

OPTIONAL FSA VERIFICATION

FIELD TO MARKET & SAI PLATFORM EQUIVALENCY GUIDANCE

Applicable for those companies wanting to make FSA volume claims. Verification could take place directly after the first assessment step, or after a period of improvement and subsequent reassessment. An example of an FSA volume claim could be *'100% of the raw material we sell comes from farms reaching FSA Silver level or above'* or "We source a volume equivalent to 100% of our raw material needs from farms reaching FSA Bronze or above".

1. Verification Steps

- 1.1. In order to proceed with verification, a minimum number of randomly sampled farms who have completed the Fieldprint Platform must answer the questions in the FSA Equivalency Module. From these, a random subset of the completed FSA Equivalency modules are selected for 3rd-party auditing. The minimum number of farms that need to be selected, for both self-assessment and verification are outlined in the [Implementation Framework](#) in Chapter 5.5.2. For convenience, the sampling tables are listed at the end of this document (Section 3).
- 1.2. It is recommended that before proceeding to Step 3, the Project Administrator reviews the questionnaires informally, investigating any results that stand out. In addition to this revision, it is recommended that they review the information acquired through the Fieldprint Platform, together with the growers. This review should be on an individual grower basis. It should include individual grower results, as well as a comparison of where the individual grower sits compared to the overall results of his/her peers.
- 1.3. The sample of the self-assessments are third-party audited. The purpose of the auditing step is to determine the accuracy of the self-assessments, and hence the scope of the audit is limited to the questions answered in Equivalency Module and the auditors are not required to review individual grower information that has been entered into the Fieldprint Platform. For full details of this process, from selecting a verification body to audit sign-off please refer to the [FSA Audit Guide for FMGs](#).
- 1.4. To establish that FSA volume claims are accurate, the accounting system supporting these claims will be verified. This check happens at the level of the 'farm management system' operated by the company buying raw materials directly from farms. Only the volumes that are included in the scope of an FPP assessment can be claimed as FSA equivalent. The group of farmers are referred to as the 'Farm Management Group' (FMG). For more details please refer to the [FSA Audit Guide for FMGs](#) (Chapter 5.4).
- 1.5. After the auditor has delivered the letter of attestation, the company is free to publish the results and advertise FSA volume claims. For more details on communicating FSA claims, please refer to the [SAI Platform Membership Communications Guide](#).

2. Examples for common situations

The following three examples explain the implementation steps and sampling process for three commonly encountered situations:

1. **Situation 1: All growers in the Farm Management Group (FMG) are participating in the Fieldprint Project (FPP).**

Implementation:

- Communicate FSA program requirements to all growers in the FMG
- Randomly select a number of growers, based on the SAI sampling method, to complete an FTM add-on FSA self-assessment
- Randomly select a number of growers from the sample, as per the SAI Sampling method, to complete a third-party on-farm audit per the FSA Implementation Guidelines

Example 1: Corntech is a global company that sources from 1000 growers in Kansas. All 1000 growers in the project are currently entering data into the FPP. Corntech wants all 1000 growers to implement FSA.

Corntech can focus FSA implementation on all 1000 growers right away:

- Communicate program requirements to the 1000 growers
- Randomly select a minimum of 39 growers to complete an FSA self-assessment
- Randomly select a minimum of 9 of the 39 growers for a third-party on-farm audit per the FSA Implementation Guidelines

An FSA Claim could be made on the percent of volume that reaches a bronze level or higher. A Field to Market measurement claim could also be made on the volume produced by the 1000 growers by using Field to Market's claim process.

Outcome: An FSA Claim could be made on the percent of volume that reaches a bronze level or higher. A Field to Market measurement claim could also be made on the volume produced by the growers in the FPP/FMG by using Field to Market's claim process.

2. **Situation 2: Growers in the FMG outnumber the growers participating in the FPP, and the project owner wishes to engage only the growers participating in the FPP.**

Implementation:

- Communicate program requirements to the growers participating in the FPP
- Randomly select a number of growers from the growers participating in the FPP, based on the SAI sampling method, to complete an FTM add-on FSA self-assessment
- Randomly select a number of growers from the sample, as per the SAI Sampling method, to complete a third-party on-farm audit per the FSA Implementation Guidelines

Example 2: Corntech is a global company that sources from 1000 growers in Kansas. Only 100 growers in that sourcing region are currently registered in a Fieldprint Project and entering data into the FPP. Corntech wants all 1000 growers to implement FSA. Corntech does not have time to reach out to the broader 1000 and get their buy-in to FSA, and therefore chooses to focus on the 100 growers that are already involved in a Fieldprint Project.

Given that only 100 self-selected growers are entering FPP data, Corntech focuses on these growers only.

- Communicate the program requirements and benefits to the 100 growers
- Select a random sample of a minimum of 23 growers from the 100 and have those growers complete an assessment
- Randomly select a minimum of 7 of the 23 growers for a third-party on-farm audit per the FSA Implementation Guidelines

If all 23 growers meet a bronze level and this bronze level is confirmed, by the third-party verifier, the volumes associated with all 100 can be claimed as “sustainable” under FSA. A Field to Market measurement claim could also be made on those volumes by using Field to Market’s claim process.

Outcome: An FSA Claim could be made on the percent of volume coming from the growers involved in both the FPP and the FSA, that reaches a bronze level or higher. A Field to Market claim could also be made on the volume produced by the growers in the FPP/FMG by using Field to Market’s claim process.

3. Situation 3: Growers in the FMG outnumber the growers participating in the FPP, and the project owner wishes to engage all the growers in the FMG (not just the ones participating in the FPP).

Implementation:

- Communicate program requirements to all growers in the FMG
- Randomly select a number of growers, based on the SAI sampling method, to complete a full FSA questionnaire
- Randomly select a number of growers from the sample, as per the SAI Sampling method, to complete a third-party on-farm audit per the FSA Implementation Guidelines
- If a grower who is involved in the FPP is chosen during any of the sampling, they are not required to complete a full FSA questionnaire, and the FTM add-on will suffice

Example 3

Corntech is a global company that sources from 1000 growers in Kansas. Only 100 growers in that sourcing region are currently entering data into the FPP. Corntech wants all 1000 growers to implement FSA. Corntech has over a year to implement what is necessary to ultimately include all 1000 in the scope of FSA.

In this example, Corntech would have to implement the **full FSA** questionnaire utilizing the sampling methodology explained in the FSA Implementation Guidelines. After discussions between SAI Platform and Field to Market it was determined that doing otherwise would stretch the integrity of the benchmarking work.

Therefore, the steps for Corntech to include all 1000 growers would be:

- Start by communicating the FSA program requirements to all 1000 and securing their agreement to a self-assessment and on-farm audit if randomly selected
- If all 1000 farmers agree to be a part of the program, a minimum of 39 farmers would be randomly selected from the 1000 to complete a full self-assessment.
Of the 39, nine will be chosen for a third-party on-farm audit of the full FSA per FSA

Outcome: An FSA claim can be made on the volumes of the whole FMG, if all growers during the verification scored over Bronze. The project owner could only make FTM measurement claims on growers and their respective acres, involved in the FPP.

3. Random sampling frequency tables

# Farms in Group	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-50	51-100	101-200	201-300	301-400	401-500	501-1k
Self-Assessment Sample Size	6	10	13	17	23	29	33	34	35	37
# Farms in Group	1k-2k	2k-3k	3k-4k	4k-5k	5k-7.5k	7.5k-10k	10-20k	20-30k	30k+	
Self-Assessment Sample Size	39	39	39	40	40	40	40	40	41	

Figure 1. Verification rules for FSA volume claims: Minimum number of farms to complete the FSA self-assessment, for various sizes of farm management groups.

# Farms self-assessed	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-50
Audit sample size	4	5	7	9

Figure 2. Verification rules for FSA volume claims: Minimum number of FSA self-assessments that needed to be audited in each farm management group.

Related Resources

- Equivalency Module Spreadsheet
- Implementation Guidance (Appendix 1)
- FAQ – Guidance for Growers (Appendix 3)
- FAQ – Guidance for Supply Chain Companies (Appendix 4)