Wild Farm Alliance and Partner Comments on Eliminating the Incentive to Convert Native Ecosystems to Organic Production Discussion Document

March 30, 2017

Ms. Michelle Arsenault
National Organic Standards Board
USDA-AMS-NOP
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Room 2648-S, Mail Stop 0268
Washington, DC 20250-0268

Dear Ms. Arsenault,
Wild Farm Alliance and our partners appreciate the opportunity to comment on the National Organic Standards Board **Eliminating the Incentive to Convert Native Ecosystems to Organic Production** Discussion Document. Our comments were guided by the principles that organic agriculture:

- Supports natural, diverse ecosystems,
- Benefits from nature's processes, and
- Has ecological integrity.

We look forward to continuing the conversation with the NOSB as this Discussion Document is finalized.

Wild Farm Alliance promotes a healthy, viable agriculture that protects and restores wild nature. In collaboration with the organic community, we have been working on biodiversity conservation issues for over a decade. Most recently, we published Biodiversity Conservation: An Organic Farmer's and Certifier's Guide, which clarifies the National Organic Program's (NOP) 5020 Natural Resources and Biodiversity Conservation Guidance, and we are assisting organic certifiers with updating their Organic System Plans.

The National Organic Program's (NOP) three-year waiting period for land to be free of prohibited substances unintentionally incentivizes producers to convert High Conservation Value Areas (HCVA) to agricultural production on one day, and become organically certified the next. While organic agriculture is an ecological management system that promotes and enhances biodiversity, it offers no environmental protections prior to certification.

Because agriculture has a significant impact on ecosystems, it would be beneficial to have knowledge of how many and where all the High Conservation Value Areas are in the world. It would make conservation of those places much easier, not just for the organic community, but for those worldwide who care about biodiversity conservation. We would also know how many acres would potentially be affected by this proposed NOP regulation.

The reality is that many areas, especially in the less developed parts of the world have not been surveyed to determine if they have High Conservation Value because there has not been enough public will and funding to do that. And without that data, the assessment of impacts to organic farmers cannot be fully stated. Even though the data is not complete for such an assessment, the

broader issue is that organic producers should be incentivized to transition existing land managed with prohibited materials rather than to destroy areas of High Conservation Value.

Fortunately, we do know a lot about natural ecosystems, many of which may have High Conservation Value. Agriculture is predicted to encroach on natural ecosystems (Attachment 1) by nearly a third with croplands increasing more than 20% and pasturelands more than 10% by 2050 (http://bit.ly/2mTn7kl). This along with other development, energy and mining pressure could result in half of the world's biomes (different types of habitat) being converted. The biggest land conversion will be seen in less developed continents. In just 35 years, conversions in South America could double, and in Africa could triple (Attachment 2), which will cause much of what's left to be then considered of High Conservation Value.

NOP needs to catch up with the rest of the organic and environmental ecolabels of the world. Twenty-four of them 13 organic (Attachment 3) and 11 ecolabels (Attachment 4) do not allow the conversion of High Conservation Value Areas or native ecosystems into agricultural production. These programs are models that can be learned from and emulated.

As with NOSB, Wild Farm Alliance and partners want organic agriculture to grow; we want to see more than 1% of agriculture to be certified organic. However, it is imperative for organic to grow in a sustainable way that embraces the integrity of the label. This proposed rule change does not aim to limit the growth of organic agriculture, but rather redirect the wanted growth to transitioning conventional acres to organic acres.

In addition, it is not fair to organic producers, who have waited three years to transition land that had been managed with prohibited materials, to have to compete with those farmers who converted High Conservation Value Areas overnight. This proposed change puts all organic producers on the same playing field and ensures the products bearing the organic label are upholding the intention behind the standards.

It is not prudent to compromise the integrity of the organic label in the eyes of consumers. And it is not wise to allow High Conservation Value Areas to be converted when we are in the midst of a *sixth mass extinction* of plants and animals on Earth. Consumers have come to expect that products with the organic label are ensuring the protection of High Conservation Value Areas and biodiversity. It is critical to maintain this high standard that consumers have come to expect when they purchase certified organic products.

Additionally, the NOP allows organic operations to get biodiversity credit for managing adjacent natural areas near their certified fields. Farms next to natural areas have a greater diversity of native bees and increased pollination services. Natural enemy insects and birds are supported by these habitat refuges. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) also offers the Conservation Stewardship Program for improving wildlife habitat and other natural resources on all working lands.

It is clear there is consensus that this issue needs to be addressed and moved forward. While we understand that there are concerns, we are confident that the NOSB and the organic community can come together to work out the details, and make the hard choices that result in favorable

solutions without holding up this critical issue, thereby fixing the bigger problem of incentivizing conversion of High Conservation Value Areas.

Answers to the NOSB Questions

Question 1: Please provide specific data on the occurrences of organic agricultural conversion of high value lands or fragile ecosystems.

- As mentioned in the Discussion Document, a University of Wisconsin report describes the conversion of 1.6 million acres of grassland that was in place for at least 20 years occurred between 2008-2012. Some of that land went into organic production as the document also stated, and more organic conversion undoubtedly occurred.
- In a recent World Wildlife Fund's PlowPrint report, they describe 53 million acres of grassland—an area the size of Kansas—have been converted to cropland across the Great Plains alone. Grassland songbirds have declined 80% since the 1960s, mainly because of habitat loss. The plow-up of these grasslands caused 3.2 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide to be released into the atmosphere.
- Conducting an informal survey of a few NOP and international inspectors and certifiers as well as conservation groups resulted in the examples below describing conversion of lands to organic production that could have been of High Conservation Value. All text is paraphrased:
    - I did see up close in China several cases in the north where grasslands were being converted, and that was not a good thing - traditional grazing lands getting row-cropped and then eroded by wind… I also saw peaty regions in another northern part of China being broken for soybeans; again there was incursion into natural areas...
    - I have seen land that appears to have never been cultivated in China and Wyoming converted to crop ground.
    - I will try to describe the situation. Conversion of native sagebrush sandy soils to Alfalfa near Burns, OR and Christmas Valley, OR; and conversion of native desert to organic vegetables in Baja Sur California, Mexico.
    - There are a couple of areas that I have seen regular development...This summer I witnessed the tilling of native short grass prairie in the western Colorado Plains...to grow corn, milo and wheat. In most cases the farmers are conventional farmers who are trying their hand at organic agriculture since they don't have a conversion period. I would estimate the land witnessed in the last year would be 1000 acres in the midwest and 1000 acres in OR and WA. I also witnessed many acres of CRP being taken out of the program and moving into organic agriculture in WY, NE and CO. This I would estimate to be 2000 acres.
    - We see this all the time on the high desert—new hay pivots going in with NRCS help from the native sage brush range lands between Bend & Vail and down to the Christmas Valley, Fort Rock, Lake View, K Falls, etc.
    - About 3 acres of hilltop-forested lands had been cleared and subsequently an herbicide used to make way for what was to become and organic vineyard that we were inspecting.

- I have seen quite a bit of this. First, the Eastern Oregon region (Burns, OR, area) has a huge amount of sagebrush being converted to farmland. I think that this has drastically changed the migration patterns of certain animals (elk, deer, birds)…More recently, I have seen many Operators taking land that is coming out of CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program) and turning it into organic farms. My understanding is that this is highly controversial, but the land is immediately eligible for organic certification…
- I saw about five acres of never-plowed wetland drained and converted into warm season vegetables in New Mexico. This is in an arid State that would benefit greatly from the slow release of waters from wetlands.
- In Mexico, the practice is unfortunately much more prevalent, particularly the conversion of native desert to cropped land, or coastal sub-tropical scrub forest. This is particularly prevalent in Baja California and on the coastal plains of Sinaloa (around Mazatlán and Culiacán), as well as the states of Michoacán and Guerrero. Chiefly the crops being planted are warm season vegetable crops like tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers.

Question 2: What definition of high value conservation land or fragile ecosystem should be used?

- The term "High Conservation Value Areas" has international recognition and should be used instead of "fragile ecosystems."
- This four-part definition of "High Conservation Value Areas" used in the Discussion Document and presented below is a variation on what many organic and ecolabels currently use and should be adopted by the NOP:
    - Lands or aquatic environments that are habitat for vulnerable, threatened or endangered plant, mammal, bird, amphibian, reptile or other species as identified by the IUCN Red List, including the federal and state lists and those compiled by NatureServe;
    - A large landscape-level ecosystem which is significant at global, regional or national levels, and that contains viable populations of most of the naturally occurring species in natural patterns of distribution and abundance (e.g., Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem);
    - Ecosystem types as protected by local law, or designated by NatureServe Conservation Status ranks (G1-G3), or those defined as VU, EN, or CR by the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems. In the U.S., refer to NatureServe's Terrestrial Ecological Systems of the United States (as a classification standard for NatureServe ranks or IUCN Red Listing);
    - Areas that provide critical ecosystem services (e.g. watershed protection or erosion control, and areas providing barriers to destructive fires).

US producers can request from their State Natural Heritage Program a list of vulnerable, threatened and endangered species on their land. These programs often provide a free environmental review and consultation. A possibility the organic community should consider is working directly with NatureServe to develop screening tool like they have for other industries for determining if the land likely supports sensitive species or ecosystems. It is estimated that in the lower 48 states, 85-90% of the land would not be in this course screen and so those producers

would just need to show their reports to their certifiers. Only the 10-15% that has land with possible sensitive species and ecosystems would need to contact their State Natural Heritage Program for further information. Producers in Canada and Latin America, along with those in the US, can find contact information and self-identified areas of individual expertise for NatureServe, NatureServe Canada, and other programs in this searchable directory http://www.natureserve.org/natureserve-network/directory They are the leading source of information on the precise locations and conditions of at-risk species and threatened ecosystems in their jurisdictions. Producers outside the Americas can use the IUCN Red List, which is the world's most comprehensive inventory of the global conservation status of biological species.

The Rule Change should not exclude the consideration that land coming out of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) may have High Conservation Value. What was also mentioned in the above University of Wisconsin report is that 42 percent of 1.6 million acres of the converted grassland may have come from land exiting the CRP, and again some undoubtedly went into organic production. Because land initially enrolled in CRP must be highly erodible or otherwise environmentally sensitive, it is more likely than other lands to have conservation concerns if it is farmed again.

Another way to address this issue is with a broader rule change that protects against conversion all native ecosystems without a recorded cropping history. This simpler approach defines and protects land from being irrevocably altered (*cleared, burned, drained, cultivated*) when it has no cropping history. The major value of this approach is that it would be simple for farmers to determine and for certifiers to verify. But it may prevent non-cropped, non-HCVAs from being able to be converted to organic production.

Question 3: How can high value land and fragile ecosystems best be protected under in USDA organic certification? Should the NOP issue Guidance on conversion of high value land, or fragile ecosystems? Should a Rule change, such as an addition to 7 CFR 205.202 be recommended in order to address conversion of high value lands or fragile ecosystems?

- A Rule Change is required. The NOP has already said that they would not address this issue in Guidance because converting HCVA into organic production takes place before the land is certified. All NOP regulations apply to land that is already certified, except the standard about land which has had any prohibited substances applied during the three years immediately preceding the harvest.
- Converting land is a costly investment, and non-compliances issued by certifiers for conversion of HCVA may be challenged if this issue is only addressed in Guidance, whereas a Rule Change would make it clear that conversion is not allowed.

Question 4: What incentives, and/or disincentives could be implemented within current USDA organic regulations to prevent the conversion of high value land and fragile ecosystems?

- There are numerous ways to discourage the conversion of High Conservation Value Areas to organic production, including complete prohibition or prohibition during an extended waiting time. We recommend that land should not be eligible for five years between first requesting organic certification to the allowance of that ecosystem to be transformed to organic production.

- USDA NOP regulations should describe how they will be in sync with USDA's other programs that reduce Farm Bill payments as a penalty for violation of conservation provisions:
    - The Sodsaver provision discourages grassland conversion,
    - The Wetlands Conservation provision deters wetland conversion, and
    - The Highly Erodible Lands provision dissuades soil loss on erosion-prone lands.
- As stated in the NOP's 5020-1 Response to Comments to Natural Resources and Biodiversity Conservation Guidance (which isn't regulation), "requirements for agricultural conversion of Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and wetlands should be consistent with NRCS requirements."
- NOP should encourage producers who want to become organic to apply for assistance through USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's Conservation Activity Plan 138 for transitioning lands. They should also suggest that some producers may find the USDA Certified Transitional Program authored by the Organic Trade Association to be helpful in their transition.

Question 5: Should there be an extended waiting period for land seeking organic certification that has recently been converted from high value land or fragile ecosystems? If so, what duration should the waiting period be and why?

- High Conservation Value Areas should not be "eligible" for five years in order to make the three-year transition of conventional land easier and cheaper than converting HCVA. Using the term "not eligible" conveys the inappropriateness of bringing this land under organic certification, more than a "waiting period," and should be used in its place. Making HCVA not eligible for five years will eliminate the incentive for conversion, and will encourage producers to transition the right land - the 99% of US agriculture, and the billion acres internationally that are still managed with prohibited materials.

Suggested Regulatory Text

Reflecting on the two bullets under the Summary of the Discussion Document, we recommend the following changes to the NOP regulations (new text is italicized):

7 CFR 205.202 Land Requirements
Any field or farm parcel from which harvested crops are intended to be sold, labeled, or represented as "organic," must:
d) Have not <u>been</u> converted <u>from</u> High Conservation Value Areas to agricultural production in the last 5 years.

7 CFR 205.200 General, *and Natural Resources and Biodiversity Conservation*
(a) The producer or handler of a production or handling operation intending to sell, label, or represent agricultural products as "100 percent organic," "organic," or "made with organic (specified ingredients or food group(s))" must comply with the applicable provisions of this subpart.
(b) The operation's practices implemented in accordance with this subpart *must conserve natural resources and biodiversity, including but not limited to:*

(1) *Conserving genetic, species, and ecosystem biodiversity, and the full range of natural processes upon which life depends.*
(2) Maintain*ing* or improv*ing* the natural resources of the operation, including soil, water, *wetlands, woodlands, and wildlife.*
(3) Monitoring of biodiversity must be conducted.
(4) No conversion of High Conservation Value Areas may occur on certified lands.

7 CFR 205.2 Terms defined.
High Conservation Value Areas (includes this four-part definition):

- *Lands or aquatic environments that are habitat for vulnerable, threatened or endangered plant, mammal, bird, amphibian, reptile or other species as identified by the IUCN Red List, including the federal and state lists and those compiled by NatureServe;*
- *A large landscape-level ecosystem which is significant at global, regional or national levels, and that contains viable populations of most of the naturally occurring species in natural patterns of distribution and abundance (e.g., Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem);*
- *Ecosystem types as protected by local law, or designated by NatureServe Conservation Status ranks (G1-G3), or those defined as VU, EN, or CR by the IUCN Red List of Ecosystems. In the U.S., refer to NatureServe's Terrestrial Ecological Systems of the United States (as a classification standard for NatureServe ranks or IUCN Red Listing);*
- *Areas that provide critical ecosystem services (e.g. watershed protection or erosion control, and areas providing barriers to destructive fires).*

Additionally, since "biodiversity" is used in the above 7 CFR 205.200, and in the definitions of organic production and crop rotations, the NOP regulation should codify the NOSB's May 2009 recommendation for definition of biodiversity:

7 CFR 205.2 Terms defined.
Biodiversity: Biodiversity, or biological diversity, is the diversity of life existing at three levels: genetic, species, and ecosystem. Therefore, biological diversity (biodiversity) includes variety in all forms of life, from bacteria and fungi to grasses, ferns, trees, insects, and mammals. It encompasses the diversity found at all levels of organization, from genetic differences between individuals and populations (groups of related individuals) to the types of natural communities (groups of interacting species) found in a particular area. Biodiversity also includes the full range of natural processes upon which life depends, such as nutrient cycling, carbon and nitrogen fixation, predation, symbiosis and natural succession.

Consumers look to the USDA organic label as representing environmental stewardship, not encouraging the destruction of valuable ecosystems. Paraphrasing Aldo Leopold—we need to change our role from conqueror of the Earth, to plain member and citizen of it. Who better to do that than the organic community whose philosophy is caring for the Earth.

Sincerely,

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Peter Martinelli, Organic Farmer, Fresh Run Farm, Bolinas, CA
Phil Foster, Organic Farmer, Phil Foster Ranches, San Juan Bautista, CA
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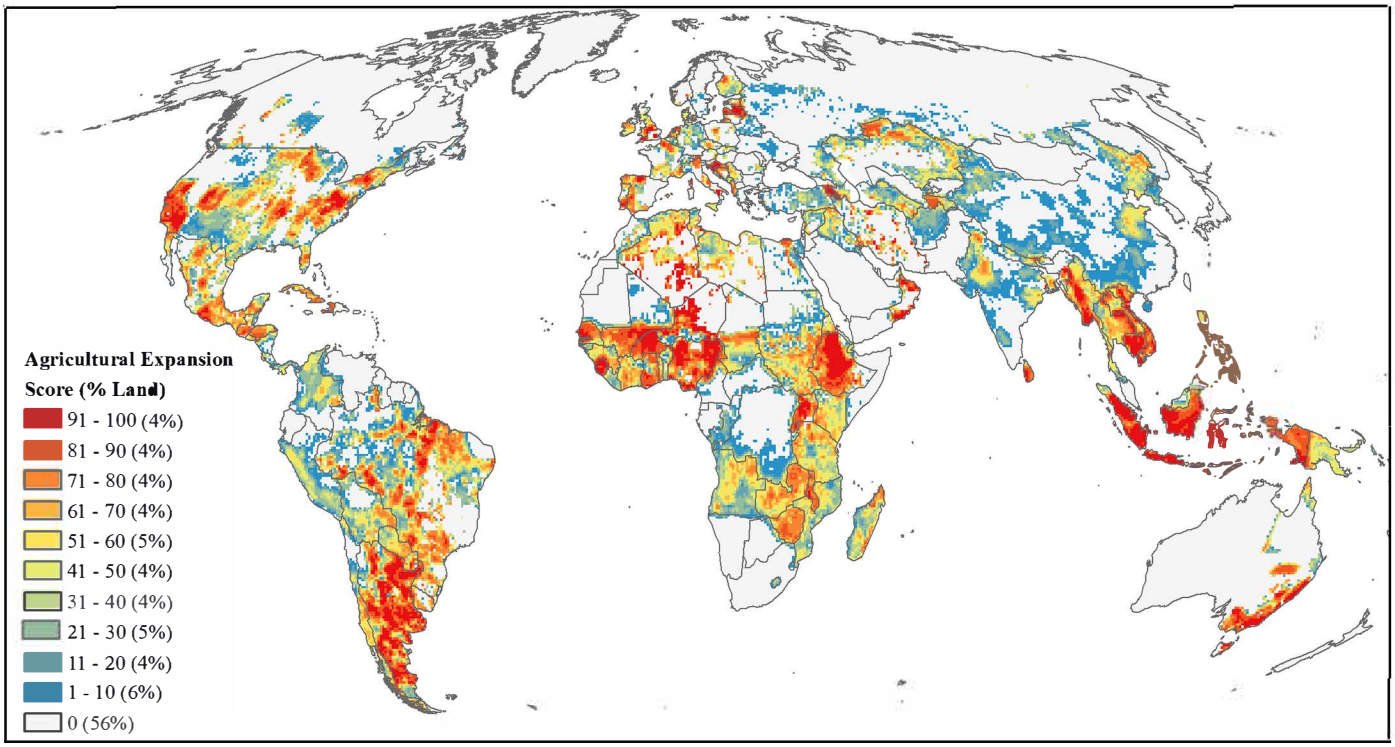
Valerie Calegari, Conservation Consultant, Davis, CA
Vance Russell, Conservation Consultant, UK
Wes Jackson, President Emeritus, The Land Institute, Salina, KS

Attachment 1

Projected future development threat of agricultural expansion

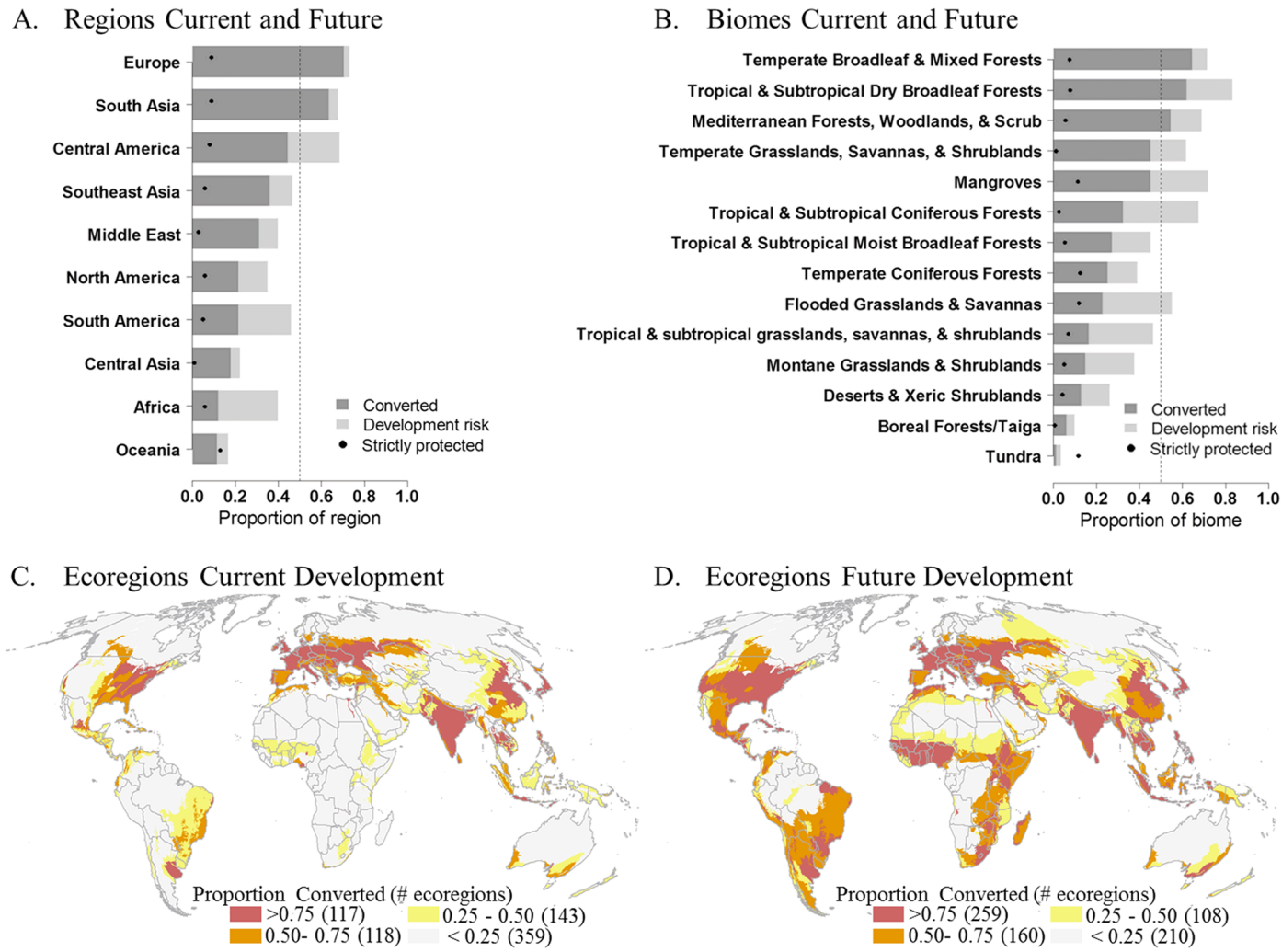


Area - ranked threat scores based on estimates of fractional amount of agricultural expansion by 2030 extrapolated from 2000–2011 cropland and pasture time series maps.

From: http://bit.ly/2mTn7kl

Attachment 2

Proportion of land currently converted and future conversion per geopolitical region, biome, and ecoregion



The proportion of land in each geopolitical region (A) and biome (B) that is currently converted (dark grey), the proportion of natural lands at high risk to development (light grey), total future conversion (dark grey + light grey), and the proportion of strictly-protected natural lands at risk (dashed lines indicate the 50% threshold). Distribution of terrestrial ecoregions with > 0.75, 0.50, 0.25, and < 0.25 proportion of converted lands under (C) current conversion and (D) potential future land conversion including high development risk areas.

From: http://bit.ly/2mTn7kl

Attachment 3

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIC CERTIFIERS
PROHIBITING CONVERSION OF NATIVE ECOSYSTEMS

Home Country	Name	Standard Language	Page No.	Website
	IFOAM	Clearing or destruction of High Conservation Value Areas is prohibited. Operators shall design and implement measures to maintain and improve landscape and enhance biodiversity quality, by maintaining on-farm wildlife refuge habitats or establishing them where none exist. Such habitats may include, but are not limited to: a. extensive grassland such as moorlands, reed land or dry land; b. in general all areas which are not under rotation and are not heavily manured: extensive pastures, meadows, extensive grassland, extensive orchards, hedges, hedgerows, edges between agriculture and forest land, groups of trees and/or bushes, and forest and woodland; c. ecologically rich fallow land or arable land; d. ecologically diversified (extensive) field margins; e. waterways, pools, springs, ditches, floodplains, wetlands, swamps and other water-rich areas which are not used for intensive agriculture or aquaculture production; f. areas with ruderal flora; g. wildlife corridors that provide linkages and connectivity to native habitat.	33	http://www.ifoam.bio/sites/default/files/ifoam_norms_version_july_2014.pdf
Argentina	ARGENCERT S.A.	1.2 If production units that start in natural environments will be required complete the following conditions: Submit a production plan to provide all necessary information made by the right person where it is shown that the ecological impact caused by the land use. It should include aspects of sustainability and sound management of resources. b . Grazing on virgin land and / or that be performed in systems ecologically fragile will require completing the same conditions precedent . c . If the project includes deforestation must also present the permission from the provincial or national forestry authority . d . Deforestation of primeval forests is prohibited	12	http://argencert.com.ar/sitio/wp-content/uploads/MN_third_countries_1_16.pdf
Australia	Australian Certified Organic	4.6.9.The clearing of primary forest and destruction of primary ecosystems on certified lands is not permitted. The clearing of primary forest and destruction of primary ecosystems on land intended for organic production prior to application for certification is also not permitted.	35	http://www.austorganic.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/ACOS-2013-final.pdf
Bolivia	Bolicert	In secondary forests, improving the soil by the system of slash and burn is restricted and subject to a plan. In primary forests and / or virgin soils, this is prohibited. Exception when for primary forest or virgin soil the conversion plan will ensure conservation of areas from forest Virgin for do not affect the natural cycles of the ecosystem.	18 - 19	http://www.bolicert.org/files/LEY_3525_PRODUCCION_ORGANICA_PARA_BOLIVIA.pdf
Brazil	IBD Certifications Ltd.	1.2. Native forests are essential to the structuring of an agricultural organism (habitat of natural enemies, biodiversity, microclimate, etc.) and due to its importance for the preservation of natural sources (ciliar forest, springs, etc.) their pre sence is indispensable and shall be in accordance with the Brazilian Forestry Code. 1.3. Opening of virgin or primary forest areas will not be allowed. Should this occur, the areas opened, even if under organic management, will not be certified as organic immediately after the first crop, but only at the third crop (or second year). Exceptions: when the property has no further areas left to convert to organic management and the expansion is justified, IBD CERTIFICATIONS can evaluate request for exception al authorization; for such, it is mandatory that the opening of new areas is in conformity with the Environmental and Forestry laws and that it is authorized by competent official authorities.	74	http://ibd.com.br/Media/arquivo_digital/7d19302d-ed08-4f65-9eef-c6c8d5ca8bd8.pdf

Attachment 1

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIC CERTIFIERS
PROHIBITING CONVERSION OF NATIVE ECOSYSTEMS

England	Soil Association	Any land that was primary habitat or an area of High Conservation Value (HCV) after January 2007 must not be cleared or used for organic farming. There are six criteria for defining an HCV area. Only one of these criteria needs to be met for an area of land to have high conservation value. These are: • areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity such as refugia, endemic or endangered species • globally, regionally or nationally significant large landscape - level habitat where viable populations of most, if not all, naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance • areas that contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems • areas that provide basic ecosystem services in critical situations such as watershed protection or erosion control • areas fundamental to meeting the basic needs of local communities as a source of food, water or income • areas critical to local communities' traditional, cultural identity (this will be identified in cooperation with the local community). An HCV area not only includes the characteristic of critical importance but also the surrounding area required to maintain or enhance the high conservation value. You can identify an HCV area by looking at land use records, consulting with the appropriate authority, a regional or local conservation body and local communities. If sufficient information is not available to identify primary habitat or an HCV area then we will take the precautionary approach and not certify the land	49	https://www.soilassociation.org/media/1220/farming-and-growing-v17-4-august-2016.pdf
Germany	Naturland	The clearing of primary forest and the cultivation of primary organic systems (e. g. tundra) is prohibited.	13	http://organicrules.org/370/1/Naturland_standards_on_production_2005_01_en.pdf
Ireland	Organic Trust Limited	Article 22 of Regulation 1257/1999 states: Support for agricultural production methods designed to protect the environment and to maintain the countryside (agri-environment) shall contribute to achieving the Community's policy objectives regarding agriculture and the environment. Such support shall promote: • ways of using agricultural land which are compatible with the protection and improvement of the environment, the landscape and its features, natural resources, the soil and genetic diversity; • an environmentally favourable extensification of farming and management of low-intensity pasture systems; • the conservation of high nature-value farmed environments which are under threat; • the upkeep of the landscape and historical features on agricultural land; • the use of environmental planning in farming practice.	78	http://organictrust.ie/pdfs/ot_forms/Organic_Food__Farming_Standards_in_Ireland_-_Edition_1-original_Optimised.pdf
Italy	CCPB SRL	With specific reference to the CCPB Global Programme certification scheme, it is prohibited the cleaning or destruction of the High Value Conservation Areas (areas that have been identified of fundamental importance due to their environmental, socio-economic, biodiversity or landscape values). Agricultural areas which were obtained by cleaning or destruction of areas of High Conservation Value in the previous five years can not be considered in compliance with the present Standard.	19	http://www.ccpb.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Standard-BIO-ED-2-REV-2-2016_11_14-ENG-EDIT.pdf
Japan	Japan Organic & Natural Foods Association	Following measures should be cared to maintain natural environment. -Not to break or develop land, forest and / or wetland without environmental assessment.-To utilize its original land shape and to choose species of plant which is suited to its soil, climate and environment of the land.-To protect and maintain trees and the woods.	69	http://www.jona-japan.org/form/JONA_Standards.pdf

Attachment 1

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIC CERTIFIERS
PROHIBITING CONVERSION OF NATIVE ECOSYSTEMS

New Zealand	AsureQuality Limited	4.5.1 The clearing of primary forest and ecosystems or High Conservation Areas is prohibited	30	https://www.asurequality.com/assets/Organic-Files/organics-standard-2015-FULL-V6-Feb16.pdf
Sweden	KRAV	Cultivation, or other enduring changes, of old-growth and natural forests is prohibited. Cultivation before 1990 is accepted due to the difficulty in checking before 1990.	1	http://www.krav.se/sites/default/files/rapport_bevarande
Switzerland	BioSuisse	Clear-felling of virgin forests (primary and secondary) or the burning of sites (pre-or post-harvest) are prohibited.	2	http://www.bio-suisse.ch/media/en/pdf2006/import/eng_information_note_summary_of_bio_suisse_standards_2006.pdf

Attachment 4

Ecolabel Comparisons

(Wild Farm Alliance and National Wildlfe Federation)

Organization	Name of Ecolabel	Term to Describe Ecologically important land	Definition	What is required	Information Used by Inspector/Certifier to Ensure Compliance	Retroactive date?	Link for Standards	Further Information	
NON-ORGANIC STANDARDS									
Better Cotton Initiative	Production and Principles & Criteria (2013)	natural habitat	A natural habitat is an area where the original biodiversity remains largely undisturbed by human activities. It may also include areas where once-disturbed biodiversity has been restored or regenerated by human or natural forces.	Principle 4. "Better Cotton is produced by farmers who conserve natural habitats"	Criterion 4.1 Practices are adopted that enhance biodiversity on and surrounding the farm Criterion 4.2 The use and conversion of land to grow cotton conforms with national legislation related to agricultural land use.		http://bettercotton.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Better-Cotton-Production-Principles-and-Criteria-Explained_Final-2013_eng_ext.pdf		
Bonsucro	Production Standard Version 4.01 (2014)	High Conservation Value	HCV 1 Species diversity: Concentrations of biological diversity including endemic species, and rare, threatened or endangered species, that are significant at global, regional or national levels. HCV 2 Landscape-level ecosystems and mosaics: Large landscape-level ecosystems and ecosystem mosaics that are significant at global, regional or national levels, and that contain viable populations of the great majority of the naturally occurring species in natural patterns of distribution and abundance. HCV 3 Ecosystems and habitats: Rare, threatened, or endangered ecosystems, habitats or refugia. HCV 4 Ecosystem services: Basic ecosystem services in critical situations, including protection of water catchments and control of erosion of vulnerable soils and slopes. HCV 5 Community needs: Sites and resources fundamental for satisfying the basic necessities of local communities or indigenous peoples (for livelihoods, health, nutrition, water, etc.), identified through engagement with these communities or indigenous peoples. HCV 6 Cultural values: Sites, resources, habitats and landscapes of global or national cultural, archaeological or historical significance, and/or of critical cultural, ecological,	Principle 4 - Actively manage biodiversity and ecosystem services	Criterion 4.1: To assess impacts of sugarcane enterprises on biodiversity and ecosystems services Indicator 4.1.2: Percentage of areas defined internationally or nationally as legally protected or classified as of High Conservation Value planted to sugarcane after the cut-off date of 1 January 2008 (To prevent the cultivation of sugarcane on areas of critical conservation value (including HCVs categories 1- 6) or area legally protected. International definitions of HCVs to take precedence over national where both exist. In the absence of HCV maps or databases, credible documentary evidence shall be provided to demonstrate that no HCV is converted after 1 Jan 2008.)	1st Jan 2008	http://bonsucro.com/site/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Bonsucro-Production-Standard-v4-01.pdf		
Demeter USA	Demeter Biodynamic Farm and Standards (Feb 2014)	Virgin forest and conservation areas of high ecological value; biodiversity reserve	A minimum of 10% of the total effective land base is set aside as a biodiversity reserve. This preserves wildlife diversity, endangered species habitat, and provides an overall reserve of diverse life forms to inoculate and inhabit the farm organism. Environmentally beneficial grazing [in compliance with Section IE.5] and low impact wild harvest can take place but each situation will be handled on a case-by-case basis. In situations where there is no potential biodiversity reserve occurring naturally, areas will need to be created. For all botanical species established (natural or planted) at a minimum it needs to be allowed to develop through the flowering stage to be counted towards the 10%. Some examples include insectory plantings, hedgerows, flowering cover crops, perennial plantings along fence lines and roadways, and wildlife corridors.	A Demeter certified farm must have a minimum of 10% of its total effective land base- clearly documented in a calculated acreage figure- set aside as a biodiversity reserve.The clearance of virgin forest for agricultural usage is forbidden. Other conservation areas of high ecological value must also be protected.			http://www.demeter-usa.org/downloads/Demeter-Farm-Standard.pdf		
Fairtrade International	Fairtrade Standard for Small Producer Organizations Version 1.2 (2011)	"Protected Areas" and "Areas with High Conservation Value"	"Protected areas" are a clearly defined geographical space, recognized dedicated, and managed through legal or other effective means, to achieve long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values (IUCN 2008). Protected areas can be public or private biological conservation areas. You may identify protected areas with the help of local, regional or national authorities. "Areas with high conservation value" is a concept developed by FSC and refers to areas that are worth conserving because they are important on a local, regional, or global scale and which may include social value such as the benefits that an area provides to a community in terms of its cultural importance or economic resource. Biological value includes ecosystems or habitats of an endangered species. These areas can usually be identified though natural vegetation with low disturbance from agriculture, forestry, industry, urbanism or other.	3.2.33. Members must avoid negative impacts on protected areas and in areas with high conservation value within or outside the farm or production areas from the date of application for certification. The areas that are used or converted to production of the Fairtrade crop must comply with national legislation in relation to agricultural land use 3.2.36 You and the members of your organization that carry out wild harvesting of Fairtrade products from uncultivated areas must assure the sustainability and survivability of the collected species in its native habitat.	3.2.33. You may identify protected areas with the help of local, regional or national authorities. 3.2.36. Guidance: Wild harvesting implies that the only productive activity in the uncultivated area is the harvest itself. Any other activities (e.g. clearing paths, maintaining camps) should be done in a way that minimizes human impact. Assuring sustainability refers to harvesting in such a way to maintain the species, maintain availability to other species in the ecosystem that depend on it, and ensure that the subsequent harvest cycle will provide a comparable quantity		http://www.fairtrade.net/fileadmin/user_upload/content/2009/standards/documents/2014-07-16_SPO_EN.pdf		

Attachment 2

Ecolabel Comparisons

(Wild Farm Alliance and National Wildlfe Federation)

Forest Stewardship Council International	Forest Stewardship Council	High Conservation Value	High Conservation Value Forests possess one or more of the following attributes: 1) Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g., endemism, endangered species, refugia). 2) Forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant large landscape level forests, contained within, or containing the management unit, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance. 3) Forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems. 4) Forest areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations (e.g., watershed protection, erosion control) 5) Forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g., subsistence, health). 6) Forest areas critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).	Forest conversion to plantations or non-forest land uses shall not occur, except in circumstances where conversion: A) entails a very limited portion of the forest management unit; and B) does not occur on high conservation value forest areas; and C) will enable clear, substantial, additional, secure, long term conservation benefits across the forest management unit.			https://ic.fsc.org/national-standards.247.htm		
Global Roundtable on Sustainable Beef	Principles and Criteria for Sustainable Beef (draft principles 2014)	Native forests are protected from deforestation. Grasslands, other native ecosystems, and high conservation values areas are protected from land conversion and degradation.		Principle 1. "Natural Resources" The global beef value chain manages natural resources responsibly and enhances ecosystem health.	Criterion 4. Native forests are protected from deforestation. Grasslands, other native ecosystems, and high conservation values areas are protected from land conversion and degradation. Criterion 5. Land management practices conserve and enhance the health of ecosystems and high conservation value areas throughout all sectors of the beef value chain.		http://grsbeef.org/Resources/Documents/GRSB%20Principles%20and%20Criteria%20for%20Global%20Sustainable%20Beef_091514.pdf		
Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF-UK)	Marque Global Standard v. 11.2 (2013)	key wildlife habitats, important species, other valuable environmental and archaeological or historical features		In order to avoid the risk of environmental damage and deterioration, approved producers must be able to demonstrate an awareness and undertake a map-based risk assessment of the distribution of the key wildlife habitats, important species, other valuable environmental and archaeological or historical features on their farms as listed in the guidance notes, and know the farming operations that could damage or have a detrimental effect on them and prohibit cultivation in those areas. Where practical, the whole farm should be on one map so that all the features and their management are clearly visible. a) Areas and sites on the farm with any statutory landscape designation; b) Lakes, ponds, and watercourses; c) Semi-natural habitats (e.g. moorland, wetlands, lowland heath, species-rich grassland, broad-leaved woodland, or other "high carbon stock' land, etc.); d) Linear features (e.g. hedges, fence lines, farm borders, verges, field margins, walls, ditches, tracks); e) Public rights of way; f) Archaeological or historical sites; g) Land on which other important species are found; h) Areas that are grazed need to be recorded (see 5.1 and 5.6); i) Lists of any important species or populations	All LEAF Marque certified farms are independently inspected. Inspection of the map-based audit, including the key environmental features above. The Audit (and Whole Farm Conservation Plan) should ideally be completed or reviewed by a specialist conservation advisor or consultant such as FWAG; and should be regularly reviewed (at least every five years by the specialist advisor) and every year by the farmer.		http://www.leafuk.org/resources/000/870/535/LEAF_Marque_Global_Standard_ver_11.2_2013nc.pdf		
Rainforest Alliance	SAN Addendum and Sustainable Agriculture Standard (versions April 2009) merge into Sustainable Agriculture Standard (version July 2010)	natural ecosystems	Natural Ecosystems: A dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit (Source: Convention on Biological Diversity). Examples are aquatic ecosystems such as streams, rivers, pools, ponds, lakes, lagoons, and other bodies of liquid water that exist naturally; wetlands such as swamps, marshes, mangroves or bogs; terrestrial ecosystems, such as primary and secondary forests, bush lands, grass lands or other advanced natural succession stages without significant human disturbance for a minimum of ten years.	All existing natural ecosystems, both aquatic and terrestrial, must be identified, protected and restored through a conservation program, The program must include the restoration of natural ecosystems or the reforestation of areas within the farm that are unsuitable for agriculture.	For the evaluation of land use history, baseline information about land use changes in high risk regions is reviewed, including aerial photographs, satellite images, old photographs of the ecosystems, interviews with workers and community members.	2005 and 1998	Ahttp://www.rainforest-alliance.org/certification-verification		

Attachment 2

Ecolabel Comparisons

(Wild Farm Alliance and National Wildlfe Federation)

Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials (RSB)	Consolidated RSB EU RED Principles & Criteria for Sustainable Biofuel Production (2011)	"no-go" areas and "no-conversion" areas	"No-go areas" include: • Primary forest and other wooded land, namely forest and other wooded land of native species, where there is no clearly visible indication of human activity and the ecological processes are not significantly disturbed; • Areas designated by law or by the relevant competent authority for nature protection purposes or for the protection of rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems or species, recognized by international agreements or included in lists drawn up by intergovernmental organizations or the IUCN, subject to their recognition by the European Commission, unless evidence is provided that the primary production of raw material (biomass) did and/or does not interfere with those nature protection purposes areas designated; • Natural grassland that would remain grassland in the absence of human intervention and which maintains the natural species composition and ecological characteristics and processes • Non-natural grassland that would cease to be grassland in the absence of human intervention and which is species-rich and not degraded, unless evidence is provided that the harvesting of the raw material (biomass) is necessary to preserve its grassland status	Areas that contain identified conservation values of global, regional or local importance or that serve to maintain or enhance such conservation values shall not be converted after the 1st of January 2009, or earlier as prescribed by other relevant international standards.	a. Participating operators shall identify the status of the area of a potential or existing operation and its conservation value(s) during the screening exercise of the RSB impact assessment process (Principle 2). b. Conversion or use of new areas for biofuel operations shall not occur prior to the screening exercise. c. Where conservation values of local, regional or global importance have been identified, Participating Operators shall carry out a specialized impact assessment in accordance with the Conversion Impact Assessment Guidelines (RSB-GUI-01-007-01). d. Biofuel operations shall prioritize areas with the lowest possible risk of impacts to the identified conservation values. The process may include: 1) the review of publicly available data and maps; 2) landscape-level assessment, i.e. the consultation of national/regional experts and institutions ,3) site-level mapping, (i.e. a detailed site-level assessment through the consultation of local conservation organizations or communities, as well as larger farmers, local leaders and elders) and mitigation planning if needed.	1st Jan 2008, or earlier as prescribed by other relevant international standards, unless biofuel operations maintain their status on 1st of January 2008 and maintain or enhance their identified conservation values.	http://rsb.org/pdfs/standards/RSB-EU-RED-Standards/13-03-01-RSB-STD-11-001-01-001%20vers%202.1%20Consolidated%20RSB%20EU%20RED%20PCs.pdf	To learn more about the screening exercise of the RSB impact assessment process (Principle 2), go to page 8 of this link: http://rsb.org/pdfs/guidelines/13-03-13-RSB-GUI-01-002-02RSB-ScreeningTool-Version2.3.pdf Step 4.1 – Restricted Areas and Conservation Values. 1. "No - go": Is the existing or proposed operation site located in a region (or contain an area) that could be identified as a "no - go area" as of the 1st of January 2008, or earlier as prescribed by other relevant international standards.1.? Is the operation site in a nationally, regionally, or internationally legally protected area including but not restricted to those designated by any of the following processes on or after the cutoff date.2 : • The World Conservation Union "IUCN" Category I - IV protected areas http://www.protectedplanet.net/ • Wetlands of International Importance designated under the Ramsar Convention http://ramsar.wetlands.org/. • World Heritage Sites designa ted under the UNESCO World Heritage Convention http://whc.unesco.org/en/list. • Biosphere Reserves designated under the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural - sciences/environment/ecological - sciences/biosphere - reserves/. • Other legally protected areas. • For operators entering the EU RED market, also: other areas designa ted as "no - go" areas under Criterion 7a of the RSB EU RED P&C. a. If yes, no certification is possible. For operators not entering the EU RED market, the operation site can still be used (but not converted) for those operations legally authorized as part of the conservation management for the protected area. b. If no, continue to Question 2. 2. "No conversion" and key biodiversity areas: Is the existing or proposed operation site located in a region (or contain an area) t hat could be identified as a "no conversion" area as of the 1st of January 2008, or earlier as prescribed by other relevant international standards.3 ? "No conversion" areas include: • Alliance for Zero Extinction Areas (AZEs).	
Roundtable on Sustainable Palm	Principles and Criteria for the Production of Sustainable Palm Oil Production (2013)	High Conservation Value	HCV 1 Species diversity: Concentrations of biological diversity including endemic species, and rare, threatened or endangered species, that are significant at global, regional or national levels. HCV 2 Landscape-level ecosystems and mosaics: Large landscape-level ecosystems and ecosystem mosaics that are significant at global, regional or national levels, and that contain viable populations of the great majority of the naturally occurring species in natural patterns of distribution and abundance. HCV 3 Ecosystems and habitats: Rare, threatened, or endangered ecosystems, habitats or refugia. HCV 4 Ecosystem services: Basic ecosystem services in critical situations, including protection of water catchments and control of erosion of vulnerable soils and slopes. HCV 5 Community needs: Sites and resources fundamental for satisfying the basic necessities of local communities or indigenous peoples (for livelihoods, health, nutrition, water, etc.), identified through engagement with these communities or indigenous peoples. HCV 6 Cultural values: Sites, resources, habitats and landscapes of global or national cultural, archaeological or historical significance, and/or of critical cultural, ecological,	Criterion 7.3 New Plantings since November 2005 have not replaced primary forest or any area required to maintain or enhance one or more High Conservation Values Indicator 7.3.1 There shall be evidence that no new plantings have replaced primary forest, or any area required to maintain or enhance one or more High Conservation Values (HCVs), since November 2005. New plantings shall be planned and managed to best ensure HVCs identified are maintained and/or enhanced (see Criterion 5.2). Indicator 7.3.2 A comprehensive HCV assessment, including stakeholder consultation, shall be conducted prior to any conversion or new planting. This shall include a land use change analysis to determine changes to the vegetation since November 2005. This analysis shall be used, with proxies, to indicate changes to HCV status. Indicator 7.3.3 Dates of land preparation and commencement shall be recorded. Indicator 7.3.4 An action plan shall be developed that describes operational actions consequent to the findings of the HCV assessment, and that references the grower's relevant operational procedures (see Criterion 5.2). Indicator 7.3.5 Areas required by affected communities to meet their basic needs, taking into	For 7.3.1: Evidence should include historical remote sensing imagery which demonstrates that there has been no conversion of primary forest or any area required to maintain or enhance one or more HCV. Satellite or aerial photographs, land use maps and vegetation maps should be used to inform the HCV assessment. Where land has been cleared since November 2005, and without a prior and adequate HCV assessment, it will be excluded from the RSPO certification programme until an adequate HCV compensation plan has been developed and accepted by RSPO. For 7.3.5: The management plan will be adaptive to changes in HCV 5 and 6. Decisions will be made in consultation with the affected communities. Guidance: This Criterion applies to forests and other vegetation types. This applies irrespective of any changes in land ownership or farm management that have taken place since November 2005. HCVs may be identified in restricted areas of a landholding, and in such cases new plantings can be planned to allow the HCVs to be maintained or enhanced. National Interpretation should refer to existing national definitions of HCVs (or where these do not exist refer to definitions in this document), or equivalent land-use/conservation plans or consider how growers and the audit team can identify High	Nov-05	http://www.rspo.org/file/revisedPandC2013.pdf		
Roundtable on Sustainable Soy	Standard for Responsible Soy Production, Version 2.0 (2013)	High Conservation Value Areas	High Conservation Value Areas are critical areas in a landscape which need to be appropriately managed in order to maintain or enhance High Conservation Values (HCVs). There are six main types of HCV Area. Based on the definition originally developed by the Forest Stewardship Council for certification of forest ecosystems, but now increasingly expanded to apply to other credible assessments of other ecosystems. Also note, national level macro-scale maps will be created through a multi-stakeholder process, which will provide guidance on responsible expansion. These maps will indicate four categories of area: Category I Areas = areas which are critical for biodiversity (hotspots), where stakeholders agree there should not be any conversion of native vegetation to responsible soy production. Category II Areas = areas with high importance for biodiversity where expansion of soy is only carried out after an HCVA assessment which identifies areas for conservation and areas where expansion can occur. Category III Areas = areas where existing legislation is adequate to control responsible expansion (usually areas with importance for agriculture and	With the RTRS Approach to Responsible Conversion, there will be two phases: - For the short term, an interim approach will be used. This is set out in criterion 4.4 of the RTRS Standard for Responsible Soy Production Version 1.0. - For the medium term, the RTRS will develop official RTRS approved macro-scale maps which will provide biodiversity information and a system which will orient responsible expansion of RTRS soy. This work will be carried out as described below and should be completed before 31st December 2012 for Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia and Paraguay. Once national maps and methodologies are endorsed they replace any interim approach to managing responsible expansion.	Criterion 4.4 Expansion of Soy Cultivation is Responsible. 4.4.1 After May 2009 expansion for soy cultivation has not taken place on land cleared of native habitat except under the following conditions: 4.4.1.1 It is in line with an RTRS-approved map and system; or 4.4.1.2 Where no RTRS-approved map and system is available: a) Any area already cleared for agriculture or pasture before May 2009 and used for agriculture or pasture within the past 12 years can be used for soy expansion, unless regenerated vegetation has reached the definition of native forest (see glossary). b) There is no expansion in native forests. c) In areas that are not native forest, expansion into native habitat only occurs according to one of the following two options: Option 1. Official land-use maps such as ecological-economic zoning are used and expansion only occurs in areas designated for expansion by the zoning. If there are no official land use maps then maps produced by the government under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are used, and expansion only occurs outside priority areas for conservation shown on these maps. Option 2. A high Conservation Value Area (HCVA)	May-09	http://www.responsiblesoy.org/documentos/rtrs-standard-for-responsible-soy-production/		