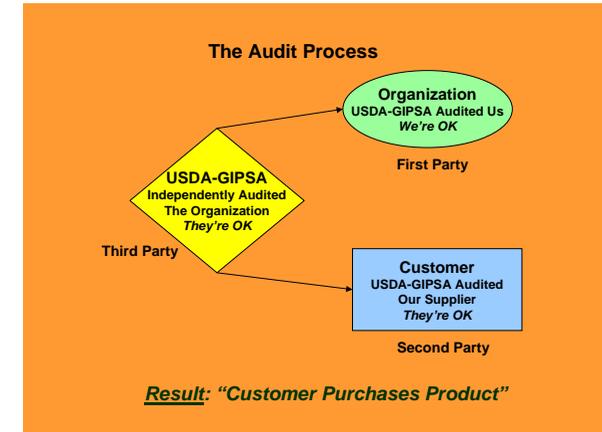
establish a quality management system that will positively influence its overall business practices.

### GIPSA's Role

Under the Process Verified Program, GIPSA confirms an organization's written manufacturing processes through periodic, announced and unannounced, independent, third-party audits.

To ensure they receive products of a known quality, many customers stipulate that their suppliers must implement and maintain a specified quality management system. USDA third-party auditors independently determine if the customer's stipulations are being met, thereby saving organizations and their customers from conducting additional process audits.

To maintain third-party impartiality and integrity, GIPSA does not participate in the development of the process to be verified.



### GIPSA Auditors

GIPSA quality auditors are fully trained as ISO 9000 Lead Auditors. Each auditor has an agricultural background with grain and related commodity expertise. Trained Technical Experts will accompany auditors when specific expertise is required to complete the audit. In addition to ISO Lead Auditor Training, all lead auditors must pass the American Society for Quality's (ASQ) Certified Quality Auditor examination and maintain this status with continuing education and practical experience in the quality process auditing field. ASQ is a professional society devoted to all aspects of quality assurance, control, and management techniques and theory.

### Cost

The Process Verified Program is user-fee funded. Applicants are charged an hourly fee for documentation review, all audits, and for travel costs at the Government approved reimbursement rate.

Exact costs will vary depending on the scope of the process(es) being audited, the number of participating parties, and other factors. During the first year of program