



Friends of the Earth
Climate-Friendly Food
For Healthy Kids and a Healthy Planet

Internal Assessment Guide

For Producer Questionnaire for
Regenerative & Climate-Smart
Practices



This assessment guide is meant to be used by school nutrition teams, NGO partners, food hubs, or other purchasers. This should NOT be completed by the farmer.

Are you working with a certified farmer or rancher?

This survey is for agricultural producers without one of the following certifications: CCOF Organic, USDA Organic, Regenerative Organic Certified, Real Organic Project, Certified Regenerative by AGW, and Demeter Biodynamic. Please see this [Regenerative Food Label Guide](#) to assess the strength of various certifications.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to better understand a producer's practices — not to make a definitive determination about whether a farm or ranch "regenerative" or "climate-smart."

Rather than approaching regenerative or climate-smart farming as a "pass" or "fail" designation, use the responses to understand where the farm falls along a continuum. Crop type, climate, geography, farm size, and production system all affect which practices are practical and appropriate.

Interpreting Answers

After a producer completes the questionnaire, purchasers may summarize the farm's current practices using the guide below. There are two types of questions — those where the answers are organized from the best (at the top) to the worst (at the bottom); and those where there is a long list of practices and the more that are checked, the better.

- **Questions marked with a** 🌟 **:** Top answer = strongest; bottom answer = weakest
- **Questions marked with a** ☑️ **:** More boxes checked = stronger alignment

Section	Question	Type	Quick Assessment
1. Standards & Certifications	Please see this Regenerative Food Label Guide to assess the strength of various certifications.		☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Limited ☐ N/A
2. Pest Management & Agrochemicals	2.1 Pesticide use	★ Ranked	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Limited ☐ N/A
	2.2 Pest prevention practices	☑ Check-all-that-apply	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Limited ☐ N/A
3. Treated Seeds & GMOs	3.1 Pesticide-treated seeds	★ Ranked	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Limited ☐ N/A
	3.2 GMO seeds	★ Ranked	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Limited ☐ N/A
4. Habitat & Biodiversity	4.1 Habitat/ biodiversity practices	☑ Check-all-that-apply	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Limited ☐ N/A
5. Fertilizer & Nutrient Management	5.1 Synthetic fertilizer use	★ Ranked	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Limited ☐ N/A
	5.2 Soil fertility practices	☑ Check-all-that-apply	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Limited ☐ N/A
	5.3 Source of fertility inputs	★ Ranked	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Limited ☐ N/A

Section	Question	Type	Quick Assessment
6. Soil Health	6.1 Cover crops	★ Ranked	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Limited ☐ N/A
	6.2 Soil disturbance practices	★ Ranked	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Limited ☐ N/A
	6.3 Crop rotations	★ Ranked	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Limited ☐ N/A
	6.4 Soil coverage	★ Ranked	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Limited ☐ N/A
7. Livestock	7.1 Outdoor access	★ Ranked	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Limited ☐ N/A
	7.2 Animal welfare practices/standards (Please see this ASPCA guide on certifications)	☑ Check-all-that-apply	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Limited ☐ N/A
	7.3 Livestock integration	☑ Check-all-that-apply	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Limited ☐ N/A
	7.4 Grazing practices	★ Ranked	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Limited ☐ N/A
	7.5 Source of livestock feed	★ Ranked	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Limited ☐ N/A
	7.6 Purchased feed type	★ Ranked	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Limited ☐ N/A

Section	Question	Type	Quick Assessment
8. Farm Goals & Continuous Improvement	8.1 Areas currently working to improve	☒ Check-all-that-apply	☐ Strong ☐ Developing ☐ Limited ☐ N/A

Appendix: Common Pesticides, Trade Names, and Key Concerns

Pesticides is an umbrella term that includes herbicides, insecticides, and fungicides. This is a list of concerning pesticides that are commonly used on staple school food crops (corn, soy, wheat, fruits, vegetables). Farmers can legally make “regenerative” or “climate smart” claims without restricting use of any of these pesticides.

This is NOT an exhaustive list of pesticides of concern or product names.

Pesticide (Active Ingredient)	Common Trade Names	Key Health & Environmental Concerns
Herbicides		
Glyphosate	Roundup®, Ranger Pro®, Touchdown®	Linked to cancer; harms soil life; drives herbicide-resistant weeds
Dicamba	XtendiMax®, Engenia®, Clarity®	Drift damage to neighboring farms and ecosystems; harms non-target plants
2,4-D	Enlist One®, Weedar® 64	Hormone disruption; potential cancer risk; drift and volatilization concerns
Paraquat	Gramoxone®, Firestorm®	Highly toxic; small exposures can be fatal; linked to Parkinson’s disease
Atrazine	AAtrex®	Hormone disruption; groundwater contamination; persistent in environment
Glufosinate	Liberty®	Neurotoxicity concerns; commonly used as glyphosate alternative
S-metolachlor	Dual Magnum®	Water contamination; potential developmental and endocrine effects
Insecticides		
Diazinon (organophosphate)	Diazinon®	Neurotoxic; harmful to birds and aquatic life; developmental risks
Carbaryl (carbamate)	Sevin®	Nervous system effects; toxic to pollinators and beneficial insects
Methomyl (carbamate)	Lannate®	Highly toxic; acute poisoning risk; harmful to wildlife and farmworkers
Pyrethroids (e.g., bifenthrin)	Brigade®, Baythroid®	Neurotoxic; highly toxic to fish and aquatic life; widely used replacements for older insecticides

Imidacloprid (neonicotinoid)	Admire®, Gaucho®	Highly toxic to pollinators, beneficial insects and aquatic species; persistent in the environment; neurotoxicity concerns
Thiamethoxam (neonicotinoid)	Cruiser®	Highly toxic to pollinators, beneficial insects and aquatic species; persistent in the environment; neurotoxicity concerns
Clothianidin (neonicotinoid)	Poncho®	Highly toxic to pollinators, beneficial insects and aquatic species; persistent in the environment; neurotoxicity concerns
Fipronil	Regent®	Highly toxic to pollinators and aquatic organisms; persistent in the environment
Fungicides		
Chlorothalonil (fungicide)	Bravo®	Probable carcinogen; toxic to aquatic life; persistent
Mancozeb (fungicide)	Dithane®	Breaks down into compounds linked to thyroid disruption and cancer risk
Azoxystrobin (fungicide)	Quadris®	Toxic to aquatic organisms; widely used on fruits and vegetables
Seed treatment mixes	CruiserMaxx®, Acceleron®	Combine insecticides + fungicides; systemic exposure; pollinator and ecosystem impacts



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About Friends of the Earth's Climate-Friendly School Food Program

Friends of the Earth's Climate-Friendly School Food Program helps school districts make shifts toward delicious, plant-forward, and organic menus that benefit students and the planet. We work with over 100 school districts in California, as well as state agencies, NGO partners, and organic and regenerative farmers. We provide organic procurement and plant-based technical assistance and marketing materials, support student and community engagement strategies, and link school districts with the resources they need in order to be successful. Our Organic School Food Initiative, launched in California, aims to make organic foods available to every student. We also partner with school districts and NGOs to advocate for state and federal policy change. For more information or to request support please email climatefriendlyfood@foe.org.

