

FIELD TO MARKET & SAI PLATFORM EQUIVALENCY

APPENDIX 3: GUIDANCE FOR GROWERS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. When should I consider this option?

Most often participation will be at the invitation of your customers. However, if you sell to multiple customers who are aligned to the FSA, it could be worth initiating a discussion with your buyers.

2. Why should I participate?

The FSA/FTM module allows you to combine the work you are already doing with FTM, with an internationally recognized sustainability programme, SAI platforms' FSA. You can see where your practices put you on the ladder of sustainability – FSA Bronze, Silver, or Gold Level. The questionnaire can help you identify which points your operation can improve on. The verification of the module allows your product to have an internationally recognized B2B sustainability claim attached to it, based on the practices you are implementing on your field. As it is only 15 questions, the onsite verification process takes at most half a day.

3. What are the Benefits?

The primary benefits for farms are:

- ✓ *Reducing the amount of duplication and administration; by combining the Fieldprint Platform with the FSA Equivalency Module, farmers can satisfy the sustainability requirements of downstream customers.*
- ✓ *Provides an opportunity to document and demonstrate your sustainability performance utilizing Field to Market's environmental metrics alongside the socioeconomic assessment from SAI Platform's FSA.*
- ✓ *Get extra support from the supply chain, helping you to address your sustainability needs*

4. How much does it cost?

There will be no additional costs for growers associated with the use of the FSA Equivalency Module. If you are selected for an audit, the cost is covered by the partner seeking the claim.

5. Why has this FSA Equivalency Module been created?

With overlapping membership, SAI Platform and Field to Market want to streamline sustainability measurement through better integration and harmonization between our programs. The 15 additional questions in the FSA Equivalency Module allow SAI Platform members to universally recognize farms utilizing the Fieldprint Platform as equivalent to the FSA up to the Gold level.

6. How has this FSA Equivalency Module been created?

The FSA consists of 112 sustainable agriculture questions. After evaluating which topics are addressed by either U.S. Federal or State legislation, as well as the topics that are included in Field to Market's Fieldprint Platform the remaining areas were used to address the gaps identified between our two programs through the use of additional 15 questions. This benchmarking was the result of extensive analysis and discussion involving leading experts from our respective membership, farm advisors and agronomists, and both our organizations' leadership

7. Does the assessment correspond to individual crops or the whole farm?

The Fieldprint Platform allows a farmer to assess the sustainability performance of the management system used to produce a specific crop. The additional 15 questions of the FSA Equivalency Module can be applied to all the crops the farm grows or an individual crop.

8. How long it will take to complete the extra questions?

If all the information is at hand, and you have no clarification questions for your Fieldprint Project Administrator, it should take no longer than 10 minutes. It might take longer if you need to do some additional investigation before answering.

9. Can I participate even if I have not been selected for self-assessment at random?

Yes, we encourage all Fieldprint Projects seeking equivalency to work with participating growers to complete the assessment. Please contact your Project Administrator with any questions.

10. Should I be practicing everything in the module?

The 15 questions laid out in the module refer to practices that if you are implementing in your field, would place you in the "gold" level of production, as per the scoring of the FSA. Where they are applicable, the practices could be implemented on your field if you are interested in making your operation more sustainable.

11. What if the questions exceed what I'm required to do by the law?

Depending on the state, several FSA requirements may exceed what is required by the law. If you are doing what is required by law, but not what is asked in the question, please answer "no".

12. What are the consequences if I answer 'no' to these questions?

Nothing; it's better to be honest in answering these questions. Confirming your compliance with U.S. laws automatically qualifies you for FSA Bronze level if you are also utilizing the Fieldprint Platform. By answering the additional 15 questions truthfully, you can qualify for FSA Silver or Gold Performance levels. Please note: your results will be aggregated and then used to inform your customers and supply chain partners about the overall performance levels of participating growers in a Fieldprint Project. Some questions may be considered more important than others; for these, your customers may ask you to work with them towards turning a 'no' into a 'yes' if they require a higher performance level than FSA Bronze.

13. We do implement most of the practices, but we don't keep records of them. Do I need to have records of every practice?

Only a few of the practices require written evidence to prove the requirements are being met. Most of the points can be verified through visual inspections or interviews with you and/or your workers.

14. How is the data stored and shared?

Your personal data and answers to these 15 questions will be stored according to the current privacy policy governing your Fieldprint Project. A guiding principle of all Fieldprint Project privacy policies is that the grower's data remains their own and that growers can opt-in to share this data in aggregate with downstream companies. Please contact your Fieldprint Project Administrator for more details. At a minimum, the answers will not be shared outside of the Fieldprint Project Administrator and your direct customers without your permission.

15. What is this information going to be used for?

The information collected by the Farm Management Group (FMG) coordinator throughout the assessment process is confidential. It is used to identify which opportunities the group, as a whole, can improve on. It can be used in setting up trainings, though individual scores will never be published or identified. Once the verification process is complete, your scores are used for the final attestation of the group as a whole. If 50% of the volume is found to be cultivated at the Gold level, then this can be stated in sales, and on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reports. Again, individual results are never published, and grower scores or answers are not public information.

16. Who will see this information?

You will share your Individual scores with the FMG coordinator (who in most cases will be the Project Administrator). If your FMG goes through a verification process, the verifier will be required to look at your results and some supporting documentation to verify them. The FMG coordinator will have access to each self-assessment, as well as the verification results. Growers will have access to their own self assessments and verification reports.

17. Is this part of the online Fieldprint Platform system?

Yes, in addition to the Module Excel sheet, the 15 questions, their requirements, and any additional question guidance are available to the online users of the Fieldprint Platform as a module.

18. How can I share the results of the Equivalency Modules with my customer or the Fieldprint Project administrator?

It will be automatically visible within the online Fieldprint Platform Reports. The Project Administrator will be able to pull the reports and can also share anonymized reports with customers.

19. If I am randomly selected for auditing, will the auditor also audit my Fieldprint Analysis or things covered by the law?

No, the benchmarking exercise was undertaken to ensure those FSA topics where there are already strong guarantees don't need to be looked at again by an auditor. Some of these topics are already addressed through the completion of a Fieldprint Analysis by utilizing the Fieldprint Platform. For other FSA topics, the legislation varies by state, but for simplicity, the benchmark uses a rule of thumb based on the analysis of 5 key states for the Fieldprint Platform. This means that if you farm in state with more advanced legislation it may be obvious to respond 'yes' to one or more of the 15 questions because it is required by state law, but the auditors should be aware of these cases.

20. How are FSA Bronze, Silver, and Gold performance levels calculated and which questions carry the greatest weighting?

Any grower who has completed a Fieldprint Analysis and confirms they comply with U.S. local, state and federal laws is automatically qualified for FSA Bronze level. To qualify for FSA Silver or Gold, an additional number of questions must be responded to affirmatively. When reviewing the FSA Equivalency Module spreadsheet, you will notice that questions are classified as 'essential', 'basic' or 'advanced'. To achieve FSA Silver or Gold, a progressively larger number of 'basic' and 'advanced' questions need to move from 'no' to 'yes'. Some questions carry a higher weighting than others indicated by the number of points for each category (See the Results Tab in the FSA Equivalency Module spreadsheet).

Related Resources

Equivalency Module Spreadsheet

Implementation Guidance (Appendix 1)

Optional Verification Guidance (Appendix 2)

FAQ – Guidance for Supply Chain Companies (Appendix 4)