

A BETTER AGRICULTURAL STANDARD

TRACEABILITY TRANSPARENCY TRUST



FOOD ALLIANCE INSPECTORS

To determine if an operation or a product is eligible to use the Food Alliance Certified seal, Food Alliance contracts independent, third-party inspectors who apply the evaluation criteria to determine whether and how desired management outcomes are being achieved.

The goals for inspections are:

- Verify compliance with Food Alliance fixed evaluation criteria,
- Assess performance under Food Alliance's scored evaluation criteria,
- Evaluate the operation's strengths and opportunities for improvement,
- Develop a recommendation for or against certification.

To meet these goals, inspectors will carefully review all application materials, tour the operation, identify critical control issues, and interview the owner/manager and key staff about systems, practices, and how decisions are made.

TRAINING

New site inspectors are trained by Food Alliance staff and mentored by current site inspectors. 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.

COMPENSATION

Site inspectors are considered independent contractors, and bill at an hourly rate for the site inspections, report writing, and travel expenses.

INSPECTOR DUTIES

It is the inspector's responsibility to schedule and coordinate site inspections.

Site inspectors have a responsibility to represent Food Alliance during inspections, and to understand and accurately convey certification requirements.

Inspectors must gather and analyze information in order to make a complete, fair and accurate evaluation of the performance of applicants against Food Alliance certification standards and criteria.

Upon completion of an inspection, inspectors must submit a report detailing the findings, along with hard copies of all scored evaluation criteria. Inspectors may also be asked to participate in conference calls to discuss their recommendations and to answer questions about inspection findings.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Site inspectors receive no direct payment from applicants for certification, have no family or business interest in applicants, and cannot provide consultation, advice or any other service to applicants.

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.

Inspectors sign an agreement kept on file by Food Alliance pledging to operate under confidentiality and without conflict of interest, and are required to disclose any potential conflicts in writing.

INSPECTOR QUALIFICATIONS

Inspectors must possess sufficient education, experience and training to assess criteria addressed in the Food Alliance standards, including:

- Farm Planning and Record Keeping
- Soil/Water Conservation
- Crop Nutrition
- Pesticide Applications
- Integrated Pest Management
- Natural Areas Management
- Weather/Crop Monitoring
- Continuing Education
- Human Resources Management
- Safety Training

To ensure this is the case, all Food Alliance inspectors must have:

- At least 5 years work experience with a specific cropping/production system, which could include livestock, dairy, tree fruits, small fruits, vegetables, cereals, and diversified farm operations, and/or with handling facilities management.
- At least a Bachelor of Science with a major in a discipline such as: Horticulture, Agronomy, Animal Science, Soil Science, Plant Science, Range Management, Agricultural Engineering, etc. Additional work experience can substitute for education.
- Significant knowledge of conservation and sustainable agricultural management practices for the specific production systems they will evaluate, and/or sustainable facilities management.

Inspectors must also possess the following skills:

- Able to observe, analyze and clearly document production practices in the field;
- Able to make unbiased decisions based on scientific evidence;
- Able to communicate knowledgeably, clearly and respectfully;
- Knowledgeable of agricultural chemicals, and their proper storage and application;
- Knowledge and ability to review agricultural records for completeness.
- Able to work independently;
- Able to meet deadlines;
- Able to keep organized and accurate records;
- Willing to travel throughout a specified region, on weekends and evenings when necessary.

WANT TO BECOME A FOOD ALLIANCE INSPECTOR?

Applicants should submit a resume and cover letter. The cover letter should clearly detail:

- Production systems and/or handling facilities the applicant is qualified to inspect.
- Work experience with those systems or facilities.
- Educational background related to the production system/facility management.
- Experience and education specific to conservation practices and sustainability concepts in agriculture and/or facilities management.

Please send application materials to

Shaila Cook, Certification
(503) 481-0271
shaila@foodalliance.org
PO Box 1004
Carnation, WA 98014

EXPECTATIONS FOR PERFORMANCE

ACTION ITEM

The site inspector is assigned an application by Food Alliance and contacts the applicant to set an inspection date and time that works for all parties. The site inspector then reports the date of scheduled site inspection to Food Alliance. Prior to evaluating the operation, the site inspector prepares by thoroughly reviewing the completed application.

TIME FRAME

Contact the applicant within 1 week of receiving the application.

ACTION ITEM

The site inspector conducts an inspection in accordance with their training. The inspector is prompt, courteous, and service oriented.

TIME FRAME

Conducts inspection within 3 weeks of receiving application.

ACTION ITEM

Following the site inspection, the site inspector completes the site inspection report form. This report, along with all scored evaluation criteria, and an inspection invoice is sent to Food Alliance.

TIME FRAME

Sends report scored evaluation criteria, and invoice to Food Alliance within two weeks of inspection.

ACTION ITEM

If necessary, the site inspector will provide clarifications to Food Alliance and participate in any appeals process.

TIME FRAME

On an ongoing basis.

ACTION ITEM

Site inspectors are paid directly by Food Alliance.

TIME FRAME

Invoice should be submitted along with reporting materials.