



**FOOD  
ALLIANCE**  
SUPPORTING SUSTAINABILITY  
IN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

# Sustainability Standard for Nursery and Greenhouse

## Managing for Sustainability — and Realizing Outcomes

Innovative growers across the U.S. and Canada are reducing their energy, water, and chemical use for cost-savings, while concurrently managing their operation for environmental and community benefits. With the FA Sustainability Standard for Nursery & Greenhouse Production, growers now have a suite of new tools to assess, manage and certify sustainability.

## Delivering New Sustainability Tools to Nursery and Greenhouse Growers

Food Alliance (FA) offers three sustainability tools to help nursery and greenhouse producers manage their operations for environmental, social and economic outcomes.

1. The FA Sustainability Standard for Nursery and Greenhouse Production provides a comprehensive definition to guide nursery and greenhouse operators in achieving greater sustainability.
2. The FA Sustainability Evaluation Tool allows growers to self-assess current sustainability performance – and set sustainability objectives – either as a prelude to certification or as a best management practice.
3. The voluntary FA Sustainability Certification Program gives producers a credible way to distinguish their sustainably-managed operation and products in the marketplace, to customers and consumers.

## Setting the Standard

The FA Sustainability Standard for Nursery & Greenhouse Production addresses all operational activities related to sustainable production:

- Soil and water conservation
- Integrated pest, disease and weed management
- Safe and fair working conditions
- Operational efficiency (energy use, recycling, etc.)
- Wildlife habitat and biodiversity conservation



The Standard was developed by industry request, in alliance with the Oregon Association of Nurseries ([www.oan.org](http://www.oan.org)). The standards development process was supported by government and private foundation grants. Individuals with professional experience and expertise in the nursery industry – agencies, universities and the private sector – contributed to criteria development and review, and provided opportunities for field testing.

## Choosing Certification and Reaping the Benefits

Innovative growers seek independent third-party certification to stringent FA standards so their marketing claims are credible and irrefutable.

During certification, an independent third-party verifies management practices against the FA Sustainability Evaluation Tool for Nursery & Greenhouse Production. Following a rigorous on-site inspection, the independent verifier (International Certification Services) determines

**For information about becoming certified  
to the FA Sustainability Standard:**

(503) 267-4667

[info@foodalliance.org](mailto:info@foodalliance.org)

**[FoodAlliance.org/nursery](http://FoodAlliance.org/nursery)**

whether to award certification. Food Alliance certification can help nursery and greenhouse businesses:

- Achieve acknowledgement for a commitment to environmental and social responsibility;
- Address buyers' concerns for social and environmental responsibility;
- Differentiate and add value to products;
- Receive guidance to help the operation be more environmentally and socially responsible;
- Protect and enhance the brand;
- Access niche market opportunities;
- Build customer loyalty.

Producers in the Pacific Northwest may further differentiate their operations by concurrently verifying compliance with Salmon-Safe ([www.salmonsafe.org](http://www.salmonsafe.org)). This sends a clear message to customers that an operation is committed to protecting water quality and native salmon spawning habitats.



### **Certifying Sustainable Agriculture Since 1998**

Food Alliance is the most experienced sustainable agriculture certifier in the United States. We have over a decade of experience developing and maintaining comprehensive sustainability standards and criteria for a wide range of agricultural products, including fruits, vegetables, grains, livestock, and plants. We “get” our clients’ business, which is reflected in our standards, evaluation tools, inspection process, and customer service.



Unlike commercial certification programs, Food Alliance is a nonprofit organization; we are motivated by mission, and our rates are reasonable. To date, we are 5.6 million acres strong.

### **Honoring and Encouraging Grower Innovation**

FA Sustainability Standards set a high bar that recognizes innovation and continual improvement. Growers may receive credit for innovative practices that achieve the intended social, environmental, and economic outcomes. Likewise, growers participate in defining continual improvement goals, and are encouraged to define their own path for achieving those goals.

### **Calling All Greenhouse and Nursery Leaders**

As a leadership standard, Food Alliance seeks nursery and greenhouse growers who are committed to continually improving their environmental, social and economic performance.

The FA Sustainability Standard for Nursery & Greenhouse Production applies to field, container, and greenhouse operations in North America. These operations may produce a wide range of plants including woody ornamentals, annuals, perennials, potted flowering plants, foliage plants or cut flowers. Currently, the standard is not intended for evaluating Christmas tree operations or tree farms.



### **Getting Started**

Nursery and greenhouse growers interested in pursuing FA sustainability certification should first read the FA Sustainability Standard for Nursery and Greenhouse Production and related Evaluation Tool to understand the pertinent criteria and the certification requirements. Those who feel certification is right for their operation may submit an application. The Sustainability Standard, Evaluation Tool, and application may be requested by mail or downloaded online.

**[FoodAlliance.org/nursery](http://FoodAlliance.org/nursery)**