

APS Approval Announcement



Fair Trade USA

Dear Friends of Fair Trade,

Fair Trade USA is pleased to announce that the Agricultural Production Standard (APS) has been approved. After a three-year review process, the standard was recommended for approval by Fair Trade USA's multi-stakeholder Board Task Force, and subsequently unanimously approved by the full Fair Trade USA Board on November 3, 2016.

Publication of the APS is targeted for February 2017, with audits beginning in March 2017. All Certificate Holders in agricultural production certified against our existing standards, including the Farm Workers Standard (FWS), Independent Smallholder Standard (ISS), and Small Producer Organization standard (SPO), will have a transition period of one year from publication to meet new requirements. For details on the transition process, please read our [Transition Policy](#). The APS will not change our recognition of producers certified by FLO-Cert against FLO standards.

Fair Trade USA began the comprehensive review and revision of our agricultural standards in 2014. This multi-phased process included extensive consultation, with feedback received from more than 100 companies and organizations, including producer groups representing both smallholders and large growers, labor experts, NGOs and fair trade movement organizations, buyers and brands. Direct input from farm workers and smallholders was collected through 10 regional workshops, and implementation of the draft standard assessed through 13 field tests with diverse producer groups. Through the online public comment period alone, which ran from July through August, we received over 700 individual comments which were considered during the finalization of the Standard.

This extensive participatory process has been key to building a strong final APS that improves and builds upon Fair Trade USA's existing standards, and consolidates them into one globally applicable certification model that is not only clearer for producers, but will drive greater impact to everyone in the supply chain. Just as in our standards today, the APS focuses on four critical impact outcomes:

- Income Sustainability
- Community and Individual Well-Being
- Empowerment
- Environmental Stewardship

The APS brings notable improvements to enhance these outcomes, including the expansion of Premium benefits to more farmers and workers than ever before, improved protections for workers, and a robust Internal Management System approach to improve compliance.

We would like to thank all those who provided feedback during this process. We especially would like to acknowledge the Board Task Force, a representative group comprised of experts in labor, smallholder production, and certification from Fair Trade USA's Board and Advisory Council, for their guidance and support throughout the creation and revision of the APS.

What's Next

The publication of the final Standard in February will be accompanied by a summary of feedback from the public comment period, as well as Fair Trade USA's responses to the suggestions made. A Summary

and Response to Feedback received during the first phase of consultation can already be found on our [website](#).

Other supporting documents that will be published along with the Standard include the revised Prohibited and Restricted Pesticides List, updated Scope of Application Policy, Compliance Score System Guide, and frequently asked questions.

Thank you again for your interest and support of Fair Trade USA.

Kind regards,

The Fair Trade USA Standards Team