

REGENERATIVE CERTIFICATIONS AND VERIFICATIONS

Kiss the Ground met with certifiers to better understand the various regenerative certifications and verifications available to producers. We offer a brief break-down of the cost, timeline, and requirements for each certification, but please refer to their websites for more detailed information. To read more about the potential role of certifications in the marketplace, [here's a great article from](#) Regenerative Food Systems Investment (RFSI).

SAVORY INSTITUTE Ecological Outcome Verification (EOV)



Who is it for: Who is it for: Grasslands and rangelands managers across the world looking to measure outcomes on their land and/or enter the Land to Market program.



Timeline: Baseline setup at year 0, short-term monitoring done annually, and long-term monitoring conducted every 5 years.

- Two data points needed for verification.



Cost: Varies based on local rates of EOJ Monitors/ Verifiers* and specific monitoring being conducted.

*An EOJ Verifier is required to set up baseline transects and to measure long-term indicators in years five and ten. An EOJ Monitor is often less expensive since annual monitoring of short-term indicators is a quicker process and based on initial transect data.



Measures: Outcomes-based

- Measures leading (short-term) above-ground indicators and lagging (long-term) below-ground indicators that correlate with the four ecosystem processes taught in Holistic Management: nutrient and water cycling, energy flow, and community dynamics
- Results are scored against a known reference area in the eco-region, and must trend positive for verification. EOJ verification applies to the land itself, while the Land to Market Verified label applies to products.

REGENERATIVE ORGANIC ALLIANCE Regenerative Organic Certified™



Who is it for: Farmers, buyers, or processors.

- Pre-requisites*: Farms must already be Certified Organic, or are pursuing both simultaneously (ROC™ works in collaboration with organic certifiers).

**If farms have a certification for animal welfare and/or social worker justice, these will be considered and evaluated for any gaps by ROC™ auditors. ROC™ has 100 trained auditors in North America and across the globe.*



Timeline: Soil testing occurs every three years.

- Must meet a list of audit criteria, such as practicing cover cropping, to achieve certification (see the [Regenerative Organic System Plan](#) for a full list).
- Criteria vary for soil health, animal welfare, social fairness, buyers, and processors.



Cost: Farmers pay an annual fee equal to .1% of gross crop production, and brands and other entities making consumer-facing ROC™ claims must complete a license agreement and pay licensing fees based on annual revenue.



Measures: Both outcomes and practices-based.

- ROC consists of three pillars: Soil Health & Land Management, Animal Welfare, and Farmer & Worker Fairness.
- ROC has three levels: Bronze, Silver, and Gold.

GREEN AMERICA Soil Carbon Initiative

Green America is a nonprofit marketplace solutions organization.



Who is it for: All producers.

- Participating farms can continue or sign up with other programs simultaneously (you can be both SCI and Regenerative Organic Certified™, for example).



Timeline: Farmers participating in SCI commit to achieving 75% to 100% of their total acreage managed under the Farm Commitment Plan by no later than the end of Year 10.



Cost: Project dependent.

- An Annual SCI Program Participation Fee, based on a scalable fee schedule and paid annually. Lab testing is paid for by the farm, and testing stipends are available annually.



Measures: Outcomes-based, and it never dictates practices since every farm is different.

- Farmers must make commitments against each of the following SCI Program Pillars: Minimizing Soil Disturbance, Living Roots in the Ground Year Round, Maximizing Diversity Above and Below Ground, Appropriate Integration of Livestock, Reducing Synthetic Inputs, and Learning.
- SCI verifies that the participant farms are actively engaged in their transition plans, are performing and reporting on required testing, are increasing their number of acres transitioned, and are participating in the SCI communities of practice. This verification is Independently verified by [SCS Global](#).

REGENIFIED Regenified



Who is it for: Farmers, ranchers, food manufacturers, and retailers.

- Pre-requisites: Applicants have to have completed 2/3 of the following – Hired an accredited consultant to develop a farm plan, taken the [Regen Ag 101](#) online course, or attended Soil Health Academy



Timeline: Five-tier system that progresses over 10 years. Verifications are annual, and soil testing is done every three years.



Cost: Project based. Audit fee in year one, and annual licensing fee that varies based on expected gross revenue.



Measures: Outcomes and practices-based, formed by what a producer has control over, ie. takes into account natural circumstances such as drought, wildfire, freeze, etc.



Who is it for: Applies to the certification of farmers, ranchers, and processors for the purpose of allowing their farms, ranches, and resulting agricultural products to carry the Demeter certification marks "Biodynamic®", "Demeter®" and "Demeter Certified Biodynamic®".



Timeline: The land to be certified must meet the National Organic Program (NOP)* standard as a base and be managed to the Demeter Biodynamic® Farm Standard for one year. Applications are accepted throughout the year but are typically reviewed in the Spring and inspection occurs in the Summer. The certification process usually finishes in the Fall.

**Land that does not meet the organic requirements requires a three year transition from the last prohibited material. The last transition year can coincide with the year of required Biodynamic management. Organic certification is not required, and Demeter will verify that organic requirements are fulfilled if an operation is not certified organic.*



Cost: Farm application is \$350 (new) and \$220 (renewing). Processor application is \$550 (new) and \$320 (renewing). Inspections occur annually and costs range from \$400-\$1000, depending on travel cost and complexity of the operation. A licensing fee is assessed on total gross sales of certified products (0.5% for farm sales/0.6% for processed product sales).



Measures: Outcomes and practices-based.

- Demeter® certification is a whole farm certification with the ideal of a self-contained ecosystem. Field-by-field certification is not allowed. In addition to organic requirements, emphasis is given to generation of on-farm fertility including livestock integration, limited imported fertility, in-depth specifications around water conservation and biodiversity, and emphasis on on-farm solutions for disease, pest, and weed control. Use of key Biodynamic field sprays and compost preparations are required for the enhancement of the vitality of the soil and resulting farm products.



Who is it for: All producers.

- REGEN1 was co-created by farmers and ranchers to identify and support regenerative transition. It uses Meta standard, leveraging existing verifications and certifications.



Timeline: In development and varies.

- REGEN1 is designed to meet producers where they are, recognizing the many "roads to regenerative" from transitioning producers experimenting with one or two regenerative practices (e.g., cover crops), farmers and ranchers on a path of continuous improvement who have yet to be recognized or rewarded for the ecosystem services they provide, and regenerative farmers and ranchers, often certified organic, who've practiced regenerative agriculture for years or even generations.
- Transitioning producers must advance to the level of "continual improvement," implementing several regenerative practices and beginning to monitor outcomes, after two years. After five to 10 years, producers must advance to a regenerative systems approach.



Cost: No initial cost; but there are costs associated with certifications and increasing levels of market verifications.



Measures: Currently in development.

- REGEN1 is developing an inclusive standard, one designed to transition and reward farmers and ranchers at every scale and from any background.
- Producers self report their practices in an app; the "onboarding" phase includes entering their practices, any trainings they've completed, farm plans, certifications, etc. Outcomes are verified by uploading photos, receipts, videos, an affidavit from a crop advisor or soil scientist, etc. Scores are applied to each practice/outcome, and a tier is assigned.
- The app will connect producers with purchasers so that they can theoretically optimize their profits by advertising their verified practices and outcomes.

A GREENER WORLD

Certified Regenerative



Who is it for: Farms; the individual or entity seeking Certified Regenerative status must have management control of the farm. Cooperatives and networks of independent farms are also eligible.



Timeline: Project dependent.

- Farm must meet a **list of standards** to achieve certification. An AGW auditor visits the farm and compares the status of the farm to baseline standards; if the standards are met and the land steward is implementing an approved regenerative plan, certification can happen in the first year. Subsequent audits are every 15 months.
- In the first year of certification, the farm history and risks are reviewed, and if there is a risk of toxic pesticide or other agrochemical residues, the farm will have to enact a plan of remediation before food products can reach the market. If the farm raises animals for meat, dairy or other agricultural production, at least one species on the farm must be certified to Certified Animal Welfare Approved by A Greener World (AGW) standards within 3 years of becoming Certified Regenerative, with a plan for all applicable species to be certified within 5 years.



Cost: \$450 application and farm plan review fee. Audit fee is dependent on travel costs, starting at \$800



Measures: Whole-farm, place-based certification.

- The Certified Regenerative by AGW standards cover a holistic range of farm specific, risk-based metrics, such as soil health, biodiversity, water quality, air quality, long-term financial viability, and animal welfare.

REAL ORGANIC PROJECT

Real Organic Project



*Real Organic Project operates as an add-on label to Certified Organic.



Who is it for: Farmers inspired to protect the spirit and original meaning of organic.



Timeline: If the application is approved, an inspector schedules a 1.5 to 2 hour farm visit during the growing season to assess whether the farm meets Real Organic Project Standards. Physical inspections happen once every 5 years*, unless there is a major change in the operation's production that needs inspection sooner. Once inspection is approved the farm can use the Real Organic Project logo on certified products.

*Producers need to submit a renewal application for review annually.



Cost: There are no fees to be a Real Organic Project farm. The certification program is funded by eaters, farmers, and private foundations that want to see a certified organic system that embodies integrity, transparency, and the spirit of organic farming.



Measures: Ecosystem services, soil management, greenhouse production, origin of livestock, dairy grazing, animal welfare, hired labor protections, and standards for processed products - all with the minimum criteria that farmers grow their plants in healthy, living soil and ranchers raise their animals humanely and on pasture. Piloting soil ecosystem rubric in 2022.