

1,600-share CSA wins sustainability certification

One Straw Farm has its 175 acres of veggies certified by Food Alliance

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A 1,600 share CSA (community supported agriculture) operation – serving over 2,000 families - has been certified as sustainable under the Food Alliance's socially and environmentally responsible agricultural practice standards.

The certification of One Straw Farm's 175 acres of vegetables, based in White Hall, Md., sets a precedent for other market gardeners and CSA operations in the eastern U.S., Food Alliance said.

The Portland, Ore., nonprofit certifies farms, ranches and food processors for sustainable agricultural and production practices such as safe and fair working conditions, reduction of pesticide use and toxicity, healthy and humane care for livestock, no genetically modified crops or livestock and no hormones or non-therapeutic antibiotics.

The certification requires continuous improvement in social and environmental management practices.

Businesses that meet Food Alliance's standards, as determined by a third-party site inspection, are allowed to use the non-profit's green eco-label to claim social and environmental responsibility, which differentiates products and can strength brands.

There are over 330 Food Alliance certified farms and ranches throughout North America, raising beef, lamb, pork, dairy products, grains, legumes, and a wide variety of fruits and vegetables.

Since 1985, One Straw Farm also sells its vegetables at various local farmers markets and independent grocers as well as wholesale to restaurants in the Baltimore area.

The CSA operation has 40 drop-off sites, which includes 11 churches and a synagogue.

The Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA), one of the largest U.S. sustainable agriculture organizations, recently partnered with Food Alliance to bring Food Alliance certification to the Mid-Atlantic region.