

Food Alliance Producer Certification

Program Standards and Procedures Manual

**FOOD ALLIANCE**

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**General Description of the Farm & Ranch Certification Program**

## Introduction

Food Alliance incorporated as an independent non-profit organization in 1997, and started as a project of Oregon State University, Washington State University, and the Washington State Department of Agriculture. Food Alliance’s mission is to create market incentives for more socially and environmentally responsible agricultural and business practices.

Food Alliance operates a voluntary certification program based on standards that define sustainable practices. Farms, ranches, and food handlers (including packers, processors and distributors) that meet Food Alliance’s standards, as determined by a third-party site inspection, use Food Alliance certification to differentiate their products, strengthen their brands, and support credible claims for social and environmental responsibility.

To earn certification, farms and ranches must meet standards, including:

* + - Providing safe and fair working conditions
		- Ensuring healthy and humane care for livestock
		- Not adding hormones or non-therapeutic antibiotics
		- Not genetically modifying crops or livestock
		- Reducing pesticide use and toxicity
		- Conserving soil and water resources
		- Protecting wildlife habitat
		- Planning for continuous improvement

Food Alliance standards provide a systematic measure of environmentally and socially responsible management practices for participating farms and ranches. In general terms, the standards are the scientific and technical foundation on which the Food Alliance certified label is built. Also called the certification seal, the Food Alliance certified label is a visual aid that businesses can use to identify foods produced in environmentally and socially responsible ways.



## Decision Makers and Governance

Food Alliance’s Board of Directors has ultimate authority over the standards used in the certification program. The Board is advised by the Food Alliance Stewardship Council on the content of the standards and the structure of the certification system. Stewardship Council members are volunteers representing the full spectrum of stakeholders in the food system: farmers, ranchers, scientists, environmentalists, and farm labor advocates, and others. The Stewardship Council maintains the rigor of the standards and ensures their consistency with Food Alliance’s guiding principles. The Stewardship Council also ensures the standards remain relevant to farmers and ranchers.

## Changes to the Standards and Standards Development Process

Food Alliance is committed to the continual improvement of our certification standards. In that sense, the program is constantly incorporating new ideas and information. In addition to the Stewardship Council, Food Alliance also draws on a wide network of peers to provide feedback on certification standards. Food Alliance also develops new standards and evaluation criteria as client needs and market demands dictate.

## Geographic Scope

Food Alliance certification is offered nationwide. All applications are processed through our office:

Food Alliance

P.O. Box 86457 Portland, OR 97286 (503) 267-4667

info@foodalliance.org

# **Certification Fees**

## Overview

Farms and ranches applying to the Food Alliance certification program are inspected every three (3) years. In the event that a farm or ranch fails a certification inspection, the applicant has one year to make required changes. If a follow-up inspection is required, the applicant is responsible for covering the additional inspection costs. In some cases, compliance can be verified through means other than a full inspection. Fees are assessed as follows:

### Individual Farms and Ranches

Independent producers pay both inspection fees and licensing fees.

Inspection fees include the actual cost of inspection (inspector time and travel expenses - which may vary depending upon the location, number of facilities, number of production lines, etc.) and a processing charge of $400 which covers review of applications, coordination of the inspection, review of inspection reports, and the recommendation for certification. A payment of $800, which includes a $400 deposit towards inspection costs and the processing charge, is due at the time of application. The check should be made payable to Food Alliance. The remaining balance for inspection expenses will be invoiced upon issue of the certification decision.

Independent producers also pay a certification/licensing fee to Food Alliance. The percentage is based on a sliding scale:

#### Gross Sales Percentage

First $150,000 0.4% or $200
 whichever is greater

Next $150,000 0.2%

Additional Sales 0.1%

The certification/licensing fee paid to Food Alliance is applicable to the upcoming year. The fee can be billed at the beginning of the certification term or quarterly.

### Contract Producers

Producers growing for contracts that require Food Alliance certification pay the actual cost of the inspection. However, they do not pay the certification/licensing fee. That fee is paid by the contracting entity. Contract producers are not allowed to label products or assert a claim of Food Alliance certification outside the contract.

### Cooperatives and Producer Groups

In order for a cooperative or producer group to become Food Alliance certified:

* + All individual producer-members of the cooperative must submit Food Alliance applications.
	+ The cooperative must estimate its gross annual sales and submit an initial annual fee based on a percentage of the group’s gross sales – according to the sliding scale listed above.
	+ The cooperative must identify all the farms/ranches within the cooperative covered by this annual fee.

## Billing

Food Alliance annual certification fees are applicable to the upcoming year. As an example, if your farm is certified in September 2018, your annual fee pays for Food Alliance certification and services from September 2017 through September 2018. Food Alliance offers billing options for annual fees. Fees are billable annually or quarterly.

# **Certification Process and Timeline**

## Overview

The certification process begins when Food Alliance receives a completed application packet from a new or renewing applicant. Food Alliance's administers certification inspections. Food Alliance reviews the application packet for completeness, ensuring that: all questions are answered; all required signatures are made; the application fee is paid; and all supporting documents are present.

The average time from application to certification is 10-12 weeks, but time varies depending on inspector availability, time of application/seasonal conditions (site-conditions need to be conducive to viewing crops/livestock), and the number and complexity of non-compliances needing to be addressed post-inspection.

## Certification Process

### **Review the Food Alliance Standards and Inspection Tools**

Farmers and ranchers participating in Food Alliance certification are required to follow Food Alliance standards and are evaluated using Whole Farm and Product-specific inspection tools. In the application and during the site inspection that follows, applicants are asked to describe how they follow Food Alliance standards in their day-to- day management practices.

**Complete the Application**

The application requires information on a number of different levels: contact info, marketing activities, and production practices. Most importantly, the information provided helps prepare the site inspector for the on-site evaluation. Responses to questions in the application must be sufficiently detailed to allow Food Alliance staff and inspectors to easily understand the ways in which you follow Food Alliance guiding principles. All information provided in the application is strictly confidential. Applications can be downloaded from [www.foodalliance.org.](http://www.foodalliance.org/)

### **Site Inspection**

A site inspection is conducted by an independent, third party, trained professional. Site inspectors have significant education and work experience in the cropping and/or livestock systems they are sent to evaluate so they know what to look for and what questions to ask. Applicants should be prepared to show the site inspector production records, landscape features and fields, and facilities. Inspectors ask several questions about production practices, management strategies and workplace issues. All information and observations made during the site inspection are strictly confidential.

### **Reporting**

Site inspectors use inspection tools created by Food Alliance’s certification staff and Stewardship Council to score operations during the evaluation process. Once the site inspector has reviewed an application and completed the on-site inspection, s/he submits reports detailing the degree to which the operation meets the evaluation criteria. Using the site inspector’s written evaluation, a Food Alliance certification committee reviewer renders a certification decision and creates a site report that summarizes the results. Again, all information discussed in the reporting process is strictly confidential.

### **Certification**

If all certification criteria are met, an operation is certified for a 3-year term. The producer receives a letter outlining the dates of the certification term and the products for which the operation is certified, along with a summary report of the inspection findings (Appendix A).

### **Annual Update**

Each year, Food Alliance certified producers may be asked to report on their continual improvement goals. Specifically, if certification was initially granted with conditions either on an initial inspection or on a renewal. Additionally, certified producers are asked to report any unforeseen changes in production practices, or any special problems or successes encountered during the season. The updates allow us to certify farms and ranches for a three-year term instead of the typical one-year term.

### **Spot-Check**

Food Alliance reserves the right to conduct random, unannounced visits for the purpose of ensuring that guiding principles are being followed on a consistent basis.

## Certification Process Timeline and Responsibilities

|  | **Action** | **Performed By** | **Timeline and Notes** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | New and renewal applications received | Food Alliance | Food Alliance logs all new applicants and checks applications for completeness. |
| **2** | Producer receives acknowledge-ment of application by email or phone call | Food Alliance | Within 1 week of receipt. |
| **3** | Complete applications electronically forwarded to Food Alliance | Food Alliance | Within 1 week of receipt. Food Alliance retains copies of applications. |
| **4** | Inspection process initiated | Food Alliance | Food Alliance logs new inspections and balances variables in allocating inspections among inspectors – e.g., geography, season, inspector expertise and workload. |
| **5** | Producer contacted concerning inspection | Food Alliance | If the farm/ranch can be assigned to an inspector within 2 weeks, the producer receives an inspection preparation notice.If the inspection cannot be assigned within 2 weeks, the producer receives a note relating the status of their inspection and a general timeline for proceeding.Goal = assigning inspection within 4 weeks. Exceptions made for operations that apply during the late fall or winter, when conditions may not be conducive to inspecting or there may not be crops in the field. These operations are held over until the following spring so that crop management can be observed. |
| **6** | Inspection assigned to an inspector | Food Alliance | Inspection packet sent to inspector.Packet includes: a) Copy of the application, b) Standards necessary for inspection, and c) Site inspection report form.Producer receives inspection preparation notice. |
| **7** | Inspection conducted | Inspector | Inspector works with farm/ranch to set a date and time that works for all parties within 3 weeks.  |
| **8** | Inspection documents completed and returned | Inspector | Within 2 weeks of inspection visit, Inspector returns a completed site inspection report form and all scored evaluation criteria. |
| **9a** | Certification recommendation made, improvement actions established, certification conditions issued | Food Alliance | Food Alliance Certification Committee reviews inspection documents and issues a certification recommendation, suggestions for Improvement Actions, and certification conditions (if applicable).Certification options include: a) Certified, b) Certified with Conditions, c) Not Certified |
| **9b** | Completed inspection materials forwarded to FA | Inspector and Food Alliance | Within 2 weeks of receipt. Materials include:1. Certification Committee recommendations (Certification Conditions and Continual Improvement Form)
2. Site Inspection Summary and Scorecard
3. Whole farm evaluation criteria/ inspection tool
4. Product-specific evaluation criteria/inspection tool
5. Inspector’s report
 |
| **10** | Improvement goals and certification conditions agreed upon, if applicable | Food Allianceand Producer | Producer is sent:1. Site Inspection summary & Scorecard
2. If certification or certification with conditions is recommended, producer receives Certification Conditions and Continual Improvement Form (Appendix B)

The farm/ranch has 30 days to sign and return the form. During this time the certification is Pending. Once the producer agrees with the stated conditions (if any) and improvement goals are agreed upon, certification is issued. |
| **11** | FA makes final certification decision (based on certification committee recommendation). Notification package prepared and sent to farm/ranch | Food Alliance | Producer receives a letter notifying them of their certification status. Package includes final site inspection summary and, if certified, a Food Alliance certification certificate. |
| **12** | FA sends applicant inspection evaluation form (Appendix C) | Food Alliance | Within 2 weeks of sending |

**Grievance Policy:** If applicants feel that the certification decision or inspector’s findings are unfair or inaccurate, they may submit a request for re-evaluation to Food Alliance. A request must be made in writing within 30 days of receiving the official site report, detailing the perceived inaccuracies of the site inspection. Applicants should also state whether they would like to be inspected by a different site inspector. Re-inspections of this nature will be provided at no cost to the applicant. No further appeals will be accepted. However, an applicant may reapply after they have made changes to their operation as suggested in their site report.

## Term of the Certification: If an operation passes inspection, the term of certification is three years from the official start date. The official start date will be stated in the certification letter along with the products that may be labeled as Food Alliance certified.

## Ongoing Compliance and Verification: Food Alliance certification is not intended to duplicate or otherwise supplant local, regional, or federal laws, many of which are dedicated to the same sorts of issues as this certification program. Instead, this certification is designed to provide a basis for marketplace claims of environmental and social responsibility. To ensure the certification criteria are being met at all times, several verification and compliance activities occur.

**Annual Reporting:** Each year, Food Alliance will send certified producers an “Annual Update Form,” which must be filled out and returned in a timely manner. The form asks producers to report any significant changes to their operation, to list any improvements they made in each of the standards areas, and to report progress on implementing the continual improvement actions agreed upon during their last inspection. If a participant does not complete, submits an incomplete, or falsifies an Annual Update, their certification can be suspended.

**Un-announced Visits:** Food Alliance reserves the right to conduct off-schedule (i.e. before the end of the 3-year certification term) visits on participating farms and ranches. Operations are either selected at random or they are selected based on areas of concern (regarding specific standards) identified in the initial inspection process.

**Suspension and Revocation:** If during an off-schedule site visit, or in the Annual Update report (see above), it becomes clear that a participant is not adhering to the standards, Food Alliance staff will investigate the situation further. If further investigation demonstrates that the participant is not operating in a manner consistent with Food Alliance certification standards, their certification will be suspended. The participant will be given a timeline to address the conditions of the suspension. If they choose to remedy the violation within the timeframe, their certification will be restored. The certification will be revoked if the violation is not remedied.

## Parallel and Split Operations: Food Alliance defines a split operation as a farm or ranch operation that produces non-certified and Food Alliance certified agricultural products of differing crop or livestock type. For example, a Food Alliance certified ranch that produces hogs without Food Alliance certification and cattle with Food Alliance certification. A parallel operation is defined as a farm or ranch operation that produces non-certified and Food Alliance certified agricultural products of the same type of crop or livestock. For example, a farm that has five fields of Food Alliance certified carrots and one field of non-certified carrots.

While split operations are allowed, due to increased risk of co-mingling with non-certified product, parallel operations are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. For parallel production to be allowed, a producer must be able to demonstrate a complete recordkeeping (or audit trail) system by which a crop may be traced from field to storage to sale. The recordkeeping system must show proof of using acceptable Food Alliance management practices and inputs on crops for which certification is being sought.

**Food Alliance Certification Standards**

## Background

The Food Alliance certification program is based on a set of standards, which are derived from Guiding Principles established by our Board of Directors. The standards provide a detailed definition of how Food Alliance defines environmental and social responsibility in agricultural production. When considered altogether they describe an ideal, comprehensive approach to agricultural production.

## Food Alliance Standards

### **Standard: Protect and conserve water resources**

***Guiding Principle:***Food Alliance certified producers protect water resources by using methods such as: creating buffer zones along waterways, reducing chemical and sediment runoff, managing animal wastes to prevent ground and/or surface water contamination, and using tillage practices that conserve organic matter and soil aggregation. Food Alliance producers conserve water by encouraging infiltration and storage of rainfall in the soil. Additionally, they increase irrigation water efficiency through soil moisture monitoring and the use of new irrigation technologies.

### **Standard: Protect and enhance soil resources**

***Guiding Principle:***Food Alliance certified producers reduce erosion and protect soils by:

* optimizing plant cover throughout the year,
* establishing permanent vegetative cover in orchards and vineyards, and
* using pastures and management intensive grazing. Food Alliance producers use crop rotations that include cover crops to build soil organic matter and productivity.

Finally, they select tillage technologies that minimize degradation of soil quality.

### **Standard: Reduce the impacts of pesticides with Integrated Pest Management**

***Guiding Principle:***Food Alliance certified producers make informed decisions regarding pest management and pesticide use. They employ cultural and biological pest prevention strategies to reduce or eliminate the need for a pesticide application. When pesticides are needed, they select effective materials with fewer known environmental and health hazards. Food Alliance producers properly maintain application equipment to ensure precise applications and monitor weather conditions to prevent pesticide drift. When combined, these practices create an Integrated Pest Management strategy adapted to local farm/ranch conditions. As such, Food Alliance producers can deliver economically effective pest control while minimizing negative impacts to human health and the environment.

### **Standard: Conserve and enhance wildlife habitat**

***Guiding Principle:***Food Alliance certified producers foster vegetative cover, food, and water resources necessary for habitat by using methods such as establishing or maintaining biological corridors, managing mowing and grazing cycles, and restoring or protecting wetlands, prairies and woodlands. They take steps to provide habitat for beneficial insects to reduce the need for insecticides.

### **Standard: Conserve and recycle nutrients**

***Guiding Principle:***Food Alliance certified producers conserve and recycle nutrients by converting organic wastes into productive uses and by seeking ways to generate nutrients on farm through such methods as cover cropping, on-farm composting, and integrating livestock into farm production.

### **Standard: Provide safe and fair working conditions for employees and families**

***Guiding Principle*:** Food Alliance certified producers develop farm/ranch employment policies to establish open channels for communicating with employees about such issues as workplace safety and job satisfaction. They provide incentives and opportunities for the development of employee skills and incorporate quality of life issues into daily decision making for themselves, their families and employees.

### **Standard: Provide healthy and humane care for livestock**

***Guiding Principle:***Food Alliance certified producers raise livestock with the greatest respect for their needs and comfort. Food Alliance producers provide proper nutrition for excellent animal health and fitness without excess fat. Living conditions and space allowances provide:

* physical and thermal comfort,
* afford access to natural lighting and vegetated pasture (where appropriate), and
* enhance natural behaviors (including social contact among animals).

Food Alliance producers are trained and competent handlers, minimizing animal fear and stress during handling, transportation, and slaughter. Use of hormone treatments is prohibited. Antibiotic use is restricted to treatment of occasional illness and not as a substitute for healthy living conditions. Finally, alternatives to commonly used and unneeded surgical manipulations such as tail docking and branding are explored.

**Standard: Produce foods that are not derived from genetically modified organisms (GMO's)**

***Guiding Principle*:** Food Alliance certified producers focus on fulfilling consumer expectations, seeing this as essential to their success in the marketplace. Most consumers express an aversion to agricultural biotechnology, citing concerns over potential ecological impacts or effects on human health. Therefore, crops or livestock products that are sold as Food Alliance certified may not be derived from transgenic or genetically modified organisms.

### **Standard: Continually improve farming/ranching practices**

***Guiding Principle:***Food Alliance certified producers set goals and assess their progress toward these goals by monitoring for impacts of decisions on their farm, family, employees and the environment. Food Alliance producers seek out new and innovative management techniques to integrate into their farm and ranch management. They respect their neighbors and take steps where possible to prevent agricultural production from being a nuisance. When possible, they take leading roles in their communities by participating in community groups and industry associations, sharing information and expertise, and serving as mentors to others.

**Food Alliance Inspection Tools – Whole Farm and Product Specific**

Food Alliance Whole Farm and Product Specific inspection tools are used to measure the degree to which farm/ranch management adheres to each of the Food Alliance Standards. Both fixed and scored evaluation criteria are used to measure compliance.

## Fixed Evaluation Criteria

Fixed evaluation criteria provide the first level of screening for acceptance into the Food Alliance certification program. All fixed criteria must be adhered to:

1. No use of genetically modified seed varieties or livestock breeds.
2. No use of hormones or non-therapeutic antibiotics in livestock production.
3. Continual improvement of management and production practices.
4. No use of high toxicity pesticides included on prohibited list.

### **GMO free seed, genetics**

Crops and livestock products bearing the Food Alliance certified label must not be produced with genetically modified organisms. Site inspectors examine records to see if any of the seed varieties or livestock semen, embryos, or other genetics have been produced with genetically modified technologies. Animals may be fed with GMO feeds; however, applicants are encouraged to source non-GMO feeds if they are available. Based on our understanding of the supply of livestock feeds (nearly all are formulated from commingled supply), it currently appears unreasonable to require participants to feed non-GMO feeds.

### **No hormones or non-therapeutic antibiotics**

Use of hormones and non-therapeutic antibiotics ("antimicrobials") is prohibited in products bearing the Food Alliance certified label. Non-therapeutic antibiotic use is defined as any use of an antibiotic as a feed or water additive for an animal in the absence of a clinical sign of disease. Non-therapeutic uses generally include growth promotion, feed efficiency, weight gain, improved pigmentation, routine disease prevention, or any other routine purpose. Antibiotic uses for disease prevention are considered non-therapeutic unless it can be shown that one or more animals within a barn, pasture, or feedlot carry a disease; or unless an infection is likely to occur because of a specific, non-customary situation (e.g. injury to an animal). If animals are ill, they may be given therapeutic medicines until they recover. If animals are receiving antibiotics due to illness at the time of slaughter or during milking, these food products cannot be labeled Food Alliance certified. Site inspectors examine production and veterinary records to ensure fulfillment of this fixed evaluation criterion.

### **Continual Improvement and Annual Updates**

Farms and ranches must be committed to continually improving management practices. In the application for Food Alliance certification, applicants are asked to consider the Food Alliance guiding principles improvement goals.

Based on inspection results, the Food Alliance Certification Committee suggests, and the applicant adopts, final improvement actions. Food Alliance maintains these improvement actions on file and may require the participant to report on the degree to which improvements have been implemented.

When the certification is renewed (every three years), inspectors verify the information supplied. Upon renewal of certification after three years, farms and ranches must show progress in fulfilling the improvement actions that were set during their prior inspection.

### **No use of Food Alliance Prohibited Pesticides**

Participants in Food Alliance’s certification program may not use pesticides listed on the Food Alliance Prohibited Pesticide List on crops or livestock for which Food Alliance certification is being sought. (Appendix D).

## Scored Evaluation Criteria, Scoring System

Scored evaluation criteria are found in both the Whole Farm and Product-specific inspection tools.

**Whole Farm Inspection Tool:** Applicants must score an average of level 3.0 (out of 4) in a set of evaluation criteria in each of the following four subject areas:

* + Reduction of pesticide usage
	+ Soil and water conservation
	+ Safe and fair working conditions
	+ Wildlife habitat conservation

**Product-specific Inspection Tool:** Product-specific evaluation criteria relate more specifically to the cultural practices, crop nutrition, insect/disease/weed management, animal handling, livestock nutrition and housing, and nutrient management on the products for which an applicant is interested in seeking Food Alliance certification. An overall average score of level 3.0 (out of 4) is needed to pass each set of product-specific criteria for which certification is sought.

### **Scoring system**

As stated above, an average score of 3.0 (out of 4) must be achieved in each of the four subject areas found in the Whole Farm inspection tool. This average is calculated from individual scores received on multiple evaluation criteria that fall under each subject area. Related to product-specific inspection tools, an overall average of level 3.0 (out of 4) on product-specific evaluation criteria is needed.

In general, Food Alliance tries to characterize each scoring level as follows:

* + Level 1: Legally required, or, in the absence of a law, poor performance.
	+ Level 2: Conventional practice, or “how it’s always been done.”
	+ Level 3: Progressive management, representing environmentally or socially responsible management. There is scientific evidence or consensus among participating Stewardship Councilors (see page 10) that level 3 management practices represent the goals of the certification program.
	+ Level 4: Visionary or experimental management. Level 4 represents exceptional effort in trying to meet the Food Alliance Standards.

For each evaluation criteria, indicators of compliance are listed under each scoring level. Inspectors use these indicators to determine the degree to which compliance to the evaluation criteria is achieved. (Example- from Whole Farm Inspection Tool.)

#### Evaluation Criterion: Lowest Effective Application Rates / Reducing Application Rates

**Level 1. *Indicator of compliance:***Pesticide application rates are selected according to manufacturer’s label.

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

**Level 3. *Indicator of compliance:***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. *Indicator of compliance:***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.

By averaging level 3 (or greater), we think the total outcome will show a farm or ranch operating in an environmentally responsible manner, minimizing impacts to environmental quality and providing real benefits (safe and fair jobs) to society. Food Alliance uses an average of 3.0 to allow farms to improve on low scoring evaluation criteria. Given the complexity of farm and ranch management, we believe this is fair, reasonable, and consistent with the goals of this program.

### **Non-applicable evaluation criteria**

Evaluation criteria that have nothing to do with an operation, e.g., employment policies on a farm with no employees, are scored “non-applicable” or “N/A”. Each crop specific inspection tool includes an exhaustive list of evaluation criteria related to insect pests prevalent to that crop. If managers never experience a particular pest and do not treat for it, that evaluation criteria will be deemed “N/A”. However, if a manager currently or previously has treated for a particular insect, and/or scouts fields for a particular pest, the evaluation criteria will be scored. Non-applicable items are not considered in the scoring system.

### **Half scores**

Half level performance may be awarded if the site inspector finds a management practice is used across a portion of the operation, or if management practices fall between two levels. For example, the site inspector may award a level 2.5 if he or she finds the applicant uses a level 2 practice on half of the acreage and a level 3 practice on the other half. Or, an inspector may award a level 2.5 if management practices fulfill the level 2 requirement, but only partially fulfill level 3 requirements.

## Whole Farm Scored Evaluation Criteria

The following section includes background information and vision statements for each of the four scored evaluation subject areas found in the Whole Farm inspection tool. The background information and vision statements provide the context for the scored evaluation criteria (and indicators of compliance) found in the inspection tools.

### **Subject Area 1: Reducing Pesticide Usage**

**Background**

Agricultural pesticide use in the United States has made it possible for farmers and ranchers to produce a great volume of food. Chemical pesticides (herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides, etc., and chemicals such as plant growth regulators) have allowed farmers and ranchers to reduce human labor costs in production and remain competitive in an increasingly global marketplace. However, this success in productivity has often been to the detriment of wildlife and the environment in many regions of the country. Many areas, for example, have experienced pesticide contamination of surface and ground waters.

In addition to environmental problems, human health problems also arise from agricultural pesticide usage. Farmworkers and farmers have experienced chronic, long-term health problems from exposure to agricultural chemicals, and there are been numerous cases of acute, or emergency health problems resulting from pesticide exposure. Additionally, consumers have long been concerned about the presence of pesticide residues in their foods.

Many farmers and ranchers are seeking new ways to curb pesticide usage to address the many concerns. Leading farmers and ranchers are seeking new approaches to pest problems by employing integrated pest management (IPM). A growing culture of innovation addressing environmental and human health concerns is taking root.

**Vision for the Future**

In our vision, farmers and ranchers rely on biologically intensive and ecologically sensible pest management practices. By using a biologically based system of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and a systemwide approach as described in the list below, producers will increase their bottom line through reduced reliance on expensive chemical inputs. Food Alliance also believes IPM practices will continue to gain value and recognition in the marketplace, as food buyers increasingly support suppliers of goods who work to preserve the environment and reduce health hazards.

**Broad strategies to achieve this vision:**

1. Adopt chemical application and storage practices designed to reduce environmental impacts, such as drift prevention, equipment calibration, weather monitoring, etc.
2. Use soil quality indicators, conservation tillage, and crop rotation to build soil health as a means of preventing soil born pestilence.
3. Select pesticides that are low toxicity or risk.
4. Use IPM techniques to monitor populations of insect pests AND predators: Allow natural pest control to operate and use cultural practices that support natural pest control. Use plant protectants and insect traps (these and many more practices are reflected in product specific standards.)
5. Select pest control measures that are consistent with monitoring activities and that target the problem pest.
6. Food Alliance creates habitat around fields to support beneficial insects and natural predators.
7. Collect data on crops during harvest to test the effects of these strategies.
8. Farmers, ranchers and farmworkers receive training on how to apply pesticides safely and make better decisions in selecting pesticides.
9. Eliminate any use of high toxicity pesticides found on the Food Alliance Prohibited
Pesticide List.

**List of Evaluation Criteria and Goals**

1. **Continuing Education*:*** Higher scores are awarded to farmers/ranchers that train and educate managers and workers about lower risk materials and strategies to reduce pesticide usage.
2. **IPM Planning and Establishing New Plantings:** Higher scores are awarded on this criterion when managers select varieties and site locations to minimize pesticide applications and environmental impacts.
3. **Weather Monitoring:** Higher scores are awarded to farmers/ranchers who monitor the weather to prevent pesticides from leaving the cropping system.
4. **Crop Monitoring/Field Scouting:** Higher scores are awarded to farmers/ranchers for monitoring crops at harvest to assess the effectiveness of pesticide reduction strategies.
5. **Lowest Effective Application Rates/Reducing Application Rates:** Higher scores are awarded to farmers/ranchers that employ strategies to reduce the material applied per acre.
6. **Pesticide Selection and Resistance Management:** Higher scores are awarded to farmers/ranchers who select lower risk pesticides, and rotate the materials used to prevent pesticide resistance.
7. **Pesticide Record Keeping:** Higher scores are awarded to farmers/ranchers who keep accurate records of pesticide applications: beyond those required by law; including IPM scouting and targeting of pests; and tabulate toxicity rankings to demonstrate success in reducing toxicity.
8. **Application Equipment Calibration and Pesticide Drift Management:** Higher scores are awarded to farmers/ranchers that regularly calibrate application equipment (to prevent over-applications of pesticides) score higher. Higher scores are also awarded for steps taken to prevent pesticide drift.
9. **Hazardous Material Storage and Disposal:** Higher scores are awarded to operations that store pesticides in facilities designed to prevent environmental contamination and dispose of empty pesticide containers properly.
10. **Elimination of high toxicity pesticides:** Pesticides found on Food Alliance Prohibited Pesticide List

### **Subject Area 2: Soil & Water Conservation**

**Background**

Successful agriculture depends on healthy soil and water. Fertile soil and clean water are both renewable resources in natural systems and, when managed properly, can also be renewable resources in the context of agricultural production. Soil and water are required resources for life on Earth. Most terrestrial life needs a continual source of water for sustenance and soil is an essential medium for plant growth in most terrestrial ecosystems, providing nutrients, water, physical support, and biological interactions with roots. Soil and water are closely linked in nature, impacting each other through the hydrologic, geo-chemical and energy cycles. In most cases, an impact on the soil system has a direct impact on water resources.

Food Alliance supports a vision where farmers and ranchers improve soil resources and productivity, protect or improve water quality, and efficiently use water at renewable levels. The management practices and tools required by the Certification process can achieve this vision while also enhancing farm/ranch productive integrity and profitability and delivering important ecological benefits to society, such as clean water and wildlife habitat. The recommended strategies include practices to avoid (such as over-grazing and excessive tillage) and practices to embrace (like buffer strips, mulching and cover-cropping).

**Vision for the Future**

Our vision for soil and water conservation is one where farmers and ranchers improve soil resources and productivity, protect or improve water quality, and efficiently use water at renewable levels. Management practices and tools are chosen that can achieve this vision while enhancing farm/ranch productive integrity and profitability. Such operations will deliver important ecological benefits to society, such as clean water and wildlife habitat. Where conservation activities cost more to adopt, various public programs can offset this added expense. Market-based approaches such as Food Alliance are, in part, aimed at overcoming such economic disincentives for sustainable agriculture.

**Broad strategies to achieve this vision:**

1. Control and minimize soil erosion by employing practices designed to prevent wind and water from transporting soils away, and/or reduce physical and chemical degradation of soil.
2. Identify soil quality indicators that can be used to monitor success in building soil health and productivity. Healthy and productive soils help increase rainfall infiltration and storage in the soil and are require fewer imported nutrients.
3. Reduce tillage where possible, rotate crops and recycle organic residues back to the soil. This will enhance soil organic matter levels, help reduce soil compaction, and promote carbon sequestration in soil (which helps counteract atmospheric change due to greenhouse gas emissions).
4. Adopt water-conserving strategies as appropriate. These include new irrigation techniques, mulching, soil moisture monitoring and irrigation scheduling.
5. Protect water quality by soil erosion control; careful management of nutrients, agrochemicals and manures; and the use of landscape features such as buffer strips and riparian habitat.
6. Raise livestock with access to pasture/range when possible, and a system of rotational grazing to prevent overgrazing and erosion.

**List of Evaluation Criteria and their Goals**

1. **Continuing Education for Soil and Water Conservation:** Farmers and ranchers who monitor soil quality, use biological and physical indicators to gauge their soil’s health, and/or learn about nutrient planning and erosion prevention strategies are awarded higher scores.
2. **Buffer Strips around Waterways:** To score well on this criterion, buffer strips will be placed around waterways to help prevent migration of soil and farm chemicals into surface waters. In addition, buffer strips are managed in a way that prevents them from becoming sources of invasive weeds, and where possible, to maximize riparian habitat for wildlife.
3. **Soil Erosion Prevention:** High scores are awarded when: appropriate steps are taken to reduce or eliminate erosion; cultural practices like cover cropping and conservation tillage are utilized; barriers and windbreaks are used to prevent moving soil from impacting waterways.
4. **Tillage Selection Practices and Soil Compaction Prevention:** High scores are awarded to farmers who choose tillage methods to prevent erosion, compaction, and loss of soil quality.
5. **Irrigation Systems:** Farmers and ranchers who select the most efficient irrigation systems available for the crop being grown and replace or improve older and/or less efficient systems receive higher scores.
6. **Irrigation Water Conservation:** High scores are awarded when farmers and ranchers practice water use planning to help track and monitor water usage and eliminate wastage. Irrigation management practices that factor in weather conditions, soil moisture, and plant need also rate higher scores.
7. **Nutrient Management:** High scores are awarded when farmers and ranchers: apply only the amount of plant nutrients to crops that are needed or recommended; time applications to prevent nutrients from leaving the field; use a nutrient management planning process to design strategies for preventing nutrient contamination of water.
8. **Soil Organic Matter Management:** High scores are awarded to farmers and ranchers that test for soil organic matter, an important indicator of soil health, and use practices designed to increase soil organic matter levels such as: adding compost to soils; planting cover crops; reducing tillage; practicing crop rotation.

### **Subject Area 3: Safe & Fair Working Conditions**

**Background**

Human labor is extremely important in agricultural production. Human effort and skill in food production determines the quality and safety of food products, the positive or negative environmental impact of the agricultural operation, and ultimately the sustainability of an agricultural business. People who work on farms and ranches profoundly affect the sustainability of the rural communities where agricultural operations are based.

Historically, migrant and part time agricultural workers have been among the least enfranchised in American society. Many of these farmworkers are recent immigrants, seasonal workers traveling the countryside, and/or temporarily part of the businesses and communities in which they work. For many years, tensions have existed between the owners of agricultural business and social activists advocating improved working conditions and political representation for agricultural workers.

Many social activists and agricultural business leaders now recognize the need to work together to ensure the survival of the industry. This pragmatic view has only been reached after years of conflict and in the face of extremely challenging market and industry conditions. While the two sides often approach these challenges from different perspectives, there is now an opportunity to build a common understanding of how best to work toward widespread, progressive farm labor management practices.

**Vision for the Future**

In our vision, farmers and ranchers consistently implement professional, progressive human resource management practices to ensure a safe and fair workplace. In an environment where workers enjoy a range of protections and benefits, they are inclined to offer their ideas, expertise and concerns about the agricultural operation and play a key role in building a culture of efficiency, productivity and overall success. Progressive labor management strategies help agricultural employers create better jobs (full-time, part-time/seasonal and migrant) and result in true leadership when it comes to social and environmental responsibility.

**Broad strategies to achieve this vision:**

1. ***Labor Relations:*** Managers and workers mutually pledge to focus on safety, productivity and fairness. Farms and ranches have a written grievance policy stating procedures to follow for employees and employers. Furthermore, employers acknowledge employees’ right to associate or affiliate with organizations with the goals of improving workplace safety, fairness and productivity. Employers communicate clear policies and procedures for all workers and managers.
2. ***Best Management Practices for Human Resources:*** Employers communicate expectations effectively, take cultural sensitivity classes (where applicable), train employees, and manage performance problems with a stated procedure.
3. ***Employment Standards:*** Employers follow the law regarding employment of minors and discrimination when hiring new employees and managing existing employees. Non-employees (adults and children alike) are not allowed in the workplace, for their own safety and welfare. Children who live on the farm are given safety training and supervised when participating in work activities.
4. **Compensation and Benefits:** Employers reward seniority and excellent performance and manage piece rate work to ensure wage commitments are met. Benefits such as profit sharing and health and life insurance are offered when practical and affordable.
5. **Health and Safety:** Employers and employees unite around a safe workplace. Goals are set for workplace safety, and rewards established. Employers fully implement all aspects of health and safety laws and regulations and continually look for ways to improve workplace safety.

**List of Evaluation Criteria and their Goals**

1. **Minors, children and family members in the workplace**: High scores are awarded employers who prevent all non-employees from entering the workplace. Additionally, employers who offer minors of legal working age and family member’s appropriate training and supervision are scored accordingly.
2. **Grievance procedures and policies:** High scores are awarded to employers with c clear grievance policies that encourage employees to come forward without fear of retaliation or termination.
3. **Recognizing and supporting employee input for workplace improvement:** High scores are awarded to those employers with policies that encourage and support employees who offer ways to improve the workplace.
4. **Farm worker support services:** Higher scores are awarded to those employers whose policy it is to consider the recommendations of third parties representing employee interests. Under such policies, employers do not retaliate against employees interested in or affiliated with third party organizations.
5. **Discipline process:** High scores are awarded to employers that formalize the process of dealing with employee performance problems to treat each case with consistency and equity.
6. **Non-discrimination policy:** High scores are awarded to farms/ranches that train employers/managers and employees in non-discrimination practices.
7. **Hiring practices and communicating expectations and policies:** Higher scores are awarded to employers that clearly state performance expectations and important policies for a safe and fair workplace in a written document for employees. This document should be in English and the applicable language of the employee.
8. **Workforce development and new skills training:** Higher scores are awarded to employers that provide employees with training and opportunities for advancement.
9. **Compensation practices:** High scores are awarded to employers who give bonuses and who use other progressive compensation practices to reward workplace excellence.
10. **Employee benefits:** High scores are awarded to employers who offer employees benefits such as health insurance (when possible and affordable).
11. **Worker housing and family support services:** High scores are awarded to employers who provide housing to employees that exceeds minimum standards called for by law, and/or help workers access family support services.
12. **Pesticide handler/applicator safety:** High scores are awarded to employers who provide exceptional safety equipment and training for employees.
13. **Hazardous Materials Emergency Management:** Higher scores are awarded to employers who are prepared for spills or other accidents involving pesticides, fuels, and other chemicals, by having an action plan and clean-up materials available.
14. **Sanitation and general safety:** High scores are awarded to employers who provide special services beyond drinking water and latrines, such as washing facilities and showers.

### **Subject Area 4: Wildlife Habitat Conservation**

**Background**

Agricultural lands are extremely important to the long-term maintenance of biodiversity. They provide habitat for many species of birds, fish, amphibians, reptiles, ungulates, carnivores, and invertebrates. Some of these species depend largely on the natural areas within agricultural landscapes. Others have adapted to croplands and pasturelands and thrive in and around domesticated plants and animals.

Certain ecosystems in the United States are uniquely suited to agricultural production and have been converted to agricultural lands to a greater degree than others. According to USGS publications, 98% of the native prairie in the Midwest and elsewhere has been converted to other uses, largely grain production and cereal crops.

Sixty percent of the nation’s wetlands have been drained, 20% of this for agricultural use. Nationwide, more than 90% of natural streamside vegetation has been removed. Other habitats at risk in agricultural ecosystems include bottomland hardwood forests, oak savannas, and shrub steppe systems, with a greater than 90% loss of historic reach.

Agriculture occupies 55% of the land in the contiguous United States. Widespread conversion of certain ecosystem types into working landscapes has had significant impacts on some species. Habitat loss and conversion is the leading cause of species endangerment. Many now rare species depend on active habitat management by farmers and ranchers. For example, according to USDA statistics there is 770 million acres of public and private rangeland in the U.S. (this is double the number of acres in crop production.) According to the USDA, rangelands provide habitat for 84% of mammals and 74% of bird species found in our country.

Significant examples of agriculture coexisting with wildlife habitat exist. Many experts believe that the additive effect of many relatively small, orchestrated changes to agricultural operations will begin to show landscape-wide results. This will demonstrate that farms/ ranches and wildlife can co-exist, and the public will develop a deeper appreciation for the contribution farmers and ranchers make to the protection of the nation’s biodiversity.

**Vision for the Future**

We envision an agricultural landscape in which native plant and animal communities co-exist with agriculture and sustain ecosystems over time. Farmers and ranchers seek out and are given the technical support needed to manage working landscapes that support healthy, sustainable fish and wildlife populations. The public assumes their responsibility in preventing the spread of invasive species so farmers and ranchers do not disproportionately bear the costs for their control. Farmers are rewarded for special efforts to integrate habitat into their operations. Ranchers are rewarded for maximizing the habitat value of grasslands and rangelands, and for including species other than livestock in their natural resource management decisions.

**Broad strategies to achieve this vision:**

1. Avoid converting sensitive or priority habitats to agricultural production.
2. Where possible, restore sensitive habitats using native vegetation that historically occupied the site, focusing on priority areas identified by landscape scale conservation plans.
3. Provide as much vegetation as possible around water bodies to provide functioning ecological systems that support a diversity of wildlife. This will also help protect water quality for the benefit of fish and people alike.
4. Manage habitats on farms/ranches with an eye toward the larger landscape and needs of wide-ranging species; connected patches are generally best, however, some species need large continuous areas.
5. Prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species of plants and animals.
6. Manage crop and rangelands to meet the habitat needs of fish and wildlife.
7. Develop a working knowledge of the native plants and animals found in the area and, if possible, monitor for selected indicator species from different groups.
8. Wildlife pests (when not threatened and endangered species) are managed using integrated pest management techniques. Where applicable habitat supports native predators to control wildlife pest populations.

**List of Evaluation Criteria and their Goals**

1. **Continuing education for wildlife habitat issues:** Managers can become knowledgeable about wildlife habitat issues, as a long-term goal, but managers with current knowledge are awarded higher scores. Managers who can identify native vegetation, and/or manage their operations in a way that protects threatened and endangered species and priority habitat types also score well.
2. **Habitat conservation improvements:** Producers who have invested in habitat conservation and/or restoration are recognized in the scoring process.
3. **Invasive species prevention and management:** Higher scores are awarded to managers who do not commercially produce invasive species; control and eradicate established invasive species when possible; and prevent the introduction and establishment of new invasive species on their land.
4. **Threatened and endangered species protection:** Higher scores are awarded when managers learn about, and if applicable, protect threatened and endangered species or their habitat on their farm/ranch.
5. **Wildlife Food, Cover and Water:** Higher scores are awarded when managers: consider ways to manage fields and production areas to benefit wildlife, in addition to producing crops; consider the specific requirements of wildlife on the farm by providing functioning buffers near water bodies.
6. **Linking individual wildlife habitat conservation activities together:** Recognition in the scoring process is given to managers who work with nearby landowners, and/or as a part of regional plans designed to create the greatest habitat value possible for wildlife and threatened and endangered species.

## Product Specific Scored Evaluation Criteria

Product specific scored evaluation criteria for crops focus on reducing pesticide usage and include assessment of cultural (non-chemical) practices and management of pests unique to the crop. Product specific evaluation criteria for livestock production focus on animal welfare, however they also include assessment of some issues addressed in the previous sections (primarily soil and water conservation and nutrient management). Each crop/livestock product marketed as Food Alliance certified must receive an overall average score of level 3.0 (out of 4) on their respective product specific evaluation.

**General Strategies—product specific evaluation criteria for crop production**

For crop management that relies less on available pesticides, and more on natural control or biological system integrity, the following practices are called for in the crop specific evaluation:

1. Scouting to establish need for an application (based on economic threshold research).
2. Keeping long-term records to track outbreaks of pests.
3. Preserving natural predators.
4. Selecting the least toxic or risky pesticides.
5. Reducing pesticide usage by relying on planting rates/densities, planting times, variety selections, and other cultural controls.

### **Product Specific Evaluation Areas for Crops**

1. **Cultural Practices:** In each crop specific set of evaluation criteria cultural practices designed to improve or maintain the biological integrity of the cropping system are addressed. These include, but are not limited to: adjacent areas management, ground cover, and pruning.
2. **Crop Nutrition:** Evaluation criteria investigate fertilizer application strategies and soil pH monitoring. If crop fertility and soil pH are managed properly, in many cases plants resist disease or are less susceptible to pestilence.
3. **Insect Pest Management:** Each crop-specific evaluation tool includes an exhaustive list of evaluation criteria related to insect pests prevalent to that particular crop. Many will likely be found “not applicable” or “N/A” by the site inspector, because the managers never experience this pest and do not treat for it. However, when a manager treats for a particular insect, Food Alliance’s evaluation system considers the control methods selected by the manager, and if pesticides are used, the types of pesticides selected.
4. **Diseases and Nematodes:** Just like the insect criteria, each crop specific evaluation tool contains an exhaustive list of evaluation criteria related to diseases and nematodes prevalent to that crop.

Many will likely be found “not applicable” or “N/A” by the site inspector, because the managers never experience this pest nor treat for it. However, when a manager treats for a disease or nematode, Food Alliance’s evaluation system considers the control methods selected by the manager, and if pesticides are used, the types of pesticides selected.

1. **Weeds:** Each crop specific evaluation tool evaluates the weed management practices used in producing the crop. Weeds are a constant challenge in any cropping system, and several strategies can help

Control herbicide use while building soil health. This includes spot spraying for weeds, conservation tillage practices, and monitoring weeds more closely to help target eradication efforts.

1. **Vertebrate Pests:** In crops and regions where vertebrate pests are sometimes a problem, Food Alliance crop specific evaluation tools will have evaluation criteria relevant to controlling each pest in a safe and/or poison free control method.
2. **Additional Practices:** In some crops, pollinators are needed to produce fruit or seed. In these cases, evaluation criteria detail pesticide usage practices that don’t harm bees and other pollinators.

**General Strategies—product specific evaluation criteria for livestock production**

Food Alliance standards for livestock production focus on the long-term health and productivity of both land and animals, broadly covering the following production practices:

1. A focus on animal nutrition and health to promote breeding and calving success, weight gain, and freedom from illness.
2. Pasture/rangeland management that focuses on providing adequate periods of rest and re-growth and ensures that stocking rates are kept within acceptable levels.
3. A keen understanding of the natural behaviors of livestock, which is factored into handling techniques and the design/choice of animal housing facilities.
4. Protection of environmentally sensitive areas through sound grazing management techniques.

### **Product Specific Evaluation Criteria for Livestock**

1. **Animal Nutrition and Animal Health:** Each livestock evaluation tool has evaluation criteria addressing water and feed supply quantity and quality and takes into consideration the age-specific needs of animals. Breeding and calving success, weight gain, and freedom from illness are used to indicate the degree to which livestock nutritional needs are being met and overall animal health is being promoted.
2. **Living Conditions:** Livestock living conditions are expected to be actively managed: outdoor shelter areas should be kept as clean and dry as possible, housing and fencing regularly checked for broken sections or sharp objects to prevent injury, and adequate space provided for livestock in confinement or fenced-in areas to freely move about. Higher scores are granted for operations providing free ranging pasture (for all or suitable portions of the year) or for producers utilizing a well-managed grazing system.
3. **Livestock Handling:** Natural reaction to movements and herd social behavior should be well understood and of top consideration when handling livestock. Animal handlers should be well trained in such livestock behavior and focused on reducing stress during handling or transport activities.
4. **Transportation:** Loading densities are expected to be closely managed to prevent over-loading and possible injury to livestock during transport; truck or trailer surfaces should be free of sharp, protruding features that could cause injury; temperature and weather are prime factors when planning transportation activities.
5. **Handling Facilities:** Facilities should be designed to reduce stress and injury, should be well maintained and kept in good repair. Higher scores are granted when handling areas include design features to allow for the normal behaviors and reactions of livestock (lighting designed to prevent shadows, uniform flooring to prevent balking, quiet fans, pumps, gate closures to prevent high pitched or alarming noises).
6. **On-Site Slaughter (N/A for animal processing off-site):** Livestock handlers need to be able to articulate methods of testing for insensibility during on-farm slaughter. Additionally, handler needs to be able to discuss guidelines for deciding when a casualty animal should be treated versus slaughtered.
7. **Feed Production and Pasture Management:** Feed production and pasture management in livestock production includes the following scored criteria areas (as applicable): grazing plan, grazing riparian areas, plant litter and vegetative cover, pasture reproduction and health, fertilizer usage, weed management and herbicide usage, feeding/shelter/watering site management, over-winter confinement areas, and feed storage. In general, pastures or rangelands need to be given adequate periods of rest and re-growth, nutrient levels should be monitored, and commercial or organic amendments applied when needed, congregation areas (near feeding/shelter/watering sites) kept adequately vegetated, and feed storage areas kept dry and free from contamination.
8. **Manure Management:** An adequate balance of livestock numbers and pasture/cropland areas needs to be achieved such that manure nutrients can be cycled through the available land base at agronomic rates. Manure odors should be minimal, and any manure storage areas should meet local and state legal requirements, be located within acceptable distance from surface waters, and away from areas with potential for flooding.
9. **Animal Pest Management:** This area includes evaluation criteria related to fly control, external and internal parasites, rodents, and predators. Cultural controls and management options that limit the need for insecticide use are promoted. Producers are expected to understand predators’ natural habits, habitats, territories, and food sources and adjust livestock management to an awareness of the food needs of predators.

# **Food Alliance Third Party Site Inspectors – Duties and Qualifications**

Food Alliance engages private contractors to perform on-site evaluations of applicants to the Food Alliance certification program. Food Alliance has developed Whole Farm and Product-specific inspection tools to verify on-farm practices and make recommendations for awarding certification.

## Duties

Site inspectors possess sufficient training and experience to assess all criteria in the inspection tools, including:

* + Farm Planning and Record Keeping
	+ Soil/Water Conservation
	+ Crop Nutrition
	+ Pesticide Applications
	+ Integrated Pest Management
	+ Healthy & Humane treatment of livestock
	+ Pasture/Range Management
	+ Natural Areas Management
	+ Weather/Crop Monitoring
	+ Continuing Education
	+ Human Resources Management
	+ Safety Training
	+ Continual Improvement

## Qualifications

A combination of work experience and educational background is required of all Food Alliance inspectors. Food Alliance gives preference to site inspector applicants with:

* + Work experience of not less than 5 years in a specific cropping/production system. Production system categories used are: Dairy, Tree Fruits, Small Fruits, Vegetables, Livestock, Cereals, and diversified farms.
	+ Education in an agricultural discipline. Site inspectors should possess a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in a discipline such as: Horticulture, Agronomy, Animal Science, Soil Science, Plant Science, Range Management, Agricultural Engineering, etc. Work experience can substitute for education and degree requirements.
	+ Significant knowledge of sustainable/conservation agriculture management for the specific production systems they will evaluate.
	+ Familiarity with relevant regulatory systems and requirements.

**Training**

Site inspectors are required to attend training by Food Alliance staff prior to conducting a Food Alliance inspection. After receiving training, site inspectors are required to observe at least one (un-paid) on-site inspection conducted by an experienced Food Alliance site-inspector. Additionally, preference is given to site inspectors who have completed a comprehensive inspector training program, such as are offered through International Organic Inspectors Association ([www.ioia.ne](http://www.ioia.net)t).

## Conflict of Interest

Site inspectors have primary responsibility for representing Food Alliance to applicants during on-site evaluations. However, they receive no direct payment from applicants for any services, certification, consultation or otherwise. Inspectors sign an agreement kept on file at Food Alliance pledging to operate under confidentiality and without conflict of interest. Site inspectors are required to disclose any potential conflicts in writing to Food Alliance.

Food Alliance site inspectors are bound by a code of ethics designed to ensure:

* + Confidentiality of the information provided by the applicant;
	+ No conflict of interest exists between the applicant and the inspector;
	+ Professionalism in representing Food Alliance.

## Description of tasks required

While performing on-site verification for Food Alliance certification, third-party site inspectors perform tasks in three distinct areas:

1. Verify an operation’s fulfillment of Food Alliance’s fixed evaluation criteria.
2. Verify an operation’s fulfillment of Food Alliance’s scored evaluation criteria.
3. Make a professional recommendation on Food Alliance certification and continual improvement actions.

**Appendix A – Inspection Summary Report**



**Producer Inspection Report**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Operation Name: |  |
| Address**:** |  |
| Inspection Date**:** |  |
| Crops/Livestock Inspected**:** |  |
| Name of Inspector(s): |  |

Food Alliance

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503-267-4667

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1. Summary of Scores

The minimum passing score for each set of scored evaluation criteria listed below is 75%. All fixed criteria of relevant Food Alliance standards must be met prior to certification being issued. For scoring details, please see full Evaluation Criteria Document(s) found in Section Five of this report.

|  |
| --- |
| **Whole Farm/Ranch Standard** |
| **Scored Evaluation Criteria**  | **Score** | **Status** |
| Integrated pest, disease, weed management and pesticide risk reduction |  | **Pass** |
| Soil and water conservation  |  | **Pass** |
| Wildlife habitat and biodiversity conservation  |  | **Pass** |
| Safe and fair working conditions |  | **Pass** |
| **Fixed Evaluation Criteria** | **Status** |
| Continual improvement | **Pass** |
| No prohibited pesticides  | **Pass** |
| No GMO seeds (or breeds)  | **Pass** |
| No growth-promoting hormones or other growth promotants used | **N/A** |
| No sub-therapeutic (feed additive) antibiotics used | **N/A** |
| **Livestock, or Production-Specific Standards** |
| No-till (direct seed) Crop Production  |  |

1. Scope of the Inspection

Food Alliance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that defines sustainability in agriculture and food handling operations with sustainability standards which include evaluation criteria for safe and fair working conditions, humane treatment of animals, and careful stewardship of ecosystems.

The following Food Alliance evaluation criteria were used during the inspection of this operation:

**Whole Farm Evaluation Criteria (FA-ET-01)**

Crops/Livestock Inspected:

1. Certification Decision

Based on a review of the operation’s application, on-site inspection results, and inspector’s recommendation, the Food Alliance certification review committee issues the following certification decision: **Certification Granted**

Please note, certification will only become active upon completion of the following:

* Acceptance of certification conditions (if applicable) and continual improvement goals (via Inspection Response Form)
* Submission of signed Certification Agreement and Licensing Agreement (if applicable)
1. Confidentiality Statement

Food Alliance certification related documents (e.g. client applications, records, inspection reports) and information gathered during the inspection process is confidential to Food Alliance staff, inspectors and the respective certification client. Information will only be released to outside parties upon request from the client.

1. Evaluation Criteria Documents

The following pages include the evaluation criteria documents which were completed and submitted to Food Alliance following on-site inspection of the operation. These documents include the scored and fixed evaluation criteria used to evaluate the operation’s performance to the Food Alliance standards within the scope of the inspection.

*Note: If you’re receiving this report in hard copy, the evaluation criteria documents have been omitted, as they are large documents and we’re trying to save paper! Electronic copies of these documents were included in the full inspection report sent to the email address listed in your application. Please contact Food Alliance if you have not received the electronic report or if you wish to receive these documents in hard copy:* *certification@foodalliance.org**, 503-481-0271.*

# **Appendix B – Inspection Response Form - Certification Conditions & Continual Improvement Form**

Food Alliance Producer Certification Program - Inspection Response Form

**Please complete and return form at your earliest convenience, and no later than 10 working days after receiving:** *Email:* *certification@foodalliance.org*

 *Mail: Food Alliance, P.O. Box 1004, Carnation, WA 98014*

Operation name:

Inspection date:

#####  CERTIFICATION CONDITIONS

|  |
| --- |
| Reviewer Comments: **None issued**Condition:      Implementation Timeframe:       |

#####  RECOMMENDED CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS

Based on the results of your on-site inspection and continual improvement goals listed in your application, Food Alliance recommends the following continual improvement actions be adopted for the upcoming three-year certification period.

|  |
| --- |
| **Standards Area: Integrated pest, disease, weed management and pesticide risk reduction***Suggested Improvement Actions:*  |
| Producer Agrees to Suggested Improvement Actions? [ ]  Yes [ ]  NoComments:  |
| **Standards Area: Soil & Water Conservation/Nutrient Management***Suggested Improvement Actions:*  |
| Producer Agrees to Suggested Improvement Actions? [ ]  Yes [ ]  NoComments:  |
| **Standards Area: Wildlife & Biodiversity Conservation** *Suggested Improvement Actions*:  |
| Producer Agrees to Suggested Improvement Action? [ ]  Yes [ ]  NoComments:  |
| **Standards Area: Safe & Fair Working Conditions***Suggested Improvement Actions*:  |
| Producer Agrees to Suggested Improvement Action? [ ]  Yes [ ]  NoComments:  |
| **Other Suggested Improvement Actions***Suggested Improvement Actions*:  |
| Producer Agrees to Suggested Improvement Action? [ ]  Yes [ ]  NoComments:  |

Signature *(E-signature valid)* Date

**Appendix C – Prohibited Pesticide List**

Products on the Prohibited Pesticide List may not be used on Food Alliance certified crops. The Food Alliance Prohibited Pesticide List (PPL) is based on the WHO Recommended Classification of Pesticides by Hazard (2009). The PPL consists of materials classified as extremely hazardous or highly hazardous on the WHO list that are registered for use by the USEPA. Exceptions will be allowed if the use of a material on the PPL is required by law or required for export.

|  |
| --- |
| **Class Ia and Ib pesticides registered for use by the USEPA (See: The WHO recommended classification of pesticides by hazard and guidelines to classification: 2009.) ©Food Alliance 2011** |
| **EPA Reg No.** | **Product Name** | **WHO Mixture Classification** | **Chemical****Name** |
| 5481-448 | AMVAC BIDRIN 8 WATER MISCIBLE INSECTICIDE  | Ib | Dicrotophos |
| 10163-95 | AZINPHOS METHYL TECHNICAL  | Ib | Azinphos-methyl |
| 66330-233 | AZINPHOSMETHYL 50W  | Ib | Azinphos-methyl |
| 5481-9032 | AZTEC 3.78% GRANULAR INSECTICIDE  | Ib | Phostebupirim |
| 5481-9028 | AZTEC 4.67% GRANULAR  | Ib | Phostebupirim |
| 5481-552 | BIDRIN XP  | Ib | Dicrotophos |
| 100-987 | BRODIFACOUM TECHNICAL  | Ia | Brodifacoum |
| 270-371 | BROMADIOLONE 2.5% CONCENTRATE  | Ib | Bromadiolone |
| 270-374 | BROMADIOLONE TECHNICAL  | Ia | Bromadiolone |
| 47629-9 | BROMETHALIN TECHNICAL  | Ia | Bromethalin |
| 279-3060 | CARBOFURAN TECHNICAL  | Ib | Carbofuran |
| 67760-43 | CHEMINOVA METHYL PARATHION 4 EC  | Ib | Methyl parathion |
| 4787-33 | CHEMINOVA METHYL PARATHION TECHNICAL  | Ib | Methyl parathion |
| 34704-259 | CLEAN CROP PHORATE 20G  | Ib | Phorate |
| 13808-7 | COMPOUND 1080 LIVESTOCK PROTECTION COLLAR  | Ib | 1080 |
| 56228-26 | COMPOUND 1080 TECHNICAL (LPC)  | Ia | 1080 |
| 47000-144 | CO-RAL COUMAPHOS 25% DUST BASE  | Ib | Coumaphos |
| 11556-98 | CO-RAL COUMAPHOS FLOWABLE INSECTICIDE  | Ib | Coumaphos |
| 11556-123 | CO-RAL PLUS INSECTICIDE CATTLE EAR TAG  | Ib | Coumaphos |
| 11556-148 | CORATHON  | Ib | Coumaphos |
| 11678-53 | COTNION-METHYL  | Ib | Azinphos-methyl |
| 66222-11 | COTNION-METHYL AZINPHOS METHYL 50W  | Ib | Azinphos-methyl |
| 11556-11 | COUMAPHOS TECHNICAL  | Ib | Coumaphos |
| 5481-545 | COUNTER 15G SYSTEMIC INSECTICIDE-NEMATICIDE  | Ib | Terbufos |
| 5481-562 | COUNTER 20G  | Ib | Terbufos |
| 5481-547 | COUNTER CR  | Ib | Terbufos |
| 5481-546 | COUNTER TECHNICAL POISON SOIL INSECTICIDE  | Ia | Terbufos |
| 5481-447 | DICROTOPHOS TECHNICAL  | Ib | Dicrotophos |
| 47629-12 | DIFENACOUM TECHNICAL  | Ia | Difenacoum |
| 7173-204 | DIFETHIALONE TECHNICAL  | Ia | Difethialone |
| 61282-5 | DIPHACINONE, TECHNICAL GRADE FOR MANUFACTURING ONLY  | Ia | Diphacinone |
| 352-361 | DU PONT METHOMYL COMPOSITION  | Ib | Methomyl |
| 5481-492 | DUPONT FORTRESS TECHNICAL  | Ia | Chlorethoxyphos |
| 352-342 | DUPONT LANNATE SP INSECTICIDE  | Ib | Methomyl |
| 352-366 | DUPONT METHOMYL TECHNICAL  | Ib | Methomyl |
| 352-400 | DUPONT OXAMYL TECHNICAL 42 INSECTICIDE/NEMATICIDE  | Ib | Oxamyl |
| 5481-9043 | ETHOPROP TECHNICAL  | Ib | Ethoprop |
| 5481-493 | FORTRESS 5G GRANULAR INSECTICIDE  | Ib | Chlorethoxyphos |
| 279-2876 | FURADAN 4F INSECTICIDE/NEMATICIDE  | Ib | Carbofuran |
| 279-3038 | FURADAN 85 DB  | Ib | Carbofuran |
| 279-3310 | FURADAN LFR INSECTICIDE/NEMATICIDE  | Ib | Carbofuran |
| 10163-78 | GOWAN AZINPHOS-M 50 WSB  | Ib | Azinphos-methyl |
| 66222-162 | GUTHION SOLUPAK 50% WETTABLE POWDER INSECTICIDE  | Ib | Azinphos-methyl |
| 11678-70 | GUTHION TECHNICAL INSECTICIDE  | Ib | Azinphos-methyl |
| 61282-38 | HOPKINS COV-R-TOX ENCAPSULATED WARFARIN - 50% TECHNICAL  | Ib | Warfarin |
| 61282-39 | HOPKINS WARFARIN TECHNICAL RODENTICIDE  | Ib | Warfarin |
| 13808-8 | M-44 CYANIDE CAPSULES  | Ib | Sodium cyanide |
| 33858-2 | M-44 CYANIDE CAPSULES  | Ib | Sodium cyanide |
| 35975-2 | M-44 CYANIDE CAPSULES  | Ib | Sodium cyanide |
| 35978-1 | M-44 CYANIDE CAPSULES  | Ib | Sodium cyanide |
| 39260-1 | M-44 CYANIDE CAPSULES  | Ib | Sodium cyanide |
| 39508-1 | M-44 CYANIDE CAPSULES  | Ib | Sodium cyanide |
| 56228-15 | M-44 CYANIDE CAPSULES  | Ib | Sodium cyanide |
| 56228-32 | M-44 CYANIDE CAPSULES ARCTIC FOX  | Ib | Sodium cyanide |
| 10707-10 | MAGNACIDE B MICROBIOCIDE  | Ib | Acrolein |
| 10707-9 | MAGNACIDE H HERBICIDE  | Ib | Acrolein |
| 7173-174 | MAKI TECHNICAL  | Ia | Bromadiolone |
| 7946-11 | MAUGET INJECT-A-CIDE B  | Ib | Dicrotophos |
| 10163-252 | MESUROL 75 WDG  | Ib | Methiocarb |
| 10163-229 | MESUROL 75% CONCENTRATE  | Ib | Methiocarb |
| 56228-33 | MESUROL 75% WETTABLE POWDER AVERSIVE CONDITIONING EGG TREATMENT  | Ib | Methiocarb |
| 10163-231 | MESUROL 75-W  | Ib | Methiocarb |
| 10163-230 | MESUROL TECHNICAL INSECTICIDE  | Ib | Methiocarb |
| 100-530 | METHIDATHION TECHNICAL  | Ib | Methidathion |
| 10163-245 | METHIDATHION TECHNICAL  | Ib | Methidathion |
| 5481-9041 | MOCAP EC NEMATICIDE - INSECTICIDE  | Ib | Ethoprop |
| 279-2862 | NIAGARA FURADAN 75 BASE  | Ib | Carbofuran |
| 5481-8980 | PHORATE 20 G  | Ib | Phorate |
| 9779-293 | PHORATE 20-G  | Ib | Phorate |
| 5481-8979 | PHORATE TECHNICAL INSECTICIDE  | Ia | Phorate |
| 83100-28 | ROTAM METHOMYL 90SP INSECTICIDE  | Ib | Methomyl |
| 81598-9 | ROTAM METHOMYL TECHNICAL  | Ib | Methomyl |
| 7173-75 | ROZOL RODENTICIDE TECHNICAL POWDER  | Ia | Chlorophacinone |
| 72500-15 | SLN PHARMACHEM WARFARIN  | Ib | Warfarin |
| 5481-561 | SMARTCHOICE 5G  | Ib | Chlorethoxyphos |
| 35975-4 | SODIUM FLUOROACETATE (COMPOUND 1080) LIVESTOCK PROTECTION COLLAR  | Ib | 1080 |
| 35978-8 | SODIUM FLUOROACETATE (COMPOUND 1080) LIVESTOCK PROTECTION COLLAR  | Ib | 1080 |
| 39508-2 | SODIUM FLUOROACETATE (COMPOUND 1080) LIVESTOCK PROTECTION COLLAR  | Ib | 1080 |
| 46779-1 | SODIUM FLUOROACETATE (COMPOUND 1080) LIVESTOCK PROTECTION COLLAR  | Ib | 1080 |
| 56228-22 | SODIUM FLUOROACETATE (COMPOUND 1080) LIVESTOCK PROTECTION COLLAR  | Ib | 1080 |
| 36029-14 | STRYCHNINE ALKALOID N.F.  | Ib | Strychnine |
| 27995-1 | STRYCHNINE ALKALOID N.F. POWDER  | Ib | Strychnine |
| 37259-1 | STRYCHNINE ALKALOID NFX  | Ib | Strychnine |
| 5481-9031 | TEBUPIRIMPHOS TECHNICAL  | Ia | Phostebupirim |
| 12455-88 | TECHNICAL BRODIFACOUM  | Ia | Brodifacoum |
| 12455-70 | TECHNICAL BROMADIOLONE  | Ia | Bromadiolone |
| 12455-92 | TECHNICAL BROMETHALIN  | Ia | Bromethalin |
| 12455-25 | TECHNICAL DIPHACINONE  | Ia | Diphacinone |
| 61282-1 | TECHNICAL DIPHACINONE  | Ia | Diphacinone |
| 12455-26 | TECHNICAL WARFARIN  | Ib | Warfarin |
| 100-1015 | TEFLUTHRIN TECHNICAL  | Ib | Tefluthrin |
| 264-330 | TEMIK BRAND 15G ALDICARB PESTICIDE  | Ib | Aldicarb |
| 5481-526 | THIMET 10-G SOIL AND SYSTEMIC INSECTICIDE  | Ib | Phorate |
| 5481-527 | THIMET 15-G SOIL AND SYSTEMIC INSECTICIDE  | Ib | Phorate |
| 5481-530 | THIMET 20-G  | Ib | Phorate |
| 5481-528 | THIMET MC - 85 FOR MANUFACTURING PURPOSES ONLY  | Ia | Phorate |
| 5481-529 | THIMET TECHNICAL FOR MANUFACTURING PURPOSES ONLY  | Ia | Phorate |
| 352-532 | VYDATE C-LV INSECTICIDE/NEMATICIDE  | Ib | Oxamyl |
| 352-372 | VYDATE L INSECTICIDE/NEMATICIDE  | Ib | Oxamyl |
| 69826-1 | WARFARIN TECHNICAL  | Ib | Warfarin |
| 3282-32 | WINCON WARFARIN TECHNICAL  | Ib | Warfarin |
| 61282-3 | ZINC PHOSPHIDE 93  | Ib | Zinc phosphide |
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| NOTE: WHO classification is based on acute risks to human health. Class Ia = extremely hazardous, Class Ib = highly hazardous.  |  |  |