

1-3 points

FS Credit 3.1-3.3

Local, Sustainably Produced Food Purchasing**Intent**

Improve human and ecological health through purchase of local and sustainably produced food products.

Health Issues

Shifts in the U.S. food system over the last century are compromising human and ecological health. While total farm acreage has declined, farm size has increased and is more focused on concentrated monocropping. This contributes to declining diversity of food crops necessary to fulfill human nutritional needs, while also leading to a loss of biodiversity. In the U.S., the typical food item now travels from 1,500 to 2,400 miles from farm to plate. This long travel distance disconnects growers from consumers, increases opportunities for food contamination and nutrient loss.

Routine use of antibiotics in animal agriculture has been shown to increase antibiotic resistance among bacteria that cause human infections. Pesticide drift, field dust, waste burning, toxic gases from degrading manure, and diesel exhaust from transporting food long distances are all factors related to food production that contribute to asthma, cardiovascular disease and lung cancer. Commercial fertilizers and pesticides contaminate surface- and ground-water in many locales. Large-scale animal feedlot operations contribute to water pollution with biologically active hormones, nitrates and other breakdown products of untreated animal waste. Calorie-rich, nutrient-poor diets contribute to obesity, diabetes, cancer, and a variety of degenerative diseases. By moving toward a healthier and more sustainable food system, health care can help alleviate human health problems associated with inadequate or inappropriate nutrition, antibiotic resistance, air and water contamination, and global health issues such as climate change.

Credit Goals

- Achieve a minimum percentage of annual combined food and beverage purchases (both in-house and contracted food service) from any combination of the following sources:
 - Approved to carry one or more of the following independent third party certified eco-labels: USDA Certified Organic, Food Alliance Certified, Rainforest Alliance Certified, Protected Harvest, Fair Trade Certified, Bird Friendly, Certified Humane Raised and Handled, Animal Welfare Approved, Salmon Safe, Marine Stewardship Council or other eco-label that has transparent and meaningful standards and independent verification processes. See Consumers Union Greener Choices Eco-Label Center for individual label ratings. Go to www.greenerchoices.org/eco-labels/eco-home.cfm

Note: Additional information about eco-labels is available in the Green Guide for Health Care Food Technical Brief, <http://www.gghc.org>.

AND/OR

- Carry one of the following label claims allowed by USDA or FDA: "Raised without antibiotics" or "No antibiotics administered" (poultry and meat products); "Raised without antibiotics that cause antibiotic resistance in humans" (poultry); "Raised without added hormones" or "No hormones added" (beef and lamb only); "No genetically engineered ingredients" (products made from corn, soy, canola or their derivatives); "rBGH-free", "rBST-free", or a statement such as "our farmers pledge not to use rBGH or rBST"/"Our farmers pledge not to use artificial hormones" (milk, butter, cheese, yogurt, ice cream, sour cream, cottage cheese); "Grass-fed" (products from ruminants such as beef cattle, dairy cattle, lamb); .

AND/OR

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- Farms, ranches, and production/processing facilities located within a 200-mile radius of the facility.

Note: All food items that are processed must be sourced from within a 200-mile radius to meet the intent of this Credit Goal. For processed foods with multiple ingredients, including breads and other bakery items, only products with the majority of ingredients (>50% by weight) produced within the 200-mile radius may be included in the calculation.

Credit	Point total	Minimum Percentage (combined food and beverage purchases, based on cost)
3.1	1 point	15%
3.2	2 points	25%
3.3	3 points	50%

Reference Table: Third Party Certified Eco-Labels

Products	Animal Welfare Approved	Bird Friendly	Certified Humane Raised & Handled	Certified USDA Organic	Fair Trade Certified	Food Alliance Cert.	Marine Stewardship Council	Protected Harvest	Rainforest Alliance Certified	Salmon Safe
Beef/Bison	X		X	X		X				X
Lamb	X		X	X		X				X
Pork	X		X	X		X				
Poultry	X		X	X		X				
Coffee		X		X	X				X	
Tea				X	X				X	
Fruit Juices				X					X	X
Wine				X						X
Milk			X	X		X				X
Eggs			X	X		X				X
Cheese			X	X		X				
Yogurt				X						
Fruit				X	X	X		X	X	X
Vegetables				X		X		X		X
Breads				X						
Cereals				X						
Grains				X	X	X				
Sugar				X	X					
Processed Foods				X		X				
Cocoa				X	X				X	
Chocolate				X	X				X	
Nuts				X		X				
Oils				X		X				
Snacks				X						
Premade soups				X						
Fish							X			

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General Label Claims

Label Claim	Food Category
"Raised without antibiotics" or "No antibiotics administered"	poultry and meat
"Raised without antibiotics that cause antibiotic resistance in humans"	poultry
"Raised without added hormones" or "No hormones added"	beef and lamb
"No genetically engineered ingredients"	products made from corn, soy, canola or their derivatives
"rBGH-free", "rBST-free", or something to this effect "our farmers pledge not to use rBGH or rBST"/"Our farmers pledge not to use artificial hormones"	milk, butter, cheese, yogurt, ice cream, sour cream, cottage cheese
"Grass-fed"	products from ruminant animals such as beef cattle, dairy cattle, lamb

Suggested Documentation

- Demonstrate through annual purchasing records that combined food and beverage purchases from food service operations (patient food and cafeterias), based on total cost, have met the credit goals over a minimum one-year period.

Reference Standards

Note: For additional information on the Reference Standards for this credit, view the Green Guide for Health Care Food Technical Brief, <http://www.gghc.org>

Bird Friendly, <http://www.si.edu/smbc>

Certified Humane Raised and Handled, <http://www.certifiedhumane.com>

Certified USDA Organic, <http://www.ams.usda.gov/NOP/indexNet.htm>

Fair Trade Certified™, <http://www.transfairusa.org>

Food Alliance Certified, <http://www.foodalliance.org>

Grass Fed, <http://www.usda.gov>

Marine Stewardship Council, <http://www.msc.org>

Raised Without Antibiotics/No Antibiotics Administered,
http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Meat_&_Poultry_Labeling_Terms/index.asp

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Raised without antibiotics that cause antibiotic resistance in humans,
http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Regulations/Use_of_Ionophores/index.asp

Raised without added hormones/No hormones added,
http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Meat_&_Poultry_Labeling_Terms/index.asp

Protected Harvest, <http://www.protectedharvest.org>

Rainforest Alliance Certified, <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/index.cfm>

Salmon Safe, <http://www.salmonsafe.org/>

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Labeling,
http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=4&tax_level=1&tax_subject=273

U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Labeling and Nutrition, <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/label.html>

Potential Technologies & Strategies

- **Credit Synergies:** *Coordinate implementation of this credit with GGHC IO Prerequisite 1: Integrated Operations & Maintenance Process; GGHC WM Prerequisite 1: Waste Management Plan; GGHC WM Prerequisite 2: Waste Generation Profile and Measurement; GGHC FS Credit 1: Sustainable Food Policy and Plan; GGHC FS Credit 2: Sustainable Food Education and Promotion; GGHC FS Credit 4: Reusable & Non-Reusable Products; GGHC FS Credit 5: Hospital Supported Agriculture: Food and Farm Linkages; GGHC FS Credit 6.1: Food Donation and Composting; GGHC FS Credit 6.2: Food Services Recycling; GGHC FS Credit 7: Food Vendors; GGHC FS Credit 8: Chemical Management for Food Services; and, EP Credit 1: Solid Waste Prevention in Purchasing.*
- There is no single definition for sustainable agriculture; however, such a system includes characteristics such as:
 - **Conservation and preservation:** The use of land and other natural resources does not deplete their existence and therefore makes those resources available to future generations. Agrichemicals (ie., chemical products used in agriculture for insecticides, herbicides, fertilizers, etc.) are not conducive to sustainability, and therefore should be used minimally and only when necessary. Conservation in agriculture includes soil conservation, water conservation and protection, and energy conservation during the production process.
 - **Animal welfare:** Sustainably-raised animals are treated humanely and with respect, and are well cared for. They are permitted to carry out their natural behaviors, such as grazing, rooting or pecking, and are provided with a natural diet appropriate for their species.
 - **Biodiversity:** Rotation of a variety of plant and animal types can enrich soil nutrients, prevent disease, and minimize pest outbreaks, whereas continued support of a single species depletes those resources used by that species alone. Ecosystem is integral to sustainability.
 - **Economic viability:** In a sustainable agricultural system, farmers earn fair prices for their products that are appropriate to their reasonable costs. A sustainable system does not depend on subsidies, treats workers fairly, and pays wages and benefits that provides a meaningful livelihood to farmers to enable them to continue their work.

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Local, Sustainably Produced Food Purchasing

The following strategies can be used to identify food and beverages that meet some or all of the characteristics of sustainable agriculture:

- **Third-party certification/eco-labels:** Third-party certifications provide independent verification that standards have been met. These certifications usually include on-farm/ ranch inspections to verify that standards have been met. It is also important that the standards are meaningful and developed through an open process by parties free of any conflict of interest. Certifications such as USDA Organic and the others mentioned herein have been deemed “Highly Meaningful” by Consumers Union, <http://www.eco-labels.org>.
- **Marketing claims:** Some common marketing claims, such as those allowed by USDA or FDA and listed above, can be used by purchasers to identify products that offer measurable social and environmental benefits. These claims are usually a statement made by the producer, sometimes with a signed affidavit as the only verification; thus, they do not represent independent third-party verification.
- **Local, independent family farms/ranches:** Many small, local farm sources subscribe to sustainable agriculture practices and deserve support, though they may lack the resources or have been unable to complete the transition to obtain state or USDA organic certification. Sustainable agriculture is plant and food animal cultivation that is healthful and humane, economically viable, environmentally sound, and socially just.
- **Work directly with farmers/ranchers, local distributors and the facility’s Group Purchasing Organization (GPO):** Participate in GPO selection process for food vendors.
- **Identify Local and Independent Family Farms:** The definition of what is “local” may differ in various regions of the country. Ideally foods will travel less than 200 miles or 4-5 hours from the farm to the facility. In areas with abundant year round produce, purchasing even closer is often possible. Purchasing preference should be given to independent family farm/ ranch or cooperative/ network of independent family farms/ ranches where farmers/ ranchers own, labor on and earn a meaningful livelihood from their farms. Similarly, the definition of “family farm” is not always uniform. At the time this document went to print, one eco-label could be used to identify producers that met both family farm and sustainability criteria- the Animal Welfare Institute’s “Animal Welfare Approved” label, which applies to poultry and other meat products (<http://www.awionline.org>). However, the Association of Family Farms (AFF) has adopted similar draft standards for an AFF eco-label that purchasers will be able to use in the future to identify a wide range of sustainably produced products on family farms (<http://www.familyfood.net>).

Resources

Eat Well Guide, <http://www.eatwellguide.org/index.cfm>.

FoodRoutes, <http://www.foodroutes.org>

Jamie Harvie, Michelle Gottlieb, Roberta Anderson and Marie Kulick, *Green Guide for Health Care Food Technical Brief*, <http://www.gghc.org>

Health Care Without Harm, <http://healthyfoodinhealthcare.org>

National Rural Catholic Conference on the Ethics of Eating, <http://www.ncrc.com/>

Organic Trade Association (OTA), <http://www.ota.com/index.html>.