

Understanding labels

Meat and poultry













HEALTHIER FOOD » PURCHASING GUIDANCE

This vetted list of criteria meets the definition of sustainable meat and poultry for Health Care Without Harm and Practice Greenhealth.

THIRD-PARTY CERTIFICATIONS

The following certifications are third-party audited, offering transparent guidelines and standard attributes.

American Grassfed Certified		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diet - forage • Antibiotics and hormones - Never • Living conditions - Pasture-raised with no confinement • Origin - U.S. born and raised 	Beef, bison, goat, lamb, sheep
Animal welfare certifications		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antibiotics - Administered for therapeutic purposes only • Hormones – Never • Living conditions - Humane treatment of animals 	Beef, pork, broiler chicken, turkey, eggs, dairy, bison, sheep, goat
Certified Organic		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diet - 100% organic feed; no animal by-products • Antibiotics and hormones - Never • Living conditions – Must accommodate natural behavior • GMOs - No genetically modified livestock or feed 	Beef, broiler chicken, turkey, pork, dairy, eggs
Certified Grassfed by A Greener World		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antibiotics - Administered for therapeutic purposes only • Hormones - Never • Diet - Must solely be derived from grass and forage throughout their lives • Living conditions - Humane treatment of animals; pasture access • In order for animals to be approved as Certified Grassfed by AGW they must also be approved under the Animal Welfare Approved species specific standards. 	beef, dairy, meat and dairy from sheep, goats, bison
Certified Responsible Antibiotic Use (CRAU)		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antibiotics – All steps prohibit the use of antibiotics in broiler chickens; antibiotics may be used to treat sick broiler chickens as prescribed by a veterinarian. • Expanded to include beef and pork in 2019. 	Broiler chicken, beef, pork
Ecological Outcome Verification		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on regenerative grazing practices for land-based livestock. Looks at soil health, water holding capacity, and biodiversity 	Beef, pork, bison, sheep, goat, dairy

Food Alliance Certified		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antibiotics - Administered for therapeutic purposes only • Hormones - Never • Living conditions - Humane livestock handling • GMOs - No genetically modified livestock • Grass-fed meat products 	Beef, pork, broiler chicken, turkey, eggs, dairy, bison, sheep, goat
Global Animal Partnership		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antibiotics – All steps prohibit the use of antibiotics in beef, pork, and turkey; antibiotics may be used to treat sick broiler chickens as prescribed by a veterinarian. • Hormones - Growth hormones are prohibited in all steps. • Living conditions – vary throughout the “5-Step Program.” 	Beef, broiler chicken, turkey, pork, bison, sheep, goat
Regenerative Organic Certified		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes into account indicators related to soil health, animal welfare, and social fairness. USDA Certified Organic is the baseline for ROC. 	Applies to all meat and poultry products
Soil Carbon Initiative		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looks at soil health and carbon sequestration as outcomes through this verification and recognition program. Does not require specific practices for farmers to participate in the program. 	Applies to all meat and poultry products

USDA-APPROVED LABEL CLAIMS

The Department of Agriculture (USDA) allows the following label claims. Note that no third-party audit is required to use these claims without the Process Verified Seal. For this reason we strongly encourage purchasers to review the [Official Listing of Approved USDA Process Verified Programs](#).

Raised without antibiotics		
<p>Sample label claims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Raised without antibiotics” • “No antibiotics administered” • “No Antibiotics Ever (NAE)” • “No added antibiotics” <p><i>*This is not a complete list</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No antibiotics ever (NAE) • No antibiotics used for growth promotion -- antibiotics only used for treatment and prevention of illness. • No antibiotics used that are important to human medicine as defined by the World Health Organization. 	Beef, broiler chicken, turkey, pork

ADD-ON CERTIFICATIONS

The following certifications address important sustainability considerations but do not meet our criteria by themselves. Look for these certifications in conjunction with the above accepted third-party certifications.

- [Non-GMO Project Verified](#) No genetically modified livestock or feed. Applies to products containing corn, soy, canola, and non-dairy milk.
- [Salmon Safe](#) The farm’s production practices are verified to protect salmon streams from farm runoff through soil, water and vegetation management.

NOTE: “Natural” and “judicious use of antibiotics” are not robust or verifiable label claims.