Western Sustainability Exchange

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 "sustainable food" products.*** The elements were developed in consultation with range specialists, ranchers, farmers, and consumer research. 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.

Certified by Western Sustainability Exchange 2016

- ★ No Hormones or Antibiotics
- ★ Low-Stress Livestock Handling
- ★ USDA Certified Organic
- ★ No Genetically Engineered Seed or Feed
- ★ Sustainable Stewardship Practices
- ★ American Grassfed Association Certified
- ★ Protected by Conservation Easement

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, or feed animal byproducts to livestock 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. Certification is valid for two years.

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

Certification must be updated biennially.

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)

WSE will use your responses not only to better understand how you employ sustainable concepts, but also to learn more about how your efforts contribute to our mission of *conserving what's best about the West for this and future generations – open space, wildlife habitat, and farming and ranching heritage – while strengthening rural economies.*

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.)_____

How are livestock finished? ☐ Grain _____ ☐ Grass ☐ Other _____

Where are livestock finished and for how long?_____

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 ☐ Don't Know If "No" to either of the above questions, have livestock received growth hormones or antibiotics before you took possession?

Criteria

Specifically, do you:

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA Knowingly use genetically modified (GMOs) seeds or crops in your food product (e.g. Roundup Ready® or Bt crops)?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA Use growth hormones?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA Use synchronization hormones?

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

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* **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®.

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☐ 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 identify treated animals that no longer qualify for your "natural" product line?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA Feed animal by-products to livestock?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA Feed hay? If so, please specify hay type and origin.

_____

_____

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA Feed urea to livestock?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA Use other supplemental feeds such as range cubes or protein tubs? Please specify if so. If seeking the No Genetically Engineered Feed star, please provide feed tags and verification of non-GMO feed ingredients.

_____

_____

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA Adhere to Organic production standards, such as no chemical use?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA Have certification from the USDA Organic Certification program? If yes, please provide a copy of your certificate(s).

☐ 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 or herbicides? If so, which chemicals are used?

_____

_____

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☐ 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 what duration do you rest pasture before or after grazing periods?

Growing season: _____

Dormant season: _____

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

Utilization	Residual (aftermath)	Grazing Period	Recovery Period
_____	_____	_____	_____

(1 = highest priority, 4 = least priority)

How many paddocks or pastures do you manage for each of your herds? _____

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA Change season of use for each of your pastures? ☐ Never ☐ Occasionally ☐ Annually

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA Actively manage to protect rangelands from overgrazing? If so, how?

_____

_____

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA Actively manage to protect riparian areas from overgrazing? If so, how (e.g., permanent or temporary fencing, use of stock tanks, water gaps, water lines, or ponds)?

_____

_____

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

_____

_____

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

_____

_____

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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 (e.g. plant density/diversity/succession, soil indicators (organic matter, moisture infiltration/retention), bare ground)?

_____

_____

☐ 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 predation with preventative or non-lethal measures, such as guard dogs, herders, llamas, range riders, fladgry, or live traps? Please describe.

_____

_____

How and for what wildlife species do you provide habitat?

_____

_____

_____

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA Use hot shots, whips, prods, flags, or paddles when processing livestock? To what extent?

_____

_____

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA Believe it possible to decrease the incidence of sickness in your livestock by the way you handle them?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA Believe it possible to increase livestock performance by the way you handle the livestock?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA Find that, in leading up to a production event, your animals will walk into the corral, crowd pen, chute, scale, etc. voluntarily?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA Approach every time you handle your livestock as an opportunity to train or prepare them for a future production or handling event?

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☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ NA Consider your animals' point of view when working livestock?

When working livestock do you prefer: ☐ more help, or ☐ less help?

What specifically do you do to reduce stress when handling livestock?

_____

_____

_____

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 late spring/early summer 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 (e.g., American Grassfed Association, Food Alliance, Montana Department of Agriculture) to document sustainable practices? If yes please provide a copy of your certificate.

_____

_____

Additional Information

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

_____

_____

☐ Yes ☐ No Have you participated in any ranching related continuing education—workshops, clinics, seminars, schools, etc.—in the past three years? If so, on what topic(s)/subject(s)?

_____

_____

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☐ Yes ☐ No Does all the product for which you seek certification with this Sustainability Criteria originate exclusively from animals raised on your property or under your care? If not, please explain.

_____

_____

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

_____

_____

What is the greatest challenge of your operation?

_____

_____

☐ Yes ☐ No WSE promotes restaurants and other food businesses for purchasing from WSE Certified farmers & ranchers. In order to protect your product from being misrepresented through "green washing" (restaurants claiming to purchase local food but not), WSE may need to verify restaurant purchases through you. Do you agree to provide sales data upon request? Please understand, this information is used for WSE's purposes only, to evaluate the effectiveness of our programs, and kept confidential. Only aggregate information from participating producers will ever be publically reported.

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, through on-site inspection or other methods. Once granted, WSE's Certification Mark may only be used by currently certified producers. Any use of WSE's Certification Mark deemed by WSE as a misrepresentation of the intended use by Western Sustainability Exchange must be immediately suspended and may result in the revocation of the certification mark and/or prosecution.

_____ _____

Signature **Date**

WESTERN SUSTAINABILITY EXCHANGE
Sustainability Criteria©

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