



Sustainability Criteria© for Produce & Grain Growers

Western Sustainability Exchange (WSE) uses the Sustainability Criteria© to quantify the agricultural practices farmers and ranchers use to protect human and livestock health and the health of soil, water, air, open space, wildlife and fish resources. *WSE's Sustainability Criteria is based on years of market research that identifies the characteristics many consumers, chefs, and natural food markets demand in "natural food" products.* The elements were developed in consultation with range specialists, ranchers, farmers, and consumer researchers. It is a dynamic document that evolves with knowledge of sustainable agricultural practices.

WSE will use the information you provide to apply the **Sustainable Star Rating System** to your product. WSE uses the Rating System to promote your product(s) to wholesale and retail buyers and to consumers.



- ★ Nothing Added
- ★ Produced in the Region
- ★ Montana or USDA Certified Organic
- ★ Sustainable Stewardship Practices

In order to qualify for WSE's marketing assistance, products must meet 75% of the following "sustainability" criteria, and therefore earn the ★ "sustainable" star. A strategic use of synthetic chemicals is permitted under limited circumstances and only as part of an integrated pest management program.

Please use the space at the end of the document or additional pages to explain your agricultural techniques.

Certification must be updated annually.

Name _____ Date _____

Business name _____

Address/City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____ Website _____

Please provide a one or two sentence statement that explains why your product qualifies as "sustainable." This description will be used to promote your product. (50 WORD MAXIMUM)

General Information

Number of Acres in Production:

of acres _____ Deeded acres _____ leased acres

Water Source: Well Open Irrigation Closed Irrigation Other _____

WSE will use your responses not only to better understand how you practice sustainable concepts, but also to learn more about how your efforts contribute to our mission of *advancing sustainable choices that enhance economic opportunities which preserve open space, wildlife habitat, farm and ranchlands and quality of life for future generations.*

Criteria

Specifically, do you:

- Yes No NA Knowingly use chemically treated seeds?
- Yes No NA Knowingly use genetically modified (GMOs) seeds?
- Yes No NA Care for the soil, water, and air quality with sustainable management practices? Check all that apply:
 Cover Crops Composts Crop Rotation Mulching
 Crop Diversity Other _____
- Yes No NA Follow sanitary post-harvest practices, including proper transport, storage and use of only potable water for washing?
- Yes No NA Adhere to “Organic” production standards such as no chemical use?
- Yes No NA Certified as “Organic” by the Montana or national Organic Certification program?
- Yes No NA Eliminate chemical inputs such as solvents, fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, etc.?

Yes No NA Use chemical inputs such as solvents, fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, etc?
Which chemicals are used and to what extent? _____

Yes No NA Protect water resources from sediment, manure and chemical contamination? If so, how?

Yes No NA Prevent erosion? Please describe any erosion prevention strategies, irrigation systems and management, etc.

Yes No NA Control noxious weeds and pests? Please check those methods that apply:
 Chemical Mechanical Bugs Grazing Other

Yes No NA Use a structured monitoring system to measure the condition of range, pasture, biodiversity, riparian and/or water resources? If so, what parameters do you monitor?

Yes No NA Provide open space? If so, how and how many acres?

Yes No NA Provide fish and wildlife habitat? If so, how, for what species do you provide habitat?

Yes No NA Have certification by an independent third party to document sustainable practices? If so, who certifies your operation?

Yes No NA Produce the raw product within the state of Montana or the Northern Rockies?

Yes No NA Produce a finished product from raw products produced within the state of Montana or the Northern Rockies? If so, where do you process?

Legally Binding Affidavit:

I attest that the above information about my production methods is true & correct. I grant Western Sustainability Exchange the right to verify my claims.

Signature

Date

**WESTERN SUSTAINABILITY EXCHANGE
Sustainability Criteria©**

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