ACERTA
WEBUILDCONFIDENCE

CERTIFICATION GUIDELINES

COMPOUND FEED MANUFACTURING (CFM)

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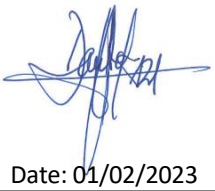
Technical Department  Date: 31/01/2023	AQUA Operations Manager  Date: 01/02/2023	Quality Manager  Date: 02/02/2023	05

CAUSE OF THE NEW REVISION:

- Changes in personnel that make up the CFM Technical Department.
- Changes in work operations due to the update of internal documents and ACERTA Customer Relationship Management.
- Inclusion of regulations for the distribution of ACERTA audit report to third parties.
- Inclusion of two sections: sanctions and burden of proof.
- Changes in certificate suspension period after unfavorable decision.
- Changes in section of claims, appeals and lawsuits.

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1. GLOBALG.A.P. CERTIFICATION SYSTEM BY ACERTA

1.1. Introduction.

This document describes the certification processes for producers to be certified with ACERTA for the Program GLOBALG.A.P. Compound Feed Manufacturing (CFM) Scope: Livestock and Aquaculture feeds. The scope of GLOBALG.A.P. Certification covers the compound feed manufacturing for aquaculture and livestock. Specifically:

- All production steps from purchase, handling, and storage to processing and transport of compound feed for food-producing animals that are covered by the GLOBALG.A.P. Integrated Farm Assurance standards for livestock and aquaculture. The scope does not include the production of ingredients such as forage or grains (simple feed materials), pre- mixtures, additives or medications (prepared feed supplements), etc., but covers the production of compound feeds (which can be complete or complementary) that may be produced using any or all of these ingredients as raw materials.
- The production of home-mixed feeds which do not leave the farm where they have been produced, and grazing/foraging materials for animals is not covered by this standard.
- Only products included in the GLOBALG.A.P. product list, published on the GLOBALG.A.P. website, can be registered for certification. The GLOBALG.A.P. product list is not limited and can be extended based on demand. The certified production of compound feed destined for food-producing animals requires that the respective animal species be integrated into the GLOBALG.A.P. product list. Therefore, the production of feed for pets is not covered by this standard.
- Only products that are produced by producers themselves. Producers cannot receive certification for the production of products that are not produced by themselves.

1.2. Registration in the CFM - GLOBALG.A.P. Program: Application Procedure.

1.2.1. Applicants.

An applicant:

- Cannot register the same product more than once with different CBs.
- Cannot register the same product more than once under different certification options.
- Can register different products with different CBs and/or different certification options.

a) New Applicant.

When a new applicant contacts ACERTA in order to get information of the certification in accordance with the Compound Feed Manufacturing (CFM)-GLOBALG.A.P. Program, ACERTA's Commercial Department or the Technical Department (consisted of the team of internal auditors of ACERTA) will contact the applicant and send him the document ***GG CFM Certification request form*** **(*)** requesting necessary information to propose a cost estimate.

(*) ***GG CFM Certification request form*** **(**hereinafter ***Certification request form)***: document where it is registered the general info of the producer, the scope of certification, declarations regarding to Parallel Production, Parallel Ownership and purchase of certified products (hereinafter when we say product we refer to the types of feed (compound feed) for animals that are to be certified), production centres identification, specific information about al products, and the ***Annex to GLOBALG.A.P. Certification Agreement*** (that includes the ***GLOBALG.A.P. Sublicense and Certification Agreement*** and the ***Data Access Acceptance on GLOBALG.A.P. Database***). The ***GLOBALG.A.P. Sublicense and Certification Agreement*** (hereinafter ***Sublicence and Certification Agreement***) is the contract between the Certification Body (CB) and the producer. Sets the legal framework in order to grant the GLOBALG.A.P. Certification.

The Certification request form includes two links to the **Guide for Use of the ACERTA Brand** and to the **GLOBALG.A.P. Certification Guidelines.**

Once the ***Certification request form*** is received and reviewed, using the ACERTA Customer Relationship Management, the quotation **(*)** is made and reviewed by the Administration Manager.

(*) ***GG CFM General Quote*** *(*hereinafter ***Quotation):*** includes the costs derived from the certification process and a specification of the items detailed in it: application procedure and management of the information in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database, certification audit and issuing of the "report", decision taking by the Certification Committee, issuance of the certificate (where applicable). The official GLOBALG.A.P. fees are also indicated in the quotation, according to the latest version published by GLOBALG.A.P., and a calculation is made of the estimated expenses for the auditor's travel and maintenance. If the producer request for a previous visit, the cost will be included. The payment method is also specified in the quotation.

The applicant who wants to begin the certification shall send this quotation appropriately accepted. The Technical Department includes the accepted quotation in the ACERTA Customer Relationship Management and files the computerized copy in the corresponding folder to the applicant´s file in local server.

Once the accepted quotation is received, the Technical Department will send the applicant the next document:

- ***"SGC Certification Agreement"*** *(hereinafter* ***Certification Agreement****),* ***annex to the Certification Request Form***: between ACERTA and the applicant company, document where the conditions which will regulate the commercial relationship are specified. The duration of the contract will be 1 year.

b) Certification maintenance: Renewal.

Registered producers (i.e.: persons, companies, individual producers that are legally responsible for the production process and products covered within the scope) must re-register annually their certified products **before the certificate expiry date.**

For this purpose, between 2 and 4 months before the expiry date, the Technical Department informs the holder of the certificate (or the relevant office) of the new activities of the certification maintenance to be carried out, by sending the documents to be completed and/or signed:

- ***Certification Request Form,*** which includes the ***GLOBALG.A.P. Certification Guidelines,*** the ***Data Access Acceptance on GLOBALG.A.P. Database*** *and the* ***GLOBALG.A.P. Sublicense and Certification Agreement.***
- ***Quotation.***
- ***Certification Agreement.***

However, ACERTA shall apply the rules for initial (first) audit if the certificate expired for more than 12 months.

When a producer changes from one CB to another CB or requests the services of a new CB, it is not considered a first audit, but subsequent audit.

1.2.2. Certification Request

Once the Technical Department has received all the documents related to the applicant's certification request:

- The Technical Department reviews the ***Certification Request Form*** sent by the applicant (including the data provided detailing production sites).

- A folder is also created in the local server for each applicant, appropriately identified with its corresponding year, country and producer's name in order to file and maintain electronic records.

- Once the ***Certification Request Form*** is reviewed and closed, the Technical Department will register the producer in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database (if it is registered with ACERTA for the first time) and will accept the information provided in the request form in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database, always within 28 calendar days after the registration. The Certification Request Form is considered closed once technical department has received the Certification Agreement, Quotation and the Annex to GLOBALG.A.P. Certification agreement signed, and always after verifying that Certification Request Form is completed. An email is sent to the producer automatically by the GLOBALG.A.P. database, confirming the acceptance of the producer by ACERTA and its GNN. If the producer has a GLN, it must be communicated and used.

- The Technical Department assigns a registration number (only for producers registered with ACERTA for the first time).

- The registration number (inscription number) for producers under option 1 consists of the word ACERTA, followed by a four-digit number.

Example: ACERTA XXXX.

- The Technical Department sends the producer an email confirming that the company has been registered in the database, as well as its GLOBALG.A.P. number. (GGN) and ACERTA registration number.

- The Technical Department registers the applicant's request in the ACERTA Customer Relationship Management and, once the quotation has been accepted by the applicant and the Certification Agreement and Sublicence Annex have been signed, file number will be created: The file number consists of the acronym "GGCFM", the code assigned to the customer and the digits corresponding to the year in which the work is carried out, and the number of works carried out to this customer in this year (assigned by the ACERTA Customer Relationship Management).

E.g.: GGCFM.00344-17/001

Any objective evidence found that indicates that the applicant has been misusing the GLOBALG.A.P. claim shall lead to the exclusion of the applicant from certification for 12 months after evidence of misuse. In addition, the applicants will be listed and the list must be checked before registration in the database. Any case of misuse shall be communicated to the GLOBALG.A.P. members.

GLOBALG.A.P. registration fees are generated once ACERTA registers and accepts the aquaculture products in GLOBALG.A.P. database. This admission starts the invoicing of registration costs. Only ACERTA is allowed to register and accept products in the GLOBALG.A.P. database.

1.2.3. Evaluation of Request Form and Issuing of Working Order.

The Operation Manager, the GLOBALG.A.P. Scheme Manager or the Technical Department (approved auditor by ACERTA) will draw up a working Program by using the ACERTA Customer Relationship Management from the review made to the ***Certification Request Form***. He/she will assign an auditor team, determine the appropriate working days, define the interval of dates to undertake the audits, and inform the auditor or auditor team, in writing, of the assignation and sample to be carried out, and the necessary details of the audit to be carried out.

This communication is called a ***Working Order*** and will include the ***Certification Request Form*** attached.

The communication of the ***Working Order*** is reflected in the ACERTA Customer Relationship Management.

1.3. Previous Visit.

At the applicant's request it to ACERTA, a previous visit can be carried out.

Initially, the designated auditor team for carrying out the work agrees the date of the visit with the applicant usually by telephone or email. Then, the applicant is sent the ***Audit Plan***, where the date of the audit is confirmed, and all the information and activities to be carried out and the persons involved, are detailed. Simultaneously, the auditor sends a copy of this document to the Technical Department, to be registered in the ACERTA Customer Relationship Management and filed it in its corresponding folder on the server.

The visit will be carried out by the auditor team, either ACERTA own staff or subcontracted, and it will begin with an initial meeting with the producer or his/her representative. In this previous audit, the compliance of the producers and production sites detailed by the applicant will be assessed in accordance with the GLOBALG.A.P. Program. It will end with a closing meeting and the findings will be mentioned to the producer.

The auditor team who carries out this visit will prepare a ***Previous Visit Report***, where all non-compliances detected will be detailed and the applicant will be informed of the continuation of the process moving forward. The Technical Department will send a copy of this report to the applicant within 15 days from the end of the previous visit.

In this stage of the process, the applicant shall not be requested a corrective action proposal, in the event of any non-compliance being detected.

1.4. Audit.

If a previous visit has been carried out, from the reception of the report, the applicant may contact ACERTA in order to request the continuation of the process. In the same way, ACERTA will be able to contact the applicant if the time elapsed since the report was sent is considered, and to know the applicant's intentions as to the continuation of the certification process.

It can be possible that from the initial ***Certification Request Form*** to the audit, one or more modifications related to the scope to be certified can arise. If any change is made regarding the initial recorded information, the producer shall inform ACERTA to carry out the corresponding changes.

Only in the case of remote audits, the producer must send to ACERTA the document ***GLOBALG.A.P. & GRASP Agreement for remote audits*** duly filled out and signed as a signal of acceptance of all the conditions applicable to this kind of audits.

REMOTE inspections/audits for all certification options will be carried out following the current official GLOBALG.A.P. Remote Procedure.

In case the producer opts to use the **Off-site Module** (exclusively under the **Remote** Audit Procedure), the process will follow the current official GLOBALG.A.P. procedures.

Once the Technical Department and/or the auditor agrees on the date of the audit with the producer, the Operations Manager is informed and the ***Working Order*** is issued.

In preparation for the audit, the auditor will confirm that the information received is correct.

When all the issues related to the scope of the audit have been set, the auditor will prepare the ***Audit Plan*** and send it to the applicant, who must return it signed as a sign of acceptance, to finally be sent to the ACERTA's Technical Department,

which will file it in its corresponding folder on the local server. If the applicant does not agree with any aspect, he/she will be able to notify it within the 3 subsequent days after the communication. In this case, the auditor or the Technical Department and the applicant shall have to reach an agreement and a new ***Audit Plan*** will be sent.

The applicant is aware that only the auditors identified in the Audit Plan or equivalent document can perform the audit and commits to report immediately ACERTA in case of any incidence in this regard, as well as prevent access to the facilities of persons who claim to act on behalf of ACERTA but who are not identified in the aforementioned documents.

The auditor shall communicate to the Technical Department any information found during the audit that it is not correctly reflected in the ***Certification Request Form*** or in the ***Working order***. This communication is made through the "Comments / Updates" box located in the "Front Page" tab of the ***GG CFM Audit Report*** document.

1.4.1. Audit Development.

The certification audit will begin with an initial meeting in which the auditor team and the representatives of the company will be introduced. The methodology to be followed during the audit will be explained and the document "Presentation of the GLOBALG.A.P. Program" can be used.

During the audit, the methodology described and defined in the GLOBALG.A.P. Program will be followed.

The audit will finish with a closing meeting in which the auditor team will inform the representative of the company of the findings, identifying all the control points in which non compliances have been detected (differentiating Major Musts, Minor Musts and Recommendations).

a) OFF SITE / ON SITE MODULE.

ACERTA, its management as well as its technical and commercial departments, after evaluating the producers that certifies and given the voluntary status to offer the OFF SITE module, has decided **NOT TO OFFER the OFF SITE Module** to its clients. Therefore, all announced audits will be exclusively conducted using the **ON SITE Module format**, with the exception of audits carried out remotely which may include the off site module (as stated in point 2.3).

1.4.2. Documents.

The following document will be used during the on-site audit:

GG CFM Audit Report (hereinafter ***Audit Report***): the auditor must always use the current revision of the document. This document is composed of different tabs: ***Instructions, Front Page, Feed Mill Checklist, Traceability Test, Feed Mill Results, CA Plan*** *and* ***Guidelines.*** All of them are integrated in the same document, but the most relevant are listed below:

- ***Feed Mill Checklist:*** the auditor must verify compliance with all control points and compliance criteria, leaving a written record in the comments of all documents and evidence reviewed.
- ***Traceability Test:*** the auditor must carry out a traceability test.
- ***Feed Mill Results:*** are the conclusions of the audit. At the end of the audit, the auditor will print the page ***"Feed Mill Results"*** of the ***Audit Report*** and the company's representative and the auditor will both **sign the preliminary results of the audit** as evidence of this being carried out, and a copy will be given to the auditee detailing the non-compliant control points detected, which can be modified in the technical review and decision phase if needed. An electronic signed copy will be sent to ACERTA. A documented or electronic confirmation by the producer is equal to the 'signature' of the producer. In this document the auditor will indicate if the detected non-compliance is a non-conformance.
- ***CA Plan*** (Corrective Action Plan)***:*** each non-compliance will be detailed together with the auditor's motivation in a Corrective Action Plan – a table that is part of the electronic file ***Audit Report*** – and a **copy of this table** will be given to the producer in order to facilitate the implementation of the corrective actions (if needed),

which must be returned filled out together with evidence of the corrective actions implemented.

EMPLOYEE CODES GGAP-GRASP: document for exclusive internal use that collects and traces the name, surnames and position of the people mentioned throughout the justification of the control points, to whom a consecutive code is assigned (e.g. E1) in order to maintain their anonymity in the ***Audit Report***.

Note: Notifications about changes on certification requirements is done through ACERTA's web site: www.acerta-cert.com and/or by email.

1.4.3. Timing.

The deadline for closing the CA PLAN will be:

I. If the non-compliance implies a non-conformance:

(See Control Program (only Spanish version) Chapter 3: Assessment criteria)

The audited company will prepare and submit the corrective action proposal, which shall include the description of the measures taken to solve the non-conformance, the term for its implementation and the responsible person, as well as the evidence of the implementation and, where appropriate, the effectiveness of these measures. The applicant has the following timeframes to close the CA PLAN:

(i) For Initial Certification Audits:

- This section is applicable to producers seeking GLOBALG.A.P. Certification for the first time and to producers who wish to add a new product or production facility to an existing GLOBALG.A.P. Certificate.
- A maximum term of 3 months since audit date.
- If an individual producer does not comply with 100% of Major Must and 95% Minor Must control points within 28 days after an initial audit, the status "open non-conformance" is set in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database.
- If the status "open non-conformance" is set and no corrective actions are sent to close the CA PLAN in a maximum term of 3 months since audit date, an initial audit will need to be performed again at producer's expense to continue with the certification process.

(ii) For Renewal Audits:

- A maximum term of 28 calendar days since the last audit day.
- Each non-conformance shall be assessed in accordance with Chapter 3: Assessment Criteria of the Control Program.
- If 28 calendar days have passed after the renewal audit before closing the CA PLAN, ACERTA will set the status "suspension of product" in the GLOBALG.A.P. database.

If the non-conformance is against a Major Must, the General Requirements or contractual, the period given for compliance -before suspension is applied- will be decided between the audit team that carried out the visit and the Operations Manager or Scheme Manager. This period shall never exceed 28 days and may be shortened according to the criticality of the non-conformance in terms of safety of workers, environment and consumers. An immediate suspension shall be issued where a serious threat to food safety, the safety of workers, the environment, consumers and/or product integrity. The decision will be communicated through a direct communication by warning letter.

If no corrective actions are sent in the established time, ACERTA will apply the required sanction.

In the case that non-compliances are a non-conformance, the auditor must send all the related documents to the Technical Department no later than 7 calendar days after the non-conformance is considered closed, (always within 28 days or 3 months if the Open Non-Conformance Status has been issued) after audit.

When assessing the corrective actions, the adequacy of the measures taken to solve the non-conformances, their implementation stage and their effectiveness will be considered. For this purpose, other audits, analyses, etc., can also be required, being this determined, in that case, by the Operation Manager or Scheme Manager.

In this case, the applicant will be informed of the necessity of undertaking a new audit, its scope and his/her acceptance, in writing, of the additional costs derived from it, which will be specified also in writing. Once the applicant has accepted it, the Administration Manager will issue and send the corresponding invoice to the applicant.

II. **If the non-compliance does not imply a non-conformance:**

The producer will be able to choose if he wants to make and submit the corrective action proposal, which shall include the description of the measures taken to solve the non-compliance, the term for its implementation and the responsible person, as well as the evidence of the implementation and, where appropriate, the effectiveness of these measures.

In this case, the evidence of corrective actions will be sent to the auditor **within 7 calendar days after audit date**.

If the non-compliance does not imply a non-conformance, the auditor should send all the documents to the Technical Department no later than 7 days after the last audit day if the producer chooses not to submit corrective actions, and 14 days after the last audit day if the client chooses to submit the corrective action proposal.

In both cases, from the conclusions obtained from the assessment of the corrective action proposals provided by the applicant, the auditor makes the ***"Corrective Action Assessment Report"*** – format included within the digital file ***Audit Report*** (CA PLAN) – which includes the table of the Corrective Action Plan submitted by the company, where each corrective action has been reviewed by the auditor, the final result of compliance level and the advice about the certification (or not certification) is stated.

The auditor in charge of the file is responsible for giving the Technical Department all the appropriate documentation in electronic format: full ***Audit Report*** (including ***Traceability test***, ***Final conclusions of the audit*** and ***Corrective Action Assessment Report***), evidence of implementation provided by the company (where applicable), ***Preliminary Results of the audit***, signed by the auditor team and the company's representative and ***EMPLOYEE CODES GGAP-GRASP.***

1.5. Certification decision.

All the reports will be filed in electronic format by the Technical Department in the corresponding folder in the local server, which is the responsible of this action.

In order the certification decision to be taken, the responsible person, in accordance with the decision-making structure detailed in the quality procedure "Assessment of the results", will take into account what is described in the chapter 3: Assessment Criteria of Control Program.

To begin the decision-making process, the Technical Department will be in charge of providing the documents to be assessed, including at least: ***Certification Request Form***, full ***Audit Report*** (including ***Final Conclusions of the audit***, ***Traceability Test***, ***Corrective Action Assessment Report)***, evidence of implementation provided by the company (where applicable), ***Preliminary Results of the audit*** signed by the auditor team and the company's representative and ***EMPLOYEE CODES GGAP-GRASP.***

The Technical Department will be responsible for this process to be completed, providing to the person responsible for

making the **decision** with all the necessary documents for that purpose.

The certification decision will not be delayed more than **28 calendar days** after the close of the ***CA Plan***, or 28 calendar days since the last audit day, in the case that non-compliances detected do not imply a non-conformance.

1.6. Notification of certification decision and Certificate.

1.6.1. Favorable decision.

As soon as the decision has been satisfactory, according with Control Program Chapter 3: Assessment Criteria of the Control Program, the Technical Department shall update the information in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database.

The Technical Department will issue and send the ***Certificate of Conformity*** including all the information required by the General Regulations and according to the information available in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database at that moment. It will be sent once the payment of the invoice has been confirmed. If the payment is not confirmed, the Technical Department will inform the producer about the satisfactory decision and will send the certificate once the payment has been confirmed. In addition, the interested party is provided with the ***GLOBALG.A.P. User Guidelines of trademark*** and the ***GG CFM Notification of results***. Together with the certificate, the corresponding Technical Annex will be sent, in which the details of the production site or sites are specified.

Validity dates of the certificate will be the following:

Valid from:

- Initial certification: The initial date of validity is the date on which the ACERTA makes the certification decision.
- Subsequent certifications: The “valid from” date for subsequent certificates issued shall always revert to the “valid from” date in the original certificate except when the certification decision is made after the expiration of the previous certificate. In this case the “valid from” date shall coincide with the date of the certification decision.

Valid to:

- Initial certification: Date “valid from” plus 1 year minus 1 day. ACERTA may shorten the certification cycle and the validity but cannot prolong it unless an extension is given following Point 1.11 of this document.
- Subsequent certifications: The validity date for subsequent certificates issued shall always revert to the “valid to” date on the original certificate.

If a certificate that was not extended nor "re-accepted" expires and the subsequent audit (to be performed by the same CB) is going to take place in less than 12 months after the expiration date, a new certification cycle should start. The old cycle can be reinstated by setting the same “valid to” date as before (ACERTA shall apply the rules for initial (first) audit if the certificate expired for more than 12 months).

The cycle remains the same if the certificate was extended.

I. Other considerations.

ACERTA or their subcontracted parties may issue communications other than the certificate related to the producer status (registered, audited, etc.) as long as it is clear that it is not a certificate and it contains the sentence: The actual GLOBALG.A.P. status of this producer is always displayed at:

https://database.globalgap.org/globalgap/search/SearchMain.faces

II. Initial audits and products registered for the first time.

This section is applicable to producers seeking GLOBALG.A.P. Certification for the first time. No audit can take place until ACERTA has accepted the applicant's registration.

Each feed mill registered and accepted for certification for the first time **must be completely assessed** (all applicable control points must be verified) **prior to issuing the certificate**. This includes all production lines operating in the feed mill. In initial audits, once the decision is favourable, a sole Certificate of Conformity will be issued for the legal entity (applicant) including all the products whose production process has been completely assessed. The certification cycle (certificate validity) will be set for each legal entity (GGN) and will be sole and the same for all audited feed mills, being independent of the date when the audits of the different feed mills have been carried out.

No product will be certified before registration with GLOBALG.A.P.

Records that relate to harvest or product handling before the producer has registered with GLOBALG.A.P. are not valid.

III. Renewal audits.

In subsequent years, the certificate issued after the favorable decision of the renewal audit, will include all feed mills belonging to the legal entity (applicant) (those that were registered and audited for this cycle and were in previous certificate). The certification cycle (certificate validity) will be set for each legal entity (GGN) and will be sole and the same for all audited feed mills, being independent of the date when the audits of the different feed mills have been carried out.

1.6.2. Unfavourable Decision.

The **certification decision will be unfavorable** when any of the mandatory conditions established for obtaining the certification are not met. In this case, the corresponding sanction will be applied.

When the decision is unfavourable, the applicant may communicate his/her disagreement within the following **30 calendar days** after receiving the certification decision notification, or it may request an extraordinary audit which will have to be carried out within six months, having previously accepted the additional costs derived from it.

If the applicant does not agree with the decision, the Technical Department will provide him/her the Appeals registration form. Once ACERTA has received it duly completed, the appeal procedure described in the quality procedure "Complaints, appeals and lawsuits" will be followed.

1.6.3. Sanctions.

Three types of sanctions exist within GLOBALG.A.P.: Warning, Suspension and Cancellation.

- If non-conformance is detected, the ACERTA shall apply a sanction.
- If a clear link has been established between a producer and public health outbreak by a reputable governmental regulatory authority, suspension of the certification shall be imposed while a review of the producer's certification is performed.
- Producers cannot change CB until the non-conformance that led to the respective sanction is satisfactorily closed.
- ONLY ACERTA is entitled to lift it, provided there is sufficient and timely evidence of corrective action (either through a follow-up visit or other written or visual evidence).

a) Warning.

A Warning will be issued for non-conformances detected.

If there is a non-conformance detected during the audit, the producer must be served a warning when the inspection is finalized (in the Preliminary Results). This is a provisional report that could be overridden by the Operational Manager or Scheme Manager of GLOBALG.A.P.

The period for solving the non-conformances is stablished in the point "1.4.3 Timing" of GLOBALG.A.P. Control Program.

For non-conformities that have not been found in the audit, ACERTA will establish the deadlines for implementation of the corrective actions based on the type and severity involved by the appropriate nonconformity.

If the cause of warning is not solved in the stablished period, the producer will be sanctioned with a suspension.

b) Suspension.

ACERTA shall issue a Suspension when a certified producer cannot show evidence of corrective action in the established time or when Non conformances have not been solved, after exceeding the warning time.

A product cannot be partially suspended, the entire product must be suspended.

ACERTA can issue a suspension for certain products or for all products of the certified product scope.

ACERTA shall issue an immediate suspension where a serious threat to food safety, the safety of workers, the environment, consumers and/or product integrity (e.g. selling non-certified products as certified). The situation will be communicated through a direct communication by warning letter.

After the suspension is applied, ACERTA will set a time period allowed for correction. This time shall be, at maximum, till the expiration of the certificate in force.

During this time (period of suspension), the producer will be prevented from using the GLOBALG.A.P. logo/trademark, License/certificate or any other type of document that has any relation to GLOBALG.A.P.

ACERTA shall lift it when there is sufficient evidence of corrective action by the producer within the period stipulated by ACERTA (either by means of a complementary audit, on-site or off-site, announced or unannounced, which may be a complete inspection or only an evaluation of the evidence presented, whose expenses will be borne by the producer, or by submitting written or visual evidence).

If the cause of the suspension is not resolved within the time period set, the certificate and the producer will be sanctioned with a cancellation. The suspension remains if ACERTA does not lift it or impose a cancellation.

In case of producers who do not close the non-conformities during the renewal within the 28 days period established in the CA Plan, the negative decision to suspend the certificate must be made immediately, on the 29 day regarding the completion of the audit. Therefore, the auditor must send the closed pack no later than the 29th, notifying the situation by telephone to the Technical Department to guarantee that it receives this information and can act immediately, as required by GLOBALG.A.P.

- **Self-declared product suspension.**

A producer may voluntarily ask ACERTA to temporarily suspend one or more of his/her product(s) unless ACERTA has established a sanction previously.

This suspension will not delay the renewal date, nor will it allow the producer to avoid paying registration and other applicable fees.

The deadline for closing non-compliance is set by the producer himself, which must be agreed upon with ACERTA, but must be closed out before ACERTA may lift the suspension.

In the GLOBALG.A.P. Database the product status "self-declared suspension" shall be set for the respective products.

c) Cancellation.

A Cancellation of the contract will be issued where ACERTA finds evidence of fraud and/or lack of trust to comply with GLOBALG.A.P. requirements, where:

- ACERTA finds evidence of fraud and/or lack of trust to comply with GLOBALG.A.P. requirements.
- A producer cannot show evidence of implementation of effective corrective action before the suspension period set by the ACERTA has elapsed.

In this case, the technical department will request to GLOBALG.A.P. database the company to be cancelled and the same day of the cancellation, a certificate will be issued whose validity date is the date of cancellation.

The cancellation of the contract will result in the total prohibition of the use of the any logo/trademark, License/certificate, or any device or document that could relate to GLOBALG.A.P.

The producer that has had a Cancellation sanction applied shall not be accepted for GLOBALG.A.P. certification until 12 months after the date of Cancellation.

Decisions on sanctions will be made considering the clauses established in the GLOBALG.A.P. General Regulations: Notifications and Appeals.

1.6.4. Burden of proof.

In the case of information (e.g., MRL exceedance, microbial contamination, etc.) about a GLOBALG.A.P. certificate holder, which could have a potential impact on the certified status/claim being transmitted to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat, it is the responsibility of the certificate holders and ACERTA to refute the claim by verifying and providing evidence of compliance with the GLOBALG.A.P. Standards.

If the certificate holders and do not provide the requested evidence of compliance within the period of time defined by ACERTA, the corresponding sanction will be applied.

The findings and actions taken shall be reported to the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat within the defined period of time by ACERTA.

ACERTA will provide the requested evidence of compliance within the period of time defined by the GLOBALG.A.P. Secretariat, other way, ACERTA will be exposed to be sanctioned according to the sanctioning procedures described in the GLOBALG.A.P. General Regulations.

In case the evidence includes laboratory analyses, accredited laboratories (ISO 17025) and independent sampling (according to the rules as set out in the relevant CPCC) shall be included.

1.6.5. Distribution of the ACERTA audit report to third parties.

Copies of the ACERTA's audit report, objective evidence of corrective action implementation, or a fully completed audit checklist may only be provided to third parties if the producer authorizes access in writing, except upon request of the

regulatory authorities in accordance with the applicable national legislation or the Accreditation Body.

Upon request by the producer, ACERTA will provide the full audit report and the fully completed audit checklist, when it is definitive, as soon as possible. When the automatically generated report (including the checklist) is available in the GLOBALG.A.P. system, this report must be used.

When GLOBALG.A.P. requests it, ACERTA will upload / transfer the full audit report to the GLOBALG.A.P. database.

Before externally distributing the ACERTA audit report, it must be protected against unauthorized modification or alteration.

1.7. Scope extension audits.

It is a type of audit that is carried out with the aim of adding a product or a production site (feed mill) that has not been audited in any previous audit and that is currently not included in the certificate, consisting of a complete audit.

The methodology for carrying out these audits is explained in Chapter 2 of the ACERTA Control Program.

1.8. Unannounced Audits.

ACERTA shall carry out unannounced audits to 10% of the certified producers in Option 1 during the valid period of the certificate. The methodology to carry out these audits is explained in Chapter 2 of ACERTA's Control Program.

In the case of a favourable decision of an Unannounced Audit, ACERTA will send to the auditee a letter informing of the favourable report issued (***GG CFM Notification of results***).

1.9. Unannounced Reward Program.

Producers of animal feed (CFM) cannot participate of the Unannounced Reward Program as this Program is only applicable to GLOBALG.A.P. Integrated Farm Assurance (IFA) standards.

1.10. Registration of additional producers / production sites.

- Option 1:

Additions in case of Option 1 may be carried out during the cycle of validity of a certificate, always subject to a favourable certification decision taken by ACERTA and based on in situ audit or in a documentary study. This decision will be taken by the Operations Manager.

The decision shall depend on the type of addition and the existing risk. That risk shall depend on several aspects: **new areas of expansion of the facility, if there are new processing lines for new species** (see ACERTA Control Program (only Spanish version) section 2.1.2. - Certification / Renewal Audit), **the geographical location** of the new production site, etc.

1.11. Extension of the certificate validity.

ACERTA may extend the certificate beyond the 12 months for a maximum period of 4 months (12 months + 4 months, 16 months in total), only if there is a valid reason, which has to be recorded. The following conditions must be met:

- On producer's demand, ACERTA (the CB who issued the certificate extended) re-accepts the product in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database for the full next cycle within the original validity period of the certificate.

- The full certification license fee and registration fee shall be paid for the next cycle.
- The producer shall be re-audited during the extension period.

The only reasons that are considered to be valid for an extension are the following:

- ACERTA wants to schedule the on-site audit after the certificate has expired in order to observe a certain part of the production process because it was not seen in the previous audit/audit, because it is considered to be a high-risk process in terms of product safety, or to be able to see a newly added product or process.
- ACERTA needs to be able to extend some certificates because of resource restraints.
- ACERTA was not able to conduct the on-site audit and/or the producer was not able to receive the CB audit due to circumstances beyond its control (force majeure) e.g.: natural disaster, political instability in the region, epidemic or unavailability of the producer due to medical reasons.

The producer cannot change the CB in the cycle subsequent to the one for which the extension was granted.

In this case, the cycle remains the same.

1.12. Transfer between Certification Bodies.

Transfer between Certification Bodies takes place when a producer that is found in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database changes from the original GLOBALG.A.P. approved CB (outgoing CB) to ACERTA (accepting CB).

Only producers found in the GLOBALG.A.P. database and that are not sanctioned will be accepted by ACERTA. Producers must first solve any outstanding sanction before being able to transfer to ACERTA. Moreover, for accepting the transfer, the producer shall sign the ***Sublicense and Certification Agreement*** with ACERTA.

ACERTA will keep the existing GGN of the transferred producer.

When a producer is changing the certification body with which they are associated, they will communicate to ACERTA the previous registration number(s) (GGN) they had with the former certification body or any other one with which the applicant was previously registered in accordance with the GLOBALG.A.P. Program. This information shall be detailed in the ***Certification Request Form***. Failure to do this will result in an additional surcharge of the registration fee of 100 euro that will be charged to the producer.

A certificate is not transferable from one owner to another when a production site changes the legal entity or owner. In this case a complete audit, following the rules for renewal audit, is required. The new legal entity shall receive a new GGN.

1.12.1. Producer transfer.

This type of transfer of a producer from other CB to ACERTA takes place after the producer's certificates has expired as long as there is no binding service contract between producer and the original CB. The producer will apply for certification for the next cycle to ACERTA. It is not necessary to wait until the current certificate has expired to initiate certification request to ACERTA.

Prior to any transfers the Operations Manager or Scheme Manager or the Technical Department will carry out a review of the certification status of the potential customer checking the GLOBALG.A.P. database and documents provided.

Minimum requirements to be reviewed:

- Firstly, **a search in the GLOBALG.A.P. Database** will be carried out, in order to verify the current status of the producer and the certificate – in terms of authenticity, duration, and scope of activities covered in respect of the site or sites wished to be transferred.

- If the producer **has a sanction** applied by the outgoing CB, which **has not yet been closed out**. In cases where sanctions are outstanding, the sanction must be resolved and closed out with the outgoing CB **before** any transfer of the producer to ACERTA.

- Whether any **contractual commitments** with the outgoing CB are still outstanding, which would impede a correct transfer.

- A consideration of the last evaluation/re-evaluation reports, subsequent surveillance reports and any outstanding non-conformities arising there from. This consideration should also include any other available, relevant documentation regarding the certification process (i.e.: handwritten notes, verification list, complaints received, and corrective actions taken, etc.).

Two situations are possible:

- **Expired certificate.**

If the date of acceptance (signing of ***Sublicense and Certification Agreement***) and the date of audit are AFTER the certificate from the outgoing CB expired, there will be a period when the producer does not have a valid certificate.

If the certificate with the other CB has expired when ACERTA receives the request form, ACERTA will carry out an **initial audit** (see point 1.6.1.II about Initial audits and species registered for the first time).

- **Valid certificate.**

If the date of acceptance (signing of ***Sublicense and Certification Agreement***) and perhaps also the date of audit is BEFORE the certificate from the outgoing CB expired, the certification decision can only take effect as soon as the certificate expires. In this case, the certification cycle of the producer will remain the same as before. If, during the validity of the certificate issued by the outgoing CB, the accepting CB detects non-conformities that are not closed after 28 days, then ACERTA shall inform GLOBALG.A.P. about the non-conformities detected so that appropriate actions can be taken.

If the producer has a valid certificate with the other CB when ACERTA receives the request form, ACERTA will carry out a **renewal audit** (see point 1.6.1.III about Renewals).

1.13. Complaints, appeals and litigations.

For the purposes of this document, the following definitions are established:

COMPLAINT: An action taken by an applicant or certification holder, or by an interested third party, expressing in writing their disagreement with the way ACERTA has acted during the evaluation processes.

APPEAL: This is the action taken by an applicant or certification holder, by which he/she complains in writing against the decision taken by ACERTA in relation to the evaluation process that affects him/her. It may be due to discrepancies in the scope or because the certificate has been denied, suspended, or cancelled.

LITIGATION: This is the discussion established through judicial or extrajudicial channels between ACERTA and the applicants, certificate holders or former certificate holders, regarding a disagreement in the resolution of

appeals, or for other causes that exceed the entity's capacity to resolve them.

Complaints: Any natural or legal person may lodge a complaint against ACERTA. Complaints may be communicated through formal channels; this is through the form available to the public on the ACERTA's website. If someone tries to make a complaint verbally or by a written means other than the above-mentioned, they will be asked to do so through the indicated channel so that the complaint is recorded, and the information is not misrepresented when it is transferred between people outside the entity.

This information is sent to ACERTA's General Management, who will designate the person who will contact the claimant to acknowledge receipt and clarify any doubts that may arise in this regard.

ACERTA will try to inform the interested party of the decisions taken within a maximum of 10 working days from receipt of the complaint.

Appeals: Any customer or applicant for certification may lodge an appeal against decisions taken by ACERTA.

All appeals must be managed using the form available to the public on ACERTA's website. Appeals will be finalised within 30 calendar days from the date of receipt. Once the detailed and thorough appeal investigation process has been completed, a final response will be communicated in writing.

Litigation: For the resolution of litigations that may arise from certification activity or any other disputes that relate to ACERTA with another party, the resolution of any discrepancies shall be governed by the provisions set forth in the certification agreement.