



ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025



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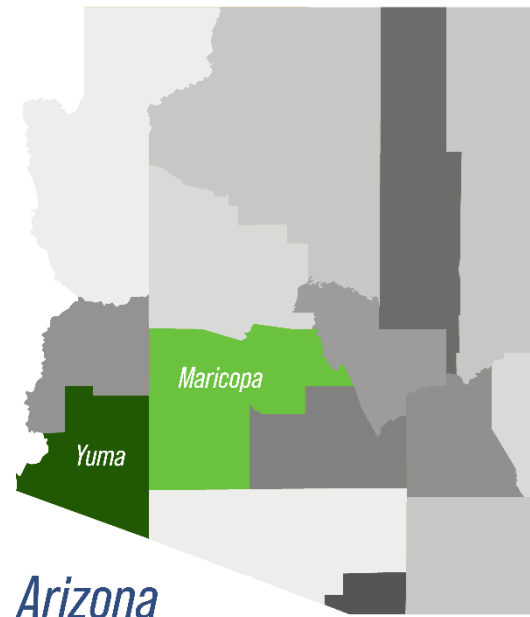
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OVERVIEW

Arizona is known as the winter lettuce capital of the United States. Thanks to its desert climate, the state enjoys a short but productive harvest season from November to March. Each year, Arizona farmers, primarily in Yuma and Maricopa counties, produce about 25% of the nation's total lettuce supply.

Organization

The Arizona LGMA protects public health by providing safe and healthy lettuce and leafy greens. This food safety program cultivates food safety practices, verifies on-farm compliance, utilizes data for improvement, and empowers industry with tools to advance food safety. The Arizona LGMA food safety standards require agricultural water risk assessments, field personnel training, environmental risk assessments, evaluation of soil amendments and crop inputs prior to use, equipment cleaning and sanitation, food safety practices for harvest, and more.



Members

Arizona farmers are committed to growing and harvesting safe lettuce and leafy greens through the Arizona LGMA food safety certification program. Arizona LGMA members are shippers of Arizona leafy greens who utilize strict food safety standards to ensure the integrity of leafy greens grown, harvested, and shipped from Arizona. The Arizona Department of Agriculture administers the program. In 2024/2025, Arizona LGMA members represent 98.6% of leafy greens grown in Arizona.

Audits & Compliance

To be certified, Arizona LGMA members must complete multiple audits each growing season. Audits are conducted by Arizona Department of Agriculture auditors, who are licensed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and ISO-certified to verify compliance with the food safety standards (also called metrics).

Funding

The Arizona LGMA operates solely using collected fees from its members. The Arizona LGMA assessment fee can vary from year to year depending upon projected costs. The assessment rate for a standard carton was set at \$0.007 from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.

The Arizona LGMA is committed to ensuring safe, healthy lettuce and leafy greens by upholding rigorous food safety standards and audits. But our work goes beyond compliance—science, training, and continuous education are central to our mission. We are dedicated to improving knowledge and practices across the industry, recognizing the vital role each individual plays in every step of leafy greens production.



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HAPPENINGS

Food Safety Standards Updated

On August 16, 2024, the Arizona LGMA Food Safety Committee voted to approve several changes to the Arizona LGMA Food Safety Standards, also called Metrics. One of the major updates is an increased buffer related to concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) with greater than 80,000 head. The distance was previously one mile, but the 1.5-mile distance is now science-based, from U.S. FDA research conducted in the Southwest growing region between 2019 and 2024. Findings of the study stated that:

Distance played an important factor in the likelihood of STEC being detected in collected airborne dust, with the percentage of positive samples declining steadily as air sampling moved in an incremental manner away from concentrated animal operations. No viable (living) pathogens were found in airborne dust beyond a distance of 1.5 miles.

The other change for the Standards/Metrics was related to agricultural water. Several minor changes were made to ensure that the Arizona LGMA requirements align with the Food Safety Modernization Act's Final Rule on Pre-Harvest Agricultural Water which was released in July of 2024.

Working with Produce Buyers on Food Safety

Our 2025 Buyer tour included 11 participating companies with 16 representatives on a two-day tour of the winter growing season in Yuma. We visited multiple operations which included observing a water treatment demo, harvesting equipment hygienic design review, a romaine harvest demonstration with auditor interaction and a laboratory tour. We provided an extensive LGMA program overview, discussed metrics updates, and provided an update on the AZ longitudinal study and the Desert Food Safety Coalition. The group had widespread discussions on collaboration and has also held follow-up meetings with the participants.

Arizona Lettuce and Leafy Greens Harvest Celebration

Arizona's Governor, Katie Hobbs, proclaimed November 2024 as Arizona Leafy Greens Month. This was the State's 12th annual celebration of the start of harvest for Arizona leafy greens. The Arizona LGMA conducted outreach on this topic via social media partnerships and giveaways as well as press outreach.

Economic Contribution of Yuma County Agriculture

In February 2025, a new report was published by the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension titled: Economic Contribution of Yuma County Agriculture. The 48-page publication includes analysis and statistics for crop production, economic contributions, and water productivity. Our favorite findings from the report:

- Yuma's agriculture and agribusiness industries generated \$4.4 billion in 2022
- Yuma's top three crops are iceberg lettuce, romaine lettuce and processed lettuce.
- Yuma accounted for 18% of crop sales in the Colorado River Basin, but consumed only 8% of the irrigation water
- Yuma is to agriculture what Hollywood is to movies, and what Silicon Valley is to computers



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LEADERSHIP & STAFF

The Arizona LGMA is managed by the Arizona Leafy Greens Food Safety Committee, a five-member committee of signatory shippers or their designated representative. The members have three seats that represent the Yuma area, and the other two seats are for any other leafy greens growing areas. The volunteer leadership consists of industry professionals who are shippers or designated representatives of shippers. The Arizona LGMA has the Arizona Leafy Greens Technical Subcommittee overseeing and maintaining the science-based Metrics. The Arizona Leafy Greens Communications Subcommittee then oversees public relations for both consumers and industry.

Food Safety Committee Members	
Megan Chedwick – Chair	Church Brothers Farms
Herman Cossio	Queen Victoria / Ippolito International
Armando Figueroa	Braga Fresh Family Farms
Kristina Nunes	The Nunes Company, Inc.
Chato Valdez	Sabor Farms, LLC.

Technical Subcommittee Members	
Amanda Brooks – Chair	Harrison Farms
Guadalupe Camarena	Nature Fresh Farms
Jesus Canchola	Fresh Express
Bob Mills	RSM Food Safety Service
Michael Menes	True Organics
Valentin Sierra	Amigo Farms
Megan Chedwick	Church Brothers Farms
Matthew Burk – Alternate	Tanimura & Antle
Jeremy Vanderzyl– Alternate	Diamond Block Services

Communications Subcommittee Members	
Kelly Miller – Chair	Griffin Ranches
Amanda Brooks – Co-Chair	Harrison Farms
Valentin Sierra	Amigo Farms, Inc.
Kelly Williams	Smith Farms
Vicki-Lynne Scott	Scott Resources

Staff	
Teressa Lopez	Administrator
Kami Van Horn	Technical Assistant
April Ward	Public Relations Liaison
Kevin Watson	Compliance Officer



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MEMBERS















Amigo Farms, Inc.	Ippolito International	 <p>Certified Members of Arizona LGMA are shippers who are committed to adhering to the food safety standards set forth. View the current member list at: www.arizonaleafygreens.org</p>
Beachside Produce	Mann Packing Company, Inc.	
Bengard Ranch, Inc.	Muzzi Family Farms, LLC	
Bonipak Produce	Ocean Mist Farms	
Braga Fresh Family Farms	organicgirl, LLC	
Church Brothers, LLC / True Leaf Farms	Pacific International Marketing, Inc.	
Classic Salads, LLC	Ratto Bros., Inc.	
D'Arrigo Bros Co of California	Ready Pac Foods, Inc.	
Dole Fresh Vegetables, Inc.	River Fresh Farms, LLC	
Duda Farm Fresh Foods, Inc.	Sabor Farms, LLC	
Dynasty Farms, Inc.	Salad Savoy Corporation	
Everkrisp Vegetables, Inc.	Steinbeck Country Produce	
Field Fresh Farms, LLC	Tanimura & Antle Fresh Foods, Inc.	
Fresh Express, Inc.	Taylor Farms California	
Gold Coast Packing, Inc.	The Nunes Company	
Green Gate Fresh, LLLP	The Salad Farm	
Harbinger Group dba Misionero	TLC Custom Farming Company LLC	
Hitchcock Farms, Inc.	Zada Fresh	
Ippolito International, Inc.		



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CROP STATISTICS

The Arizona LGMA food safety program covers 15 different types of leafy greens and members reported shipping the following 24lb cartons or *carton equivalents:

Commodity		2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
	Iceberg Lettuce	28,805,728	24,187,777	23,155,376
	Romaine	12,195,276	13,160,264	14,891,387
	Romaine Hearts	11,484,018	12,723,650	13,107,115
	Green Leaf	4,661,019	4,573,310	3,381,278
	Red Leaf	762,377	962,379	789,780
	Butter Leaf	598,159	741,512	665,752
	Spinach (Teen & Baby)	10,249,657	9,201,693	9,580,539
	Baby Leaf Items (Spring Mix)	6,969,465	5,878,889	6,517,709
	Cabbage (Green, Red & Savoy)	4,007,508	3,820,110	3,572,138
	Kale	797,565	641,188	688,707
	Arugula	903,493	778,679	755,708
	Chard	79,800	96,181	272,198
	Escarole	40,959	33,313	20,998
	Endive	23,206	25,028	23,201
	Radicchio	100,403	66,602	76,637
Total Cartons*		81,678,683	76,890,575	77,498,523



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AUDIT REPORT

The Arizona LGMA is a part of the Arizona Department of Agriculture (AZDA). The AZDA uses United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and ISO certified auditors that verify compliance with the Arizona LGMA Food Safety Standards (also known as metrics).



Each year the Arizona and California LGMA collaborate to develop audit plans for the upcoming season. Auditors from both states are calibrated on metrics intent and new metrics requirements from both states and they address any challenges from the previous season. This helps to ensure all metrics are being evaluated in the same manner throughout the LGMA programs.

Representatives from the following agencies attend this discussion:

- Arizona Department of Agriculture
- Arizona LGMA
- California Department of Food and Agriculture
- California LGMA
- U.S. Department of Agriculture

The Arizona LGMA contracts with AZDA/USDA to conduct two scheduled and one unannounced audits with each shipper, and to audit each grower at least once. Overall audits in 2024/2025 show a slight reduction. This is due to a change in the program where shippers who only have one grower are subject to one scheduled and one unannounced audit. Additionally, there are some shippers that only ship from Arizona a few weeks a year and therefore will only receive one scheduled audit and one unannounced audit.

Audit Type	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Scheduled Audits	73	75	62
Unannounced Audits	36	37	34
Total Audits	109	112	96



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COMPLIANCE

After an audit is conducted, the Arizona LGMA Compliance Officer conducts a review of the audit and sets each citation at one of four violation levels. The Compliance Officer works with each LGMA member to ensure that all violations are corrected in a timely manner. Additionally, the LGMA Technical Assistant conducts an annual review at the end of the season for members to assess compliance and address recurring issues. In 2024/2025 fifteen major violations were issued due to repeat violations between audits and inadequate corrective actions, resulting in repeated deviations. Total violations were down significantly this season as outlined in the table below.

Violation Level	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Flagrant	0	0	0
Major Deviation	3	3	15
Minor Deviation	584	485	310
Minor Infraction	46	105	45
Total	633	593	370

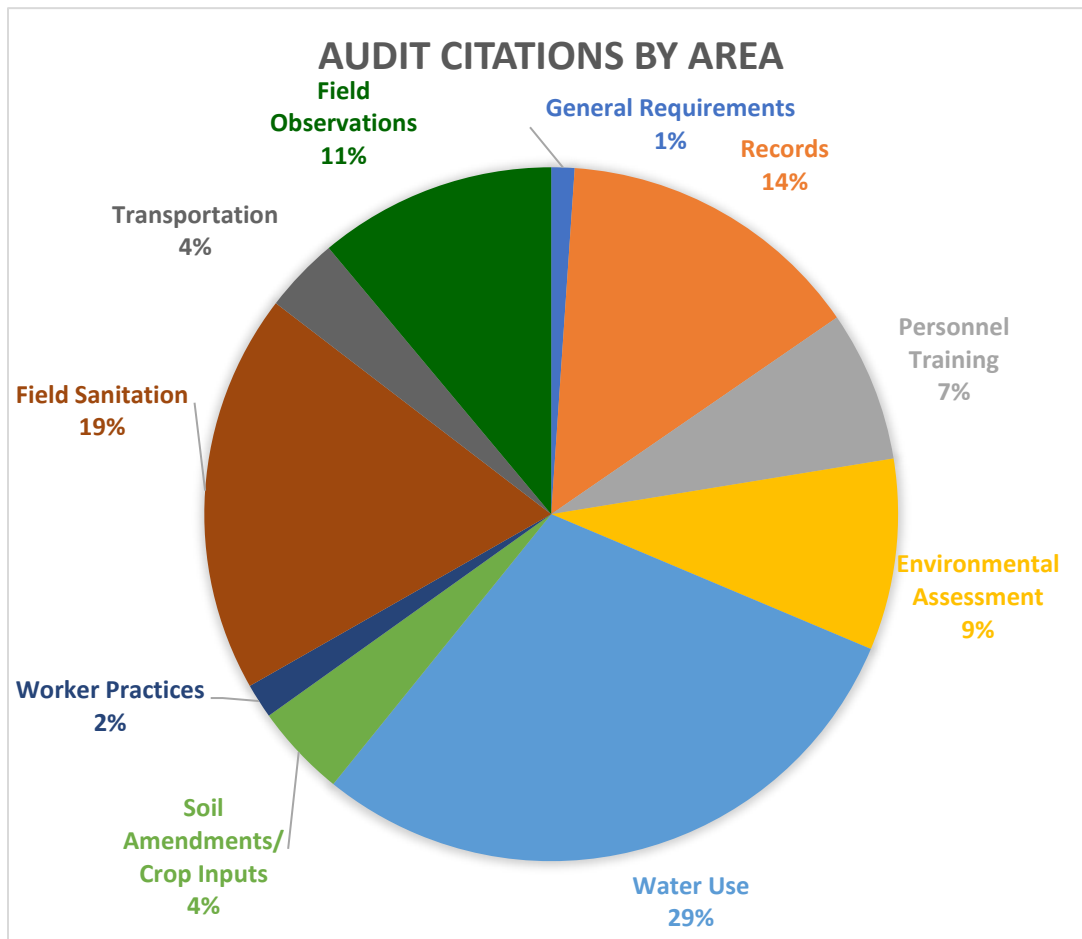
- A **Flagrant violation** occurs when the signatory shipper buys, consigns, or otherwise accepts or handles a leafy green product and knows or should have known the product was grown, packed, shipped, processed, or handled in violation of the best practices and the violation significantly increased the risk of delivering unsafe product into commerce. A single flagrant violation leads to a loss of the privilege to use the LGMA service mark.
- A **Major Deviation** is a violation of the food safety standards that may inhibit the maintenance of food safety, but that does not necessarily result in an unsafe product. A signatory who commits a major deviation must submit a corrective action plan to the Food Safety Committee or its designee, within five business days of receipt of the inspection report, noting the deviation. The Food Safety Committee may consider a major deviation to be a flagrant violation if the signatory fails to provide a timely corrective action plan. Once the Food Safety Committee or its designee accepts the signatory's corrective action plan, an unannounced audit will be performed.
- A **Minor Deviation** is a violation of the food safety standards that the signatory can correct within five business days and that does not necessarily increase the risk of a foodborne illness. A signatory who commits a minor deviation must submit a corrective action plan to the Food Safety Committee or its designee, within five business days of receipt of the inspection report noting the deviation. A minor deviation does not require a follow-up inspection within three business days of submitting the corrective action plan. Instead, the inspectors will ensure compliance at the next regularly scheduled inspection.
- A **Minor Infraction** is a violation of the food safety standards that is corrected before the inspector leaves the inspected premises and that does not necessarily increase the risk of a foodborne illness. The Food Safety Committee or its designee may treat an otherwise minor infraction as a minor deviation; if there have been multiple similar minor infractions over the past twelve months.



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COMPLIANCE

Another way to look at Arizona LGMA compliance is by the area of the food safety standards, or metrics, where audit citations are frequently occurring.



The chart above shows that the top three categories for audit citations in the 2024/2025 year were as follows:

- Water Use (109 citations, 29% of the total)
- Field Sanitation (69 citations, 19% of the total)
- Records (53 citations, 14% of the total)

Throughout the season, Arizona LGMA staff monitors audit citation trends and provide targeted training to help improve compliance.



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TRAINING

The Arizona LGMA held pre- and post-season office hours for members to engage and gain insights into the 2024/2025 season, with 53 total attendees. The Arizona LGMA also offered a variety of virtual and in-person training sessions throughout the season, including:

- Environmental Risk Assessment Training
 - 2 English sessions 22 participants | Spanish session 22 participants
- Cleaning and Sanitizing of Harvest Equipment
 - 1 English session, 9 participants | 1 Spanish session, 10 participants
- Module 1-5 Training
 - 1 English session, 16 participants | 2 Spanish sessions, 33 participants

Ag Water Assessment templates for irrigation and commercial applicators were also updated to provide guidance on new water metrics updates for the 2024-25 season.

In May, we also launched two key resources: the Harvesting Equipment Hygienic Design Template and the Self-Assessment Template for Section 8.1. Both templates are designed to assist organizations in meeting the compliance requirements outlined in Version 18 Harvesting Equipment Cleaning & Sanitizing updates, and were developed in conjunction with CALGMA, Factor IV Solutions, Food Safety CTS, and Western Growers Association.

ARIZONA - CALIFORNIA LEAFY GREENS INDUSTRY
FOOD SAFETY TRAINING PROGRAM



An updated version of the Cleaning & Sanitizing of Harvesting Equipment training program reflecting the Arizona LGMA Version 18 revisions has been released. This includes an updated workbook, PowerPoint, videos, and activities to comply with the new requirements to attend an LGMA training. New training dates will be announced soon for the full training program, and for the bridge training for individuals who have already attended a training in the past.

COMING SOON

An updated Environmental Risk Assessment training program will include Pre-season assessments and will soon be accessible online through our online food safety training platform, Doctum. This training platform is in conjunction with the California LGMA and Yuma Safe Produce Council and training can be conducted at your pace. In the 2024/2025 year 148 training sessions were conducted in Doctum. Please make sure your organization is taking advantage of this free training resource Find it online here: <https://www.allucantrain.com/doctum/produce#/login>

This summer, in collaboration with Western Growers Association and California LGMA, we will release our work on Appendix S, which will offer enhanced resources for cleaning and sanitizing best practices for the industry.



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COMMUNICATIONS

Arizona Leafy Greens Month

In November 2024 Arizona LGMA and the farming community in Arizona celebrated the 12th annual Arizona Leafy Greens Month. The celebration included a proclamation from the Governor's office, social media education and prize giveaways and a booth at the Yuma Farmer's Market. Arizona LGMA partnered with Yuma Safe Produce Council, as well as online influencers including Farmer Jon (Dinsmore), Ram628 (Ramiro Ruiz) and Welcome to Arizona.



Stakeholder Communications

The Arizona LGMA maintained its communications efforts with the farming community (growers, shippers, harvesters), produce buyers and the greater produce industry. Regular updates were provided via a multitude of communications including blog posts, Harvest Times newsletters and social media posts.

Stakeholder Education

The Arizona LGMA partnered with California LGMA and The Produce Nerd to produce a series of six educational videos for social media. The videos tackle farming and food safety topics like seasonality, traceability, audits, and training.