

Name of Farm: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Inspection: \_\_\_\_\_

Site Inspector: \_\_\_\_\_



## Whole Farm/Ranch Inspection Tool

### Evaluation Criteria

To become Food Alliance Certified and market products with Food Alliance's certification seal, an operation must:

1. Comply with all fixed criteria for Food Alliance Certified crops and livestock.
2. Score at or above a 3.0 average in each of the four following areas:
  - a. Reducing pesticide usage,
  - b. Soil and water conservation,
  - c. Safe and fair working conditions, and
  - d. Wildlife habitat conservation.

### Instructions for Use

Production practices are evaluated according to Food Alliance criteria (listed on the next page of this document) and then ranked in four steps. Level 1 is worth 1 point; Level 2 is worth 2 points, and so on. Write the score in the NOTES/SCORE area and then tabulate the points at the end of each section.

Scoring partial points is allowed. *Example:* Half of a farm operation is planted with disease resistant varieties conducive to IPM. You may score 1.5 points, or half the increase between Level 1 and Level 2 as a result of this move toward IPM.

For **PRODUCERS** reviewing this evaluation tool: The scorecard at the end of this document identifies the minimum number of points required for consideration of certification. This is only a guideline for your use, and does not guarantee acceptance of your application.

**INSPECTORS** should make notes on each criterion describing how they arrived at decisions. These notes will provide important background that will be carefully considered in the final certification decision.

**NOTE:** Record keeping is an important facet of Food Alliance certification. Individual record keeping needs to work for an operator and their situation. Inspectors need to feel confident that the method in which a producer keeps records is adequate for Food Alliance certification. Food Alliance encourages producers to improve over time based on the site inspector's scores of the certification criteria.

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## Reducing Pesticide Usage Evaluation Criteria:

### Continuing Education for Reducing Pesticide Usage

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**Level 1.** No continuing education occurs.

**Level 2.** Crop-specific publications are purchased or accessed by web site to aid in management decisions.

**Level 3.** As per Level 2, and manager is a licensed private applicator, and meets all continuing education requirements for licensed private applicators. Manager consults crop advisors, extension agents, pest control consultants and/or other agricultural specialists as needed. Manager attends education seminars on the following subject matters (check all that apply):

- Biological pest control.
- Low risk pesticides.
- Innovative crop rotations.
- Variety selection.
- Pesticide application safety.
- Techniques to reduce amount of pesticides applied.
- Pest and disease management.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 4.** As per Level 3, and manager participates (or has participated in the last 5 years) in on-farm testing of pesticide reduction strategies to evaluate their usefulness.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

### IPM Planning

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**Note for inspectors:** Allow for flexibility in record keeping with larger vs. smaller operations. Employed managers or tenant farmers need to have written documentation.

**Level 1.** New plantings are established without regard to environmental impact. Planning to prevent pests is rare. For ongoing pest control, curative measures are emphasized rather than preventive, i.e. herbicides are applied to the same weeds year after year in more or less the same place.

**Level 2.** Crop losses to pests are reduced by the planned use of preventive measures. Managers may have a written farm plan detailing the following provisions or can communicate the methods they use for monitoring pests and their phenology, weather, and can identify pest management decisions based on this monitoring. At least **two** of the following indicators of IPM practices are seen:

- Pest and disease resistant varieties used.
- Field scouting is practiced.
- Crop rotation is practiced.
- Site selection is a criterion for crop establishment.
- Canopy humidity management (plant density, irrigation, raised beds) is practiced.
- Soil or plant tissue sampling informs fertility management.
- Field insect population sampling informs pest management.
- Field sanitation is practiced as a preventative measure.
- Insect phenology/degree day modeling informs pest management.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

For **Range-based operations**, IPM planning can be used for weed control.

Evidence of the following practices is discussed or observed. Check as applicable:

- An annual inventory or monitoring activity is performed to determine location of new weed infestations and effectiveness of previous year's treatment methods.
- Grazing management
- Herbicides are applied using spot spraying techniques, i.e. with backpack sprayers
- Soil disturbance
- Competitive plant species are intentionally seeded
- Constant monitoring for problems or plant species of concern
- Removal of singular weed species
- Control methods applied based on plant phenology, so they have the most impact on target weed.
- Natural or mechanical re-vegetation with desirable species to maximize site usefulness and weed competition, thus limiting potential re-invasion.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 3.** As per Level 2, and **three** of the above practices are used.

**Level 4.** As per Level 3, and **four** of the above practices are used.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

## **Weather Monitoring**

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**Level 1.** Weather is not monitored.

**Level 2.** Important weather parameters are monitored on site, or a site-specific weather service is employed. Pesticides are not applied when weather conditions are not appropriate (e.g. wind or precipitation episodes are expected, or during adiabatic barometric pressure conditions.).

**Level 3.** As per Level 2, and varieties are selected to avoid weather-related diseases and disorders common to the location. **Note:** Provide notation when varieties are fixed.

**Level 4.** As per Level 3, and weather data is used to schedule pesticide applications for weather-dependent pests (phenology or degree day models), irrigation, etc.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

### **Crop Monitoring / Field Scouting**

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Note: This needs to be re-written to include range-based operations, where management includes scouting for weeds.

**Level 1.** Crops/Fields/Rangelands are not monitored.

**Level 2.** Production records are maintained including inputs (e.g. chemicals, fertilizers, animals, irrigation, etc.) yields, and quality.

**Level 3.** As per Level 2, and crops/fields/rangelands are regularly scouted (weekly, or some other schedule sensible for the area) or sampled for insects, diseases, weeds and disorders. There is evidence that threshold monitoring is an important part of the pest management process. Inspector sees at least **one** of the following indicators of monitoring/scouting:

- Pheromone traps
- Sticky traps
- Sweep nets
- Hand lenses / binoculars
- Flags marking field sampling locations
- Scouting records or notes
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 4.** As per Level 3, and scouting records / crop-monitoring records are collected and maintained. These records are reviewed and used to inform and improve pest management strategies and/or scouting methods in subsequent seasons.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

## **Lowest Effective Application Rates / Reducing Application Rates**

**Level 1.** Pesticide application rates are selected according to manufacturer's label.

**Level 2.** Reduced dosage strategies such as spot spraying or alternate row spraying are employed *when the target pest does not require complete coverage*.

**Level 3.** Applications are chosen (select circumstance(s) below):

- To match density and severity of the pest (insect, disease, weed) problem.
- To preserve beneficial insects.
- When using concentrate (low-volume) applications.
- To account for the density of plantings.
- To account for the size of plants.
- Border sprays.
- Based on tree-row volume (canopy cover, tree size).
- Number of applications made.
- Frequency of applications.
- Using novel spray technology.
- Spot applications are made (i.e. for weeds).
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 4.** As per Level 3, and synthetic pesticides are not used. All pesticide (synthetic and organic) toxicity rankings are maintained with pesticide records and tabulated annually to indicate progress in reducing overall use of high toxicity pesticides.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

## **Pesticide Selection, Justification and Resistance Management**

**Level 1.** All of the following must apply:

- Only pesticides registered in the state as approved for target pests and crop (or livestock) are used.
- Pesticide mixtures prohibited by the label are not used.

**Level 2.** For applications made using equipment covering larger areas, i.e. boom applications, pesticide selections and recommendations are made by licensed applicators and/or licensed consultants. (N/A for spot applications of non-RU pesticides)

**AND** All pesticides used that are at risk of developing pest resistance are mixed or alternated with other pesticides of a different chemical class/mode of action, starting with the first year of use.

**Level 3.** As per Level 2, and the timing of applications and selection of pesticide materials correspond with scouting records or monitoring.

**Level 4.** When a control measure is deemed necessary, every effort is made to use reduced toxicity pesticides (labeled "Caution"), beneficial organisms, and/or cultural controls.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

### **Pesticide Record Keeping**

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**Note:** Pesticide records are a key element of the inspection process and are the only way inspectors can verify activities in the past.

**Level 1.** All legal requirements for pesticide record keeping are met. [USDA requires, and states enforce, the following records for all applications of restricted use pesticides: name of applicator, date, field location or area, area treated, pesticide name and EPA registration number, total amount applied, and crop.]

**Level 2.** As per Level 1, and pesticide records include **at least one** of the following additional pieces of information:

- Crop / Animal growth stage
- Disease / Pest growth stage
- Purpose of the pesticide treatment, i.e. target pest
- Threshold used to guide pesticide treatment
- Current weather data, e.g. weather conditions on day of application
- Accumulated weather data, e.g. growing degree days to determine pest outbreaks
- Effectiveness of pesticide treatment
- Calibration records
- If commercial companies apply pesticides on this operation, those records are requested and maintained on site.

**Level 3.** As per Level 2, and pesticide records are kept for longer than two years. Grower can relate how records are used year-to-year to examine trends and aid management decisions.

**Level 4.** As per Level 3, and pesticide records include **at least two** additional pieces of information listed in Level 2. Grower can relate which pesticides are no longer used on the farm (and why), as well as newer pesticides that are being used / tried.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

## Application Equipment Calibration and Pesticide Drift Management

**Level 1.** Application equipment that can be calibrated (insecticide, fungicide, herbicide growth regulator, fertilizer application equipment) is calibrated less than once per year. Applications are made only with equipment designed for that use. Nozzles are checked and replaced when necessary.

**Level 2.** Check the following, as applicable:

- Products are mixed according to label directions.
- Application equipment is calibrated at the start of each season, if designed to be calibrated.
- Surfactants are used to minimize drift when recommended by the label.
- Applications are made only under weather conditions that minimize off-site movement (e.g., low wind speed, not raining).
- Commercial application companies are hired on this operation.

**Level 3.** As per Level 2, and

- Spot applications are used exclusively on this operation.

**OR all** of the following:

- The method of calibration is communicated to the inspector via written calibration records or verbal description. **Note: Inspectors must feel confident that the method of calibration is adequate. Provide notation as to calibration methods used.**
- When possible, calibration is adjusted to control amount applied and distribution of application (e.g., air blast sprayer nozzle distribution matches plant canopy size and shape).
- Buffer areas are established around fields to help reduce drift.

**Level 4.** As per Level 3, and **at least one** of the following:

- Application equipment is calibrated more than once per season or uses technology that continuously calibrates.
- Technology is employed to keep particle size above 150 microns, **depending on the type of equipment and pesticide used.**
- Pesticide application equipment is selected and maintained for site-specific conditions (e.g., hooded sprayers for windy sites).

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

## Hazardous Material Storage

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**Level 1.** Storage facilities for hazardous materials (crop and livestock pesticides, fertilizers, fuel, lubricants) meet legal requirements (where applicable). Hazardous materials are stored in original, clearly labeled containers.

**Level 2.** Storage is at least 150 ft. away from wells and 200 ft. away from surface water or sources of flame. **Four** of the following management practices are used (check off as applicable):

- Empty hazardous material containers are triple-rinsed before return to supplier, disposal in an approved recycling program or licensed landfill.
- Tank rinsate is sprayed out on labeled crops at labeled rate or less.
- Storage size and organization is adequate to separate flammables from other materials.
- Pesticides are organized by insecticides, fungicides, herbicides, fertilizers, etc
- Containers are organized to prevent spillage when storing/removing materials.
- Non-hazardous materials (e.g., seed, livestock feeds) are kept away from hazardous materials.
- Storage area is clearly marked on the outside with warning signs.
- Flammables are kept out of direct sunlight.
- Dry materials are stored above liquids.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 3.** As per Level 2, and **three** of the following:

- Storage area is locked.
- Storage area has a sealed floor.
- Storage area is well ventilated (no strong chemical smell).
- Inventory is managed on a first-in, first-out basis.
- A current written inventory is maintained and accessible in the event of an emergency.

**Level 4.** Hazardous wastes are limited due to success in eliminating use of pesticides labeled "Danger" or "Warning". **OR**, as per Level 3 and storage area is "state of the art", containing all of the following:

- It is located in a separate facility or building.
- The storage area is diked/curbed to contain spills.
- Capacity of the diking system is at least 125% of the largest quantity stored.
- Shelves are lipped and of an impermeable material.
- Road access is adequate for delivery and emergency vehicles.
- Lock allows free exit from within when locked.
- Valves on (large) storage tanks are locked when not in use (if applicable).
- Storage is downwind (prevailing wind) from housing, play or livestock areas.
- An emergency plan is posted, directing people what to do in case of an emergency.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

## Food Alliance Prohibited Pesticide List

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### \*Criteria for Prohibition:

Laboratory tests results (as supplied to the US EPA for product registration) show the LD<sub>50</sub> for acute mammalian toxicity is 30 mg/kg or lower.

\*\*Please contact Food Alliance for the comprehensive list of Trade Names

Please check the appropriate box if the operation does or does not use the following pesticides:

Check Yes Used	Check Not Used	ACTIVE INGREDIENT	CHEMICAL CLASS	A.I. USE	Acute Toxicity LD <sub>50</sub> (mg/kg) *	SOME COMMON TRADE NAMES **
		Aldicarb	Carbamate	I	0.5	Temik, etc.
		Phorate	Organophosphate (OP)	I	2	Phorate 10G, Thimet, etc.
		Terbufos	OP	I	2	Counter, etc.
		Disulfoton	OP	I	3	Disyston, Disystox, etc.
		methyl Parathion, parathion-methyl, or metafos	OP	I	6	Parathion, Metaphos, Penncap-M, etc.
		Oxamyl	Carbamate	I,N	6	Blade, Oxamil, Vydate, etc.
		ethyl Parathion	OP	I	6.8	Niran or Phoskil, etc.
		Carbofuran	Carbamate	I	8	Furadan, Rampart, etc.
		methyl bromide	Not available	I	15	Brom-o-Gas, Bromomethane, Terr-o-Gas, etc.
		Fenamiphos	OP	N	15	Nemacur and Phenamiphos AND formulations
		Azinphos-methyl or metiltriaozion	OP	I	16	Guthion, etc.
		Methomyl, metomil and mesomile	Carbamate	I	17	Lannate, etc.
		Ethoprop	OP	I	26	Mocap
		Strychnine	Not available	R	30	(Sometimes Nux Vomica)

Check Yes Used	Check Not Used	ACTIVE INGREDIENT	CHEMICAL CLASS	A.I. USE	Acute Toxicity LD <sub>50</sub> (mg/kg)*	SOME COMMON TRADE NAMES**
		KEY:				
		Insecticide		I		
		Nematicide		N		
		Rodenticide		R		

### Reducing Pesticide Usage Scores:

CRITERIA	SCORE/LEVEL
Continuing Education For Reducing Pesticide Usage	
IPM Planning	
Weather Monitoring	
Crop Monitoring / Scouting	
Lowest Effective Application Rates / Reducing Application Rates	
Pesticide Selection and Justification	
Pesticide Record Keeping	
Application Equipment Calibration and Pesticide Drift Management	
Hazardous Material Storage	
<b>TOTAL</b>	

Possible Scores:        36                    9 Criteria @ 4 points each.

Subtract N/A:    -        \_\_\_\_\_            Add 4 points for each N/A.

Applicable:        \_\_\_\_\_            Subtract N/A points from Possible (36)

SCORE:            \_\_\_\_\_%            Calculate: Total / Applicable\*100

## Soil and Water Conservation Evaluation Criteria

### Continuing Education for Soil and Water Conservation

**Level 1:** Manager demonstrates little or no knowledge about soil and water conservation. Current operation reflects this knowledge gap, with no special planning or action considered to prevent soil erosion, conserve water, and protect water quality.

**Level 2:** Manager relies on general interest Ag publications (newspapers and general newsletters, etc.) to learn about soil and water conservation. In the course of the discussion, manager demonstrates a basic understanding of the issue area.

**Level 3:** Manager uses technical, subject matter-specific information sources to aid in soil and water conservation. Farm or ranch manager can discuss these issues and communicates technical knowledge of the following specific soil and water conservation issues (check off as applicable):

- Erosion prevention strategies
- Nutrient budgets
- Innovative irrigation systems and management
- Soil quality monitoring
- Precision application of plant nutrients
- Incorporation of crop residue or compost
- Cover cropping
- Conservation tillage
- Riparian habitat and buffer zones around surface waters
- Carbon sequestration in agricultural soils
- Building soil organic matter and soil carbon levels
- Soil building crop rotations<sup>i</sup>
- Soil ecology
- Soil biota
- Water conservation practices (list practices used)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 4:** As per Level 3, and manager participates (or has participated in the last 5 years) in either on-farm testing of soil and/or water conservation strategies to evaluate their usefulness, or, participates in a local or regional water quality council or organization. Manager also documents performance of on-farm soil and water conservation practices.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

### **Buffer Strips Around Waterways**

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**Level 1:** Cultivated areas alongside waterways are currently managed to allow the following to occur less than 25 feet from water's edge. Check all that apply:

- There is evidence of sediment or farm effluent reaching watercourses.
- Riparian and/or wetland areas appear in a degraded state (e.g., eroded, areas of unusually sparse vegetation, hummocky, etc.).

**Level 2:** Cultivated areas alongside waterways have been managed to achieve the following greater than 25 feet from water's edge. Check all that apply:

- Sedimentation appears to be contained by the buffer.
- Stream banks seem stable with no evidence of falling into the watercourse.

**Level 3:** As the slope of the adjoining field increases, the width of the riparian buffer zone is increased to adequately protect the riparian area from erosion and run-off.<sup>ii</sup> Riparian buffer zones are sufficiently vegetated to prevent erosion and the movement of agricultural chemicals and sediment from adjoining fields into surface waters. Check all that apply:

- Grass filter strips have been established and maintained in fields above waterway.
- The farm is in no-till production.
- Livestock access to riparian areas is managed.
- The farm has transitioned into a pasture-based livestock system.
- Riparian buffer areas are an average of 35-feet or more in width.
- The use of buffers and upland erosion-control measures has resulted in the prevention of the movement of sediment, nutrients, organics and pesticides beyond the edge of the field.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 4:** As per Level 3, and all of the following must apply (**if applicable**):

- On slopes of 10 percent or greater, riparian zones are no less than 50 feet wide in any location.
- Riparian zones and buffer areas are adequately vegetated with a diverse mix of species containing greater than 50 percent of mixed multi-aged, native and non-invasive non-native species.
- Newly established ground cover plantings include a diverse mix of adapted grasses and forbs native to the site.
- Ecologically appropriate, trees and shrubs provide a second-story of cover and habitat, especially along stretches of streams or rivers in need of bank stabilization and shade. The use of native species is recommended when available.
- Once established, practices are managed appropriately and maintained to ensure effectiveness.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

### **Soil Erosion Prevention**

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**Level 1:** All applicable federal, state and local erosion-related legal requirements are met (if applicable, for e.g., buffer zones, management of highly erodible areas).

**Level 2:** As per Level 1, and soil erosion is monitored regularly.

If signs of erosion are present, they are as follows (check all that apply):

- Soil deposits exist at field margins as evidence of erosion.
- Channels and gullies are present
- Erosion pedestals are present.
- Wind scoured areas, blowouts or depositional areas are present.

- Surface-crusts are visible.
- Damage to seedlings from wind erosion is evident.
- Bare soil and loss of soil from around plant roots is evident.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

If erosion is present or reported, the manager must employ at least one landscape improvement or cultural practice to score at this level:

- Diversion ditches
- Terracing
- Contour farming
- Contour buffer strips
- Stripcropping
- Cross wind trap strips or herbaceous wind barriers for wind erosion control
- Windbreaks/shelterbelts for wind erosion control
- Farm pond or wetland managed as sediment trap.
- Livestock managed to reduce or prevent erosion.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 3:** As per Level 2, and **at least two** of the following cultural practices are integrated into the cropping or livestock system (check all that apply):

- Cover crops or inter-seeding are used.
- No-till, direct-seed, mulch-till, strip-till or other restricted tillage system is used.
- Crop residue is retained on field during critical erosion period.
- Time controlled/intensive rotational grazing system is employed to incorporate plant matter.
- Mulches are used.
- Organic matter (e.g. manures, composts) is incorporated into fields.
- Perennial crops are integrated into the farm/ranch.
- Long-term crops, like alfalfa, are incorporated into the rotation.
- A ley crop is included in the rotation.
- Conservation crop rotation
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 4:** As per Level 3, and **at least four** practices are used from Level 3. Signs of erosion (see Level 2) are very minimal or absent. Practices are designed for each field and there is an evaluation of the effectiveness of implemented practices.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

### **Tillage Selection Practices and Soil Compaction Prevention.**

**Level 1:** The possible soil-degrading effects of tillage are rarely considered on the farm. Tillage operations are conducted with minimal concern for soil productivity and compaction.

**Level 2:** The farm considers tillage as a tool to be used judiciously. A tillage system that conserves soil (lessens soil erosion and compaction) and/or improves soil health is used on the farm. The following indicators are observed (check all that apply):

- Non-inversion tillage methods are selected that result in crop residue left on the soil surface during critical erosion periods (e.g. conservation tillage)
- Tillage is restricted to specific portions of fields (e.g. strip tillage).
- Farm activities involving heavy machinery are not performed when soils are wet.
- Farm traffic is generally controlled (e.g. use of field borders, tractor paths and lanes within fields for machinery).
- Farm vehicles are operated with improved load distributions.
- Precision agricultural-guidance systems are used.
- Cover crops are planted to improve drainage and increase the tilth of the soil
- Long-term crops, like alfalfa, are incorporated into the rotation.
- Manures or compost are added to soils on a regular basis to improve tilth.
- Conservation cover (permanent vegetative cover) is planted between rows in orchards, vineyards, and other perennial row crops (e.g. caneberries and blueberries).
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 3:** As per Level 2, and evidence of success is seen. Check all that apply:

- Farm records show gradual increases in soil organic matter.
- Monitoring records show a decrease in soil compaction.
- Evidence of erosion is minimal or not present.
- Soil quality indicators are all positive.
- Soil tilth appears good.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 4:** As per Level 3 and the farm manager selects production systems based on any of the following. Check all that apply:

- Producer is in the process of or has recently converted acreage to perennial crops.
- The farm is entirely in no-till, direct-seed, or other agricultural production system that uses crop rotations and other strategies to limit inputs.
- The farm employs pasture or rotational grazing systems for livestock production.
- Producer evaluates and documents improved efficiency of crop production resulting from adoption of conservation practices.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

## **Irrigation Systems**

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**Note:** Flood irrigation can be managed in perennial systems to increase overall field productivity, without causing erosion (in or below the field) and to maintain good litter distribution.

**Level 1:** An irrigation system is used that appears inefficient and may allow water, nutrients, pesticides and/or soil particles to leave the field.

**Level 2:** An irrigation system using at least one of the following improvements is used (check all that apply):

- Fields with furrow irrigation have been laser leveled.
- Fields with furrow irrigation use gated head pipe.
- Center pivot systems use drop nozzles.
- Flood irrigation used only on perennial fields.
- Sprinkler systems make use of low pressure, micro-sprinklers.
- Trickle tape is used when appropriate for the crop.
- Soil moisture sensors are used to monitor moisture.
- Crop / range modeling is used to predict plant demand.
- A weather data system is used to estimate crop water use.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 3:** As per Level 2, and **three** improvements are checked.

**Level 4:** As per Level 3, and **four** improvements are checked. Improvements in water use efficiency for the farm are documented.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

### **Irrigation Water Conservation**

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**Level 1:** Water use or need is not monitored or planned.

**Level 2:** Water use is monitored and data is recorded OR annual planning for available water is a priority (as applies to regions with seasonal water availability). **(Inspectors: describe how water use is monitored in notes.)**

**Level 3:** As per Level 2, and at least **three** of the following irrigation management behaviors are evident (check all that apply):

- Irrigation activities are initiated based on soil moisture testing.
- Water use data is analyzed and interpreted for managers and staff for the purpose of improving water conservation techniques.
- Irrigation practices consider soil type and infiltration rates.
- Weather information is factored into the timing of irrigation activities.
- Crop demand or consumptive use is factored into irrigation activities.
- Drought resistant varieties are selected.
- Soil moisture is conserved through reduced tillage and soil organic matter conservation.
- Crops are produced without irrigation.
- Mulches and ground covers are used.

- Manures (animal and/or green) are incorporated into fields and improvement in soil organic matter is detected.
- Animal watering systems that incorporate on-farm water storage (e.g. ponds) are established and maintained.
- Water is collected and recycled for other uses.
- Farmer/rancher participates in a local or regional body responsible for water issues such as over-allocation, groundwater recharge, stream flow, etc.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 4:** At least **five** items checked in Level 3.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

## **Nutrient Management**

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**Level 1:** There is no nutrient management plan in place. Neither soils nor plant tissues are monitored for nutrient levels.

**Level 2:** Fertilizer applications are performed using at least two of the following nutrient management practices (check all that apply):

- Plant tissue testing is completed at regular intervals appropriate to the crop.
- Soil pH is monitored and adjusted to ensure proper nutrient availability and uptake.
- Soil and/or plant tissue tests are used to determine fertilizer application rates.
- Fertilizer applications comply with University or Extension crop and region-specific recommendations for rates and timing to minimize leaching and runoff while meeting plant needs.
- Manager considers soil type, previous crops, expected yields, and manures/composts in fertilizer applications and account for these in nutrient budgets.
- Split and /or banded applications are used.
- On-farm composting of animal manures.
- Organic fertilizers are used (e.g. animal manures, green manures) to meet but not exceed plant needs.
- Mulching is used to reduce nutrient leaching.
- If applicable, all state or local nutrient and fertilizer-related regulations are met (e.g., livestock density, manure storage and handling, safety, application equipment operation and calibration).
- Producer can describe how their operation recycles nutrients, and how their operation balances nutrient inputs with nutrient use.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 3:** **Three** practices are used from Level 2. Additionally, a nutrient management plan is in place that includes two of the following:

- Procedures for advanced nutrient application techniques designed to reduce waste (e.g., banding, side-dressing rather than broadcasting).
- Precision agricultural-guidance systems are used.
- Proper crediting for animal or green manure applications or composts.
- Includes consideration of fertilizer type for both plant nutrient needs and environmental impact (broadly defined).
- A procedure to record observations on important indicators of success, like impacts on surface water on-site (e.g., algal blooms, excessive vegetation), etc.
- One of the following three nutrient requirements is met exclusively with organic, noncommercial sources: nitrogen (N), phosphorous (P), or potassium (K), to meet but not exceed plant needs
- Manager is knowledgeable about healthy soils and how livestock interact with them (if livestock are part of the operation).

**Level 4:** Four practices used from Level 2. Additionally, as per Level 3, and the nutrient management plan is written and completed with the assistance of a professional (when available). Important indicators of success are evident (check all that are evident):

- Crop rotations are planned to maximize conservation and recycling of nutrients.
- Majority of nutrients provided by on-farm sources.
- Use of precision fertilizer applications based on multiple samplings per field (with varying application rates per field or block).
- Advanced soil quality indicators related to nutrient retention and uptake (e.g., organic matter content, soil aggregation) are monitored and improvements documented.
- Livestock numbers are managed to avoid exceeding the capacity of the land area to handle nutrients in waste. Producer documents nutrient plan calculations.
- Farmer or rancher participates in education, cost-share and/or demonstration programs related to nutrient management planning.
- Manger maintains records to demonstrate continuous improvement in nutrient management.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

### **Soil Organic Matter Management**

---

**Level 1.** Soil organic matter is not monitored. Inorganic fertilizers supply the majority of plant nutrients. Fertilizers may be applied without regard to soil testing or crop monitoring.

**Level 2.** Soil organic matter is considered a factor in soil management. Of the following practices shown to increase soil organic matter content, manager employs at least one (check all that apply):

- No-till, direct-seed, strip-till, or other restricted tillage practice.

- Planting of seasonal cover crops that produce high volumes of organic material or root mass.
- Conservation cover (permanent vegetative cover) is planted between rows in orchards, vineyards, and other perennial row crops (e.g. caneberries and blueberries).
- Use of mulches (natural or synthetic).
- Regular additions of organic matter (e.g. animal manures, green manures, composts).
- Strip cropping with annuals and perennials.
- Using the least oxidizing inorganic fertilizers (e.g. ammonium nitrate versus anhydrous ammonia).
- Integration of perennial crops (e.g. orchards, vineyards, berries).
- Banding or split applications of fertilizers.
- Precision agricultural-guidance systems are used.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 3.** As per Level 2, soil organic matter management is a priority with at least **two** practices used from Level 2. One must be use of cover crops **or** no-till practices. Changes in soil organic matter resulting from implemented practices are documented.

**Level 4.** As per Level 3, and managers have eliminated use of inorganic fertilizers due to the successful implementation of soil quality and soil fertility management activities. Soil tests must be taken annually, and include organic matter content to score at this level. Manager has developed and documented a plan for improvement on each individual field.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

**Soil and Water Conservation Scores:**

CRITERIA	SCORE/LEVEL
Continuing Education for Soil and Water Conservation	
Buffer Strips Around Waterways	
Soil Erosion Prevention	
Tillage Selection Practices and Soil Compaction Prevention	
Irrigation Systems	
Irrigation Water Conservation	
Nutrient Management	
Soil Organic Matter Management	
<b>TOTAL</b>	

Possible Scores:            32            8 Criteria @ 4 points each.

Subtract N/A: - \_\_\_\_\_ Add 4 points for each N/A.  
Applicable: \_\_\_\_\_ Subtract N/A points from Possible (32)  
SCORE: \_\_\_\_\_% Calculate: Total / Applicable\*100

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## Safe and Fair Working Conditions Evaluation Criteria

**Note:** For operators who used the Food Alliance Employee Manual Template: the template was provided by Food Alliance as a service to producers seeking Food Alliance certification and is not intended to be a legal document. Every effort was made to include language that conforms to Food Alliance certification criteria for the following criteria, when all bracketed items are replaced with relevant information. However, fulfillment of said criteria is subject to verification by the site inspector and certification process.

**Note:** Food Alliance intends to implement a qualification necessitating written employee policies dependent on the number of employees.

### Minors, children and family members in the workplace

---

**Level 1:** Employer complies with laws regarding employment of minors. Check if applicable:

- Employer has no policy or procedure regulating non-employees access to the workplace.

**Level 2:** Employer has a written policy designed to keep ALL non-employees out of the workplace. The policy exempts family members, however it states that children of the farm family (under age of 12) must be supervised when around the workplace area and in fields.

**Level 3:** As per Level 2, and at least **one** of the following items dealing with family and/or minors under employ:

- Employer only employs legal minors during non-school hours.
- Employer has special training for minors and/or farm family's children (see 4-H guidelines for child safety on farms).
- Employer communicates with parents of minors regarding the employment of their children.
- Employer provides childcare for employees' children.
- Trains supervisors on the special management needs of minors.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Note: If the operation does not employ minors, that can be an item for 'other'.

**Level 4:** As per Level 3, and **two** items checked.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

## **Grievance procedures and policies**

---

**Level 1:** Management has no policy and makes no suggestions to employees that they may raise grievances.

**Level 2:** A management policy exists that allows/encourages employees to raise concerns, safety issues, or grievances without fear of termination. Check at least one or all that apply:

- The policy is verbally communicated to employees either at the time of hire or implementation.
- Employees are directed to a designated individual with whom to raise concerns/grievances.
- If needed, employer can speak with employee in native language, or someone on staff is available to translate.

**Level 3:** As per Level 2, and the policies are communicated in writing. The following must apply:

- The policy is accompanied by a set of procedures that describes how grievances or concerns will be handled.
- Employees are given the name of the person with whom to file the grievance.

**Level 4:** As per Level 3, and the employer takes steps to encourage and get feedback regularly from employees. Employer schedules meetings to communicate with employees about their concerns, or has an open door policy in writing.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

## **Recognizing and supporting employee input for workplace improvement.**

---

**Note:** Inspectors can give half points here if employer is encouraging employee input but the policy is not necessarily in writing. Provide notation.

**Level 1:** Employer or managers discourage employees from forming groups or discussing issues.

**Level 2:** Employer or managers verbally encourage employees to discuss work place issues and develop ideas for improving the workplace.

**Level 3:** As per Level 2, and employer or manager has a policy in writing encouraging employees to develop ideas for improving the workplace.

**Level 4:** As per Level 3, and the operator supports group activities with space for meeting **and/or** time set aside during the workday for meetings.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

### **Farm Worker Support Services**

---

**Level 1:** When approached by employees or third party representatives, employer is not receptive. Employer communicates this un-receptiveness to the inspector.

**Level 2:** Employer works with groups of employees or third party representatives (**any person representing a group or organization dedicated to welfare, safety, labor unions, legal services, etc**) to improve workplace conditions (check all that apply):

- Employer meets with union representatives when asked by the employees.
- Employer meets with community groups to discuss health and welfare.
- Employer cooperates with groups to build workplace productivity.
- Employer cooperates with groups to ID training needs.
- Employer cooperates with groups to ID safety concerns.
- Employer has addressed the recommendations of third party representatives.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 3:** Employer has a written policy communicating openness to working with third party representatives **and/or** groups of employees.

**Level 4:** As per Level 3, and the policy describes a timeline or process for responding to recommendations made by third party representatives.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

### **Discipline process**

---

**Level 1:** There is no policy or procedure in place requiring a uniform disciplinary process that maps out the steps that may lead to termination. When terminations occur, it involves no process of coaching to improve performance.

**Level 2:** There is a written policy in place but is not distributed to managers. Firing may take place at the will and by the terms of the manager.

**Level 3:** As per Level 2, and written policy is distributed to new hires and given to all managers. Firing of an employee comes at the end of a stepped, progressive discipline process.

**Level 4:** As per Level 3, and all managers are trained to implement policy uniformly. The policy must describe a process to improve performance problems.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

### **Nondiscrimination policy**

---

**Level 1:** Employer has no written policy claiming non-discrimination practices consistent with the law are in effect.

**Level 2:** Employer has a written policy describing non-discrimination practices consistent with the law. The following items are discussed (check all that apply):

- Age
- Race
- Third party affiliation
- Religion
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- National origin
- Disability
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 3:** As per Level 2, and employer provides training for managers for implementing non-discrimination policy.

**Note:** If an owner is also the manager, his/her own training applies here.

**Level 4:** As per Level 3, and employer extends training to employees.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

### **Hiring practices and communicating expectations and policies**

---

**Level 1:** Employer does not communicate with employees about job expectations or workplace policies.

**Level 2:** Employer verbally communicates job expectations and policies at the time of hire.

**Level 3:** Employer gives new hires a workplace policies document. Check all that apply:

- This written document is in both English and applicable language for non-English speakers.
- New employees are given a sign off sheet acknowledging receipt of the policies.
- New employees are given a sign off sheet describing job expectations.
- New employees are given a sign off sheet detailing the terms of employment (pay rate, work day, and length of employment).
- Employer gives some limited job training and orientation specific to the task.
- Employer has an orientation checklist that is kept on file to keep a record of the orientation/training activity.
- Shows educational materials such as videos, manuals, etc, for safety and/or tasks specific to the jobs.
- Employer has taken a cultural sensitivity class in order to better relate with employees.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 4:** As per Level 3, and employer offers employees a written employee contract detailing terms and conditions of employment.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

### **Work force development and new skills training**

---

**Note:** For seasonal laborers doing un-skilled tasks, this criterion is non-applicable. It does apply for laborers performing skilled tasks.

**Level 1:** Employer provides no training opportunities for employees.

**Level 2:** Employer allows limited unpaid leave for employees to pursue training.

**Level 3:** Employer encourages workplace training by providing paid time off and/or tuition for job related educational activities.

**Level 4:** As per Level 3, and employer offers paid leave to employees for training relevant to required tasks.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

## Compensation practices

---

Level 1: Employer meets federal laws for pay period, at least every two weeks, and meets minimum wage laws. Employer has a system to track piece rate to ensure minimum wage is met. Employer keeps records on each employee.

Level 2: As per Level 1, and employer has a progressive compensation system, employing at least one of the following practices (Check all that apply):

- Employer adjusts piece rates to reward seniority or performance, or changing crop conditions.
- Employer gives bonuses to reward productivity of the group.
- Employer shares profits.
- Employer distributes work opportunities fairly, not giving favorite workers best opportunities.
- Employer conducts regular performance evaluations, rewarding good performance with pay raises.
- When employer gives pay advances to employees, they have system to communicate the expectations to prevent confusion on the part of the employee.
  
- Employer gives bonus wages to reward excellent work.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Level 3: As per Level 2, and employer uses **two** practices from the list.

Level 4: As per Level 3, and employer uses **three** practices from the list.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

## Employee benefits

---

**Note:** Non-applicable for seasonal-only labor.

**Level 1:** Employer provides unemployment and/or workers compensation insurance.

**Level 2:** Employer provides one of the following:

- Health insurance
- Disability insurance
- Life insurance
- Subsidizes cost of or provides transportation to employees
- Arranges for community groups to provide assistance to workers
- Sick pay
- Vacation pay
- Reduced cost housing for full time employees
- Housing allowance, special compensation to cover housing costs
- Migrant worker/temporary worker housing at reduced rates
- Employer gives bonus wages to reward excellent work

Other : \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 3:** As per Level 2, and employer provides **two** benefits from the list.

**Level 4:** As per Level 3, and employer provides **at least three** benefits from the list.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

### **Worker housing and family support services**

---

**Level 1:** Employer provides no housing, referrals, and/or services to employees.

**Level 2:** Employer provides housing **AND** housing meets legal standards.

**And/or** employer refers workers to community resources for housing and other health and welfare information. Check all that apply:

- Employer keeps a list of community resources to give to employees.
- Employer keeps a list of housing opportunities to give to employees.
- Employer offers childcare services or stipend.
- Employer participates at a high level (leadership, donations, etc.) in community groups dedicated to increasing housing opportunities.
- Employer donates money and other resources to local housing groups.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 3:** As per Level 2, and **two** items checked, if housing not provided.

**Level 4:** As per Level 3, and at least **three** items checked, if housing not provided.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

### **Pesticide handler/applicator safety**

---

**Level 1.** All legal requirements are met for protection of handler/applicators and others who handle hazardous materials including crop and livestock pesticides, fertilizers, fuel, lubricants, solvents, etc., including protective equipment, re-entry and pre-harvest intervals and posting appropriate signage.

**Level 2.** As per Level 1, and all of the following apply for pesticide applicators:

- All workers are closely supervised by a licensed pesticide applicator.
- All workers have taken a pesticide application training course.

**Level 3.** As per Level 2, and **at least two** of the following (Check all that apply):

- Emergency eye washing facilities are provided near storage, mixing/loading and/or application sites.
- Showers and changing rooms are provided near storage, mixing/loading and/or application sites.
- Spare clean clothing is provided near storage, mixing/loading and/or application sites.
- Protective clothing is used and cared for properly (e.g., laundered as soon after use as possible, laundered separately from household wash).
- Respirator training and fitting.
- Respirators are kept in protective packaging
- Respirator pads are changed regularly.
- Pesticide applicators applying highly toxic chemicals (e.g., pesticides labeled Danger) are equipped with powered filtered-air respirator systems and/or positive pressure cabs.
- When applicable, workers handling solvents, fertilizers, etc., with potential to cause injury, are provided appropriate safety equipment.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 4.** As per Level 3, and **at least three** items are checked.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

### **Hazardous materials emergency management**

**Note:** Inspectors need to know how spills are handled. Provide notation. Supplies needed include: absorbents, trash bags, rubber boots & gloves, eye protection and/or respirators.

**Level 1.** All state or local legal requirements (if applicable) are met for emergency management of spills, fires or other emergencies related to hazardous materials.

**Level 2.** As per Level 1, and any spills in storage, mixing/loading or application sites are cleaned up promptly. As an indicator, spill response kits/equipment (can be as simple as absorbent materials, i.e. kitty litter) are readily available where hazardous materials are stored, mixed or used. Materials used to clean up spills are disposed of properly.

**Level 3.** As per Level 2, and emergency washing facilities (this can include the operator's home) such as showers, eyewash and spare clean clothing are provided near storage, mixing/loading and application sites.

**Level 4.** As per Level 3, and a written emergency management plan (see farm safety policy) is available including (check off as applicable):

- Identification and phone numbers for persons who should be contacted.

- Procedures and equipment to be used.
- Copies of complete labels and MSDS sheets of hazardous materials used.
- Location of fixed storage sites.
- Policies requiring training for those who work with or around hazardous materials.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

**Sanitation and general safety**

---

Level 1: All of the following:

- Employers provide clean drinking water and clean latrines with handwashing stations to workers in fields **and/or** working areas.

**Note:** For operations greater than 2000 acres, only needed in shop areas or water mounted on tractors, for example.

- Handwashing stations **or** facilities have soap and water.
- Upon inspection all facilities are clean.
- Employers provide safety training consistent with the law.

Level 2: As per Level 1, and **one** of the following:

- Employer provides a shower facility with warm water for employees to wash and change after the workday. (This can include the operator's home)
- Employer contracts with professional firms to provide safety training.
- Employer has developed training checklists specific to jobs to ensure each employee gets training.
- Employer sets goals for safety and tracks success.
- Employer gives bonuses when safety goals are met.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Level 3: As per Level 2, and at least **two** items from above.

Level 4: As per Level 3, and at least **three** items from above.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

**Scores for Fair and Safe Working Conditions**

CRITERIA	SCORE/LEVEL
Minors, children and family members in the workplace	

Grievance procedures and policies	
Recognizing and supporting employee input for workplace improvement.	
Farm Worker Support Services	
Discipline process	
Nondiscrimination policy	
Hiring practices and communicating expectations and policies	
Work force development and new skills training	
Compensation practices	
Employee benefits	
Worker housing and family support services	
Pesticide handler/applicator safety	
Hazardous materials emergency management	
Sanitation and general safety	
<b>TOTAL</b>	

Possible Scores:        56                    14 Criteria @ 4 points each  
 Subtract N/A:        -        \_\_\_\_\_            Add 4 points for each N/A  
 Applicable:                \_\_\_\_\_            Subtract N/A points from Possible (56)  
 SCORE:                    \_\_\_\_\_%            Calculate: Total / Applicable\*100

## Wildlife Habitat Conservation Evaluation Criteria

**Note:** These criteria are written to reward the educated operator and they tend to measure attitude and education rather than outcome. Conservation activities will be more obvious when actually on-site. Provide notation of viewed activities.

### Continuing Education for Wildlife Habitat Conservation

**Note:** The intent of this section is to raise awareness with operators, looking at the farm owner as a land steward. Fallow times and range-based livestock management both allow for opportunities to provide habitat.

**Level 1:** Manager demonstrates little or no knowledge about wildlife habitat or threatened/endangered species conservation. Current operation reflects this knowledge gap, with no special planning or action considered to prevent agricultural activities from interfering with natural areas (if present).

**Level 2:** Manager relies on general interest Ag publications (newspapers and general newsletters, etc.) to learn about wildlife and habitat issues. In the course of the certification process, manager demonstrates a basic understanding of the issue area. Check either of the following:

- There are no natural areas on the farm. Manager may use general interest informational materials to learn about natural pest control, establishment of insectary plants, predatory bird nesting sites, etc.
- Natural areas exist on farm. Actions are limited to preventing agricultural activities from interfering with natural areas.

**Level 3:** Manager uses technical, subject matter-specific information sources or participates in seminars for habitat management, ID of habitat types or native

vegetation, fish or wildlife management, etc. When natural areas exist on farm or ranch, manager can discuss wildlife and habitat issues and communicates knowledge of (check off as applicable):

- General habitat management
- Native plants
- Native animals
- Invasive or exotic plants and animal
- Sensitive, priority habitat
- Endangered or at risk species
- Migratory species
- Riparian habitat
- Aquatic ecosystems
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 4:** Manager participates (or has participated in the last 5 years) in on-farm testing of new wildlife habitat conservation strategies or concepts to evaluate their performance.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

### **Habitat Conservation Improvements**

---

Level 1: Upon inspection, the farm or ranch has made no apparent improvements related to wildlife habitat, or gives no special consideration to the natural areas under his/her control.

Level 2: Upon inspection, the farm or ranch, has made at least one improvement. Check below as appropriate (i.e., small farms may not be able to invest in habitat):

#### **Low impact improvements**

- Introduced insectary plants to encourage beneficial predator populations for IPM.
- Established bird perches on field edges to encourage predatory birds.
- Leaves standing deadwood for raptors and woodpeckers.
- Leaves wolf trees/den trees for wildlife.
- Built owl or bat boxes to establish predator populations.
- Established native vegetation along unused areas, fencerows, etc.
- Addressed terrestrial and aquatic habitat in a comprehensive farm plan.
- Fallow fields are left with plant cover to provide food, water, and/or cover; this includes cover crops, or crop residue left on soil surface.
- Uses native plants to landscape around buildings.
- Limits disturbances to wildlife, especially during breeding season.
- Leaves fields fallow for a year or more to provide wildlife habitat.
- Management maintains or improves perennial, native or desirable non-native diverse plant communities when proper grazing techniques are used.
- Isolated pasture is developed to a relative high succession level.

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**High impact improvements**

- Participates in set-aside programs such as "CRP" or other, **and** manages this area for habitat potential.
- Participates in WHIP or EQIP programs to conserve wildlife habitat.
- Has set aside and not converted priority habitat and manages to protect the habitat value of this area.
- Has set up buffers around aquatic areas with 25-foot minimum setbacks. With increase in slope, the width of the riparian buffer zone is increased; on slopes of 10% or greater, riparian zones should be no less than 50 feet (even wider for wildlife habitat purposes is better).
- Established a new natural area in the last 10 years.
- Has adequately vegetated a riparian area for water quality protection. (There is a good canopy cover (>50%) of mixed multi-aged, native species to provide shade. The area is managed for site potential vegetation. Newly established plantings have a ground cover including a mix of grasses and shrubs with a second-story of cover and habitat, especially along stretches of streams or rivers in need of bank stabilization.)
- Established wildlife habitat corridors between natural areas.
- Established pastures for the dual benefit of new grazing areas and bird habitat.
- Established agro forestry enterprises for the dual purpose of profit and for the benefit of wildlife.
- Established windbreaks for the dual purpose of erosion prevention and wildlife habitat.
- Linked habitat conservation activities to other landowners, possibly as a part of a regional conservation plan.
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 3:** As per Level 2, with **two** items checked, **one** must be a **high impact** improvement (allowance given for high impact investments on small farms less than 35 acres with no natural areas).

**Level 4:** As per Level 2, with **two** or more high impact improvements.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

**Invasive species prevention and management**

---

**Level 1:** Manager neither prevents establishment of nor systematically controls invasive species. Manager is not informed about the issue. Check off as applicable:

- Manager deals with crop production problems stemming from invasive species as they are encountered and/or as time permits.
- Manager has no plan, or systematic inventory of invasive species problems.

- Manager communicates no knowledge of invasive species or how to identify them.
- Farm records, if records kept, do not refer to invasive species and are not used for improvement of invasive species problems.
- Operation currently produces invasive species.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 2:** Manager communicates some knowledge of potential invasive species and has the ability to identify most common species. Check off as applicable:

- Control of invasive species involves limited prevention strategies.
- Manager performs rudimentary planning for invasive species control, with some inventory of existing problems.
- Inventory of problem extends beyond the production system and into habitat areas.
- Manager communicates some knowledge of species life history and vulnerabilities in order to increase treatment effectiveness.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 3:** As per Level 2, and actively prevents introduction and spread of invasive species. At least one of the following must apply:

- Manager establishes a policy or protocol designed to prevent establishment not just control of invasive species as problems arise.
- Manager only uses certified seed and composts to prevent weed seeds from coming onto farm.
- Steps are taken to eradicate invasive species in natural areas while not harming the habitat and populations of natural species.
- Manager communicates solid knowledge base of invasive species in the area and demonstrates the ability to identify, with some life history knowledge.
- Manager keeps control records to improve control program.
- Manager seeks additional knowledge to assist with control program effectiveness.
- Manager works with state/federal agencies (e.g. Dept. of Natural Resources, Dept. of Agriculture) to develop and implement control plans.
- Manager discusses problems with neighbors to increase effectiveness of the control effort.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 4:** As per Level 3, and manager has an advanced understanding of IPM principles and application, including bio-control, and clearly manages the operation in order to prevent the establishment of invasive species, OR, no invasive weeds are on the farm/ranch. Check off as applicable:

- Manager has systematic inventory and stated thresholds that trigger control action.
- Invasive species are a high priority in overall operation as reflected in farm plans and records.
- Manager has advanced knowledge of life cycles and control is performed at most effective time.
- With noxious weeds, manager has planned re-vegetation with desirable plants to gain control of site.
- Manager uses predators of invasive species and other bio-control methods.
- Manager keeps comprehensive records and evaluates program each year for effectiveness.

- Land clearly shows results of this comprehensive invasive species management program.
- Manager actively tries to coordinate with neighbors in control efforts that have an impact on the wider general area.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

### **Threatened and endangered species protection**

**Note:** N/A given only if: a) no natural areas exist on the farm/ranch OR b) the region supports no listed species either directly or by providing habitat resources for migratory species.

**Level 1:** Manager exhibits no knowledge of threatened and endangered species (locally found species listed in state or federal record), and possesses no ability to identify them in the field. Current operation reflects this knowledge gap, with no special planning or action considered in management of the habitat/natural areas under his/her control.

**Level 2:** Manager communicates some knowledge of habitat on farm/ranch, or in nearby areas from general interest publications (newspaper, newsletter, etc.) Check off as applicable:

- Manager discusses major threatened and endangered species issues, identifying those species found in the locality, with depth of knowledge consistent with general interest publications.
- Manager identifies people, organizations and information sources available to increase knowledge base of threatened and endangered species issues.
- Management done for the protection of threatened and endangered species/habitat is limited to leaving it alone and keeping agricultural production from interfering.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 3:** Manager can identify natural areas/habitat on the farm/ranch suitable for locally listed threatened and endangered species AND protects the habitat. Manager communicates some technical knowledge of threatened and endangered species and critical habitat. Check off as applicable:

- Threatened and endangered species conservation is addressed in general management plan and specific actions are taken to maintain their presence on the land.
- Farm/Ranch work is designed not to impact threatened and endangered species habitat areas. Habitat appears healthy.
- Manager can identify and/or locate habitat where threatened and endangered species occur on the land unit.
- Manager works with state/federal agencies (e.g. Dept. of Natural Resources, Dept. of Agriculture) to protect threatened and endangered species habitat.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 4:** As per Level 3 and, manager has obtained subject matter specific technical information about how to judge the threatened and endangered species/critical habitat health and/or quality. Check off as applicable:

- Manager has attended seminars or lectures on threatened and endangered species protection.
- Manager knows both why and when threatened and endangered animals are present on the land unit.
- Manager has determined how threatened and endangered species welfare might be improved.
- Farm/Ranch management plans take into account reproductive and migration times of threatened and endangered species.
- Manager establishes threatened and endangered species on habitat under their control.
- Participates in regional/statewide effort to recover endangered species on/off farm.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

### **Wildlife food, cover, and water**

---

**Level 1:** Manager communicates little or no knowledge about wildlife on/around the farm, and no steps are taken to leave cover, water or food resources for wildlife.

**Level 2:** If any natural areas exist on farm, actions are taken to minimize adverse effects on wildlife food, cover, and water resources in these areas. Check off as applicable:

- Tall grasses un-mowed during migration or reproductive times.
- Vehicle traffic and activities around natural areas are limited during migration and reproductive times and/or when wildlife is present.
- Manager communicates some knowledge of key regional, local species mostly from general interest publications (newspaper, etc.).
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 3:** Cultivated and non-cultivated areas are actively managed for the benefit of wildlife on a yearly calendar. Check off as applicable:

- Manager can identify wildlife and plant species.
- Manager makes arrangements to supply water to farm ponds, rice paddies, etc. as needed.
- Management ensures that water resources on the farm are protected from contamination from/by farm operations.
- Wildlife crops for food are planted.
- Field rotations include a fallow period specifically designed for wildlife habitat.

- Traffic is restricted from natural areas.
- Grain harvest is delayed (as appropriate) to provide cover for hatching of ground nesting birds.
- Crop residue/stubble is left standing to provide cover or food for wildlife.
- Small portion of the crop is left un-harvested for wildlife.
- Winter flooding of crops stubble.
- Ditch clearing is alternated from side to side, each year.
- Cover crops are planted to provide bird and other habitat.
- Field borders and/or windbreaks are maintained for habitat.
- Pastures are managed with a variety of forages that provide cover and food.
- Agro forestry areas are included on the farm and provide cover and food.
- Manager may communicate an understanding of wildlife corridors.
- Where site potential of streams, lakes, and wetlands include woody vegetation, banks and flood plains may have a continuous corridor of native shrubs and trees, with mixed age class distributions.
- Standing deadwood is left for birds to use.
- Invasive weeds are removed from natural areas.
- If otherwise healthy, natural areas are left alone undisturbed.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Level 4:** As per Level 3, and population information is tracked year-to-year to evaluate wildlife management strategies.

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

### **Linking individual wildlife habitat conservation activities together**

**Note:** Government projects are included in this criterion. Individual landowners may be leading the way for other producers without working with other landowners.

Level 1: Manager is not involved with other landowners **or** state/federal agencies to link individual on-farm actions to larger landscape activities.

Level 2: Manager participates in watershed councils, soil and water districts, or other landscape activities promoted by state agencies, farming organizations, non-profits, or similar groups.

Level 3: Manager has made habitat improvements in concert with nearby landowners **or** on their own in order to create large and/or connected patches of habitat.

Level 4: Manager has made habitat improvements as a part of a regional plan that includes other landowners (check off as applicable):

- Watershed council plan
- Eco-regional plan (like those created by groups like The Nature Conservancy, etc.)
- Coordinated resource management plans

- Soil and water district plans
- Statewide habitat/biodiversity plans
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**SCORE:**

**VERIFICATION METHODS/NOTES:**

**Scores for Wildlife Habitat Conservation**

CRITERIA	SCORE/LEVEL
Continuing Education for Wildlife Habitat Conservation	
Habitat Conservation Improvements	
Invasive species prevention and management	
Threatened and endangered species protection	
Wildlife food, cover, and water	
Linking individual wildlife habitat conservation activities together	
<b>TOTAL</b>	

Possible Scores:      24                      6 Criteria @ 4 points each  
 Subtract N/A:      -                      Add 4 points for each N/A  
 Applicable:                      \_\_\_\_\_                      Subtract N/A points from Possible (24)  
 SCORE:                      \_\_\_\_\_%                      Calculate: Total / Applicable\*100

**Fixed Criteria for Food Alliance Certified crops and livestock**

**No GMO seeds (or breeds) are used**

Check the following as applicable:

- There are no GMO plants or animals produced on the farm.
- GMO plants or animals are produced on the farm, but they are not produced or sold as a Food Alliance Certified product (e.g. GMO soybeans).
- If GMO plants or animals are produced on the farm, please list them here:

Check the verification method used:

- Records show the plant varieties grown and/or breeds produced. These are non-GMO varieties/breeds.
- There are currently no GMO varieties for the crops grown or breeds produced.
- Producer describes GMO use (if any) and labeling/marketing during interview.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTES:**

### **No Prohibited Pesticides used**

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Check the following as applicable:

- Pesticide records indicate that **none** of the pesticides listed in the Reducing Pesticide Usage section are used on this operation.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Check the verification method used:

- Visual inspection of hazardous material storage confirms **no presence** of prohibited pesticides.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTES:**

### **No growth promoting hormones used**

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Check the following as applicable:

- Growth-promoting hormones are **not used** in animal production on the farm.
- Growth-promoting hormones are used on the farm.

Check the verification method used:

- Veterinary and production records are complete, and show **no use** of hormone implants.
- Visual inspection of storage area/buildings and animals confirms **no use** of hormone implants.
- OTHER \_\_\_\_\_.

**NOTES:**

### **No sub-therapeutic (feed additive) antibiotics used**

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Check the following as applicable:

- Sub-therapeutic antibiotics are **not used** in animal production on the farm.
- Sub-therapeutic antibiotics are used on the farm.
- Therapeutic antibiotics are used on the farm. If checked, please list antibiotics here and how they are administered:

Check the verification method used:

- Feed and/or veterinary records demonstrate no antibiotics used.
- Visual inspection of storage area/buildings confirms no feed additive (sub-therapeutic) antibiotics used.
- Producer attests to production without sub-therapeutic antibiotics during interview.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTES:**

## Continual Improvement

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Check the following for renewing applications only (as applicable):

- 1-year improvement goal from previous application met.
- 3-year improvement goal from previous application met.
- 5-year improvement goal from previous application met.

### NOTES:

### Scorecard Standards Areas:

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<b>Reducing Pesticide Usage</b>	Score: _____
<b>Soil and Water Conservation</b>	Score: _____
<b>Safe and Fair Working Conditions</b>	Score: _____
<b>Wildlife Habitat Conservation</b>	Score: _____
<b>No GMO Seeds used</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ✓ OK?
<b>No Prohibited Pesticides used</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ✓ OK?
<b>No Hormones used</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ✓ OK?
<b>No Antibiotics used</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ✓ OK?
<b>Continual Improvement (re-applicants ONLY)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ✓ OK?

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<sup>i</sup> Soil conserving or soil building crop rotations include high-residue crops. Low-residue crop rotations assist with pest control, but do nothing for soil or water conservation.

<sup>ii</sup> Land use above the waterway should factor into the required size of a buffer, e.g., land in permanent pasture requires less of a buffer than land used for annual row crops.