



Sustainability Criteria© for Livestock Producers

Western Sustainability Exchange (WSE) uses the Sustainability Criteria© to quantify the agricultural practices farmers and ranchers use to protect human and livestock health and welfare, 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.



- ★ No Hormones or Antibiotics
- ★ Low-Stress Livestock Handling
- ★ Produced in the Region
- ★ Montana or USDA Certified Organic
- ★ Sustainable Stewardship Practices
- ★ American Grassfed Association Certified

In order to qualify for WSE's marketing assistance, products must meet 75% of the following "sustainability" criteria, and therefore earn the ★ "sustainable" star. Livestock operations that use hormones or sub-therapeutic antibiotics do not qualify for the certification. 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 practices.

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

Size of operation: # of acres _____ Deeded acres _____ State leased acres _____ Private leased acres
_____ Federal leased acres

Type of livestock: Cattle Sheep Hogs Poultry Bison Other _____

Average type and number of livestock for sale (feeders, weaned calves, lambs, etc.) _____

Type of operation (e.g. cow/calf, stocker, etc.) _____

Where are livestock fattened and for how long? _____

How are livestock finished? Corn Grass Other _____

Where are livestock slaughtered and at what age? _____

Average date of calving, lambing, farrowing, hatching: _____

How is product sold (e.g., commodity market, wholes, halves, cuts)? _____

Yes No Are sale livestock born and raised on your property? If not, please explain.

Yes No Have sale livestock been exclusively in your care? If not, please explain.

Yes No NA If "No" to either of the above questions, have livestock received growth hormones or antibiotics before you took possession?

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 genetically modified (GMOs) seeds or crops in your food product?

Yes No NA Use growth hormones?

Yes No NA Use sub-therapeutic antibiotics or ionophores*?

* **Sub-therapeutic** refers to the use of antibiotics below dosage levels used to treat diseases, commonly employed for prevention or mass-treatment. Sub-therapeutic antibiotics are commonly fed, though sometimes injected. Examples include Aureomycin and Terramycin. **Ionophores** are antibiotic feed additives used to increase rate of gain and feed efficiency. Examples include Rumenson® and Bovatec®.

- Yes No NA Identify animals treated with therapeutic antibiotics within your herd? (Therapeutic use of antibiotics does not disqualify an operation from WSE's marketing assistance.)
- Yes No NA Have and use a mechanism (e.g., ear notch, ear tag) to remove treated animals from your natural product line?
- Yes No NA Feed animal by-products to livestock?
- Yes No NA Adhere to Organic production standards, such as no chemical use?
- Yes No NA Have certification from the Montana or USDA Organic Certification program?
- Yes No NA Eliminate synthetic chemical inputs such as solvents, fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides, etc.?
- Yes No NA Use synthetic chemical inputs such as solvents, fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides, etc.?

Which chemicals are used and to what extent? _____

- Yes No NA Use back pour to control parasites? If so, which chemical?

- Yes No NA Use other methods to control parasites? If so, please describe.

- Yes No NA Use feed grown with insecticides and herbicides? If so, which pesticides are used?

- Yes No NA Use insecticide ear tags for feedlot animals? If so, which product?

- Yes No NA Use a structured grazing approach (e.g., management-intensive, rest rotation, drought management)? Please describe.

Make or document a grazing plan? Never Occasionally Annually

On average, for how much time do you rest pasture before or after grazings?

Please prioritize the following grazing management factors regarding your grazing philosophy:

Utilization Residual (aftermath) Grazing Period Recovery Period

(1 = highest priority, 4 = least priority)

Yes No NA Protect rangelands from overgrazing? If so, how?

Yes No NA Protect riparian areas from overgrazing? If so, how (e.g., use of stock tanks, water lines, or ponds)?

Yes No NA Protect water resources from sediment, manure and chemical contamination? If so, how (e.g., management of livestock access to riparian areas, soil and water monitoring)?

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

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 Document monitoring results?

Yes No NA Document grazing activities?



How many years of documentation (grazing and/or monitoring) could you provide?

Grazing = Monitoring =

Yes No NA Control noxious weeds and pests? Please check those methods that apply:

Chemical Mechanical Bugs Grazing Other

Yes No NA Control predators with lethal measures, such as traps or poison? Please describe.

Yes No NA Control predators with non-lethal measures, such as guard dogs, herders, llamas, or live traps? Please describe.

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

Yes No NA Provide livestock meaningful access to a natural outdoor setting?

Yes No NA Provide livestock suitable shelter?

Yes No NA Provide livestock balanced feed rations and fresh water?

Yes No NA Use hot shots? To what extent?

Yes No NA Use low-stress livestock handling techniques? Please describe your stockmanship practices (e.g. use of dogs, noise level, general pace).

Please describe your weaning practices (e.g., age of calf/lamb, fence-line wean, abrupt separation, nose rings).

Yes No NA Align birthing times with natural cycles, such as spring calving? When do you calve, lamb, farrow, and why?

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 that derive from the state of Montana or the Northern Rockies? If so, where do you process?

Yes No NA Have certification by an independent third party to document sustainable practices? If so, who certifies your operation (e.g., American Grassfed Association, Food Alliance, Undaunted Stewardship, Montana Department of Agriculture)?

Additional Information

Yes No Is any of your property under Conservation Easement or involved in a conservation program? Please detail:

Which of your farm or ranch practices are you most proud of?

What is the greatest challenge of your operation?

Yes No Food service markets that participate in WSE programs must provide verification for their purchases of local foods to earn WSE certification. Do you agree to let WSE collect purchasing data from these markets that pertain to your business? Please understand, this information is used for WSE's purposes only, to evaluate the effectiveness of our programs.

Legally Binding Affidavit:

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

Signature

Date

WESTERN SUSTAINABILITY EXCHANGE
Sustainability Criteria©

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