

Sustainability guidelines; Agriculture and nature

SpareBank 1 SR-Bank is an important partner for agriculture in our market area. Agriculture includes forestry and agriculture, which in turn includes livestock.

Sustainable agriculture and conservation are an important concern for the group. Nature is a renewable resource if it is managed sustainably. We want to be a driving force for sustainable development in our market area, and will work with our customers to achieve this. This means that our customers and business associates should consider whether their business has a negative impact on the climate, environment and nature, and perform targeted work to reduce their impact. They should also seek to strengthen the positive impact they can have on sustainable conservation. They should have their own guidelines in areas that are of relevance to their business and to their suppliers and other partners, including in contracts and specifications of requirements. We also want to contribute to sustainable agriculture and conservation internationally.

These guidelines are rooted in our “Sustainability strategy” and our “General sustainability guidelines”.

The Agricultural Land Act should be followed in all work with agriculture and nature. The objective of the Act is to *“provide suitable conditions to ensure that the land areas in the country including forests and mountains and everything pertaining thereto (land resources) may be used in the manner that is most beneficial to society and to those working in the agricultural sector...A manner beneficial to society entails taking into account the fact that the resources shall be disposed of with a view to the needs of future generations. Land resource management shall be environmentally sound and, among other things, take into consideration protection of the soil as a production factor and preservation of land and cultural landscapes as a basis for life, health and well-being for human beings, animals and plants.”*¹

QAS (the quality assurance system in agriculture) is agriculture’s joint quality system for primary production and is recognised by the Norwegian Food Safety Authority as a national industry standard; see appendix. QAS builds the reputation for Norwegian food production where the products must be free from infection and without dangerous foreign substances, produced with good animal welfare, in an environmentally friendly manner and in a safe working environment that ensures good health for workers.

Our customers are expected to operate their business in accordance with QAS and be in line with internationally recognised conventions, laws, regulations and requirements of commodity buyers. Some important areas within nature and agriculture are specified below. This does not mean that others are unimportant, but we want our agriculture customers and other business associates to pay particular attention that they do not:

Biological diversity and genetic engineering

- breach international or national guidelines for biological diversity and genetic engineering, including the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the related Bonn guidelines and the Nagoya protocol, as well as “Nature for Life – Norwegian action plan for natural diversity”.²
- operate in production of or trade in living genetically modified organisms without the permission of the country of import and without fulfilling the requirements of the Cartagena Protocol, which is a

protocol under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. The ratification of the Cartagena Protocol is treated in a separate Storting bill in Norway.³

– in major projects that could have a dangerous impact on biological diversity, fail to perform an environmental impact assessment. In this case, for example, the GRI 304 Standard: Biodiversity 2016 can be used.

Animal welfare

– breach the Animal Protection Act, and fail to follow the Norwegian Food Safety Authority's guidance on the import and export of animals, production animals, animal transport and slaughter.⁴

– breach the Brambell Commission's accepted five freedoms for animal welfare: freedom from hunger, thirst and malnutrition; freedom from discomfort, disease and injury; freedom to express normal behaviour; and freedom from fear and distress.⁵

– have irresponsible use of antibiotics, which contributes to antibiotic-resistant bacteria that can be transferred to humans.⁶

Nature conservation areas, wetlands and peat

– have a harmful impact on wetland registered in the Ramsar Convention on wetlands or vulnerable and protected natural areas/protected areas registered by the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN).⁷ There are over 60 Ramsar areas in Norway, and many in our market area.⁸ Businesses must respect the plan for restoration of wetlands in Norway (2016-2020), the purpose of which is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to climate change and improve ecological conditions.

– fail to respect regional and local protection plans where they operate.⁹

– fail to respect national guides for the cutting of peat, especially peat from high bogs, which are a threatened natural environment in both Norway and Europe.¹⁰

World heritage

– have a detrimental influence on a UNESCO world heritage site. The UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritages is an international agreement that obliges countries to identify, protect, conserve, administer and transfer to future generations the part of the world's inheritance that exists on its own territory.¹¹

¹ Act on Agricultural Land (Agricultural Land Act) <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/1995-05-12-23>

² Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD), Norwegian Environment Agency.

<http://www.miljodirektoratet.no/no/Tema/Internasjonalt/Internasjonale-avtaler/Konvensjonen-om-biologisk-mangfold-CBD/>

³ Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Norwegian Environment Agency,

<http://www.miljodirektoratet.no/no/Tema/Internasjonalt/Internasjonale-avtaler/Konvensjonen-om-biologisk-mangfold-CBD/>

⁴ Animals and animal husbandry. Norwegian Food Safety Authority https://www.mattilsynet.no/dyr_og_dyrehold/

⁵ What is animal welfare? Norwegian Food Safety Authority, State Inspectorate for Plants, Fish, Animals and Foodstuffs,

https://www.mattilsynet.no/dyr_og_dyrehold/dyrevelferd/rad_om_dyrevelferd/hva_er_dyrevelferd.5017

6 Antibiotic use, Norwegian Agrarian Association. <https://www.bondelaget.no/antibiotikabruk/>

7 "Protection across national borders". Environmental Protection Agency <http://www.miljodirektoratet.no/no/Tema/Verneomrader/Vern-over-landegrensene/>

8 "Norway currently has 63 sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites), with a surface area of 909,134 hectares." <https://www.ramsar.org/wetland/norway>

9 Examples of protection of areas in Hedmark. Hedmark County Governor. <https://www.fylkesmannen.no/nb/Hedmark/Miljo-og-klima/Verneomrader/Gjennomfort-vern/>

10 Phase out of cutting and use of peat. Environmental Protection Agency <http://www.miljodirektoratet.no/no/Nyheter/Nyheter/2018/Februar-2018/Utfasing-av-uttak-og-bruk-av-torv/>

11 World Heritage Convention. Norwegian Environment Agency. <http://www.miljodirektoratet.no/no/Tema/Internasjonalt/Internasjonale-avtaler/Verdensarvkonvensjonen/>

Water

- start operations in areas with water shortages without performing impact analyses of its own water consumption and/or operate irresponsible water management that has major negative consequences for humans and nature.
- severely contaminate water and not perform environmental analyses to avoid water contamination.

Endangered species of plants and animals

- breach the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats.¹²
- operate trade in or has activities in areas with endangered plant and animal species, including animal species listed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, not take them into account and not minimise interventions in nature. Trade shall fulfil CITES conditions and trade in endangered plant and animal species that are on CITES lists shall not occur. The Norwegian Environment Agency is the Norwegian Cites authority and the Agency's website contains information on what requirements are established for the import, export and ownership of endangered species and products from endangered species. ¹³
- introduce, disseminate or spread foreign organisms that entail or could entail negative consequences for natural diversity and thus breach the Norwegian regulation on foreign organisms. ¹⁴

Use of chemicals and fertilisers

- perform irresponsible use of fertiliser and chemicals, and not follow national developments and regulations concerning the exploitation of organic fertilisers.¹⁵

Raw materials

- fail to respect internationally recognised standards and initiatives for agricultural commodities produced outside of Norway, which are associated with particular environmental risk and risk of poor working conditions, such as cocoa, coffee, tea, soy, palm oil, sugar cane, cotton, biofuel etc. Where possible, relevant certification of the commodities should be applied.¹⁶ There are many international initiatives that develop tools and guidance that may be of assistance. In Norway, the multiparty initiative 'Initiative for Ethical Trade' (IEH) is a relevant partner.¹⁷

Forestry

- fail to comply with the Forestry Act, the purpose of which is "promote sustainable management of forest resources in Norway with a view to promotion of local and national economic development,

and to secure biological diversity, consideration for the landscape, outdoor recreation and the cultural values associated with the forest.”¹⁸

- not respect the regulations of County Governors on the protection of forest.
- use timber from parties that operate illegal logging, sale of illegally cut timber or use timber or deforestation, and/or which destroy tropical rainforests, remove primary forest or protected

forests (High Conservation Value Forests), or have suppliers or other business associates that do so.

- operate irresponsible forest management and breach what is considered to be good industry standards, including through the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)¹ Where there is a risk of harmful impacts, production forests and timber plantations should be FSC certified.¹⁹ This also applies to high-risk supplier chains, with paper pulp, paper, veneer, furniture or woodwork.
- do not follow the EU Timber Regulation, which should avoid illegal logging and trade in lumber and wood products that originate from illegal logging.²⁰
- have irresponsible use of chemicals and contamination of the soil, water and air in paper and paper pulp production.
- do not respect indigenous peoples and the local population's rights concerning the use of forests.²¹
- operate palm oil production that is not sustainable.

We encourage businesses that have major influence in the forestry and paper industry to report in accordance with CDP Forests Program (previously Forest Footprint Disclosure Project).²²

¹² "Protection across national borders". Norwegian Environment Agency <http://www.miljodirektoratet.no/no/Tema/Verneomrader/Vern-over-landegrensene/>

¹³ Cites protected species. Norwegian Environment Agency. <http://www.miljodirektoratet.no/no/Tema/Arter-og-naturtyper/Handel-med-trua-arter-CITES/CITES-verner-arter/>

¹⁴ Regulation on foreign organisms. Norwegian Environment Agency. <http://www.miljodirektoratet.no/no/Regelverk/Forskrifter/Forskrift-om-fremmede-organismer/>

¹⁵ Future-orientated use of fertiliser in new regulations. Norwegian Environment Agency.

<http://www.miljodirektoratet.no/no/Nyheter/Nyheter/2018/Mars-2018/Framtidsrettet-bruk-av-gjodsel-i-nytt-regelverk/>

¹⁶ Consumer Council's brand overview. <https://www.forbrukerradet.no/merkeoversikten/>

¹⁷ http://etiskhandel.no/Om_I EH/index.html

¹⁸ Act on Forestry (Forestry Act), <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/2005-05-27-31>

¹⁹ FSC, Consumer Council. <https://www.forbrukerradet.no/merkeoversikten/miljo/fsc/>

²⁰ Timber Regulation. Norwegian Environment Agency. <http://www.miljodirektoratet.no/no/Regelverk/Forordning/Tommerforordningen/>

²¹ Overview of Indigenous Population Conventions. United Nations Association of Norway. <https://www.fn.no/Om-FN/Avtaler/Urfolk>

APPENDIX:

The requirements in the QAS standard are based on public laws and regulations, plus some specifically defined requirements as well. The legal basis and regulations are grouped below under the same headings as the QAS standard.

1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR FARMS

Act on Bookkeeping

Regulation on production subsidy in agriculture

Act on Protection Against Pollution and Relating to Waste (Pollution Act)

Regulation on plant protection products

Regulation on fertiliser planning

Regulation on fertilisers etc. with organic origin

Regulation on animal and pest control

Act on Food Production and Food Safety (Food Act)

Regulation on plants and measures against plant pests (Phytophealth regulation)

Regulation on oat grasses

Regulation on handling of flammable, reactive and pressurised substances, and equipment facilities used for handling

Regulation on general principles and requirements for food products (Food act regulation)

Regulation on food hygiene (Food hygiene regulation)

Regulation on animal by-products that are not intended for consumption (By-product regulation)

Regulation on subsidies for environmentally friendly spreading of animal fertiliser

Regulation on the handling of explosives precursors

2 HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT (HSE)

Regulation on safety, health and working environment at building and construction sites (Construction client regulation)

Act on Working Environment, Working Hours and Employment Protection etc. (Working Environment Act)

Regulation on the design and facility of workplaces and work premises (workplace regulation)

Regulation on the organisation, management and participation

Regulation on action and threshold values for physical and chemical factors in the working environment as well as infectious risk groups for biological factors (Regulation on action and threshold values)

Regulation on fire prevention measures and inspection

Regulation on electrical low-voltage systems (FEL)

Regulation on technical requirements for construction work (Technical construction regulation)

Regulation on systematic health, environmental and safety work in enterprises (Internal control regulation) Act on the Prevention of Fire, Explosion and Accidents involving Hazardous Substances, and on the Fire Department's Fire and Rescue Work (Fire and Explosion Protection Act)

Act on the Supervision of Electrical Installations and Electrical Equipment

Act on the Control Of Products And Consumer Services

Regulation on administrative ordinances in the area of the Environmental Protection Act (Regulation on administrative ordinances)

Regulation on construction, design and production of work equipment that is not covered by the regulation on machinery (Manufacturer regulation)

Regulation on the performance of work, use of work equipment and related technical requirements (Regulation on performance of work)

Act on Road Traffic

Regulation on electrical equipment

Regulation on stocks of hens and turkeys

Regulation on stocks of cattle

Regulation on stocks of swine

Regulation on welfare for sheep

Regulation on handling inflammable, dangerously reactive and pressurised substances as well as equipment and facilities that are used during handling

Regulation on handling of dangerously explosive substances

Act on Obligatory Occupational Pensions

Regulation on the handling of explosives precursors

3 COARSE FEED, GRAIN, OILSEED, PEAS AND SEED CULTIVATION

Regulation on the performance of work, use of work equipment and related technical requirements (Regulation on performance of work)

Regulation on food hygiene (Food hygiene regulation)

Act on Food Production and Food Safety (Food Act)

Regulation on oat grasses

Regulation on seed hygiene

4 POTATOES

Regulation on seed potatoes

Regulation on food hygiene (Food hygiene regulation)

Regulation on plants and measures against plant pests (Phytophealth regulation)

Act on Food Production and Food Safety (Food Act)

Regulation on food potatoes

Regulation on water supply and drinking water

Regulation on materials and objects in contact with foodstuffs (Food contact regulation)

Regulation on internal controls for fulfilling food legislation

5 VEGETABLES, FRUIT, BERRIES, NURSERIES, FLOWERS AND GREENHOUSES

Regulation on food hygiene (Food hygiene regulation)

Act on Food Production and Food Safety (Food Act)

Regulation on water supply and drinking water (Drinking water regulation)

Regulation on materials and objects in contact with foodstuffs (Food contact regulation)

Regulation on internal controls for fulfilling food legislation

Regulation on plants and measures against plant pests

6 RUMINANTS

Regulation on marking and registration of llamas and farmed deer

Act on Food Production and Food Safety (Food Act)

Regulation on additives for use in fodder

Regulation on marking, registration and reporting of sheep

Regulation on combating animal diseases

Act on Animal Welfare

Regulation on the nutritional transport of animals

Regulation on stocks of cattle

Regulation on welfare for sheep

Regulation on requisition and delivery of medicines from pharmacies

Act on Medicines etc. (Medicine Act)

Regulation on the euthanasiation of animals

Regulation on monitoring and control of the occurrence of salmonella in living cattle and swine

Regulation on performance of work, use of work equipment and related technical requirements
(Regulation on performance of work)

Act on Protection Against Pollution and Relating to Waste (Pollution Act)

Regulation on the prevention, control and extinguishing of spongiform encephalopathies (TSE regulation)

Regulation on animal by-products that are not intended for consumption (By-product regulation)

Regulation on fodder

Regulations on production subsidies and subsidies in agriculture

Regulation on welfare for production animals

Regulation on the traceability and marking of cattle and cattle meat etc.

Regulations on food hygiene

Regulation on seed hygiene

Guidance on the regulation on stocks of cattle (guidelines on stocks of cattle)

7 MILK

Regulation on water supply and drinking water (Drinking water regulation)

Regulation on special hygiene rules for foodstuffs of animal origin (animal hygiene regulation)

Act on Food Production and Food Safety (Food Act)

Regulations on food hygiene

8 PIGS

Regulation on combating animal disease Act on Traceability of Swine

Regulation on combating animal diseases

Act on Food Production and Food Safety (Food Act)

Act on Animal Welfare Regulation on stocks of swine

Regulation on the nutritional transport of animals

Regulation on the euthanasiation of animals

Regulation on requisition and delivery of medicines from pharmacies

Regulation on monitoring and control of the occurrence of salmonella in living cattle and swine

Regulation on performance of work, use of work equipment and related technical requirements
(Regulation on performance of work)

Act on Protection Against Pollution and Relating to Waste (Pollution Act)

Regulation on animal by-products that are not intended for consumption (By-product regulation)

Regulation on fodder Regulation on the welfare of production animals

Regulation on seed hygiene

Regulations on food hygiene

Regulation on additives for use in fodder

Guidelines for stocks of swine

9 POULTRY

Regulatory on general principles and requirements in food regulations (Food act regulation)

Regulation on the prevention, control and eradication of transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE)

Regulation on feed hygiene (Feed hygiene regulation)

Regulation on additives for use in fodder

Act on Animal Welfare

Regulation on stocks of hens and turkeys

Regulation on the nutritional transport of animals

Regulation on control measures for residual quantities of certain substances in animal foodstuffs, production animals and fish to ensure safe health foodstuffs (Legal control regulation)

Regulation on food information for consumers (food information regulation)

Regulation on fertilisers etc. with organic origin

Regulation on certification of poultry enterprises

Regulation on fodder

Act on Food Production and Food Safety (Food Act)

Regulation on animal by-products that are not intended for consumption (By-product regulation)

Regulation on the euthanasia of animals

Regulation on the control of salmonella in poultry, poultry feed, poultry meat and eggs

Regulation on welfare for production animals

Regulation on combating animal diseases

Regulations on food hygiene

Regulation on special hygiene rules for foodstuffs of animal origin (animal hygiene regulation)

10 HONEY

Regulation on the creation of zones for fighting European foulbrood, Aust-Agder

Regulations on measures against fireblight

Regulation on foreign breeding activity in bees

Act on Food Production and Food Safety (Food Act)

General regulation on production and turnover of foodstuffs

Regulation on beekeeping

Regulation on internal control for fulfilling food legislation

Regulation on the warning and notification of disease in animals

Regulation on animal health conditions for the import and export of living mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, bees and bumblebees

Regulation on the inspection and control of the export of living animals, other breeding material and animal waste within the EEA and when importing live animals from third party countries

Regulation on control measures for residual quantities of certain substances in animal foodstuffs, production animals and fish to ensure foodstuffs that are safe to health (Residual control regulation)

Regulation on warning marking of honey

Regulation on honey

Regulation on food information for consumers (food information regulation)

Regulations on identification marking of food batches

Regulation on materials and items in contact with foodstuffs

Regulations on food hygiene

QAS MEDICINE STANDARDS

Regulation on combating animal diseases

Regulation on stocks of hens and turkeys

Regulation on stocks of cattle

Regulation on stocks of swine

Provision on the welfare of sheep

Regulation on welfare for production animals

Regulation on the performance of work, use of work equipment and related technical requirements (Regulation on performance of work)

Act on Animal Welfare

Act on Food Production and Food Safety (Food Act)

Regulation on the use of medicines in animals

Regulation on requisition and delivery of medicines from pharmacies

Act on Veterinary Surgeons and other Animal Health Personnel