



## Sustainable Standards in the Planning Moves Forward

**Agreements reached and steps taken to move discussion forward toward a national consensus standard on sustainable agriculture.**

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### Groups for Sustainable Agriculture

[Click here to get links to groups involved in sustainable agriculture to learn more.](#)

Photo

courtesy

USDA/Scott Bauer Could a national standard for sustainable agriculture in the United States be established in the near future?

A meeting of a standards committee working toward a national standard indicates steps forward and a number of agreements are being made.

### Sustainable Standard's Difficult Issues

According to a report from the Leonardo Academy, which is facilitating the discussion, committee members identified difficult issues on the table: the relationship between organic, mainstream and sustainable agriculture; the place of genetically engineered crops in sustainable agriculture; the degree to which sustainable agriculture standards should establish a path for continuous improvement; inclusiveness of small and mid-size farms, as well as mainstream and conventional agriculture; the sequestration of carbon in soils and the role of agriculture in the global fight against climate change; the strength of labor protections; the intersection of product safety and sustainability; and whether the scope of the standard should extend beyond plant agriculture to include livestock and other sectors of agriculture.

Those serving on the Standards Committee, the guiding body for development of the standard, represent U.S. agricultural production, food and clothing manufacturing, retail, government, environmental and labor organizations, academia and certification.

Leonardo Academy, a nonprofit organization that specializes in using market-based incentives to advance sustainability and improve the environment, is facilitating the current process as an ANSI accredited standard developer.

### What Else Happened

The Standards Committee agreed to form work groups to: Conduct a needs assessment for the sustainability standard, including potential market and agricultural applications Review and articulate the mission, principles and scope of work ahead Collect reference documents to inform the standard setting process Report on potential methodologies and indicators for measuring various aspects of environmental, social and economic sustainability Identify potential funding sources to support full stakeholder participation in the process Outline outreach opportunities for soliciting involvement from all affected stakeholders

### What's Next

The Committee will continue the formal process of review and standard-setting--and the public can look for chances to weigh in.

A public review process will be held before the draft final standard is submitted for consideration as an American National Standard.

### Learn More

You can read more information on the first Standards Committee meeting, including the approved motions and a list of Standards Committee members.

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