

LEAFY GREENS MARKETING AGREEMENT BOARD ACCEPTS METRICS FOR VERIFICATION PROGRAM

March 31st last day for handler sign-ups

SACRAMENTO - March 27, 2007- With a unanimous vote on March 23, the Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement Board of Directors accepted the metrics to be used in the marketing agreement's verification program.

The metrics, which are guidelines for good agricultural practices (GAP) to be followed by marketing agreement signatories, were proposed by a coalition of leafy greens industry members, and were reviewed and endorsed by food science experts in academia and government. A link to the metrics may be found at www.cdfa.ca.gov

We recognize and appreciate the numerous GAP initiatives coming forward from trade organizations and private companies, said marketing agreement board chairman Joe Pezzini. *However, the California Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement program is the only initiative that will incorporate on-site field inspections that are conducted by a government inspection and verification entity. The California Department of Food and Agriculture will be using state and federal inspectors trained by the USDA.*

The Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement's role is to verify and certify that signatories are following industry's guidelines, using a USDA-designed inspection program in use across the country, and CDFa inspectors.

The fiscal year for the marketing agreement will begin on April 1. At that time, signatory handlers will be assessed two cents per carton for operation of the agreement, which is administered by CDFa. Handlers must sign-up by March 31 to participate.

To date, 54 handlers representing 98 percent of leafy greens produced in California have signed up for the marketing agreement.

-30-

The California Department of Food and Agriculture protects and promotes California's \$31.8 billion agricultural industry. California's farmers and ranchers produce a safe, secure supply of food, fiber and shelter; marketed fairly for all Californians; and produced with responsible environmental stewardship.

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