



Agricultural Production Standard (APS) At a Glance

Fair Trade USA

Introduction

to Fair Trade USA and the APS



What is Fair Trade USA?

Fair Trade USA is a nonprofit organization and the leading certifier of Fair Trade products in North America. We work to promote sustainable livelihoods for small producers and workers in agricultural, fishing and apparel, and home goods factory settings, protect fragile ecosystems, and build strong, transparent supply chains through independent, third-party certification systems.

We recognize that sustainability is a journey, and our standards focus on continuous improvement over time to achieve superior social, economic, and environmental practices. Our trusted Fair Trade Certified™ seal signifies that rigorous standards have been met in the production, trade, and promotion of Fair Trade products from over 45 countries across the globe.

What is Fair Trade Certification?

Fair Trade certification requires regular evaluation by independent auditors to ensure requirements are met. Fair Trade focuses on social and environmental responsibility, meaning the well-being of the humans growing and processing products and the environment around them.

Once in compliance with the related standards, certified entities can sell their products with the Fair Trade Certified™ seal, resulting in Fair Trade Premium going to the producers and workers in that supply chain. Having the Fair Trade Certified™ seal on products means consumers know their products have met rigorous requirements.

How Do Farmers and Workers Benefit?

From economic stability to education to empowerment, Fair Trade gives farmers and workers a voice and an improved livelihood. Fair Trade offers :

- Improved working conditions,
- Transparent terms of trade,
- Clear work contracts,
- Premium funds for community investment, and
- Training on fundamental rights at work necessary to improve their lives and plan for their futures.

How do Market Partners Benefit?

Fair Trade works with businesses by rewarding them for making responsible, ethical decisions. It is a way for businesses to strengthen their supply chains, reduce risks, increase transparency and engagement between those in the supply chain, and demands of conscious consumers. The widely recognized Fair Trade seal differentiates products in the marketplace by communicating the story behind the product and igniting consumer interest.

How do Consumers Benefit?

When consumers purchase Fair Trade Certified™ goods, they're voting with their dollar – supporting responsible companies, empowering farmers and workers, enhancing community and individual well-being, promoting sustainable incomes and safe working conditions, as well as protecting the environment.

Overview of the APS

The Agricultural Production Standard (APS) sets the requirements for Fair Trade USA Certified™ agricultural production systems globally – covering diverse groups and sizes of farms and associated processing facilities under one Standard. Farms and facilities are audited against criteria applicable to their farm and facility size (Small, Mid or Large). APS compliance requirements are grouped thematically into six modules on:

- Empowerment
- Fundamental Rights at Work
- Wages, Working Conditions and Access to Services
- Biodiversity, Ecosystem Function, and Sustainable Production
- Traceability and Transparency
- Internal Management System

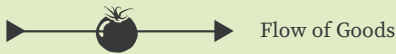
The following pages provide an introduction and overview of the Fair Trade certification system and APS core theme. For full details, read the APS and associated policies which can be found online at, www.FairTradeUSA.org.

The Flow of Goods and Impact



Fair Trade Products

Products that have been produced, finished, and traded under Fair Trade Standards. Premium is paid on all products sold on Fair Trade terms. Some products also have a Minimum Price, which protects farmers from volatile market prices.



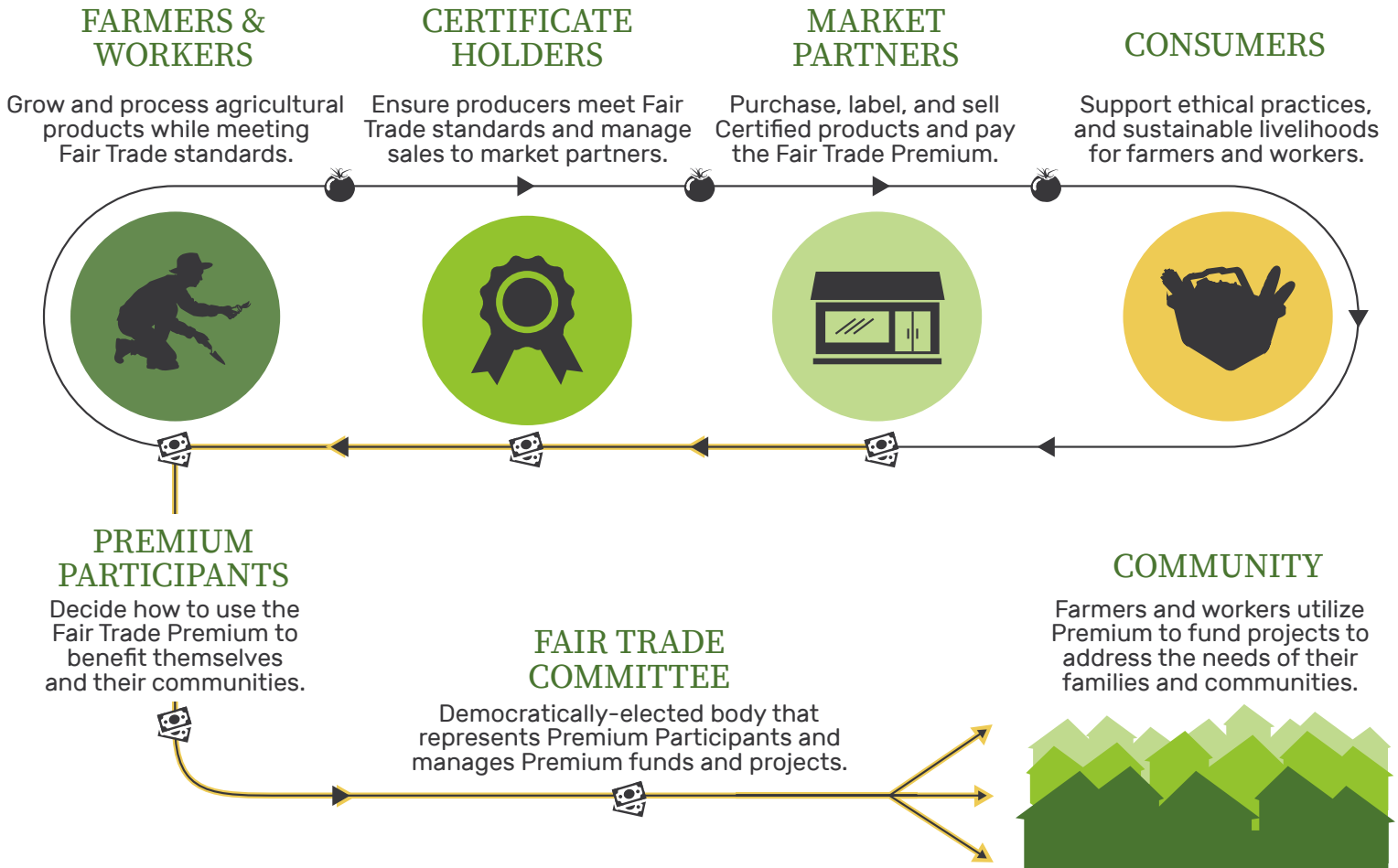
Fair Trade Premium

An extra sum paid by market partners directly to farmers and workers to support community development projects. Premium is set on a per-product, per-unit basis and sent from the market partner.



FAIR TRADE USA

Provides support across the entire supply chain and the process of certification, and tracks payment of the Fair Trade Premium, and Minimum Price where relevant, back to the farmers and workers.



Fair Trade USA Agricultural Production Standard Certification Cycle

Fair Trade Audits

Audits are conducted by an independent body to verify compliance with the APS. The certification process is based on a three-year cycle, with the initial certification decision made during the initial (Year 0) audit. Audits are conducted yearly to assess ongoing compliance with the APS.



How much will it cost to get certified?

(1) **Compliance Costs** depend upon the level of changes required to come into compliance with the APS by all sites and entities included in the scope of the Certificate.

(2) **Audit costs** vary according to the number and size of sites under the Certificate, the number of workers and farmers, as well as the use of labor contractors, third-party recruiters, and subcontracted facilities. Fair Trade USA Supply Chain staff may be able to provide a cost range estimate. Submit an application to receive an audit quote from one of our participating conformity assessment bodies.



Questions?

The following pages outline requirements in the APS.

For more resources or to start a conversation, visit us at:

FairTradeCertified.org or

info@fairtradeusa.org

Overview

of the Six APS Modules

FARM & FACILITY SIZE
determines APS timeline requirements.

Small
0-5 permanent workers AND less than 25 total workers.

Mid-sized
6-25 permanent workers OR 25-100 total workers.

Large
More than 25 permanent workers OR more than 100 total workers.

1

EMPOWERMENT

Guides the identification of the Premium Participants, democratic election of the Fair Trade Committee, and management and spending of Premium funds on needs-based projects.

COMMUNITY

FARMERS & WORKERS

CERTIFICATE HOLDER

2

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AT WORK

Outlines rights for individual and collective well-being and autonomy, including freedom from forced or child labor and discrimination, protections for young workers, and freedom of association.

3

WAGES, WORKING CONDITIONS, & ACCESS TO SERVICES

Sets requirements to improve farmer and worker health and safety, working hours, fair wages, and benefits, and to promote supportive work environments and open communication.

4

BIODIVERSITY, ECOSYSTEM FUNCTION, & SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION

Helps protect biodiversity, soil productivity, and water; control risks from pesticides and waste; enhance resilience to climate change; and improve the environment, health and quality of life of farmers, workers, and their communities.

5

TRACEABILITY & TRANSPARENCY

Provides a framework for the traceability of Fair Trade Certified™ goods, and ensures that Fair Trade agreements between the Certificate Holder, suppliers, and market partners are bound by fair and transparent contracts.

6

INTERNAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Outlines requirements for the Certificate Holder and others under the Certificate to ensure compliance with Fair Trade USA's Agricultural Production Standard requirements.

Module Criteria

The following pages provide a brief overview of the APS requirements and responsibilities under each Module. The Fair Trade program is a journey of continuous improvement, and compliance requirements increase over time. Before reviewing the requirements, determine your farm and facility size because the APS adapts requirements and auditing approach by farm size.

Critical requirements must be met by a specific certification year (0, 1, 3, or 6).

Progress requirements allow for flexibility in choosing the journey of improvement, and Certificate Holders choose the practices to implement first, while achieving continuous progress over time and full compliance by the 6th year of certification.

Key to Symbols

- ● ● ● Critical requirements
- ○ ○ ○ Progress requirements
- \$ Implementation timeline is dependent on premium.
- * Less strict for Small Farms & Facilities.
- ** Less strict for Mid-Sized & Small Farms & Facilities.
- ROLE** Specific individual(s) should be identified for these roles.
- T Required trainings

Module 1: Empowerment

The Certificate Holder is primarily responsible for these criteria. 

1.1 - 1.2 Small Producers and Workers Are Represented in a Fair Trade Committee to Manage the Use of the Fair Trade Premium.

	CERTIFICATION			
	Y0	Y1	Y3	Y6
The Certificate Holder understands the role of the Fair Trade Committee, Needs Assessment, and Premium Plan.	●	●	●	●
The Certificate Holder proposes an initial structure for the Fair Trade Committee(s). FAIR TRADE COMMITTEE	●	●	●	●
Premium Participants are trained on the purpose of the Fair Trade Committee, Needs Assessment, and Premium Plan. T	\$	●	●	●
Premium Participants approve the structure and elect the Fair Trade Committee.	\$	●	●	●
A Needs Assessment is conducted to identify needs of the Premium Participants, their families, community and environment.	\$	●	●	●
The Premium Participants and the Fair Trade Committee meet regularly.	\$	●	●	●
The Fair Trade Committee develops a Premium Plan based on the Needs Assessment.	\$	\$	●	●
The Premium Participants approve the Premium Plan.	\$	\$	●	●
Premium Participants understand Premium spending and project implementation.	\$	\$	\$	\$
The Needs Assessment is updated regularly.			●	●
Fair Trade Committee is trained on how to conduct the Needs Assessment. T			●	●
Fair Trade Committee takes an active role in updating the Needs Assessment.				●

1.3 Small producers are empowered to improve their livelihoods.

Certificate Holders do not prevent smallholders from taking on more responsibility in the supply chain.		●	●	●
Smallholders are trained on financial literacy or otherwise supported to diversify their livelihoods at least every 3 years. T			●	●



CERTIFICATION

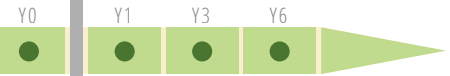
Minimum for certification



Requirements increase gradually

2.1 There is no forced, bonded, or compulsory labor.

Workers are not threatened with or subjected to forced, bonded, or compulsory labor.



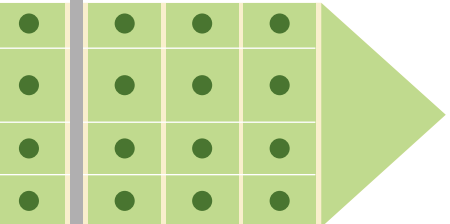
2.2 Children and young workers are protected.

Employment of children is prohibited.

Young workers and children helping on family farm have tasks and work schedules that protect their mental and physical health and development.

Detailed records of young workers are kept.**

Where child labor is a risk, a risk mitigation plan is developed and implemented.**



2.3 Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.

Employers do not interfere with or discriminate against the rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining.



2.4 There is no discrimination or abuse.

There is no discrimination against workers.

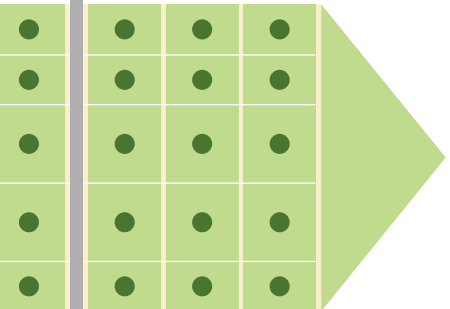
All workers receive equal wage for work of equal value.

Farmers and workers are not subject to corporal punishment, coercion, abuse or harassment.

Farms and facilities have internal policies and procedures on sexual harassment.*

Workers and management are trained on sexual harassment procedures.*

T



Module 3: Wages, Working Conditions, & Access to Services

Employers and site managers are primarily responsible for implementing these criteria.



CERTIFICATION

Minimum for certification



Requirements increase gradually

3.1 Employment contracts and conditions are clear.

	Y0	Y1	Y3	Y6
Workers understand their wages, payment schedules, benefits and responsibilities.	●	●	●	●
Workers have a legally-binding written contract.**	●	●	●	●
There is an analysis of the workforce and labor needs for each site.	●	●	●	●
Labor contractors comply with applicable APS requirements.	●	●	●	●
Workers are employed directly or through registered labor contractors in good standing.	○	○	○	○
Positions that are regular and on-going are staffed with permanent workers.	○	○	○	○

3.2 The work environment is safe.

	Y0	Y1	Y3	Y6
Workers and farmers are provided with adequate safety equipment.**	●	●	●	●
Heat stress is prevented through the provision of cool water and shade.	●	●	●	●
Workers are provided services and care needed for workplaces injuries and illnesses.**	●	●	●	●
Workers and farmers receive annual training on workplace risks.*	●	●	●	●
Workers handling hazardous pesticides are given regular medical examinations.	○	○	○	○
There is a written assessment of worker's occupational risks.	○	○	○	○
An Occupational Health and Safety Committee identifies and addresses health and safety concerns.	○	○	○	○

OHS COMMITTEE

3.3 Workers receive fair wages and benefits.

	Y0	Y1	Y3	Y6
Wages and benefits meet or exceed legal minimums.	●	●	●	●
Only legal, non-disciplinary wage deductions are permitted.	●	●	●	●
Employers provide vacation, sick, and maternity leave benefits that meet or exceed APS minimums.	○	○	○	○
Employers understand living wage and are implementing a plan to move towards it.	○	○	○	○
Workers are protected by health insurance, workers' compensation insurance, and a retirement pension.*	○	○	○	○

3.4 Individuals work reasonable hours.

	Y0	Y1	Y3	Y6
The work week does not exceed 48 regular hours and 12 voluntary overtime hours.*	●	●	●	●
The work day is not more than 14 hours.*	●	●	●	●
Workers receive rest days and paid breaks.*	●	●	●	●



CERTIFICATION

Minimum for certification  Requirements increase gradually

3.5 Migrant workers are recruited ethically.

	Y0	Y1	Y3	Y6	
Migrant worker recruitment is fair and transparent, and they do not pay any hiring fees.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Third-party recruiters are registered and in good standing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Employers cover all associated recruitment costs.*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

3.6 Workers have access to basic needs and services.

	Y0	Y1	Y3	Y6	
Workers have access to drinking water and sanitary facilities.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Worker housing meets increasing standards of sanitation and safety.*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Children living on-site have access to primary education and daycare.**	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Workers have accessible options for purchasing goods and services at fair prices.*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

3.7 Workers understand their rights and can air grievances and concerns.

		Y0	Y1	Y3	Y6	
Workers receive written information and training on their rights under the APS.*	T	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Workers may freely access an anonymous grievance procedure.*		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
A Social Engagement Team facilitates communication between workers and management.*	SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT TEAM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	





CERTIFICATION

Minimum for certification  Requirements increase gradually

4.1 Water is used efficiently.

	Y0	Y1	Y3	Y6	
Only clean water is used in irrigation.	●	●	●	●	▶
The source of water is known and the distribution system is maintained.	○	○	○	○	
Water extracted from ground and surface sources are recorded and used sustainably.*	○	○	○	○	

4.2 Production methods protect waterways and ecosystems.

	Y0	Y1	Y3	Y6	
Farmers comply with national legislation on agricultural land use.	●	●	●	●	▶
There is no deforestation or degradation of natural forest.	●	●	●	●	
Farmers do not use genetically modified seed or planting materials.	●	●	●	●	
Buffer zones around protected areas, water bodies, and drinking water sources are maintained.	○	○	○	○	
Farmers protect and enhance on-farm biodiversity and endangered species.	○	○	○	○	

4.3 Farmers use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and Other Best Practices to Protect Soils and Reduce the Use of Pesticides.

	Y0	Y1	Y3	Y6	
Farmers use Integrated Pest Management techniques and minimize pesticide use.	○	○	○	○	▶
Farmers keep records of annual quantities of pesticides applied.	○	○	○	○	
Farmers take measures to prevent soil erosion, improve soil fertility and use fertilizers efficiently.*	●	●	●	●	

4.4 Pesticides and chemicals are used safely.

	Y0	Y1	Y3	Y6	
Farmers do not use illegal pesticides.	●	●	●	●	▶
Farmers do not use pesticides on Fair Trade USA's Red List of Prohibited Pesticides.	●	●	●	●	
Farmers only use pesticides on Fair Trade USA's Yellow List of Restricted Pesticides under specific conditions.	●	●	●	●	
The Certificate Holder maintains a list of all pesticides used.	●	●	●	●	
Pesticides and hazardous materials are stored and transported in a safe manner.	●	●	●	●	
Pesticides are applied in a way that minimizes risk of drift and human exposure.*	●	●	●	●	

4.5 Waste disposal does not threaten human health or the environment.

	Y0	Y1	Y3	Y6	
Wastewater is treated before being discharged.	●	●	●	●	▶
Discharged wastewater does not pollute drinking water sources.*	●	●	●	●	
Wastewater quality is monitored to ensure it meets safe water quality parameters.**	●	●	●	●	
Farmers and workers are trained in handling organic and hazardous waste.	○	○	○	○	
There is a waste management plan to minimize pollution and health risks.	○	○	○	○	



CERTIFICATION

Minimum for certification



Requirements increase gradually

5.1 There is traceability throughout the supply chain.

	Y0	Y1	Y3	Y6
Fair Trade products are marked and physically separated from non-Fair Trade products.	●	●	●	●
The physical flow of Fair trade product is documented.	●	●	●	●
The volume of Fair Trade products sold matches the volume purchased.	●	●	●	●
There are detailed records of all sourcing, purchasing, and sales of Fair Trade products.	●	●	●	●
Records are kept of processing losses.	●	●	●	●

5.2 Contracts are followed.

	Y0	Y1	Y3	Y6
Contracts related to Fair Trade sales and purchases are honored.	●	●	●	●
The Certificate Holder has a contract with each supplier regarding payment and credit terms.	●	●	●	●
Farms and facilities receive a detailed receipt for each transaction.	●	●	●	●
The Certificate Holder pays the correct price and, if relevant, Fair Trade Premium.	●	●	●	●
Credit and farm inputs or services are provided in a fair and transparent manner.	●	●	●	●

5.3 Certificate Holders are transparent with Fair Trade USA and the Certification Body.

	Y0	Y1	Y3	Y6
Only products included in the scope of the Certificate are sold as Fair Trade.	●	●	●	●
All auditing activities are unobstructed and information is freely shared.	●	●	●	●
Product held in stock for more than one year prior to certification cannot be sold as Fair Trade.	●	●	●	●
The Fair Trade USA certification mark is only used with approval.	●	●	●	●



CERTIFICATION



Minimum for certification

Requirements increase gradually

6.1 An Internal Management System (IMS) facilitates compliance and improvements.

	Y0	Y1	Y3	Y6
At least one person is responsible for management of the IMS and compliance with the APS. IMS MANAGER	●	●	●	●
The Certificate Holder maps where Fair Trade product is grown, processed, and stored.	●	●	●	●
An IMS Manual is created.	●	●	●	●
A risk assessment is conducted to identify potential areas of non-compliance with the APS.	●	●	●	●
Internal inspections of all sites included in the scope of the Certificate are conducted.	●	●	●	●
There is a clear process for resolving problems found during internal inspections.	●	●	●	●
The IMS Manual is followed.		●	●	●
A Risk Management Plan is implemented to address results of the risk assessment.		●	●	●

6.2 The relationships between the Certificate Holder and any separately-managed entities included under the Certificate are transparent, empowering, and non-discriminatory.

	Y0	Y1	Y3	Y6
Site managers understand their responsibilities under Fair Trade Certification.	●	●	●	●
The Certificate Holder does not discriminate against current or potential entities in the Certificate.	●	●	●	●
There is a contract between the Certificate Holder and separate entities in the Certificate explaining APS responsibilities.			●	●

