Australian Soil Planners

CERTIFIED

ASP | CERTIFIED™

Australian Soil Planners (ASP) was formed in 2006 by a dynamic group of progressive, experienced, Australian farmers, agronomists and soil experts drawn together by their common disillusionment with the direction of conventional farming methods. The group is passionate about producing high quality food using a system that improves the soil and the environment whilst fostering true sustainability which inherently provides robust rural communities and profitable farming enterprises.

In the past decade, ASP has undertaken a massive rethink on how we farm in Australia. ASP has moved away from the current conventional methods, where farming systems drive high yields by force feeding crops with synthetic inputs that overload depleted soil fertility. ASP has focused their efforts on researching methods that optimise soil fertility and in turn, maximise profits for the farmer whilst delivering a higher quality product to the consumer and better environmental outcomes for all.

At the heart of the ASP system is its ability to utilise naturally derived fertilisers, which deliver complete nutrition and continuously build soil biology year-on-year. This means ASP Certified™ produce includes all trace elements that are disappearing from the nation's over-farmed fragile landscapes. Those nutrients that are vital to human health end up on the consumer's plate when produce is farmed using the ASP system. The ASP membership now boasts a network of over 120 independent, like-minded, family owned farming enterprises in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, New Zealand, Europe and Asia.

The ASP Standard was developed to formalise the specific ASP farm management methodology to a certified level. Produce will be labelled ASP Certified™ if it is grown using the ASP System and this is verified by an audit of the operation against the ASP Standard. The ASP Standard is aligned with industry best practice and is backed by years of Research and Development (R&D). It is independently audited so consumers can be confident that producers are adhering to the practices prescribed by the ASP Standard. Certification of produce to the ASP Standard is limited to growers within the ASP membership.

Produce labelled ASP Certified™, indicates that this produce has passed the stringent practices outlined in the ASP Standard. This ensures produce is sustainably grown and is superior in complete nutritional density to both conventional as well as organically grown produce. The ASP Standard certification system relies heavily on farm hygiene, stringent record keeping and MRL testing. This allows end users of ASP Certified™ produce the ability to trace the source of their product back to an individual grower's field.

The ASP Standard is a genuine alternative to conventional farming practices and organic farming systems.

ASP Certified™ produce is:

- High quality;
- Non-GMO;
- Tested to be pesticide residue free;
- Nutrient rich;
- Grown under a farming system that continuously enhances the soil, sequesters carbon and stimulates soil microbial activity;
- Grown under a farming system that delivers genuine environmental and sustainability outcomes;
- Grown so traditional Australian family farms stay Australian owned, thus nurturing rural communities.

Further information please contact :
info@aspcertified.com or visit www.aspcertified.com

HEALTHY SOILS, HEALTHY FOODS AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

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Evolution of the ASP Standard and Certification Process

The ASP Standard has been developed from a decade of work and research undertaken and financed by passionate farmers, agronomists and soil experts who make up the membership of Australian Soil Planners (ASP). The ASP Standard was developed to formalise the ASP farm management methodology to a certified level. Produce will be labelled ASP Certified™ if it is grown using the ASP System and verified by an audit of the operation against the ASP Standard.

The ASP Standard sets out the core requirements, key production inputs as well as procedures and practices for ASP members who choose to have their produce labelled ASP Certified™.

The ASP Standard incorporates the best of traditional and modern farming methods into a holistic management system that encompasses soil health, environmental outcomes, farmer viability and community resilience.

The ASP Standard considerably reduces and limits the use of conventional fertilisers and pesticides which is an important point of difference between ASP Certified™ produce and conventionally grown produce. Producers who comply with the ASP Standard are dedicated to removing all risk of chemical exposure to our food, as demanded by the consumer. All ASP Certified™ produce is sampled and MRL tested for verification of its pesticide residue free status before produce can be labelled ASP Certified™. ASP Certified™ produce can therefore be compared to organically labelled produce on its chemical residue status.

ASP understands the relationship between soil and plant health, the ASP system focuses on building better soil health and nutrition by eliminating practices and products which are harmful to soil or human health. Farms using the ASP system consequently produce healthier plants that are less susceptible to disease and insect attack. Produce grown under the ASP Standard therefore has a reduced reliance on pest control measures and delivers an overall nutritionally superior product to the consumer.

ASP agronomists and researchers are focused on building whole of soil health and fertility. The ASP Standard mandates the use of specialised soil conditioners which are based on natural inputs, supplying all trace elements and minerals to the crop. In-crop testing verifies and documents that complete nutrition is achieved.

Our agronomists devise soil nutritional programs on a field by field and crop by crop basis that complements natural processes to build soil carbon and enhance

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nutrient cycling. The ASP Standard is based on soil science and the negative experience of modern conventional farming systems which depletes soil fertility and builds a dependency on costly synthetic fertilisers. Produce grown under the ASP Standard is sustainably grown and superior in nutritional density when compared to both organically and conventionally grown crops.

Who Created the Standard?

Key ASP members including ASP farmers, agronomists and soil experts have collaborated to create the ASP Standard.

What sort of standard is the ASP Standard?

The ASP Standard is a private standard that is aligned to Industry Best Management Practice (BMP). It is not available to all farmers but is a voluntary option for ASP growers who see value in growing ASP Certified™ produce under the ASP Standard. This makes the ASP Standard unique and exciting, and sets a new level in agricultural production.

The ASP Standard reporting and record keeping takes food safety and traceability further by ensuring that all grain delivered to the processor can be traced back to individual fields of production. This guarantees the end user can access the farming history of growers' individual fields if required.

Senior Agronomists of Australian Soil Planners are renowned soil specialists who have introduced the ASP system across five states of Australia. The ASP producers are active not only throughout the grains industry but also grazing, horticultural and viticultural sectors. The ASP network is now currently working in New Zealand and several Asian countries to assist with soil health and crop management.

How does the ASP Farm Management Plan align with the ASP Standard?

The ASP Farm Management Plan has been created to support farmers to manage their requirements for record keeping and reporting. The ASP Farm Management Plan can be utilised by the ASP producer as the basis of a whole of farm improvement process. It requires the ASP Certified member to document and carry out practices to an compliance level required by the ASP Standard and to further develop strategies to improve and enhance their farming practices.

Certified Organic vs ASP Certified

The ASP Certified Product is **NOT Certified ORGANIC** and is not produced to be sold or described as a Certified ORGANIC product. However, great care is taken to ensure that no pesticides come into contact with the plant from grain formation to harvest and through to storage, transport and processing.

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What does the ASP Standard address?

The ASP Standard covers the following management areas:

- Soil Conservation, Soil Health and Improvement
- GMO's (Prohibited in the ASP Certified System)
- Crop Rotation
- Crop Nutrition Verification Tests (SAP Test)
- Landscape and Environment
- Records and Record Keeping
- Whole of Farm Management System
- Residues and Possible Contaminations
- Farm Hygiene
- Manure Crops
- Diversity of Crop Production
- Irrigation Management
- Crop Residue Management
- Seed, Seedlings and Seed production
- Plant Production
- Fertiliser Inputs (Prohibited products and Restricted Use Products)
- Trace Elements
- Manures and Composts
- Pests, Disease and Weed Management (Plant Protection)
- Storage and Processing
- Community and Social Expectations
- Certification Audit and Inspection

ASP grower members who have made the decision to grow ASP Certified™ produce are required to meet not only the ASP Standard but they must also document and prove to the ASP agronomist and independent auditor that the fields to be certified fully meet the ASP Standard requirements.

ASP growers wishing to grow ASP Certified produce must complete the following on an annual basis:

- Pre-Season Growers Agreement
  - Sets out their acceptance to grow produce compliant to the ASP Standard
  - Sets out their production area for the current season
  - Sets out the penalties for breaching the standard and their liability to ASP
  - Informs them of the power of the ASP Standards Review Board - Power to revoke their status
  - Sets out who by legal license may use the Certification Logos and sell product under the ASP Certified Logo
  - Sets out the requirement to who can market ASP Certified produce
  - Outlines the requirement of the Audit and Certification process and in signing allows access to the property and records of the farming enterprise for Auditors

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This document is counter signed by the ASP Agronomist in their area and ensures that both Grower and Agronomist must comply with the standard.

- Pre Plant Declaration
  - Signed Declaration which states that the growers produce grains to the ASP Standard
  - Maintain the Farm Management and record system truthfully and honestly
  - Will notify the ASP Standard Review Board should a production area be potentially adversely affected by something beyond the growers control but which will affect the certification of the product.
  - That they have read the Standard and understand the requirements and have noted any changes made to the Standard
  - Understand the requirement to have internal and 2nd party Audits, during the growing period, internal by ASP Employees (Agronomist) and prior to ASP Certified product leaving the property by the Accredited Auditors
  - Declaration that each field that is to produce ASP Certified produce has not in the proceeding 3 years been subject to or planted with either Prohibited Inputs or GMO crops
  - This Declaration also sets out the ASP grower members requirement to ensure they understand and actively participate in sustainable communities and enhancing environments

- Harvest Production Declaration
  - Signed declaration by the farmer that the Standard has been adhered to and that no known incidents have occurred during the life cycle of the crop which would prohibit the produce from being sold as ASP Certified
  - That the samples required have been taken as per the Standard requirement for testing
  - That the reporting and documentation required has been kept and records maintained

- Grain Testing and Auditing
  - Grain produced under the ASP Certification process is sent for pesticide residue testing prior to any grain being allowed to leave the farm as ASP Certified.
  - ASP Auditors are highly experienced industry participants specialised and trained in farming production systems. They specialise in and understand Natural Resource Management and the importance of growing and supporting regional communities. They are accredited Auditors.
  - The independent auditors are engaged through the ASP licenced marketing body to ensure and validate the declarations and compliance of the ASP Growers.
  - They also validate the testing which has occurred on the produce, which then allows marketing body to ensure that the ASP Standard has been rigorously followed.

- The ASP member is required to validate their compliance to the standard by producing evidence ie. Production records, input register, operations reports.

Copies of relevant evidence is recorded by the Auditors and kept on file. The Auditors also complete field inspections of production and storage areas. Visual inspection is also undertaken on the Natural Environment and Natural Assets of the ASP member's property.

- In the event of non-compliance
  - Should the auditor believe for any reason that there is inadequate evidence grant compliance to the ASP Standard, the auditor must immediately report the non-compliance to the ASP Producer, agronomist and ASP Standards Review Board for investigation. The ASP producer will be given a corrective action report and they will then liaise with the ASP Standard Review Board to ensure they make corrective actions as required. Any grain produced from this farming unit will be withdrawn from sale as ASP Certified and sold into the conventional market.

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Standards Comparisons Table

Consumer Requirements	Certified Organic	ASP Certified Sustainable	Conventional
Production and soil management standards	✓	✓	X
Certified and audited system	✓	✓	X
Trace back system to each production field (Plate to Paddock)	✓	✓	X
Audited field history including all produce MRL residue tested *	X	✓	X
No GMO crops	✓	✓	X
In crop documented tested nutritional verification	X	✓	X
100% Australian grown	X	✓	X
100% Australian owned	X	✓	X
Zero pesticide exposure of consumable produce (tested)	✓	✓	X
Unique consistent farming system	X	✓	X
Limited use of synthetic Nitrogen Fertilisers	✓	✓	X
Limited use of synthetic Acid based Phosphorus Fertilisers	✓	✓	X
Limited use of pesticides	✓	✓	X
Focus on soil biological health	X	✓	X
Customised prescription blend of minerals and nutrients	X	✓	X
Requirement to use complete nutritional program for soil health	X	✓	X
Grower community participation within standards – must maintain active involvement in their community	X	✓	X
Innovative and commercially valued IP in ASP Soil Nutritional Program	X	✓	X
Focus on building and restoring Soil Carbon	X	✓	X
Building Healthy and Resilient Community Programmes	X	✓	X
Member funded research and development programmes to improve Soil Fertility and Nutritional value of food produced	X	✓	X

* Certified Organic Random Residue Testing Only