



**Leading Harvest Farmland
Management Program 2025**



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SECTION 1

LEADING HARVEST
FARMLAND MANAGEMENT
PROGRAM 2025



What the Leading Harvest Standard Does

The Leading Harvest Farmland Management Standard (*Leading Harvest Standard*¹) identifies sustainable farming practices based on 13 Principles, 13 *Objectives*, 33 *Performance Measures*, and 73 *Indicators*. It addresses economic, environmental, social, and governance issues and includes measures to efficiently use water, *agricultural chemicals*, and energy to grow *crops* for useful *agricultural products*; *minimize waste*; and conserve soils, water resources, and *biodiversity*. It also takes into consideration the well-being of *tenants/lessees of farmland*, employees, *contract management company* employees, contract farm labour, and local communities. Conformance to the *Leading Harvest Standard* requires awareness and *appropriate use of agricultural best management practices* to advance sustainable agriculture.

What Is Addressed by the Leading Harvest Standard?

The *Leading Harvest Standard* applies to any organization that owns or has management authority for *farmland (Standard User)* and the *farmland* that it chooses to enroll. It does not apply 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 *farmland* enrolled under the *Leading Harvest Standard*. The activities of *farmland tenants/lessees* 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 Measures, and Indicators*. *Indicator 13.1.4* applies to all *farmland tenants/lessees* of leased *farmland* enrolled under the *Leading Harvest Standard*.

Geographic Application of the Leading Harvest Standard

This standard is applicable worldwide through licensing with Leading Harvest.

Leased Farmland Under the Leading Harvest Standard

The *Standard User* can credibly conclude that *tenant/lessee* operations are in conformance with the *Leading Harvest Standard* where inspection of leased *farmland* and other supporting evidence can demonstrate that lessor operations are in conformance with *Objectives 2 through 6 and Indicators 7.2.3, 7.3.1, and 9.4.1* of the *Leading Harvest Standard*. Inspections, annual interviews, and desk audits may be permissible for verifying whether *farmland tenant* operations are within the scope of the *Leading Harvest Standard* when used to the scope and scale of the lessor's operations. For *farmland* leased and operated by tenants/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 *farmland*.

Impact of Scope, Scale, and Size Under the Leading Harvest Standard

The *Leading Harvest Standard* can be applied to farms and *farmlands* of any size. All *Standard Users* are held to the same *Leading Harvest Standard*, but the expectation of evidence of conformance may vary with the scope (i.e., type of crop, type of operation, geographical regions) and scale of the *Standard User* as well as the size of *enrolled farmlands*, because these parameters influence the risk of adverse impacts to society and the environment from agricultural operations. *Standard Users* managing large acreage areas may need a greater level of conformance evidence than those managing modest acreage areas in order to demonstrate risk management sufficient to meet the requirements of the *Leading Harvest 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.

¹All terms in italics are defined in the glossary.

Normative References

Leading Harvest Certification Body Administration

Leading Harvest Standards Management

Leading Harvest Standard Interpretations

Leading Harvest Group Certification Module

Relevant Leading Harvest glossaries

Core Conventions of the ILO

Informative References

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

ISO/IEC 17021-1:2015 Conformity assessment — Requirements for bodies providing audit and certification of management systems.

Leading Harvest Farmland Management Principles

Standard Users believe *farmland* owners and producers have a vital stewardship responsibility and commitment to society and future generations. They recognize the importance of maintaining viable commercial and family *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 *farmland* that they manage and promote such practices on other *farmland* to advance sustainable agriculture. Consistent with these responsibilities, the Leading Harvest Standard requires that *Standard Users* have a written *policy* (or policies) demonstrating their commitment to implement and achieve the following principles:

Principle 1. Sustainable Agriculture

To practice sustainable agriculture to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This means practicing a *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 tenants/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 applying *biosecurity* principles and *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 *minimize* atmospheric emissions. To be resilient and prepared for adverse climatic and weather events.

Principle 6. Waste and Material Management

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

Principle 7. Conservation of Biodiversity

To manage *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 *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 national and *sub-national* laws, statutes and regulations relating to agriculture.

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 tenant-operated/leased *farmland*.

Leading Harvest Standard Objectives

The Leading Harvest Standard is broken down into 13 Objectives, which are summarized below.

Objective 1. Sustainable Agriculture Management

To practice sustainable agricultural stewardship to improve *crop* production and ensure long-term agricultural sustainability.

Objective 2. Soil Health and Conservation

To maintain or enhance *soil health* to optimize *crop yield* and protect long-term *soil productivity* on *agricultural lands*.

Objective 3. Water Resources

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

Objective 4. Crop Protection

To achieve *crop 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 *minimize* adverse impacts to the atmosphere and the global climate; and to be resilient and prepared for adverse climatic and weather events.

Objective 6. Waste and Material Management

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

Objective 7. Conservation of Biodiversity

To manage *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 *farmland* that are geologically or culturally important in a manner that recognizes 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 recognize and respect the rights of *local communities and Indigenous Peoples* in regions of agricultural operations.

Objective 10. Employees 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 national and *sub-national* laws, statutes, and regulations relating to agriculture.

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. Tenant/Leased Operations

To promote the use of *agricultural best management practices* on leased *farmland* to broaden the practice of sustainable agriculture and to promote the efficient use of agricultural inputs and the management of environmental impacts.

Objective 1. Sustainable Agriculture Management

To practice sustainable agricultural stewardship to improve *crop* 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 describes the sustainable agricultural stewardship of *farmland*.

Indicator 1.1.2 *Farmland Stewardship:* Demonstration of the management of major synergies and trade-offs 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:* Demonstration that measures are in place and implemented to *minimize* conversion of *prime farmland*.

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 optimize *crop yield* 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* and maintain or enhance *soil health* of *cropland*.

Indicator 2.1.1 *Soil Quality:* Application of *agricultural best management practices* (e.g., tillage systems, *cover cropping*, addition of *soil amendments*) 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:* Demonstration of the implementation of an up-to-date *nutrient management program* that efficiently uses nutrient inputs and nutrients in the soil and *crops* to create optimum conditions for *crop* production and nutrient utilization 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*.

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

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

Indicator 2.2.2 *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, salinization, 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 productivity*.

Indicator 3.1.1 *Agricultural Water Withdrawal:* A *process* for avoiding the depletion of available *groundwater* resources beyond the recharge capacity of the watershed or catchment and by direct withdrawal where *groundwater depletion* is an issue as determined by a *groundwater 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 crop/irrigation system design) and applies agricultural best management practices to utilize water efficiently; to provide water tailored to crop needs; and to control pests, pathogens, salinization, and accumulation of other adverse compounds.

Performance Measure 3.2 Water Quality: Standard Users shall apply a program to properly manage the use of fertilizers and other soil amendments, crop protectants, and other inputs and avoid the release of sediment and nutrients 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 fertilizers and other soil amendments, crop protectants, and other agricultural inputs to avoid and control the infiltration of nutrients, crop protectants, and pathogens into groundwater.

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

Objective 4. Crop Protection

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

Performance Measure 4.1 Integrated Pest Management: Standard Users shall protect crops against pests by implementing an Integrated Pest Management program that uses appropriate biosecurity to achieve crop protection objectives.

Indicator 4.1.1 *Pest Monitoring*: Monitoring of pests to prevent excessive crop loss and economic injury to crop plants.

Indicator 4.1.2 *Crop Protection*: Implementation of a process for preventing excessive crop loss from pests, crop protectant resistance, and buildup and spread of pests.

Indicator 4.1.3 *Pest Control Practices*: Prioritization of the use of lowest risk, most selective treatment options to achieve crop protection goals whenever appropriate.

Performance Measure 4.2 Crop Protectant Management: Standard Users shall select, use, and store crop protectants in accordance with label instructions and regulatory requirements.

Indicator 4.2.1 *Application and Storage of Crop Protectants*: Application and storage of crop 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 crop protectants offsite.

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

To conserve energy used by agricultural operations and minimize adverse impacts to the atmosphere and the global climate; and to be resilient and prepared for adverse climatic and weather events.

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 minimize adverse impacts to air quality from agricultural operations.

Indicator 5.2.1 *Air Emissions*: Use of low-emission technologies when compatible with agricultural best management practices.

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

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 on the global climate and adapt to climate change.

Indicator 5.3.1 *Greenhouse Gas Emissions*: Application of climate-smart agricultural best management practices that minimize greenhouse gas emissions from agricultural operations and farmland and/or sequester greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change where appropriate.

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*.

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

Objective 6. Waste and Material Management

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

Performance Measure 6.1 Management of Waste and Other Materials: *Standard Users* shall *minimize 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*: Implementation of a *process* for properly handling and disposing of *hazardous* and *solid waste*, avoiding the burning of rubber, plastics, chemically treated materials, or other materials which produce excessive or noxious smoke, unless combustion results in usable energy or some other demonstrably beneficial byproduct, or where viable alternatives do not exist.

Indicator 6.1.2 *Resource Recovery*: Implementation of a *process* for properly handling *waste* to be reused, repurposed, 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* 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 Surplus and Waste Resource Recovery: *Standard Users* shall ensure efficient handling and recovery of *agricultural products, surplus, and agricultural waste*.

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 Surplus and Waste*: Reuse, repurpose, and/or recycle surplus product or *crop residues*, manure, other *agricultural wastes*, and/or agricultural inputs (e.g., tailwater recovery) where *appropriate*.

Objective 7. Conservation of Biodiversity

To manage *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 *species at risk*.

Indicator 7.1.1 *Species at Risk*: A program to locate and protect known *viable occurrences* of *species at risk* on enrolled *farmland*. A *protection program* may be developed independently or collaboratively and may use easements, *conservation* land sales, exchanges, or other *conservation* strategies.

Indicator 7.1.2 *Species at Risk Protection*: *Protection* of *species at risk* when they occur on *enrolled farmland* and management of agricultural operations with consideration of *species at risk* in the local watersheds catchments and landscapes of operation.

Performance Measure 7.2 Wildlife Habitat Conservation: *Standard Users* shall conserve *native habitats, wildlife habitat, natural communities, and Ecologically Important Sites* 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 *Ecologically Important Sites*: Participation individually or collaboratively in plans or *programs* that manage *Ecologically Important Sites* 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*.

Performance Measure 7.3 Avoided Conversion: *Standard Users* shall avoid conversion of *natural forests, other natural communities, and Ecologically Important Sites*.

Indicator 7.3.1 *Habitat Conversion*: Demonstration of commitment and *due diligence* to avoid the *land use conversion* and fragmentation of *natural communities* and *Ecologically Important Sites* 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 written *policy* to demonstrate the *Standard User's* commitment to a zero *deforestation policy* that identifies the regions of application, relevant *natural forest* types, and *appropriate deforestation cut-off date(s)* in areas with biome-specific or geography-specific *deforestation* protocols,

Indicator 7.3.3 *Responsible Land Acquisition*: 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 Diversity: Support *crop* diversity on *cropland*.

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

Objective 8. Protection of Special Sites

To manage *Special Sites* on *farmland* that are geologically or culturally important in a manner that recognizes 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 (from national or *sub-national* administrations) or expert advice in identifying or selecting *Special Sites*.

Indicator 8.1.2 *Special Site Management*: *Appropriate* mapping, cataloging, and management of identified *Special Sites* in a manner that recognizes 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 recognize 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 all applicable 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 neighbors and local communities thus raising the awareness of sustainable agriculture.

Performance Measure 9.3 Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples: *Standard Users* shall recognize and respect the rights of *local communities and Indigenous Peoples*.

Indicator 9.3.1 *Local Community and Indigenous Peoples Policy*: A written *policy* demonstrating a commitment to recognize 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 the land tenure rights, access to and use rights, customary rights, and legal rights of *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 and *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 *minimize* injuries, help establish safe routines and enhance employee productivity.

Indicator 10.1.1 *Equal Opportunity Employment:*

Provision for equal opportunity employee recruitment and occupations, including *equitable* access to professional development.

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.

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 fulfill their responsibilities under the *Leading Harvest Standard*.

Indicator 10.3.1 *Sustainability Policy Commitment:* *Standard Users* shall provide a written *policy* demonstrating commitment to the *Leading Harvest Standard* that is communicated throughout the organization, 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 Standard*.

Indicator 10.3.3 *Employee Sustainability Training:* Staff education and training for *Standard User* personnel and *contract management company* employees sufficient to fulfill their roles and responsibilities under the *Leading Harvest Standard*.

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 an *equitable* and *fair 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 contractors* to help ensure farm labour working conditions consistent with the *Principles* and *Objectives* of the *Leading Harvest Standard*.

Indicator 10.5.1 *Farm Labour Monitoring Program:* A *program* to monitor *farm labour contractors* employed by *Standard Users* or *contract management companies* to ensure compliance with applicable labour laws, statutes, and regulations by reviewing policies, practices, and training addressing workplace environment, equal opportunity, workplace health and safety, and compensation, including *equitable* and *fair wage* and, where *appropriate*, housing and transportation.

Objective 11. Legal and Regulatory Compliance

To comply with applicable national and *sub-national* laws, statutes, and regulations relating to agriculture.

Performance Measure 11.1 Legal Compliance: *Standard Users* shall comply with applicable national and *sub-national* 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 on relevant laws, statutes, and regulations in *appropriate* locations.

Indicator 11.1.2 *Standard User Compliance Program:* A *program* to achieve compliance with applicable national and *sub-national* 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 national and *sub-national* 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 *equitable and fair wage*, *Indigenous Peoples'* rights, workers' and communities' right to know, prevailing wages, workers' right to organize, 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 *Farmland Tenant/Lease Laws*: Demonstration of commitment to respect the rights of *tenants/lessees* of leased lands with respect to the *covenant of quiet enjoyment* as determined by applicable national and *sub-national* 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 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, tenants, 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 Standard Objectives* and *Performance Measures*.

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-utilized *agricultural products*, *new crops*, 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 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.

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.

Objective 13. Tenant/Leased Operations

To promote the use of *agricultural best management practices* on *tenant/leased farmland* 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 Management: *Standard Users* shall clearly define and implement strategies to ensure that *tenant/lessee* activities adhere to the principles of sustainable agriculture.

Indicator 13.1.1 Leased-Land Program: A *program* to help ensure that *farmland* management complies with the *agricultural best management practices* and the *Principles* and *Objectives* of the *Leading Harvest Standard* as determined by a *Standard User* and *tenant/lessee*.

Indicator 13.1.2 *Farmland Lease Agreements*: Written agreements with *tenants/lessees* demonstrating their commitment to applying *agricultural practices* consistent with *agricultural best management practices*.

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

Indicator 13.1.4 *Tenant/Lessee Social Responsibility Commitment*: A written statement by *tenants/lessees* demonstrating their commitment to operate safely and responsibly; provide a safe working environment; and comply with applicable country, state/provincial, and local laws, statutes, and regulations.

Performance Measure 13.2 Leased-Land Monitoring:

Standard Users shall monitor *agricultural practices* used by *tenants/lessees* 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 *tenants/lessees*; and

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

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



SECTION 2

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* (for all or a portion of their operations). Any express or implied claim that a *Program User* is in conformance with the *Leading Harvest Farmland Management Standard* must be substantiated by a current, valid certification by an accredited *certification body* recognized by *Leading Harvest*.

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

1.2 Public Claims and Mark Use²

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 Farmland Management Standard* by a recognized 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 4, *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 3.

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

100% of Farmland Acres (or 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 Farmland Management Standard*:

100% of Farmland Acres (or 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 Farmland Management Standard* by a recognized 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 4, *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 acres/hectares are enrolled and certified:

XX% of Farmland Acres (or Hectares) Enrolled and XX% Farmland Acres (or Hectares) Certified

Program Supporter Claims and Mark Use: organizations that are formally recognized 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

² 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 Use³

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 Farmland Management Standard* by a recognized accredited *certification body* and submit a private audit report to *Leading Harvest*. The contents of the audit report are detailed in Section 4, *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 acres/hectares in the *Leading Harvest Farmland Management Program* may use the *Leading Harvest off-product* mark and make the following private claim before achieving certification:

100% of Farmland Acres (or Hectares) Enrolled

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

100% of Farmland Acres (or Hectares) Enrolled and XX% of Farmland Acres (or 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 Farmland Management Standard* by a recognized accredited *certification body* and submit an audit report to *Leading Harvest*. The contents of the private audit report are detailed in Section 4, *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 acres/hectares are enrolled and certified:

XX% of Farmland Acres (or Hectares) Enrolled and XX% Farmland Acres (or 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.

³ 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 3

BRAND GUIDELINES
FOR USE OF OFF-PRODUCT
MARK AND MESSAGES



SECTION 3

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.



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
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4-COLOUR LOGO

Use the CMYK colour palette when 4-Color 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 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 3

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

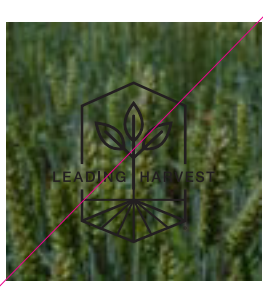
The primary colours are Navy, Teal, White, and Dark Gray.

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

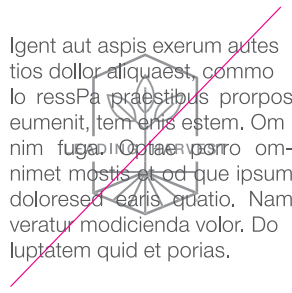
For website graphics, and PowerPoint presentations, use RGB or HEX colours.



LOGO DON'TS



Place logo on images that provide good contrast and legibility. Do not superimpose the logo onto any image that obscures the logo or reduces its readability.



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 4

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 Farmland Management Standard 2025*. 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 area and general geographies certified for aggregated reporting across program users.

- 1.1 The *certification body* shall prepare the *Leading Harvest Farmland Management Standard 2025* summary audit report, which shall include, at a minimum:
- a. a description of the audit process, *objectives* and scope; This shall include:
 - the specific *Leading Harvest Farmland Management Standard 2025* 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 acres/hectares under management and provide a description of key features)

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

0 – 10,000ac (0 – 4,000ha)

10,000 – 50,000ac (4,000 – 20,000ha)

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

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

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

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

- 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 Farmland Management Standard 2025* objective within the scope of the audit.
 - an update on the status of previous non-conformities, if any.
- h. the audit team recommendation.



SECTION 5

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 Farmland Management Program 2025* and supporting documents allow individuals and organizations 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 Farmland Management Standard 2025* 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 Farmland Management Standard 2025*

The disputes and appeals process is an important component of any legitimate certification program, including the *Leading Harvest Farmland Management Program 2025*. The disputes and appeals process allows individuals or organizations 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 Farmland Management Standard 2025*, 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.



LeadingHarvest.org
info@LeadingHarvest.org