



Leading Harvest Metrics Pilot Project

Participant Orientation

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Welcome

Thank you for participating in the Leading Harvest Farmland Management Standard Metrics Pilot. Your involvement in this project is a direct extension of the work you and/or your colleagues have already contributed through focus groups, surveys, and convenings - to help shape what a meaningful, practical metrics standard looks like for farmland managers and asset managers.

This pilot is the next step in that process. It moves from asking what metrics matter to actually testing whether those metrics can be collected, what the data looks like in practice, and any potential gaps. The findings will directly inform whether and how Leading Harvest incorporates a metrics module into the Farmland Management Standard. Its findings will inform an external-facing report for the industry, backing the metrics Leading Harvest selects and demonstrating the thought leadership and expertise of our members and select partners.

This document is your guide to participating. It covers:

- Why this pilot matters and what it is designed to learn
- The full timeline from now through the fall
- How the pilot is structured and what you will be asked to complete
- How to define your pilot scope: the specific acreage you will report on
- The metrics included in the pilot and what data is needed for each
- How your feedback will shape what comes next

A Note on What We Are Asking of You

This pilot is designed to work with data you already have. **You are not being asked to collect new data, install new systems, or report on your entire portfolio. You are being asked to look at what exists for a defined subset of your managed acres** across the 2024 and/or 2025 crop years, and to tell us what you find, including where data and methodology are available, where it is not, and what would make collection more feasible in the future.

Partial responses are valuable. A metric where you report that data does not exist or is not accessible is just as useful to Leading Harvest as a metric with a complete data set. The pilot is as much about understanding current capacity as it is about collecting specific numbers.

What the Pilot is Designed to Learn

The pilot has three primary research questions:

1. **What data already exists?** Which metrics are participants currently tracking, and in what form? Understanding existing data infrastructure is essential for designing a standard that members can actually meet.
2. **What are the gaps and barriers?** Where does data *not* exist, and why not? Is it a question of infrastructure, access, cost, or relevance? Understanding barriers is as important as collecting the data itself.

3. **Do these metrics connect to management decisions?** A metric only belongs in a farmland management standard if it can inform how land is managed. The pilot will assess whether the selected metrics are genuinely useful tools for participants, not just reporting obligations.

Pilot Timeline

The following timeline outlines the key milestones from orientation through the member convenings. Specific dates will be confirmed and communicated separately.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Pilot site launches with survey link and orientation materials June 4 th |
| 2 | JotForm pilot survey OPEN June 4 th : Four-week completion window begins |
| 3 | JotForm pilot survey CLOSES July 3 rd : All submissions due by this date |
| 4 | Follow-Up Interviews* Mid-July: One-hour interviews with a subset of respondents |
| 5 | US Member Convening — Minneapolis October 20 th , 2026: In-person pilot findings presented and discussed |
| 6 | Australian Member Convening — Melbourne November 5 th , 2026: In-person pilot findings presented and discussed |

*Follow-Up Interviews

Following the pilot submission window, a subset of respondents will be invited to participate in a one-hour follow-up interview in July. These conversations will go deeper into specific metrics regarding how data was collected, what was challenging, and what would make the process more useful. Interview participation is voluntary but strongly encouraged.

How the Pilot Is Structured

The pilot is completed through **JotForm**, a **secure online form platform**. **You will be able to save your progress and return to the survey to continue.** The form is divided into three parts. If you are completing the pilot for more than one subset of acreage, you will **complete one JotForm submission for each subset of acreage you choose** to include in the pilot.

Part 1: Background and Pilot Scope

Part 1 collects context about your organization, your current sustainability reporting, and — most importantly — the specific subset of acreage you are using for this pilot. This context is essential for interpreting the metrics data in Part 2. It is not a performance assessment; it is information that helps Leading Harvest understand what your numbers mean.

Part 1 takes approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete.

Part 2: Metrics Data Collection

Part 2 is the core of the pilot. It asks you to report data for each of the 15 selected metrics as it applies to the subset of acreage defined in Part 1. You complete only the metrics where data exists for the 2024 or 2025 crop year and where the metric is applicable to your operation type.

For each metric, you will be asked to provide the data value (or note that it is not available), document the method used to generate it, upload supporting data (spreadsheet, pdf, screenshot, etc) and answer a small number of questions designed to help understand your current data infrastructure.

The Data Collection Protocol section below gives detailed guidance on what is acceptable for each metric, including definitions, calculation methods, and examples. Refer to it as you work through Part 2.

The time it takes you to complete Part 2 will depend on the number of metrics for which data is available, but will likely take several hours to complete. This does not need to be completed in one sitting; you will be able to save progress and return to the survey.

Part 3: Feedback

Part 3 asks for your honest assessment of the pilot experience. You will be asked about:

- The feasibility of each metric: how difficult was the data to compile?
- Whether the metrics connect to real management decisions on your operation
- How long data collection took and what the primary barriers were
- Which metrics you found most and least useful
- General thoughts on the process and recommendations for improvement

There are no right or wrong answers in Part 3. Critical feedback is as valuable as positive feedback. The goal is to build a standard that works for members, and that requires understanding where it currently falls short.

Part 3 takes approximately 30-45 minutes to complete.

Defining Your Pilot Scope

One of the most important decisions you will make before completing the pilot is choosing the subset of acreage you will report on. This section explains what a pilot subset is, how to choose one, and what to document about it.

What Is a Pilot Subset?

A pilot subset is a defined portion of your total managed acres that you will use as the basis for all metric reporting in this pilot. We encourage you to reflect on where data is most accessible and where the metrics are most applicable to your operation.

Choosing a subset rather than your full portfolio accomplishes two things: it makes the pilot feasible within a reasonable amount of time and resources, and it allows you to focus on a context where the metrics are genuinely meaningful rather than forcing a one-size-fits-all approach across a highly diverse portfolio.

How to Choose Your Subset

You may define your subset in any of the following ways. Choose the approach that makes the most sense for your operation and where data is most accessible:

| Subset Type | Description and Example |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Single tenant operation | Report on one tenant farm or one tenant's operations across multiple parcels. Best suited for members who want to test what data a single tenant relationship can support. |
| Direct-operate acres | Report only on acres your organization directly operates or contract-manages, where you have full data access. A good starting point for members whose tenant relationships limit data availability. |
| Key Customer / Supplier | If you are an industry partner or CPG, consider working with a key customer or supplier. This may include a subset of acreage you have partnered on data collection with before. |
| Cropping system | Report on acres within a specific cropping system. For example, all irrigated row crop acres, all acreage in a specific crop (ex. Potatoes), all vineyard acres, or all dryland grain acres. Best suited for members who want to assess one production system type comprehensively. |
| Geographic area | Report on managed acres within a defined region, for example a state, county, watershed, or basin. Best suited for members with diverse portfolios who want to focus on one operating context. |
| Combination of Subsets | Example: Report on all potato acres in a given state with a key tenant or customer. Select what is meaningful and doable. |

You Can Report on More Than One Subset

If your portfolio includes meaningfully different operation types — for example, irrigated specialty crops in California and dryland grain in Australia — you are encouraged to complete a separate submission for each subset. Each submission represents one defined pilot scope and is treated as an independent data contribution.

There is no requirement to complete more than one subset. One well-defined submission is more valuable than multiple incomplete ones.

What You Will Be Asked to Document About Your Subset

In Part 1, you will be asked to describe your chosen subset so that Leading Harvest can interpret your metrics data in context. This includes:

- Total acres in the subset
- Primary crop(s) or commodity type(s)
- Operation type — directly operated, contract-managed, or tenant-operated
- Geography — state(s) or region(s) included
- Why you chose this subset — a brief explanation of what makes it a useful pilot scope for your organization
- The proportion of the subset that is irrigated vs. dryland / rainfed
- Any significant limitations or data gaps you are aware of before beginning

Metrics Included in the Pilot

The following 15 metrics were selected through a process that included a landscape assessment of over 120 sustainability frameworks, surveys of Leading Harvest members, four stakeholder convenings, and five focus groups. They represent the best available balance of scientific credibility, operational relevance, and data accessibility across a diverse membership.

For each metric, you will complete only the fields where data exists for your pilot subset for the 2024 or 2025 crop year. A metric where you report that data is not available is a valid and valuable response.

Full definitions, calculation guidance, and acceptable data sources can be found in the [Metrics Data Collection Protocols](#) document.

| Category | Metrics |
|---------------|---|
| Soil Health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil Organic Matter Anchor Metric for this category [highest resonance / potential for successful collection based upon aforementioned selection process] • Aggregate Stability • Nutrient Use Efficiency — Nitrogen |
| Biodiversity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crop and Rotation Diversity Index Anchor Metric • Habitat Extent and Quality • IPM and Beneficial Insect Management |
| Water Quality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irrigation Efficiency (irrigated operations) • Groundwater Levels • Nutrient or Sediment Load |
| Climate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GHG Emissions — Carbon Intensity Anchor Metric • Soil Carbon / Carbon Sequestration • Land Use Change |
| Social | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety Training Completion and Recordable Incident Tracking Anchor Metric • Agricultural Management Retention Rate • Community Engagement Activities Annually |

Part 1: Background and Pilot Scope

This section provides additional context for each field you will complete in Part 1 of the pilot. Part 1 is designed to give Leading Harvest the context needed to interpret your metrics data meaningfully.

Member Profile

Basic organizational information used to identify your submission and direct follow-up communications. This information is not shared externally and is used only for pilot administration and analysis.

- Organization name
- Primary contact name and title
- Contact email and phone
- Country or countries of primary operation (U.S. / Australia / Both)

Current Sustainability Reporting

Leading Harvest members participate in a wide range of sustainability programs and face diverse reporting requirements from buyers, investors, and regulators. Understanding what you are already reporting helps Leading Harvest identify where the pilot metrics align with existing obligations and where they represent genuinely new data collection requests.

You will be asked:

- Are you currently participating in any external sustainability frameworks or certification programs? If yes, list them (e.g., Field to Market, RSPO, Rainforest Alliance, BCI, GRI, SASB, TCFD, AASB S2, state or regional programs).
- Do any of your buyers, investors, or lenders currently require sustainability metric reporting from you? If yes, describe what is being requested.
- Are you currently subject to any regulatory reporting requirements related to water, GHG emissions, or land use? If yes, name the program and/or requirement.

Data Management

Understanding how members currently manage agronomic and sustainability data will help Leading Harvest design a metrics module that integrates with existing systems rather than creating parallel, duplicative data infrastructure.

You will be asked:

- What platforms or systems do you currently use to track farm management data? (e.g.: farm management software, spreadsheets, agronomist records, ERP systems, sustainability platforms — list what you use)
- Do you currently use any MRV (Measurement, Reporting, and Verification) tools for GHG or carbon accounting? If yes, name the tool(s).
- Is farm-level data centrally managed by your organization, or distributed across individual operators, tenants, or agronomists?

Pilot Scope Declaration

This is the most important section of Part 1. It defines the specific subset of acreage you are reporting on and provides the context Leading Harvest needs to interpret your Part 2 data.

You will be asked to describe your pilot subset using the framework outlined in the Defining Your Pilot Scope section of this document. Specifically:

- Subset type: How the subset is defined (single tenant / cropping system / geographic area / direct-operate acres / key client or customer / other — describe)
- Total acres in the subset
- Primary crop(s) or commodity type(s) in the subset
- Operation type for the subset: directly operated / contract-managed / tenant-operated / mixed
- Geography: state(s), region(s), or basin(s) included in the subset
- Why you chose this subset: a brief explanation
- Proportion of subset that is irrigated vs. dryland / rainfed (approximate %)
- Known limitations or data gaps for this subset before beginning

What to Expect After You Submit

After participating in the pilot, here is what will happen next:

1. **Acknowledgment.** You will receive confirmation that your submission was received.
2. **Follow-up interview invitation (July).** In July, a subset of respondents will be invited to participate in a one-hour follow-up interview. If selected, you will be contacted directly to schedule a time. Participation is voluntary.
3. **Pilot analysis & report share-out (September).** All submissions will be analyzed to identify patterns in data availability, collection methods, metric feasibility, and connections to management decisions. A summary report of the findings and insights from the pilot will be sent out to all participants.
4. **Member convenings (October/November).** Findings will be presented:
October 20th for US members (Minneapolis)
November 5th for Australian members (Melbourne)
These sessions are your opportunity to respond to what the data shows, raise concerns, and help shape recommendations before anything is finalized.
5. **Final report and metrics module (November).** Leading Harvest will publish a thought leadership piece with insights around its two-year project findings and the final metrics module.

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to complete all 15 metrics?

No. You complete only the metrics where data exists for your pilot subset for the 2024 or 2025 crop year and where the metric is applicable to your operation type. A response of 'data not available' or 'not applicable' is a valid and useful submission.

What if I only have data for one crop year?

That is fine. Report what you have. If you have data for both 2024 and 2025, report both. If you only have one year, report that year and note which one.

Can I report modeled or estimated values rather than measured data?

Yes, for most environmental metrics. Both measured and modeled values are acceptable. You must document which type of value you are reporting and the source or method used. Refer to the Data Collection Protocol for guidance on what is acceptable for each specific metric.

What if I can't access data from my tenants?

This is a common situation and one of the things the pilot is specifically designed to understand. Where tenant data is not accessible, note this in the diagnostic questions for the relevant metric. A response documenting that tenant data is not available is useful information for Leading Harvest — it tells us something important about the structural constraints any metrics standard must account for.

How long will the pilot take to complete?

This depends on how many metrics you have data for and how that data is currently organized. We estimate approximately 3-4 hours for a complete submission across all three parts. Participants who have fewer metrics with available data will complete it faster. Gathering and organizing your data before opening the form will save time.

Is my data confidential?

Yes. Data privacy is important to us: Participation in this pilot asks participants to report metric data to Leading Harvest and its consultancy partner. All data will be 1) held confidentially and 2) only be reported out in the aggregate, 3) without the disclosure or identification of participating entities.

What if I have questions while completing the pilot?

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AND

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We are available through the open window to answer questions about definitions, methods, or any aspect of the process.