RIVER FRIENDLY FARM

CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

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CERTIFICATION OVERVIEW

The River Friendly Farm Program certifies agricultural products were produced with practices that protect regional water quality. Agricultural practices are evaluated to ensure that (1) soil health, (2) nutrient management, (3) pest management, (4) farmstead management, and (5) waterway management best management practices (BMPs) are in place. The use of BMPs reduces or eliminates the detrimental environmental impact of their operations on water quality.

CATEGORIES EVALUATED


Soil Health


Nutrient Management


Pest Management


Farmstead Management


Waterway Protection

CERTIFICATION CRITERIA

River Friendly Farm Certification evaluates agricultural practices based on five categories. Within each category, there are criteria that, if applicable to the product growth/production, must be met for the farm to quality as River-Friendly Certified. All criteria are described in detail on subsequent pages.

For each criterion, applicants must select either:

- "N/A" if the criteria are not relevant to the operation. Farms will not be evaluated based on those criteria. See below for more information. For examples, a farm that does not have livestock can mark N/A and skip all questions pertaining to livestock exclusions and manure handling.
- "No," if the agricultural practices do not meet the criteria, and
- "Yes" if the agricultural practices do meet the criteria."

To qualify for the River Friendly Farm Certification, applicants must meet every relevant criterion.

In most cases, applicants will be prompted to select one or more techniques or practices they employ related to the criteria. These are designed to guide the subsequent narrative description. There is no minimum number needed to qualify for any given criteria.

In the "Description" area, applicants must record a detailed description of the best management practices they employ to achieve the criteria. If the applicant is claiming an exemption, please describe why your farm qualifies for an exemption.

Responses will be verified by an approved independent River Friendly Farm certifying agent during an on-site visit.

STEPS TO BECOMING CERTIFIED

1

Visit Website

Visit the website, www.riverfriendlyfarm.org to learn about the programs.

2

Request Application

Applicants will need to (1) list products they intend to certify, (2) certify that they meet all relevant criteria, and (3) provide a description of the best management practices (BMPs) used to achieve the criteria.

3

River Friendly Farm Certifiers Review Application

River Friendly Farm certifiers will review your application and schedule an on-site visit.

4

On-site Visit by Certifying Agent

River Friendly Farm certifiers will conduct an on-site visit to check the compliance of your systems and practices with the corresponding standards.

5

Certification Decision

Approved certifying agents, in coordination with the local advisory committee, will make the final decision to approve or deny the certification.

6

Certification Awarded

Certification certificate is awarded. Applicants can display the logo associated with the standard on your labels.

7

Certification Maintenance

Applicants will complete an online recertification form every year and submit to spot checks approximately once every 5-years.

BASIC FARM INFORMATION

CONTACT INFORMATION

Farmer Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Farm Name: _____

Farm Address: _____

FARM AND EXPERIENCE INFORMATION

1. **Please describe your operation?**

2. **Operation Size** *(acres)*
_____ Cropland _____ Hayfield _____ Pasture _____ Forest
_____ Other: _____

3. **Operations Type:** *(Mark all that apply)*
☐ Crop (Grain/Bean) ☐ Hay ☐ Pasture ☐ Orchard/Fruit
☐ Horses ☐ Beef ☐ Dairy ☐ Other Livestock
☐ Nursery ☐ Poultry ☐ Forestry ☐ Vineyard
☐ Crop (Vegetable) ☐ Mushroom ☐ Other: _____

4. **Management:** ☐ Conventional ☐ Organic, Not Certified ☐ Organic, Certified

5. **What products will you market as River Friendly Farm Certified?**

SOIL HEALTH

		N/A	NO	YES
Cropland Erosion Control (Sheet) *Sheet erosion is the uniform removal of soil in thin layers, and it occurs when soil particles are carried evenly over the soil surface by rainwater that does not infiltrate into the ground.*	Little to no evidence of sheet erosion in agricultural production areas and areas at risk of erosion are protected.	○	○	○

Please indicate which of the following erosion management and mitigation practices are used on your farm. Check all that apply.

Soils are Covered

- ☐ Residue management (Crop residues are left on soil surface following harvest.)
- ☐ Cover crops are planted in production areas between growing seasons
- ☐ Perennial grasses established within and around production areas
- ☐ Mulch or other protective soil covering protects soil from erosion between growing seasons.

Tillage is Limited

- ☐ Production areas are no-till
- ☐ Production areas are strip-till
- ☐ Minimum till practices leave residues on soil surface and some soil structure intact.

Other Management Strategies

- ☐ Contour buffer strips break up slopes
- ☐ Crops are farmed along contours or in strips
- ☐ Crops are rotated
- ☐ Highly erodible land is identified and selectively managed

Please provide a short description of erosion mitigation practices.

	N/A	NO	YES
Cropland Concentrated Flow Erosion *Concentrated flow erosion, caused by runoff from rainfall, snow-melt, or irrigation water, can cause gullies. Ephemeral gullies usually appear on cultivated fields during the planting or growing season, but are temporarily removed by cultivation. Classic gully erosion generally occurs in well defined drainage ways and generally is not obliterated by tillage.*	There are very few or no gullies present throughout the farm and areas subject to concentrated flow are protected.	☐	☐	☐

Please indicate how you manage areas of concentrated flow. Check all that apply:

- ☐ Grass or rock lined waterways
- ☐ Terraces or grade stabilization structures
- ☐ Permanent vegetation in concentrated flow areas.
- ☐ Water and sediment control basin

Please provide a short description of how you prevent gullies on your farm.

		N/A	NO	YES
PASTURE EROSION CONTROL	Pastures contain a healthy stand of grass, few bare areas, and minimal compaction.	◯	◯	◯

Please indicate which systems you use to ensure healthy pasture.

- ☐ Management intensive rotational grazing
- ☐ Animals are removed from pasture during wet conditions
- ☐ Pasture size is adequate to provide for animal's dietary needs without overgrazing
- ☐ Livestock feeding and watering areas are protected using gravel or other artificial surface
- ☐ Livestock feeding and watering systems are moved frequently to prevent the formation of bare spots.

Please provide a short description of pasture management.

	N/A	NO	YES
SOIL ORGANIC MATTER	Farm practices protect and increase soil organic matter.	◯	◯	◯

Please indicate what practices you take to protect and increase soil organic matter. Check all that apply:

- ☐ Soil covered as much as possible with cover crops, crop residues, or organic mulches
- ☐ Soils are disturbed as little as possible by limiting tillage, using tillage methods where the soil surface is disturbed but maintains a high level of crop residue on the surface.
- ☐ Plants are kept growing throughout the year to feed soils
- ☐ Crop diversity introduced through the use of cover crops and crop rotation.
- ☐ Compost and manure used to supply crop nutrients.
- ☐ Perennial crops (hay, pasture, orchards, etc) are grown

Please provide a short description of how you protect and build your soil's organic matter.

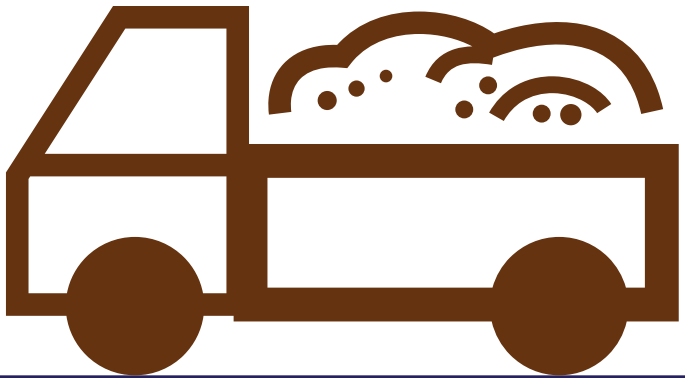
		N/A	NO	YES
AVOIDING COMPACTION	Farm practices limit or reverse soil compaction and promote a healthy soil.	☐	☐	☐

Please indicate which practices you employ to limit or reverse soil compaction. Check all that apply:

- ☐ Soil structure protected using reduced or limited tillage techniques
- ☐ Vehicle and animal traffic avoided on wet fields
- ☐ Vehicle traffic concentrated to designated areas (controlled traffic)
- ☐ Perennial crops (hay, pasture, orchards, etc) are grown
- ☐ Rotational grazing management is implemented

Please provide a short description of the measures you take to prevent soil compaction.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT



		N/A	NO	YES
NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT: *RIGHT RATE*	Nutrients are applied at a **rate** that minimizes the potential for run-off and leaching.	☐	☐	☐

Please indicate which of the following techniques you use to ensure the rate of nutrient application corresponds with plant needs. Check all that apply:

- ☐ Nutrient applications are informed by recommendation of frequent soil tests (at least once every three years)
- ☐ Plant tissue analysis guides nutrient application
- ☐ Manure and compost are tested prior to field application
- ☐ Precision nutrient management application employed
- ☐ Nutrient budgeting evaluates contribution of all sources of nutrients to the needs of a particular crop.
- ☐ Equipment is calibrated regularly
- ☐ Records are kept documenting field, crop and nutrient application data.
- ☐ Shut-off valves on sprayers prevent over-spray

Please describe how you determine the rate of nutrient application.

	N/A	NO	YES
NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT: *RIGHT PLACEMENT*	Nutrients are applied through a method that minimizes the potential for run-off and leaching.	☐	☐	☐

Please indicate which of the following techniques you use to ensure even and proper nutrient placement. Check all that apply:

- ☐ Fertilizer and manure applied to the soil surface in pastures, turf, perennial cropland and annual cropland when plants are actively growing
- ☐ Fertilizer and manure applied below the soil surface (manure injection, starter, pop-up, 2x2) to maintain crop residue cover.
- ☐ Spreaders calibrated for the proper application rate and distribution pattern
- ☐ No nutrients applied through sprinkler irrigation system
- ☐ No manure applied to crops within 100 feet of a water-body or well-head

Please describe how you determine the placement of nutrients.

		N/A	NO	YES
NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT: *RIGHT TIMING*	**Timing** of nutrient application minimizes the potential for run-off and leaching.	☐	☐	☐

Please indicate which of the following techniques you use to ensure nutrients are available when crops need them. Check all that apply:

- ☐ Nutrients applied when soil is not saturated
- ☐ Nutrients applied to match the seasonal crop nutrient demand (including split application and side-dressing after plants are established)
- ☐ No application of nitrogen/phosphorous rich fertilizer before a large rain event sufficient to cause surface run-off
- ☐ No fall application of nitrogen/phosphorous rich fertilizer/manure on bare soils (without cover crops)
- ☐ No winter application of nitrogen rich fertilizer/manure when soils are frozen or snow is present

Please describe how you determine the timing of nutrient applications.

	N/A	NO	YES
NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLAN	The farm is following a nutrient management plan.	☐	☐	☐

Please indicate which of the following nutrient management plans you have. Please check all that apply:

- ☐ NRCS Nutrient Management Plan (NMP)
- ☐ NRCS Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP)
- ☐ Self Certified manure management plan
- ☐ Other written record of nutrient management decisions

Please provide a short description of your nutrient management plan and how it influences your decision making.

PEST MANAGEMENT

		N/A	NO	YES
NON-PESTICIDE MEASURES	Farm implements non-pesticide measures to reduce pest damage and pesticide use.	◯	◯	◯

Please indicate which of the following non-pesticide measures are used on the farm.

Encouraging natural process in environment

- ☐ Beneficial organisms protected or released
- ☐ Encourage a diverse habitat around the perimeter of the field where beneficial insects can live.
- ☐ Inter-crops and companion planting
- ☐ Crop rotation

Pest Prevention

- ☐ Resistant Varieties

No-Pesticide Actions

- ☐ Flaming
- ☐ Insect Trapping
- ☐ Physical barriers
- ☐ Vacuuming

Please provide a short description of how the non-pesticide measure selected above are employed to reduce pest damage or pesticide use.

	N/A	NO	YES
PESTICIDE MONITORING	Pesticide use is based on inspection, monitoring or another science-based approach to determine need and optimum timing and placement.	◯	◯	◯

Who conducts crop inspections to determine types and infestation levels of pests at each site.

- ☐ Self scouting
- ☐ Certified Crop Advisor: _____

Please describe your procedure for inspecting, monitoring and keeping records of pest (weeds, insects, and pathogenic fungi, etc)

	N/A	NO	YES
PESTICIDE APPLICATION: *RECORD KEEPING*	Written or electronic records are maintained for pesticide applications	◯	◯	◯

		N/A	NO	YES
PESTICIDE APPLICATION: *CALIBRATION*	All pesticide application equipment calibrated per manufacturer's instruction at least annually.	☐	☐	☐
PESTICIDE STORAGE AND MIXING	The storage, mixing, loading and disposal of pesticides does not risk contaminating groundwater and all storage and mixing areas are outside of floodplains.	☐	☐	☐
PESTICIDE SELECTION	Ecological and environmental impact of pesticides are evaluated and, whenever possible, farm uses pesticides with lesser known risks.	☐	☐	☐

Please indicate what strategies you employ to reduce the ecological and environmental impact of the pesticides.

- ☐ Exclusive use of "general-use pesticides"
- ☐ Use of Pesticide Risk Mitigation Engine (ipmPRiME.com) to evaluate risks for pesticide application
- ☐ Use of WIN-PST/NAPRA Pesticide Properties Database (PPD): a tool for screening environmental risk of pesticides
- ☐ Thorough understanding of environment hazards listed on pesticide label
- ☐ Highly limited use of certain pesticides that have a high ecological risk.

Please describe the means in which you select pesticides with the least ecological risk.

PESTICIDE USE REDUCTION	Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies are used to reduce pesticide use and potential detrimental effects.	☐	☐	☐

Please indicate which techniques the farm uses to reduce pesticide use:

- ☐ Special handling in and around sensitive areas including wetlands and wellheads.
- ☐ Knowledge of common pest's habitat, life cycle, needs and dislikes
- ☐ Precision application technology (Reduce nozzles, GPS, overlap technology, etc.)
- ☐ Treating limited areas (alternate row, perimeter, spot, banded application)
- ☐ Monitoring the pest's activity and adjusting methods over time
- ☐ Apply protective fungicides when weather conditions are favorable and before damage occurs.
- ☐ Monitor blocks closely and spray according to action thresholds established for each species.

Please describe your process for reducing pesticide use.

FARMSTEAD MANAGEMENT

		N/A	NO	YES
STORMWATER CONTROL	Stormwater is managed to prevent detrimental impact to water resources.	☐	☐	☐

Please indicate which of the following best management practices you employ to prevent stomwater from impacting water resources. Check all that apply:

- ☐ Most clean surface water (rainwater) is diverted away from the farmstead using diversions, drains, or curbs.
- ☐ Most clean roof water is diverted away from the farmstead using gutters and downspouts.

Please provide a short description of your compost and manure storage.

	N/A	NO	YES
ANIMAL CONCENTRATION AREAS (ACAS) *Animal concentration areas specifically include barnyards, feedlots, loafing areas, exercise lots, or other similar animal confinement areas. Heavy use areas in pastures, such as cattle access ways, feeding areas, watering areas, and shade areas, are also considered animal concentration areas.*	Areas where animals concentrate (ACAs) are managed to prevent run-off from impacting the water resources.	☐	☐	☐

Please indicate which of the following solutions you use to prevent surface run-off from creating erosion concerns. Please check all that apply:

- ☐ ACAs are more than 100 feet from a waterbody
- ☐ Most clean surface water (rainwater) is diverted away from the ACA using diversions, drains, or curbs.
- ☐ Most clean roof water is diverted away from the ACA using gutters and downspouts.
- ☐ Runoff from un-roofed ACAs is directed to a densely vegetated area where it can infiltrate
- ☐ No runoff from ACAs flows into a drainage way or surface water
- ☐ Where appropriate, movable structures (such as shade and feeding ares) are relocated regularly to minimize development of denuded areas and manure concentration.
- ☐ Barns and gravel or concrete lots (roofed and un-roofed) prevent erosion and contain wastes
- ☐ Solid waste is scraped or removed, as needed

Please provide a short description of how you prevent animal concentration areas from impacting water resources.

		N/A	NO	YES
MANURE MANAGEMENT	Manure and compost are stored in a means that minimizes the potential for run-off and leaching.	☐	☐	☐

Please indicate which of the following best management practices you employ related to your manure and compost storage. Check all that apply:

- ☐ Waste is stored outside flood plains at all times
- ☐ Waste Storage facilities are large enough to accommodate farm needs without overflow potential.
- ☐ Waste is stored in designated stacking pad, lagoon, or tank
- ☐ Permanent piles are covered year-round by roof or tarp
- ☐ Temporary piles are conically shaped to shed water
- ☐ Cover crops grown in areas after temporary manure piles are removed

Please provide a short description of your compost and manure storage

	N/A	NO	YES
CONTAMINATED WATER DISCHARGE	Contaminated wastewater (ie milk-house waste, wash-water, and leachate) from farm operation is treated and does not enter waterways	☐	☐	☐

Please indicate which of the following best management practices you employ to treat contaminated wastewater.

- ☐ Wastewater delivered to a manure storage lagoon or tank
- ☐ Wastewater treated using a septic system or other below ground treatment system
- ☐ Wastewater collected and surface applied to dedicated vegetative areas

Please provide a short description of practices employed to treat wastewater

WATERWAY PROTECTION

		N/A	NO	YES
BUFFERS ON PERMANENT WATERWAYS	Vegetation along waterways, known as buffers, are adequately sized to intercept stormwater run-off, filter pollutants, and support stream health.	◯	◯	◯

Which of the following management strategies do you use to protect your permanent waterways and waterbodies? Check all that apply.

- ☐ Buffers are larger/wider near annual crops and areas with higher potential for nutrient and sediment runoff
- ☐ Buffers are adequate to intercept stormwater near perennial hay-fields and pasture
- ☐ Buffers contain mature trees that shade the stream and support stream health.
- ☐ Buffers contain permanent grasses and shrubs that encourage infiltration and filter pollutants.

Please provide a short description of the area.

	N/A	NO	YES
STREAM ACCESS Livestock and vehicles have restricted access to waterways and waterbodies.	◯	◯	◯

Please indicate which of the following practices you employ to preserve your riparian buffer. Check all that apply.

- ☐ Livestock have access to waterways only at controlled crossings or access points and waterways are minimally impacted by this access
- ☐ Vehicles and farm machinery have access to waterways only at controlled crossings or access points and waterways are minimally impacted by this access
- ☐ Access point are hardened (gravel or concrete)

Please provide a short description of how you prevent livestock and vehicle access from impacting waterways and waterbodies.

		N/A	NO	YES
SEASONAL AND EPHEMERAL WATERWAYS	Measures are taken to protect seasonal waterways.	○	○	○

Please indicate which of the following techniques you employ to protect seasonal and ephemeral water-bodies. Please check all that apply:

- ☐ Manure is not applied within 50 feet of waterway
- ☐ Livestock exclusion when water is present

Please provide a short description of your seasonal and ephemeral stream protection.

		N/A	NO	YES
IRRIGATION WATER MANAGEMENT	Measures are taken to minimize water use and maximize water use efficiency.	○	○	○

Please indicate all conservation measures being used. Check all that apply.

- ☐ No irrigation used

- ☐ Drought-resistant varieties
- ☐ Delayed irrigation only during critical crop stages, drought emergency, or when plant stress is visible
- ☐ Drop nozzles on overhead irrigation
- ☐ Overhead or drip irrigation
- ☐ Use of soil moisture meters
- ☐ Flow Meters
- ☐ Laser leveling flood irrigation fields
- ☐ Plastic irrigation pipes
- ☐ Rainwater storage
- ☐ Shutoff devices triggered by rainfall
- ☐ Variable rate irrigation
- ☐ Electronic irrigation valves

Please provide a short description of water conservation efforts.

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