



**Sustainability**  
Standard™

# SUSTAINABLE FOOD GROUP SUSTAINABILITY STANDARD

**Audit Scope Guidance**

*Version 2.0*

*Published April 16, 2025*

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Name of document	Effective Date	Expires by
Sust Stnd Audit Scope Guidance v2.0	April 16, 2025	Valid until further notice
<b>To be used in conjunction with</b>		
Sust Stnd General Regulations v2.0 Sust Stnd Audit Guidelines v2.0		
<b>Replaces</b>	<b>Applicable to</b>	
N/A	Approved Sustainability Certification Bodies	

### Scheme owner

Sustainable Food Group (SFG) is a part of the IPM Institute of North America, a non-profit with over 25 years of experience in implementing sustainability best practices in agriculture and communities. As experts in agricultural supply chain sustainability, SFG has developed high-impact, science-based programs for food industry leaders.



SFG envisions a world where food is grown in sync with natural processes and where agriculture and food companies are a force for good, directly benefiting workers, consumers, water, air, climate, biodiversity and soil. Read more at <https://ipminstitute.org/branch/sfg/>.

### Data partner

Azzule Systems is a leading global data management solution provider, helping companies maintain visibility over their supply chains.



### More information

For more information about the Sustainability Standard certification, visit the Sustainability Standard webpage, <https://ipminstitute.org/services/sustainability-standard/>, or contact Sustainable Food Group at [certification@sustainablefoodgroup.org](mailto:certification@sustainablefoodgroup.org).

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## Audit Scope – Supplemental Guidance and Minimum Comment Guidelines

### From the Sustainability Standard General Regulations v2.0:

The scope of an audit may include multiple farms and/or facilities. Farms and/or facilities within the scope of an audit are not required to be adjacent or contiguous, so long as they generally operate with the same workforce, management and operational practices.

### Additional Guidance:

- All farms (fields and/or greenhouses) within the scope of an audit shall be under the direct control of and operated by the single legal entity (the auditee), and generally use the same inputs, resources and practices, e.g., same workforce, production practices and equipment, management and operational practices.
- Land can be rented or owned, but rented land should be under direct control of the auditee.
- The scope of an audit can include multiple farms and/or facilities. While the auditee defines the scope of the audit, it is the responsibility of the Certification Body/auditor to determine which farms and production sites to observe when conducting the audit, keeping in mind that assessing conformance should primarily rely on visual observation and document review. It is not a requirement that every single field/ranch or greenhouse in the scope is observed, if the auditor has confidence (e.g., through documentation review) that the unobserved sites are using the same inputs, resources and practices.
- Multiple crops can be included in the scope of an audit, though not all crops produced on the farm(s) need to be included in the scope.
- The audit scope cannot be *part* of a facility.
- Each facility in the scope of an audit shall be visited (see “Guidance for virtual audits” in the General Regulations for instances where virtual audits are acceptable.)
- While certification of a whole farm is encouraged and may lead to audit cost efficiencies, the audit scope may be defined as part of a farm, e.g., specific blocks, ranches, fields or plots.

### Minimum Comment Guidelines for Defining Audit Scope on an Audit Report:

The scope of the audit shall be clearly defined in the audit report, including:

#### For Farms:

- All farms or production sites (e.g., blocks, ranches, fields, greenhouses) included in the scope of the audit, i.e., the specific locations and entities that are achieving certification.
- Which locations (e.g., blocks, ranches, fields, greenhouses) were observed in the on-site audit and how the sites observed were deemed to be representative of the full scope of certification
- The total acreage used to produce crop(s) in the scope of the audit

#### For Facilities:

- The facility within the scope of the audit
- Products (crops) and processes observed in the on-site audit
- Products (crops) and processes not observed in the on-site audit

## Audit Scope – Information from General Regulations v2.0

### From Audit Execution Section in [General Regulations](#), page 12:

#### ii. Audit execution

- a.) The scope of certification shall be clearly defined prior to audit execution to determine how the audit will be structured for each applicant organization. Ownership of the different areas, locations, activities or crops of the applicant organization are elements to consider when deciding which operation(s) to include in the scope. The auditee defines the scope of the audit. The auditor shall perform the audit based on the defined scope.
  1. The scope of an audit may include multiple farms and/or facilities. Farms and/or facilities within the scope of an audit are not required to be adjacent or contiguous, so long as they generally operate with the same workforce, management and operational practices.
- b.) Commodities in the scope of the audit should ideally be present in the field, greenhouse or facility at the time of the audit.
  1. Where a commodity is not present at the time of the audit, but the operation wishes to include it the scope of their certification, it may be considered if it has similar growing and processing practices as the commodities audited and at least 12 months of records of production.
  2. The auditor shall indicate in the audit report which products were observed at the time of the audit, and which products are similar but not observed. The auditor shall include specific details in the scope of the audit and throughout the audit report as to which products were observed at the time of the audit and which records were reviewed.
  3. If the crop is not present at the time of the audit, the auditor shall review at least 12 months of production records.
- c.) The facility shall be running, and the commodities should ideally be present in the operation during the audit.
  1. Where a commodity is not present at the time of the audit, but the operation wishes to include it in the scope of certification, it may be considered if it has similar growing and processing practices as the commodities audited.
  2. The auditor shall indicate on the audit report which products were observed at the time of the audit and similar products not observed. The auditor shall include specific details in the scope of the audit and throughout the audit report related to which products were observed at the time of the audit and which records were reviewed.
  3. Process descriptions, e.g., a flow chart with step-by-step details of the postharvest process and equipment, shall be provided by the auditee during the time of the audit. If the product is not present in the facility at the time of the audit, the auditor shall review at least 12 months of records.