FIELD TO MARKET & SAI PLATFORM EQUIVALENCY APPENDIX 4: GUIDANCE FOR SUPPLY CHAIN COMPANIES FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. When should I consider this option?

This option has been designed primarily for companies who are stakeholders or future stakeholders of both the FSA and Field to Market.

2. What are the Benefits?

The primary benefits for supply chain companies are:

- ✓ *The FSA/Fieldprint Platform benchmarking evaluation, which includes U.S. legislation, delivers clarity; you no longer need to conduct your own benchmark exercise*
- ✓ *The remaining FSA questions have been consolidated and tailored around the gaps that are not addressed through the Fieldprint Platform, which allows for simplification.*
- ✓ *Industry recognition on how the Fieldprint Platform aligns with the FSA requirements makes things easier for your suppliers and reduces duplication of efforts.*
- ✓ *Increased availability of sustainably sourced FSA volumes*

3. How much does it cost?

There will be no additional costs associated with the use of the FSA Equivalency Module. However, should you wish to verify the results, you should factor in the cost of auditing according to the rates of minimum sampling in Appendix 2, and a half day farm visit at typical rates.

4. 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 14 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.

5. 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 14 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

6. 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 14 questions of the FSA Equivalency Module can be applied to all the crops the farm grows or an individual crop.

7. How easy will it be to include the FSA Equivalency Module to my existing Fieldprint Project?

The main thing you need to do is add the FSA Equivalency Module into your supply chain communications, and potentially provide some tailored guidance on the 14 FSA Equivalency Module questions. If you intend to verify the results, then this will need to be added to your existing project management.

8. How is the data stored and shared?

Project administrators will have access to the additional information these 14 questions create. You need to speak with your suppliers and the participating growers to ensure that they know how you will store the information (Excel sheets), and how you will or will not use it or share it. Please update your Fieldprint Project privacy policy accordingly.

9. Will this be part of the IT system?

For the time being, the module will remain in excel format, however it may be included in version 3.0 of the Fieldprint Platform later depending on the level of uptake.

10. For the verification of volume claims, will the auditor also check a grower's 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 14 questions because it is required by state law, but the auditors should be aware of these cases.

11. 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).

12. Can FSA volume claims be made on a mass balance basis?

Yes, however there are certain rules relating to traceability and volume accounting. Please see the FSA Implementation guidance (pages 8 & 9) for more information. Mass balance accounting is included as part of the third-party verification during the audit of the management system.

13. How does Field to Market's verification process relate to the FSA verification requirements, and which should I use if I am interested in the FSA Equivalency Module

At this time, Field to Market and SAI Platform's verification processes and requirements are separate and distinct from one another. If a company wishes to pursue FSA Equivalency and make a FSA volume claim, they must utilize SAI Platform's verification guidance provided in Appendix 2. In the future, SAI Platform and Field to Market will explore whether the verification protocols for Field to Market's Supply Chain Sustainability Program meet the verification requirements of the FSA Implementation Framework.

14. As a supplier to a downstream company that wishes to pursue FSA equivalency, do I need to send any documentation to SAI Platform, or file the audit report with them?

No, your direct customers are the only ones that might need to see the evidence of verification. However, we always welcome FSA implementation stories and are happy to listen to user feedback. If you would like to share your experience with utilizing the FSA Equivalency Module or suggestions for improvement, please contact Joe Rushton.

15. I would like to utilize the Field to Market and SAI Platform Equivalency, but my organization is not a member in Field to Market. How do I get started?

There are opportunities for non-members to collaborate with existing Field to Market members on Fieldprint Projects or create a new project specific to your organization's needs by pursuing membership or a licensing arrangement with Field to Market. For more information, please contact Betsy Hickman.

Related Resources

Equivalency Module Spreadsheet

Implementation Guidance (Appendix 1)

Optional Verification Guidance (Appendix 2)

FAQ – Guidance for Growers (Appendix 3)