Sustainability Standards and Certification

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Outline

Continuous Improve Approach

Certification Approach

Sustainability Certification 2.0
Background

• 1987-1996 Academia
  • 1992 certification and eco-labeling

• 1997-1998 Non-profit and private consulting
  • Eco-label review for Pew Charitable Trusts

• 1999 – Founded SureHarvest
  • WWF/ WPVGA/ UW project
    • 2001 Founding of Protect Harvest
  • 2008 Stewardship Index for Specialty Crops
What is the Purpose of Certification?

• Account for what is and verify it
• Incentivize change in a particular direction
  • Markets, Policies, Public investments, etc
• Identify and reduce unintended consequences
**Approach to Continuous Improvement**

- Change is inevitable
- Directionality should be intentional (Strategy)
Continuous Improvement Approach

1. **Principles**: Sets the direction (e.g., 3 E’s)

2. **Processes**: Management areas (e.g., production, sales, etc.)

3. **Practices**: What gets done and how (e.g., BMP’s)

4. **Performance**: Measures of outcomes (e.g., economic, environmental, social performance metrics)

5. **Progress**: Improvements in performance over time (e.g., economic analysis, environmental & social benchmarking)
Certification Focus?

- Some or all the P’s?
  - What is?
  - Change?
  - Consequences?
Certification Framework

Principles
A guiding sense of the requirements and obligations of right conduct

Criteria
Rules for evaluating or testing something
• Criteria form the basis to evaluate adherence to principles

Metrics
System of measures
• Appropriate metrics measure desired performance

Outcomes
Performance status
Example

Environmental Stewardship
- Optimize water use

Water Use Efficiency

Water Applied relative to Plant Water Demand
- Yield/Water Use Efficiency (e.g., lbs/% eff.)

Baseline to year over year comparisons
Example

Principle: Environmental Stewardship
  • Soil Quality and Water Quality

Criteria: Soil Erosion

Metrics: RUSLE2 (e.g., tons of soil lost per acre)
  • Model of direct impacts

Outcome: Baseline to year over year comparisons
Certification Framework: What’s Missing?

- No BMP’s
- No Management Plans
- No Dictating What to Do

Focus on performance outcomes
- Don’t care how achieved
Why Outcome Focus?

“*What gets measured, gets managed*”

If measuring performance, managing for performance
Why Outcome Focus?

Be clear on outcomes and let people innovate on how to achieve those outcomes
Sustainability 2.0

The Key is Getting the Metrics Right

- Science
  - Gaps
- Values
  - Stakeholders
- Practicality
  - Acquisition costs
Sustainability Certification 2.0

- Principles
- Criteria
- Metrics
- Outcomes

Use Standard Measure (Common Metrics)

Build Performance Standards Fit to Purpose
Case Study

**Principle**
Environmental Stewardship
  • Pest Management

**Criteria**
Biological Intensive IPM
Pesticide Risk

**Metrics**
BioIPM Survey
Pesticide Toxicity Index

**Outcome**
Baseline to year over year comparisons
Case Study
Final Thoughts

• Sustainability 2.0 is a necessity
  • Managing for performance with common metrics

• Certification 2.0 is an option
  • Establishing performance standards fit for purpose
    • Critical to clearly define the purpose and expected outcomes

• Invest in getting the metrics right for
  • Desired outcomes, and…
  • Unintended consequences

• Collect real data…again and again and again
  • LCA and model accuracy depend on it!
Thank you!

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