

Q&A

Who is SFI?

First and foremost, SFI is about responsible forestry and always has been since the inception of the original program in 1995. [SFI Inc.](#) is an independent non-profit organization, and is solely responsible for maintaining, overseeing and improving the internationally recognized Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) program. Across North America, about 195 million acres/79 million hectares are certified to the SFI forest management standard, making it the largest single forest standard in the world. SFI chain-of-custody certification tells buyers the percentage of fibre from certified forests, certified sourcing and/or post-consumer recycled content. The SFI program's unique fibre sourcing requirements promote responsible forest management on all suppliers' lands. SFI Inc. is governed by a three-chamber Board of Directors representing environmental, social and economic sectors equally. For more about SFI in Canada click [here](#).

How does a consumer get information about SFI's labels?

Our website, www.sfiprogram.org, is listed on every label. Our website contains a ["labels and claims" section](#), detailing how our process works and what our labels mean, further demonstrating SFI's transparency. Organizations that want to use SFI program labels must contact the [SFI Office of Label Use and Licensing](#), which must approve the use of all SFI labels and claims.

How does SFI's consumer research compare to CBC's?

Label research and transparency in our labels is an important part of the SFI program and any credible third party labelling program and as such SFI used a leading and expert third party public opinion research company to conduct label testing in which they asked 1,000 consumers what their understandings of our labels were. The study found that only one percent of these consumers said that the SFI label indicated no clearcutting. For the purposes of its show, CBC Marketplace also conducted consumer research. However, there are important design differences between our studies that influence the results.

SFI's research featured an open-ended question – that is, respondents were asked to say in their own words, verbatim and without any aiding, what they believed the SFI label meant when placed on a product. In the Artemis research, just one percent of respondents said that they believed the SFI label indicated no clearcutting.

In contrast, CBC's survey used blatantly leading questions, in which respondents were prompted with specific potential meanings for the label, and asked whether the logo carries that meaning, such as "is from forests where there is no clearcutting" or "comes from forests where no chemicals are used". The leading-question design led most consumers to agree that the SFI label "probably" means just what CBC suggested that it means.

Open-ended questions (as per SFI research) measure top-of-mind perceptions and allow an unrestrained or free response, while leading questions (as per CBC research) steer the respondent to a predetermined result.

Who recognizes SFI?

The SFI program is recognized by governments, conservation groups and forestry experts around the world, including the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers, the Competition Bureau of Canada's Guide for Advertisers, Public Works Canada, and Environment Canada's EcoLogo program. To see what others are saying click [here](#).

What does SFI third-party certification involve?

Voluntary third-party certification involves an independent audit to ensure that requirements set out in the SFI Standard and supporting documents have been met. A certificate is issued if the planning, procedures, systems and performance of on-the-ground forest operations are found to be in conformance with the standard. This is more rigorous than self-regulated claims by companies about their own products. To learn more about this process click [here](#).

Why is certification important?

With just 10% of the world's forests certified, forest certification provides an essential instrument to tell customers they are purchasing products from responsibly managed forests. SFI forest certification means compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, use of best practices, public involvement, etc. The SFI forest management standard is a single standard that was designed by North Americans for North American forests -- it grew from a concept in the 1990s to the world's largest single forest certification standard today. It is supported by on-product labels that help consumers make responsible choices when it comes to buying forest products from well-managed forests.

Does the SFI standard allow clearcutting?

Yes, like all forest certification standards. It is important to understand that forestry experts the world over, including the [Canadian Council of Forests Ministers](#) and the [Society of American Foresters](#), consider clearcutting an appropriate harvesting method because it supports sustainable forest management, mimics natural disturbance such as wildfires and is used to manage or reduce the risk of insect infestation. While clearcutting is accepted by all forest certification standards, the SFI standard restricts the average size of a clearcut. In addition, the SFI requires that ALL areas must be promptly reforested after final harvest though planting within two years or two planting seasons, or by planned natural regeneration within five years.

Does the SFI Standard allow the use of pesticides including herbicides?

Yes, as do all forest certification programs. However, the SFI standard calls for minimizing chemical use and using the least toxic pesticides and there are six auditable requirements related to their use. Forestry experts and all the forest certification standards recognize the critical role that pesticides play in forest management. They control pest outbreaks that can devastate a forest. These pesticides are

subject to stringent regulation and the SFI Standard requires conformance with the law in addition to its own standards.

Who runs the SFI program?

SFI is a fully independent, non-profit organization. SFI's Board of Directors represent environmental, economic and social interests equally and includes conservationists, forest sector representatives, as well as academics, wildlife ecologists, government officials, landowners, forest professionals and family forest landowners from across Canada and the United States. We are one of the few certification standards that include government experts on its Board. To learn more about our board and governance click [here](#).

Today there are 242 program participants -- government agencies, forest companies, conservation groups, aboriginal communities, private landowners, and universities -- with lands certified to the SFI program, and 2,500 individuals and organizations meeting SFI requirements and/or working with the program to strengthen forest practices and fiber sourcing including close to 1,000 members of community-based SFI Implementation Committees and dozens of conservation groups leading projects funded through the SFI conservation and community grants program.

Most of New Brunswick's lands are SFI certified. What involvement do New Brunswickers have in the SFI program?

SFI involves all forest stakeholders in standard development, which is reviewed every five years so we can incorporate the latest science. During the last review process, we held workshops across North America to solicit comments on the standard. In addition to including New Brunswickers in that process, they are also involved in our New Brunswick SFI Implementation Committee which is one of our 37 grassroots committees across North America that participates in the SFI program, shares best management practices, engages in landowner and community outreach and logger training.

How does SFI support conservation?

SFI has more than 170 requirements, indicators and objectives, many of which support conservation at a variety of levels. Under the SFI forest management standard, program participants are required to invest in forest research. Since 1995, SFI program participants have invested over \$1.2 billion in forest research, and over \$57 million to support community programs such as education and training for 130,000+ loggers and foresters and outreach to family forest owners. In 2010, we introduced the [SFI Conservation and Community Partnerships Grant Program](#), which has already led to impressive results.

What if I have a concern about a SFI certified company or practice?

A process that openly investigates complaints is an important component of any legitimate certification program. The transparency requirements of the SFI Standard and supporting documents allow individuals and organizations to bring forward concerns, as outlined in [SFI Requirements: Section 11 – Public Inquiries and Official Complaints](#). A complaint challenges the audit findings and the decision to

grant the certification, or events occurring since the audit that question the maintenance of the certification.