



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

# Sustainability Standard for Farmed Shellfish Operations

(Oysters, Clams, Geoducks, & Mussels)

## Managing for Sustainability — and Realizing Outcomes

Shellfish growers work the sensitive, ecologically rich environments where water meets the land. The most innovative producers recognize that reducing energy, water, and chemical use, protecting biodiversity and wildlife habitat, and contributing to their local community are not only the *right* things to do; they can also help reduce costs and environmental risks.

As consumers and commercial food buyers grow more concerned with social and environmental issues, they demand traceability and transparency in the food they purchase. Growers who are committed to practicing and verifying responsible management are well positioned to meet the growing expectations of this market.

## Setting the Standard for Sustainability

The FA Sustainability Standard for Farmed Shellfish Operations addresses all operational activities related to sustainable production:

- Soil and water conservation
- Fish and wildlife conservation
- Integrated pest, disease and weed management
- Healthy, humane care for shellstock
- Safe and fair working conditions
- Shared resource management



## Sustainability Tools for Farmed Shellfish Operations

Food Alliance (FA) provides shellfish growers with a suite of tools to assess, manage, and certify sustainability. These tools help farmed shellfish growers manage their operations for environmentally, socially and economically sound outcomes.

1. The FA Sustainability Standard for Farmed Shellfish Operations provides a comprehensive definition to guide farmed shellfish growers in achieving greater sustainability. The standard applies to all North American oyster, clam, geoduck and mussel production systems that produce shellfish from seed to harvest within a defined area and with clear ownership of the shellfish being cultured. It does not apply to wild harvest.
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 growers a credible way to distinguish their sustainably-managed operation and products in the marketplace, to customers and consumers.

## Choosing Certification and Reaping the Benefits

Innovative and progressive growers seek independent third-party certification to stringent FA standards to ensure their marketing claims are credible and irrefutable. With certification, products grown and processed by these operations are licensed to use the Food Alliance Certified eco-label on qualified products.

During certification, an independent third-party verifies management practices against the FA Sustainability Evaluation Tool for Farmed Shellfish Operations. Following a rigorous on-site inspection, an independent verifier determines whether to award certification.



Food Alliance certification can help shellfish operations:

- Get acknowledged for a commitment to sustainability practices;
- Receive guidance on operational improvements for greater social and environmental responsibility;
- Address buyers' concerns for sustainability and traceability;
- Differentiate and add value to products;
- Protect and enhance the brand;
- Access niche market opportunities;
- Build customer loyalty.

## Get Certified!

**For information about  
FA Sustainability Certification  
for Farmed Shellfish:  
(503) 267-4667  
info@foodalliance.org  
FoodAlliance.org/shellfish**

Our comprehensive, supply chain-based approach to certification means Food Alliance Certified shellfish products meet high standards for social and environmental responsibility – from the tidelands to the seafood market.

### **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.

Food Alliance is a nonprofit organization. Our rates are reasonable and we are motivated by our mission: to *define and promote sustainability in agriculture and the food industry, ensuring safe and fair working conditions, humane treatment of animals, and careful stewardship of natural resources.* To date, we are more than 330 certified operations and 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.

### **Getting Started**

As a leadership standard, Food Alliance seeks farmed shellfish growers who are committed to continually improving their environmental, social and economic performance. Shellfish growers interested in pursuing FA sustainability certification should first read the FA Sustainability Standard for Farmed Shellfish Operations 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 certification application may be requested by mail or downloaded online.

### **Endorsements & Testimonials**

*“The shellfish industry represents family businesses where current shellfish growers have followed the footsteps of their parents and grandparents. Food Alliance Certification captures the essence of this multi-generational industry. The criteria and standards for shellfish certification honors previous generations of growers and sets forward-thinking expectations for future generations.”*

**Margaret Barrette, Executive Director  
Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Assoc.**

*“Shellfish help maintain the health of local estuaries – through filtration, nitrogen removal and habitat diversity – and provide an ongoing incentive for clean water.*

*We applaud Food Alliance for establishing sustainability standards for shellfish aquaculture. These new sustainability standards will raise the bar for social and environmental performance. This is good news for Puget Sound.”*

**Betsy Peabody, Executive Director  
Puget Sound Restoration Fund**

*Fishchoice.com gives seafood buyers free, instant access to the products and information necessary to source socially and environmentally-responsible seafood.*



**FISHCHOICE.COM**

**Find Food Alliance Certified shellfish  
at FishChoice.com.**

**FoodAlliance.org/Shellfish**