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GeoGAP

Local Standard for
Primary Honey Production

Farmer Guidebook

GEOGAP STANDARD REQUIREMENTS FOR BEEKEEPERS

GeoGAP

Local Standard for
Primary Honey Production

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Table of Contents

Georgian Farmers' Association (GFA)

www.gfa.org.ge

info@gfa.org.ge

gfa.com.ge

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Preface

The Farmer Guidebook was prepared within the framework of the project "Capacitated Agricultural Practices and Consumer Awareness (CAPCA)." This initiative is funded by the European Union under the "European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development" (ENPARD – Georgia), Phase IV (ENPARD IV), and is implemented by the Farmers' Association of Georgia (lead organization) in collaboration with the Center for Strategic Research and Development of Georgia (CSRDG) and the Association of Beekeepers-Farmers of Ambrolauri District in Georgia's mountainous regions.

The project aims to improve food safety and sanitary and phytosanitary standards in Georgia, raise civil awareness about food safety and related regulations, and enhance government accountability through stakeholder communication and engagement.

The manual includes GeoGAP certification procedures, explanations of each requirement of the GeoGAP standard, and templates for the records corresponding to these requirements. Its purpose is to help beekeeping farmers access information on GeoGAP certification procedures and requirements, follow the suggested record-keeping formats and procedures, and bring their farms into compliance with GeoGAP standards.

The development of this module involved independent expert Bill William Lord from the University of Pennsylvania, USA, the Georgian Beekeepers' Union (GBU), and specialists from the Agronomy and Certification Department of the Farmers' Association of Georgia (GFA).

In 2018, with support from USAID under the "Growth" project, the Farmers' Association of Georgia developed the GeoGAP standard for fruit and vegetable production. In 2021, with USDA support under the project "Investing in Safe and Quality Livestock (SQIL)," the GeoGAP standard for milk production was developed. The local standard aims to promote the development of a traceable and safe production and sales chain, aligning farms with European standards. The manual may be updated in line with the development of the GeoGAP standard.

DOCUMENT HISTORY

VERSION #	LAST UPDATED ON	BRIEF HISTORY OF CHANGES	UPDATED BY
01	31.05.2024	Primary Version	Bill Lord
02	12.06.2024	Updated with changes	Aleko Papava

GeoGAP Certification Procedures

Farmer

1

A farmer seeking certification must bring the conditions in the apiary into compliance with the standard's requirements and ensure full adherence to the criteria necessary for the issuance of the certificate.

2

The next step is for the farmer to apply to the certification body for GeoGAP certification. The certification body then conducts an audit, and if the standard's requirements are met, issues the certificate.

3

The certificate is issued for two years to the legal or natural person who completes the registration application and is not transferable from one legal or natural person to another. If the company changes its business entity status, it must notify the certification body.

Certifying Audit

- The farmer seeking GeoGAP certification completes an application with the certification body.
- Within 7 calendar days of applying, a contract is formalized between the farmer and the certification body.
- Within 14 calendar days of signing the contract, the farmer pays the audit service fee to the certification body.
- Within 30 calendar days of signing the contract, the certification audit is conducted. If the farmer decides to withdraw from certification within this period, the certification fee will be refunded.
- The audit involves inspecting the conditions in the apiary (including hives, auxiliary buildings, surrounding areas, staff rooms, existing equipment, supplies, disinfectants, etc.) and reviewing documentation (including records) to determine compliance with GeoGAP standards.
- There are two types of audits: scheduled and unscheduled. Scheduled audits are conducted during initial certification or each subsequent renewal (annually). Unscheduled audits are carried out annually in 10% of certified apiaries, selected randomly. Farmers are notified of an unscheduled audit no more than 48 hours in advance. If a farmer refuses an unscheduled audit, they are given one more opportunity; refusal a second time results in suspension of certification.
- For one legal entity, the GeoGAP audit procedure usually lasts one day (depending on the size of the apiary, number of staff, availability of records, etc.). The procedure includes inspection of the apiary according to the GeoGAP requirements checklist and verbal and later written feedback to the farmer.
- The auditor determines whether the conditions in the apiary comply with each GeoGAP requirement:

  ✓ Yes - The condition complies with the requirement

  ☒ No - The condition does not comply with the requirement or is not properly documented

- During the assessment of each requirement, it is mandatory that all completed fields are filled with explanatory comments and observations, except in cases where this is explicitly allowed in the GeoGAP documentation.
- GeoGAP standard requirements are divided into **mandatory** and **recommended**. Mandatory requirements must be fully met for GeoGAP certification. Desirable requirements are not obligatory in the first year but must be fully met in any subsequent certification period.

- The audit consists of the following stages: opening, which must be attended by management (farm director, farm manager); active phase; and closing, which must also be attended by management representatives. During the closing stage, the auditor communicates the audit results to management, including both compliance and identified non-conformities.

In Case of Full Compliance with the Requirements

- During initial certification, if there is full compliance with mandatory requirements, the auditor prepares an official compliance report within 7 calendar days of the audit.
- Within 7 calendar days of the report's preparation, the Advisory Board decides on issuing the certificate.
- The farmer receives the certificate within a maximum of 7 calendar days from the Advisory Board's decision.
- Each certificate is assigned an individual number.
- The audit report is confidential and may only be shared with third parties (other than the farmer and the certification body) with the farmer's written consent.
- The farmer receives the certificate from the certification body, which is valid for two years (effective "from" date minus one day). The start date of the certificate's validity is considered the date of issuance.

In Case of Non-compliance with One or More Requirements

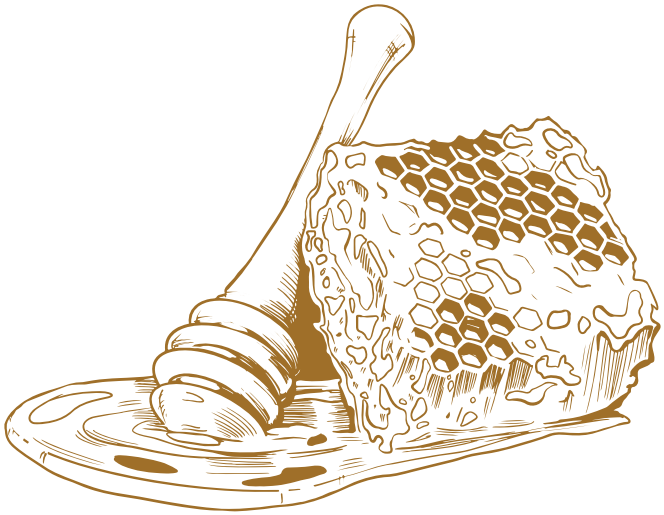
- The auditor informs the management of the existing non-compliances on-site at the apiary.
- If the farmer does not wish to bring the conditions into full compliance with mandatory requirements or refuses the certification process for any other reason, an audit termination form is completed between the auditor and the farmer. In this case, the certification fee is non-refundable. If the farmer refuses to sign the audit termination form, the certification contract is automatically considered terminated.
- If the farmer agrees to follow the auditor's instructions and bring the conditions into compliance with the requirements, the auditor fills out the requirements checklist in two copies. In the compliance column, it is indicated whether the conditions in the apiary meet the GeoGAP requirement, and in the justification column, information on compliance or non-compliance is provided. One copy of the checklist is given to the farmer, while the second remains with the auditor, who, after returning from the audit, sends a scanned electronic version to the farmer to avoid any misunderstandings.

The farmer is given 30 calendar days from the first audit to bring the current conditions into compliance with the mandatory requirements.

- The farmer is given 30 calendar days from the date of the first audit to bring the conditions into compliance with mandatory requirements. During this period, the farmer must also submit a corrective action plan for any non-compliant desirable requirements (if applicable), which must be implemented by the next GeoGAP certification renewal period (1 year).
- If it is not possible to verify compliance with all requirements during a single visit, a follow-up visit may be conducted for audit purposes. Alternatively, the farmer can provide evidence of compliance for a specific requirement (e.g., photo, document, or video) to the auditor via email. If, for objective reasons, a repeat visit to the apiary by the auditor is necessary to complete the audit or to verify compliance, or if additional working time is required to check compliance, the certification body may charge the farmer an additional fee to cover transportation or lost time.

- If, based on the data provided by the farmer within 30 calendar days from the first audit, or as a result of a follow-up visit, it is determined that the non-compliances with mandatory requirements have not been resolved, or if the farmer does not submit evidence of compliance within 30 calendar days from the first audit, the certification contract is terminated.
- If, within 30 calendar days from the first audit, based on the data provided by the farmer or as a result of a follow-up visit, it is determined that all non-compliances have been resolved, the auditor prepares an official compliance report within 7 calendar days.
- Within 7 calendar days of the report's preparation, the Advisory Board decides on the issuance of the certificate.
- The farmer receives the certificate within a maximum of 7 calendar days from the Advisory Board's decision.
- Within one week of issuing the certificate to the farmer, the auditor sends the following information to the Farmers' Association of Georgia:
    - ⓘ Name of the certificate holder (farm) and the company name under which it operates, if different;
    - ⓘ Name of the company representative;
    - ⓘ Contact information (phone, email);
    - ⓘ Full address of the certified company;
    - ⓘ Certificate registration date;
    - ⓘ Scope of use.

Within **7** calendar days of the report's preparation, the Advisory Board decides on issuing the certificate.



After Receiving the Certificate

- The farmer has the right to display the GeoGAP certificate and logo in the apiary. It is recommended to place the GeoGAP logo in a visible location (e.g., at the entrance of the apiary, administrative building, or other prominent spot).
- Certification allows the farm to use its certified status for marketing purposes and to conduct appropriate negotiations with honey processors or buyers.

Certificate Renewal

The certificate is valid for 2 years, and it should be renewed after that. The renewal process is simple because the audit only verifies that all standards are still being followed and are in effect.

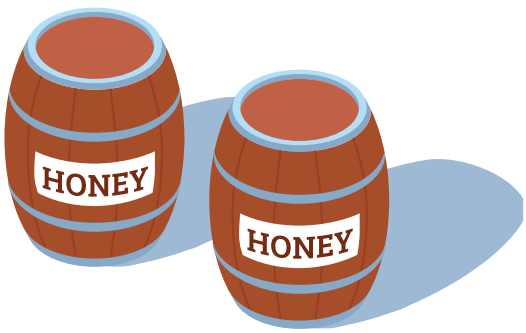
- The validity period of the GeoGAP certificate is 2 years. To renew it, an application for certificate renewal (the same as the initial application) must be completed no later than 2 months before the certificate expires.
- Within 7 calendar days after submitting the application, a contract is drawn up between the farmer and the certification body.
- Within 14 calendar days after signing the contract, the farmer makes the payment of the required amount to the certification body.
- Within 30 calendar days after signing the contract, the certification audit will be carried out.
- If the mandatory and recommended requirements are met, the active status of the apiary standard will be restored within 7 calendar days after the audit.

- If the mandatory and recommended requirements are not met, the apiary is given 40 calendar days to bring the current situation into compliance with the requirements.
- Once the farmer brings the current situation into full compliance, the active status of the standard will be restored within 7 calendar days after the follow-up audit.
- After the expiration of the 2-year certification period, the farmer must reapply to the certifying body for a new audit and pay the certification fee.

Revocation of the Certificate's Active Status

CANCELED

- If a certified farmer is unable to correct the non-conformities identified during the annual audit within the given 40-day period, the agreement will be terminated. The farmer will be notified of this in writing. After the certificate is revoked, the use of the certificate and the display of the certificate or logo on the apiary premises becomes prohibited. At the same time, the apiary's active status will be suspended in the database of certified apiaries.
- In the event of certificate revocation, the use of the certificate and logo is strictly prohibited.
- The farmer has the right to reapply for GeoGAP certification 6 months after the revocation, and must undergo the same procedures required during the initial certification.



Technical Assistance in the Certification Process

If a farmer wishes to implement the GeoGAP standard and needs technical assistance, they can contact the Georgian Farmers' Association. With the support of its consulting team, the farmer can prepare for the implementation of the standard.

The consulting team of the Farmers' Association will thoroughly explain, according to the list of GeoGAP requirements, which actions must be taken to meet each specific requirement. They will also conduct the necessary tests for the apiary (water testing, honey quality analysis, pesticide and antibiotic residue analysis). Based on these results, the farmer will know how to meet each criterion. In addition, the farmer will receive all supporting guidelines, stickers, and record-keeping templates needed to comply with GeoGAP requirements.

BEST PRACTICES IN HONEY PRODUCTION

Below are recommendations that align with best practices in honey production. Farmers should take these recommendations into account in order to produce safe and high-quality honey.

Site Selection

The apiary should not be located in windy or damp areas; a sunny location is recommended. Transporting the hives should be easy. Hives must be protected from theft and vandalism. It is recommended that honey plants be present within 800 meters of the apiary. Avoid placing hives near areas where agricultural crops are treated with pesticides, as well as near industrial facilities that may pose a risk of contamination. The apiary should be kept away from large farms (livestock, poultry, etc.), highways, landfills, factories, and agricultural fields with intensive pesticide use. The apiary should be located at least 3 km away from such areas.

Honey Production

For honey production, frames made from natural beeswax should be used, which are free from pesticides and other contaminants. Light-colored, well-constructed frames are most suitable for honey production. Hives should be ventilated, providing an easy-to-maintain microclimate for the bees, and should be adapted to cope with changing climatic conditions.

Honey Harvesting

The farmer should harvest honey when at least ¾ of the honeycomb is capped. The honey must also be checked for moisture content and must not exceed the limit defined by the technical regulations for honey. Bees should be removed from the frames using a brush, air blower, or gentle tapping, while strong smoke should be avoided. Materials that could potentially contaminate the honey or comb should not be used in the extraction area.

Extracted honey should be transferred into properly sealed containers and stored in a dry, dark place, elevated from the ground, and kept out of reach of insects and rodents. Honey should be extracted from the comb promptly to prevent it from absorbing moisture from the air. If immediate extraction is not possible, the honey should be stored in a cool place (up to 25°C), out of reach of insects and rodents, with an air humidity below 60%.

Honey Storage

Honey should be stored in food-safe plastic or other suitable containers that are well-sealed and kept in a cool, dark place. Long-term storage in metal containers is not allowed, as honey's acidity may react with metal. Storing honey in aluminum containers is strictly prohibited, as it can lead to contamination with heavy metals. In the storage room, the relative humidity of the air should not exceed 60%.

Honey Processing

Honey should be extracted from the comb as quickly as possible; slightly warming it can make the transferring and pumping process easier. Honey processing equipment should not be a source of contamination and must be made of stainless steel. The facility should be protected from insects and rodents, and the walls and floors should be easy to clean. Honey should not be stored in rooms with high humidity or unpleasant odors, as honey has the property of absorbing odors from the air.

Honey Packaging

The Beekeepers can produce high-quality packaged honey by following simple rules.

Crystallized honey should be warmed to 40°C before packaging and allowed to settle so that solid particles can be removed (a filter with a mesh size of no less than 150 microns should be used to remove dust particles). The filtered honey should then be left to settle for 24 hours so that air bubbles and any other particles rise to the surface of the storage container. When filling jars, honey should be taken from the bottom of the container, not the top, to avoid air bubbles and other particles. Jars must be clean and dry before filling. The label should include information in accordance with the Technical Regulation for honey in Georgia:

On honey labels, except for filtered honey and confectionery honey, the following information may be indicated:

a) The regional, territorial, or topographical area where the honey was directly produced;

b) The name of the plant or plants, if the honey is full or mainly derived from

the nectar of that plant or plants and exhibits physical-chemical, organoleptic, and morphological characteristics specific to honey obtained from that plant's flowers. In this case, the botanical name of the plant must be indicated together with the word "honey" (e.g., "Acacia honey," "Hazel honey");

c) Specific quality characteristics.

1. On the label of confectionery honey, near the product name, the words "intended only for confectionery production" must be indicated.
2. If confectionery honey is used as an ingredient in food production, the term "honey" may be used instead of "confectionery honey." In this case, the ingredient list must indicate the term "confectionery honey."
3. On transport packaging not intended for retail sale, the labeling must indicate the product name, batch number, and the name and address of the business operator responsible for honey packaging and distribution.
4. The GeoGAP logo may be displayed on the label if the product is certified according to the GeoGAP standard.

Honey Traceability and Reliability

Honey sold for further processing must be assigned a lot to ensure traceability. Honey sold domestically or exported is subject to safety and quality checks. In cases where honey is contaminated, it should be easy to trace the beekeeper. Preference is given to honey that is uniform, has a known origin (species), and meets the criteria defined by the Honey Technical Regulation.

PEST MANAGEMENT IN THE APIARY

Pest management plays a crucial role in the production of safe honey, as it directly affects both honey quality and safety.

Pests not only reduce beekeeping productivity but can also lead to the presence of various harmful substances and toxins in honey, posing health risks to consumers.

Key aspects of pest management include: **

Prevention: Preventing pests is essential for producing safe honey. This includes maintaining hygiene standards during honey production, timely vaccination, and the use of treatments that do not affect honey quality.

Monitoring: Continuous monitoring and timely response to pest outbreaks are necessary for effective management, significantly reducing the risk of honey contamination.

Varroa Mite (Varroa Destructor) Management

The Varroa mite feeds on the hemolymph and fatty tissue of bees, transmitting viruses and infecting them in the process. High levels of mites and the viruses they carry lead to reduced production and overall productivity, as well as high mortality rates in bee colonies. It is essential to regularly monitor mite infestation levels, as treatment is much more effective during the phoretic stage of Varroa development. Timely intervention by the beekeeper at this stage makes it easier to control mite populations. Otherwise, it becomes very difficult to reduce high Varroa and virus levels in the hive.

A secondary issue is caused by weak, virus-infected colonies being robbed by healthy bee colonies, which facilitates the spread of viruses to healthy colonies.

One method for monitoring mite management involves sampling 300 bees from a colony and using alcohol or powdered sugar to determine infestation levels in the hives. If results show 9 mites per 300 bees (3% infestation), immediate treatment with a Varroa control agent is required. After treatment, monitoring should be repeated to assess effectiveness. Many successful beekeepers aim to maintain mite numbers at 0–1 per 300 bees to ensure low virus levels in the hive and strong bee colonies.

Many beekeepers use “light” mite control practices, such as plant compounds (e.g., thymol), organic acids (formic acid and oxalic acid), or integrated mite management (e.g., removing drone brood before emergence and maintaining broodless periods) to minimize the use of synthetic chemicals, thereby reducing the risk of honey contamination. Mites can often develop resistance, making the applied substance ineffective.

Tropilaelaps mites are quarantine, parasitic pests caused by Tropilaelaps clareae and Tropilaelaps mercedesae. They are sometimes referred to as Asian mites, a term that can also encompass Varroa mites. Tropilaelaps mites are considered major parasites of the western honeybee (Apis mellifera) in many Asian countries. They have been found in Papua New Guinea and across tropical Asia and share similarities with Varroa mites as lethal parasites of honeybees. At least four species of Tropilaelaps mites are known: T. clareae, T. koenigerum, T. mercedesae, and T. thaii. Their natural hosts are giant honeybees (Apis dorsata and Apis laboriosa), as well as Apis cerana and Apis florea, although they do not harm these species.

The mites are large enough to be seen in the hive. They have a reddish-brown color and resemble Varroa mites, but are about half the width. Adult mites leave brood cells and enter other brood cells to reproduce within 24 hours, making early detection difficult before populations grow significantly. Studies show only 3–4% of adult mites are found on adult bees, while 96–97% are on brood. Signs of infestation on adult bees include deformed bees with distorted abdomens, missing legs, and crumpled wings. Crawling bees and dead drones near the colony entrance can also indicate a heavily infested colony.

Treatment for Tropilaelaps mites is not fully documented, but population reduction strategies exist. These include creating a broodless period for three days, increasing the frequency of Varroa-control treatments to limit rapid mite spread, and removing heavily infested hives from the apiary to reduce overall mite populations.

Small hive beetle (Aethina tumida) is another harmful pest and a quarantine threat to honeybee colonies. Fortunately, it has not been reported in Georgia. Special traps are used to monitor its presence in bee colonies.

Disease Management

Honeybees are susceptible to many diseases, but beekeepers have three main concerns in Georgia: American foulbrood (AFB), European foulbrood (EFB), nosemosis, Tropilaelaps mite infestation (Tropilaelaps clareae and Tropilaelaps mercedesae), and small hive beetle (Aethina tumida).

American Foulbrood (AFB) is a quarantine bacterial disease that spreads via spores and is highly contagious. Antibiotic treatment is ineffective for AFB; using antibiotics only masks the disease, contaminates beekeeping products (including honey), and reduces the bees' immunity. In many countries, frames and combs from AFB-infected colonies are destroyed by burning, while hives can be reused after disinfection.

European Foulbrood (EFB) occurs worldwide and is often considered a stress-related disease, commonly appearing in spring. EFB can be treated with antibiotics, but beekeepers must consider the risk of contaminating other bee products. Control of EFB is also possible by creating an artificial broodless period until the disease is eliminated.

Nosemosis is a fungal disease caused by Nosema apis or Nosema ceranae. In Georgia, it is generally not highly dangerous. In spring, the number of Nosema spores in bees increases, but bees regulate their levels through their microbiota. Georgian bees have natural immunity to both strains, although Nosema can become a serious problem after long winters or cold spring periods.

Feeding Bee Colonies

During the active season, feeding of bee colonies is allowed when a 10-frame colony has less than 8 kilograms of honey. Feeding is intended to replenish food reserves for overwintering. Food reserves should be supplied in August–September, depending on the strength of the colony.

Bees can be fed inverted syrup or, if necessary, liquid sucrose. Feeding in solid form, such as candy, is also acceptable. Overheating liquid sugar solutions is prohibited, as it produces hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF). Prolonged storage of liquid sugar also increases the risk of HMF formation. Feeding bees with honey of unknown origin is not allowed, as it may be contaminated with spores of American foulbrood (AFB) or other contaminants.

Hive Selection

Beekeepers should avoid using second-hand hives and equipment, as they are often contaminated with disease spores or chemicals used against Varroa mites. Priority should be given to hive types that are widely used in commercial beekeeping and are easy to handle and transport.

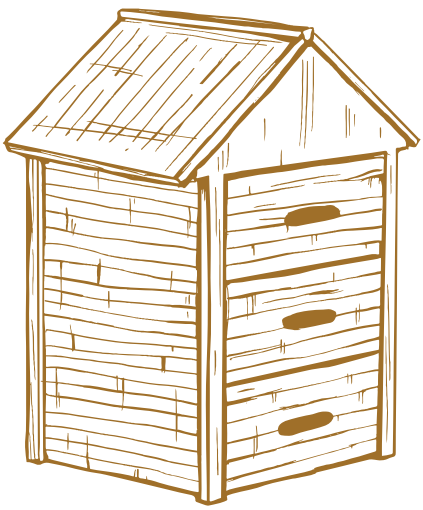
Hive Construction

Hives are made from plastic or wood. When using wood, it must be protected against rot. Surfaces of the hive are treated with oil- or water-based paints. In some cases, to extend the lifespan of the hive, it is coated with wax or vegetable oil. Any materials used for the hive must be safe and non-toxic. When using wax, choose wax with the lowest level of residues, as many Varroa-control acaricides are fat-soluble and can be absorbed through bee wax. High levels of chemical residues in the hive reduce the queen's productivity and weaken the colony.

Management of Hive Frames

Annually, at least 30% of hive frames should be replaced, as combs darken and cell size decreases over successive generations of bees. Comb that has been used for 7-8 generations should be replaced with new comb (maximum 2-3 years of use).

Drone frames can be placed at the outer edges of the hive to maintain an adequate population of drone bees and prevent drone cells from forming on regular brood frames. Since Varroa mites prefer to reproduce in drone cells, these frames can be removed before the brood emerges and frozen to reduce mite populations. The drone frames can then be returned to the hive for reuse.



Name of Company:	Pest Management Procedure	Date:

“I approve”

_____

20.09.2024

PEST CONTROL

Purpose

This procedure is intended to prevent both direct and secondary contamination of products by pests.

Scope

The procedure applies to the enterprise’s internal and external pest control mechanisms. Pests include rodents, flying or crawling insects, and birds.

Responsible Person

Responsibility for implementing this instruction lies with the designated personnel_____.

The execution of the work is monitored by the head of the apiary.

Implementation Stages/Rules

General Rules to Prevent Pest Activity

Effective pest control in the enterprise requires the establishment of certain prohibitions. Specifically, it is not allowed to:

- Keep domestic animals on the production site or in rooms.
- Allow unsecured openings in any part of the building, including windows and doors;
- Use inappropriate chemical substances for pest control in open form in the enterprise, storage areas, or other spaces.
- Store raw materials, finished products, any items, or containers directly on the floor.

Pest control measures:

Flying insects – Use electronic insect catchers, placed away from direct contact with products. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations provided in the equipment manual.

Rodents – Appropriate deratization measures are carried out in designated areas.

Crawling insects – Disinsection procedures are performed in designated areas.

Pest Monitoring:

- Responsible personnel are aware of the placement of pest control devices.
- The person responsible ensures ongoing pest monitoring.

Based on the analysis of results recorded in the monitoring log, areas of heightened pest activity are identified. If such areas exist, additional control measures are applied. Corresponding adjustments are made in the relevant schematics, as well as in the inspection schedule, depending on pest activity.

Records

Appendix №1: *Journal for recording deratization and disinsection activities*

Appendix №2: *Pest control plan*

Appendix №3: *Pest inspection journal*

Rules for Visiting the Farm Premises

The farmer is obliged to inform all visitors of these rules. Visitors must read the rules and sign the corresponding document. Only after this procedure will they be granted permission to enter the apiary premises.

- Visitors must familiarize themselves with the rules and signs for behavior in the apiary, must not litter the area, and must dispose of all waste in designated bins.

- Definition of visitors: This includes the farmer's family members, neighbors, friends, veterinarians, suppliers, clients, consultants, certifiers, and representatives of local or central government—essentially anyone who is not a farm employee.

- Dress code: Visitors' clothing should be clean and appropriate for farm conditions. Depending on the weather, the area may be dusty, muddy, or dirty. Long pants and closed-toe shoes are recommended.

  Prohibitions:

  Walking barefoot on the farm premises;

- Bringing domestic animals into the apiary;

- Smoking, eating, or drinking outside designated areas within the apiary.

- Climbing trees, fences, piles, or other structures is prohibited.
- Visitors are allowed to enter only areas for which they have the farmer's permission. Visitors must respect the farmer's private property.
- Photography or videography without the farmer's consent is prohibited.
- Visitors are responsible for paying for any damage caused by themselves, their children, or members of their group.
- Children under 10 years old must not be left unsupervised.
- Do not touch or approach areas marked with signs such as "Authorized personnel only" or "No entry for unauthorized persons."
- Doors must not be left open; all doors should be closed after each entry or exit.
- Farmers often take photos of visitors for social media or their website. By signing below, you give permission for photos/ videos to be taken during your visit.
- The farmer is not responsible for visitors' safety if the farm rules are not followed. In case of bee stings, snake bites, tick bites, or other incidents, the visitor is responsible for themselves.
- In case of an emergency, first call the Public Safety Management Center (112) and then immediately notify the farmer.
- Acknowledgment: I have read and agree to the rules.

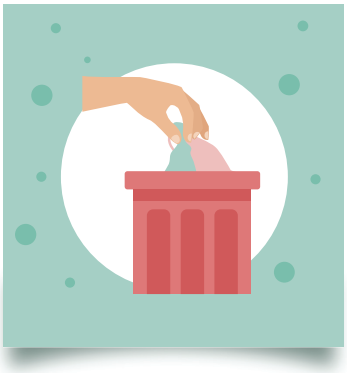
Date: _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

HYGIENE PROCEDURES

Hygiene Procedures:



- Wear clean clothing before starting your tasks.
- Maintain personal hygiene.
- Do not smoke or eat/drink in areas where products are stored.
- Do not wear jewelry (only a wedding ring is allowed).
- Do not grow long nails or use nail polish; gloves should be worn if necessary.
- Long hair should be tied back or covered with a cap.
- Wash hands with unscented soap after using the restroom and before starting work.
- Inform your supervisor if you have a contagious disease.
- Individuals with open wounds or skin conditions must use disposable gloves.
- Treat and cover any wounds.
- Avoid physical, microbiological, or chemical contamination of the product during pouring and packaging.

Sick personnel must not have direct contact with the product. Risk factors include production and transportation. Ill workers should be assigned tasks that do not require direct contact with the product.

Proper Handwashing Method:

THE KEY POINTS ARE thorough rubbing of the hands and sufficient duration of washing.

- Reduces infections by 35–50%.
- Reduces gastrointestinal infections by 80%.

- “Washed/Clean” hands mean removal of visible dirt using water of a quality that meets sanitary standards.
- The main method for thorough handwashing is active rubbing of the hands together for an adequate duration. During washing, scrub between the fingers, under the nails, and the surfaces of the hands. Using a brush under the nails and for the entire hand is recommended.
- To wash hands properly, cover all areas, the back of the hands, spaces between fingers, and under the nails for at least 20 seconds. Ideally, this process should be supervised by a designated staff member to ensure hygiene after using the restroom. Unfortunately, some individuals neglect hygiene standards, which poses a contamination risk to the product.

GeoGAP Standard for Beekeepers

Information about the Entrepreneur _____

(Company name or owner's first and last name, identification or personal number):

Responsible Person: _____

(Leave blank if the same as the owner)

Farm's physical address: _____

Certifying company: _____

Date: _____

Audit Name/Last name _____

Audit Conclusion _____

Farm Description and Location							
					Approved		
N 1	Requirement	Description	Additional Information	Status	Yes	No	Comment
1.1	Is the apiary registered as a family production entity or business operator? (This applies only to the enterprise)	If there are more than 10 bee colonies, the beekeeper is required to register as a business operator in accordance with Georgian legislation.	Rules for the unorganized production of food/animal feed	Mandatory			
1.2	Is the honey storage and processing area (if it exists) indicated on the apiary map?	If it exists, is the honey storage and processing area shown on the apiary map?	It is recommended to add a description of the apiaries, for example, "Mountain area for acacia honey."	Mandatory			
1.3	Is drinking water available at the apiary, and is its quality confirmed by the appropriate laboratory analysis?	Drinking water should be available for the staff, and clean water for the bees. It should also be available for cleaning equipment.	Environmental risk should be assessed, and an analysis should be conducted annually.	Mandatory			
1.4	Is there an environmental protection, beekeeping, and waste management plan?	The farm should prevent littering and contamination of water and soil. Management of both organic and inorganic waste should be carried out. All causes of pollution (chemicals, liquids, etc.) should be minimized. No taps should be leaking, and the water system should be well-maintained.	All possible waste products and sources of contamination on the farm premises should be identified. A person responsible for waste management should be designated.	Recommended			

1.5	Is there an appropriate area in the apiary for managing and utilizing beekeeping waste?	Beekeeping waste includes brood comb, pine frames, etc. Waste should be destroyed (e.g., by burning).	It is recommended to collect the waste in a metal container and destroy it on-site.	Mandatory			
1.6	Is the storage area protected from insects and rodents?	Different types of waste should be stored separately. Waste storage containers should be covered and inaccessible to insects and rodents. All products should be stored in appropriate conditions.	A person responsible for waste management should be designated.	Mandatory			
1.7	Are hazardous areas marked on the farm premises?	Appropriate warning signs should be posted in hazardous areas.	Employees should know how to act in emergency situations.	Mandatory			
1.8	Do the employees have decent working conditions, access to communication means, and receive feedback from managers/supervisors?	There should be a space for changing clothes and consuming food, with access to drinking water, food storage areas, and a restroom.	A contact person should be identified.	Mandatory			
1.9	Is the transport designated for product transfer clean and properly maintained?	During harvest, vehicles must be clean before transportation to prevent product contamination.	Vehicles designated for transporting personnel must be safe.	Mandatory			

Use of Drugs							
N2	Requirement	Description	Additional Information	Status	Yes	No	Comment
2.1	Are records kept on the use of approved products for bee protection and treatment? (Use Form 2).	Registered products must be used for bee protection and treatment (in accordance with the requirements of the National Food Agency).	Products approved by the Ministry of Agriculture must be used.	Mandatory			
2.2	Is integrated pest management (IPM) carried out, including prevention, observation, monitoring, and appropriate intervention?	There should be a specialist trained in Integrated Pest Management (IPM) who is involved in the decision-making process on this matter.	Evidence of integrated pest management (IPM) should be provided regarding diseases.	Mandatory			

Production, Packaging, and Storage Area							
N3	Requirement	Description	Additional Information	Status	Yes	No	Comment
3.1	Is the primary processing (extraction) and storage of honey carried out in a clean area?	The floor, walls, ceiling, doors, and windows of the area should be clean. No windows or glass should be broken. Rodents, animals, and insects should be excluded from this area (e.g., bees, wasps, flies, dogs, cats, etc.), and proper ventilation should be ensured.	Smoking and eating should not be allowed (except in designated areas). Appropriate signs should be posted.	Mandatory			
3.2	Is the honey storage container placed in a clean area?	Jars, buckets, and tubs should be protected from dust and made of food-safe materials. The use of aluminum or tinned containers is not allowed.	Boxes and other packaging materials should be clean to prevent product contamination.	Mandatory			
3.3	In the area designated for honey classification, lifting, and storage, does the non-breakable lamp have a protective cover?	The unbreakable lamp should be placed near the production/packaging line to prevent physical contamination of the product.	All lamps should be protected against breakage. They should not be made of transparent glass or plastic.	Mandatory			

Chemicals, Equipment, and Storage							
N4	Requirement	Description	Additional Information	Status	Yes	No	Comment
4.1	Are veterinary products stored and locked in an isolated, dry, cool, and dark place?	There should be a sign on the storage for bee care products, and only authorized personnel should have access to it.	Only authorized personnel should have access to the key.	Mandatory			
4.2	Does the storage area for veterinary products meet the appropriate conditions?	Ventilation, humidity, and lighting should be controlled. Shelves should be made of non-absorbent materials (e.g., plastic, metal, etc.) to contain any spilled substances.	Chemicals should not be placed directly on the ground.	Mandatory			
4.3	Is the liquid placed on the lower shelf beneath the powder?	Veterinary products with a liquid consistency should be stored separately from powder-form products on the lower shelf.	Chemicals should not be stored directly on the ground.	Mandatory			
4.4	Is there a storage area for protective equipment and clothing for the personnel?	The appropriate equipment is clean and well-organized, including gloves, masks, boots, etc.	It should be stored in an appropriate storage area in a clean condition.	Mandatory			
4.5	Is the bee protective equipment and other necessary tools properly maintained?	Bee protective devices, such as oxalic acid sublimators or other equipment, should be stored properly (they should not be kept in open or damp areas).	After use, the equipment should be cleaned and then properly stored.	Mandatory			
4.6	Are first aid medications readily available?	The storage area should have a first aid manual and appropriate medications. The first aid kit should contain: cotton, alcohol, bandages, scissors, clean water, antihistamine medications, etc.	There should be telephone access to call 112. The storage location for first aid medications should be marked on the farm map.	Mandatory			

4.7	Are invoices and receipts for purchased veterinary products kept?	Receipts and invoices listing the active ingredients for bee protection and treatment should be kept with the seller's signature.	They should be kept.	Mandatory			
4.8	Are waste, including excess chemicals, cleaning solutions, and tank rinse water, managed properly?	Recommended	It is recommended to dilute chemicals with clean water before use.	Recommended			

Traceability and Record Keeping							
N5	Requirement	Description	Additional Information	Status	Yes	No	Comment
5.1	Is the food traceable, and are there records confirming the traceability process? (Use Form 5).	All products sold must be traceable, and the information required for traceability should be available in written form for use as needed.	Beekeepers should have records of honey sold, including the customer's contact information.	Mandatory			
5.2	Does the packaging/box of the GeoGAP-certified product contain the information required for traceability? (Use Form 4).	GeoGAP certificate number, product name (e.g., honey), type, place of origin, and the farmer's contact information.	Every box/packaging container must have a label indicating the information required for traceability.	Mandatory			
5.3	Is the GeoGAP-certified product protected from falsification – is there an identifying mark (container, label)?	Mandatory	Traceability must be ensured. The risk has been properly assessed.	Recommended			
5.4	Are there appropriate labels to distinguish between certified and non-certified honey?	Are there proper labels to differentiate between certified and non-certified honey?	Appropriate labels should be placed on the boxes.	Mandatory			

5.5	In case of defects, is there a honey return procedure at the facility where the honey is poured?	It should be possible at any time to recall sold products based on records indicating the quantity sold and the customer's contact information (Form 5). The reason for the return should be noted in the comments section.	The use of defective or contaminated honey in production is not allowed.	Mandatory			
5.6	Is parallel production or ownership recorded?	Parallel production or ownership should be regulated with appropriate documentation.	Appropriate procedures should be in place.	Mandatory			

Hygiene and First Aid							
N6	Requirement	Description	Additional Information	Status	Yes	No	Comment
6.1	Is the hygiene instruction for the staff placed in a visible location within the packaging area	The handwashing instruction must be in a language understandable to the employees.	The staff should be trained annually.	Mandatory			
6.2	Is there a protocol for pest monitoring and control in the packaging and sorting areas?	There must be a clean toilet and a handwashing point with running water and a hand dryer.	There must be a site plan showing the locations of baits and/or traps.	Mandatory			
6.3	Are records kept regarding cleaning and maintenance?	Control of rodents, insects, and birds: every entry point to the buildings and any point in contact with equipment must be protected against the intrusion of rodents, insects, and birds.	The recordings should be kept for at least 2 years.	Recommended			
6.4	Is first aid training conducted annually?	A responsible person must be identified.	Each apiary must have at least one trained specialist.	Recommended			
6.5	Are there procedures in place for managing accidents and emergencies?	The designated person should be responsible.	It should be a trained staff member.	Recommended			

Management Responsibility							
N7	Requirement	Description	Additional Information	Status	Yes	No	Comment
7.1	Is there a pollution risk assessment in an enterprise	There must be a risk assessment and mitigation plan for all physical, chemical, and microbiological contaminants.	It requires annual update	Mandatory			
7.2	Is self-assessment conducted in accordance with these requirements, and are measures taken to improve it?	Self-assessment must be conducted at least once a year, and appropriate measures must be taken to improve it	An internal audit must be conducted before the external audit inspection.	Recommended			
7.3	Are there written rules for visitor behavior on the farm premises?	There must be appropriate signage (exits, evacuation plan, fire extinguisher, hazard areas).	The signage must be in a language understandable to the employees.	Recommended			
7.4	Is there instruction and documentation for labeling, storage, and sale boxes/containers of GeoGAPcertified products?	The responsible person on the farm must be identified. (Use Form 4)	The records must be kept for at least two years.	Mandatory			

Laboratory Analysis							
N8	Requirement	Description	Additional Information	Status	Yes	No	Comment
	Food Safety Parameters						
8.1	Laboratory analyses must be determined and conducted based on the assessment of food safety risks.	A food safety risk assessment must be conducted, and the need for necessary laboratory analyses must be identified.		Mandatory			
8.2	Have analyses been conducted for nitroimidazole, chloramphenicol, and sulfonamide antibiotics, as well as for lead?	For all GeoGAP-certified products.	The conclusion should be provided by an ISO 17025-accredited lab.	Mandatory*			
8.3	Has a residue analysis (chemical/ pesticides) been provided for bifenthrin, deltamethrin, glyphosate, fluvalinate, and amitraz in GeoGAP-certified honey?	For all GeoGAP-certified products.	The conclusion should be provided by an ISO 17025-accredited lab.	Mandatory*			
	Quality Parameters						
8.4	Have tests been conducted for quality parameters – dust content, moisture content, diastase number, hydroxymethylfurfural content, fructose-to-glucose ratio, sucrose content, pH, and electrical conductivity?	For all GeoGAP-certified products.	It should be ISO 17025-accredited.	Mandatory*			

** Mandatory if the need for these laboratory analyses is identified during the food safety risk assessment.*

NOTES

NOTES

This publication was produced with the support of the European Union. Its content is the sole responsibility of the Farmers' Association of Georgia and may not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

Georgian Farmers' Association
საქართველოს ფერმერთა ასოციაცია

Georgian Farmers' Association (GFA)

www.gfa.org.ge

info@gfa.org.ge

gfa.com.ge

გეო გაპი/Geo GAP