

ALMOND BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
Direct Verifiable (DV) Program
Audits of DV User Almond Treatments

Each DV User facility that treats almonds shall be audited by a Board¹-approved auditor:

1. Within 1-2 months after the start of treatments, and
2. At least every 12 months thereafter.

These on-site audits of almond treatment facilities shall include procedures to determine if:

1. The DV User, if appropriate, has a letter issued by a Board-approved process authority that established that the treatment achieves in total a minimum 4-log reduction of *Salmonella* bacteria pursuant to §981.442(b) of the almond marketing order.
2. Personnel and procedures used at the facility ensure that all critical factors and treatment parameters required in the process identified above are followed, controlled appropriately, monitored and recorded; treated almonds are not subject to recontamination prior to shipment; and appropriate corrective actions are followed for all almonds associated with treatment deviations.
3. Records are retained in files and document that all almonds are appropriately treated prior to shipment or that untreated (or inadequately treated) almonds are properly disposed of through non-edible channels.

This includes reviews of calibration records to determine if equipment is calibrated properly, monitoring records to determine if all almonds are treated prior to shipment, and corrective action records to ensure that product dispositions are based upon appropriate evaluations.

A summary audit report of the DV User's treatment facility shall be sent to the Board within ten (10) days of each audit. The summary should be a 1-2 page document that contains:

- Facility name, location, primary contact during audit
- Audit date, auditor name
- Auditor statement on Overall Rating
- In a table format, check marks to show if there are No infractions, Minor infractions or Major Infractions in the following areas:
 - o Process letter on file from ABC-approved process authority
 - o Treatment parameters controlled, monitored & recorded
 - o Product not subject to recontamination
 - o Corrective actions followed for any deviations
 - o Records retained
 - o Compliance with regulation

If the audit determines that there are issues with non-compliance with the items mentioned above, the procedures are as follows:

1. If there are minor infractions², no action will be taken beyond a discussion by the Board with the DV User to determine the cause(s) of non-compliance and to ensure that remedies have been put in place to correct the problem(s).
2. If there are major infractions³, the situation will be discussed with company personnel to determine cause(s) and to ensure that remedies have been put in place. The Board will follow up with the DV User to ensure that effective procedures are in place to correct the problem(s). Audit frequency will be increased to at least every two months until it is evident that the problem(s) has been resolved, at which time the audit frequency will return to at least once every 12 months.
3. If there are repeated major infractions the DV User will only be able to ship or use almonds treated at the facility if, prior to shipment or use, a process authority has reviewed the records and conditions at the facility, and determined on a lot-by-lot basis that the almonds were treated to yield at least a minimum 4-log reduction of *Salmonella* and handled in a manner after treatment to prevent recontamination, and that appropriate records related to the treatment were kept.

When the DV User is able to show that they can consistently meet the requirements for treating almonds, the DV User may petition the Board to return to being audited at least once every two months for six months and subsequently to at least once per year.

4. If the process authority reviews of procedures and treatments or auditor results indicate continued major infractions and/or inadequate means to control the treatment or recontamination, DV User status will be revoked.
5. Should the company disagree with a Board decision, it may appeal this decision in writing to the Board, and ultimately to USDA.

¹ Board refers to the Almond Board of California, its staff or designated agent.

² Minor Infractions: Any infraction that does not compromise overall compliance with the minimum 4-log reduction in *Salmonella*.

³ Major Infractions: Any issue that is associated with the recontamination, recordkeeping and/or shipment of almonds that do not comply with the minimum 4-log reduction in *Salmonella*.

Note: Should ABC request further information from the DV auditor applicant to process an application, an initial response must be received within 30 days to keep the application open; failure to respond within 30 days will result in a rejected application. Correspondence thereafter must be received in a timely fashion as determined by the ABC.

ALMOND BOARD OF CALIFORNIA DIRECT VERIFIABLE (DV) PROGRAM AUDITORS APPLICATION FORM

Pursuant to authority provided in § 981.42 of almond marketing order (order) – 7 CFR Part 981, and as specified in § 981.442(b) of the order's regulations, handlers must subject their almonds to a treatment process or processes that have been determined to achieve in total a minimum 4-log reduction of *Salmonella* bacteria. Handlers may treat the almonds prior to shipment, ship untreated almonds labeled as unpasteurized to locations outside the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, or ship untreated almonds labeled as unpasteurized under the DV program to approved manufacturers within the U.S., Canada, or Mexico, who agree to treat the almonds. Such manufacturers are subject to audit by approved DV auditors. The Almond Board of California (Board or ABC) administers the order locally, with oversight by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

In consideration of the approval of this application, the following applicant requests approval as a DV Program Auditor for almonds for _____ (crop year).⁴

Date _____

Company _____

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone (____) _____ Fax (____) _____

Email _____

Please complete the following (attach a curriculum vitae and additional pages, if needed):

Professional Affiliation(s) and Education:

Length of time as an auditor:

Products/Equipment/Processes for which you have audited:

Experience conducting audits for food industry:

⁴ Applicant may be an organization or a person. Applications will be reviewed and approved by ABC's Technical Expert Review Panel (TERP). Should the applicant disagree with TERP's decision, it may appeal the decision in writing to the Board, and ultimately to USDA.

Undersigned hereby certifies to the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Board that the information supplied herein is complete and correct. The making of any false statement or representation on this form, knowing it to be false, is a violation of Title 18, section 1001, United States Code, which provides for the penalty of a fine of \$10,000 or imprisonment of not more than 5 years, or both.

Date _____ Signature _____

Printed Name

Return completed form to: Almond Board of California, 1150 9th St., Suite 1500, Modesto, CA 95354 fax: (209) 550-5494

For ABC Use:

Date Received by ABC:	
Date Approved by ABC:	
Effective for Crop Year:	August 1 – July 31,
Date DV Auditor Notified of Approval:	

Note: The following statements are made in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a) and the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. The authority for requesting this information to be supplied on this form is the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937, Secs. 1-19, 48 Stat. 31, as amended, (7 U.S.C. 601-674). Furnishing the requested information is necessary for the administration of the marketing order program.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0581-0242. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.