The Rainforest Alliance's Priority Research Topics for the Agriculture Sector - January 2017

RA/SAN Outcome Area	Research Topic
Biodiversity Conservation	Effects of certification on deforestation, natural ecosystem encroachment, and restoration (e.g., at landscape level)
	Contribution of on-farm natural ecosystems to composition and structure (including connectivity) of habitats at a landscape level
	Effects of certification on the size, configuration, health, and management regime of on-farm natural ecosystems, shade cover, and other native vegetation
	Effects of certification on species assemblages (e.g., birds) on farms
Natural Resource Conservation	Aggregate effects (e.g., at watershed scale) of certification-prescribed best management practices on water quality and water flow (using modeling methodologies)
	Effects of certification on net greenhouse gas emissions of agriculture
	Effects of certification on key aspects of stream health on/around farms (erosion, sedimentation, eutrophication, agrochemical pollution, water flow regimes)
Farmer, Worker, and Family Well-being	Roles and effectiveness of different group administrator types in promoting the success and advancement of member farmers (e.g., training, support, marketing, revenue distribution, decision-making, transparency)
	Effects of certification on worker well-being (e.g., wages, benefits, and health and safety) on **smallholder farms**. Requires documenting attributes of employment on smallholder farms
	Effects of certification on worker well-being (e.g., wages, benefits, and health and safety) on **medium/large farms**. (Also relevant to understand labor relationships and characteristics [e.g., permanent vs seasonal, contracts, worker origins, unions])
	Effects of certification on smallholder household assets and income (including income from focal crop[s], other crops, subsistence products, and other earnings)
	Effects of certification on child well-being and development (including education levels, child labor, and opportunities)
	Well-being and equality of, and opportunities for, women participating in the Rainforest Alliance's programs (certification or technical assistance)
	The size and extent of price premiums, and the use of any such revenue
	Effects of certification on the roles and effectiveness of farmer and worker organizations and collective action
Farm Productivity and Profitability	Effects of certification on the net income / profitability of production of focal crop(s)
	Effects of certification on yield of focal crop(s) (potentially including assessment of variety, age, and regeneration status of perennial crops)
	Cost/benefit of program participation for producers (looking at investment in sustainability improvements and/or in certification)
	Effects of certification on product quality
	Effects of certification on efficient or optimal use of farm inputs

	Roles and effects of female participation in smallholder agriculture on farm productivity, quality, and income
Cross-cutting	Relation of certified lands to areas of high social or environmental value or risk
	Spillover effect relative to specific sets of best management practices, i.e., the effects of interventions on nearby (non-participating) properties/land managers
	Changes made in preparation for certification (which are not typically captured by evaluation or impact studies)
	Level of producer satisfaction with participation in certification (or producers' experience of participation) and contribution of different factors (e.g., productivity, training/support, price, environmental quality, health) to satisfaction
	Effectiveness of training and support, i.e., the uptake of best management practices and increased farmer knowledge following training
	Effects of certification on the resilience of farms and farming households to climate change and other shocks
	Effects of the new 2017 SAN Standard on the quantity, type, and toxicity of applied agrochemicals, and effects on people and environment
Learning/R&D	Barriers to adoption of key best management practices required by the SAN standard (e.g., improved agrochemical management; riparian zone protection, waste management)
	Key factors in farmer decision-making about shade canopy management (e.g., crop yield, pest management, wildlife conservation, and climate change resilience)