

# +SA General Regulations

Plus Sustainable Agriculture

Ver.1.0



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## Introduction

The Japan GAP Foundation (hereinafter referred to as "JGF") is the organization responsible for developing and operating +SA. JGF develops and operates +SA impartially and fairly and ensures a high level of transparency in the process. Additionally, through the development and operation of +SA, JGF aims to contribute to the sustainable development of Japan's agriculture and food-related industries.

The General Regulations stipulates the basic of +SA. It also defines the necessary measures to ensure the compliance and appropriate management of the organizations involved in +SA, as well as the maintenance and management of reliable auditor competency to ensure trustworthiness.

+SA is an add-on standard to JGAP and ASIAGAP. JGAP/ASIAGAP certified farms/groups that meet the +SA requirements are recognized as achieving the equivalent performance as the Silver Level of the Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) developed by SAI Platform. By evaluating the implementation of sustainable agricultural practices, +SA aims to significantly contribute to the development of Japanese agriculture.

## 1. Scope

### 1.1 General

The General Regulations stipulates the overall operation of +SA and defines the requirements for stakeholders, including JGF, which is the program owner of +SA, as well as farms, groups, certification bodies, and other related parties.

### 1.2 Assessment Program

The +SA Assessment Program (hereinafter referred to as "the Assessment Program") is only applicable to agricultural products.

### 1.3 Disclaimer

JGF and certification bodies do not bear legal responsibility for the products sold by farms/groups that have undergone the Assessment Program.

## 2. Referenced Documents

- (1) JGAP2022 General Regulations for Agricultural Products
- (2) JGAP2022 Control Points and Compliance Criteria for Farms
- (3) JGAP2022 Control Points and Compliance Criteria for Group Administration
- (4) ASIAGAP General Regulations Ver2.3 Rev.1
- (5) ASIAGAP Control Points and Compliance Criteria for Farms Ver2.3 Rev.1
- (6) ASIAGAP Control Points and Compliance Criteria for Group Administration Ver2.3

- (7) Farm Sustainability Assessment Benchmarking Protocol Version 3.0
- (8) FSA 3.0 Self-Assessment Questionnaire

### 3. Glossary

In General Regulations, terms are defined as follows.

#### (1) SAI Platform

SAI Platform is an international organization of food businesses established in 2002, with its office located in Brussels, Belgium. Currently, more than 170 companies and organizations are SAI Platform members. In addition to FSA, SAI Platform develops and operates several standards such as ERBS (European Roundtable for Beef Sustainability).

#### (2) FSA

FSA stands for Farm Sustainability Assessment. FSA was launched in 2014 by SAI Platform, assessing farm sustainability across various elements such as farm management, soil, water, fertilizer, and waste management, biodiversity conservation, greenhouse gas reduction, labor safety, and protection of workers' rights.

#### (3) Silver Level

FSA establishes three levels—Gold, Silver, and Bronze—based on farms' performance. According to SAI Platform, the Silver Level is recognized as "practicing sustainable agriculture acknowledged by major companies." If a farm meets the +SA requirements, it is considered to achieve the equivalent performance as FSA Silver level.

## 4. Program Owner

### 4.1 General

JGF, as the program owner, is responsible for operating the Assessment Program and is required to conduct its activities in accordance with the General Regulations.

### 4.2 Development and Maintenance of the Assessment Program

- (1) JGF shall develop documents related to the Assessment Program (Table 1), conduct review periodically based on the latest information and stakeholder opinions and revise the documents if necessary.
- (2) When +SA General Regulations and +SA Control Points and Compliance Criteria are approved, JGF shall determine the date of commencement of operation, taking into consideration the time required for dissemination and explanation to all stakeholders.
- (3) Documents related to the Assessment Program are original documents in Japanese. Any translation into other languages shall be approved by JGF Technical Committee. The assessment could be conducted with the approved translated version. In case of any discrepancy between the original and the translated version, the original shall prevail.

- (4) JGF shall notify the stakeholders concerned of any revisions and changes to the documents related to the Assessment Program and post the information on its website.

Table 1 Documents of the Assessment Program

Documents	Drafting and Deliberation	Recognition
+SA General Regulations	Technical Committee	Board of Directors
+SA Control Points and Compliance Criteria	Technical Committee	Board of Directors
JGAP Control Points and Compliance Criteria	Technical Committee	Board of Directors
ASIAGAP Control Points and Compliance Criteria	Technical Committee	Board of Directors
Guidelines	Technical Committee	Board of Directors
Bylaws and Regulations	Head of the Secretariat	Chairman of Technical Committee
JGF List of Products	Head of the Secretariat	Chairman of Technical Committee
Technical Letters	Head of the Secretariat	Chairman of Technical Committee

#### 4.3 Management of Data

- (1) JGF shall issue a registration number to the farms/groups reported by the certification bodies.
- (2) JGF shall reflect and manage the registration information on farms/groups in the database system.
- (3) JGF shall disclose on its website the names of assessed farms/groups and the products.

#### 4.4 Integrity Program

JGF shall implement an integrity program to ensure credibility. The integrity program shall include, at a minimum, the following activities, which should be implemented in cooperation with certification bodies if necessary.

- (1) Confirmation of the operational status of the certification bodies
- (2) Opinion collection and survey on the Assessment Program

#### 4.5 Management System

- (1) JGF shall establish, implement and maintain a quality management system.
- (2) JGF shall conduct an internal audit of the operation of the Assessment Program at least once a year in accordance with the Internal Audit Rules and review the Internal Audit Rules.

#### 4.6 Complaints

JGF shall appropriately respond to the following complaints by posting a complaint statement on its website in accordance with the Regulations for Handling Complaints.

- (1) Complaints regarding accreditation
- (2) Complaints regarding certification bodies and auditors
- (3) Complaints regarding assessed farms/groups
- (4) Complaints regarding JGF and the Assessment Program

#### 4.7 Communication

- (1) JGF shall ensure communication with certification bodies and other relevant external organizations.
- (2) JGF shall notify the certification bodies about the information and the development of the Assessment Program.

#### 4.8 Prohibitions

- (1) JGF shall not certify the conformity of the Assessment Program.
- (2) JGF shall not provide consulting services related to the Assessment Program.

### 5. Accreditation Body

#### 5.1 General

JGF is the accreditation body of +SA.

#### 5.2 Accreditation

- (1) JGF shall accredit certification bodies in accordance with the following documents.
  - (a) +SA General Regulations
  - (b) +SA Rules of Accreditation for Certification Bodies
  - (c) Agreements between JGF and Certification Bodies
- (2) JGF shall prepare a plan for accreditation audit and notify certification bodies before conducting accreditation.
- (3) JGF shall issue a certificate to accredited certification bodies. The scope of accreditation on the certificate shall correspond to +SA's certification criteria.

#### 5.3 Suspension and Withdrawal of Accreditation

JGF shall decide to suspend or withdraw the accreditation of a certification body that fails to meet 5.2(1) of the General Regulations.

#### 5.4 Complaints and Appeals

JGF shall handle complaints or appeals from certification bodies regarding accreditation activities

in accordance with the procedures defined in 4.6 of the General Regulations, and shall notify the person who made the complaint or appeal of its response.

## 6. Certification Bodies

### 6.1 Basic Requirements

The +SA certification bodies shall meet the following requirements.

- (1) Be a JGF member and make agreement with JGF to conduct assessment under the Assessment Program.
- (2) Conduct assessment in accordance with 5.2(1) of the General Regulations to obtain and maintain accreditation from JGF.
- (3) Conduct assessment using the entire Assessment Program, including documents related to the Assessment Program issued by JGF.
- (4) Be registered as a certification body of JGAP/ASIAGAP and recognized by JGF.
- (5) Provide JGF with the following information at all times.
  - (a) Assessment procedures and materials related to assessment, including audit reports
  - (b) Procedures for handling complaints, appeals and disputes
  - (c) List of assessed farms/groups
- (6) Agree with JGF on appropriate measures to mitigate situations that may involve the JGF in disputes.
- (7) Agree that JGF may accompany the applicant to the audit if necessary.
- (8) Collect registration fees from farms/groups and pay to JGF.
- (9) Manage the setting, estimating, and billing of assessment fee.
- (10) Pay the certification body registration fee to JGF.

### 6.2 Quality System

The certification body shall operate an effective quality system based on the General Regulations. The quality system shall be documented and utilized by the relevant personnel of the certification body. A staff member shall be designated within the certification body who is responsible for the development, implementation, and maintenance of the quality system. The designated personnel shall be responsible for reporting to management and for reporting on the performance of the quality system for system improvement based on management reviews.

### 6.3 Management of Assessment

- (1) The certification body shall inform the farms/groups the timing of surveillance and renewal audits in conjunction with JGAP/ASIAGAP audits and maintain the assessment cycle.
- (2) The certification body shall report to JGF after the assessment of the farms/groups in accordance with the Detailed Rules for Assessment Services with information on the assessment as specified by JGF.

- (3) The certification body shall promptly inform JGF of any suspension, withdrawal, return or termination of an assessment. In case of withdrawal and return of assessment, the farms/groups shall be requested to return the certificate of conformity.
- (4) The certification body shall treat the information obtained from the farms/groups during the assessment as confidential information and shall not provide it to third parties without the farms/groups' permission.
- (5) When the +SA Control Points and Compliance Criteria are revised, the certification body shall inform the assessed farms/groups of the revision and the transition period.

#### 6.4 Management of Personnel Competence

- (1) The certification body shall ensure that all personnel responsible for management, operations, expertise and audits within the organization meet the competencies required by the certification body and the Assessment Program.
- (2) The certification body shall require all personnel involved in the assessment process to sign a contract or agreement that clearly covenants the following requirements.
  - (a) Comply with the rules of the certification body, with particular reference to confidentiality and independence from commercial or personal interests.
  - (b) Declare issues related to personal conflicts of interest.
- (3) The certification body shall clearly document all requirements relevant to personnel involved in the assessment process and disseminate them to its own personnel. This shall include systems and procedures to ensure that auditors meet the competencies described in the requirements.
- (4) The certification body shall keep and maintain records of the qualifications, training and experience of all personnel involved in the assessment process. All records shall be dated. Records shall include following information at a minimum.
  - (a) Name and address
  - (b) Relationship with certification bodies and positions
  - (c) Education and professional status
  - (d) Experience and training related to personnel competence requested by the requirements of +SA
  - (e) Details of performance evaluation
- (5) The certification body shall have one or more persons reviewing audit results to review all information and results related to the audit. The competence requirements for reviewers of audit results shall include an understanding of the requirements for the +SA General Regulations, the +SA Control Points and Compliance Criteria, the audit report and checklists.
- (6) The certification body shall have a system to ensure the competence of auditors and other personnel involved in assessment and shall work to improve the competence of its personnel.
- (7) The certification body shall have in place a system to regularly conduct witness assessment of auditors to ensure that contracted auditors act in a professional manner.

(8) The certification body shall report the contracted auditors to JGF.

#### 6.5 Cooperation with Integrity Program

The certification body shall cooperate with the integrity program implemented by JGF.

#### 6.6 Complaints, Appeals and Disputes

- (1) The certification body shall handle complaints or appeals regarding assessment from farms/groups in accordance with the procedures established by the certification body, and shall notify the person making the complaint or appeal of its response.
- (2) The certification body shall submit records of complaints, appeals, and disputes related to its assessments upon request of JGF.

#### 6.7 Agreements with Farms/Groups

The certification body shall have a written agreement with the farms/groups regarding the following requirements.

- (1) The farms/groups shall notify the certification body of any changes that involve modifications to the content of the assessment.
- (2) If the certification body conducts an audit other than a surveillance or renewal audit as necessary, the farms/groups shall be promptly audited.
- (3) The farms/groups shall respond promptly when the certification body requests them to return the certificate of conformity due to suspension, withdrawal, or return of the assessment.
- (4) The farms/groups shall report any significant violations or prosecutions related to assessment to the certification body and through the certification body to JGF.
- (5) In the group assessment audit, if a nonconformity at some sites results in a nonconformity that affects the entire group, a sampling site will be added during the course of the audit.
- (6) The certification body shall provide JGF with materials related to its assessments, such as audit reports.

#### 6.8 Registration of New Certification Bodies

A certification body newly applying for +SA assessment services shall inform JGF of its intention to conduct assessments for the Assessment Program, receive an explanation of the Assessment Program from JGF, and submit an application form. JGF shall review the application and determine its basic eligibility as a certification body.

## 7. Auditors

### 7.1 Basic Requirements for Auditors

Auditors conducting assessments for the Assessment Program shall meet the following requirements.

- (1) Act in accordance with the documents related to the Assessment Program and the contract with the certification body.
- (2) Keep up-to-date and study the latest information on the Assessment Program.

## 7.2 Additional Requirements for Auditors

- (1) Satisfy the requirements for JGAP/ASIAGAP auditor registration.
- (2) Undergo training and other training related to +SA designated by JGF.

# 8. Farms/Groups

## 8.1 Obligations

- (1) The farms/groups shall comply with the documents related to the Assessment Program issued by JGF.
- (2) The farms/groups shall continuously address the requirements of +SA Control Points and Compliance Criteria with respect to the scope of the assessment.
- (3) The farms/groups shall be responsible for ensuring that outsourced operations are performed in accordance with the +SA Controls and Compliance Criteria.
- (4) The farms/groups shall not be assessed by more than one certification body at the same time for the same scope of application.
- (5) When providing a copy of the Certificate of Conformity to others, the farms/groups shall provide all JGAP/ASIAGAP certificates and annexes along with the certificate of conformity.
- (6) The farms/groups shall inform the certification body of any changes to the information in the certificate of conformity.
- (7) The farms/groups shall promptly respond to any request from the Certification Body for the return of the certificate of conformity due to suspension, withdrawal or return of the assessment.
- (8) If the farms/groups do not intend to continue the assessment, even before the assessment expiration date, they shall promptly inform the Certification Body of the return of the assessment.
- (9) The farms/groups shall promptly undergo an audit if the certification body requests an additional audit or an extraordinary audit.
- (10) The farms/groups shall accept any request by JGF to witness an audit conducted by a certification body, unless there is a valid reason not to do so.
- (11) The farms/groups shall agree that the name of the assessed farms/groups, the assessed products, and other related information shall be made public on JGF's website after the assessment is obtained.
- (12) The farms/groups shall pay a registration fee to the certification bodies, which is separately determined by JGF. The registration fee will not be refunded in the event of withdrawal or return of the assessment, or independent from the groups.

## 8.2 Rights

- (1) The farms/groups could file complaints and appeals with the certification body.
- (2) The farms/groups shall have the right to allow third parties access to the audit report prepared by the certification body and information related to it.

## 9. Basic of Program

### 9.1 Documents of the Assessment Program

The following documents related to the Assessment Program are provided below. The copyright of the Assessment Program is owned by JGF and could be used by all stakeholders. Any derivative works of these documents shall be approved in advance by JGF.

- (1) +SA General Regulations

The General Regulations sets forth the regulations that form the basis of the Assessment Program, the assessment process, and the rules for organizations, farms/groups involved in the Assessment Program.

- (2) +SA Control Points and Compliance Criteria

The Control Points and Compliance Criteria lead JGAP/ASIAGAP to be equivalent to FSA Silver Level. It includes +SA specific items and control points for JGAP/ASIAGAP with level changes (9.7 of the General Regulations).

- (3) Guidelines

Documents supplementing (1) and (2) above.

- (4) Bylaws and Regulations

Documents that supplement the +SA General Regulations and are specific to the organizations and stakeholders.

- (5) JGF List of Products

A document indicating the name of the items to be listed on the certificate of conformity.

- (6) Technical Letters

Documents explaining (1) through (4) above. Technical letters are issued on an irregular basis through JGF's website to address matters that are frequently inquired about by certification bodies, farms, groups, etc., and matters for which separate explanations are deemed necessary.

### 9.2 Scope of the Assessment Program

The scope of the Assessment Program shall be the same as that of a concurrent JGAP/ASIAGAP audit.

### 9.3 Types of Assessment

The types of the Assessment shall be the same as that of a concurrent JGAP/ASIAGAP audit.

## 9.4 Validity of Assessment

The validity of the Assessment shall be the same as that of a concurrent JGAP/ASIAGAP audit.

## 9.5 Types of Audits

### 9.5.1 General

There are three types of audits: an initial audit to obtain an assessment, a periodic surveillance audit to continue the assessment, and a renewal audit. In addition, additional or extraordinary audits may be conducted if necessary. Audits shall be conducted in accordance with the following.

- (1) In the initial, surveillance, and renewal audits, all control points in +SA Control Points and Compliance Criteria are assessed as conformity, nonconformity or not applicable.
- (2) In the initial, surveillance, and renewal audits, when there are multiple items to be assessed, the items that have not been confirmed in the previous audits shall be given priority in principle.
- (3) The man-hours for initial, surveillance, and renewal audits shall be calculated in accordance with 9.6 of the General Regulations.
- (4) The initial, surveillance, and renewal audits shall be conducted consecutively with the JGAP/ASIAGAP audits.
- (5) The costs related to the audits shall be borne by the farms/groups.

### 9.5.2 Initial Audit

The initial audit is the first audit conducted for the purpose of evaluating that the farms/groups have an operational structure that meets +SA requirements.

### 9.5.3 Surveillance Audit

The surveillance audit is an audit conducted for the purpose of evaluating how a farm/group has specifically implemented operations that meet +SA requirements between the initial audit or previous renewal audit and the next renewal audit.

### 9.5.4 Renewal Audit

The renewal audit is an audit to evaluate that the operational system continues to meet the +SA requirements based on the results of previous audits.

### 9.5.5 Unannounced Audit

- (1) The +SA audit for ASIAGAP certified farm/group could be conducted as unannounced audit.
- (2) The requirements for unannounced audits shall be in accordance with the ASIAGAP General Regulations Ver.2.3 Rev.1.
- (3) The +SA unannounced audit shall be conducted at the same time as the ASIAGAP unannounced audit.

#### 9.5.6 Extraordinary Audit

- (1) Notwithstanding the frequency of audits specified in the General Regulations, the certification body shall consider conducting an extraordinary audit under following situations.
  - (a) When a significant event occurs that may affect the reliability of the assessment.
  - (b) When there is evidence or suspicion of compliance issues related to the assessment.
  - (c) When there is evidence or suspicion of noncompliance on the farms/groups.
- (2) Extraordinary audit shall be conducted on site.
- (3) The audit duration shall be calculated according to the purpose and content of the extraordinary audit.
- (4) The timing of the notice to conduct an extraordinary audit will be determined case by case.

#### 9.6 Audit Duration (Man-hours)

- (1) The standard audit man-hour for initial, surveillance and renewal audit is one hour.
- (2) The standard audit man-hour for the group administration and sites in the case of group assessment shall be one hour. In the case of group assessment, the certification body shall decide whether to increase or decrease the standard audit man-hours by comprehensively considering at least the following factor.
  - (a) Size of the group
  - (b) Degree of division of roles between the group administration and the sites
- (3) In case of reducing the man-hours for audit from the standard audit man-hours, the reduction ratio shall be up to 50%.

#### 9.7 The Criteria of Assessment and Change of Control Points

##### 9.7.1 The Criteria of Assessment

An assessment is given when a farm/group has corrected the nonconformities received as a result of the audit and is found to be in conformity with the following situations. A farm/group that has received an assessment is referred to as +SA assessed farm/ group.

- (1) The conformity criteria of JGAP/ASIAGAP shall be met. For details, refer to JGAP2022 General Regulations for Agricultural Products and ASIAGAP General Regulations Ver.2.3 Rev.1.
- (2) 100% compliance with +SA Control Points and Compliance Criteria.
  - (a) +SA specific items
  - (b) Control points of JGAP/ASIAGAP with level changes in line with 9.7.2 of the General Regulations

##### 9.7.2 Change of Control Points' Level

In order to meet +SA conformance, the level of some control points of JGAP/ASIAGAP are changed. Farms/groups are required to comply with 100% of the applicable items in the following control points.

- (1) JGAP control points to change the level to shall  
 2. 5、2. 7、3. 3、3. 4、3. 6、3. 9、6. 1、8. 2、8. 3、8. 4、9. 1、9. 3、9. 4、9. 5、9. 7、11. 2  
 11. 3 (grains)、13. 2. 1、13. 2. 2、13. 3(fruits and vegetables)、C1.2、C1.3、C1.4、C2.4、C5.4.2、  
 C5.4.3、C5.4.5  
 C6.1.6 (grains)、C6.3.2、C6.3.4
- (2) ASIAGAP control points to change the level to shall  
 3.4、12. 3、12. 5、12. 6、12. 7、14. 2、14. 3、14. 4、14. 6、15. 2、15. 3、16. 4、18. 6、19. 2  
 19. 3 (grains)、20. 2、21. 1、21. 2、21. 3、22. 1、22. 1. 1、22. 2、25. 1. 4 (grains)、25. 3. 4

## 10. Management of Audit and Assessment

### 10.1 Acceptance of Applications

The farms/groups submit applications for assessment to the certification body. JGF does not recognize +SA assessment conducted by other organizations. The certification body could reject an application only with justifiable reasons.

### 10.2 Application Form for Audit

The certification body shall provide a field on the JGAP/ASIAGAP application form for audit regarding whether or not a +SA audit is desired.

### 10.3 Confirmation of Applications

The certification body shall confirm the application, including the application for audit.

### 10.4 Audit Plan

#### 10.4.1 General

The certification body shall prepare an audit plan in conjunction with the JGAP/ASIAGAP audit based on the application form for audit.

#### 10.4.2 Auditors

- (1) The certification body shall appoint auditors who meet the General Regulations. The certification body shall establish rules for the appointment of auditors to ensure impartiality.
- (2) The certification body shall appoint an audit team leader when more than one team of auditors conducts an audit.
- (3) The certification body shall confirm in advance that there are no conflicts of interest between the auditor and the farm/group.
- (4) The certification body shall comply if the farm/group recuse itself from the designated auditor for legitimate reasons, such as conflict of interest or risk of impartiality.

## 10.5 Implementation of Audit

- (1) The certification body shall conduct the +SA audit at the same time as the JGAP/ASIAGAP audit.
- (2) The Certification Body shall conduct audits in accordance with 9.7 of +SA General Regulations.
- (3) The auditor shall record the audit results in the checklist (\*1) and prepare a list of nonconformities (\*2) and an audit report. The list of nonconformities and the audit report shall be submitted to the farm/group after the audit.

\*1 A checklist is a list of objective evidence and judgments of "conformance," "nonconformance," or "not applicable" to all control points in the Control Points and Compliance Criteria. In the case of "not applicable," it is necessary to be able to prove the validity of the judgment.

\*2 The list of nonconformities shall include a clear and accurate description of the nonconformity

## 10.6 Correction and Verification

The certification body shall implement the correction and verification of nonconformity together with JGAP/ASIAGAP.

## 10.7 Review of Audit Results

The certification body shall conduct a review of the audit results. The review shall be conducted by a person who was not engaged in the audit process.

## 10.8 Decision of Assessment (Determination)

The certification body shall make the decision of assessment in conjunction with JGAP/ASIAGAP.

## 10.9 Prohibitions

- (1) Auditors, reviewers of audit results, and decision makers on assessment shall not compromise impartiality with respect to the assessment process.
- (2) Auditors, reviewers of audit results, and decision makers of assessment shall not engage in sales activities such as consulting (\*) or sales of products to farms/groups within 3 years before and after the date of audit and decision of assessment.

\* Consulting means giving advice or instruction on +SA specific to a farm/group. Serving as an instructor for education and training limited to general information to an unspecified audience is not considered consulting.

## 10.10 Certificate of Conformity

### 10.10.1 Validity of Certificate

The +SA certificate of conformity is only valid in conjunction with the JGAP/ASIAGAP certificate.

## 10.10.2 Contents of Certificate

The certification body shall provide the farm/group with a certificate of conformity that includes the following items (1) through (8) as soon as possible after the assessment decision is made. The certificate of conformity shall be revised if any of the items listed in the certificate of conformity are changed.

- (1) +SA logo
- (2) Name, address, logo and manager of certification body
- (3) Registration number issued by JGF
- (4) Date of the assessment decided (same date as the date of determination for JGAP/ASIAGAP)
- (5) Validity period of the assessment
- (6) Issued date of certificate of conformity (including cases where there is a change in the information in the certificate of conformity)
- (7) Standards of assessment
- (8) Category of agricultural products (fruits and vegetables, grains, tea)

## 10.11 Management of Farms/groups

### 10.11.1 Report of Assessment

The certification body shall maintain information and report to JGF in accordance with the "Bylaws for Assessment Services" regarding the assessed farms/groups.

### 10.11.2 Registration Number

For the initial assessment, the certification body submits an application for assessment to JGF, and JGF issues the registration number to the assessed farms/groups.

## 10.12 Changes after Assessment

- (1) If a farm/group want to change the information in the certificate of conformity after the assessment, the farm/group shall apply to the certification body for the change.
- (2) The certification body shall take the following actions depending on the application.
  - (a) Conduct document review or additional audit
  - (b) Review the audit results
  - (c) Make decision on assessment
  - (d) Issue a certificate of conformity to accommodate the changes
  - (e) Report to JGF

## 10.13 Suspension, Withdrawal, Return and Termination of Assessment

### 10.13.1 Report

If a farm/group returns or terminates an assessment of its own volition, or if the certification body decides to suspend, withdraw, or reduce the scope of the assessment, the certification body shall promptly inform JGF.

### 10.13.2 Suspension and Withdrawal of Assessment

- (1) The certification body shall consider and decide whether to suspend, withdraw, or continue the assessment under certain conditions if the farm/group is in the following situation.
  - (a) In case of breach of contract
  - (b) Failure to pay the stipulated fee for the assessment
  - (c) If there is no intention to take appropriate corrective actions or a corrective report is not submitted for more than three months, despite the fact that a rule violation has been pointed out.
  - (d) Internal audit findings of nonconformity of required items at a member site, but the group administration and the site are unwilling to take appropriate corrective actions, or a corrective action report is not submitted for more than three months.
  - (e) Continued refusal to undergo an extraordinary audit
  - (f) If a farm/group does not apply for or express an intention to be audited, despite the certification body's appropriate invitation to apply for the next audit, and the audit cannot be conducted in accordance with the timing specified in the General Regulations (\*).
    - \* The assessment will be returned if the due date for the surveillance audit has passed, and the assessment will be terminated if the expiration date has passed. If the farm/group want to continue the assessment, it shall undergo an initial audit.
  - (g) The audit results are determined to be unreliable due to an inappropriate relationship between the auditor and the farm/group.
  - (h) Inappropriate sales methods, such as violations of the label of origin or use of the +SA logo, or other violations of consumer trust, or violations of agricultural, food, environmental, labor, or other laws and regulations that are deemed unsuitable for +SA.
  - (i) If a farm/group has received a dishonored bill, delinquent taxes or public dues, or compulsory execution such as seizure, or any other similar event.
- (2) It is preferable for the certification body to give a written warning to the farm/group prior to withdrawal of the assessment, but immediate withdrawal is also possible.
- (3) If a farm/group receives a decision to suspend, withdraw, or reduce the scope of assessment, it could not use the +SA logo for products in the relevant scope of assessment and shall return the certificate of conformity.
- (4) If the reason for withdrawal of assessment is malicious and concerns public trust, the farm/group could not apply for assessment for a period of five years from the date of withdrawal. JGF could post the name of the farm/group on its website and, if necessary, take legal measures such as criminal prosecution and compensation claims.

### 10.13.3 Return from Suspension

- (1) The certification body shall follow the audit, review of audit results, and decision to resolve the suspension.
- (2) When reinstating an assessment from suspension, the certification body shall make all

necessary corrections to the certificate of conformity, publicly available information, etc.

#### 10.14 Change of Certification Body

A change of certification body shall be the same as a change of JGAP/ASIAGAP certification body.





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