

# BLOOMINGFOODS PRODUCT STANDARDS

## Bloomingfoods Ends Statement

Because of BCS, people in Bloomington and South Central Indiana will have...

- 🌱 A market for local, fair and healthful products, produced with care for the land, animals, and future generations.
- 🌱 A democratic cooperative-ownership model that provides meaningful employment and strengthens the community.
- 🌱 A robust and sustainable local food economy with fair prices for producers and all owner-members.
- 🌱 Access to education on food systems, cooperative values, and the interconnectedness of food, health, and the environment

Bloomingfoods strives to increase its customer and owner-member base by providing desired products for a diversity of community members. We believe that a larger customer base allows for more education – a valuable part of our Ends Statement. We make every effort to carry a variety of local, fair, and sustainable products, all of which are in high demand. We recognize that every shopper has different values, perspectives, and priorities. We also understand that a robust local food economy includes area CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture), Farmers Markets and other small local businesses. Sometimes these avenues are more appropriate for local producers. With this in mind, Bloomingfoods' Product Policy attempts to balance considerations about ingredients, production, fair labor, humane animal practices, etc. with enough flexibility to meet current consumer demands. We cannot vet every product for every concern. Our shelves would be empty. We can offer a diversity of products that address the many different concerns. This allows and requires each shopper to make personal choices that best align with their values.

## Bloomingfoods Storewide Product Standards

We will never carry products with the following ingredients/characteristics:

- 🌱 MSG, high-fructose corn syrup, nitrates, nitrites, sulfur dioxides, artificial sweeteners, colors, flavors or preservatives
- 🌱 Chlorine bleached or chemically decaffeinated
- 🌱 Ozone depleting compounds as listed in the Clean Air Act regulations
- 🌱 Substances classified as known or likely carcinogens or reproductive toxins from authorities such as the National Toxicology Program, US EPA, and/or the International Agency for Research on Cancer.

Bloomingfoods is committed to the above standards for all new products. A few products currently available do not meet the standards above, but are very popular with our shoppers. These include: Oringina, etc (still researching complete list).

As mentioned above, we all have different concerns and priorities when we vote with our food dollars. Beyond the restrictions above, Bloomingfoods will prioritize the following product qualities (see definitions after departmental product standards):

- 🌱 [Locally produced](#)
- 🌱 [Organically grown](#)
- 🌱 [Natural ingredients](#)
- 🌱 [Fairly Produced](#) with concern for workers, animals, and the earth
- 🌱 [Responsible Packaging](#)
- 🌱 [Non-GMO](#)
- 🌱 [Dietary preferences](#) (Vegan, Allergen Safe)
- 🌱 [Affordable](#)
- 🌱 [Bloomingfoods Ends Statements](#)

Many of these qualities are now clearly labeled on the shelf tags with round icons. [Insert chart>](#)

If you have suggestions for products that are more aligned with these criteria than the ones we currently carry, please share them with a store manager or department buyer. Although we cannot guarantee every suggestion will be enacted, together we will develop a stronger product mix.

## Bloomingfoods Product Standards by Department

### PRODUCE

Bloomingfoods is building close relationships with [local and regional](#) farmers to provide the best-tasting, freshest produce possible. Seasonal produce at fair prices for customers and farmers is emphasized with efforts to reduce overall food waste. Farms and miles to market will be clearly identified next to all local/regional produce. When local organic produce is not available, [certified organic](#) produce will be available in minimal packaging.

### DELI

All Bloomingfoods deli dishes are free of artificial flavorings, preservatives and colors, and high fructose corn syrup. The deli regularly reviews the availability of organic, fair trade, local, and seasonal ingredients for the highest quality. Explore the consistently used organic, fair trade, and local ingredients [here](#). Given the fluctuating availability and cost of organic produce, salad bar ingredients are identified with red (organic) or black (conventional) utensils. We also assure a variety of vegan/vegetarian/gluten free options.

### MEAT/POULTRY/EGGS/DAIRY

Bloomingfoods offers [local](#), [natural](#) and [organic](#) meat products from farms and companies committed to [humane animal care](#).

All Bloomingfoods animal products (meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy) are from [pastured or free-range](#) animals and must meet the following criteria to be sold by Bloomingfoods:

-  No use of sub-therapeutic antibiotics or growth-promoting hormones such as rBGH
-  No feed containing animal by-products
-  No artificial flavorings, colorings or preservatives;
-  No added sodium nitrites or nitrates
-  Not produced from cloned animals or their offspring
-  All ruminant animal products must come from animals raised on a 100% vegetarian diet.

### SEAFOOD

Bloomingfoods uses the [Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch Program](#) and [Indiana guide](#) recommendations, which rates seafood choices according to environmental criteria including the method used to catch the fish and whether the species is abundant or endangered or threatened by over fishing. The seafood sold by Bloomingfoods is rated "Green, A Best Choice" or "Yellow, A Good Alternative." We do not knowingly purchase or sell genetically engineered seafood.

### GROCERY/BULK

Bloomingfoods gives preference to healthy, organic, fairly-traded, and local grocery items packaged in an environmentally responsible way and to products that are not genetically modified and not irradiated. Bloomingfoods grocery products are free of artificial preservatives, colors, sweeteners and high fructose corn syrup.

### COFFEE

All coffee sold at Bloomingfoods must meet 2 of the following criteria:

- 🌱 Certified Organic
- 🌱 Certified Fair Trade
- 🌱 Certifiable Direct Trade
- 🌱 Co-op Business Roasted/Sold
- 🌱 Locally Roasted/Sold
- 🌱 Certified Rainforest Alliance, Bird-Friendly,

## BEER/WINE

Bloomingfoods supports local breweries and wineries owned and operated by small, independent producers who emphasize integrity and quality. Additionally Bloomingfoods offers selections from small independent businesses and cooperatives that focus on fair trade, sulfite free, gluten free, organic, and other unique qualities. Every effort is made to offer a wide range of choices for every budget.

## BODY CARE

Bloomingfoods believes that what we put on our bodies is as important as what we eat. To ensure the highest levels of quality and purity, all skin, facial, and body care products sold by Bloomingfoods must meet the following criteria:

- 🌱 Free of artificial fragrances and dyes
- 🌱 Environmentally [responsible packaging](#)
- 🌱 Free of parabens and phthalates
- 🌱 [Cruelty-free](#)

## NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS

Bloomingfoods offers a wide variety of nutritional supplements. Each product is evaluated individually, beginning with raw materials, to ensure great quality and purity. All of the products sold at Bloomingfoods must comply with these requirements:

- 🌱 No artificial flavors, colors or sweeteners and high fructose corn syrup
- 🌱 Backed by reliable research that supports claims concerning the product's purity
- 🌱 Adequately labeled, listing ingredients and recommended use as required by law

## Appendix

### DELI INGREDIENTS

Although guarantees are difficult due to the nature of the supply chain Bloomingfoods Deli always orders the following:

#### Local

Rhodes Family Farm Eggs  
Smoking Goose Bacon on Salad bar

#### Organic

Fair trade sugar  
Flour  
Pie Crusts

*Getting the full list soon*

## Definitions

### LOCAL

Bloomingfoods believes a strong local economy allows us the most food security and transparency in the growth and production of our foods and household goods. We will strive to have locally grown/produced options whenever available. Additionally we believe that “local” means more than location. Products that carry the *local* or *regional* label will include the following geographic boundaries and independent business practices.

Geographic boundaries:

- Local is Indiana.
- Regional includes the surrounding states of Ohio, Illinois, Kentucky, and Michigan.

Independent business practices:

- Private, worker, community or cooperative ownership.
- At least 50% locally-owned. This means the owners live in the geographic area where the business is located.
- Decision-making authority is vested in the local owners

We do not require that our local producers meet specific certifications. Although some are certified, many use organic methods but opt not to pay the certification fees. In some cases local producers follow many of the organic practices, but cannot adhere to every detail. Some customers find this preferable to remote certified organic produce. Bloomingfoods is committed to providing the farm name and miles to market for all of its local and regional produce. You may find these farms at area Markets or online. We also ask each local vendor to complete a short questionnaire about their growing and/or business practices. These can be found at the customer service desk. We encourage customers to talk with vendors directly to learn about their specific growing methods, labor practices, animal care, and other ideologies.

### ORGANIC

The USDA organic regulations describe organic agriculture as the application of a set of cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that support the cycling of on-farm resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity. These include maintaining or enhancing soil and water quality; conserving wetlands, woodlands, and wildlife; and avoiding use of synthetic fertilizers, sewage sludge, irradiation, and genetic engineering. Organic producers use natural processes and materials when developing farming systems—these contribute to soil, crop and livestock nutrition, pest and weed management, attainment of production goals, and conservation of biological diversity.

For more info - <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/Organic%20Practices%20Factsheet.pdf>

For more information on USDA Organic labels -

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/OrganicLabelsExplained.png>

### Other Ecological/Sustainable Certifications (for non-local/regional products)

[Biodynamic Certified by Demeter](#)

[Food Alliance Certified](#)

[Regenerative Organic Certified](#)

[Certified Sustainably Grown](#)

[LEAF Marque \(Linking Environment and Farming\)](#)

[Certified Rainforest Alliance](#)

[Certified Bird Friendly](#)

## NATURAL

Natural has no clear legal definition, although the FDA took public comment in 2016. At Bloomingfoods we consider foods natural when they are made of plants or animal products that are not irradiated, non-GMO, and whole or minimally processed.

## HUMANE ANIMAL PRACTICES

Humane means that birds and animals have the ability to meet their physical, mental and behavioral needs in a low-stress environment and are only administered drugs for treatment of diagnosed illness or disease.

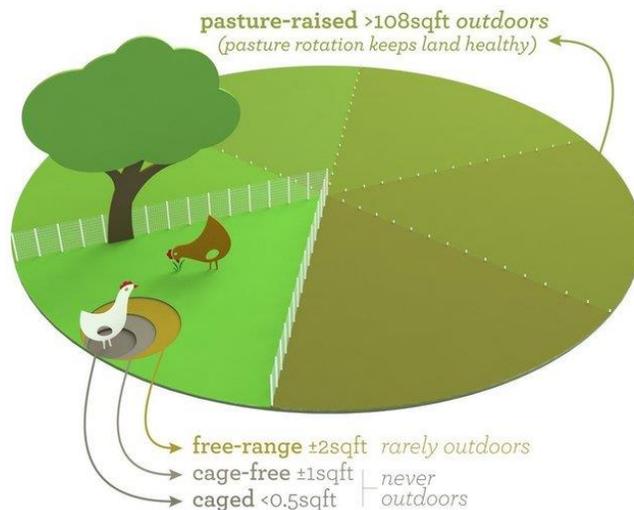
Definitions of terms commonly found with animal products:

**Cage-free**, regulated by the USDA, only means that the hens don't live in cages. The term does not specify or indicate how much space they have, or whether or not they see the outdoors. Their living conditions can be cramped, but it isn't always the case. If cage-free eggs come with a certified humane status given by the HFAC, it means the hens were given at least 1.5 square foot of space each.

**Free-range**, also regulated by the USDA, means hens were given continuous access to the outdoors during their production cycle. It's one step more humane than cage-free in philosophy, but according to NPR, it might mean that the hens had a "few small doors that lead to a screened-in porch with cement, dirt or a modicum of grass." To be free-range and certified humane, there must be a minimum of two square feet of outdoor space per bird.

**Pasture-raised** is not regulated by the USDA. In order for pasture-raised eggs to also be labeled certified humane, it means that the ladies were given ample space to roam outdoors —108 square feet — and have access to a barn for cover. This mandated space means there's ample room to allow for rotating the flocks, ensuring that they have fresh food to pick at.

Here's a graphic, provided by [Vital Farms](#), that gives a visual for what these different terms may look like.



## Possible Certifications for Animal Products:

[Animal Welfare Approved/Certified \(AWA\) by A Greener World](#)  
[AWA Grassfed by A Greener World](#)  
[Global Animal Partnership Steps 3-5+](#)  
[Certified Humane Free Range/Pasture Raised](#)  
Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch Program – [Guide for Indiana](#)  
[Salmon Safe](#)  
[Bee Better Certified](#)

## CRUELTY FREE

Bloomingfoods carries health and beauty products that are cruelty-free, meaning they don't test products on animals at any point during production, their suppliers don't test raw materials or ingredients on animals, no third-party tests on animals on their behalf. Some companies are certified by [Leaping Bunny](#), [PETA](#), or [Choose Cruelty-Free](#) — the 3 major cruelty-free organizations. Leaping Bunny is the only internationally recognized one, while PETA focuses on North America and Choose Cruelty-Free focuses on Australia. Not all organizations have the same standards

## FAIRLY PRODUCED/TRADED

Individuals throughout the food supply chain have safe and fair working conditions, fair wages, are ensured the right to organize, the right to a grievance processes, and have equal opportunity for employment.

Fair trade certifications

- [Ecocert Fair Trade Certified](#)
- [Fair for Life Certified by Institute for Market Ecology \(IMO\)](#)
- [Fair trade America \(Fair trade International FLO\)](#)
- [FairWild](#)
- [Hand in Hand](#)
- [Fair Trade USA](#)
- [Equitable Food Initiative \(EFI\)](#)
- [Food Justice Certified by Agricultural Justice Project](#)
- [Fair Food Program by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers](#)
- [Milk with Dignity by Migrant Justice](#)

## RESPONSIBLE PACKAGING

For many of our owner-members excess packaging is a major concern. As a small co-op we have little effect on large producers to make changes. We CAN support producers that use minimal, responsible packaging. New product selection will consider packaging with the follow concepts from best to worst:

-  No or bulk packaging
-  Reusable by the producer
-  Concentrates
-  Reusable by the customer (especially with standard sized lids, such as canning jars)
-  Made from 100% recycled content
-  Compostable
-  Recyclable paper and/or glass
-  Recyclable plastics

Whenever possible Bloomingfoods will avoid and/or offer alternatives to single use plastics, other non-recyclable items, and excessive packaging.

## NON-GMO

Our consumers expect products to be free of GMOs. We are endeavoring to meet that expectation to the best of our ability. Therefore we are not purchasing new non-organic food products that include GMO high-risk items (listed below) in their ingredient list, unless they are enrolled in the Non-GMO Project or can provide us a detailed description of measures taken to avoid GMO contamination. Products with Organic Certification are non-GMO by the USDA Organic Standards. For more information visit <https://www.nongmoproject.org/>

High-risk items:

Alfalfa

Papaya

Canola

Soy

Corn

Sugar Beets

Cotton

Zucchini and Yellow Summer Squash

Animal products,

Microbes and enzymes,

Potato

#### **DIETARY PREFERENCES (VEGAN, ALLERGEN SAFE)**

90% of food allergens come from 8 main ingredients – milk, peanuts, tree nuts (walnuts, almonds, pine nuts, brazil nuts, and pecans), soy, grains with gluten (wheat, barley, oats, and rye), fish, and shellfish. Especially for staple foods, we will carry alternatives whenever available. Bloomingfoods will also strive for a balance of vegetarian and vegan options in all departments. If you have particular dietary needs or product suggestions, please inform a store/department manager.

#### **AFFORDABLE**

We realize that many products that meet our other standards are also higher priced and that many of our shoppers have a limited food budget. With this in mind, we will offer a larger variety of staple products that allow shoppers to balance their budgets with their personal priorities. Additionally, for those that receive SNAP or WIC we offer the [Bloomingfoods for All](#) program – 10% off everything except beer and wine.