






SIGNS OF FAIR TRADE

Product certification

	<p>Fair Trade Certified: This is the most common label currently used in the USA, administered by Fair Trade USA (Oakland, CA). The work of certification is done by Scientific Certification Systems, a close neighbor in the Bay Area.</p>
	<p>This FTC label dates from 2012, superseding the black-and-white ‘bucket boy’ logo introduced in 1998 by Transfair USA, the original US Fair Trade labeling body set up by the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy in Minneapolis. In December 2011, Transfair USA left the international Fair Trade network and, somewhat controversially, adopted the name Fair Trade USA. Click here for information on Fair Trade USA’s Multiple-Ingredients Product Policy.</p>
	<p>Fairtrade: The International Fairtrade Mark is the principal global sign of Fair Trade product certification, owned by Fairtrade International, based in Bonn, Germany. The Mark came into use in 2002 when all national Fair Trade labeling organizations bar one adopted it, replacing their own logos. Canada was among them but not the USA. The work of certification is done by FLOCERT, also located in Bonn.</p> <p>With Fair Trade USA’s departure from the international system, Fairtrade International was free to establish the International Fairtrade Mark in the USA. In 2013, Fairtrade America was set up in Washington, DC as the US member of Fairtrade International to promote the scheme and award the Mark.</p>
	<p>Fair for Life: This alternative Fair Trade label was initially promoted by the Institute for Marketecology, Switzerland, in 2007. Founded in 1989, IMO has, since 2014, been part of the international ECOCERT group, set up in France in 1991. ECOCERT has long had a strong reputation in organic certification but has broadened its interest into social and economic certifications in recent years.</p>
	<p>Small Producers’ Symbol: In 2006 Fair Trade producers in Latin America and the Caribbean decided to express their own Fair Trade identity by establishing the SPP (Símbolo de Pequeños Productores). One of their reasons was a desire to distance themselves from the influence of large corporations that they detected on the work of Fairtrade International, then known as FLO (Fair Trade Labeling Organizations).</p>

While all these are labels that help consumers identify Fair Trade products, they are also expressions of Fair Trade values and the trading relationships that stand behind them. The producers responsible for the SPP, for instance, think of their project as “a particular way of improving prospects for life and well-being through collective, co-responsible work among small producers, consumers and other stakeholders in the market and in society.”

The [International Guide to Fair Trade Labels](#) contains detailed analysis of Fair Trade labels, standards and monitoring processes and how they differ from sustainable development labels.

Membership organizations

	<p>The Fair Trade Federation, in Wilmington, DE, is an association of 250 businesses in the USA and Canada that are fully committed to its Fair Trade Principles. These are closely aligned with those of the World Fair Trade Organization. The range of product categories represented in the membership of the FTF is now much wider than handcrafts. The Federation holds an annual conference, supported by the WFTO and Fairtrade America, to consolidate its vision among members of what it calls “360 degree Fair Trade”. (Equal Exchange is a member, as are other well-known names, Ten Thousand Villages and SERRV.)</p>
	<p>The World Fair Trade Organization, located in the Netherlands, is the latest iteration of a ‘global journal for Fair Trade’ that found original expression in 1989 with the formation of the International Federation of Alternative Trade. WFTO now has a membership of over 350 in 75 countries in five continents. The list includes Fair Trade businesses, networks and support organizations. WFTO has developed a Guarantee System which members can be awarded, subject to further verification processes. In 2009 WFTO and Fairtrade International launched the Charter of Fair Trade Principles as a single international reference point for Fair Trade. WFTO is also responsible for promoting World Fair Day on the second Saturday in May.</p>

DIGGING DEEPER

Consumer awareness of how everyday products come to market from far away has grown hugely over the last 25 years. The digital revolution has expanded both knowledge of product availability and, thus, facilitated the offer of choice to an unprecedented extent. In such a highly competitive market, manufacturers and retailers vie to demonstrate their edge, on price or values.

The 1990s saw the growth of product certification in many fields of business. The collapse of the International Coffee Agreement (1990) and the impetus given to “Sustainable Development” by the [Earth Summit](#) (Rio, 1992) encouraged active involvement by agencies of civil society. For instance, in 1993, the Forest Stewardship Council was formed, followed by the Marine Stewardship Council in 1996. The following year saw 17 national Fair Trade bodies come together in FLO (Fairtrade Labelling Organizations, now Fairtrade International).

In 2000, FSC, MSC and FLO decided to join with the longer-established (1972) International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM - Organics International) to form the International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labeling Alliance. The mission of the [ISEAL Alliance](#), based in London and now with 23 full members and many other associates, is to safeguard and promote credible sustainability standards on a global basis.

Clearly, the certification business has come long way quickly. It was a very necessary development, inevitably at the cost of complexity. An essentially ‘free market’ for the setting of standards required monitoring and coordinating bodies like ISEAL to emerge and, by the rigor of their work, expand the circle of members working in related fields. On the next page are links to ISEAL’s full members. The list gives a good impression of the scope of work being done in this particular ‘network of networks’.

ISEAL Full Members

	ISEAL Member, 2017	Est.	Main contact point(s) (excl. regional offices)
ASC	Aquaculture Stewardship Council	2010	Utrecht, Netherlands
ASI	Accreditation Services International	2006	Bonn, Germany
AWS	Alliance for Water Stewardship	2008	North Berwick, Scotland
BCI	Better Cotton Initiative	2009	Geneva, Switzerland
Bon Sucro	Better Sugar Cane Initiative	2008	London, England
EO	Equitable Origin (oil & gas)	2009	New York, NY, USA
FI	Fairtrade International	1997	Bonn, Germany
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council	1993	Bonn, Germany
GCP	Global Coffee Platform	2016	Bonn, Germany
GEO	Golf Environment Organization	2005	North Berwick, Scotland
GW	Good Weave International	1994	Washington, DC; Banbury, England
IOAS	International Organic Accreditation Service	1997	Dickinson, ND, USA [IFOAM sole member]
LEAF	Linking Environment and Farming	1991	Stoneleigh Park, England
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council	1996	London, England
RFA	Rainforest Alliance	1987	New York, NY, USA
RJC	Responsible Jewellery Council	2005	London, England
RSB	Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials	2007	Geneva, Switzerland
RSPO	Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil	2004	Zurich, Switzerland; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
SAAS	Social Accountability Accreditation Services	1997	New York, NY, USA
SAN	Sustainable Agriculture Network	1997	Costa Rica, Guatemala, USA, UK
UEB	Union for Ethical BioTrade	2007	Amsterdam, Netherlands
UTZ	UTZ – merging with RFA by end of 2017	2002	Amsterdam, Netherlands