



Partnership for a Sustainable Georgia AgTrack Partner Application

Instructions For Bronze, Silver, and Gold Applications



Completing the Application: Section by Section

Section A. Operation Information

We've tried to make Section A as self-explanatory as possible. If you need assistance, please contact AgP² personnel. Section A follows the same format as the Governor's Environmental Stewardship Award application.

Section B. Partner Commitments

Section B requires slightly more effort than Section A, however AgP² staff are willing to help you complete the process.

1. Draft a written farm **environmental policy statement**.

Your policy statement should show you:

- 1) Comply with all pertinent laws and regulations*
- 2) Exhibit good environmental stewardship*
- 3) Prevent pollution at its source, whenever possible*
- 4) Work for continual improvement of environmental performance*
- 5) Share information with your employees about your environmental performance and your environmental policy statement*

For more information on farm environmental policy statements and examples, please see Appendix A.

2. Complete a **comprehensive environmental assessment** or audit of your operation.

These assessment(s) should be conducted within the past five years of filing this application, or during the first year of partnership.

Assessments identify environmental concerns related to your farm operation, including potential for runoff and erosion; nutrient management practices; waste collection and treatment; storage conditions for pesticides, fertilizers, and fuel; air quality, including dust and odors; energy use; water use; and water discharges.

For more information on environmental assessments and examples, please see Appendix B.

3. Based on your assessment(s), list environmental concern(s) and prepare to devise an **action plan** to address those concerns.

The number of concerns listed is based on membership level. These issues should be easily attainable goals in order to achieve the quickest returns, but longer term goals are also requested. Success will not be based solely on achievement of goals, but also on progress made towards meeting goals.

We do not require you turn in your action plan. This is something you develop with AgP² staff or other individuals such as county agents or NRCS staff.

4. Provide an **annual performance report (APR)** on progress towards goals and any **quantifiable results** that help to **promote your efforts** as an environmental leader.

This update should include any accomplishments as an AgTrack partner, any savings or outcomes you've seen as a result of your efforts, as well as any efforts you've made to promote your practices to others. The deadline for reporting each year is April 30. The APR form will be sent out each year to the address you listed on the application form.

5. Participate in, or host, **community outreach events**.

This is a requirement of silver (2 events) and gold (3 events) level partners, but is suggested for all partners for your own self-interest. Community outreach can include many things, from school field trips to farmer field days.

6. Complete **(4,8) hours** of continuing education (CE).

CE can include hours provided by other sources/associations. AgP² will also strive to provide CE credits to partners. You are not required to submit CE hours the first year of membership. For subsequent years, please provide details of CE hours you've completed in your APR.

Section C.
Application and Participation Statement

On behalf of _____ (my farm or nursery)

I certify that:

- I have read and agree to the terms and conditions for application and participation in the Partnership for a Sustainable Georgia, as specified in the application instructions.
- I believe the information provided in this application is accurate to the best of my knowledge.
- My operation is, to the best of my knowledge, currently in compliance with applicable Federal, State, and local environmental requirements, or has a corrective action program in place to attain compliance.

I understand that Sustainability Division’s decision whether to accept, deny or remove me from the Partnership for a Sustainable Georgia is wholly discretionary.

I understand that the information provided in this application will be public record.

I am the highest-ranking operation manager or I have been fully authorized by a manager to represent this farm or nursery.

Signature/Date

Printed Name

Title

Phone Number

Name of Farm/Nursery

Please direct any questions to:

Adam Speir
AgTrack Coordinator
706.542.5512
aspeir@engr.uga.edu

Please mail a hard copy of the entire completed application and checklist to:

AgTrack Program
C/O Adam Speir
620 Driftmier Engineering Center
University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602

Appendix A: Farm Environmental Policy Statements

The Farm Environmental Policy Statement provides the framework for setting environmental objectives and targets. All future environmental management of the farm operation will be measured by the question, “Is this compatible with our environmental policy?” However, as your farm changes, your environmental policy may change. To keep your environmental commitments current, you should review and revisit this policy statement often.

A policy statement should provide a clear, unifying vision for the farm and should guide farm decisions and activities. This statement should be developed and reviewed by farm family members, staff, and partners. Once developed, post the policy in work areas and refer to it at staff meetings to remind all people who work on the farm of their commitment to environmental stewardship.

A policy statement includes several components. At a minimum, it should include commitments to:

- Environmental stewardship
- Continual improvement
- Compliance with all pertinent laws and regulations

Some tips for writing your environmental policy are:

- **Keep it simple**
- Expect to revise it several times during the initial EMS development
- Make sure that it is **appropriate** to the nature and scale of the farm
- Address local environmental concerns
- Ensure that it is **clear, concise, and implemented at all levels of the farm**
- **Make it your own**, not a “cookie-cutter” copy of someone else’s policy

A policy statement is a great opportunity to fully grasp what you do on your operation. Take this time to evaluate the history of your operation, where you want to go in the future, and the best way to get there.

Sample Environmental Policy Statements

The following are samples of different environmental policy statements (in different formats)

Sample 1

Our farm is committed to a cleaner, healthier environment for the health of our communities and the sustainability of agriculture. Through a system of planning and self-examination, we seek to continually improve our management practices so we may continue to produce quality chickens, while preventing pollution, complying with all pertinent regulations, and maintaining good relationships with our neighbors. Pursuant to these goals, we will maintain honest, effective communication with officials, our neighbors, employees and other stakeholders.

Sample 2

Davis Brothers Farm has a long history of producing quality crops while maintaining a healthy environment. Through our efforts, we hope to keep our farm productive so that future

generations can operate this farm while continuing the tradition of sustainable production. This will be achieved by setting attainable immediate goals and keeping good records to track our progress towards those goals. We also strive to be a good neighbor through community activities and involvement.

Sample 3

Our farm aims to produce the best possible product in an environmentally responsible manner. We manage animal health to ensure the birds' well-being, and a high level of production and quality. We manage and apply manure to cropland so as to achieve optimum production while preventing pollution. We are committed to complying with all pertinent environmental regulations and to continually improving the environmental performance of our operations. By regularly reviewing our actions and our goals we sustain our farm's profitability, while continually improving environmental stewardship.

Sample 4

Purpose: Jones Family Farm is a diversified operation with poultry, cow/calf and alfalfa production. The farm employs its husband and wife owners on a full-time basis and two employees on a part-time basis. The families of the owners provide additional help as needed.

Environmental Issues: Jones Family Farm is located near a small housing development along a busy highway; therefore our impact on our neighbors is an important aspect of our operations. We will strive to maintain a neat and professional appearance on our farmstead. Litter applications will be made with consideration to potential impacts on neighbors.

Compliance: Jones Family Farm is committed to compliance with all pertinent environmental laws and regulations. Where laws and regulations are not sufficient to safeguard the health and safety of our families, employees, or neighbors, we will develop our own procedures and guidelines.

Stewardship Principles: Our profitability depends upon maintaining long-term productivity and minimizing waste. The principles that guide our operations are:

- To manage riparian areas in such a way that protects and even enhances the associated plant communities and quality of the water
- To preserve soil quality by minimizing erosion and maintaining soil characteristics that contribute to its productivity.

Continuous Improvement: We are committed to reviewing our environmental risks on a regular basis and identifying ways to improve our environmental performance.

Appendix B: Farm Environmental Assessment Tools

An environmental assessment can be achieved on your operation in many ways, ranging from a meeting of employees to evaluate existing conditions to a visit from trained environmental professionals.

Environmental assessments can be performed internally, meaning solely by those at the farm-level. This type assessment could involve several processes:

- a detailed inspection of your facilities by yourself or team of employees that assesses all aspects of your operation, from water and energy use to runoff and erosion issues
- Group meeting with all staff and employees to brainstorm and voice noticeable concerns in regards to environmental practices. A list of concerns can be created to decide which concerns are of higher priority.

The method of assessment is up to the manager of the operation, however questions to consider when identifying concerns are:

- Which of your farm activities could have an environmental impact?
- What resources do you use in your work? (energy, materials, etc.)
- Are any emissions to air, water, or soil created?
- Are wastes generated, and if so, where do they go?
- Are there any activities that could create accidental releases?

You may also seek outside environmental consultants to perform professional environmental assessments.

AgP2 staff are available to assist in environmental assessments

The University of Georgia has produced several documents that provide a framework for performing environmental assessments based upon several different aspects of farm operation. Assessments are also available for nursery, greenhouse, and landscape operations.

List of **Farm*A*Syst Assessment Worksheets**

- Beef Production
- Broiler Production
- Composting Poultry Mortalities
- Cotton IPM
- Dairy Production
- Fertilizer Storage & Handling
- Forest Resource Management (*Forest*A*Syst*)
- Hazardous Products Storage, Handling, and Waste Disposal
- Layer Production
- Management of Irrigation Systems
- Managing Pests on Croplands and Pastures
- Managing Pesticides for Ornamental/Turf Professionals (*Green*A*Syst*)

- Managing Runoff and Erosion on Croplands and Pastures
- Nutrient Management
- Pesticide Storage & Handling
- Petroleum Storage & Handling
- Swine Production

For more information and to order materials: www.agp2.org/assessment

Several environmental assessments and related materials can be found online. Some examples are listed below:

Georgia Poultry Environmental Management Systems Guidebook: Georgia EMS Template Pack. Assessment tools for Georgia poultry producers.
www.engr.uga.edu/service/extension/agp2/resources/publication/A-G/GA%20Poultry%20EMS%20Templat126.pdf

Livestock and Poultry Environmental Stewardship Curriculum

A nationally developed set of educational materials and assessment tools focusing on animal agriculture operations.

www.lpes.org/homepage.html

Environmental management systems for pork producers

An on-line assessment tool designed for pork producers through the joint efforts of North Carolina State University and Smithfield Farms

<http://www.p2pays.org/porktool/>

A Farmer's Guide to Agriculture and Water Quality Issues

USDA Ag Center and EPA Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

<http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/wq/wqp/index.html>