



# Soil Carbon Initiative Farm-Level Commitment Program V5

Soil Carbon Initiative Farm-Level Commitment Program

# Table of Contents

I Overview of the Soil Carbon Initiative .....	3
A Origins of the Soil Carbon Initiative (SCI) .....	3
B SCI Vision .....	3
C SCI - Farm-Level Program Overview .....	3
D SCI Farm-Level Program - Core Program Elements.....	4
II Definitions and Verbal Forms.....	5
III Farm-Level Standard.....	7
A Farm Commitment Plan .....	7
B Soil Sampling and Testing.....	9
IV Soil Sampling Protocol and Methodology .....	11
V Approved Laboratories .....	15
VI Program Rules and Procedures.....	16
A Eligibility .....	16
B SCI Enrollment Process .....	16
C Requirements for Enrollment.....	17
D Equivalencies .....	17
E Fees & Costs .....	17
F Data Privacy .....	18
G On-site Farm Audit Requirements .....	18
Appendix A - Verification Requirements.....	19
Appendix B - Future SCI Program Development .....	22

# I Overview of the Soil Carbon Initiative

## I. A: Origins of the Soil Carbon Initiative

Agriculture has become one of the world's largest drivers of climate change within the past century. The industrial processes, chemical inputs, and repeated, long-term tillage of working lands has been implicated not just for its impacts on the climate, but also for its destruction of biodiversity, soil health, depleted nutrition, and farm economic resiliency. These types of losses are not isolated to any one region.

While the outcomes of decades of chemical, industrial farming have had many, serious, often unintended consequences, there is still an opportunity to shift course to biologically based and regenerative approaches to handling soil and working lands. We must all play a part for the sake of our climate, human health, and global farming economy.

In 2019 Green America convened a diverse array of agricultural system stakeholders – farmers, scientists, food and fiber brands, consumer advocates, health experts, ecologists – to co-create a path forward. The questions posed were:

*'What if we could grow our way out of climate change?'*

*'How can we support farmers as they change management at the farm level to make production resilient and regenerative?'*

*'How does the agricultural production system need to change? What do players in the system need and what must they give to ensure change happens at a speed and scale relevant to the crises we face?'*

Out of this exploration, the Soil Carbon Initiative (SCI) was born.

## I. B: Soil Carbon Initiative Vision

The vision of Soil Carbon Initiative (SCI) is that everyone who touches soil can be supported to unlock soil's potential for advancing a better future for the planet and all her people.

## I. C: Soil Carbon Initiative - Farm-Level Program Overview

The goal of SCI Farm-level Program is to incentivize and support participating farms to have 75%-100% of their farmed acres under regenerative management within 10 years of enrolling in the program.

SCI is a commitment and verification program with an intent **to scale the acres under regenerative management in order to deliver regenerative outcomes**: soil health, biodiversity, improved water quality, climate resiliency and greater farm and rural prosperity.

SCI requires commitments, measurements, and verification of outcomes from both farms and the companies and brands sourcing agricultural products. The design of SCI ensures that players across the agricultural system have **confidence that progress is being made and learning is happening at the farm and company level**. Both supply and demand commitment to soil health is central to systemic success.

SCI is open to any farmer, in any production system, irrespective of where they are on their regenerative journey. SCI supports farms to create a plan for their farm transition, and provides **practical, science-based, expert guidance** to achieve a farm's desired outcomes.

SCI uses a combination of **'on-farm' and 'in-lab'** tests that are subject to verification. These measurement tools are designed to **provide useful, practical information for farmers** while also providing **reasonable assurance** that farms are achieving soil regeneration and restoration of the ecosystems supporting working lands.

SCI recognizes that **measurement combined with guidance** is most helpful to farms making regenerative agriculture transitions. Farm transition entails risk in an already high-risk endeavor. SCI's testing prioritizes metrics that show change over time against key soil health and landscape indicators and will support farmers to develop their own observational skills and facility for farming for regeneration.

## **I. D: SCI Farm-Level Program - Core Program Elements**

SCI's Farm-Level Commitment Program is based on the following core elements:

1. **Commitments & Plans** - Farmers committing to transitioning an increasing number of farmed acres to regenerative management, through the development, implementation and reporting on progress against farm's soil health management transition plans.
2. **Measurement of Key Outcomes** - SCI will verify that participants have executed the required combinations of "on-farm" and "in-lab" tests, which will provide practical and useful information for farmers transition plans and decisions.
3. **Reporting and Analysis** - In addition to farm-specific insights and with the permission of farmers, SCI will gather and analyze essential program data and testing results and translate these into aggregate insights for farmers to inform their future transition plans.
4. **Learning Communities** - SCI aims to create learning communities of practices, supported by measurement, analysis, practical, in-field outcomes, and innovations.

Given the variability and uncertainty of specific outcomes on farms, SCI does not require that key outcome targets are achieved.

What SCI does verify is that the participant farms are actively engaged in their transition plans, are performing and reporting on required testing, are increasing their number of acres transitioned, and are participating in the SCI communities of practice.

## II Definitions and Verbal Forms

**Acre:** 43,560 square feet (4,047 square meters).

**Commitment:** An action element present in a Farm Commitment Plan.

**Composite Sample:** A mixture of individual Samples.

**Total Acres Commitment:** 75%-100% of Acres on a Farm are Enrolled Acres.

**Enrolled Acres:** The number of Acres committed to management under the Farm Commitment Plan during any given year after Enrollment.

**Enrollment:** A statement of intent by the Farmer to participate in the SCI Program.

**Equivalency:** A formal acknowledgement of the partial or full recognition of a separate entity's program or standard requirements as meeting the same goals as, achieving the same Outcomes as, or having the same requirements as, elements of the SCI Program.

**Evidence:** Proof that Commitments have been undertaken.

**Farm:** One or more tracts of working lands under the control and management of a Farmer.

**Farm Commitment Plan:** The plan outlining changes or additions to management of a Farm aimed at producing soil health and Farm regeneration Outcomes.

**Farm Self-Assessment:** A guided self-evaluation, completed by a Farmer, that specifies current production systems or production practices and identifies desired changes for the Farm.

**Farmer:** The working lands manager with primary responsibility for decisions related to management practices of crops or livestock and demonstrable authority to implement changes in management and to obligate a Farm to comply with the Farm-Level Standard.

**Field:** A set of contiguous Enrolled Acres with similar production and practice across those Acres.

**Guidance:** (1) Within the Farm Standard, language providing additional interpretation or anecdotal information on a specific standard requirement for the purposes of clarification. (2) A curated opportunity for Farms, combining peer and professional resources, to obtain feedback and support on their Farm Commitment Plan and regenerative journey.

**Progress:** Desirable improvements in one or more areas as compared to an initial data point and is measured across:

1. Improvements in Soil Health Score
2. Increases in acres enrolled program
3. Increases in diversity of ACTION in Commitment Program
4. Decreases in inputs and input costs
5. Decreases in tillage

6. Increases in crop rotations and plant and livestock diversity on farm
7. FARM Specified progress as reported by farmer in Annual Report (increases in profits, yield,

**Regenerative management:** Is defined by the SCI Program Pillars:

1. Minimizing Soil Disturbance
2. Living Roots in the Ground Year Round
3. Maximizing Diversity Above and Below Ground
4. Appropriate Integration of Livestock
5. Reducing Synthetic Inputs
6. Learning at the systems level to support the community of practice

**Sample:** A soil core.

**SCI Enrolled:** The status assigned to Farmers who have signified their intent to enroll Acres in the SCI Program.

**Soil Carbon Initiative (SCI):** A Commitment and Verification program with an intent to scale the Acres under regenerative management in order to deliver regenerative Outcomes: soil health, biodiversity, improved water quality, climate resiliency and greater Farm and rural prosperity.

**Subsample:** A portion of a Composite Sample.

**Approved Laboratory/Laboratory:** A Laboratory identified by the Standard Operator as being capable of providing soil testing services in alignment with the ‘in-lab’ soil testing requirements of the Farm-Level Standard.

**SCI Portal:** A Farm management tool to be used by enrolled and verified Farms to submit the Farm Commitment Plan, Soil Sampling Plan, and Evidence as required by the Farm-Level Standard.

**SCI Program Pillars:** Minimizing Soil Disturbance, Living Roots in the Ground Year Round, Maximizing Diversity Above and Below Ground, Appropriate Integration of Livestock, Reducing Synthetic Inputs, and Learning.

**Soil Health Score:** A summary of the soil respiration, water extractable organic carbon (WEOC), and water extractable organic nitrogen (WEON), measured by the Haney Test that represents the current health level of a soil based on these indicators.

**Soil Health Testing:** The collection of “on-farm” and “in-lab” tests being done on Enrolled Acres and the results of those tests.

**Standard Operator:** The entity responsible for the development and maintenance of the contents of a standard, including but not limited to standard-setting, review, revision, and withdrawal.

**Verification:** The action of the verification body to confirm that all SCI Program elements have been submitted and are compliant.

## III Farm-Level Standard

### III. A: Farm Commitment Plan

The Farmer must develop and implement a Farm Commitment Plan that outlines action elements within Acres enrolled in the SCI Program (Enrolled Acres). Farmers participating in the SCI Program commit to achieving 75% to 100% Enrolled Acres (Total Acres Commitment) by no later than the end of Year 10.

- III.A.1** Farmers may enroll a percentage of their Farm in Acres in the SCI Program as Enrolled Acres. The percentage of the Farm enrolled is equivalent to the Acres enrolled by the Farmer divided by the total Acres under the management of the Farmer multiplied by 100.

$$\% \text{ Enrolled Acres} = (\text{Enrolled Acres} / \text{total Acres}) * 100$$

Guidance
Supporting documentation may include land records showing the total Acres farmed under control of the Farmer.

- III.A.2** Farmers must make Commitments against each of the following SCI Program Pillars:

- III.A.2.i** Minimizing Soil Disturbance
- III.A.2.ii** Living Roots in the Ground Year Round
- III.A.2.iii** Maximizing Diversity Above and Below Ground
- III.A.2.iv** Appropriate Integration of Livestock
- III.A.2.v** Reducing Synthetic Inputs
- III.A.2.vi** Learning

- III.A.3** Farmers must submit a Farm Self-Assessment that contains a survey of current practices and goals within 2 months of Enrollment.

- III.A.4** Farmers must submit their Farm Commitment Plan within 6 months of Enrollment.

- III.A.5** The Farm Commitment Plan at Enrollment must address Year 1 through Year 3.

- III.A.6** The Farm Commitment Plan must:

- III.A.6.i** Include Commitments to all six SCI Program Pillars.
- III.A.6.ii** Pillar that is prohibited or where action would pose significant danger or hardship.**ii** Address all six SCI Program Pillars by either including actions against each, or, including the rationale for inaction against any SCI Program

- III.A.6.iii** At the discretion of the Farmer, outline management of % Enrolled Acres, including strategies, milestones, actions, and phasing of actions.
- III.A.6.iv** Address the frequency and type of testing in compliance with section III.B, Table 1.
- III.A.7** The Farm Commitment Plan may include and track Progress against the Soil Health Score.
- III.A.8** The Farm Commitment Plan must be structured such that within
  - III.A.8.i** 1-3 years % Enrolled Acres will be a minimum of 25% by Year 3 (Year 1-3 Plan)
  - III.A.8.ii** 4-6 years % Enrolled Acres will be a minimum of 50% by Year 5 (Year 4-6 Plan),
  - III.A.8.iii** 7-10 years Enrolled Acres will be a minimum of 75% before the end of Year 10 and 100% by the end of Year 10 (Year 7-10 Plan).
- III.A.9** 100% Enrolled Acres may be achieved prior to Year 10.
- III.A.10** Farm Commitment Plans addressing year 11 and beyond must contain strategies, milestones, actions, and phasing of actions covering 3-year intervals.
- III.A.11** Farmers must implement Commitments outlined in the Farm Commitment Plan and provide proof of action and Progress against said Commitments.

Guidance
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<p>Examples of proof of action against Commitments may include on-farm tests, laboratory tests, the Soil Health Score, time and date stamped in-field photos and videos, tractor data, receipts, other testing and certifications, other third-party verification program results and inspections, third-party agronomist affidavit of practice implementation (Certified SCI Consultants), NRCS Conservation Contract completion and inspection, third-party agronomist affidavit, seed purchases, etc.</p>
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<p>Examples of Progress against Commitments may include improvements in the Soil Health Score, increases in Enrolled Acres, increases in diversity of action in the Farm Commitment Plan, decreases in inputs and input costs, and decreases in tillage, harvest and sale data of additional crops, etc.</p>
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- III.A.12** The Farm Commitment Plan may be altered to accommodate changes in management strategies, and to Commitments, actions, and milestones, and these alterations must be documented.
- III.A.13** The Farm Commitment Plan may be revised due to weather-related events or other environmental factors that negatively impact the Farmer's ability to implement the plan, and these alterations must be documented.



- III.A.14** Farmers must submit their Year 1-3 Plan within 6 months of Enrollment.
- III.A.15** Farmers must submit their Year 4-6 Plan at the same time as submitting their Year 3 Soil Health Testing.
- III.A.16** Farmers must submit their Year 7-10 Plan at the same time as submitting their Year 6 Soil Health Testing.

## III.B Soil Sampling and Testing

Farmers must conduct soil sampling and testing.

Guidance
SCI is a verification system and the frequency of testing and method of testing that we require may differ from what is needed to make Farm management decisions. Farms are encouraged to test and make observations for management purposes beyond what SCI requires if that makes sense for the Farm.

- III.B.1** Farmers with an annual gross revenue of \$150,000 or more must comply with the entirety of Table 1.
- III.B.2** Farmers operating small holdings, or beginning Farms, with an annual gross revenue of less than \$150,000 must, at minimum, conduct and submit all the on-farm verification requirements in Table 1.

Guidance
Farmers eligible for, and opting to, only conduct on-farm verification may forgo laboratory verification. If Farmers elect to do any of the laboratory verification options, they are strongly urged to conduct the Haney Soil Health Assessment.

- III.B.3** On-farm tests should be done at the same time of year and must be done at the same locations year after year.
- III.B.4** Where soil sampling is conducted, it must be conducted in compliance with Section IV.
- III.B.5** Soil Samples should be pulled at the same time of year and must be pulled from the same locations.
- III.B.6** Laboratory testing must be conducted by an Approved Laboratory.

**III.B.7** Progress against the Soil Health Score may be obtained from the Approved Laboratory.

Table 1: Soil Sampling and Testing Requirements					
Required Tests	Measurement	On-Farm Verification	Frequency	Lab Verification	Frequency
Soil Carbon***	Dry combustion	N/A		Dry Combustion TOC/TC	BASELINE THEN EVERY 3 YEARS
Haney Soil Health Assessment	Soil nutrients available to soil microbes	N/A		Full panel; early indicators coming soon	ANNUAL
Soil Organic Matter	Soil Organic Matter	Soil Color, soil smell		SOM (%LOI); included in Haney (above)	Included in Annual Haney
Hardness/ Compaction	Compaction	Penetrometer	ANNUAL	N/A	N/A
Water Infiltration	Water Holding Capacity	NRCS Infiltration Dual Head Infiltrometer	ANNUAL	Pressure Plate	BASELINE IN LAB, THEN Every 3 Years
Water Use		Soil sensors, irrigation software, imaging data	ANNUAL		N/A
Aggregate Stability	Soil aggregates	In field Slaking Test	ANNUAL	ARS WET AGGREGATE TEST	BASELINE THEN EVERY 3 YEARS IN LAB
Towards Reduction of Synthetic Inputs			Annual		
Microbial Activity and Community	Microbial community	Underwear Decomposition (activity)	ANNUAL		N/A
Biodiversity Field Farm Assessment (Insect, Birds, Pollinators etc.)	Increases in above ground diversity	Field & Farm Counts; transects to line up with soil sampling			Phase 3 Roll Out
Nutrition	Nutrition Per Acre				Phase 3 Roll Out

## IV Soil Sampling Protocol and Methodology

### IV.A Tools Required

- IV.A.1** Clean stainless steel soil probe, standard and wet probe tips, probe brush or screwdriver, two one-gallon plastic pails, and supplies for labeling plastic pails and Sample bags.

Guidance
A step-probe works well for soil sampling, but other sampling tools can be used in lieu of a probe such as an auger bit or a spade for taking a furrow slice. Farms may wish to use a Giddings Probe or other soil core probing machinery. SCI does not require the use of such equipment.

### IV.B Sample Plan and Sample Representation

- IV.B.1** Farmers must develop sampling plans for Enrolled Acres.

- IV.B.2** Enrolled Acres must be organized into Fields.

Guidance
A 'Field' or pasture is defined as a set of contiguous Enrolled Acres with similar production and practice across those Acres. We recognize that there is considerable variability within a Field. Farms should exclude from their sampling area parts of a Field that are not representative due to topography or known performance differences (i.e., a consistently wet or poorly drained part of a Field, an area of a pasture that might contain trees where animals congregate for shade). SCI does not require that Farms set a limit to the size of a Field for the purposes of creating a sampling zone. A Field or pasture is defined by the Farm as the actual management zone that meets the definition above.

- IV.B.3** A Field must only comprise Enrolled Acres, and only from the same year.

- IV.B.4** Farmers must login to the SCI Portal and identify their Field, set the Field boundaries, and view the soil and topography map.

- IV.B.4** Farmers must select sampling locations that are representative of the Field.

- IV.B.5** Sampling locations must be marked on the Field sampling map.

**IV.B.6** Cores must be pulled from the most representative parts of the Field.

Guidance
For example, there is a Field of 100 Acres made up of 3 predominant soil types in a ratio of nearly 50%, 30% and 20%. Therefore, when pulling cores follow a similar ratio to get a representative Composite Sample dependent on soil types.

**IV.B.7** Soil Samples must only be submitted for the Fields of Enrolled Acres.

**IV.B.8** The number of cores to pull per Field must be determined using the SCI calculator  
{method square root of Acres plus 1 rounded to nearest whole}

**IV.B.9** The required number of cores from a Field must be pulled on the same day.

**IV.B.10** Samples must not be amended or altered after collection, or during bagging, labeling, storage, or shipping.

## IV.C Sampling Protocol

Farmers must utilize the following sampling protocol

**IV.C.1** Determine the Field to be sampled.

**IV.C.2** Determine the sampling patterns. Sampling patterns are at the discretion of the Farmer and should align with best practices.

Guidance
Common sampling patterns include random sampling and grid sampling.

**IV.C.3** Confirm that the stainless steel probe and one-gallon plastic pails are clean.

**IV.C.4** Label the first one-gallon plastic pail for the 0"-6" cores and the second one-gallon plastic pail for the 6"-12" cores.

Guidance
To facilitate ease of sampling, mark your soil probe for 6 inches and then slide the core in half, placing the 0-6 and 6-12 inch portions in the respective buckets.

**IV.C.5** Clear vegetation and residue to expose the soil surface.

**IV.C.6** Choose and attach the appropriate probe tip.

**IV.C.7** Insert the probe without twisting at a 90° angle to a depth of 12".

- IV.C.8** Twist the probe a quarter turn in any direction and then pull straight up to remove the probe. Each probe yields one core which is split into two Samples.
- IV.C.9** If the soil has clearly compacted more than 1" within the probe, clean out the probe with the probe brush or screwdriver and discard the core before reattempting to pull a new core.
- IV.C.10** Once a good core is collected, divide the core in half and place the 0"-6" portion of the core and the 6"-12" portion of the core into their respective one-gallon plastic pails.

Guidance
A good core fills the entirety of the stainless steel probe with soil, is not compacted, and does not contain gaps, holes, organic material, or large rocks.

- IV.C.11** Remove any excess soil from the probe prior to taking the next core. Probes used for the same Field Samples do not need to be thoroughly cleaned between sampling.
- IV.C.12** Proceed to the next site within the same Field. Repeat Sections IV.C.5 through Section IV.C.11.
- IV.C.13** Mix Composite Samples of cores separately in the two different one-gallon plastic pails; one one-gallon plastic pail for 0"-6" cores and another one-gallon plastic pail for 6"-12" cores.
- IV.C.14** Collect the required number of Samples for the Field, continuing to aggregate the 0"-6" cores into one Composite Sample and the 6"-12" cores into a different Composite Sample.
- IV.C.15** Either ship the entirety of each Composite Sample to the Approved Laboratory or thoroughly hand mix each Composite Sample to attain homogeneity before taking two cups of each Composite Sample to send to the Approved Laboratory. Subsamples (portions of soil taken from the Composite Sample in the one-gallon plastic pail) should be no smaller than X and no larger than Y (soil volume limits set by Laboratory).

## IV.D Sample Handling and Shipping Protocol

Farmers must utilize the following handling and shipping protocol for Samples, Composite Samples, and Subsamples.

- IV.D.1** Place Composite Samples or Subsamples inside either a plastic bag (freezer bag or whirlpac, etc.) or a plastic lined paper soil bag. Samples taken from multiple Fields or different core depths cannot be mixed.

- IV.D.2** Label each bag with Farmer name, Farm name, Field, date, core depth (0"-6" or 6"-12"), and the Farm's unique SCI ID number.
- IV.D.3** Ensure that all relevant metadata is prepared in the SCI Portal and sent to the Laboratory electronically. Alternatively, you can print all the relevant data and send it along with a paper submittal form.
- IV.D.4** Samples can be stored in a relatively cool and shaded location for up to 2 days prior to shipping to the Laboratory. Samples can also be stored in a standard refrigerator for up to 2 weeks prior to sending to the Laboratory. If Samples need to be stored longer than 2 weeks, they must be frozen in a standard freezer prior to shipping to the lab.
- IV.D.5** Samples may be shipped "field moist" to the lab either fresh or frozen.
- IV.D.6** If applicable, include all relevant paperwork.
- IV.D.7** Ship Samples, Composite Samples, and Subsamples with any major carrier.

Guidance
Samples can be shipped with UPS, FedEx, USPS or any other major carrier. We recommend overnight shipping if daytime temperatures are over 80°F. Otherwise, 2-3 days is fine.

- IV.D.8** Ship Samples to:

***Regen Ag Lab<sup>1</sup>, 31740 Hwy 10, Pleasanton, NE 68866***

Guidance
<p><i>Understanding the Test Results</i></p> <p>Regen Ag Laboratory provides each Farm with a comprehensive Interpretation Guide designed to help Farmers and Farm managers understand test values. Farms may also contact the lab directly with questions about results or interpretation of data.</p> <p>SCI does not require that Farms work with consultants to conduct sampling or to create their Farm Commitment Plans. SCI provides and will regularly update the SCI Guidance Section of the website with resources to assist Farmers on their regenerative journey.</p> <p>In Phase II of the SCI Launch we intend to create an SCI Verified Consultant Program to ensure that Farmers have access to consultants who are aligned with SCI's objectives</p>

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<sup>1</sup> Questions may be directed to Lance Gunderson ([lance.gunderson@regenaglab.com](mailto:lance.gunderson@regenaglab.com)) or Laura Dalland ([laura.dalland@regenaglab.com](mailto:laura.dalland@regenaglab.com)).

## V Approved Laboratories

SCI uses a combination of ‘on-farm’ and ‘in-lab’ tests that are subject to Verification. These measurement tools are designed to **provide useful, practical information for Farmers** while also providing **reasonable assurance** that Farms are achieving soil regeneration and restoration of the ecosystems supporting working lands.

### V.A SCI Approved Laboratories

At this time there is one Laboratory available to process soil Samples in compliance with Section IV:

#### **Regen Ag Lab**

31740 Hwy 10  
Pleasanton, NE 68866  
308-440-1681

Questions may be directed to  
Lance Gunderson ([lance.gunderson@regenaglab.com](mailto:lance.gunderson@regenaglab.com)) or  
Laura Dalland ([laura.dalland@regenaglab.com](mailto:laura.dalland@regenaglab.com))

# VI Program Rules and Procedures

## VI.A Eligibility

Any Farm in North America in any production system, from conventional to organic, is eligible to enroll and publicly commit to SCI at any time.

## VI.B SCI Enrollment Process

Farms may enroll in SCI and earn the SCI Enrolled status by submitting a “Statement of Intent”, available online, that signifies their intent to transition and confirms their basic farm information and farm production practices. Enrollment is free for farms and no confidential information is solicited during enrollment. Enrollment does not constitute verification and farms may not make use of their enrollment status as a way of offering third party assurance about regenerative outcomes on farm.

Table 2: Enrollment Process			
Step	Process	Timing	Status
<b>Enroll</b>	Submit ‘Statement of Intent’ and basic farm information	Any time	SCI Enrolled
<b>Farm Assessment</b>	Survey of current practices and goals	Within 2 months of enrollment	SCI Enrolled
<b>Baseline Testing</b>	In Lab and On Farm tests	Within 6 months of enrollment/ extended by Standard Operator permission	SCI Enrolled
<b>Farm Commitment Plan</b>	Submit farm plan with # of Enrolled Acres, targets and milestones INCLUDING start state for implementation: Receive Approval of SCI Farm Commitment Plan	Within 6 months of enrollment	Failure to submit Self-Assessment and Farm Commitment Plan within the specified timeframe or without approved extension results in automatic ‘un-enrollment’ and removal from public list of SCI Enrolled
<b>Annual Progress Measurement</b>	Submit required tests and evidence of progress against SCI Farm Commitment Plan	Within 12 months of implementation of Farm Commitment Plan/ extended by Standard Operator Permission	SCI Enrolled



## VI.C Requirements for Enrollment

Following the completion of the enrollment survey, farms will receive information about the requirements for onboarding including:

1. **Login information and Instructions for the SCI Portal:** Each farm will receive its own login and unique SCI ID number. The SCI Portal is where farms will input production information, field information for fields enrolled in SCI, designate soil sampling locations, and upload documentation needed for verification.
2. **Self-Assessment Template.** The Self-Assessment is a guided exploration of a farm's current operation and their goals related to regenerative agriculture transition.
3. **Selection of SCI Measurement Pathway**
  - a. **In-Field Verified:** Farmers operating small holdings, or beginning farms, with gross revenue less than \$150,000 annually may apply to enroll under this pathway. Farms are required to submit all the on-farm verification requirements but may forgo laboratory testing requirements. If farms elect to do any of the lab requirements, we strongly urge them to do the Haney Soil Health Assessment.
  - b. **Lab Verified:** Farms that do not qualify for the smallholder enrollment path are required to complete all the in lab and on-farm tests that are part of the **Testing Requirements**.
4. **Baseline Testing Requirements, Lab Information and Submittal Instructions**
5. **SCI Farm Commitment Plan Template** that includes principles of regenerative agriculture and commitments that farms can elect to include in their plan to transition acres. There is a combination of required and optional commitment areas. SCI does not dictate practices and farms can choose how they wish to take action in each commitment area. The farm plan is meant to be a practical tool for farms and can be adjusted as circumstances and learning warrant. However, the farm commitment plan is a central part of how a farm's progress will be verified as compliant within SCI.

## VI.D SCI Program Equivalencies

**At this time** SCI does not currently recognize other programs or standards as being partially or fully equivalent to the Farm-Level Standard or the SCI Program.

## VI.E Fees and Costs

**VI.E.1 An Annual SCI Program Participation Fee,** based on a scalable fee schedule and is paid annually. Contact SCI for details on pilot program fees.

**VI.E.2 SCI Lab Testing Costs are paid by the enrolled farm.** Larger farms or farms enrolling more than one field (as defined above) should consult SCI to create the most effective

and cost-wise sampling plan. It is important to note that SCI as a verification program is looking at progress over time and our sampling requirements are geared for that purpose. Farms may choose to sample more or at a greater frequency than SCI requires, and they may do so at their own election and at their own expense. Farms are only required to submit to SCI the samples on enrolled acres per the Soil Sampling and Testing (Sections III.B and IV above).

**VI.E.3 Testing Stipend.** Each year SCI will make a Test Stipend available to SCI Enrolled and SCI Verified Farms. Farms may apply for a cost-share for testing fees no later than 90 days after submitting soil samples to the laboratory. The cost share pool is open to farms during their first 3 years of participation in SCI, though the timeline may be extended at SCI's sole discretion. The **pool** opening date and closing date will be announced each year and preference will be extended to farms with the greatest financial need first.

## VI.F Data Privacy

**VI.F.1 Data Collection.** For the purposes of the SCI Farm-Level Pilot Program, Farm data is shared with SCI and our program affiliates (testing labs, verifiers, partners) in order to ensure compliance with program requirements.

**VI.F.2 Data Privacy.** SCI may not disclose, sell, or otherwise share a farm's unique data including the results of particular testing protocols without the written and express permission of the farm owner / authorized individual.

**VI.F.3 Aggregate Data Analysis.** For the purposes of Farmer feedback and learning, and SCI Program improvements, and with farmer's permission, SCI may aggregate data across the program in ways that do not allow for individual farms to be identified.

## VI.G On-site Farm Audit Requirements

SCI is designed to support farmers in transiting acres under regenerative management, while providing incentives to farmers and assurance to stakeholders that progress is being made. For the purposes of the Pilot Program, and to support assurance that the farm has complied with farm-level requirements, SCI primarily relies on remote audits by a third-party verifier, however at times SCI will require on-site farm audits by a third party verifier under the following circumstances:

**VI.G.1 Randomize On-site Audits.** SCI will randomly select a percentage of participating farms to undergo an on-site farm audit by an accredited third-party auditor. The scope of the on-site audit should include, but is not limited to, a walk-through of the facility and Fields to verify evidence of progress made against the Farm Commitment Plan reported to SCI as part of the Annual Renewal Process.

**VI.G.2 Third-party Verifier Triggered On-site Audit.** At the discretion of the third-party verifier and SCI, and based on their risk analysis, an on-site audit may be required. This on-site audit would be an escalation step in an investigation into the reporting/evidence provided by a farm to SCI.

## Appendix A - Verification Requirements

SCI is a third-party verified program. The third-party verifier for the SCI pilot is SCS Global Services ([www.scsglobalservices.com](http://www.scsglobalservices.com)), an ISO 17065 accredited certification body. Table 3 outlines the high-level scope of third-party verified program requirements.

Table 3: SCI Pilot Scope of Third Party Verification		
Step	Program Element	High-Level Requirements Verified
Enrollment (Year 0)	'Statement of Intent' and basic farm information in Enrollment Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All necessary forms are submitted</li> <li>• All forms are accurate, complete, and truthful</li> <li>• Farm meets eligibility requirements</li> </ul>
	Farm Self-Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed survey of current farm practices and goals</li> <li>• Disclosure of total number of acres under management</li> <li>• Disclosure of % Enrolled Acres</li> <li>• Designated Field Boundary Maps for Fields</li> <li>• Baseline evidence of Field status including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Geolocated photos/videos,</li> <li>◦ Relevant Tractor data</li> <li>◦ Receipts for relevant purchases</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Submitted within 2 months of enrollment</li> </ul>
	Baseline Testing: In Lab and On Farm tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed set of Baseline Soil Testing results linked to Designated Field Boundary Maps for all Fields <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Haney Test</li> <li>◦ Soil Carbon</li> <li>◦ Water Infiltration</li> <li>◦ Aggregate Stability</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Identify which test results came from which Fields</li> <li>• If timeline is extended by Standard Operator: evidence of extension approval is provided</li> <li>• Test results are submitted within 6 months of enrollment</li> </ul>
	Farm Commitment Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed Farm Commitment Plan including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ # of total Enrolled Acres</li> <li>◦ Phased plans in 3-year increments across all SCI Pillars of regenerative management</li> <li>◦ Clear targets and milestones including start date for implementation</li> <li>◦ Proposed evidence to be submitted to verify implementation</li> <li>◦ Additional "current state" evidence of Field status linked to designated Fields</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Farm Commitment Plan submitted within 6 months of enrollment</li> </ul>

Step	Program Element	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>High-Level Requirements Verified</b></li> </ul>
Annual Renewal of Enrollment (End of Year 1,2,4,5,7 & 8)	Annual Progress Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit evidence of progress against SCI Farm Commitment Plan, including, but not limited to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ # and % of total Enrolled Acres under regenerative management</li> <li>○ Indicators identified in the Farm Commitment Plan (see above)</li> <li>○ Geolocated photos/videos of Fields</li> <li>○ Relevant tractor data</li> <li>○ Receipts for relevant purchases</li> <li>○ Year 1 and Year 2 “Interval” Soil Tests on representative acres</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reporting on any deviations from the Farm Commitment Plan, and reasons for the deviations</li> <li>• Annual Progress Report is submitted within 12 months of annual implementation of Farm Commitment Plan</li> <li>• If timeline is extended by Standard Operator: evidence of extension approval is provided</li> </ul>
	Revised Farm Commitment Plan (If significant deviations from the Farm Commitment Plan have occurred)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submission of a Revised Farm Commitment Plan based on deviations from the original plan, with all relevant sections updated</li> <li>• Revised Farm Commitment Plan is submitted within 12 months of annual implementation of Farm Commitment Plan</li> <li>• If timeline is extended by Standard Operator: evidence of extension approval is provided</li> </ul>
	Interval Testing – Haney Soil Tests as Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed set of Required Interval Soil Testing results are submitted for representative enrolled Fields where transitional practices have been tested</li> <li>• Tests are submitted within 12 months of annual implementation of Farm Commitment Plan</li> <li>• If timeline is extended by Standard Operator: evidence of extension approval is provided</li> </ul>

Step	Program Element	• High-Level Requirements Verified
Annual Renewal of Enrollment (End of Year 3, 6 & 9)	Annual Progress Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verifying transition of at least 25% of total acres to regenerative management practices across all 6 pillars</li> <li>• On-site farm audit or remote audit may be required based on verifier's progress verification</li> <li>• Submit evidence of progress against SCI Farm Commitment Plan, including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Indicators identified in the Farm Commitment Plan (see above)</li> <li>○ Geolocated photos/videos of Fields</li> <li>○ Relevant tractor data</li> <li>○ Receipts for relevant purchases</li> <li>○ Year 1 and Year 2 Interval Soil Test results on Fields</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reporting on any deviations from the Farm Commitment Plans, and reasons for the deviations</li> <li>• 3-Year Progress Report is submitted within 36 months of implementation of Farm Commitment Plan</li> <li>• If timeline is extended by Standard Operator: evidence of extension approval is provided</li> </ul>
	Full Soil Test Panel Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full Soil Test Panel (Table 1) results are submitted for all Fields (for comparison against baseline)</li> <li>• Tests are submitted within 36 months of implementation of Farm Commitment Plan</li> <li>• If timeline is extended by Standard Operator: evidence of extension approval is provided</li> </ul>
	Revised Farm Commitment Plan for Years 4- 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submission of a Revised Farm Commitment Plan based on years 1-3 learnings, with all relevant sections updated</li> <li>• Completed Farm Commitment Plan including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Updated # of Enrolled Acres</li> <li>○ Updated phased plans in 3-year increments across all SCI Pillars of regenerative management (see Appendix A)</li> <li>○ Clear targets and milestones including current state for implementation</li> <li>○ Proposed evidence to be submitted to verify implementation</li> <li>○ Additional "current state" evidence of Field status linked to designated Fields</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Year 4-6 Farm Commitment Plan is submitted within 12 months of annual implementation of Year 1-3 Farm Commitment Plan</li> <li>• If timeline is extended by Standard Operator: evidence of extension approval is provided</li> </ul>

## Appendix B - Future SCI Program Development

### Proposed Sections:

- SCI Leader Level Program (Standard)
- Farmer Resources
- Farm Transition Fund
- Lab Approval Process
- Company Commitment Program
- Label and Claims Guidelines
- SCI Public Registry
- Fee Model
- Online SCI Portal
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Complaints and Dispute Resolution
- Program Forms