

# Voluntary Qualified Importer Program

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**FDA FOOD SAFETY  
MODERNIZATION ACT**

**THE FUTURE IS NOW**

# Voluntary Qualified Importer Program (VQIP)

- FDA required to establish a program to provide for the expedited review of food imported by voluntary participants.
- Participation is limited to importers who meet all eligibility criteria, including offering food from a facility certified under FDA's accredited third party program.

# Definition of VQIP Importer

- Section 806(g) defines “importer” as “the person that brings food, or causes food to be brought, from a foreign country into the customs territory of the United States.”
  - Can include manufacturers, consignees and importers of record for food for humans and animals
  - May or may not be the FSVP importer

# Draft Benefits of VQIP

- Expedited entry into the U.S.
- Examination and/or sampling generally limited to “for cause” situations
- Any sampling or examination done at location chosen by the importer
- Expedited laboratory analysis if sampled
- VQIP Importers Help Desk
- FDA will post approved VQIP importers, if desired

# Draft VQIP Guidance Eligibility Criteria

- Quality Assurance Program (QAP)
- Assurance of compliance with the supplier verification and other importer responsibilities under the applicable FSVP or HACCP regulations
- Current facility certification, including farms, issued under FDA's Accredited Third-Party Certification regulations for each foreign supplier of food in VQIP

# Draft VQIP Guidance

## Eligibility Criteria (cont.)

- 3+ year history of importing food to the United States
- No ongoing FDA administrative or judicial action (e.g., import alert, injunction, recall), or other history of non-compliance with food safety regulations by the importer, other entities in the supply chain (e.g., foreign suppliers, filers/brokers, and FSVP and HACCP importers), or food

# Timing of VQIP Program

- Anticipate Final Guidance Summer 2016
- A formal Fee will be published no later than August 1, 2018
- Anticipate first applications January 1, 2018
- Anticipate first benefit period to begin October 1, 2018