

Guide to making Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) Statements and Claims

V1.1 March 2020

1. Introduction

This document helps users make accurate and appropriate statements and claims about the Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA). This guidance is an integral part of FSA version 2.1. SAI Platform understands that there may always be questions that are not answered by this guide. In that case, please feel free to get in touch.

2. General FSA Statements

All organisations working with the FSA can publicly state that they do so. This includes farmers, businesses that buy products from farmers, companies along the food & drinks supply chain and other industry or multi-stakeholder platform initiatives.

Organisations making general statements about using the FSA should express them in such a way that they do not suggest indicating on-farm or farm group performance levels. This means that the statements need to reflect the intention or the act of using the FSA for engaging farmers and suppliers, assessing on-farm performance and for improving on-farm performance. Companies are encouraged to specify why and how they work with the FSA, and what the scope of this work is.

Organisations have a significant degree of freedom in how they express general FSA Statements. For reference purposes, SAI Platform has created some **boilerplate language** that may help organisations define their public FSA statements.

Farm	[Name farm] uses the FSA to assess its environmental, social and economic performance as the basis for ongoing improvements.
Farm Management Group	[Name group] uses the FSA to engage farmers in assessing their environmental, social and economic performance. The insights enable [name group] to promote sustainable agriculture through focused farm support.
Buyer	[Name buyer] uses the FSA to assess the sustainability of its agricultural ingredients. [Name buyer] is committed to source at least [x] % of its ingredients at FSA [bronze/silver/gold] level by [year x].
Platform	The participants of [name platform] have committed to source at least [x] % of their ingredients at FSA [bronze/silver/gold] level by [year x].

Organisations using the FSA should refer to the system they use as the FSA, and not as SAI Platform. SAI Platform is the organisation that owns and operates the FSA.

Do	Don't
Our company uses the FSA in its sustainable sourcing policy.	Our company uses SAI in its sustainable sourcing policy.
Our company strives to source all ingredients at FSA Silver level by 2025.	Our company strives to source all ingredients at SAI Silver level by 2025.
Our company only works with FSA benchmarked standards.	Our company only works with SAI Platform benchmarked standards.

3. Eligibility FSA Performance Level Sustainability Claims

Organisations aiming to make FSA claims about the on-farm performance levels ¹of:

- individual farmers,
- groups of farmers,
- products produced by farmers,
- products containing ingredients from farmers,

should use the following guidelines when making FSA performance level claims. These guidelines have been developed to protect the credibility of the FSA claim as well as to promote a common understanding of what the claim means. These are critical preconditions for creating a claim that has value to the FSA user base.

There are 3 types of FSA Performance Level claims, which follow from the three verification options that the FSA offers:

1. FSA Benchmark Equivalency Claim
2. FSA Verified Claim
3. GLOBALG.A.P. FSA Add-on Claim

3.1. FSA Benchmark Equivalency Claim

SAI Platform has developed a simple yes/no checklist to help users understand if they are eligible to make an FSA Benchmark Equivalency Claim. See Figure 1. The questions are based on two key reference documents:

- [FSA Implementation Framework](#)
- [FSA Communications Guide](#)

¹ FSA Performance Claims that can be claimed are: Bronze/Silver/Gold

You can use the following checklist to see if you are eligible for making an FSA Performance Level Claim on the basis of benchmark equivalency:

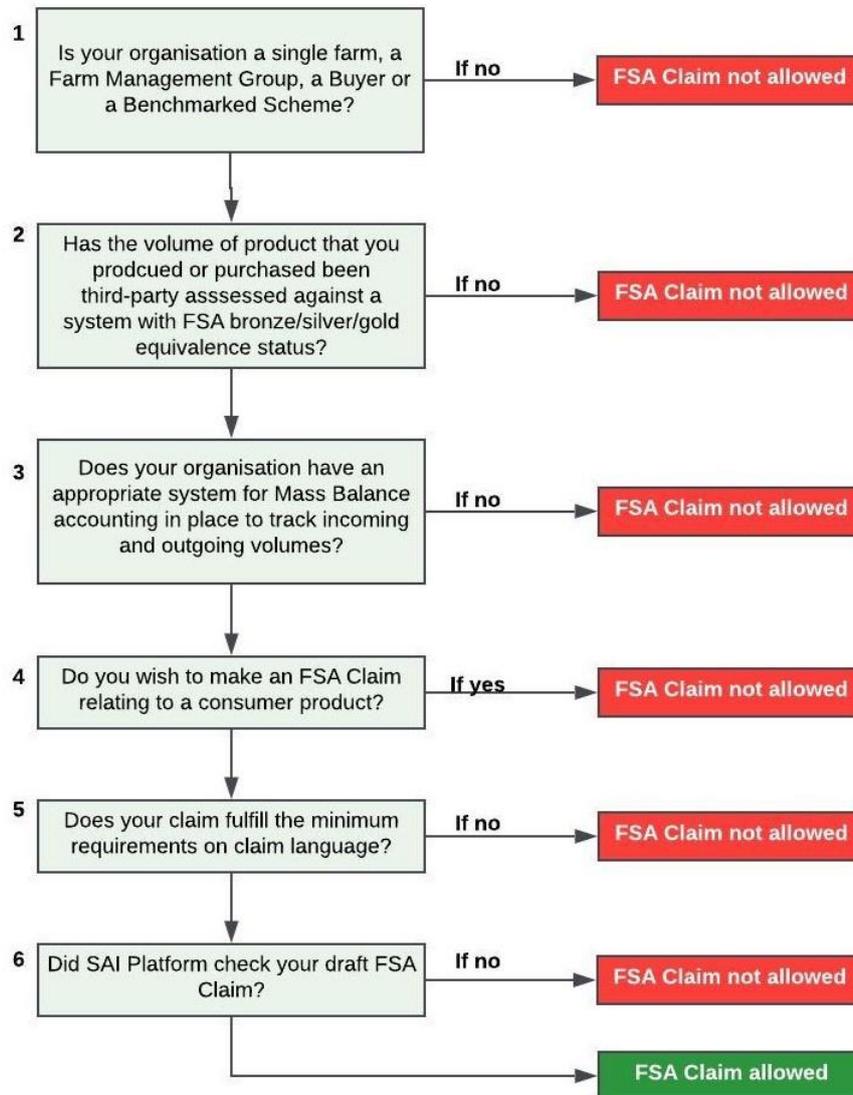


Figure 1: Checklist Benchmarked Equivalency Claim

Here is the explanation of the boxes:

1. *Is your organisation a single farm, a Farm Management Group, a Buyer or a Benchmarked Scheme?*

A farm is the subject of a Farm Sustainability Assessment questionnaire. The Farm Management Group and Buyer are defined in the FSA Implementation Framework. Benchmarked Schemes are schemes that have been benchmarked against the FSA and have received the following status in the [Benchmark Equivalency Overview](#): partial, Bronze, Silver, Gold.

2. *Has the volume of product that you produced or purchased been third-party assessed against a system with FSA Bronze/Silver/Gold equivalence status?*

This can typically be demonstrated through a certificate or other form of attestation provided to the producer or supplier on behalf of the benchmarked scheme. An overview of FSA Benchmarked Schemes that lead to FSA equivalence and their possible combinations is available in the [Benchmark Equivalency Overview](#).

3. *Does your organisation have an appropriate system for Mass Balance accounting in place to track incoming and outgoing volumes?*

The minimum requirements for a Mass Balance accounting system can be found in the [FSA Implementation Framework](#).

4. *Do you wish to make an FSA Claim relating to a consumer product?*

A consumer product is defined as a processed product containing ingredients that have been third-party assessed against a Benchmarked Scheme. Product-related claims can only mention the name of the Benchmarked Scheme, providing the standard setter allows for it.

5. *Does your claim fulfil the minimum requirements on claim language?*

Minimum requirements for Claim language can be found in section ...

6. *Did SAI Platform check your draft FSA Claim?*

SAI Platform will check your draft claim within 5 working days after you submit it to fsatool@saiplatform.org

Examples: FSA Benchmark Equivalency Claims	
Farm Management Group	All farmers in [name group] produce at FSA Silver Level as demonstrated by [name Benchmarked Scheme].
Buyer	In 2019, 68% of our raw agricultural ingredients were produced at FSA Bronze level or higher. Our suppliers can demonstrate this through [names Benchmarked Schemes].
Benchmarked Scheme	[Name Benchmarked Scheme] has FSA Gold Level Equivalence, demonstrating that is highly aligned with SAI Platforms Farm Sustainability Assessment.

3.2. FSA Verified Claim

Figure 2: Checklist FSA Verified Claim

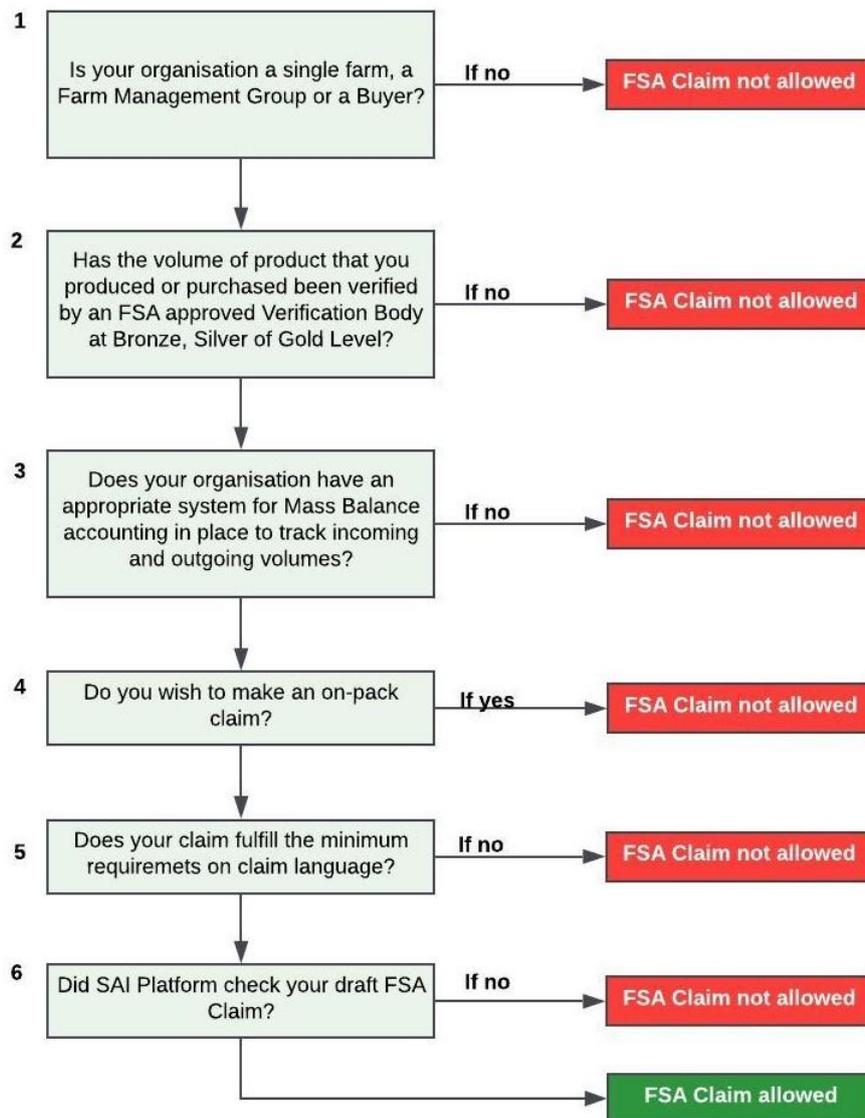


Figure 2: Checklist FSA Verified Claim

Here is the explanation of the boxes:

1. *Is your organisation a single farm, a Farm Management Group, a Buyer?*

A farm is the subject of a Farm Sustainability Assessment questionnaire. The Farm Management Group and Buyer are defined in the FSA Implementation Framework.

- 2. Has the volume of product that you produced or purchased been verified by an FSA approved Verification Body at Bronze, Silver or Gold Level?*

This can be evidenced by a valid FSA Letter of Attestation, providing assurance that the primary producer belongs to a Farm Management Group that is allowed to claim volume of FSA verified product.

- 3. Does your organisation have an appropriate system for Mass Balance accounting in place to track incoming and outgoing volumes?*

The minimum requirements for a Mass Balance accounting system can be found in the [FSA Implementation Framework](#).

- 4. Do you wish to make an on-pack FSA claim?*

It is not allowed to use the name or the logo of the FSA on pack. Section ... outlines possibilities for making product-based sustainability claims with FSA assurance.

- 5. Does your claim fulfil the minimum requirements on claim language?*

Minimum requirements for Claim language can be found in section ...

- 6. Did SAI Platform check your draft FSA Claim?*

SAI Platform will check your draft claim within 5 working days after you submit it to fsatool@saiplatform.org

3.3. GLOBALG.A.P. FSA Add-On Claim

This implementation option is managed by GLOBALG.A.P. More information about this option, including claims can be found on this [website](#).

4. Making FSA Performance Claims

The FSA is primarily a business-to-business solution for providing assurance that agricultural raw materials have been produced in accordance with certain requirements. However, SAI Platform understands that companies may want to communicate about their FSA-related performance to audiences other than their customers – such as to consumers or civil society.

In order to ensure the consistency between claims and assure that claims are aligned with the level of assurance that the FSA can provide, SAI Platform provides guidance on the use of language, and logo as well as where claims can be made.

4.1. Legal Claims requirements

Regardless of this claim guidance, companies will always need to follow national legislation with regards to consumer claims.

4.2. Claims Requirements

The following requirements apply when making FSA Claims:

- Claim must be supported by an FSA Letter of Attestation that can be evidenced through a Mass Balance accounting system as stipulated in the Implementation Framework.
- Reference must always be given to the Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA), not to SAI Platform.
- It must be clear whether it concerns a Benchmark Equivalency Claim, an FSA Verified Claim, a GGFSa Claim or a combination of these three.
- The subject of the claim must be clear.
- The perception that SAI Platform indicates whether a product is sustainable must be avoided at all times.

Some common examples of what good looks like and mistakes to be avoided:

Do	Don't
Our orange juice is produced at FSA Silver level	Our orange juice is produced at SAI Silver Level
This product comes from FSA verified sources	This product comes from FSA certified sources
Our company has defined FSA Gold level as its reference for sustainable sourcing. All our products meet this performance level.	All our products are sustainable because they have been verified at FSA Gold level.
All of our cocoa has been certified against Rainforest Alliance standards, which is equivalent to FSA Silver.	All our cocoa is FSA Silver , because it has been certified against Rainforest Alliance standards.

4.3. Where can FSA Claims be made?

4.3.1. On-pack claims are not allowed

SAI Platform does not allow on-pack claims:

- using the names SAI Platform, Farm Sustainability Assessment,
- indicating Bronze, Silver or Gold performance levels,
- displaying the FSA logo or the SAI Platform logo.

It is possible for companies to make self-declared on-pack sustainability claims that are supported by off-pack FSA claims, for example on a website. SAI Platform recommends considering ISO Guidance on self-declared environmental claims (ISO14021).

4.3.2. Online

Companies are permitted to make FSA performance level claims on their website, product websites and on social media:

- using the name Farm Sustainability Assessment,
- indicating Bronze, Silver or Gold performance levels,
- displaying the FSA logo.

Why is it not allowed to make on-pack claims using the name and logo of the FSA?

The FSA is designed as a business-to-business improvement and verification scheme. This allows the FSA to be flexible and affordable in comparison to many schemes that do allow on-pack labeling. In addition, the FSA does not prescribe what the Chain of Custody should look like.

Flexibility. Allowing for on-pack labeling would require making the underlying claim more consistent, to make it easier for consumers to know what the claim means. This would compromise the ability for the FSA to apply to all crops, all countries, and all types of crop farming.

Cost. The FSA is fundamentally a self-assessment. The role of the Verification Body is to confirm that the self-assessment has been performed appropriately across a group of farmers. The Verification Assessment therefore only includes an audit of a relatively small sample of farms, keeping the verification assessment affordable.

Chain of Custody. The FSA relies on companies to make agreements about traceability of FSA verified material and does not prescribe a so-called Chain of Custody. Therefore, there is no independent mechanism to validate the flow of FSA verified product through the supply chain. Including a Chain of Custody is technically challenging due to the broad-scale application of the FSA, and would add significantly to the cost of FSA Verification.

4.4. Logo Use Requirements

Companies are permitted to support statements and claims by using the FSA Logo and should refrain from using the SAI Platform logo for this matter.

Detailed guidance on logo use can be found in the [Membership Communications Guide](#).

5. Any questions left after reading this guide? Get in touch!

We hope you have found this guide to be useful in making statements and claims that relate to the FSA. Please direct any questions you may have to fsatool@saiplatform.org or have a look at our [website](#).