GAFTA TRADE ASSURANCE SCHEME

GTAS

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Sustainability

Environmental Dimension

Scheme Year 2013

Gafta Promoting international trade

Sustainability in the environmental dimension

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Sustainability in the environmental dimension

Gafta recognises the importance of sustainability in its wider context of the long term maintenance of responsibility, which has environmental, economic and social dimensions. The Brundtland Commission of the UN in March 1987 defined the term sustainability as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

This code of practice sets out a number of sustainability standards in environmental sustainability to be attained and possible for certification.

The intention of this code is to promote good performance in these areas with a commitment to continuous assessment and improvement.

This code applies to the applicant company and those that supply that company with goods and services. ie the applicant company undertakes that they comply with these requirements in their own operations and that they only procure goods from, and use only third party suppliers of services that meet these standards.

Individual principles [P] under each heading are described and some recommendations listed. The nature of the principles enables parties a degree of freedom and flexibility as to how they are able to demonstrate compliance with each. Where a principle does not apply these may be marked by the assessor as Not Applicable (N/A) and not affect the ultimate certification.

2.0	**ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION** **Strategic objectives:** • To reduce environmental cost of food production • To make better use of natural resources • To improve and preserve biodiversity and landscape.
2.1	**BIODIVERSITY** [P] The protection of biodiverse environments, including protected or endangered flora and fauna. There should be an active programme of conservation of sensitive environments, including wetlands, peatland etc It is recommended that steps be taken to maintain and enhance biological diversity on farms by planting native or adapted species, by promoting natural regeneration or through the use of uncultivated or non-grazed field margins, headland/ pollen/ nectar/ strips, wild bird feed strips or beetle banks. It is recommended that native trees are removed only when they significantly compete with crops or when they constitute a hazard to farm staff, visitors, passers-by or the highway. It is recommended that ploughing or other deep cultivations do not take place under the canopy of mature trees. It is recommended that ecosystems such as mature trees, woodland, wetlands or ponds that provide habitats for wildlife living on the farm, or for wildlife that pass through farms during migration, must be protected and restored. Special measures must be taken to protect threatened or endangered species. It is recommended that ecosystems, such mature trees, woodland, wetlands or ponds should be connected to one another by "wildlife corridors" consisting of, for example, hedges, non-grazed native vegetation, ditches or water courses. It is recommended that all farms commit to supporting at least one biodiversity programme/ initiative.
2.2	**ENERGY MANAGEMENT/RENEWABLE ENERGY** It is recommended that great care be taken in the choice and use of energy resources. Steps must be taken to assess different energy requirements and to implement practices which: • Avoid wasting energy • Avoid unnecessary operations and inappropriate use of machinery or equipment • Increase the use of renewable energy and fuels • Record and monitor fuel usage [R] It is recommended that care be taken to minimize any adverse impacts on the global environment and climate change. Greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced by reducing the use of non-renewable sources of energy, increasing the use of renewable sources of energy, and by optimizing the use of energy-intensive inputs such as inorganic fertilizers.
2.3	**WATER RESOURCES** It is recommended that water use must be carefully considered and water losses reduced where possible. The following actions should be undertaken: • Sketch out the water supply network and check taps, drinkers, troughs and nozzles regularly for leaks • Review water use quarterly. Look out for any increase in use that may indicate leaks. • Ensure all hoses, hand lances, and washing equipment have trigger controls • Insulate pipes properly, lagging all exposed pipe work within 750 mm of ground level
2.4	**MAPPING** It is recommended that there be a business map (or satellite photograph), significant feature inventory and land use plan. These should show areas of: • permanent pasture, • short term leys and other cropped areas • significant features such as mature trees, woodland, wetlands, ponds, woody hedges, non-grazed native vegetation, ditches and water courses. • other land use This should be undertaken initially to establish the baseline then updated at least every five years

2.5	**LAND QUALITY** It is recommended that farmers are aware of the need to reduce land vulnerability and prevent land degradation through careful choice of cultivations and by avoiding the poaching of land by livestock. Practices to reduce land vulnerability can include reducing or eliminating tillage, maintaining soil cover with plants or mulch and avoiding unnecessary traffic or access by livestock especially when wet.
2.6	**SOIL CONSERVATION, FERTILITY AND NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT** It is recommended that farming practices which protect and enhance soil quality and productivity are used wherever possible. Regular applications of composts and/or manures and increase soil aggregate stability, soil tilth and diversity of soil microbial life. Soil pH should be monitored and remedial action to maintain a suitable ph should be taken.
2.7	**CARBON FOOTPRINT** It is recommended that the farmers take steps to maintain or increase the farm's carbon absorption and carbon holding capacity by planting or conserving trees or other woody biomass.
2.8	**USE OF PESTICIDES** It is recommended that the protection of grassland and crops against pest, diseases and weeds must be achieved with as little reliance as possible on pesticides. The use of selective pesticides (insecticides, fungicides, herbicides) rather than broad spectrum. e.g. Insecticides that only control the pest species, not the predators, is encouraged. The use of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) system approach is recommended. An IPM system shall consider the following: • responsibilities are clearly assigned for planning and carrying out pest control, • choice of crop/variety is appropriate for the area, • use of cultural and physical controls: crop rotations (e.g. mechanical weeding), biological controls (e.g. for the location as well as disease and pest resistance beneficial insects), • regular visual inspections, • thresholds or other recognized prediction systems to be used to avoid unnecessary application of pesticides.
2.9	**WASTE MANAGEMENT** It is recommended that the optimum use of waste and by-products should be promoted and proper disposal of waste should be ensured. It is recommended that non-organic farm waste output be minimised as far as possible through careful purchasing decisions and by applying the principles of reduction, reuse and recycling.
2.10	**WASTE WATER MANAGEMENT** It is recommended that producers manage the use of inputs and release of wastewater into ground water or water courses. [P] The farm enterprise activities shall protect surface and ground water from direct and indirect pollution considering the following: Untreated sewage water shall not be used for irrigation; sources of water are carefully and regularly assessed for their microbial, chemical and mineral content, and properly managed in accordance with the assessment results. The use of inputs as well as release of wastewater is properly managed in order to preserve surrounding water sources, manures and fertilizers are stored in a clean, dry location (preferably under cover), where there is no risk of contamination of watercourses, and separate from nursery stock; they are not be applied to waterlogged, steep or frozen ground where there is a risk of run-off. Buffer zones adjacent to waterways are planted, maintained or restored, preferably with native species.

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