



Farm Certifications

These are various certifications from the farms we work with. They all share a common theme of socially responsible behavior and environmental awareness. This includes what chemicals may be used and the amounts that can be used, child labor and worker rights. The certifications generally focus on developing countries as some of the social and environmental concerns do not exist with producers in developed countries. This is why it would be challenging to only sell flowers that were all “Fairtrade”, as Fairtrade is not a program that exists for a Canadian farm.

Some farms have all of these and some have none. The majority have at least one certification. Many farms meet or exceed all the requirements but do not get certified due to costs and trying to choose the right label.



FLP = Flower Label Program

A joint initiative of human rights organizations, trade unions, flower producers and flower retailers the Flower Label Program implements social and environmental standards in flower production.

FLP-certified farms have to fulfill the following criteria:

- Living wages.
- Freedom of association.
- Non-discrimination.
- A ban on child labor and forced labor.
- Health care.
- A ban on toxic pesticides.
- Responsible handling of natural resources.

It is a European program and it is not active in North America.



Max Havelaar / FLO/ Fairtrade

These are all forms of Fairtrade labels. Max Havelaar is a widely recognized European fair trade label. In North America the Fairtrade label is more widely recognized particularly in the coffee industry.

They are all social and environmental labels that certify a producer in the following areas:

- Creating opportunities for economically disadvantaged producers.
- Transparency and accountability.
- Capacity building.
- Payment of a fair price.
- Gender equality.
- Safe working conditions.
- Environmental protection.



In the floral industry a premium would be paid on a stem of roses of a few cents. All of this premium would go into an account managed by the workers for projects to benefit the local community. Examples would be schools, computer labs, dental clinics, low interest loans. These are made available to the community and not just the workers at the farm.



MPS / Fair Flower Fair Plants

This is a Dutch based organization with a wide range of certifications for the floral industry. The consumer logo used to show certification is “Fair Flower Fair Plants”. This is mainly a European program and has a very low profile in North America.





BASC

This is an anti-smuggling initiative to certify farms take precautions against smuggling. It is a very effective and comprehensive program. Removing the possibility of smuggling from the floral chain improves the social atmosphere of the community by removing the side effects of illegal activities.



Veriflora

This is a standard that has more visibility in North America.

It focuses on:

- Quality
- Environment
- People.

Compared to Fairtrade it has more focus on product quality. Fairtrade has a stronger focus on the social side of the business transaction. Both are similar on the environment. Veriflora is an attempt to create a North American label that will be promoted and recognized by the industry and the public.



Florverde

This is a certification to ensure all flowers grown and harvested in Colombia meet specific social and environmental standards. Florverde is probably the most adopted South American label and is widely supported in the Colombian industry. It has independent verification and uses a benchmarking system to allow growers to work up to different levels in the program rather than try to meet extremely high standards when they begin the program. Since 2008 the standards or Florverde are equal to the global GAP program.



EuroG.A.P. - GlobalG.A.P.

The GLOBALGAP standard is primarily designed to reassure consumers about how food is produced on the farm by minimizing detrimental environmental impacts of farming operations, reducing the use of chemical inputs and ensuring a responsible approach to worker health and safety as well as animal welfare. This is a European certification and is not known in North America.



Rainforest Alliance

Farms that have earned the Rainforest Alliance Certified seal are taking steps too:

- Maintain or increase tree cover.
- Conserve soil quality and prevent erosion.
- Reduce chemical use.
- Protect wildlife.
- Ensure the well-being of workers and their families by facilitating access to education and healthcare.