



## 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 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**

**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 synthetic chemical use?
- Yes  No  NA      Certified as “Organic” by the Montana or national Organic Certification program?
- Yes  No  NA      Eliminate synthetic chemical inputs such as solvents, fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, etc.?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Yes  No  NA      Use synthetic 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?

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

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

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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?

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

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

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

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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?

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**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©**

Revised January 2011