



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): Papaya Addendum for the PrimusGFS Audit

1. Why was the papaya-specific addendum developed?

The papaya addendum was developed to provide a verification option for specific requirements for microbiological hazards in the production and handling of papayas for export to the United States, linked to a broader scope audit recognized by GFSI.

2. What benefits does the papaya addendum provide to exporters?

The addendum provides commercial and market advantages to papaya exporters, including:

- **Expanding market access** by aligning with GFSI-recognized food safety standards internationally.
- **Increasing credibility** in global markets by meeting the requirements of a GFSI-recognized audit.

3. What is the basis of the requirements for the papaya addendum?

The requirements in the papaya addendum are based on prior work conducted by the Texas International Produce Association (TIPA), the International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA), and ProExport Papaya. This collaboration led to the 2020 publication of the *Food Safety Best Practices Guide for the Growing and Handling of Mexican Papayas* focused on microbiological hazards, and the IFPA checklist used for ProExport Papaya member evaluations since 2021.

4. What requirement areas does the papaya addendum cover?

The addendum incorporates the requirements of the ProExport Papaya Verification Program, which evaluates compliance with the *Mexican Papaya Growing and Handling Best Practices Guide*. This approach focuses on key areas related to microbiological hazards required for papayas exported to the United States, such as management responsibility, internal audits, worker health and hygiene, field history and pre-harvest assessments, pest management, water use, harvest and post-harvest handling, packaging, and traceability.

5. How do Azzule platforms support the audit process and integration with the papaya addendum?

Azzule platforms facilitate the audit process by enabling certification bodies (CBs) to manage and centralize information from every stage of the PrimusGFS certification process in real time. The papaya addendum will be managed through the Azzule Auditing Software and can be linked to either PrimusGFS or other GFSI audits using Azzule platforms. This integration allows for both GFSI audit reports and addendum results to be easily accessible, ensuring that the specific compliance with papaya requirements is clearly documented, optimizing auditors' time and resources, and simplifying the review process for papaya exporters, their buyers, customers and partners in general.

6. Where can I find more information on the food safety requirements and verification checklist for the papaya addendum?

The papaya addendum checklist, compliance expectations, the guide “How to Enter the Papaya Addendum in the Azzule Auditing Software” (available for Auditees and Certification Bodies), and a FAQ document are available on the PrimusGFS website. You can also find the base document for the addendum, the *Food Safety Best Practices Guide for the Growing and Handling of Mexican Papayas*, on ProExport Papaya’s website.

7. I am new to PrimusGFS. How do I request an audit, and what is the general process?

PrimusGFS is a food safety audit program managed and developed by Azzule Systems. PrimusGFS generates and maintains all audit information in a digital format, which can be directly transferred to buyers and clients. PrimusGFS audits must be performed by a CB approved by Azzule Systems, so before starting the certification process, you will need to contact one of the approved CBs listed on the PrimusGFS website. For new auditees (first-time audits), three months of operational records are required.

The general certification process takes 45 days, divided into specific phases with defined times. The process begins with each auditee completing their online application on the PrimusGFS site (the chosen CB can assist with this step). Following the **application**, where audit details are defined (scope, products, processes, buyer/client transfer, etc.), the audit date is **scheduled**, and **the audit takes place**. After the audit, the auditor issues a **preliminary report**, and, if applicable, the auditee works on **corrective actions** and uploads them to the PrimusGFS system. The auditor will **review and approve corrective actions** to issue a **certification decision** and generate a **final audit report**.

8. How do I request the papaya addendum?

You can request the papaya addendum during the application phase of your PrimusGFS audit, which can be completed by either the auditee or an approved Certification Body.

9. Can any certification body I work with request the papaya addendum?

Any certification body approved by PrimusGFS can add the papaya addendum to a PrimusGFS food safety audit. However, some CBs may have limitations, such as a lack of auditors with specific training for the addendum. Confirm with your CB to ensure they offer the addendum and are prepared to include it with your GFSI audit.

The papaya addendum may also be added by any GFSI-approved certification body that uses the Azzule platform, SCP, or Azzule auditing software. Check with your CB if you wish to add the papaya addendum to a different GFSI audit.

10. How much will the cost increase with the addendum?

The cost for including the papaya addendum may vary depending on the certification body and specific services required. Contact your CB directly for a detailed cost estimate.

11. What score is needed to pass each audit?

For all PrimusGFS audits, the preliminary report score must be $\geq 85\%$ to proceed with the certification process. The score after corrective actions must be $\geq 90\%$ to obtain certification. The papaya addendum is not scored for certification, nor does it affect PrimusGFS certification status.

The papaya addendum audit results are documented in a *Report of Addendum Results* that includes a percentage showing the level of compliance with requirements. Percentages of compliance at or below 65%, marked in red, indicate a non-compliance result, as applied by ProExport for papaya exporters since 2021.

12. If I recently completed or plan to complete a PrimusGFS audit, can I request the ProExport addendum afterward?

The papaya addendum cannot be retroactively linked to an audit that has already been completed or certified. However, it can be included in future audits or scheduled audits that have not yet begun. For more information on adding the addendum to an upcoming audit, contact your CB or refer to the guides *How to Enter the Papaya Addendum in the Azzule Auditing Software*, available on the PrimusGFS website in versions for Auditees and Certification Bodies.

13. When can I request and schedule my audit to include the addendum?

The papaya addendum will be available for integration with a PrimusGFS or other GFSI audit starting November 2024. Once officially launched, you will be able to request and schedule your audit with the addendum through an approved CB.