

# GlobalGap Tour 2009

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## Breakout Session Aquaculture I

*"Management System for the Quality Assurance of Mariculture Products"*

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**Ladies and gentlemen,**

**AGROCERT** is a non-profit, public Organization operating under the supervision of the Hellenic Ministry of Rural Development & Food. According to its founding law it has the authority of standardization, certification and also inspection of private certification bodies in the agricultural sector.

Under this authority we take action on certification of agricultural products by the European Community regulations such as Organic farming products, Products of Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI), Bovine meat traceability and products of Special Poultry breeding. As for the products that such regulation does not exist we take the opportunity of collaboration with consumers, producers and scientists to produce the necessary standards for certification. Until today we have issued standards and guidances such as: **AGRO 1.** Hazard Analysis and Critical Points Control (HACCP) system, **AGRO 2.** Management of Rural Environment – System of Integrated Management in Agricultural production, **AGRO 3.** Management system for the Quality Assurance of Pig Meat, **AGRO 4.** Management System for the Quality Assurance of Mariculture Products, **AGRO 5.** Technical guidance – Traceability of beef and veal meat, **AGRO 6.** Management System for the Quality Assurance of Sponge - Fishery and Sponge - Culture Products Specifications of Fishing and Cultivation procedures - Quality control of the product.

More specific I must say that the section of aquaculture is one of the most developed fields of primary production in Greece. Mariculture contributes significantly to the gross product of fishery and participates decisively to the production of important products for the domestic and international food markets.

The Greek mariculture units prevail in the effort for development of contemporary production units and invest constantly in the application of scientific data and technological evolutions. This evolution effects the intense development of the section of aquaculture giving it characteristics of highly financial importance.

The continuous increase of development in combination with high claims of consumers as well as the entry of the same kind of products from other countries in the market has formed in short time new conditions of high competition.

In this new environment of the international competition the mariculture units are looking for modern ways to organize their production and packaging methods, in order to indicate the quality of their products as a great comparative advantage. The valid and of high standards certification of the quality of their products constitute steady demand for all the procedures of section's development.

In order to correspond to these requirements many units of the aquaculture section, have already applied quality management systems such as ISO management systems and HACCP system. However, the need for the existence of standards that intend to high requirements has been the object for the certification, promotion and support of products. The use of a quality label is necessary not only for the assurance of the quality characteristics but also for the protection of maricultural products from other products that are of doubtful quality and origin.

For all these purposes we have elaborated the first standards AGRO 4-1 and AGRO 4-2 for the certification of the quality of maricultural products and their support with the certificate conferment and the labelling.

These standards provide to the maricultural units the opportunity to develop a quality management system for the maricultural products in order to support them with labels, increase their added value and to gain a major advantage in the high competitive markets obtaining the consumer confidence. The standards AGRO 4-1 and AGRO 4-2 are available to all mariculture companies and AGROCERT is at disposal of all concerned for any collaboration.

The spirit of constructive collaboration guides all the initiatives of AGROCERT with all Greek maricultural companies in order to contribute in a dynamic way to upgrade of the production and packaging procedures and to support the maricultural products.

The aim of AGROCERT is to make the Quality Label the "Quality Passport" of the maricultural products to the national and international market.

The Standard **AGRO 4-1** includes specific requirements, in which production units have to be complied with constantly, in order to be certified and have the right to use the certificate of compliance of AGROCERT.

The basic principle of the Standard is the development of a management system concerning the production procedure in order to assure the quality of products.

Besides the conferment of general requirements of the National and European legislation, the standard contains specifications and sets up specific requirements about broodstock, origin of fishes, spawn, fish density, breeding conditions, any types of handling, nutrition, fish health, treatment, veterinary care, fishing, storage, transportation, training, hygiene and safety of the staff and establishment, maintenance of the traceability and also the necessary laboratory controls for the specification of the percentage of muscular fat, the concentration of antibiotics and dioxins in the product.

All actions about application of the standard requirements and establishment of the management system must be accompanied systematically by complete records and files in order their maintenance to be approved constantly and the company to be able to be inspected either by internal inspections or by the inspections of AGROCERT.

The successful inspection of the system by AGROCERT is completed by the conferment of compliance certificate and the certified company can deliver its products to the packaging establishment, in order to be disposed of in the market with the quality label of certification.

The Standard **AGRO 4-2** includes specific requirements, in which the packaging establishments have to be complied with constantly, in order to be certified and have the right to use the special label of AGROCERT.

Basic principle of the Standard is the development of a management system about sorting and packaging procedures, in order to achieve the goal of all the requirements of the Standard and assure the quality of products.

Besides the observance of general requirements of the National and European legislation, the standard contains specifications and sets up specific requirements about establishments, hygiene areas, programs of establishments operation, cleaning and disinfection of work place, hygiene rules of staff and medical certificates, staff training, products assessment criteria, terms and rules of packaging, production, storage, maintenance of traceability and the necessary laboratory controls for the specification of the percentage of muscular fat, the concentration of antibiotics and dioxins in the product and also laboratory controls for the specification of the gathering of total microbiological flora on the surface, in the used ice and water and in the gathering of bacterius Coli in the used ice and water.

All actions about application of the standard requirements and establishment of the management system must be accompanied systematically by complete records and files relative to water, pest control, disinfection of work places, equipment, means of transportation, daily production, lot records, temperature records of work place, cold store and procedures, in order their maintenance to be approved constantly and the company to be able to be inspected either by internal inspections or by the external inspections of AGROCERT.

The successful inspection of the system by AGROCERT is completed by the conferment of compliance certificate and the certified company which has the right to use the quality label of certification, can deliver its products that come from certified production unit according to the standard AGRO 4-1 to the market, having the quality label of certification.

The quality label of AGROCERT is a patented label for the certification according to the standards AGRO 4-1 and AGRO 4-2. The approval of use of the quality label is allowed to the packaging establishments that have been certified according to AGRO 4-2, provided that the packaged mariculture products have been certified according to AGRO 4-1. By this label, the consumer is assured that the mariculture product is complied with the requirements of the standards AGRO 4-1 and 4-2.

The Quality Label of AGROCERT belongs to the "family" of its patented labels, "The National Team of Quality Labels" which have been designed so as to constitute a united total of labels of certification of quality assurance of agricultural products, and thereby to become an important mechanism for the information of consumers.

The widespread acknowledgement of such labels by consumers is the primary intention of AGROCERT. According to the scope of the approved by European Union corporate program of the fourth period, AGROCERT in collaboration with the productive companies of Greek mariculture will develop programs for the consumer's information in order to spread the value of the certified quality and increase the demand of products which comply with the rules and requirements of the standards.

***THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION***