

December 24, 2019

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Office of the State Comptroller
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180-day Response to Office of State Comptroller Audit 2018-S-32

As required by Section 170 of the Executive law, the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets (Department) is submitting its progress and implementation plan of the Department's Division of Plant Industry (Division) for the recommendations made in the Office of the State Comptroller's (OSC) audit 2018-S-32. The Department is constantly exploring opportunities to improve the efficiencies of its programs and is pleased to report the following:

OSC Recommendation 1

Take steps to improve the usability, accuracy and completeness of program data, including implementing procedures for input, quality assurance and utilization of information.

Department Response 1

The Department has acted to improve the usability, accuracy and completeness of program data. As the report mentions, we have developed a database which helps the Division to administer and monitor the program. The database maintains grower information including, but not limited to, application information, a harvest report status, and sampling information. The information in this database is used to track infractions and warning letters.

OSC Recommendation 2

Implement procedures to incorporate periodic data analysis to:

- Identify patterns, outliers, and/or areas of risk for industrial hemp testing;
- Assist in allocating staff resources as effectively as possible; and
- Monitor compliance with State, Federal and Department requirements and practices

Department Response 2

The Division is developing written procedures to assist with data analysis. In addition, a new risk assessment is in development to assist with allocating staff resources, monitor compliance with requirements and practices, and identify patterns and outliers. Several database queries now help identify growers who are not submitting required information; these queries also help the Division develop statistics and performance metrics based on compiled information. Further, the database allows for multiple years of data to be stored and easily accessible.

OSC Recommendation 3

Develop, implement and follow clear and consistent procedures for processing applications, conducting inspections, sampling, and disposing of non-compliant plants, including adherence to the State and Federal limits of THC.

Department Response 3

Procedures are constantly being improved to manage the evolving research program, including procedures for processing applications, conducting inspections, sampling, and disposing of non-compliant plants.

Very truly yours,

Richard A. Ball
Commissioner
New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets