GROW CONFIDENTLY

Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard – Pasture and Livestock 2023

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SECTION 1

LEADING HARVEST AUSTRALIA FARMLAND MANAGEMENT STANDARD 2023 – PASTURE AND LIVESTOCK

Introduction

What the Leading Harvest Australia Standard Does

The *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard – Pasture and Livestock* (*Leading Harvest Australia Standard**) identifies sustainable farming practices based on 14 Principles, 14 *Objectives*, 37 *Performance Measure*s and 94 *Indicators*. It addresses economic, environmental, social and governance issues and includes measures to effciently use water, *agricultural chemicals* and energy to grow *crops* for useful *agricultural products*; *minimise* waste; and conserve soils, water resources and *biodiversity*. It also takes into consideration the well-being of lessees of *pasture and farmland*, employees, *contract management company* employees, contract farm labour and local communities. Conformance to the *Leading Harvest Australia Standard* requires awareness and *appropriate* use of *agricultural best management practices* to advance sustainable agriculture.

What is addressed by the Leading Harvest Australia Standard?

The *Leading Harvest Australia Standard* applies to any organisation that owns or has management authority for *pasture or farmland* (*Standard user*) and the *land* that it chooses to enrol. This standard applies to animal agriculture operations. *Objectives* 1 and 7 through 13 apply to the *Standard user* and the management system it uses to manage enrolled *farmland*, except for *indicators* 7.2.3, 7.3.1 and 9.4.1. *Objectives* 2 through 6 and *indicators* 7.2.3, 7.3.1 and 9.4.1 apply to all *land* enrolled under the *Leading Harvest Australia Standard*. The activities of *farmland lessee*s may contribute to the performance of the *Standard user* for *objectives* 2 through 6 and *indicators* 7.2.3, 7.3.1 and 9.4.1, but the *Standard user* is responsible for conformance to these *objectives*, *Performance measure*s and *Indicators*. *indicator* 13.1.4 applies to all *farmland lessee*s of leased *farmland* enrolled under the *Leading Harvest Australia Standard.*

Geographic Application of the Leading Harvest Australia Standard

The *Leading Harvest Australia Standard* can be applied to *pasture and/or farmland* owned or managed by a *Standard user* in Australia.

Leased Farmland under the Leading Harvest Australia Standard

The *Standard user* can credibly conclude that lessee operations are in conformance with the *Leading Harvest Australia Standard* where inspection of leased *land* and other supporting evidence can demonstrate that lessor operations are within the scope of *objectives* 2 through 6 and *indicators* 7.2.3, 7.3.1 and 9.4.1 of the *Leading Harvest Australia Standard*. *Inspections*, annual interviews and desk audits may be permissible for verifying whether *pasture or farmland* tennant operations are within the scope of the *Leading Harvest Australia Standard* when used to the scope and scale of the lessor's operations. For *pasture or farmland* leased and operated by lessees, *objectives* 1 and 8 through 13 (except for *indicators* 7.2.3, 7.3.1 and 9.4.1) apply to the *Standard user* and the management system it uses to manage *pasture or farmland*.

Impact of Scope, Scale, and Size under the Leading Harvest Australia Standard

The *Leading Harvest Australia Standard* can be applied to farm or farm management units of any size. All *Standard users* are held to the same *Leading Harvest Australia Standard*, but the expectation of evidence of conformance may vary with the scope and scale of the *Standard user* because scope and scale influence the risk of adverse impacts to society and the environment from agricultural operations. *Standard users* managing large areas may need a greater level of conformance evidence than those managing modest areas in order to demonstrate risk management sufficient to meet the requirements of the *Leading Harvest Australia Standard*.

References

This standard incorporates, by dated or undated reference, provisions from other publications. For dated and undated references, the latest edition of the publication applies.

*All terms in italics are defined in the glossary.

Normative References

None.

Informative References

i. ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Management Systems—Specification with guidance for use.

Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Principles

Standard users believe *pasture and farmland* owners and producers have a vital stewardship responsibility and commitment to society and future generations. They recognise the importance of maintaining viable commercial and family *pasture and farmland* and supporting an agricultural system that renews its ability to provide food and other *agricultural products*, and sustains rural communities and natural resources. They seek to *appropriately* apply and improve *agricultural best management practices* on the *pasture and farmland* that they manage and promote such practices on other land to advance sustainable agriculture. Consistent with these responsibilities, *Standard users* shall have a written *policy* (or policies) demonstrating their commitment to implement and achieve the following principles:

Principle 1. Sustainable Agriculture

To practise sustainable agriculture to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This means practising a *pasture and farmland* stewardship ethic that integrates profitable agricultural production with efficient use of inputs; the *conservation* of natural resources, including *farmland*; attention to *climate change* and land rights; and consideration for lessees, employees, contract workers, *Indigenous Peoples* and local communities.

Principle 2. Soil Health and Conservation

To maintain or enhance long-term *soil health* and *soil productivity* and to protect soil from degradation.

Principle 3. Protection of Water Resources

To conserve and protect *groundwater* and *surface water* resources by managing impacts from water use and *runoff*.

Principle 4. Protection of Crops

To ensure long-term *crop productivity* by *appropriate* use of *crop protectants* while protecting the environment.

Principle 5. Energy Use, Air Quality and Climate Change

To increase use of *energy-efficient agricultural practices* and equipment and to *minimise* atmospheric emissions.

Principle 6. Waste and Material Management

To promote the efficient production of *agricultural products* and to *minimise* waste by seeking other uses of waste.

Principle 7. Conservation of Biodiversity

To manage *pasture and farmland* in a manner that maintains agricultural production while conserving biological diversity—including animal and plant species, *Wildlife habitats* and natural or ecological community types—and avoids *habitat* conversion.

Principle 8. Protection of Special sites

To manage *pasture and farmland* that is geologically or culturally important in a manner that considers its unique qualities.

Principle 9. Local Communities

To contribute to the economy and well-being of rural communities through jobs, local purchases, other contributions, efforts to maintain community health and safety, and by respecting land and resource rights of local communities and *Indigenous Peoples*.

Principle 10. Employees and Farm Labour

To provide a safe and respectful working environment, fair compensation and training for employees; *contract management company* employees; and farm labour necessary to improve the practice of sustainable agriculture.

Principle 11. Legal and Regulatory Compliance

To comply with applicable federal, state and local agricultural and related laws, statutes and regulations.

Principle 12. Management Review and Continual Improvement

To continually improve the practice of agricultural management and to monitor, measure and report performance in achieving the commitment to sustainable agriculture.

Principle 13. Leased Operations

To promote the application of *agricultural best management practices* on *pasture and farmland* that is operated under lessee or share farming arrangements.

Principle 14. Animal Well-Being

To ensure the basic *physiological* and *behavioural* needs of animals are met; with a goal of avoiding unnecessary animal stress and prioritising animal health and continual improvement in *animal husbandry* practices.

Leading Harvest Australia Standard Objectives

A summary of the *Leading Harvest Australia Standard objectives* follows:

Objective 1. Sustainable Agriculture Management

To practise sustainable agricultural stewardship to improve production and ensure long-term agricultural sustainability.

Objective 2. Soil Health and Conservation

To maintain or enhance *soil health* to optimise yield and protect long-term *soil productivity* on *agricultural land*s.

Objective 3. Water Resources

To protect water resources and manage water for efficient agricultural productivity.

Objective 4. Crop, Pasture and Animal Health Protection

To achieve *crop, pasture* and *animal health* protection goals while protecting people and the environment.

Objective 5. Energy Use, Air Quality and Climate Change

To conserve energy used by agriculture operations and *minimise* adverse impacts to the atmosphere and the global climate.

Objective 6. Waste and Material Management

To manage food waste, *agricultural chemicals* and other materials from agricultural operations to *minimise* their adverse impacts to people and the environment.

Objective 7. Conservation of Biodiversity

To manage *pasture* and *farmland* in a manner that maintains agricultural production while conserving *biodiversity* where *appropriate* or legally required.

Objective 8. Protection of Special Sites

To manage *special sites* on *pasture* and *farmland* that are geologically or culturally important in a manner that recognises and respects their unique qualities.

Objective 9. Local Communities

To operate safely and responsibly; contribute to the economic well-being, social networks and health of local communities; and recognise and respect the rights of local communities and *Indigenous Peoples* in regions of agricultural operations.

Objective 10. Personnel and Farm Labour

To provide a safe and healthy working environment, fair compensation and training for *Standard user* personnel, *contract management company* employees and *contract farm labour* necessary to improve the practice of sustainable agriculture.

Objective 11. Legal and Regulatory Compliance

To comply with applicable Commonwealth, state and local laws, statutes and regulations.

Objective 12. Management Review and Continual Improvement

To promote *continual improvement* in the practice of sustainable agriculture by conducting management reviews and monitoring performance.

Objective 13. Lessee-Operated Operations

To promote the use of *agricultural best management practices* on *farmland* that is operated under *lessee* or *share farming* arrangements to broaden the practice of sustainable agriculture and to promote the efficient use of agricultural inputs and the management of adverse environmental impacts.

Objective 14. Animal Well-Being

To ensure people responsible for animals have the required competencies to perform their responsibilities in such a manner that ensures the basic *physiological* and *behavioural* needs of animals are met; with a goal of avoiding unnecessary animal stress and prioritising animal health and continual improvement in *animal husbandry* practices.

Objective 1. Sustainable Agriculture Management

To practise sustainable agricultural stewardship to improve production and ensure long-term agricultural sustainability.

Performance Measure 1.1 Sustainable Agricultural Stewardship: *Standard users* shall demonstrate their commitment to sustainable agricultural stewardship of *farmland*.

Indicator 1.1.1 *Farmland* Stewardship Commitment: A written commitment statement and list of goals that describe the sustainable agricultural stewardship of *farmland*.

Indicator 1.1.2 *Farmland* Stewardship: Demonstration of the management of major synergies and tradeoffs between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable agricultural stewardship of *farmland* while ensuring long-term profitability and sustainability.

Indicator 1.1.3 *Farmland Conservation*: *Conservation* of *prime farmland* to avoid its conversion to non-agricultural uses when conversion would adversely impact regional agriculture.

Performance Measure 1.2 Critical External Factors: *Standard users* shall manage for potential impacts of *critical external factors* to help ensure long-term profitability and sustainability of each farm or farm management unit by the *Standard user*.

Indicator 1.2.1 Adapting to Critical External Factors: A *process* for periodically identifying critical external factors and adapting to their impacts to ensure the long-term profitability and sustainability of agricultural production of a farm or farm management unit.

Objective 2. Soil Health and Conservation

To maintain or enhance *soil health* to optimise yield and pasture production and protect long-term *soil productivity* on *agricultural lands*.

Performance Measure 2.1 Soil Health: *Standard users* manage nutrients and apply practices to achieve *crop* yield, pasture production and maintain or enhance *soil health* of *farmland*.

Indicator 2.1.1 Soil Quality: Application of *agricultural best management practices* (e.g., tillage systems, *cover cropping*, addition of *soil amendments*, *pasture cover*, appropriate *rest periods*) to maintain or enhance *soil fertility* and physical and biological characteristics of soil.

Indicator 2.1.2 *Soil Health* Monitoring: Monitoring of *soil health* characteristics, including nutrients from different sources necessary to maintain or enhance *appropriate* nutrient balance and *soil health*.

Indicator 2.1.3 *Nutrient Management Program:* An up-to-date *nutrient management program* that efficiently uses nutrient inputs, both synthetic and biological, and nutrients in the soil and *crops* or *pastures* to create optimum conditions for *crop* and *pasture* production and nutrient utilisation and avoids nutrient loss to water and air.

Indicator 2.1.4 *Crop Residues*: Application of *agricultural best management practices* to use *crop residues* to maintain or improve *soil health* and long-term *soil productivity* where *appropriate*.

Indicator 2.1.5 Effluent Application: Manage the effect of *effluent addition* to land where *appropriate*, to minimise degradation of soil structure, salinisation, waterlogging, chemical contamination or erosion, and to instead utilise the nutrient benefit of effluent application to land by following *best management practices (e.g. nutrient budgeting)* and soil and *effluent* testing advice.

Performance Measure 2.2 Soil Conservation: *Standard users* shall implement *agricultural practices* to *minimise soil erosion* and avoid degradation of *agricultural lands*.

Indicator 2.2.1 *Cropland* Soil Management: Application of *agricultural best management practices* to *minimise soil erosion* and physical damage (e.g., compaction) of *cropland* and restore *soil health* where *appropriate*.

Indicator 2.2.2 Pastureland Soil Management: Apply a process of *grazing* management that includes agricultural best management practices to maximise ground cover and minimise *soil erosion* and physical damage (e.g., compaction) of *pastureland*.

Indicator 2.2.3 Degradation of Agricultural Lands: A process to avoid the widespread loss of agricultural lands to soil mismanagement (e.g., failure to prevent extensive soil erosion, acidification, salinisation, compaction, pugging, overgrazing and accumulation of other adverse compounds).

Objective 3. Water Resources

To protect water resources and manage water for efficient agricultural productivity.

Performance Measure 3.1 Water Use: *Standard users* shall conserve water resources and manage water use to avoid long-term depletion and maintain *crop and pasture productivity*.

Indicator 3.1.1 Agricultural Water Withdrawal: A *process* for avoiding the depletion of available *surface water* and *groundwater* resources beyond the recharge capacity of the watershed or catchment and by direct withdrawal where *surface water* or *groundwater depletion* is an issue as determined by a State based *water regulatory agency*.

Indicator 3.1.2 Regional Water *Conservation*: Participation individually or collaboratively in regional water *conservation programs* where *appropriate* to help foster responsible use and *conservation* of *groundwater* and *surface water* used for agriculture.

Indicator 3.1.3 Water *Conservation*: A water management *program* that uses *appropriate* technology (including washdown and irrigation system design) and applies *agricultural best management practices* to utilise water efficiently; to provide water tailored to plant needs; and to control *pests*, pathogens, salinisation and accumulation of other adverse compounds.

Performance Measure 3.2 Water Quality: *Standard users* shall apply a *program* to properly manage the use of *fertilisers* and other *soil amendments*, *crop protectants*, and other inputs, and impacts of livestock on waterways, to avoid release of sediment, nutrients or faecal contamination from *agricultural lands* into *groundwater* and *surface water*.

Indicator 3.2.1 Input Application on *Agricultural Lands*: Application of *agricultural best management practices* when applying *fertilisers* and other *soil amendments*, *crop protectants* and other agricultural inputs to avoid and control infiltration of nutrients, *crop protectants* and pathogens into *groundwater* and *surface water*.

Indicator 3.2.2 *Water Quality Protection*: Application of *agricultural best management practices* to manage water and *effluent runoff* from *farmland* into *surface water* and protect wetlands, riparian areas and *Water quality* of *groundwater* and *surface water*.

Indicator 3.2.3 *Water Quality* Protection from Livestock: Application of agricultural *best management practices* to protect *surface water, wetlands,* and *riparian areas* from the impacts of livestock.

Objective 4. Crop and Pasture Protection

To achieve *crop and pasture* protection *objectives* while protecting people and the environment.

Performance Measure 4.1 Integrated Pest and Disease Management: *Standard users* shall protect *crops and pasture* against *pests and disease* by implementing an *Integrated Pest Management program* that uses *appropriate biosecurity* and *best management practices* to achieve *plant protection objectives*.

Indicator 4.1.1 *Pest and Disease* Prevention: A process for preventing *pests and disease* through appropriate *biosecurity* and *agricultural best management practices*.

Indicator 4.1.2 Pest and Disease Monitoring: Proactive monitoring of *plant health* to identify plant production issues at an early stage and enable appropriate preventative or protective measures to be taken.

Indicator 4.1.3 *Plant* Protection: A *process* for preventing excessive *crop or pasture* loss from *pests*, *crop or pasture protectant* resistance and buildup and spread of *pests*.

Indicator 4.1.4 *Pest* Control Practices: Prioritisation of the use of *lowest risk, most selective treatment options* to achieve *plant* protection goals.

Indicator 4.1.5 *Withholding Periods*: Application of a process to ensure all *withholding periods* are met following application of inputs to *crop* or *pasture* including *crop and pasture protectants* and *effluent* as per relevant legislation and guidelines to meet *animal and human health* objectives.

Performance Measure 4.2 Plant Protectant Management: *Standard users* shall select, use and store *plant protectants* in accordance with label instructions and regulatory requirements.

Indicator 4.2.1 Application and Storage of *Plant Protectants*: Application and storage of *plant protectants* according to label instructions and regulatory requirements and application of practices to protect employees, farm workers, public health, and the environment and avoid drift of *plant protectants* offsite.

Objective 5. Energy Use, Air Quality, and Climate Change

To conserve energy used by agricultural operations and *minimise* adverse impacts to the atmosphere and the global climate.

Performance Measure 5.1 Agricultural Energy Use and Conservation: *Standard users* shall conserve energy resources, especially fossil fuels, used by agricultural operations.

Indicator 5.1.1 Energy *Conservation*: Use of technologies and application of *agricultural best management practices* to conserve energy where *appropriate*.

Indicator 5.1.2 *Renewable Energy*: Use of *renewable energy* technologies and application of *agricultural best management practices* where *appropriate*.

Performance Measure 5.2 Air Quality: *Standard users* shall *minimise* adverse impacts to air quality from agricultural operations.

Indicator 5.2.1 Air Emissions: Use of *low-emission technologies and methane abatement practices* when compatible with the most up to date *agricultural and animal welfare best management practices and guidance information*.

Indicator 5.2.2 Airborne Dust Control: Application of *agricultural best management practices* to *minimise* airborne dust where and when it adversely affects human health and/or the environment.

Indicator 5.2.3 Odour Management: Minimise off-site nuisance or interference with amenity, such as odours associated with inappropriate or poorly operated waste treatment processes.

Performance Measure 5.3 Climate-Smart Agriculture: *Standard users* shall apply the principles of *climate-smart agriculture* and/or *carbon farming* to reduce adverse impacts to the global climate and adapt to *climate change*.

Indicator 5.3.1 Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Application of climate-smart *agricultural best management practices* that *minimise greenhouse gas* emissions from agricultural operations and *farmland* and/or sequester *greenhouse gases* that contribute to *climate change* where *appropriate*. Examples could include, but are not limited to, application of *low-emission technologies* and practices that reduce use of agricultural inputs or their volatilisation, increase soil carbon sequestration, and reduce volatilisation of *greenhouse gases*.

Indicator 5.3.2 *Climate Change* Adaptation and Resilience: Application of climate-smart *agricultural best management practices* to adapt to *climate change* impacts and enhance farm or management unit resilience where *appropriate*. Examples could include, but are not limited to, use of heat-resistant *crop/pasture* varieties, new *crop/fodder* species, practices that improve soil moisture retention and soil drainage, and training on management of new *crop/pasture pests* or *livestock diseases, provision of additional shade/shelter for livestock, increased security of livestock drinking water system*.

Indicator 5.3.3 Preparedness for Severe Climate and Weather Events: Application of *climate-smart regional agricultural best management practices* to prepare for and mitigate the impact of severe climate and weather events on the agricultural operation, including animal welfare.

Objective 6. Waste and Material Management

To manage waste, *agricultural chemicals* and other materials from agricultural operations to *minimise* their adverse impacts to agriculture and the environment.

Performance Measure 6.1 Management of Waste and Other Materials: *Standard users* shall *minimise solid waste* and *hazardous waste* from agricultural operations and manage waste and *agricultural chemicals* in compliance with applicable laws, statutes, regulations and best management practices and *programs*.

Indicator 6.1.1 Waste Disposal: A *process* for properly handling and disposing of hazardous and *solid waste*.

Indicator 6.1.2 Resource Recovery: A *process* for properly handling waste to be re-used, re-purposed or recycled, or converted to energy, where *appropriate*.

Indicator 6.1.3 Management of *Agricultural Chemicals* and Other Materials: Management, use and storage of *agricultural chemicals, animal health products* and equipment gases, fluids and fuels according to regulatory requirements and application of practices to manage spills and protect employees, farm labour and the environment.

Performance Measure 6.2 Food and Agricultural Waste Resource Recovery: *Standard users* shall ensure efficient handling and recovery of *agricultural products* and *agricultural waste* and manage dairy effluent in line with relevant legislative and guideline requirements.

Indicator 6.2.1 Food and Agricultural Product Waste: Prevention of excessive loss of food *crops* and other *agricultural products* during harvest and on-farm storage.

Indicator 6.2.2 Resource Recovery of *Agricultural Waste*: Reuse, repurpose, and/or recycle product or *crop residues, effluent*, manure, other *agricultural* wastes and/or agricultural inputs (e.g., tailwater recovery) where *appropriate*, such as the integration of cropping and livestock systems.

Indicator 6.2.3 Responsible and Efficient Management of *Effluent*: Manage *effluent* in line with relevant legislative and guideline requirements, to protect surface and ground waters from impacts of effluent, contain effluent within the bounds of the property and utilise the nutrient resource appropriately on farm while avoiding environmental nuisance (odour, fecal matter, water impacts) to surrounding amenities and neighbouring lands.

Objective 7. Conservation of Biodiversity

To manage *pasture* and *farmland* in a manner that maintains agricultural production while conserving *biodiversity* where *appropriate* or legally required.

Performance Measure 7.1 Species Protection: *Standard users* shall protect threatened and *endangered* species.

Indicator 7.1.1 *Threatened Species*: *Protection* of *threatened species* when they occur on enrolled *farmland* and management of agricultural operations with consideration of *threatened species* in the local catchments and landscapes of operation.

Indicator 7.1.2 *Endangered* Species: *Program* to locate and protect known viable occurrences of *endangered* species on enrolled *farmland*. A *protection program* may be developed independently or collaboratively and may use easements, *conservation* land sales, exchanges or other *conservation* strategies.

Performance Measure 7.2 Wildlife Habitat Conservation: *Standard users* shall conserve *native habitats*, *wildlife habitat*, *natural communities* and *threatened ecological communities* on enrolled *farmland*.

Indicator 7.2.1 *Native Habitats* and *Natural Communities*: Maintenance or *conservation* of *native habitats* and *natural communities* in areas not used for agricultural production.

Indicator 7.2.2 *Threatened Ecological Communities*: Participation individually or collaboratively in plans or *programs* that manage *threatened ecological communities* in a manner that takes into account their unique qualities.

Indicator 7.2.3 *Cropland* for *Wildlife Habitat*: Application of *Agricultural best management practices* on *cropland* to create temporary *Wildlife habitat* where *appropriate*. Examples could include, but are not limited to, no-till practices, *cover cropping*, adding *soil amendments* made up of organic matter, bird boxes, *soil erosion* control structures (e.g., grassed waterways), delayed slashing, *intercropping*, seeding areas with native *grassland* seed mixes, tailwater recovery ponds managed as *wetlands*, and water level management of rice fields for waterbirds.

Indicator 7.2.4 *Grazing Land* for *Wildlife Habitat*: Application of *best management practices* on *grazing land* to maintain and enhance *wildlife habitat* where *appropriate*. Examples could include, but are not limited to, appropriate stocking rates, appropriate fire/grazing regimes, protection of wetlands, riparian management.

Performance Measure 7.3 Avoided Conversion: *Standard users* shall avoid conversion of *natural forests* and *threatened ecological communities*.

Indicator 7.3.1 *Habitat* Conversion: Demonstration of commitment to avoid the *land use conversion* and fragmentation of *threatened ecological communities* on enrolled *farmland*.

Indicator 7.3.2 *Deforestation*: Demonstration of commitment to prevent *deforestation* of *natural forest* when farming where biome-specific or geography-specific *deforestation* protocol(s) are in place, by:

(a) A written *policy* to demonstrate the *Standard user's* commitment to a zero *deforestation policy* that identifies the regions of application, relevant *natural forest* types, *appropriate deforestation* cut-off date(s) in areas with biome-specific or geography-specific *deforestation* protocols (where no *appropriate* cut-off dates exist, *Standard user* shall identify their own), and

(b) Demonstration of due diligence to prevent the acquisition of *farmland* that was converted from *natural forest* after an *appropriate deforestation cutoff date(s)* identified by the *Standard user* in areas with biome-specific or geography-specific *deforestation* protocols.

Performance Measure 7.4 Crop and Pasture Diversity: Support *crop* and *pasture* diversity on *farmland*.

Indicator 7.4.1 *Crop* and *Pasture* Diversity: Use of a variety of *crop and pasture* species, *crop and pasture* varieties, companion *crop*s (e.g., *cover crop*s, cross-pollination donors) and/or *crop/pasture* rotation where *appropriate*.

Objective 8. Protection of Special Sites

To manage *Special Sites* on *pasture* and *farmland* that are geologically or culturally important in a manner that recognises and respects their unique qualities.

Performance Measure 8.1 Special Site Management: *Standard users* shall manage *Special Sites* in a manner *appropriate* for their unique qualities.

> *Indicator* 8.1.1 *Special Site* Identification: Use of information such as existing heritage databases (Commonwealth and state/territory) or expert advice in identifying or selecting *Special Sites*.
>
> *Indicator* 8.1.2 *Special Site* Management: *Appropriate* mapping, cataloguing and management of identified *Special Sites* in a manner that recognises their unique qualities.

Objective 9. Local Communities

To operate safely and responsibly; contribute to the economic well-being, social networks and health of local communities; and to recognise and respect the rights of local communities and *Indigenous Peoples* in regions of agricultural operations.

Performance Measure 9.1 Economic Well-Being: *Standard users* shall foster the economic vitality of local communities through business practices that support sustainable agriculture and the local economy.

> *Indicator* 9.1.1 Economic Contributions: Payment of federal, state and local taxes and, as *appropriate*, employment of staff from local communities and local procurement of supplies and services.

Performance Measure 9.2 Community Relations: *Standard users* shall engage local communities to increase community awareness and support for the practice of sustainable agriculture and maintain or enhance *standard user* reputation.

> *Indicator* 9.2.1 Community Engagement: Engagement in positive relationships with neighbours and local communities thus raising the awareness of sustainable agriculture.

Performance Measure 9.3 Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples: *Standard users* shall recognise and respect rights of local communities and *Indigenous Peoples*.

> *Indicator* 9.3.1 Local Community and *Indigenous Peoples Policy*: A written *policy* demonstrating a commitment to recognise and respect the rights of local communities and *Indigenous Peoples*.
>
> *Indicator* 9.3.2 Land Tenure Rights of Local Communities and *Indigenous Peoples*: Demonstration of due diligence to prevent infringing on the land tenure rights of local communities and *Indigenous Peoples* when purchasing and managing land.
>
> *Indicator* 9.3.3 Local Communities' and *Indigenous Peoples*' Inquiries: Demonstration of commitment to be receptive to local communities' and *Indigenous Peoples*' inquiries and concerns.

Performance Measure 9.4 Public Health: *Standard users* shall apply measures to protect public health from adverse impacts of *enrolled farmland*.

> *Indicator* 9.4.1 Public Health and Safety: Application of health and safety *agricultural best management practices* that protect public health from adverse impacts of *agricultural chemicals*, excessive nutrients, equipment gases and fluids, fuels and air pollution and that train employees to operate equipment safely.

Objective 10. Personnel and Farm Labour

To provide a safe and healthy working environment, fair compensation and training for *Standard user* personnel, *contract management company* employees and contract farm labour necessary to improve the practice of sustainable agriculture.

Performance Measure 10.1 Safe and Respectful Working Environment: *Standard users* shall foster a culture of safety and respect among *Standard user* personnel and *contract management company* employees to *minimise* injuries, help establish safe routines and enhance employee productivity.

> *Indicator* 10.1.1 *Equal Opportunity Employment*: Provision for equal opportunity employee recruitment and occupations.
>
> *Indicator* 10.1.2 Respectful Work Environment: Maintain a safe, *gender equitable* and *professional work environment*.

Performance Measure 10.2 Occupational Training: *Standard users* shall provide training for *Standard user* personnel and ensure adequate training for *contract management company* employees necessary to improve the knowledge and practice of sustainable agriculture and low stress animal handling.

> *Indicator* 10.2.1 Personnel and Contract Worker Training: Workplace health and safety education and training for *Standard user* personnel and *contract management company* employees.

Performance Measure 10.3 Supporting Capacity for Sustainability: *Standard users* shall require *appropriate* training of *Standard user* personnel and *contract management company* employees so that they are competent to fulfil their responsibilities under the *Leading Harvest Australia Standard*.

> *Indicator* 10.3.1 Sustainability *Policy* Commitment: *Standard users* shall provide a written *policy* demonstrating commitment to the *Leading Harvest Australia Standard* that is communicated throughout the organisation, particularly to facility and farm managers.
>
> *Indicator* 10.3.2 Employee Roles and Responsibilities for Sustainability: Assignment and understanding of roles and responsibilities for achieving the *objectives* of the *Leading Harvest Australia Standard*.
>
> *Indicator* 10.3.3 Employee Sustainability Training: Staff education and training for *Standard user* personnel and *contract management company* employees sufficient to fulfil their roles and responsibilities under the *Leading Harvest Australia Standard*. Examples could include, but are not limited to, postsecondary degrees and professional certificates, in-house training, continuing education *programs* for managing waste, recycling, *plant and animal protectant* safety, professional development opportunities, and participation in agriculture-related professional organisations.

Performance Measure 10.4 Compensation: *Standard users* shall ensure adequate livelihood for employees and *contract management company* employees to attract and retain a stable workforce.

> *Indicator* 10.4.1 Wages and Pay: Compensation to ensure a *living wage* for *Standard user* personnel and *contract management company* employees.

Performance Measure 10.5 Farm Labour: *Standard users* shall monitor contract management companies or *farm labour contractor*s to help ensure farm labour working conditions consistent with the *Principles* and *Objectives* of *Leading Harvest Australia Standard*.

> *Indicator* 10.5.1 Farm Labour Monitoring *Program*: A *program* to monitor *farm labour contractor*s employed by *Standard users* or *Contract Management Companies* to ensure compliance with applicable federal and state labour laws, statutes, and regulations by reviewing policies, practices, and training addressing workplace environment, equal opportunity, workplace health and safety, and compensation, including *living wage* and, where *appropriate*, housing and transportation.

Objective 11. Legal and Regulatory Compliance

To comply with applicable Commonwealth, state and local laws, statutes, and regulations.

Performance Measure 11.1 Legal Compliance: *Standard users* shall comply with applicable Commonwealth, state and local agricultural and related social and environmental laws, statutes, and regulations.

Indicator 11.1.1 Access to Compliance Information: A *process* by which personnel have access to information of relevant laws, statutes, and regulations in *appropriate* locations.

Indicator 11.1.2 *Standard User* Compliance *Program*: A *program* to achieve compliance with applicable Commonwealth, state or local laws, statutes, and regulations.

Indicator 11.1.3 Compliance Commitment: Demonstration of commitment to legal compliance through available *regulatory action information*.

Performance Measure 11.2 Legal Compliance Policies: *Standard user* shall take *appropriate* steps to comply with all applicable social laws at the Commonwealth, state and local levels in the jurisdictions where the *Standard user* operates.

Indicator 11.2.1 Written Compliance *Policy*: A written *policy* demonstrating commitment to comply with social laws, such as those addressing civil rights, equal employment opportunities, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment measures, workers' compensation and *living wage*, *Indigenous Peoples*' rights, workers' and communities' right to know, prevailing wages, workers' right to organise, and workplace health and safety.

Indicator 11.2.2 Consistency with International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions: Demonstration of commitment to respect the principles concerning fundamental rights set out in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

Indicator 11.2.3 Consistency with Lease Laws: Demonstration of commitment to respect the rights of lessees of leased lands with respect to the *covenant of quiet enjoyment* as determined by national, state and/or local laws, statutes, and regulations.

Objective 12. Management Review and Continual Improvement

To promote continual improvement in the practice of sustainable agriculture by conducting *management reviews* and monitoring performance.

Performance Measure 12.1 Farm Review and Continual Improvement: *Standard users* shall establish a *management review* system to examine findings and progress in implementing the *Leading Harvest Australia Standard*, improve resource-use efficiency of agricultural production, make *appropriate* improvements in *programs*, and inform their employees of changes.

Indicator 12.1.1 Performance Review: A system to review commitments, *programs*, procedures and measures of progress; evaluate their effectiveness; and review progress toward achieving goals for employees, contractors, use of agricultural inputs, management of adverse and positive environmental impacts, and agricultural production, including greater resource-use efficiency.

Indicator 12.1.2 Monitoring Performance: A *program* for collecting, reviewing and reporting information to management regarding progress in achieving *Leading Harvest Australia Standard objectives* and *performance measure*s.

Indicator 12.1.3 Agricultural Innovation: A *process* for identifying and considering opportunities for achieving improved farming efficiency, deploying improved technologies, and using new markets for under-utilised *agricultural products*, new *plant or animal genetics* and low-grade agricultural materials (e.g., bioenergy markets).

Indicator 12.1.4 Annual Review and Improvement: An annual review of progress by management and determination of changes and improvements necessary to continually improve agricultural efficiency and farm conformance to the *Leading Harvest Australia Standard*.

Performance Measure 12.2 Support for Sustainable Agriculture: *Standard users* shall individually and/or through cooperative efforts support science-based agricultural research *programs* or partnerships or other efforts by associations to improve *soil health*, agricultural productivity and sustainable agriculture and animal management.

Indicator 12.2.1 Support for Agricultural Research: Participation individually or collaboratively in agricultural research or other science-based programs that improve the knowledge and practice of sustainable agriculture including animal management. Examples could include, but are not limited to, test plots for seed, plant or animal production trials or new practices; citizen science projects; demonstration days; research or partnerships to address agricultural productivity, *water quality*, community issues, animal health and welfare or similar topics that broaden the understanding of the benefits and impacts of sustainable agriculture.

Objective 13. Lessee-Operated Operations

To promote the use of *agricultural best management practices* on *pasture* and *farmland* operated under *lessee* or *share-farming* arrangements to broaden the practice of sustainable agriculture and to promote the efficient use of agricultural inputs and the management of adverse environmental impacts.

Performance Measure 13.1 Leased-Land and Share-Farm Management: *Standard users* shall clearly define and implement strategies to ensure that *lessee* and *share-farm* activities adhere to the principles of sustainable agriculture.

Indicator 13.1.1 Leased-Land and Share-Farm *Program*: A *program* to help ensure that *pasture* and *farmland* management complies with the *agricultural best management practices* and the *Principles* and *Objectives* of the *Leading Harvest Australia Standard* as determined by a *Standard user, lessee and share-farmer*.

Indicator 13.1.2 *Farmland Lease* and *Share-Farm* Agreements: Written agreements with *lessees* and *share-farmers* demonstrating their commitment to applying *agricultural practices* and *animal husbandry practices* consistent with *best management practices*.

Indicator 13.1.3 Communicating Leased-Land *Objectives*: A written statement clearly defining sustainable agriculture goals of the *Standard user* for *pasture* and *farmland* that is shared with *lessees* and *share-farmers* and made available to *appropriate* stakeholders upon request.

Indicator 13.1.4 *Lessee* and *Share-farmer* Social Responsibility Commitment: A written statement by *lessees* and *share-farmers* demonstrating their commitment to operate safely and responsibly; provide a safe working environment; and comply with applicable Commonwealth, state and local laws, statutes, and regulations.

Performance Measure 13.2 Leased-Land and Share-Farm Monitoring: *Standard users* shall monitor *agricultural practices* used by *lessees* or *share-farmers* to ensure their consistency with *agricultural best management practices*.

Indicator 13.2.1 *Verifiable Monitoring System*: Use of a *verifiable monitoring system* with:

Indicator 13.2.1a A *process* for monitoring the *agricultural practices* used by *lessees* and *share-farmers*; and

Indicator 13.2.1b A *process* for evaluating application of *agricultural practices* by *lessees* and *share-farmers* and identifying and communicating areas where *lessees* and *share-farmers* can improve their performance and achieve greater consistency with *agricultural best management practices* and the *Principles* and *Objectives* of the *Leading Harvest Australia Standard*.

Indicator 13.2.2 Improvement of the *Verifiable Monitoring System*: A *process* for using information from the *verifiable monitoring system* to identify areas of performance improvement for the *verifiable monitoring system*.

Performance Measure 13.3 Agistment Management and Monitoring: *Standard users* shall clearly define and implement strategies to ensure that agistment activities adhere to the principles of animal well-being and are able to monitor these outcomes.

Indicator 13.3.1 *Agistment Program*: A *program* to help ensure that *animal* management complies with *animal well-being best management practices* and the relevant *Principles* and *Objectives* of the *Leading Harvest Australia Standard* as determined by a *Standard user* and *agistor.*

Indicator 13.1.2 *Agistment* Agreements: Written agreements with the *agistor* demonstrating their commitment to applying *animal husbandry practices* consistent with *best management practices*.

Indicator 13.1.3 Communicating *Agistment Objectives*: A written statement clearly defining animal well-being goals of the *Standard user* for animals that are *agisted* off the enrolled *pasture* or *farmland* and made available to *appropriate* stakeholders upon request.

Indicator 13.1.4 *Animal* Monitoring System: A *process* for monitoring and evaluating application of *animal husbandry practices* by *agistors* and identifying and communicating areas where *agistors* can improve their performance and achieve greater consistency with *animal husbandry best management practices* and the relevant *Principles* and *Objectives* of the *Leading Harvest Australia Standard.*

Objective 14. Animal Well-Being

To ensure people responsible for animals have the required competencies to perform their responsibilities in such a manner that ensures the basic *physiological* and *behavioural* needs of animals are met; with a goal of avoiding unnecessary animal stress and prioritising animal health and continual improvement in *animal husbandry* practices.

Performance Measure 14.1 Animal Health Program: *Standard users* have an up-to-date herd health program that ensures *appropriate* animal nutrition, protection, health monitoring, breeding, and health treatments and is *appropriate* to the region of the *Standard user*, including relevant guidelines and standards.

Indicator 14.1.1 Animal Care: A process to ensure animals have reasonable access to food and water to meet nutritional needs, health, and production goals and animals are protected from external threats such as extreme weather events, predator impact and *biosecurity* hazards.

Indicator 14.1.2 Animal Health Management: management of animal health including:

a) Preventative Health: A process for preventing *pests* and *disease* through *appropriate biosecurity*, *preventative health care* and *animal management best management practices*.

b) Monitoring Animal Health: A *program* for inspecting, collecting information, and reporting on animal health on a regular basis, in accordance with country *or regional animal welfare best practices and/or guidelines*, with a focus on continuous improvement to increase accuracy and efficiency of record keeping.

c) Breeding for Animal Health and production: A *process* for identifying and selecting *desirable traits* best suited to the local environment, which maintain or improve animal health outcomes, as well as animal productivity.

d) Application of *Animal Health Products*: A *process* for identifying and managing animal health conditions that require treatment using *animal health products* to alleviate or eliminate symptoms of ill health and/or improve lifetime *animal welfare*, with a focus on selecting the lowest risk, most selective treatment option.

Indicator 14.1.3 Use of *Animal Health Products*:

a) *Prohibited Use of Health Care Products*: *Prohibition of the use of animal health products and supplements* to enhance animal growth or products that are not registered or permitted for use and/or trial. Note: this does not include *products* where the primary reason for administration is for animal health benefit.

b) Withholding Periods: Application of a process to ensure all withholding periods or export slaughter intervals are met following applications of inputs to pasture or animals, including animal protectants, animal health products or feed treatments as per relevant legislation and guidelines to meet animal and human health objectives.

c) Storage of *Animal Health Products*: Storage of animal health products according to the label instructions and regulatory requirements and application of practices to protect employees, farm workers, public health and the environment.

Performance Measure 14.2 Animal Husbandry: *Standard users* shall ensure best management practices are followed in accordance with *country or region animal welfare best practices and/or guidelines* for the industry in which it operates; underpinned by continuous improvement to reduce and/or eliminate *animal husbandry* methods that may compromise animal welfare.

Indicator 14.2.1 Animal Handling: Application of animal handling methods, including design of handling facilities and use of equipment, to minimise the occurrence of pain, stress or injury to the animal, and to improve handler safety.

Indicator 14.2.2 Animal Transport: Application of animal transport procedures that minimise stress on the animal and follow requirements of *country or region animal welfare best practices and/or guidelines* for the industry in which the *Standard user* operates and have a system to report concerns and/or adverse outcomes.

Indicator 14.2.3 End-of-Life Care: Administer safe, timely and humane euthanasia to prevent animals suffering, where treatment is not an option or has failed to improve the health of an animal.

Indicator 14.2.4 Standard *Animal Husbandry* Procedures: A process for implementing standard *animal husbandry* procedures, for *castration, tail docking (sheep),* that result in benefits to lifetime animal welfare, better animal management, and/or improved occupational and animal health and safety.

a) Discretionary *Animal Husbandry* Practices: A *process* for implementing discretionary *animal husbandry* procedures, such as *mulesing, tail docking (cattle), dehorning, disbudding, calving induction, spaying,* that result in benefits to lifetime animal welfare, better animal management, and/or improved occupational and animal health and safety in line with *country or region animal welfare best practice and/or guidelines* of the *Standard user*.

b) Continuous Improvement of Practices: A *process* for continuous improvement in use of discretionary *animal husbandry* procedures, including adoption of pain relief and, where applicable, a program to move towards alternative practices/procedures to improve animal health and reduce pain.

Performance Measure 14.3 Calf-Rearing in Dairy: *Standard users* shall follow requirements of *country or region animal welfare best practices and/or guidelines* to ensure calves in calf rearing systems are adequately cared for.

Indicator 14.3.1 Monitoring and Managing Calf Feeding: Programs are to be undertaken to ensure calves receive appropriate nutrition and care to maintain or enhance calf health, including colostrum after birth.

Indicator 14.3.2 Calf Rearing System Management: A *process* for providing *appropriate* care to maintain and/or improve calf health in calf-rearing systems and protect them from external threats such as weather and predator impact, following requirements of *country or regional animal welfare best practices and/or guidelines.*

Indicator 14.3.3 Managing Surplus Dairy Calves: A program to demonstrate the adoption, or move towards the adoption, of practices designed to reduce the incidence of surplus dairy calves; otherwise healthy calves must not be euthanised on-farm.

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Agistment: The movement of livestock from a property where there is little feed or water to another property where there are adequate supplies, generally in exchange for payment.

Agistor: The person who takes animals onto their land to graze in exchange for payment. Responsible for animal care when they are on their land.

Agricultural best management practices: A practice or combination of practices deemed to be best practice for meeting productivity, economic, social and environmental (sustainability) outcomes. These recommended practices are typically developed by any combination of industry Research and Development Corporations (RDCs), state government agencies, research institutions (such as Universities and CSIRO), Natural Resource or Catchment Management Authorities, and farming systems groups.

Agricultural chemicals: Includes any substance or organism used to: destroy, stupefy, repel, inhibit the feeding of, or prevent *pests* on plants or other commodities; destroy a plant or to modify its physiology; modify the effect of another *agricultural chemical* product; attract a pest for the purpose of destroying it. This encompasses all herbicides, insecticides and fungicides. Dairy cleansers for on-farm use, *crop* markers, insect repellents for use on humans, swimming pool disinfectants and algaecides, rodenticides, antifouling paints, preservatives, and household and home garden products for pest and weed control have been deemed to be *agricultural chemical* products. Some pest traps and barriers using chemical attractants also require registration. (DAWE).

Agricultural land: Land that is used directly or indirectly in the production of *Agricultural products* including *cropland*, grassland, rangeland, *pasture* and other land on which *Agricultural products* or livestock are produced and resource concerns may be addressed. It may include *crop*ped woodland, marshes, incidental areas included in the agricultural operation, and other types of land used for production of livestock (DAWE).

Agricultural practices: Specific methods including tillage system, planting, application practices for *fertilisers* and *crop protectants*, harvesting and other *cropping* practices that are applied to grow and harvest annual or perennial *crops* for food, animal feed, forage, fibre, oilseed and other *Agricultural products*.

Agricultural products: *Crops* for food, animal feed, forage, fiber, oilseed, medicine, cultural practices, fermentation products, or fuel, livestock and livestock products. These products include (but are not limited to) grains and flours, fresh and processed fruits and vegetables, meat and meat products, dairy products, natural fibres, sugar and wine (ABS 2018).

Agricultural waste: Refers to *solid waste* that is generated by the rearing of animals or the production and harvest of *Agricultural products*. This may include, but is not limited to, poultry and livestock manure and residual materials in liquid or solid form generated from the production and marketing of poultry, livestock, furbearing animals, other livestock products and *crop residues* from row *crops* and permanent *crops* (DAWE).

Animal health products: Includes pharmaceutical, immunobiological and complementary products that can be administered to the animal, internally or externally, to manage a specific disease, condition or circumstance. The use of such products results in a direct affecting on the animal.

Animal husbandry: Breeding and caring for farm animals. It includes day-to-day care, selective breeding and the raising of livestock.

Animal production: The change in energy requirements to achieve production metrics regarding animal growth, liveweight gain, pregnancy, lactation and exercise.

Animal welfare: The state of an animal and how well it is coping with the conditions in which it lives.

Appropriate: Suitable or proper in the circumstances for a particular purpose. Considerations may include whether an activity will achieve the goal of an *indicator* or *performance measure* in a specific setting, is practical and reasonable and contributes to achieving regulatory compliance or obtaining social license.

Appropriate deforestation cutoff date: A date (day, month and year) specified by the most relevant biome- or geography-specific deforestation protocol(s) after which farmed land cannot have been deforested, unless allowed within the parameters of a regulated no-net-negative impact (or equivalent) program. An example of a relevant deforestation protocol could include, but is not limited to, the Canadian Boreal Forest Conservation Framework.

† https://www.natureserve.org

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Australian Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines: A guiding document that aims to harmonise and streamline livestock welfare legislation in Australia, ensuring that it results in improved welfare outcomes and is practical for industry. The documents cover producers' responsibilities and set out animals' needs in relation to feed and water; risk management in extreme weather conditions, natural disasters, disease, injury and predation; facilities and equipment; handling and management/ husbandry; breeding management; and humane killing.

Behavioural: Reactions made in response to stimuli

Biosecurity: Biosecurity is the management of the risks to the economy, the environment, and the community, of *pests* and diseases entering, emerging, establishing or spreading. *biosecurity* focuses on a hierarchy of controls, beginning with preventing the entry of *pests* into areas where they do not occur, monitoring for and eradicating those that do enter, and managing the negative impacts of those that become established (DAWE).

Biodiversity: The variety and abundance of life forms, *processes*, functions and structures of plants, animals and other living organisms, including the relative complexity of species, communities, gene pools and ecosystems at spatial scales that range from local to regional to global (SFI). This includes soil organisms, pollinators, beneficial organisms, agricultural and grassland plants and *wildlife*.

Body condition score: Assessment of the amount of fat and muscle covering the bones of animals.

Carbon farming: Carbon farming is the *process* of changing *Agricultural practices* or land use to increase the amount of carbon stored in the soil and vegetation (sequestration) and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from livestock, soil or vegetation (avoidance) (Dept Primary Industries and Regional Development, WA).

Castration: The removal or disruption of the function of the testes by excision, or by constriction and / or crushing of the testicular blood supply (using a rubber ring, tension band or burdizzo clamp) or by dysfunction created by the cryptorchid method.

Certification body: An independent third party that is accredited and competent to conduct certifications to the *Leading Harvest Standard*.

Climate change: Change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g. by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer. It may be due to natural internal *processes* or external forcings or to persistent anthropogenic changes in the composition of the atmosphere or in land use (Intergovernmental Panel on *climate change*).

Climate-smart agriculture (practices): Practices and principles that promote sustainable increases in agricultural productivity (including sustainable intensification) while adapting to *climate change* and reducing greenhouse gas emissions (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations).

Conservation: 1. *Protection* of plant and animal *habitat*. 2. Management of a renewable natural resource with the *objective* of sustaining its productivity in perpetuity while providing for human use compatible with sustainability of the resource.

Construction: Nature of facilities or equipment including the design, layout, installation, assembly of the facilities and the materials of which they are made.

Contract management company: A third-party company used by a *Standard user* to directly operate enrolled *farmland*.

Covenant of quiet enjoyment: A covenant that promises that the grantee or lessee of an estate in real property will be able to possess the premises in peace, without disturbance by hostile claimants. Quiet enjoyment is a right to the undisturbed use and enjoyment of real property by a lessee.

Cover cropping: Cover *crop* refers to a specific plant that is grown primarily for the benefit of soil. Establishing a cover *crop* during a fallow period in cropping rotations or between rows in orchards or vineyards can assist with managing soil erosion, improving soil fertility, water infiltration and carbon and controlling diseases and pests. Cover *crops* may include grasses, cereals or legumes. (Department Primary Industries NSW)

† https://www.natureserve.org

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Critically endangered: Under the EPBC Act, a flora species, fauna species or ecological community, that meets any of the following five criteria:

(1) undergone, is suspected to have undergone or is likely to undergo in the immediate future a very severe reduction in numbers (measured over the longer of 10 years or 3 generations) of 80% or higher;

(2) Its geographic distribution is precarious for the survival of the species and is very restricted: Extent of occurrence (EOO) < 100 km2 and Area of occupancy (AOO) < 10 km2 and at least two of the following: Severely fragmented OR Number of locations = 1; Continuing decline observed, estimated, inferred or projected in any of: (i) extent of occurrence; (ii) area of occupancy; (iii) area, extent and/or quality of *habitat*; (iv) number of locations or subpopulations; (v) number of mature individuals; or extreme fluctuations in any of the previous (i) – (v).

(3) Estimated number of mature individuals is very low (< 250) and one of (a) or (b): (a) evidence suggests that the number will continue to decline at a very high rate (25% in 3 years or 1 generation - whichever is longer) (b) the number is likely to continue to decline and its geographic distribution is precarious for its survival, based on one of the following three conditions: (i) Number of mature individuals in each subpopulation ≤ 50, (ii) % of mature individuals in one subpopulation = 90 – 100%, (iii) Extreme fluctuations.

(4) The estimated total number of mature individuals is extremely low (< 50).

(5) The probability of its extinction in the wild is at least 50% in the immediate future (in 10 years or 3 generations, whichever is longer - 100 years maximum) (DAWE, 2021).

Critical external factor: Any off-farm attribute or factor that is materially and substantially relevant to the viability, long-term profitability, and sustainability of agricultural production of a management unit or farm. These may include economic factors (e.g., labour availability, regional market demand and opportunities, regulatory changes, *farmland tenant* availability, supplier availability and technological advancements), environmental factors (e.g., *climate change*, regional availability of water, and other inputs), and social factors (e.g., social license).

Crop: Plant species that are purposefully grown and/or harvested to satisfy human and livestock needs. They can include plants grown for food, feed, forage, fibre, decorative purposes, oilseed, medicine, cultural practices, fermentation products or fuel, including, but not limited to, field *crops*, hay or forage, fruits, vegetables, nuts, grains and horticultural specialties. *Cover crops* and companion *crops* may be considered *crops* if purposefully grown.

Cropland: Land used primarily for the direct production of *Agricultural products* for harvest, including, but not limited to, land in row *crops* or close-grown *crops*, forage *crops* that are in a rotation with row or close-grown *crops*, permanent hay land, horticultural *crops*, orchards, vineyards, *crop*ped woodland, marshes, cranberry bogs and other lands used to produce *crops*. It may include both irrigated and dryland areas.

Crop productivity: The inherent capacity of a particular site to produce a *crop*, often measured in volume or weight per hectare.

Crop protectants: Also known as pesticides or *crop Protection* products, *crop protectants* are used to keep *crops* healthy and abundant by protecting them against *pests* (insecticides), weeds (herbicides) and diseases (fungicides). Specific chemicals are labelled for very specific uses and quantities. They can be synthetic (developed in laboratories and manufactured) or natural. Chemicals used in agriculture need to be approved by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA). State and territory governments are responsible for controlling the use of *crop protectants* beyond the point of retail sale; in some states, more than one agency is involved.

Crop residues: Materials from growing *crops* left on the soil surface or partially incorporated into the surface layer of *cropland* to reduce *soil erosion*, conserve soil moisture and improve soil tilth . These materials may include, but are not limited to, stalks, stubble, leaves, chipped branches and vines, woody biomass from orchard and vineyard redevelopment and seed pods.

Crop genetic diversity: Variation in genetic and phenotypic characteristics of plants used in agriculture. Its two components are the genetic diversity within each *crop* (within-*crop* diversity, including different *crop* varieties or hybrids of the same species) and the number of *crop* species commonly grown (between-*crop* diversity).

Deforestation: The conversion of *forest* to another land use or the long-term reduction of the tree canopy cover below the minimum 20 percent threshold. It includes areas of *forest* converted to agriculture, *pasture*, water reservoirs, residential and industrial areas, and urban areas (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations).

Dehorning: The removal of attached horns.

Desirable traits: Breeding for traits that are more suitable for production systems and are conducive of reducing animal welfare issues (e.g., temperament, polledness, structural and udder soundness, disease and pest resistance, heat tolerance, doing or “fleshing” ability, mothering ability, and calving ease).

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Disbudding: Removal of an area of skin including the horn bud in a young animal prior to solid attachment of the horn bud to the skull.

Discretionary: Available for use by the judgment of the user in consideration of a particular situation.

Effluent: Effluent from dairy sheds or other infrastructure such as yards, feedpads and calving pads predominantly consisting of manure, urine and washdown water. It may also include gravel, detergents, soil particles, cow hair, milk, string, paper and wire and is high in nutrients, particularly nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium.

Endangered: Under the EPBC Act, a flora species, fauna species or ecological community, that meets any of the following five criteria:

(1) undergone, is suspected to have undergone or is likely to undergo in the immediate future a severe reduction in numbers (measured over the longer of 10 years or 3 generations) of 50% or higher;

(2) Its geographic distribution is precarious for the survival of the species and is restricted: Extent of occurrence (EOO) < 5000 km2 and Area of occupancy (AOO) < 500 km2 and at least two of the following: Severely fragmented OR Number of locations ≤ 5; Continuing decline observed, estimated, inferred or projected in any of: (i) extent of occurrence; (ii) area of occupancy; (iii) area, extent and/or quality of *habitat*; (iv) number of locations or subpopulations; (v) number of mature individuals; or extreme fluctuations in any of the previous (i) – (v).

(3) Estimated number of mature individuals is low (< 2500) and one of (a) or (b): (a) evidence suggests that the number will continue to decline at a high rate (20% in 5 years or 2 generations - whichever is longer) (b) the number is likely to continue to decline and its geographic distribution is precarious for its survival, based on one of the following three conditions: (i) Number of mature individuals in each subpopulation ≤ 250, (ii) % of mature individuals in one subpopulation = 95 – 100%, (iii) Extreme fluctuations.

(4) The estimated total number of mature individuals is very low (< 250).

(5) The probability of its extinction in the wild is at least 20% in the near future (in 20 years or 5 generations, whichever is longer - 100 years maximum) (DAWE, 2021).

Energy-efficient agricultural practices: Practices that deliver more services for the same energy input or the same services for less energy input (modified from the International Energy Agency definition of energy efficiency).

Enrolled lands: Lands managed by the *Standard user* and enrolled under the *Leading Harvest Standard* and subject to third-party audit to the *Leading Harvest Standard*.

Equal opportunity employment: To provide employment where an employer agrees not to discriminate against any employee or job applicant because of race, colour, religion, national origin, sex, physical or mental disability, or age.

Euthanasia: Put to death humanely; a person conducting the euthanasia must take reasonable action to confirm the animal is dead.

Export slaughter interval: the minimum time that must elapse between veterinary chemical administration to livestock and their slaughter for export (APVMA, 2021).

External threats: Including extremes of weather conditions, drought, fires, floods, disease, injury and predation.

Farmland: Land that includes native vegetation and modified *pastures* that are grazed, *cropping* land, horticulture and sheep-wheat that are part of an agricultural operation (ABARES Agricultural Snapshot 2021).

Farmland lessee: A lessee of *farmland* where the lease is managed by a *Standard user*.

Farm labour contractor: A person or business who charges a fee to recruit, transport, supply or hire seasonal farmworkers (including migrant/backpacker labourers) to work for or under the direction, supervision or control of *Standard user* or a *contract management company* under the oversight of a *Standard user* (DAWE).

Fertiliser: Fertiliser is defined as a substance that is manufactured, represented, supplied or used as a means of directly or indirectly fertilising the soil; supplying nutrients to plants; or conditioning the soil by altering the chemical, physical or biological composition of the soil.

(Fertiliser Australia, National Code of Practice 2018) State Governments have developed regulations to manage the description and safety of fertilisers. Fertiliser Australia has developed a National COP for Fertiliser Description and Labelling (2018).

Forest: An area, incorporating all living and non-living components, that is dominated by trees having usually a single stem and a mature or potentially mature stand height exceeding 2 metres and with existing or potential crown cover of overstorey strata about equal to or greater than 20 per cent. It encompasses woodland. (ABARES).

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Gender equitable: The fair treatment for men and women according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different, but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities (UNESCO). Equivalency between men and women does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they were born male or female.

Geoheritage: Outstanding examples of geology and the geological *processes* that formed the Earth's surface, as well as the plants and animals that have lived on it, can be seen at all scales in landforms and natural rock out*crops*, river banks, sea cliffs and shore platforms, in road cuttings, mines, quarries and other excavations. *Geoheritage* sites are protected under the EPBC Act as sites of World or National Heritage value. Regional sites are protected under state and territory legislation (Geological Society Australia).

Grasslands: *Grasslands* are natural ecological communities dominated by grasses and with no or only sparse tree or shrub cover. They are dominated by a range of grass species but contain a diversity of other herbs. *Grasslands* are among the most species-rich plant communities in Australia. Secondary or derived *grasslands* are those in which the woody species (trees and/or shrubs) have been removed, leaving only the native herbaceous ground layer (FOG, 2021).

Greenhouse gases: Gases in the atmosphere that can absorb infrared radiation from the sun, trapping outgoing energy in the form of heat in the atmosphere. Key greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide (CO2), nitrous oxide (N2O), methane (CH4), sulphur hexafluoride (SF6), perfluorocarbons (PFCs) and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) (Climate Change in Australia, CSIRO).

Groundwater: Water occurring naturally below ground level (whether in an aquifer or otherwise). In Australia *groundwater* is strongly connected to *surface water* (Water Act 2007, Geoscience Australia).

Groundwater depletion: A long-term decline in levels of *groundwater* which can be caused by a combination of increased human usage (of ground and connected *surface water*) and changes to recharge (e.g. rainfall and human usage) (DAWE).

Groundwater regulatory agency: A local, state or territory government agency with statutory authority to exercise regulatory or supervisory oversight in the use and/or extraction of *groundwater*, with coordination provided by the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council (NRMMC).

Habitat: A place, natural or otherwise (including climate, food, cover and water), where an individual or population of animal species or plant species naturally or normally lives and develops.

Hazardous waste: Waste that is dangerous or potentially harmful to human health or the environment, which can be liquid, solid, gas or sludge. It can be discarded commercial products, like leftover cleaning fluids or *crop protectants*, or the byproducts of manufacturing *processes* (Department of Agriculture Water and the Environment).

Health and safety: Regulations and procedures intended to prevent accident or injury.

Humane killing: Must ensure that the animal is killed at the first reasonable opportunity.

Indicator: A specific metric that provides information about an organisation's agricultural and environmental performance and that is integral to assessing conformance to the *Leading Harvest Standard*.

Indigenous Peoples: People defined in international or national legislation as having a set of specific rights based on their historical ties to a particular territory and their cultural or historical distinctiveness from other populations that are often politically dominant. More specifically, Australia is home to two very distinct *indigenous* cultural groups: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. (AIATSIS, 2021).

Indigenous heritage: *Indigenous heritage* places are landscapes, sites and areas that are particularly important to *indigenous* people as part of their customary law, developing traditions, history and/or current practices. Some *indigenous heritage* places are protected under national law (EPBC Act, as World or National Heritage sites), others are protected under state or territory legislation. (DAWE).

Indigenous protected area: an area of indigenous-owned land or sea where traditional indigenous owners have entered into an agreement with the Australian Government to promote *biodiversity* and cultural resource *conservation* (DAWE).

Integrated Pest Management: The control of *pests*, including insects, at tolerable levels below economic thresholds, by the strategic use of biological, cultural and chemical practices. IPM seeks to use natural predators or parasites (i.e. beneficials) to control *pests*, using selective pesticides for backup only when *pests* are unable to be controlled by natural means (Farm *Biosecurity* Australia). *Appropriate* techniques may include, but are not limited to, enhancement of natural enemies, planting pest-resistant *crops*, adaptation of cultural management and judicious use of *crop protectants*.

Inspections: Careful examination.

Land use conversion: A change in the extent or composition of an ecosystem or *habitat* where there is a shift from one land use to another that is considered significant or irreversible.

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Listed Threatened Species and Ecological Communities: The EPBC Act provides for the listing of native, nationally *threatened species* and ecological communities, native migratory species and marine species. An MNES, *threatened species* (flora and fauna) are listed in any one of the following categories: extinct, extinct in the wild, *critically endangered*, *endangered*, *vulnerable*, or *conservation* dependent. *Threatened ecological communities* are listed under three categories: *critically endangered*, *endangered* or vulnerable.

Living wage: The minimum income necessary for an employee or contract worker to meet their basic needs (e.g. food, child care, health insurance, housing, transportation and other basic necessities (e.g., clothing, personal care items, etc.). A *living wage* is set higher than a minimum wage and may be "pegged" to (fixed as a percentage of) some other measure of living standards, such as average weekly earnings. This ensures that the *living wage* holds its relative value over time. While the minimum wage sets a bare minimum, the *living wage* aspires to be a socially acceptable minimum. Typically, this is seen as a level that keeps workers out of poverty. Australia's national minimum wage is set each year by an expert panel of the Fair Work Commission (FWC).

Low-emission technologies: Advanced technologies used to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions levels, airborne pollutants and other adverse environmental impacts. This can include high-efficiency equipment and technology using *renewable energy* (e.g., hybrid vehicles, solar energy).

Lowest risk, most selective treatment options: A treatment used to control site-specific *pests* that minimises impact to non-target organisms and people and has the least overall impact while meeting management *objectives*. Considerations may include the target pest, the degree of control needed, cost, the season and timing of application, rates and methods, terrain, *crop* conditions and the presence or absence of water bodies.

Matter of National Environmental Significance (MNES): There are nine MNES protected under the EPBC Act: *world heritage properties*; *national heritage places*; *wetlands* of international importance (listed under the Ramsar Convention); *listed threatened species and ecological communities*; migratory species protected under international agreements; Commonwealth marine areas; Great Barrier Reef Marine Park; nuclear actions (including uranium mines); a water resource, in relation to coal seam gas development and large coal mining development.

Minimise: To do only that which is necessary and *appropriate* to accomplish the task or *objective* described.

Mulesing: The removal of skin from the breech and/or tail of a sheep using mulesing shears.

National Heritage Place: An MNES, *National Heritage Places* are natural, historic and indigenous places of outstanding significance to the nation. Once a heritage place is listed under the EPBC Act, special requirements come into force to ensure that the values of the place will be protected and conserved for future generations. The EPBC Act provides for the preparation of management plans which set out the significant heritage aspects of the place and how the values of the site will be managed.

Native habitats: Areas where a native species naturally occurs and that have the living and nonliving environmental conditions necessary for survival, including areas for feeding, shelter, protection and/or reproduction.

Natural communities: An assemblage of indigenous interacting plant and animal species and their common environment, recurring in specific ecological areas across the landscape. There are specific definitions of natural communities defined principally by the dominant vegetation. Some of these are defined in this glossary and include forests, woodlands, grasslands, rangelands, wetlands. They also include non-forest vegetation such as heathland and shrubland.

Natural forest: *Forest* composed of indigenous trees and not classified as a planted *forest*.

Nutrient management: To manage the amount, source, placement, form and timing of the application of nutrients and *soil amendments* to ensure adequate *soil fertility* for plant production and to minimise the potential for environmental degradation, particularly *Water quality* impairment and unnecessary air emissions. In Australia the Fertcare *program* has been established to ensure that *fertiliser* suppliers are *appropriately* skilled to provide sound advice, minimising environmental and food safety risks and optimising productivity (Fertilizer Australia).

Objective: A fundamental goal.

Occupational: Relating to a job or profession.

Overgrazing: The regrazing of plants before they are allowed sufficient time for recovery and the grazing of plants for prolonged periods that exceeds the carrying capacity of the pasture.

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Pasture: (1) Grazing lands comprised of introduced or domesticated native forage species that are used primarily for the production of livestock. They receive periodic renovation and/or cultural treatments such as tillage, fertilisation, slashing, and weed control, and may be irrigated. They are not in rotation with *crops*. (2) A grazing area enclosed and separated from other areas by fencing or other barriers (paddocks); the management unit for grazing land. (3) Forage plants used as food for grazing animals. (4) Any area devoted to the production of forage, native or introduced, and harvested by grazing.

Performance measure: A means of judging whether an *objective* has been fulfilled.

Pests: A pest is an organism living and growing where they are not wanted, which can cause damage to plants, humans, structures, and other creatures, including *crops* that are grown for food. *Pests* can include weeds, plant pathogens (certain fungi, bacteria, and viruses), rodents, and nematodes in addition to plant-feeding insects and mites. *Pests* include vertebrate animals (both native and introduced) where they negatively impact the environment or *Agricultural land*s. pest animals and weeds not only reduce agricultural productivity, they can also cause damage to the environment and natural resources. (DAWE)

Physiological: Relating to the processes of the body, typically outside of conscious perception.

Policy: A written statement of commitment to meet an *objective* or to implement a defined *program* or plan to achieve an *objective* or outcome.

Prime agricultural land: Land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing *agricultural* products and is available for these uses. Its use for agriculture is not impeded or restrained by non-agricultural use or development. The definition of prime agricultural land is complex because land conditions are not static, it is influenced by both soil quality and proximity to water resources, access to infrastructure, and future technology and innovation, and a changing climate. Individual state and territory governments have their own definitions of policies to protect prime agricultural land and national and state farming bodies (e.g., NFF) also have policies around prime agricultural land (National Farmers Federation)

Process: A series of purposeful actions or operations that leads to a sought-after end or outcome. This can include a set or sequence of informal or formal practices, procedures or routines.

Professional work environment: A nondiscriminatory workplace environment free from harassment and composed of competent, respectful, mature and accountable employees working toward a common goal.

Program: An organised system, *process*, or set of activities to achieve an *objective*, *performance measure* or *indicator*.

Property Identification Code (PIC): An eight letter/digit code which defines each property spatially and is the basis of Australia's food safety and traceability programs.

Protection: Maintenance of the status or integrity, over the long term, of identified attributes or values including management where *appropriate*, giving consideration to past disturbance, land use, and pest risk when determining *appropriate conservation* strategies.

Quality of life: The standard of health, comfort, and happiness experienced.

Rangeland: The rangelands are those areas where the rainfall is too low or unreliable and the soils too poor to support regular *cropping*. They cover about 80% of Australia and include savannas, woodlands, shrublands, *grasslands* and wetlands. The rangelands are largely undisturbed or natural bioregions within Western Australia, South Australia, New South Wales, Queensland and the Northern Territory (DAWE, 2021).

Reasonable actions: Take all practical measures to prevent or diminish further damage.

Regulatory action information: Information related to compliance with government regulations such as permits, reports and corrective action documentation.

Renewable energy: Energy from sources that are naturally replenishing but flow-limited. It is virtually inexhaustible in duration but limited in the amount of energy that is available per unit of time, including wood, waste, geothermal, wind, photovoltaic, tidal and wave, hydropower and solar thermal energy.

Riparian zone: A transition zone, it is any land which adjoins, directly influences, or is influenced by a body of water (ARRC, 2021).

Risk: Uncertainty about the effects/implications of an activity.

Runoff: Water from precipitation or irrigation on an area that does not infiltrate, but instead is discharged from the area. The water that flows off the surface of the land is called *surface runoff.* Water that enters the soil before reaching surface water is called *groundwater runoff* or seepage flow from *groundwater*.

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Share-farming: An arrangement whereby two parties (ordinarily both farmers) bring certain elements together to farm a property to generate profits which are then shared between the parties (Coulter Legal, 2023).

Soil amendments: Materials that typically are added to soil, plants or the plant-growth environment to enhance plant growth. These include *fertilisers*, compost, sludge, manure, microbes, additives, materials improving soil condition (i.e., adjusting the pH of the soil, improving soil structure and texture, aeration adjustment and moisture *conservation* among others), materials controlling or suppressing *crop pests*, and others or combinations thereof. Inorganic *soil amendments* are composed of synthetic chemicals and/or minerals, while organic *soil amendments* are often composed of organic matter from plant/animal sources and/or microbes, and may include materials such as manure, earthworm castings, soil, sphagnum peat, grass clippings, straw, wood chips, various composts, seaweed, guano, or naturally occurring mineral deposits, and living microorganisms, among others.

Soil erosion: A *process* by which soil and rock are removed by water and wind and then transported and deposited in other locations.

Soil fertility: The quality that enables a soil to provide plant nutrients, in adequate amounts and in proper balance, for the growth of specified plants when light, moisture, temperature, tilth and other growth factors are favourable.

Soil health: The capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains *crops*, soil organisms and humans. Its maintenance includes consideration of the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of soil.

Soil loss: *Soil erosion* where the removal of topsoil occurs faster than the soil-forming *processes* can replace it due to natural, animal and human activity.

Soil mismanagement: Agricultural operations, practices and/or treatments that result in the decline of *soil health* and *soil productivity*, including *soil loss*.

Soil productivity: The capability of soil for producing a specified plant or sequence of plants under specific management.

Solid waste: Any solid, semisolid, liquid or contained gaseous materials discarded from agricultural operations. It includes garbage, construction debris, commercial refuse, sludge from water supply or waste treatment plants and other discarded materials.

Special sites: Sites that include *unique geological features* or *Unique culturally important features* that are recognised regionally or nationally or by *Indigenous Peoples*.

Standard user: An organisation certified or committed to being certified by an accredited *certification body* to be in conformance with the *Leading Harvest Standard*.

Suffering: The state of severe distress, disease or injury.

Supply chain: The sequence of processes involved in the production and distribution of a commodity to a consumer.

Surface water: Water that is on the Earth's surface, such as in a stream, river, lake or reservoir.

Tail docking: The removal of a portion of an animal's tail, or actions that cause the loss of a section of the tail. It does not include any trimming of the switch hairs (the bush) (cattle).

Threatened ecological community: An ecological community that is at risk of extinction, where its natural composition and function of the ecological community have been significantly depleted across its full range. This can be due to many reasons, including clearing of native vegetation, inappropriate fire regimes, non–native or invasive species, climate change, water diversion, pollution and urban development (DAWE, 2021).

Threatened species: Species (flora and fauna) that are at risk of extinction due to various threats, including loss, degradation and fragmentation of *habitat*, invasive species, altered fire regimes, unsustainable use and management of natural resources, changes to the aquatic environment and water flows and *climate change* (DAWE, 2021). *Threatened species* may be listed under Commonwealth (EPBC Act) and/or state/territory legislation.

Unique culturally important features: Features having significance for or being representative of human activities or beliefs. Examples could include, but are not limited to, documented areas such as archaeological sites, unusual historical sites, cemeteries and sacred sites. Typically these sites have been documented in databases established by state governments or the federal government and have been significant historically. In Australia, these include *National Heritage Place*s, *indigenous heritage* sites and *indigenous protected areas*.

Unique geological features: Naturally occurring physical features on Earth's surface, which are unique or locally rare, typically limited in extent (0.1 to 100 hectares), often less than 10 hectares. Examples could include, but are not limited to, exceptional waterfalls, stream or river gorges, canyons, arches, caves or mine entrances, out*crops* of fossil beds or rare mineral deposits, bluffs, buttes and cliffs. In Australia, these include *World Heritage Properties* and *geoheritage* sites.

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Verifiable monitoring system: A system capable of being audited by a third party that includes: 1. a means to characterize *farmland* under the authority of a *Standard user*, 2. a *process* to identify and use sources of available data regarding the use of *agricultural best management practices*, and 3. a method to assess *farmland* tenant performance.

Vulnerable: Under the EPBC Act, a flora species, fauna species or ecological community, that meets any of the following five criteria:

(1) undergone, is suspected to have undergone or is likely to undergo in the immediate future a substantial reduction in numbers (measured over the longer of 10 years or 3 generations) of 30% or higher;

(2) Its geographic distribution is precarious for the survival of the species and is limited: Extent of occurrence (EOO) < 20,000 km2 and Area of occupancy (AOO) < 2,000 km2 and at least two of the following: Severely fragmented OR Number of locations ≤ 10; Continuing decline observed, estimated, inferred or projected in any of: (i) extent of occurrence; (ii) area of occupancy; (iii) area, extent and/or quality of *habitat*; (iv) number of locations or subpopulations; (v) number of mature individuals; or extreme fluctuations in any of the previous (i) – (v).

(3) Estimated number of mature individuals is limited (< 10,500) and one of (a) or (b): (a) evidence suggests that the number will continue to decline at a substantial rate (10% in 10 years or 3 generations - whichever is longer) (b) the number is likely to continue to decline and its geographic distribution is precarious for its survival, based on one of the following three conditions: (i) Number of mature individuals in each subpopulation ≤ 1000, (ii) % of mature individuals in one subpopulation = 100%, (iii) Extreme fluctuations.

(4) The estimated total number of mature individuals is low (< 1000).

(5) The probability of its extinction in the wild is at least 10% in the medium-term future (in 100 years) (DWAE, 2021).

Water quality: The chemical, physical and biological characteristics of water, with respect to its suitability for a particular purpose (e.g., drinking water for humans or livestock, commercial and industrial use, aquatic species *habitat* and *crop* irrigation (*Water quality* Australia)

Weather conditions: The forecast of weather (temperature, humidity, precipitation, wind, cloudiness and atmospheric pressure) and severe weather warnings (thunderstorms, tornadoes, hurricanes, winter storms, snow, droughts) to include observations, flood information, seas forecasts and climate information.

Wetlands: *Wetlands* are areas of permanent or periodic/ intermittent inundation, with water that is static or flowing fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed 6 metres. To be a wetland the area must have one or more of the following attributes: (1) at least periodically the land supports plants or animals that are adapted to and dependent on living in wet conditions for at least part of their life cycle, or (2) the substratum is predominantly undrained soils that are saturated, flooded or ponded long enough to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper layers, or (3) the substratum is not soil and is saturated with water, or covered by water at some time. This includes areas those areas shown as a river, stream, creek, swamp, lake, marsh, waterhole, wetland, billabong, pool or spring on topographic maps or local or regional maps, areas containing recognised hydrophytes, saturated parts of the *riparian zone*, artificial wetlands such as farm dams, water bodies not connected to rivers or flowing water such as billabongs and rock pools (DES, QLD 2015).

Wildlife: Aquatic (freshwater), marine and terrestrial fauna.

Woodlands: Ecosystems which contain widely spaced trees, fewer and more scattered trees than in *forests*, the crowns of which do not touch and of 20 to 50 per cent crown cover. In temperate Australia, woodlands are mainly dominated by Eucalyptus species. Temperate woodlands occur predominantly in regions with a mean annual rainfall of between 250-800mm, forming a transitional zone between the higher rainfall *forested* margins of the continent and the shrub and *grasslands* of the arid interior (ABARES, 2021).

World Heritage Property: An MNES, World Heritage sites are places that are important to and belong to everyone, irrespective of where they are located. They have universal value that transcends the value they hold for a particular nation. A declared *World Heritage Property* is an area that has been included in the World Heritage List or declared by the Minister to be a *World Heritage Property*. Once a heritage place is listed under the EPBC Act, special requirements come into force to ensure that the values of the place will be protected and conserved for future generations. The EPBC Act provides for the preparation of management plans which set out the significant heritage aspects of the place and how the values of the site will be managed (DAWE, 2021).

SECTION 2

CERTIFICATION BODY PROCEDURES, COMPETENCE AND ACCREDITATION

Certification Body Procedures, Competence and Accreditation

Introduction

All audits to support certification to the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023* shall be conducted by *certification bodies* accredited by the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB).[1]

Accredited *certification bodies* that provide certification services for *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Program 2023* are required to maintain audit *processes* and conduct audits consistent with the requirements of:

- ISO/IEC 17021-1: 2015 Conformity assessment – Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems; and
- ISO/IEC TS 17021-2:-2016 Conformity assessment – Requirements for certification bodies providing audit and certification of management systems (Part 2: Competence requirements for auditing and certification of environmental management systems).

1. Scope

This *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Program 2023 Certification Body Procedures*, *Competence and Accreditation* document is intended to support, but not replace the audit *process* requirements contained in ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, ISO/IEC TS 17021-2:2016, by providing specific requirements to *Leading Harvest Certified Program Users* and *certification bodies*.

2. Normative Reference

Certification bodies and *auditors* conducting third-party audits to the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023* must conform to the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015: and ISO/IEC TS 17021-2:2016. In addition, all *certification bodies* and *auditors* conducting third-party audits to *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023* must conform to all applicable ANAB requirements and International Accreditation Forum (IAF) Mandatory Documents (e.g., IAF MD 1, IAF MD 2, IAF MD 4, IAF MD 5, IAF MD 11, etc.).

3. Terms and Definitions

Additional definitions of terms can be found in the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023*.

3.1 *nonconformity*
non-fulfilment of a requirement

3.2 *major nonconformity*
nonconformity that affects the capability of the management system to achieve the intended results
Nonconformities could be classified as major in the following circumstances:

- *if there is a significant doubt that effective process control is in place, or that products or services will meet specified requirements;*
- *a number of minor nonconformities associated with the same requirement or issue could demonstrate a systemic failure and thus constitute a major nonconformity.*

3.3 *minor nonconformity*
nonconformity that does not affect the capability of the management system to achieve the intended results

[1] Please see section 7.2 for information on interim accreditation requirements.

4. Procedures for Implementing the Principles for Leading Harvest Auditing

ISO 17021-1:2015 Section 4 addresses general principles associated with auditing, including impartiality, competence, responsibility, openness, confidentiality and responsiveness to complaints.

All information and documents, including working drafts and reports, shall be considered confidential. *Certification bodies* shall not release any information or documents without the prior written permission of the *Leading Harvest Certified Program User*. *Auditors* shall conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner.

5. Leading Harvest Audit Activities

5.1 Initial Certification

For the initial certification audit to be completed, the auditee must be a *Leading harvest Program User* or be in the *process* of becoming one in which case the final certification decision is conditioned on becoming a *Leading Harvest Program User*. The *Leading Harvest* certificate cannot be issued by the *certification body* until the applicant has become a *Leading Harvest Program User*. It should be noted that the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023* is a publicly available document and, as such, anyone who wants to can offer their "opinion" on an organisation's conformance to it. However, because "*Leading Harvest*" is a registered service mark, an entity would infringe on this ownership in violation of applicable intellectual property laws if they were to use the service marks in a public claim about the "opinion" without becoming a *Leading Harvest Program User*.

5.2 Certification of Multiple Sites

Multi-site organisations may be audited on a site-by-site basis (all sites visited each year) or, in some cases, on a sample basis. Multi-site certifications shall adhere to the requirements in IAF MD 1: 2018.

5.3 Substitution and Modification of *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023 Indicators*

Certified Program Users, with consent of the *certification body*, may substitute or modify *indicators* in the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023* to address the scope and scale of operations and local conditions based on a thorough analysis and adequate justification. The *certification body* is responsible for ensuring revised *indicators* are consistent with the spirit and intent of the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023 performance measure*s and *indicators* and with the principles of *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard*, and that the changes are *appropriate* for specific local conditions and circumstances and the Certified *Program* User's scope and scale of operation.

Additional *indicators* beyond those identified in the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023*, if included by the *Leading Harvest Certified Program User*, shall be audited like all other *indicators*.

5.4 Determination of Conformity

5.4.1 The *certification body* shall assess conformance to each element of *Leading Harvest's objectives*, *performance measures* and *indicators* within the scope of the audit.

Evidence shall be compiled by examining operating procedures, materials relating to *farmland* management practices and on-the-ground field performance, and through meetings or correspondence with employees, contractors and other third parties (e.g., government agencies, community groups, affected *Indigenous Peoples*, *conservation* organisations), as *appropriate*, to determine conformance to the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023*.

5.4.2 The *certification body* shall ensure that the audit *objectives* and scope as well as the *auditor* time allocated to the audit:

- allow for accurate determination of conformance for the operating units within the scope of the audit;
- verify that the *farmland* management *program* conforms to *Leading Harvest*, *objectives*, *performance measures*, *indicators*, and any additional *indicators* that the *Certified Program User chooses*; and
- verify whether the *Certified Program User* has effectively implemented its *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023 program* requirements on the ground.

If a *major nonconformity* is found, a certification shall not be issued until the *certification body* verifies that corrective action approved by the *lead auditor* has been implemented. A revisit may be required to verify implementation of corrective actions.

If a *minor nonconformity* is found, a certification may be issued only after the *lead auditor* approves a corrective action plan that is to be implemented within an agreed-upon period, not to exceed one year. Verification that the corrective action has been effectively implemented shall occur during the next audit.

5.5 *Leading Harvest* Technical Audit Report to the *Certified Program User*

ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, Section 9.4.8 defines the audit report contents. In addition, the *Leading Harvest* audit report to the *Certified Program User* shall cover:

a. the audit plan;

b. description of the audit *process* used;

c. the number of auditor days used to conduct the audit, including both on-site and off-site audit activities;

d. information regarding any meetings or correspondence between the audit team and government agencies, community groups, affected *Indigenous Peoples* and *conservation* organisations;

e. documentation of the rationale for the substitution or modification of any *indicators*;

f. a schedule for surveillance and recertification;

g. any specific focus areas for the next audit visit.

See Communications and Reporting in Section 5 in the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard Program* 2023 document regarding the development of summary audit reports. *Certified Program Users* who wish to make public claims about being certified must submit summary audits within 90 days of the certificate being issued that can be made public by Leading Harvest.

Certified Program Users that only use certification for internal reporting and business to business communications related to selling product must submit an audit report (which will not be publicly available) to *Leading Harvest* for validation within 90 days of the certificate being issued, and also shall share with *Leading Harvest* information regarding hectares and general geographies certified for aggregated reporting across *Program Users*.

5.6 Recertification

5.6.1 To maintain current *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Program 2023* certificates, *Certified Program Users* shall recertify their *Leading Harvest programs* to the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard* every three years.

5.7 Transfer of Certification

5.7.1 When one Certified *Program User* acquires the certified *farmland* of another Certified *Program* User, the certification bodies shall work with the parties involved to review the acquisition or sale. This review will determine the significance of changes that may occur with the transfer of ownership of the *farmland* to determine the actions necessary in order to issue a new certificate to the party receiving the new assets. It is imperative that *Certified Program Users* notify their respective *certification body* as soon as possible when *farmland* is being purchased or sold to ensure that lapses in certification status can be eliminated or *minimised*.

In order to *minimise* disruptions in operations due to the transfer of certified *farmland* from one *Certified Program User* to another, *Leading Harvest* will honour current *Leading Harvest* certifications for the *farmland* involved in the transfer for a period of 90 days for *Leading Harvest* off-product mark uses provided:

a. The parties involved request this grace period in writing prior to the transfer of the assets with documentation confirming that there will not be significant variation in the current operations, environmental management systems personnel, etc. during the transfer.

b. The party receiving the assets must provide documentation demonstrating the timeline for obtaining their new *Leading Harvest* certification from an accredited *certification body*.

c. The party desiring to utilise the *Leading Harvest* off-product marks must be in full conformance with all aspects of the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Program 2023*.

5.7.2 Transfer of an existing certification to another *certification body* will meet the requirements of IAF MD2.

6. Competence and Evaluation

6.1 Competence of *Audit Teams*

Audit teams shall have the competence (knowledge and skills) to conduct an audit in accordance with the principles of auditing. The *certification body* shall select *audit team* members *appropriate* to the scope, scale and geography of the operation being audited. Additionally, at least one member of the *audit team* shall have knowledge of agricultural operations in the region undergoing the audit, at least one member shall have knowledge of applicable laws and regulations, and at least one member shall have knowledge of the socio-demographics and cultural issues in the region.

6.2 Qualifications of *Auditors*

ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, sections 7.1 and 7.2 address general competence requirements for *certification bodies* providing audit and certification of management. This is supplemented by the environmental management system-specific competence requirements contained in ISO/IEC 17021-2:2016.

7. Accreditation of Certification Bodies

7.1 Accreditation Requirements

The *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard Program 2023* requires *certification bodies* to be accredited in order to conduct *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023 audits* and issue certificates.

Certification body:

an independent *third party* that is accredited by: an independent *third party* that is accredited by ANSI-National Accreditation Board (ANAB) as being competent to conduct certifications to the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023*.

7.2 Interim Accreditation Rules

The *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland* Management *Program* 2023 is new. *Leading Harvest* is working with the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB-ANSI) to develop an accreditation *program* for certification bodies specific for the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland* Management *Program* 2023. Given the desire to begin certifications to the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023* as soon as possible and prior to ANAB accreditation procedures being developed, *Leading Harvest* recognises certifications conducted by certification bodies that meet the following requirements:

Accreditation by ANAB to conduct ISO 14001 Environmental Management Systems certifications or certification bodies that have been accredited for specific standards that are also based on land management. In addition, certification bodies with accreditation or credentialing from other organisations may be used if approved in advance by Leading Harvest. All certification bodies must be approved by *Leading Harvest* before conducting certifications to the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023*.

Once the accreditation *process* has been established by ANAB and provisional approval has been granted by Leading Harvest, certification bodies will be allotted eighteen months to complete the accreditation *process*. All audits and certifications shall be done by certification bodies accredited for the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland* Management *Program* 2023 eighteen months after the *process* has been established by ANAB.

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SECTION 3

USE OF OFF-PRODUCT MARK

1. Use of Leading Harvest Off-Product Mark

1.1 Off-Product Mark

Leading Harvest has an off-product mark to show participation in the *program* and to promote the *program* generally. *Leading Harvest* owns all right, title and interest in the off-product mark, and exercises legitimate control over its use.

The off-product mark may only be used by *Program Users* in good standing whose operations are enrolled in the *Leading Harvest Farmland Management Program 2023* (for all or a portion of their operations). Any express or implied claim that a *Program User* is in conformance with the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023* must be substantiated by a current, valid certification by an accredited *certification body* recognised by *Leading Harvest*.

The *Leading Harvest* off-product mark and messages/claims cannot be used on product labels.

1.2 Public Claims and Mark Use[1]

1.2.1 Full Participant Claims and Mark Use. A *Program User* who wishes to make a public claim regarding their participation in *Leading Harvest* must have successfully completed certification to the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland* Management Standard 2023 by a recognised accredited *certification body* and submit a public audit summary report which will be posted to the *Leading Harvest* website. The contents of the audit report are detailed in Section V, Communications and Reporting. The messages or claims that may be used with the *Leading Harvest* off-product mark are outlined in the *Leading Harvest* Brand Guidelines in Section IV.

A *Program User* that has enrolled all their *farmland* hectares in the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard* may use the *Leading Harvest* off-product mark and make the following public claim before achieving certification:

100% of Farmland Hectares Enrolled

In addition, *Program User* may use the *Leading Harvest* off-product mark and make the following public claim as *farmland* hectares are certified to the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023*:

100% of Farmland Hectares Enrolled and XX% of Farmland Certified

1.2.2 Partial Participant Claims and Mark Use. A *Program User* who wishes to make a public claim regarding their participation in *Leading Harvest* must have successfully completed partial certification to the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023* by a recognised accredited *certification body* and submit a public audit summary report which will be posted to the *Leading Harvest* website. The contents of the public audit report are detailed in Section V, Communications and Reporting. The public claim that may be used with the Leading Harvest off-product mark is limited to the following until all the *Program* User's *farmland* hectares are enrolled and certified:

XX% of Farmland Hectares Enrolled and XX% Farmland Hectares Certified

1.2.3 *Program* Supporter Claims and Mark Use. Organisations that are formally recognised by *Leading Harvest* may only use the *Leading Harvest* off-product mark and the following tagline associated with the mark:

Proud Supporter of Leading Harvest

[1] A public claim is one that is made to the general public such as in a publicly posted sustainability report, press release, blog post, company letterhead, business cards, vehicle signage, etc.

1.3 Private Claims and Mark Use[2]

Program Users can make private, business to business, claims regarding their participation in *Leading Harvest*.

1.3.1 Full Participant Claims and Mark Use. A *Program User* who wishes to make a private claim regarding their participation in *Leading Harvest* must have successfully completed certification to the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023* by a recognised accredited *certification body* and submit a private audit report to *Leading Harvest*. The contents of the audit report are detailed in Section V, *Communications and Reporting*. This report will be confidential and will not be made publicly available by *Leading Harvest*.

A *Program User* that has enrolled all their *farmland* hectares in the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Program 2023* may use the *Leading Harvest* off-product mark and make the following private claim before achieving certification:

100% of Farmland Hectares Enrolled

In addition, a *Program User* may use the *Leading Harvest* off-product mark and make the following private claim as *farmland* hectares are certified to the standard:

100% of Farmland Hectares Enrolled and XX% of Farmland Hectares Certified

1.4 Partial Participant Claims and Mark Use

A *Program User* who wishes to make a private claim regarding their participation in *Leading Harvest* must have successfully completed certification to the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023* by a recognised accredited *certification body* and submit an audit report to Leading Harvest. The contents of the private audit report are detailed in Section V, Communications and Reporting. This report will be confidential and will not be made publicly available by Leading Harvest..

1.4.1 The private claim that may be used with the *Leading Harvest off-product* mark is limited to the following until all the *Program User's farmland* hectares are enrolled and certified:

XX% of Farmland Hectares Enrolled and XX% Farmland Hectares Certified

The off-product mark must be used as described in the *Leading Harvest* Brand Guidelines, subject to the limitations detailed in the preceding requirements.

[2] A private, business to business claim is one that is made to another business such as in an invoice, personal correspondence, sell sheet, etc. and is not made public.

SECTION 4

BRAND GUIDELINES FOR USE OF OFF-PRODUCT MARK AND MESSAGES

SECTION 4

BRAND GUIDELINES AND USE OF OFF-PRODUCT MARK AND MESSAGES

VERTICAL LOGO

The vertical logo is the primary logo and should be used whenever possible. See below for smaller and horizontal usage.

The minimum space around the logo should be at least one length of the centre leaf.

To ensure the logo maintains its readability, it should not go any smaller than 0.75" in height. If it does, please use the icon with text.

MINIMUM CLEAR SPACE

MINIMUM SIZE 0.75"

HORIZONTAL (ICON WITH TEXT)

If the logo is smaller than 0.75” please use the icon and add “Leading Harvest” positioned to the right, vertically centred, in all caps, Helvetica Neue Medium or Regular. Text can be adjusted to the size needed.

	VERTICAL	HORIZONTAL
4-COLOUR LOGO Use the CMYK colour palette when 4-Colour printing is available. Navy and Teal logos are acceptable.		
2-COLOUR LOGO Use PMS2189C (Navy) or PMS2223C (Teal) and 80% Black when PMS colour is available.		
1-COLOUR LOGO Use B&W version of the marks when printing in black and white.		
WEB-SAFE LOGO Use PNG, JPEG or TIFF for all website and PowerPoint presentations.		
WHITE LOGO Use White version of the mark when applying it to dark backgrounds or over images. (PNG, EPS, or AI)		

SECTION 4

BRAND GUIDELINES AND USE OF OFF-PRODUCT MARK AND MESSAGES

LOGO + TAG LINE

"Grow Confidently" should be one weight less than "Leading Harvest," either Helvetica Neue Regular or Light.

When using the tag line with the main logo, it should be centred under the shape of the logo within the pink lines. If the tag line feels too small, then you may increase the size of the tag line but it should not go outside of the blue lines.

HORIZONTAL + TAG LINE

If the logo is smaller than 0.75" and the name and tag line are needed, use this formatting.

Position "Leading Harvest" to the right of the mark, vertically centred, in all caps, Helvetica Neue Medium or Regular. Text can be adjusted to the size needed.

"Grow Confidently" should be in a lighter weight than "Leading Harvest," either Helvetica Neue Regular or Light.

TYPOGRAPHY

Our typeface, Helvetica Neue is simple, clear, and universal.

Different weights and styles are used to establish importance in messaging.

HELVETICA NEUE 75 BOLD
HELVETICA NEUE 65 MEDIUM
HELVETICA NEUE 55 ROMAN
HELVETICA NEUE 56 ITALIC
HELVETICA NEUE 45 LIGHT
HELVETICA NEUE 45 LIGHT ITALIC
HELVETICA NEUE 35 THIN

COLOUR PALETTE

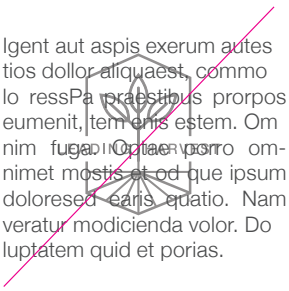
The primary colours are Navy, Teal, White, and Dark Gray.

For print, use CMYK or PMS colours. Always match print jobs to colour swatches for consistency.

For website graphics, and PowerPoint presentations, use RGB or HEX colours.

LOGO DON'TS

Place logo on images that provide good contrast and legibility. Do not superimpose the logo on any image that obscures the logo or makes it hard to see or read.



Igent aut aspis exerum autes tios dollor aliquaest, commo lo ressPa praestibus prorpos eumenit, tem enis estem. Om nim fuga. Optae porro omnimet mostis et od que ipsum doloresed caris quatio. Nam veratur modicienda volor. Do luptatem quid et porias.

Do not use the entire logo, or any part of it separately as a tinted background or decorative element.

Do not distort, recreate, add any elements, or alter the proportions of the logo.

SECTION 5

COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTING

1. Preparing and Submitting an Audit Report

A *Certified Program User* who wishes to make public claims shall provide a summary audit report (one copy must be in English) to *Leading Harvest* within 90 days after the successful completion of certification, recertification, or surveillance audit to the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023*. The summary audit report will be posted on the *Leading Harvest* website for public review.

Certified Program Users that only use certification for internal reporting and business to business communications related to selling product must submit an audit report (which will not be publicly available) to *Leading Harvest* for validation within 90 days of the certificate being issued, and also shall share with *Leading Harvest* information regarding hectares and general geographies certified for aggregated reporting across *Program* Users.

1.1 The *certification body* shall prepare the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023* 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 Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023 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* hectares 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 hectares/hectares under management and provide a description of key features);
   - a general description of major *crop* types with a general characterisation 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 Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023 objective* within the scope of the audit.
   - an update on the status of previous non-conformities, if any.

h. the audit team recommendation.

SECTION 6

DISPUTES AND APPEALS

Introduction

A *process* that openly investigates concerns and disputes is an important component of any legitimate certification *program*. The transparency requirements of the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Program 2023* and supporting documents allow individuals and organisations to bring forward questions and concerns using the *process* as outlined in this section.

An official dispute or appeal does not challenge the credibility or the content of the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023* requirements; rather it challenges the audit findings and the decision of the *certification body* to grant the certification, or events occurring since the audit that question the maintenance of the certification.

1. Disputes and Appeals Questioning the Validity of a Certification to the Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023

The disputes and appeals *process* is an important component of any legitimate certification *program*, including the *Leading Harvest Farmland Management Program 2023*. The disputes and appeals *process* allows individuals or organisations to have their concerns regarding the validity of a certification openly and independently investigated. A dispute or appeal does not challenge the credibility or the content of the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023*, rather it challenges the audit findings and the decision to grant the certification, or events that have happened since the last audit that questions the maintenance of the certification.

Disputes and Appeals Process

1.1 The *certification body* will conform to the requirements of ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015, sections 9.7 and 9.8, as well as the additional requirements defined in this *process*.

1.2 The complainant outlines their concerns in a letter to the *Certified Program User's certification body*.

1.3 The *certification body* may request additional specifics associated with the concerns and will investigate the issue in accordance with their official complaint procedures that were approved by their accreditation body.

1.4 If the *certification body* finds a sound basis for the dispute or appeal, then it would require the *Certified Program User* to take corrective action to address the complaint and advise the complainant accordingly.

1.5 If the *certification body* does not find a sound basis for the complaint and determines the certification was *appropriately* granted and *Certified Program User's* performance has not changed since the certification, it would inform the complainant of this.

1.6 In the event litigation is involved between the complainant and the *Leading Harvest Certified Program User*, the dispute and appeals *process* shall be suspended pending resolution of the litigation. It shall be restarted following resolution of the litigation if *claims* of nonconformity issues remain.

SECTION 7

INTERPRETATIONS

SECTION 7
INTERPRETATIONS

Interpretations

From time to time, a formal *process* may be needed to interpret the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Standard 2023* and supporting documents. As part of *Leading Harvest's* commitment to continual improvement of both the *Leading Harvest* certification *process* and the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Program 2023*, such concerns shall be submitted promptly to the *Leading Harvest* Interpretations Committee by contacting staff at *Leading Harvest*. The *Leading Harvest* Interpretations Committee shall respond within 45 days of receipt.

It is neither the intent nor the responsibility of the *Leading Harvest* Interpretations Committee to resolve disputes arising through certification; nevertheless, the committee will provide opinions and direction to assist parties in answering interpretive questions. Through this *process*, the *Leading Harvest* shall maintain a publicly available record of opinions and concerns available to both *Leading Harvest Certified Program Users* and certification bodies to assist with certification planning. *Leading Harvest* shall periodically review this record and, where *appropriate*, recommend changes for inclusion in the *Leading Harvest Australia Farmland Management Program 2023*.

GROW CONFIDENTLY

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