

# Getting Started: Certified Foods and Sustainable Foods

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# Overview

- Sustainable foods
- Certified foods
- Eco-labels



# Sustainable Foods

“A sustainable and resilient food system conserves and renews **natural resources**, advances **social justice** and **animal welfare**, builds **community wealth**, and fulfills the **food** and **nutrition** needs of all eaters now and in the future.”

Source: Tagtow and Harmon. Healthy Land, Healthy Food & Healthy Eaters. 2008.

# What is Certification?

- “Effective certification programs outline specific goals and create measurable standards to make it possible to reach those goals.”

# What does Certification Mean?

- Operations of farmer and/or processor have been verified by **INDEPENDENT** organizations to meet specific and transparent environmental and social **STANDARDS**

Source: Going Green: A Resource Kit for Pollution Prevention in Health Care. June 2007. Health Care Without Harm.

# Three Levels of Certification

- First-party
  - Producer signs statement
  - No outside verification
- Second-party
  - Buyer certifies
  - Vested interest
- Third-party
  - INDEPENDENT party
  - No vested interest
  - Most credible



Source: Jason Clay. Certified Foods: Separating Quality from Hype. Pediatric Basics No. 110, Spring 2005.

# What does Certification Mean?

- Operations of farmer and/or processor have been verified by **INDEPENDENT** organizations to meet specific and transparent environmental and social **STANDARDS**

# Standards

## Environmental

Soil  
Water  
Habitat  
Biodiversity

*Pesticides*  
*GE crops*  
*Antibiotics*  
*Hormones*

## Social

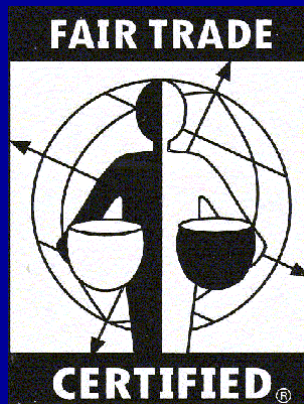
Health  
Safety  
Animal Welfare  
Compensation

# Why does certification matter?

Certifications enable us to:

- Buy according to our values
- Compare and contrast options
- Have confidence in product claims

# How do you know if a food is certified?



# Eco-label Categories

## Organic/Environment

USDA Organic  
Protected Harvest  
Rainforest Alliance



# Eco-label Categories

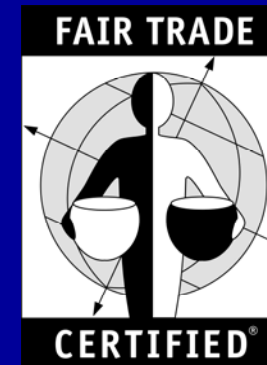
**Animal Welfare**

Certified Humane



**Labor/Social Justice**

Fair Trade



**Multiple Categories**

Food Alliance



# What is Organic?

- “an ecological production management system that promotes and enhances biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity”

Source: USDA Organic Production and Organic Food. June 2007.  
<http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/ofp/ofp.shtml>

# Organic Food is...

## Produced without

- Hormones
- Animal by-products
- Pesticides/fertilizers
- Antibiotics
- GMOs
- Irradiation
- Sewer sludge

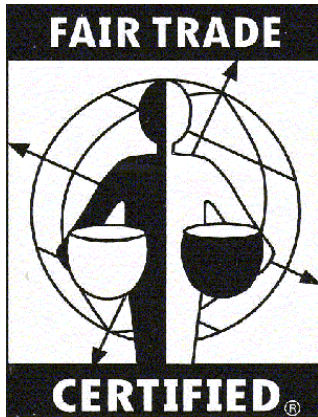
## Produced with

- Natural fertilizers
- Crop rotation
- Rotational grazing
- Outdoor access\*

\*Except for chickens

# Certified Organic





# Fair Trade Certified

- Fair price
- Access to credit
- Coops and unions
- Sustainable agriculture
- Restricted pesticide use
- No child labor

# Certified Humane Raised and Handled

- No growth hormones
- No non-therapeutic antibiotics
- Water and food
- Living environment
- Processors adhere to higher standard for slaughtering



\*Meets the Humane Farm Animal Care Program standards, which include nutritious diet without antibiotics, or hormones; animals raised with shelter, resting areas, sufficient space and the ability to engage in natural behaviors.

# Marine Stewardship Council

- Sustainable fisheries
- Relevant laws
- Ecological sustainability
- Ecosystem integrity
- Management systems



# Food Alliance Certified

- Safe, fair working conditions
- Healthy, humane livestock
- No hormones
- No non-therapeutic antibiotics
- No genetic modifying
- Decreased pesticide use
- Soil and water conservation
- Wildlife habitats
- Continued improvement



# General Claims

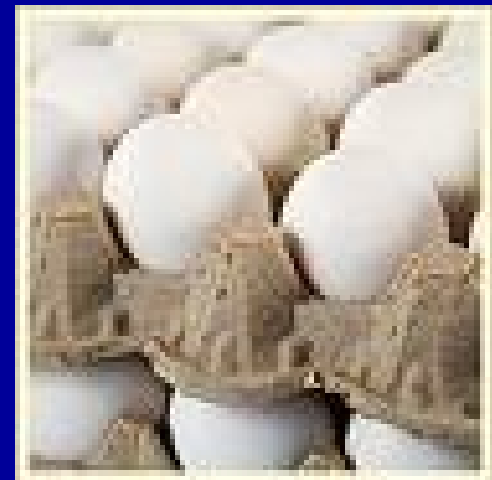
## No regulation

- “Antibiotic free”
- “Eco-safe”
- “Green”



## Limited regulation

- “Natural”
- “Free range”
- “No additives”



# Limits of Certifications

- Do not generally imply proximity
- Do not distinguish between large, corporate farms and small, family farms
- Small farmers perspective

# Which certification is the “best”?

No one certification has it all

- Identify your priorities
- Evaluate certifications on how well they address the issues that are important to you

# What Now?

Ask for what you want

- Tell farmers and distributors what you want to buy
- Specify quantities

Market demand will drive change and innovation

# Resources

- Eco-labels center
  - [www.ecolabels.org](http://www.ecolabels.org)
- Guide to Poultry Applicable Eco-labels
  - [www.noharm.org/us/food/resources](http://www.noharm.org/us/food/resources)
- Food Eco-labels: A Purchasing Guide
  - [www.noharm.org/us/food/resources](http://www.noharm.org/us/food/resources)
- Organic Production and Organic Food
  - [www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/ofp/ofp.shtml](http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/ofp/ofp.shtml)