Summary of Changes from version 1.0 to version 2.0 of the Avoided Conversion from Grasslands to Croplands methodology

The following is a summary of a significant change from v1.0 of the Avoided Conversion of Grasslands and Shrubland to Crop production published in October 2013 to v2.0 posted for public comment on September 13, 2018.

Topic	Revision	Section
General	Section numbering (numbers vs. letters), equation numbering and document format updated to match other ACR methodologies. Section order slightly changed to match other ACR methodologies.	
General	Revisions to make the methodology consistent with the current version of the ACR Standard (v 5.1, adopted July 2018)	
Summary Description of Methodology	Adds language to clarify that conversion to orchards and vineyards is not an eligible activity	1.1
Summary Description of Methodology Applicability Conditions Baseline Determination Additionality Assessment	The methodology no longer requires that likelihood of conversion to cropland be demonstrated with a property appraisal. An analysis of historical rates of conversion of available grasslands to cropland was conducted at the county level for the entire United States using remote sensing data. Likelihood of conversion can now be demonstrated via the historical patterns of conversion in counties where conversion rates are the highest. Appraisals are still an allowed method for demonstrating likelihood of conversion in counties that do not automatically meet this eligibility criterion, but where conversion of discrete parcels may still be likely.	1.1, 1.2, 3.1, 3.2, Appendix B
Summary Description of Methodology Applicability Conditions	Removes Canada from the list of countries where methodology is valid, and makes it only valid for the United States	1.1, 1.2
Definitions	Removes definitions from this chapter and moves them to the end of the document. Clarifies that unless specified otherwise in the new version of the methodology, projects are subject to all requirements and specifications in the most current version the American Carbon Registry Standard.	Definitions
Applicability Conditions	Specifies minimum requirements of an LCA	1.2
Applicability Conditions	Specifies conditions for livestock grazing, haying and prescribed fires as allowed if conservation goals of the LCA	1.2

	are met. Makes clear that overgrazing, overstocking, or overuse of prescribed fires leading to the progressive loss of vegetative cover in the project scenario cannot happen. Clarifies also that management practices that increase carbon stocks can be allowed but are not eligible for crediting.	
Applicability Conditions	Adds specificity on conditions related to: • Identified and Unidentified agents of conversion • Carbon rights ownership • Land capability classification • Irrigated cropland scenarios • Removal of wetland areas	1.2
Applicability Conditions Determine Baseline Cropland Management Scenario	Clarifies language on livestock management; grazing allowed as a practice on the baseline cropland management scenario (winter grazing of stover) when feasible and common practice for the crop and region; allowed data sources for establishing baseline cropland management scenario are listed in section 3.1.2.	1.2, 3.1.2
Applicability Conditions	Changes project location to only the United States; formerly Canada and United States.	1.2
Periodic Reviews and Revisions	New section added. ACR standard language for procedures for updating of methodologies.	1.3
Field, Area, Region, Boundary Terms	Clarifies language on participants fields	2.1.1
Recording the Project Area and Project Region	Adds list of explicit shape files that need to be provided to record project boundaries, at time of validation. Adds guidance on how to identify and exclude wetland and other areas from the project area.	2.1.2
Carbon Pools (Reservoirs)	Terminology made consistent with other ACR methodologies (e.g. optional, excluded etc.)	2.2.1 Table 1
GHG Sources and Sinks	N indirect emissions are conservatively excluded	2.2.2 Table 2
Temporal Boundary	Additions to the Temporal Boundary Requirements within the GHG Project Plan: • Date of submittal of Project listing with ACR • Date of signature of the agreement specifying ownership of ERTs • Date of submittal of Statement of Intent to ACR Clarifications: • Language on project start date for each participant field enrolled, which is inclusive of all participant fields	2.3

	• Projected times for evaluation and re-evaluation for baseline inputs • Projected times for enrollment and validation for participant fields, and actual dates for participant fields enrollment • Language made consistent with ACR Standard v. 5.1	
Start Date	Adds a section on start date; includes specific requirements for AFOLU projects and LCAs; made consistent with ACR Standard v 5.1.	2.3.1
Crediting Period	Defines timeframe in which changes are conservatively estimated to occur in a Participant Field's terrestrial carbon pools, i.e. the time as predicted by a biogeochemical model or field measurements that soil carbon loss would continue to occur in the baseline scenario of conversion to Cropland for the soils and climate at the site and the likely crop management practices. The Crediting Period must be at least 5 years but no more than 40 years and cannot be renewed.	2.3.2
Baseline Cropland Management Scenario	Rewritten for clarity. Provides a specific list of management practices to be defined in the baseline and acceptable sources. Removes language regarding financial viability of conversion, and appraisal process. New language and options for establishing Baseline Cropland Scenario in Section 3.1.1.	3.1.2
Additionality	Inclusion of a Practice Based Performance Standard	3.2
Stratification	Provides updated data sources on which to base stratification	4
Quantification of Baseline GHG Emissions Equation	Blanket uncertainty deduction removed from Equation 1. Uncertainty is incorporated for each source, sink, reservoir depending on the underlying data source (e.g. biogeochemical model, measurements, literature defaults etc.).	6.1, 6.5
Quantification of Baseline GHG Emissions Equation	Enteric fermentation and fossil fuel emissions added to equation 2 if established as part of baseline cropland management scenario	6.1
Quantification of Baseline GHG Emissions Equation	Rewritten for clarity	6.1.1, 6.1.2
Leakage	Literature for establishing market leakage default rates for commodity crops was updated; methods for estimating activity shifting leakage for non-commodity food crops was removed; market leakage deduction is conservatively applied in this scenario as it should more than account for both leakage types for non-commodity food crops. The previous method was highly uncertain, potentially resulting in errors that were both under and overestimates.	6.3

Description of Monitoring Plan	Requirements updated	7.2.1
Validation and Verification	Requirements updated for consistency with ACR Standard v 5.1; Possibility of site visit requirement waived if LCA and other documentation meet requirements to the satisfaction of the verifier; Added language and clarity around PDA requirements, consistent with ACR Standard v.5.1.	8