



Leading Harvest Standard Interpretations

Introduction

From time to time, a formal process may be needed to interpret the Farmland Management Standard or supporting normative documents. Such interpretation requests shall be submitted promptly to Leading Harvest. It is neither the intent nor the responsibility of Leading Harvest to resolve complaints or disputes arising through certification; nevertheless, Leading Harvest will provide opinions and direction to assist parties in answering interpretive questions. Through this process, Leading Harvest will maintain this publicly available record of interpretations available to both Leading Harvest Certified Program Users and certification bodies to assist with certification planning.

Interpretation requests will be acknowledged within 5 business days and decided upon within 30 calendar days. Approved interpretations will be posted publicly and considered during the Standard revision process. **Interpretation requests can be sent to info@leadingharvest.org or directly to a Leading Harvest staff member.**

Current Formal Interpretations

The interpretations listed below have been provided by Leading Harvest to add clarity to existing normative documents or are otherwise in line with the objectives of Leading Harvest and intent of the requirements. Each interpretation has a topical heading (and issued date), the standard language, and the interpretation.

Interpretation 01:2023: Disclosing certified area on public summary audit reports (issued 01 December 2023)

Standard language (Farmland Management Standard, Section 5 Communications and Reporting, relevant language underlined in bold):

1.1 The certification body shall prepare the Leading Harvest Farmland Management Standard summary audit report, which shall include, at a minimum:

a. a description of the audit process, objectives and scope; This shall include:

- the specific Leading Harvest Farmland Management Standard objectives that were within the scope of the audit;

- a description of the sampling approach (consistent with IAF MD-1:2018 and, where appropriate, adopting a risk-based approach) outlining the strata, location and number of sites sampled and the percentage of sites sampled within each stratum;
 - the sampling size, including the number of operations and managed farmland acres physically inspected during the audit.
- b. a description of substitute indicators, if any, used in the audit and a rationale for each;
- c. the name of Certified Program User that was audited, including its Leading Harvest contact person;
- d. a general description of the Certified Program User's farmland included in the audits. This shall include:
- a general description of the management plan outlining farmland management policies and objectives;
 - **an outline of the area of ownership (including the number of acres/hectares under management and provide a description of key features);**
 - a general description of major crop types with a general characterization of management and conservation approaches used.
- e. a description of the audit team. This shall include the names and professional qualifications of the lead auditor, all audit team members and any technical experts who participated in the audit. This may include the names and affiliations of any audit observers and an explanation of their role;
- f. the dates the audit was conducted and completed. This shall include the number of auditor days spent to conduct the audit, broken down by auditor time spent off and on-site. This shall include the specific farmland operations visited if there is more than one operation/region associated with the certificate, and
- g. a summary of the findings, including general descriptions of evidence of conformity and any nonconformities (reported at the performance measure level) and corrective action plans to address them, opportunities for improvement, and exceptional practices. This shall include:
- a description of the evidence examined for each Leading Harvest Farmland Management Standard 2020 objective within the scope of the audit.
 - an update on the status of previous non-conformities, if any.
- h. the audit team recommendation.

Interpretation:

The acre/hectare disclosure used to outline the area of ownership in public summary audit reports shall be listed using one of the range options listed below:

0 – 10,000ac (0 – 4,000ha)

10,000 – 50,000ac (4,000 – 20,000ha)

50,000 – 100,000ac (20,000 – 40,000ha)

100,000 – 250,000ac (40,000 – 100,000ha)

250,000 – 500,000ac (100,000 – 200,000ha)

500,000ac+ (200,000ha+)