



In May of 2011 Quality Certification Services (QCS)

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QCS is the Certification Program of Florida Certified Organic Growers and Consumers, Inc. (FOG)

In May of 2011, I participated in the Agricultural Justice Project (AJP) Auditor training. In March of 2013, I participated in the SA8000 Introduction and Basic Auditor Training Course. I subsequently received certification for each of these trainings. While both certification programs strive for similar goals, through these trainings, I took note of many similarities and differences in the scope and standards of these programs.

Scope:

The biggest difference between the two programs is in scope. Many of the differences in the standards are a function of the different needs to meet the similar goals under the different scopes.

AJP is only designed to cover food businesses and farms. While these can be covered by SA8000, SA8000 is not limited to these businesses alone. SA8000 may cover any business that produces products or provides services, and all of its requirements apply universally, regardless of a company's size, geographic location, or industry sector. SA8000 has trade standards only as they apply to subcontractors.

Worker Organizations:

In addition, AJP is generally a 3 part certification, where the business seeking certification, an accredited Worker Organization, and a Certification Body (CB) all have crucial roles to play in the certification process. It is the company's job to apply for certification and ensure that all standards are met. It is the CB's job to manage and lead the audit, finalize the audit report, and make a certification decision. It is the Worker Organization's job to collaborate on the audit and the audit report, be available for worker trainings, etc. The worker organization may be omitted in rare cases where none is available. However, under SA8000, there are no 3rd party worker organizations included in the certification process, though they are allowed (and encouraged) to be present for employee training.

Below is a side by side comparison of major portions of the AJP and SA8000 standards:

Issue	AJP	SA8000
Child and Young Worker Labor	<p>A citation is made approving of ILO convention 182, stating "Age-appropriate tasks that are of lower risk and do not interfere with a child's schooling and leisure time, can be a normal part of growing up in a rural environment. Indeed, many types of work experience for children can be positive, providing them with practical and social skills for work as adults." Defines children as under 18 years of age. In countries where young people can legally leave school at the age of 16, these standards would allow the full-time employment of 16 – 18 year olds if it can be documented that the children left school voluntarily."</p> <p>In no case can a young worker work during night hours.</p>	<p>Child (under age 15, or higher if local laws require) labor is forbidden. Young workers (between child and age 18) outside of school hours, can be allowed provided that work, school, and transport to the two do not exceed 10 hours per day. In no case can a young worker work over 8 hours in a day, or during night hours.</p> <p>Certified businesses must have a plan in place about how to handle a situation where a child is discovered to be working for the business. In this case, it becomes incumbent on the business to provide adequate financial and other support to enable such children to attend and remain in school until no longer a child.</p>

	Young workers may not be required to work during school hours.	
Forced and Compulsory Labor:	<p>Prohibits any forced or compulsory labor.</p> <p>Forbids withholding any salaries, benefits, or property.</p> <p>Workers have the right to maintain custody of their documents.</p>	<p>Prohibits any forced or compulsory labor as per ILO convention 29. To this end, no employee may be required to pay a deposit upon hiring and no business may maintain possession of any identification papers.</p> <p>Forbids withholding any salaries, benefits, or property. This is even true for certificates of trainings paid for by the employer.</p> <p>Personnel have the right to leave the work place, including dormitories, after completing the standard work day.</p> <p>Expressly forbids any human trafficking.</p> <p>The SA8000 training stressed the importance of workers maintaining custody of their documents as a basic right, giving workers the freedom to leave their jobs when they choose.</p>
Health and Safety:	<p>Has strict lists of chemicals which certified operations may not use, even including several that are allowed in certified organic production, though this will likely soon change and be replaced by a requirement that the farms be certified organic or meet organic standards.</p> <p>Require all labeling requirements of chemicals used to be met, including personal protective equipment (PPE).</p> <p>Emphasizes the importance of training of workers that use chemicals.</p> <p>Businesses of 10 or more employees (including interns) must maintain a staff member who is responsible for health and safety.</p> <p>Requires management to determine the least toxic alternative whenever possible.</p> <p>Require accidents to be minimal and reasonable steps be taken to avoid them.</p> <p>Guarantees workers the right of choice</p>	<p>Require all labeling requirements of chemicals used to be met, including personal protective equipment (PPE).</p> <p>Extends the PPE requirement to include any hazards, such as loud noises and high light.</p> <p>Emphasizes the importance of training of workers that use chemicals.</p> <p>Requires employers to maintain a staff member who is responsible for health and safety.</p> <p>Requires management to determine the least toxic alternative whenever possible.</p> <p>Require accidents to be minimal and reasonable steps be taken to avoid them.</p>

	of health providers.	
Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining	<p>Demand workers have the right to freely associate and bargain collectively, respected by the company. The company may in no way interfere with workers ability or desire to establish such systems, nor with their function or administration.</p> <p>Where the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining are restricted under law, the company shall allow workers to freely elect their own representatives.</p>	<p>Demand workers have the right to freely associate and bargain collectively, respected by the company. The company may in no way interfere with workers ability or desire to establish such systems, nor with their function or administration.</p> <p>An employer may not show preference to one union over another</p> <p>Where the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining are restricted under law, the company shall allow workers to freely elect their own representatives.</p>
Discrimination:	<p>Discrimination by companies against employees or potential employees in any way (hiring, workplace, etc) is forbidden.</p> <p>Prohibit any activities which are threatening, abusive, or coercive.</p>	<p>Discrimination by companies against employees or potential employees in any way (hiring, workplace, etc) is forbidden.</p> <p>Anti-discrimination standard is a bit more inclusive than AJP, as it includes caste, family responsibility, and “any other condition that could give rise to discrimination”, while AJP's list is more finite in that regard.</p> <p>Forbids pregnancy or virginity tests.</p> <p>Prohibit any activities which are threatening, abusive, or coercive.</p>
Discipline and Termination:	<p>Prohibit any corporal punishment, mental or physical coercion, verbal abuse, or inhumane treatment of employees.</p> <p>Prohibits disciplinary deductions from wages.</p> <p>Prohibits firing of workers except for just cause.</p>	<p>Prohibit any corporal punishment, mental or physical coercion, verbal abuse, or inhumane treatment of employees.</p> <p>Allows disciplinary deductions from wages, assuming that wages are still maintained above a living wage and if allowed by law.</p>
Working Hours:	<p>Overtime being paid at a premium is a goal, not always required if the employer cannot do this at the farm level (due to inability to get a price that would support this). This must be done if required by law, and this must always be done by a food business.</p> <p>All employees to have at least one day of rest per seven days</p> <p>Forbids a worker to regularly be required to work over 48 hours per</p>	<p>Overtime must be paid at a premium.</p> <p>All employees to have at least one day of rest per seven days</p> <p>Usually forbids a worker to regularly be required to work over 48 hours per week, but offers an exception to this in order to meet short-term business demand if and only if the company is party to a collective bargaining agreement freely negotiated with worker organizations.</p>

	week	Puts special emphasis on businesses not relying on overtime to get the work done, and the training emphasized that when workers are paid a good wage, their demand for overtime often subsides.
Living Wage and Remuneration:	<p>Expects companies to attempt to pay a living wage, but if the company cannot, a full open book policy with respect to the company's finances, along with a plan to achieve a living wage, which must involve workers' input and measures of progress towards the goal.</p> <p>Requires that personnel's wages and benefits composition are detailed clearly and regularly in writing for them for each pay period.</p> <p>Requires that farms using Labor Contracts ensure that AJP requirements are met with respect to them.</p>	<p>Requires companies pay a living wage.</p> <p>Requires that personnel's wages and benefits composition are detailed clearly and regularly in writing for them for each pay period.</p> <p>Prohibits labor only contracting (contracts must be for specified tasks/services, not for unspecified labor).</p>
Contracted and Sub-Contracted labor:	<p>Has strict limits on how much contracted work may be done to certified products (such as pitting of cherries, etc) by non AJP certified facilities.</p> <p>Regulates the relationship between certified food businesses and contracted growers.</p> <p>If a certified business and a certified farmer engage in a contract for capital investment and the buyer terminates the contract, the farmer can collect damages from the buyer. Also, Unless alternative arrangements exist, if a buyer cancels a contract before a certified farmer's debt endured to meet contract is paid, the buyer must reimburse the farmer.</p> <p>Under AJP, certified buyers must pay farmers a fair price. In markets where price is volatile, a minimum price must be negotiated ahead of time.</p> <p>Certified business may offer credit to farmers for up to 60% of their contract in pre-financing. As an alternative, the business may provide financing and/or subsidizing of organic inputs.</p>	<p>Requires that a company make all reasonable efforts to ensure that sub-contracted facilities meet SA8000 standards, but recognizes that this may not always be possible. SA8000 does not quantify these requirements. For example, a garment factory will generally have very little influence over the zipper manufacturing or fabric dying process, but they will have more influence over sub-contracted collar sewing. In this case, it is only the collar sewing that would be required to meet the SA8000 requirements. Verification of subcontractor compliance must be done by the contracting company.</p>
Communication of Social Justice	Requires businesses to define in writing, in workers' own language, the	Requires businesses to define in writing, in workers' own language, the company's

Standards:	company's policy for social accountability and labor conditions.	policy for social accountability and labor conditions.
Conflict Resolution:	Requires that all certified businesses have a conflict resolution procedure in place.	
Family Relationships:	Prohibits domestic partners from being direct supervisors of one another.	
Voluntary Ending of Employment:	Allows workers the right to terminate employment without restriction.	Requires any employee have the right to quit, but states she or he may be required to give reasonable notice.
Seniority:	Requires employers to implement a seniority policy	
Leave of Absence:	Requires leave be granted for maternity, paternity, medical, and family emergencies	Requires companies to meet ILO convention 183 requiring maternity leave.
Housing:	Requires that dormitories are clean, safe, and meet the basic needs of personnel. Allows for full visitation rights in dorms. Fees charged for dorms must be reasonable. Requires dorms to provide privacy.	Requires that dormitories are clean, safe, and meet the basic needs of personnel. Visitation rights in dorms may be restricted. Fees charged for dorms must be reasonable.
Interns and Apprentices:	Allows interns on farms for educational purposes.	Allows for apprenticeship, but only for long enough to teach a trade. Prohibits extended, or "false" apprenticeships. Forbids placing or quotas on apprentices.
Continual Improvement:	Dedicated to continual improvement in the way certified businesses meet their social obligations.	Dedicated to continual improvement in the way certified businesses meet their social obligations.

Signed

Brian Rakita 6/24/2013