

Certification Overview & Process

An Unparalleled Approach to Embrace Continuous Improvement and Create Transparency in the Supply Chain

Relationship Cultivation

A grower/shipper who wants to meet higher standards, invest in its workforce and engage with workers at all levels of the farming operation will learn more about Equitable Food Initiative (EFI), its purpose and the certification process.

Grower Mapping

Once the grower/shipper confirms their interest in the value offered by EFI certification, a member of the EFI team will visit to gather data about the farm, its processes and its workforce. Recommendations and a customized approach will be outlined along with training and audit expenses and other costs associated with reaching compliance with the EFI Standards.

Leadership Team Training

EFI works with the grower/shipper to identify proper representation from across the workforce and management. EFI facilitators lead Leadership Team members through 40 hours of training on effective problem-solving processes, data gathering, communication, conflict resolution, their role and responsibility in the supply chain and the EFI Standards.



Compliance With Standards and Self-Declaration

The Leadership Team and management work together to make sure the farming operation complies with labor practices, food safety and pest management requirements as outlined in the EFI Standards. Leadership Team members are responsible for educating the farm's entire workforce on essential criteria for achieving and maintaining EFI certification. Once the team and management believe that the farm is ready, they can schedule a third-party verification audit.

Audit

The farming operation hires a certifying body from the approved list to conduct a three-day on-site audit to determine levels of conformity with the standards and to recommend corrective actions as needed.

Certification

Once auditors are satisfied with a corrective action plan and all standards have been met, they will issue a three-year certification subject to annual verification audits.

Labeled Product

Certified farms are eligible to use the Responsibly Grown, Farmworker Assured™ label on their certified produce.

Retailer-Paid Premium for Worker Bonus

Participating retailers have agreed to pay a premium on EFI certified fruits and vegetables for higher levels of assurance. The premium is returned to farmworkers as a bonus in recognition of their added responsibility in ongoing monitoring.

Continuous Verification

Beyond the initial audit and certification, the Leadership Team will continue to meet on a regular basis to provide an opportunity for workers to be heard and to help address farm compliance issues that team members or other workers identify.

Driving Business Performance

Trained Leadership Teams can use their skills and processes to address a variety of issues in the farming operation beyond compliance, including productivity, quality and labor recruitment and retainment.



EFI is more than a certification—it is a change management program. Introducing the skills and concepts from the EFI Program into our workforce enabled us to bring everyone together to strive for the highest standards. I have great confidence that the whole team understands and is working toward those standards in everything they do.”

Kevin Doran, President and CEO, Houweling's Group

PHOTO: Leadership Team for Alpine Fresh, Inc. in Tecate, Mexico



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