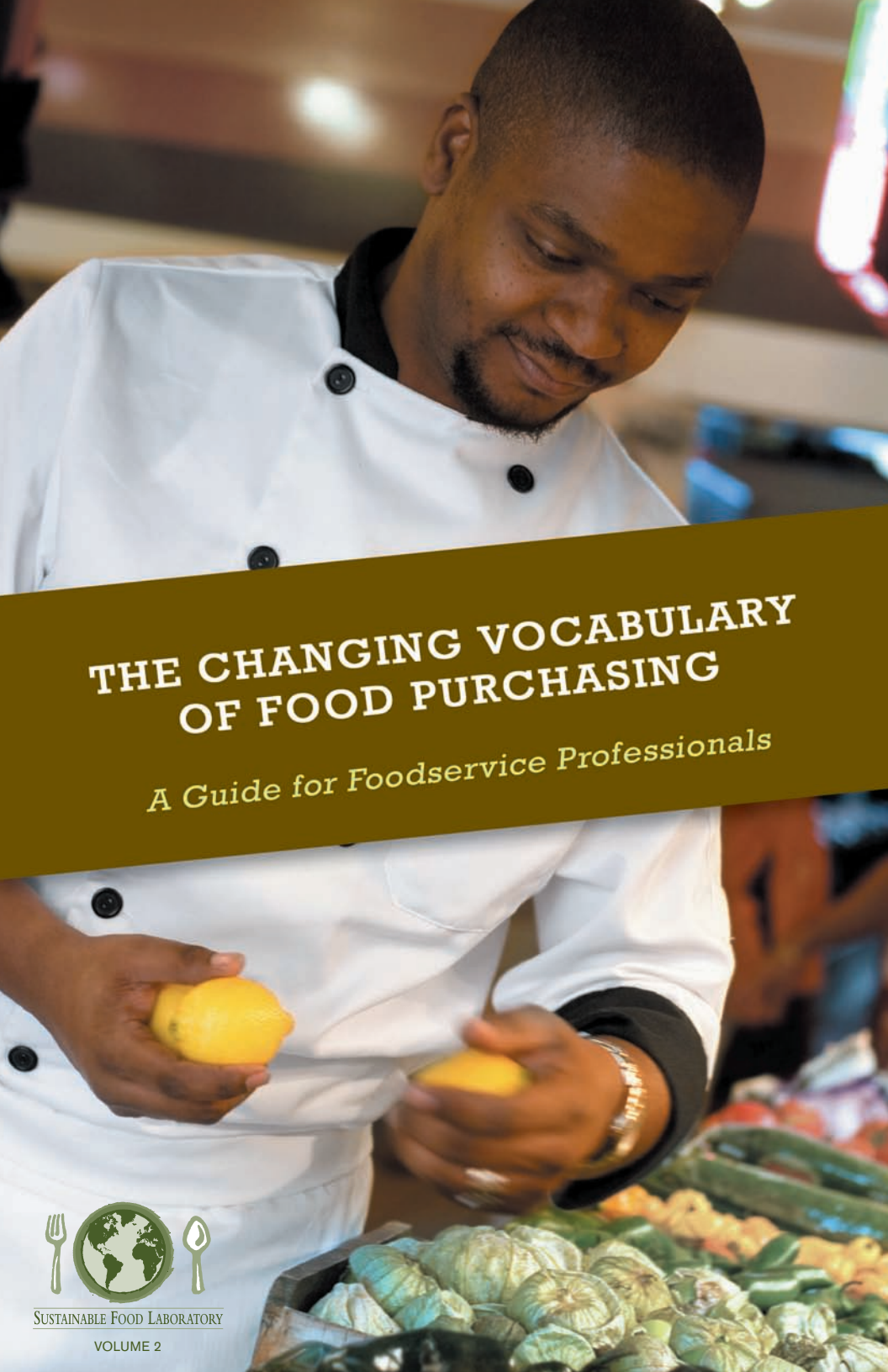


THE CHANGING VOCABULARY OF FOOD PURCHASING

A Guide for Foodservice Professionals

SUSTAINABLE FOOD LABORATORY

VOLUME 2

Inside This Guide

A GUIDE FOR
FOODSERVICE PROFESSIONALS

The Changing Vocabulary of Food Purchasing:

A Guide for Foodservice Professionals

Introduction

This booklet was conceived by the Business Coalition members of the Sustainable Food Lab in order to provide real-time, relevant information to their customers about new preferences and terminology in the production, processing, distribution, preparation, serving, and marketing of food, primarily in the U.S. marketplace.

The guide is intended as an information tool for staff and customers about the sourcing and production methods of a variety of food products.

Most of the information in this guide is about these aspects of food:

- Where food comes from,
- How it is raised or produced,
- What is (or isn't) in it, and
- The impacts of food on a range of factors, such as health and the environment.

Every product has a story to tell…

To illustrate some of the key ideas, this guide includes stories from the field – experiences of food service professionals who have encountered and addressed one or more of the growing array of questions about the food supply and have considered shifts in their purchasing based on new information. Each story highlights a few key terms which are further defined in the glossary.

The stories illustrate how choices made along the supply chain can differentiate products and make a difference to people, to animals, to the environment, to farms, and to businesses.

The bottom line

At the end of the guide you will find an alphabetical glossary of terms and a resource guide, intended to be very accessible for you, your staff, or your customers. Where available, the glossary includes legal definitions or criteria for the ways some food products are labeled and marketed.

A GUIDE FOR
FOODSERVICE PROFESSIONALS

The Good, The Bad and The Fattening

This story comes from an Account Manager with one of the nation's leading food service distributors, which delivers food and food-related products to tens of thousands of restaurants and institutional customers across the United States.

When you are in food service sales you have to try to help keep your customers abreast of trends and issues that affect all of us in the industry. In 2006, the big issue was **trans fats**, and, from my perspective, a tipping point occurred in which the number of my customers who thought that the trans fat issue was something they should care about went from a minority to a majority.

Prior to that year, when I broached the idea of switching to a trans fat-free fry oil (a feature my customers could promote in their marketing), the response tended to be, "Nah, my customers don't care about that stuff, so why should I?"

Then, with some major fast food chains announcing plans to discontinue use of industrial trans fats and with New York City preparing to ban them in restaurants, independent restaurants (my customer base) began to pay attention and clamor to get on board.

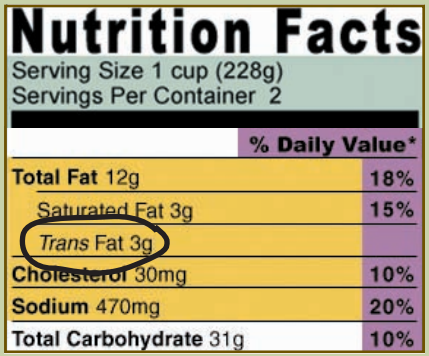
There were some difficulties to work out. Like most issues that affect our health and well-being, this one was not as clear-cut as some people assumed. Simply switching to trans fat-free oil doesn't magically render fried food healthy, for example. And then there was the peculiar fact that trans fats occur naturally in many foods. So, when one of my customers showed me a draft of a new menu, with the proclamation, "All of our menu items are completely trans fat-free," I knew I had some explaining to do.

Beef, butter, and products made from whole milk all contain natural trans fats, I pointed out. "What you mean is that your menu items contain no industrial, or artificial, trans fats."

As a bullet point, that statement does not pack quite the same punch, but after some initial resistance, my customer finally agreed, in the interest of accuracy, to qualify the claim on the menu.

Trans Fat

Artificial trans fats are created when manufacturers hydrogenate vegetable oil, a process by which hydrogen is added to transform oil into a solid fat and to increase shelf life and flavor stability. Artificial trans fats have no health benefits and have been shown to contribute to heart disease. Naturally occurring trans fats are generally considered less hazardous than their artificial counterparts, although they also have no known health benefits.



A GUIDE FOR
FOODSERVICE PROFESSIONALS

Regional, Organic, Seasonal, Sustainable

A story about creating a healthful school meal program, by Beth Collins, former Executive Chef, Ross School. Based in East Hampton, NY, the Ross School serves 750 meals each day.

We are in the Northeast. We have four seasons, and we celebrate them wholeheartedly. If eggplant is in season, we have eggplant a lot. It finds its way into everything but the desserts. Tomatoes are savored, but when the season ends, a fresh tomato does not cross the receiving door until the following summer.

I came to Ross School from the New York City fine dining world, where the fact that almost any ingredient is **"in season"** somewhere on the globe, means that menus don't have to be grounded in a particular place or season. In creating those menus, we created customer demand for that kind of food system.

Unlike my white tablecloth life, purchasing decisions at Ross are not driven by customers' demands or by an owner's attempts to drive down costs, but by a mission: to teach and practice seasonal eating and to support nearby producers. Price is a consideration, but our mission gave me license to support my agricultural community through our menus.

We became very creative in season extension and crop storage to prepare for our winter menus. Some examples of this include contracting thousands of pounds of paste tomatoes to make sauce in the summer that would last us the entire school year; freezing asparagus, grass-fed beef, squash, and strawberries; and cold-storing thousands of pounds of **locally produced** organic root vegetables. These became our hallmark methods of honoring the seasons.

I knew I had succeeded in teaching my customers the beauty that can be found in local storage crops when they longed for rutabaga after our winter storage ran out.

Our focus on knowing the place and the farmer who grows our food grounds us economically and environmentally as a community, and provides as much soulful nourishment as it does flavor and nutrition.

Seasonal

Seasonal refers to the window of time when a food is freshest, ripest and most abundant. Seasonal menu planning is an approach to creating recipes to align with a geographic region's harvest calendar.

Local

Local food is produced and/or processed as close as possible to where it is consumed. Purchasing locally grown foods gives consumers access to fresh, flavorful foods harvested at peak ripeness and abundance, and supports the area's agriculture economy.

A GUIDE FOR
FOODSERVICE PROFESSIONALS

Is Coffee Enough?

After petroleum, coffee is the world's second most heavily traded commodity. It is also the primary source of income for millions of small farmers around the world. Over the past twenty years or so, many NGOs and coffee buyers have developed ways to improve the conditions of coffee growing.

The story below is an excerpt from the journal of Rick Peyser, Director of Social Advocacy and Coffee Community Outreach for Green Mountain Coffee Roasters of Waterbury, Vermont, describing a visit in the beginning of the worst coffee price crisis in history.

Our final stop of the day was near Guzmantla, a tiny village that was home to a micro-credit project called Coffee Kids. It was late afternoon when we arrived, and darkness wasn't far away. We turned onto a narrow lane that passed between rows of coffee trees and ended at a small *beneficio* (processing mill). Twenty women had assembled there, and they had walked quite a distance to meet with us.

Most of the women were too shy to speak about their projects, but those who did exuded pride and joy as they described the small businesses they had established: creating natural medicines, growing potatoes or flowers, or raising chickens, all to sell at the local market.

As darkness arrived, a few men who had joined the crowd began speaking. They were coffee farmers. They described the rapidly decreasing price of coffee. They needed buyers in order to survive, they didn't want to sell to *coyotes* (middlemen), and the large cooperative in the area didn't need their coffee that year.

Among the men, there was a real sense of despair that contrasted sharply with the optimism and pride of their wives and daughters, many of whose businesses were generating supplemental income. There was discussion of planting other cash crops and of migration to urban centers or the U.S. Having seen the experiences the women in the community were having with successful independently-run businesses, the men expressed their interest in selling directly to companies like ours that would pay a fair price and would guarantee them a living wage.

Four years prior to my visit, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters (GMCR) had started purchasing conventionally grown coffee from a large **Fair Trade** cooperative in the bustling hilltop town of Huatusco, not far from Guzmantla.

The cooperative rapidly became our largest single source of coffee. In 2000, GMCR signed a licensing agreement with TransFair USA to purchase and sell coffee under Fair Trade terms, and we launched a line of Fair Trade coffees. GMCR felt strongly that it wanted to bring the benefits of Fair Trade to the small-scale producers in Huatusco, since the strong relationship with this cooperative has grown and flourished. Unlike the farmers of Guzmantla, the members of URPPCZ (Unión Regional de Pequeños Productores de Café) are receiving the Fair Trade minimum floor price for their coffee, which is often well above the commodity price.

Fair Trade acts like a safety net, providing farmers with the access to buyers who pay a fair price, which in turn helps them meet basic and important needs like keeping their children in school, putting food on the table, reinvesting in their coffee, and perhaps most importantly, remaining on their farms. Unfortunately, these benefits remain a dream for men of Guzmantla, where selling conventional coffee simply is not enough for these small family farms.

Fair Trade

"Fair Trade" refers to a broad movement toward standards that seek to ensure equitable international trade and fair partnerships between producers and buyers, reduce small farms' vulnerability, and improve producers' quality of life.

Other well established certification programs that require practices by growers that improve both social and environmental impacts include Organic, Rainforest Alliance, Utz Certified, and Starbucks' C.A.F.E. Practices.

A GUIDE FOR
FOODSERVICE PROFESSIONALS

Yale Sustainable Food Project

An example of trying to understand the complexities of sustainable food terms, by John Turenne, President of Sustainable Food Systems and former Executive Chef of Yale University & Yale Sustainable Food Project. Yale provides meals to over 6,000 undergraduates with a menu that is comprised of approximately 40% sustainable food.

We were planning one of the inaugural Yale Sustainable Food Project Dinners to roll out the concept to the university and the media. It was mid-February, and the menu included a pear galette. We were still trying to understand how to prioritize our purchasing: Should products be organic? Local? **Sustainable**?

We couldn't find any local pears at that time of year, so we ordered **organic** pears from Washington state instead, figuring that at least we knew they had been grown without the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers.

When our guest chef learned of the pears' origin she said simply, "Well, that won't do. We need **local**." We asked, "Why local over organic?" She explained, "Because if we can find a farm in our area with a farmer who's committed to his land and crops, we know we're supporting a local business and our own community. And think about the energy it takes to transport those pears 3,000 **miles**!"

We insisted that there were no local pears available this time of year, but she instructed, "Then change the menu to apples." We were in a tizzy, the dinner was less than 24 hours away, and there was a raging blizzard outside. "But we don't have any connections for local apples yet, *and* you just don't change menus in institutional food service this close to the event!" The chef said calmly, "We need to find a way to make it happen. Someone must have apples in storage."

One hour later, she had connected us with a well known author (who lived nearby and was coming the next day to speak at the dinner), who helped coordinate a pick up of sustainably grown apples from Averill Farms in Washington, CT–a whole lot closer to New Haven than Washington state!

Once we knew the apples were coming, we struggled to come to grips with the facts that not only would we actually have to peel the apples, but we would not have them until the day of the event. In the end however, the dessert was outstanding, and customers were thrilled: the food spoke for itself, and it had a great story to tell. It was our entry point to knowing there was an actual farmer who produced this delicious food–in our neighborhood!

Sustainability

Sustainability refers to the ability to meet the needs of the world's current human population without compromising future generations' ability to provide for themselves.

Organic

Organic foods are grown without most synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, sewage sludge, genetically modified seeds or irradiation.

Local

There is no agreed upon standard distance that constitutes 'local.' Some define it in terms of a set number of miles, while others simply prioritize proximity in their purchasing. Buying locally grown foods is valued as a means of supporting local farm businesses, farmland, and rural economies.

Food miles

The term food miles refers to the distance food travels from where it is grown to the consumer's plate.

A GUIDE FOR
FOODSERVICE PROFESSIONALS

What Does it Take to Be a Top Banana?

Chiquita's efforts to grow and market a better banana, one that goes through a rigorous certification process involving unique partnerships with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Bananas are the world's number one export fruit. Since 1992, Chiquita Brands International, the banana industry giant, has been on a voyage of transformation, bringing one farm at a time up to sustainability standards. These are certified by the international NGO Rainforest Alliance with its local NGO Partners in the Sustainable Agriculture Network. Today, 100% of the company's own banana farms, and more than 95% of its suppliers, have been certified. **Certification** is achieved when measurable differences have been made towards increased biodiversity, reduced waste, pollution, and chemical use, and improved worker conditions and housing.

Chiquita has installed many improvement systems. Some specific examples include the planting of nearly one million trees and bushes on its farms to create natural buffers along public roads and waterways, and around housing and offices. Chiquita now recycles about 3,100 tons of plastic bags and twine per year and reuses the wooden pallets that banana boxes are stacked on, which saves tens of thousands of trees each year.

One of the characteristics of Rainforest Alliance certification is the demand for steady improvement, and criteria are modified to take advantage of new technologies and practices. This way the situation on certified farms gets a little better every year. Today Chiquita is in the process of installing filter systems in its packing plants that cut water consumption by 80%, while the company's scientists are studying biological controls that could help it slash pesticide use.

"The banana companies whose farms we've certified have begun a process of positive change that should never end. During the next decade, the Rainforest Alliance and its NGO partners in the **Sustainable Agriculture** network in Latin America want to see a steady decrease in agrochemical use on certified farms and continued improvements in the environment and quality of life in banana-producing communities," says Chris Wille, Chief of Agriculture for the Rainforest Alliance.

Foodservice buyers and consumers can make a difference by choosing certified products. According to Raúl Gómez, a farm manager in Costa Rica who has worked for Chiquita for 15 years, the institution of standards has been the equivalent of a "social revolution. It's all for the good of humanity, so that we can leave something for our children."

Certification

A certification is a verification of a claim made by a food producer such as a farmer, processor, or manufacturer. A certifying agency sets and enforces standards on food and production processes to ensure that claims and labels are legitimate and meaningful. Certifications focus on social, environmental or economic sustainability objectives; some certifications set standards that combine these categories, while others focus on one category.

Sustainable Agriculture

Sustainable agriculture refers to a farm's ability to produce food indefinitely, without causing irreversible damage to the earth's ecosystem. Sustainable agriculture principles integrate productive agriculture methods, conservation of biodiversity, animal welfare and human development, including the long-term ability of farmers to profitably run their businesses.

A GUIDE FOR
FOODSERVICE PROFESSIONALS

The Carrot (not the stick) Approach

How the role of a "public interest broker"– an independent agent that facilitates market connections between farmers, public institutions, processors, distributors and their customers – helped overcome product development and procurement obstacles of a locally-grown, minimally processed fresh vegetable snack product for the New York City school market. NYC SchoolFood serves 860,000 meals daily and is the second largest institutional food buyer in the U.S., after the U.S. Department of Defense. Written by Shayna Cohen, Karp Resources.

When people think about "farm to school", they usually picture a **small farm's** pickup pulling up behind a school, overflowing with cases of produce still gleaming with that morning's dew. But in New York City, where 860,000 meals are served every day in more than 1,200 cafeterias, that model wouldn't work for farmers or buyers. For the Big Apple to serve **local** apples (and carrots and tomatoes and…), new relationships between farmers, brokers, processors, distributors, and NYC schools would have to be built. Purchased in high volumes and available locally for 10 months each year, carrots seemed a good place to start.

NYC schools were serving almost 285,000 pounds of "baby carrot" snack packs each year (not young carrots, but full grown carrots whittled into snack size pieces). The carrots were coming from California, and many complained that they were flavorless and limp. A group of government agencies and food advocates who had been working to improve the quality of school meals overall set out to replace the CA-grown product with a NY-grown and processed baby carrot. An upstate food processor who sliced and packed fresh apples for the schools would invest in carrot processing equipment and grow his business, farmers would get new high-volume markets, distributors would contend with less product waste and fewer complaints, and schools would get an improved and price-competitive product: a win-win-win-win!

New York farmers traditionally grow carrot varieties for the frozen food market. But one brave farmer took a risk–his was a **mid-size farm** and **diversified**, but carrots were his specialty. That year, he grew several acres of the carrot variety best suited to the baby carrots: he planted the seeds, tended his fields, and after many months, harvested carrots for processing. The carrots themselves didn't grow optimally in NY soils, plus by the end of the processing trial, 70% of each carrot lay in shreds on the floor, which everyone agreed was an unacceptable waste factor. It would seem that a baby carrot in NY was a round peg in a square hole.

That winter, the processor, farmer and public interest broker put their heads together and realized that a new carrot product could be developed: a carrot "coin", a cut which was suited to the kinds of carrots NY farmers grow best, made from carrots with superior nutritional profiles, and could be processed with far less waste. A seed company donated seeds for field trials and in the spring, the trial acres were planted. In September, the carrots were harvested, the coins were crinkle cut and bagged, taste tests were held in the schools, and the coins were deemed a success!

Small farm

There is no legal definition of this term but the USDA uses the following definition for research: a small farm is one with less than $250,000 in annual gross receipts and on which management and labor are provided by the farm family. This definition was created for research and evaluation, not food labeling, purposes.

Local

Food that is local may come from just up the road, but local can also refer to food that is grown, processed, and consumed within the same geographic region.

Agriculture of the middle

Mid-scale farms, sometimes called agriculture of the middle, are farms that are too small to compete in bulk commodity markets and too large to efficiently market products directly to consumers.

Diversified farm

A diversified farm is one on which a wide variety of products are raised simultaneously. Its opposite is monoculture, the modern agricultural practice of devoting large spans of land to growing a single crop.

A GUIDE FOR
FOODSERVICE PROFESSIONALS

Institutions Supporting Agriculture

How an administrator and a chef collaboratively formed a new vision of food procurement, by Peter Gorman, Chef, and Sharon Lauer, Administrator, of the Unquowa School, Fairfield, CT. The Unquowa School provides daily lunches to 200 pre-kindergarten through eighth grade students.

As winter descended upon our school's dining program last year, we found ourselves struggling to source local, fresh produce. However, upon a late fall visit to High Hill Orchards, we discovered that the farmer, Wayne Young, offered shares in a winter **CSA** that include many types of cold season products.

At first we asked ourselves, "How can we, as an institution, work with a farmer in a Community Supported Agriculture relationship?" It turned out that once we knew what we would receive, we could build our menu around the monthly delivery.

High Hill is not a certified organic farm, however Young is committed to using **Integrated Pest Management** practices in raising his crops. We purchased several shares of the CSA and looked forward to a special High Hill Orchard Menu on one day each month throughout the winter.

In our school dining room we have two framed photos of Rhode Island Reds. In one photo, the chickens are coming out of their coop, and in the other, they are pecking about in the grassy area near it. Our students call them "Patti's Girls" because they know the chickens belong to Patti Popp of Sport Hill Farm.

These chickens' beautiful eggs of many brown hues grace our salad bar, go into our baked goods, and come to our table scrambled on "breakfast for lunch" day. It is important to us that our students know not only that these eggs are fresh and local, but that the chickens they come from are **treated humanely**.

Using only **cage free** eggs and making the message clear that we do so not just for reasons of nutrition but also of ethics says that all beings matter in the delicate cycle of life – birds, bees, plants and animals – and that the way we as humans treat other living beings starts with our ability to acknowledge this. Helping children to appreciate and respect the dignity of a **free roaming** Rhode Island Red is one aspect of teaching that message.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a partnership between a farmer and a group of consumers in which consumers buy "shares" in the harvest. Shareholders provide the CSA farmer with a stable income and market, and in exchange, they receive weekly deliveries of seasonal farm products.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

IPM is an approach to pest control that minimizes synthetic pesticide use by emphasizing natural pest control methods, including crop rotation, use of pest-resistant plants, and constant field monitoring. In IPM practice, pesticides are used in small quantities and as a last resort.

Humanely raised

Humanely raised animals receive nutritious diets without antibiotics or hormones, and are raised with shelter, resting areas, and sufficient space to engage in natural animal behaviors. Humanely raised claims are certified by the Humane Farm Animal Care Program.

Free range/Cage free

The terms free range, cage free, and free roaming imply that animals are not caged and are free to roam. The USDA defines free range poultry as that which has had *access* to the outdoors, although the degree and quality of access are not specified.

A GUIDE FOR
FOODSERVICE PROFESSIONALS

Merchandising Milk

How a grocer navigated the milk maze to provide his customers with options, by Andy Arons, President and Founder of Gourmet Garage, a New York City based specialty food grocery chain with five Manhattan locations serving 70,000 customers per week. As told to Carolynn Carreño.

Before 1993, the choices when it came to purchasing milk were pretty simple: whole or non-fat? Plain, strawberry, or chocolate? Today, the distinctions are more serious. **Hormones** commonly used in milk production (like rBGH and rBST) have come under a lot of scrutiny by consumers. For many years the practice of giving cows these hormones went unnoticed; milk production soared, and the price of milk stabilized, making it more economical for the consumer.

In recent years however, customers' concern about effects of milk produced by cows given hormones increased. As a grocer who owns a small chain of five specialty food stores serving diverse populations all over Manhattan, it is my responsibility to offer choices, but leave the final one to the consumer.

At Gourmet Garage, I started carrying hormone-free milk in the late 1990s, as increasing public attention to the use of hormones created a demand for milk free of them. Today, following the publication of many books and articles about our food supply, an even wider consumer population has become interested in where their food comes from and how it is produced or raised. While I initially sourced the hormone-free milk directly from a farmer, today some of our regular suppliers offer it, making it easier for me to offer our customers a choice.

Today, with regulatory and labeling requirements for producers, choices about which type of milk to carry can be challenging. In recent years milk marketed as local or "**grass fed**" has come onto the market. It is not produced from cows given hormones, but it also is not organic. This has become a third option, filling many of our customers' demands for local food, but adding yet another SKU to our inventory and creating real estate competition in the refrigerated dairy case.

How to choose? As a retailer I must offer my customers choice, value and quality. This includes food that is affordable, products that meet the demand of an ever evolving customer base, and the information necessary for *them* to choose.

Hormones

The most commonly used hormones for dairy cows are Recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rGBH) and Recombinant Bovine Somatotropin (rBST), which increase milk production.

Grass Fed

The term grass fed suggests that an animal was raised grazing, rather than being fattened with grain.

A GUIDE FOR
FOODSERVICE PROFESSIONALS

An Apple a Day

Fletcher Allen provides a full range of services covering every major area of medicine. The medical center averages more than a million patient visits each year in Vermont and northern New York, including inpatient, outpatient, emergency department and physician office visits.

Fletcher Allen's green focus began when Diane Imrie, the Director of Nutrition Services, attended a Governor's Summit where Vermont's governor called on health care providers and large employers to "do the right thing" by providing good nutrition and addressing obesity. Around the same time, Ms. Imrie was inspired by an organization promoting a **"Healthy Food in Health Care Pledge."**

Ms. Imrie knew that Nutrition Services at Fletcher Allen already had green initiatives underway–composting food scraps, using cups with recycled fiber, serving organic, fair trade coffee, and holding a farmers' market on site. But she thought they could do more.

So Ms. Imrie committed Fletcher Allen to this pledge and developed a broad-reaching set of plans to serve more healthful fare in a more **sustainable** manner. Fletcher Allen notified its key suppliers of the pledge and asked them to partner in meeting the pledge. They posted the pledge in multiple locations and incorporated pledge-related goals in the development plans of each foodservice manager and supervisor. The pledge was also communicated to customers. A few of the many steps taken include: removing fryers and eliminating products that contain artificial **trans fat**; developing and implementing a nutrition plan and making fruit available all day; adding organic yogurt; finding local suppliers for ground beef and certain produce items (like apples and winter squash); and shifting to recycled napkins and reusable catering platters. When Fletcher Allen's CEO learned of the pledge and the many actions it had spawned, she viewed it as a differentiator for Fletcher Allen and a noteworthy aspect in the company's goal of becoming a model for health care in a rural setting.

Health Care Without Harm

Health Care Without Harm is an international coalition of over 460 organizations in more than 50 countries, working to transform the health care sector so that it is ecologically sustainable. One of the organization's seven primary goals is to encourage food purchasing systems that support sustainable food production and distribution, and to provide healthy food on-site at health care facilities.

Sustainability

Sustainability refers to the ability to meet the needs of the world's current human population without compromising future generations' ability to provide for themselves.

Trans Fat

Artificial trans fats have no health benefits and have been shown to contribute to heart disease by increasing LDL ("bad") and decreasing HDL ("good") cholesterol. Naturally occurring trans fats are not considered as hazardous as their artificial counterparts. Like saturated fats, they can be part of a balanced diet if eaten in moderation.

The Changing Vocabulary of Food Purchasing

A Guide for Foodservice Professionals

Glossary of Terms

Agriculture of the middle

See **Farm raised**

Antibiotic free

Antibiotic free refers to animals raised without the use of antibiotics. While the USDA does not allow use of the label "antibiotic free" on meat products, the USDA does allow the claims "no antibiotics administered" or "raised without antibiotics." Since the mid 1940s, antibiotics have been routinely mixed into many livestock feed products to promote growth and prevent sickness. This practice is referred to as non-therapeutic or sub-therapeutic antibiotic use. The commonly used term **raised without sub-therapeutic antibiotics** distinguishes between non/sub-therapeutic antibiotic use and therapeutic use, or using antibiotics only when needed to cure illness or infection. No organization or government entity certifies any of these claims.

Cage free

See **Free range**

Carbon footprint

A carbon footprint is a measure of total environmental impact, measured in units of carbon dioxide emitted. A person's carbon footprint would include the amount of CO_2 emissions that result from home energy consumption and transportation, as well as emissions generated by the production, distribution, and eventual waste breakdown of the products a person uses. In the food industry, many businesses are using the carbon footprint measure as a tool for understanding and maximizing the potential for supply chain efficiency. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and similar agencies internationally offer "emissions calculators" for quantifying carbon footprints.

A GUIDE FOR
FOODSERVICE PROFESSIONALS

Certification

A certification is a verification of a claim made by a food producer (farmer, processor, or manufacturer). A certifying agency sets and enforces standards on food and production processes to ensure that claims and labels are legitimate and meaningful. Certifications focus on social, environmental or economic sustainability objectives; some certifications set standards that combine these categories, while others focus on one category. Certifications may be second party, in which a company verifies a producer's claim, or third party, in which an independent organization sets standards for certification. Third party certifiers are considered the most objective and thus credible certifiers. The London-based International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labeling Alliance (ISEAL) is an international association of leading standard-setting and conformity assessment organizations that focus on social and environmental issues, and works as a clearinghouse of sorts for global certification programs.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a partnership between a farmer and a group of consumers in which consumers pay in advance of the growing season for "shares" in the harvest. Shareholders provide the CSA farmer with a stable income and market, absorbing some of the financial risks inherent in farming. In exchange, shareholders receive weekly deliveries of assorted farm products.

Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO)

See **Free range**

Country of Origin Labeling (COOL)

Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) is a process that would require retailers to label where products come from, including beef, lamb, pork, fish and shellfish, fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables, and peanuts. Although signed into law several years ago, this has not yet been made mandatory in the U.S.. As the law is currently written, COOL would not require that value-added and processed foods be labeled. COOL is expected to increase food product traceability in the event of a food safety concern.

Ethical sourcing

Ethical sourcing, sometimes called ethical trade, is an approach to food-chain management and generally refers to a company's strategy for taking responsibility for social, environmental, and labor practices across its supply chain. Most often, the

company setting the standards implements and audits adherence to these standards. In some cases, multiple stakeholders work together as stewards of a company's ethical sourcing standards.

Fair Trade

"Fair Trade" refers to a broad movement toward standards that seek to ensure equitable international trade and fair partnerships between producers and buyers, reduce small farms' vulnerability, and improve producers' quality of life. The term "Fair Trade Certified" is a third party certification by the non-profit organization TransFair USA, the only United States-based third party certifier of fair trade products. The term "Fairtrade" describes the standards and certifications overseen by the Fairtrade Labeling Organizations (FLO) International, an umbrella organization representing Fair Trade labeling initiatives in 20 countries, including the United States (through TransFair USA), 13 European countries, Canada, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

Family farms

The following USDA definitions are widely accepted by most of the industry: family farms are not operated by a hired manager and not owned by an outside corporation, and **small farms** are those with less than $250,000 in annual gross receipts and on which management and labor are provided by the farm family. Mid-scale farms, sometimes called **agriculture of the middle**, are farms that are too small to compete in bulk commodity markets and too large to efficiently market products directly to consumers. None of these terms are currently certified.

Farm raised

While the term farm raised does not specify the scale or production processes of the farm, it is meant to evoke a small farm, as opposed to a highly intensive industrial or factory farm. The term is not certified by any group or agency. Farmed raised also refers to the commercial raising of fish in tanks or enclosures, primarily for human consumption. Fish farming is a principal form of aquaculture and offers an alternative, if sometimes controversial, solution to the increasing market demand for fish and fish protein.

Food miles

Food miles refers to the distance food travels from farm to consumer. Food miles translate into carbon dioxide emissions, but the food miles measure does not take into account carbon emissions from food production (agricultural or processing) or the varying amounts of carbon emissions in air and ground transportation. There is currently no certifying or labeling agency for food miles claims.

A GUIDE FOR
FOODSERVICE PROFESSIONALS

Food safety

Food safety refers to the steps taken by consumers, producers, processors, scientists, and government agencies to minimize food-borne pathogens or contaminants, whether accidental or intentional (e.g. agroterrorism or bioterrorism). A variety of federal agencies oversee different aspects of food safety, including the Food and Drug Administration, the USDA, and the Department of Homeland Security. Food safety also includes accuracy in labeling and packaging as well as product traceability in the event of a recall or food-related health concern.

Food security

There is no legally binding definition for this term, but one widely accepted meaning is the USDA's definition: access by all people at all times to enough food for an active and healthy life. Food Stamps and School Lunches are both federal programs designed to support and ensure food security. Food security can also be thought of on a community level and with broader parameters. In a food secure community, all residents would have uninterrupted access to safe, affordable, culturally appropriate, nutrient-rich, sustainably produced and fairly traded foods.

Free range

While the terms free range and **free roaming** imply that animals raised for meat or eggs are not caged (**cage free**) and are free to roam, the USDA defines free range poultry as that which has had *access* to the outdoors. The degree and quality of access are not specified. The term's use on beef and eggs is undefined and unregulated. For poultry, meats and eggs, the terms **pasture raised** and **grass fed** suggest that animal was raised by grass grazing. More commonly, animals are fattened on grain in feedlots or confined animal feeding operations (**CAFO**). Many advocacy groups consider animals that are pasture raised, a term which is not certified, to be humanely raised. **Humanely raised** animals receive diets without antibiotics or hormones, and are raised with shelter, resting areas, and sufficient space to engage in natural animal behaviors. Humanely raised claims are certified by the Humane Farm Animal Care Program.

A GUIDE FOR
FOODSERVICE PROFESSIONALS

Free roaming

See Free range

Genetically Modified Organism (GMO)

A Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) is a plant or animal altered by genetic engineering, in which biologists transfer genetic traits across and between plant and animal species. While it is legal for farmers in many countries (including the U.S. and Argentina) to grow GMO crops for human and animal consumption, other countries (Japan and many European nations) have banned the growing and importing of GMOs until more is known about their safety and environmental impacts. Labeling products that include GMOs is not required in the U.S.. The terms **GMO-free** or **no GMOs** mean that the product contains no genetically modified ingredients. While no agency certifies this claim, food that is certified organic cannot contain GMOs.

Heirloom

Heirloom variety foods are distinguished by their unusual shapes, colors, tastes, and textures. Many common market varieties in the U.S. are hybrids, bred for consistency of appearance, extended shelf life, plant disease resistance, or extensive processing or transport. An heirloom plant variety or seed is one which has never been hybridized and can therefore be grown "true to type" for many generations, enabling growers to save seeds from a parent plant to sow the following year. Heirloom foods are sometimes also known as **heritage foods**, though this term is most often applied to purebred or rare animal breeds.

Heritage food

See **Heirloom**

Hormone free

Hormone free, **no hormones administered**, or **no synthetic hormones** are labels that imply that an animal was raised without the use of artificial growth hormones. The most commonly used hormones in production are **Recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rGBH)** and **Recombinant Bovine Somatotropin (rBST),** which promote animal growth and increase milk production. As the USDA prohibits hormone administration for pigs or poultry, a hormone free label on those products is not particularly meaningful. While the USDA can hold companies accountable for making a hormone free claim on beef and dairy products, no independent agency certifies it.

Humanely raised

See **Free range**

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is an approach to pest control that minimizes synthetic pesticide applications by emphasizing natural pest control methods. Practices include strategic combinations of crop rotation, crop planning according to pest life cycles, strategic timing of pesticide applications, use of pest-resistant plants, and constant field monitoring and response. Pesticides are used in small quantities and as a last resort. While responsible pest management is part of the Fair Trade and Food Alliance labels, IPM is not currently certified by any agency.

Local

Local food is produced and/or processed as close as possible to where it is consumed. There is no agreed upon standard distance that constitutes 'local.' Some define it in terms of a set number of miles, while others choose to think of local foods on a regional basis, prioritizing proximity rather than creating a definition that imposes mileage limits. Purchasing locally grown foods is valued as a means of supporting local farm businesses, farmland, and rural economies, and of providing consumers with fresh, flavorful foods harvested at peak ripeness.

Monoculture

Monoculture refers to the modern agricultural practice of devoting large spans of land to growing a single crop. This practice arose with the mechanization of planting and harvesting and was designed to increase farm yields and production efficiencies. While it often succeeds in that in the short term, monoculture is considered by many to be unsustainable in the long term and has been blamed for reduced ecological diversity on farms, increased crop susceptibility to pests and disease, increased need for synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, and soil depletion and erosion.

Natural

The USDA describes natural poultry and meat products as those that are minimally processed and do not contain artificial or synthetic colors, flavors, preservatives, or ingredients. No official definition or standards exist for this term, except in the categories of meat and poultry. No organization certifies this claim.

A GUIDE FOR
FOODSERVICE PROFESSIONALS

Organic

Food that is labeled organic in the United States must be certified by a USDA accredited agency, whether it was grown domestically or imported. USDA organic standards dictate that organic foods be grown without most synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, sewage sludge, genetically modified seeds, or irradiation. Feed for organic meat and poultry is grown organically and does not contain animal byproducts. Animals raised for organic food products must have access to the outdoors, including pasture for ruminants, and cannot be treated with hormones or antibiotics. The USDA offers different logos and claims for processed foods, depending on the percentage of organic ingredients included. Internationally, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM)–a United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization accredited organization– seeks to promote organic production and increase international uniformity in organic standards.

Pasture raised

See **Free range**

Raised without sub-therapeutic antibiotics

See **Antibiotic free**

Recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rGBH)

See **Hormone free**

Recombinant Bovine Somatotropin (rBST)

See **Hormone free**

Seasonal

Seasonal refers to the window of time when a given food is freshest, ripest, and most abundant. An agricultural growing season is the period of the year during which crops are grown. A growing season is generally measured by the number of days between the spring's last frost and the winter's first frost. Geographic location, climate, daylight hours, average temperatures, rainfall, and water resources also contribute to defining a region's growing season and determining what can be grown. In culinary terms, seasonal refers to an approach to menu planning in which recipes are built around a geographic region's harvest calendar. Seasonal eating does not require eating only what is available locally. For example, while figs cannot be grown in New England, a chef there might choose to build a recipe around figs in the summer, figs' peak harvest time in California.

Small farms

See **Farm raised**

Sustainability

Sustainability refers to the ability to meet the needs of the world's current human population without compromising future generations' ability to provide for themselves. A common, broadly-framed working definition of a sustainable food system is one which produces enough food to feed people affordably, nutritionally, and safely in a way that sustains the economic, environmental, and social systems in which the food system is embedded.

Sustainable Agriculture

Sustainable agriculture integrates productive agriculture, biodiversity conservation, animal welfare and human development. The USDA defines sustainable agriculture as "an integrated system of plant and animal production" that satisfies human food and fiber needs, enhances environmental quality and natural resources, sustains the economic viability of farm operations, and enhances farmers' and society as a whole's quality of life. Current systems of third party sustainable agriculture certification include Rainforest Alliance, which certifies sustainably produced products in South and Central America, Africa, and Asia, including coffee, tea, cocoa, bananas, ferns, and cut flowers; and the Oregon-based Food Alliance, which certifies United States-produced foods crops to a broad sustainability standard.

Sustainable Seafood

Sustainable seafood refers to fish or shellfish caught or farmed in a manner that does not risk the species' future or harm the environment. Factors that influence seafood sustainability include overfishing; "by-catch" (species that are caught in the harvest process other than the targeted catch); and the environmentally destructive impacts of trawl nets, fish farming pollution, and the escape of genetically altered species from controlled farms into the wild. Currently, the most commonly used sustainable seafood criteria are those of the London-based Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) which oversees sustainable fishery certifications as well as a labeling system for over 850

seafood products. Other key resources in this field include the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood WATCH program and the World Wildlife Fund-initiated Aquaculture Dialogues.

Trans Fat

According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), trans fats are created when manufacturers hydrogenate vegetable oil to transform it into a solid fat and to increase shelf life and flavor stability. Artificial trans fats have no health benefits and have been shown to contribute to heart disease by increasing LDL ("bad") and decreasing HDL ("good") cholesterol. A small amount of trans fat occurs naturally in some foods, but the majority of trans fat exposure comes through foods made with or fried in hydrogenated oils. Naturally occurring trans fats are not considered as hazardous as their artificial counterparts. Like saturated fats, they can be part of a balanced diet if eaten in moderation. Since January 1, 2006, the FDA has required that trans fats be listed on food nutrition labels.

A GUIDE FOR
FOODSERVICE PROFESSIONALS

The Changing Vocabulary of Food Purchasing

A Guide for Foodservice Professionals

List of References and Resources

GENERAL INTEREST

Agriculture of the Middle
http://www.agofthemiddle.org

Center for Ecoliteracy
http://www.ecoliteracy.org/education/sustainability.html

Consumers Union
http://www.eco-labels.org/home.cfm

Environmental Protection Agency
http://www.epa.gov/

Food and Drug Administration
http://www.fda.gov/

Health Care Without Harm
Http://www.noharm.org/us

Monterey Bay Aquarium
http://www.mbayaq.org/

Sustainable Agriculture Resources and Education (SARE)
http://www.sare.org/coreinfo/consumers.htm

Sustainable Table
http://www.sustainabletable.org/intro/dictionary/index.html

UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
http://www.defra.gov.uk

United States Department of Agriculture
http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome

WorldWatch Institute
http://www.worldwatch.org/

World Wildlife Fund-initiated Aquaculture Dialogues
http://www.worldwildlife.org/cci/aquaculture.cfm

CERTIFICATION RESOURCES

Coffee and Farmer Equity (C.A.F.E.) Practices
http://www.scscertified.com
Developed in collaboration with Scientific Certification Systems (SCS), a third-party evaluation and certification firm, Starbucks initiated C.A.F.E. Practices to evaluate, recognize, and reward producers of high-quality sustainably grown coffee. C.A.F.E. Practices seeks to ensure that Starbucks sources sustainably grown and processed coffee by evaluating the economic, social and environmental aspects of coffee production against a defined set of criteria. Starbucks defines sustainability as an economically viable model that addresses the social and environmental needs of all the participants in the supply chain from farmer to consumer.

Fairtrade Labeling Organizations (FLO) International
http://www.fairtrade.net/home.html
Fairtrade Labeling Organizations International is a non-profit, multi-stakeholder association involving 23 member organizations, including labeling initiatives and producer networks, traders and external experts. The organization develops and reviews Fairtrade Standards and provides support to Fairtrade Certified Producers by assisting them in gaining and maintaining Fairtrade Certification and capitalizing on market opportunities. Certification is done by an independent international certification company, FLO-CERT GMBH.

Food Alliance
http://www.foodalliance.org/certification/standards.htm
Food Alliance is a nonprofit organization that promotes sustainable agriculture by recognizing and rewarding farmers who utilize environmentally friendly and socially responsible practices in the way they grow or produce foods. Food Alliance also educates consumers and others in the food system about the benefits of sustainable agriculture. Food Alliance operates the most comprehensive third-party certification program in North America for sustainably produced food, and offers certifications for farmers and ranchers, and food handlers, including packers, manufacturers, distributors and wholesalers.

ISEAL
http://www.isealalliance.org/
The International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labeling (ISEAL) Alliance is an association of leading voluntary international standard-setting and conformity assessment organizations that focus on social and environmental issues. The mission of the ISEAL Alliance is to strengthen credible and accessible voluntary standards and to promote them as effective policy instruments and market mechanisms to bring about positive social and environmental change.

A GUIDE FOR
FOODSERVICE PROFESSIONALS

Marine Stewardship Council
http://www.msc.org/
The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), founded in 1997 as a partnership between Unilever, the world's largest buyer of seafood, and World Wildlife Fund, the international conservation organization, is an independent, global, non-profit organization working to reverse the decline in the world's fisheries. The MSC seeks to harness consumer power to generate change and promote environmentally responsible stewardship of the world's most important renewable food source.

The MSC has developed an environmental standard for sustainable and well-managed fisheries. It uses a product label to reward environmentally responsible fishery management and practices. Consumers who select products which have been independently assessed against the MSC Standard will assure them that the product has not contributed to overfishing.

As of September 2007 there are 857 MSC-labeled seafood products sold in 34 countries worldwide. Over 7% of the world's edible wild-capture fisheries are now engaged in the program, either as certified fisheries or in full assessment against the MSC standard for a sustainable fishery.

Rainforest Alliance
www.rainforest-alliance.org
Under the auspices of the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN), the Rainforest Alliance and its partner organizations work with farmers to bring their operations up to carefully developed standards for protecting wildlife, wild lands, workers' rights and local communities. The SAN awards the Rainforest Alliance Certified eco-label to farms, not to companies or products. Farmers may apply for certification for all land in production and companies may request that all of their source farms be certified. In addition, companies may register with the Rainforest Alliance in order to begin purchasing and selling product as certified. Certification is wholly voluntary; the process begins with an application by the farmer. Certification is a conservation approach that the Rainforest Alliance uses to eward growers who meet sustainability guidelines. The certification seal acts as a guarantee, assuring consumers that the products they are buying have been produced and/or manufactured according to a specific set of criteria balancing ecological, economic, and social considerations.

UTZ CERTIFIED
www.utzcertified.org
UTZ CERTIFIED is one of the largest coffee certification programs in the world. UTZ CERTIFIED provides independent assurance of responsible production and sourcing. UTZ creates opportunities for farmers to improve business practices and meet market expectations. UTZ is a credible trust mark for brands to meet their customers' expectations regarding social and environmental responsibility.

The Changing Vocabulary of Food Purchasing

A Guide for Foodservice Professionals

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SYSCO Corporation
www.sysco.com

Unilever Foodsolutions
The food service division of Unilever
www.unileverfoodsolutions.com

U.S. Foodservice, Inc.
www.usfoodservice.com

Rainforest Alliance
www.rainforest-alliance.org

World Wildlife Fund
www.worldwildlife.org

A GUIDE FOR
FOODSERVICE PROFESSIONALS

Sustainable Food Laboratory Business Coalition Call to Action

We, business leaders of global food and agriculture, recognize that we influence the way one quarter of the world's population earns a living, half the world's habitable land is cared for, and two-thirds of the world's fresh water is used. With such influence comes opportunity and responsibility. We commit ourselves to establish standards of excellence in social, economic and environmental responsibility.

SUSTAINABLE FOOD LABORATORY

www.sustainablefoodlab.org

The Sustainable Food Lab is a partnership of business and civil society leaders from around the globe, working to accelerate the movement toward sustainability in mainstream food and agriculture systems. Our members come together from many continents and sectors–business, government, and civil society–to bring food systems into balance with nature and have them benefit both producer and consumer communities. We aim to create a safe space for innovation in which new solutions to complex problems can emerge, be tested, and be broadly shared.

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The views expressed in this publication result from collaboration within the Sustainable Food Laboratory but are not intended to represent the consensus view of all members.

SUSTAINABLE FOOD LABORATORY