

Guide to Eco-labels

Eco-labels are intended to convey certain information about food is grown, raised, and processed as well as tell us whether or not it contains certain ingredients. Eco-labels can be misleading. Some labels have certifying agencies with strict standards. Others have no oversight and no standards associated with them.

The eco-labels listed on this page are a combination of widely-recognized labels and those created by the Marquette Food Co-op to describe the agricultural practices of farms listed in the U.P. Food & Farm Directory. This is by no means an exhaustive list, so let us know if there are others that should be featured.

Widely Recognized Labels



Fair Trade Certified

Fairtrade is an ethical trade system that puts people first, offering farmers and workers in developing countries a better deal, and the opportunity to improve their lives and invest in their future. Fairtrade gives consumers the opportunity to help reduce poverty and instigate change through everyday shopping.



USDA Certified Organic

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has put in place a set of national standards that food labeled must meet, whether it is grown in the United States or imported from other countries. Organic meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy products come from animals that are given no antibiotics or growth hormones. Organic food is produced without using most conventional pesticides; fertilizers made with synthetic ingredients or sewage sludge; bioengineering; or ionizing radiation.



Certified Naturally Grown

Certified Naturally Grown (CNG) is a grassroots alternative to the USDA's National Organic Program meant primarily for direct-market farmers and beekeepers distributing through local channels such as farmer's markets, roadside stands, local restaurants, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs and small local grocery stores.



MAEAP Verified

The Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) is an innovative, proactive program that helps farms of all sizes/commodities voluntarily prevent or minimize agricultural pollution risks. This comprehensive, voluntary, proactive program is designed to reduce farmers' legal and environmental risks through a three-phase process: education, farm-specific risk assessment, and on-farm verification that ensures the farmer has implemented environmentally sound practices.



Non-GMO Project Verified

Means that a product has been produced according to rigorous best practices for GMO (genetically modified organism) avoidance, including testing of risk ingredients. The Non-GMO Project is the only organization offering independent verification of testing and GMO controls for products in the U.S. and Canada.



Cruelty Free

This symbol developed by the Coalition for Consumer Information on Cosmetics' (CCIC) guarantees consumers that no animal tests were used in the development/production of the product. The CCIC makes sure to validate each license with on-site audits of a company's manufacturing process. The Leaping Bunny logo can be found on cosmetics, pet products, household cleansers, and personal care products.



Demeter Certified Biodynamic

Biodynamic farmers strive to create a diversified, balanced farm ecosystem that generates health and fertility as much as possible from within the farm itself. Biodynamics has much in common with other organic approaches – it emphasizes the use of manures and composts and excludes the use of artificial chemicals on soil and plants. Preparations made from fermented manure, minerals and herbs are used to help restore and harmonize the vital life forces of the farm and to enhance the nutrition, quality and flavor of the food being raised. Biodynamic practitioners also recognize and strive to work in cooperation with the subtle influences of the wider cosmos on soil, plant and animal health. There are independent certification agencies for biodynamic products; most of these agencies are members of the international biodynamics standards group Demeter International.



Rainforest Alliance Certified

This seal ensures a product comes from a farm or forest operation meeting comprehensive standards to protect the environment and promote the rights and well-being of workers, their families, and communities.



Sustainable Seafood

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) has developed standards for sustainable fishing and seafood traceability. Both standards meet the world's toughest best practice guidelines and are helping to transform global seafood markets.



Dolphin Safe

This certification is given by the U.S. Department of Commerce for tuna caught using purse seine fishing methods within the Eastern Tropical Pacific Ocean. It ensures that fishing did not involve the deliberate netting or circling of any dolphins.



Certified Vegan

Signifies that products are vegan, defined as containing no animal ingredients or by-products, using no animal ingredients or by-products in the manufacturing process, and not tested on animals by any company or independent contractor.



Certified Gluten-Free

This logo stands for the independent verification of quality, integrity, and purity of products. Products with this logo represent unmatched reliability in meeting strict gluten-free standards.



Allergen-Free

There are many companies producing products that claim to be gluten free or dairy free but actually manufacture their products in an environment that has produced products that have had traces of these allergens present. This logo ensures the product is made in a totally isolated environment that is free from gluten, wheat, dairy, egg and animal derivatives.



Kosher

When you see this logo on a product, you know you're buying food that meets the highest levels of *kashrus* (Kosher law).



Halal

In Arabic, the word *halal* means permitted or lawful. Halal foods are foods that are allowed under Islamic dietary guidelines.



Certified B Corp

B Corp certification is to sustainable business what Fair Trade certification is to coffee or USDA Organic certification is to milk. B Corps are certified by the nonprofit B Lab to meet rigorous standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency. Today, there is a growing community of more than 760 Certified B Corps from 27 countries and 60 industries working together toward 1 unifying goal: to redefine success in business.

Labels defined by the Marquette Food Co-op

Hormone-Free

The USDA prohibits the use of hormones in both pork and poultry production, but not in beef. Commercial farmers will use hormones to pump up the production of meat and dairy. The resulting products will carry the residuals of those hormones. Hormone-Free means that no hormones were given to the animal during its lifetime at that particular farm.

Raised Without Antibiotics

USDA does not allow the term antibiotic free on any meat and poultry products. Variations of this claim, such as no antibiotics administered, are allowed by the USDA, but they have no verification system established. In this guide, Raised without Antibiotics means there were no antibiotics administered to the animal. The only exception would be in the case of antibiotics administered to a sick animal that is quarantined away from the herd or flock for the duration of its illness and then reintroduced to the herd or flock.

Conventional

Operations are considered Conventional if they use any synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, hormones, antibiotics, or common enhancers like Miracle Gro™, on any crop or animal at any time.

Authentic

Operations are considered Authentic if they do not use any synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, hormones, antibiotics, and common enhancers like Miracle Gro™. The only exception would be in the case of antibiotics administered to a sick animal that is quarantined away from the herd or flock for the duration of its illness and then reintroduced to the herd or flock.

marquette food co-op

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