



What Is Food Alliance Certification?

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Third-Party Sustainability Certification: Food Alliance Certified



Food Alliance Certification: Seal of Approval

Food Alliance is an organization that provides third-party certification of sustainable agricultural operations. Farmers, ranchers, food processors and distributors, and other players in the food industry can demonstrate their commitment to socially and ecologically responsible practices by obtaining Food Alliance Certification.

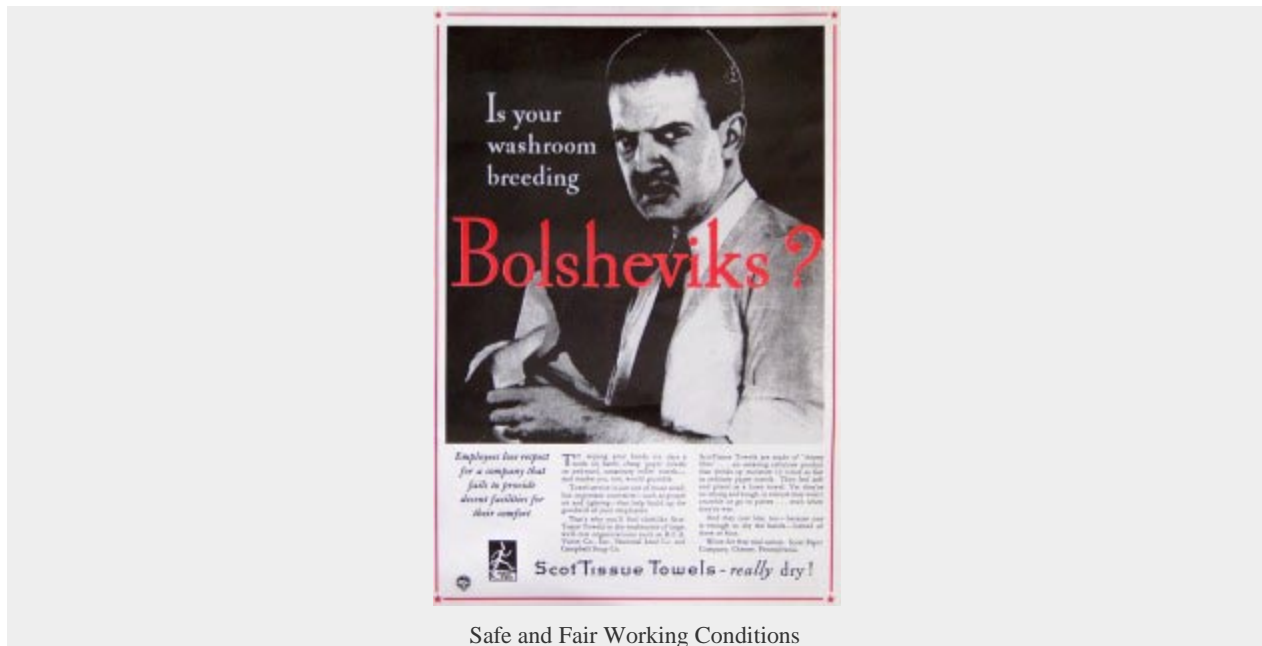
The criteria vary depending on the type of business, but generally they focus on equitable working conditions, land and water conservation, reduced use of toxic materials, protection of wildlife habitat, waste reduction and reuse, and the continual improvement of practices.

A wide variety of individual food products can also be certified, such as meats, dairy products, fruits, vegetables, and grains, with the requirements that they are humanely raised (in the case of livestock), not genetically modified, not artificially flavored, colored or preserved, and travel along a verifiable supply chain.

Food Alliance Certification Standards

But what do those criteria really mean? Food Alliance has defined an exhaustive checklist of specific, concrete standards to gauge compliance with their broader goals. Take their insistence on “safe and fair working conditions,” for example. Food Alliance places importance on every level of food production, distribution and

consumption—and that includes the human effort that goes into it. After all, quality control and food safety are directly dependent on the expertise and capabilities of those who oversee the production process.



Safe and Fair Working Conditions

At the same time, the organization recognizes the historic and systemic disenfranchisement of the migrant workers who comprise the majority of the food industry labor force. Leadership in redressing this issue is therefore one of Food Alliance’s focuses. There’s an extensive inventory of specific criteria for evaluating how successfully each company fares in this regard, primarily focused on improving labor relations, setting rigorous health and safety standards, employing best management practices, and creating high quality jobs. Everything from employee benefits to sanitation and overall workplace safety is considered.

Food Alliance Certification: LEED for Food

While none of these criteria are particularly radical, when taken together they make it clear that Food Alliance has set the bar for sustainable agriculture, much in the way that the U.S. Green Building Council spearheaded energy conservation with their LEED rating system. If the success of that standard is any indicator, then Food Alliance Certification may play a large part in bringing sustainability to the food industry.