

Muskoka North Good Food Co-operative Inc.

Food Procurement Policy

MNGCF's main mission is to provide ease of access to good food and agri-food products by utilizing a 4 tiered and prioritized food procurement system.

MNGFC's prioritized geographical food procurement system is:

- 1) Muskoka and Northern Ontario= "Local"**
- 2) Ontario (South, East, West of Muskoka)**
- 3) Quebec and Manitoba, then the rest of Canada**
- 4) Imported from another country. *ALL FOOD IMPORTED FROM OUTSIDE OF CANADA WILL BE CERTIFIED ORGANIC.***

Organic Certification:

MNGFC will not require that food be certified organic if it is produced in Canada; however, it must be ecologically grown (grown without the use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers) with health, safety, sustainability, and ethics as a priority.

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO's):

MNGFC will strive to carry GMO-free products whenever possible and will continually educate and assist producers in growing and producing GMO-free products. Because access to food is essential, MNGFC does realize that there will be some cases where GMO-free options will be simply too expensive to be considered "accessible" and therefore, will carry the same types of products which will be more affordable (accessible) but may not be GMO-free. *All of the products which are not GMO-free will be labeled as that, and member-owners will have easy access to information about GMO's and other options.*

Ease of Access:

MNGFC considers access to good food a human right. Providing a venue to enable access to good food means that the integrity of MNGFC is essential to uphold by always reflecting our values in our procurement. Ease of access means providing good food at the most accessible prices possible while still maintaining the strength and health of the business model.

When MNGFC buys from local producers, it:

- **provides** our member-owners with the freshest Local & Organic foods available;
- **supports** family-owned farms and farmers throughout our region and our province;
- **builds** a diverse food co-op which reflects the character specific to our region;
- **helps** our community and surrounding communities grow a vibrant "food economy"
- **assists** in reducing damaging environmental effects, now and in the future, that come from distribution, and poor growing and production practices.

Muskoka North Good Food Co-op believes that "You are what you eat!"

All food at MNGFC will be free from:

- Artificial preservatives, flavours and colours;
- Artificial sweeteners, conventional (non-organic) highly-refined sugar, corn-based fructose and conventional beet sugar;
- Meat products containing antibiotics, hormones or preservatives (unless required by law or within the first 3 weeks of life, which will be labelled as such);
- Hydrogenated oils;
- Mineral oil;
- Fish categorized by *SeaChoice* as “Avoid”;
- Conventionally farmed fin-fish;
- Eggs from caged* hens or hens that do not have the ability to be outdoors (including all eggs used within the MNGFC Café/value-added dishes and bakery products).

Fair Trade Principles:

• **Fair price:** Democratically organized farmer groups receive a guaranteed minimum floor price and an additional premium for certified organic products. Farmer organizations are also eligible for pre-harvest credit.

• **Fair labour conditions:** Workers on Fair Trade farms enjoy freedom of association, safe working conditions, and living wages. Forced child labour is strictly prohibited.

• **Direct trade:** With Fair Trade, importers purchase from Fair Trade producer groups as directly as possible, eliminating unnecessary middlemen and empowering farmers to develop the business capacity necessary to compete in the global marketplace.

• **Democratic and transparent organizations:** Fair Trade farmers and farm workers decide democratically how to invest Fair Trade revenues.

• **Community development:** Fair Trade farmers and farm workers invest Fair Trade premiums in social and business development projects like scholarship programs, quality improvement trainings, and organic certification.

• **Environmental sustainability:** Harmful agrochemicals and GMOs are strictly prohibited in favour of environmentally sustainable farming future generations.

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Animal Welfare:

MNGFC is committed to making friendly farm visits, of all of our suppliers who raise animals for our fresh/frozen meat sales, to ensure their animals are being raised with care and respect.

In addition to farm visits we will also rely on a producer questionnaire and written agreements/contract with each producer.

MNGFC's Animal Welfare Standards include all animals being free from:

- Synthetic hormones
- Antibiotics-unless in beginning stge of life
- Animal bi-products
- Mutilation
- Cages (including egg-laying fowl)
- Crowding

*Our priority is to provide our membership with the cleanest meats possible. At this time, there are many local producers who do use GMO feed and feed which contains animal bi-products. If any meat is sold, which is raised on GMO grain or feed which contain animal bi-products, **it will be labelled as that. MNGFC strives to assist our local producers to completely STOP using GMO grains and animal bi-product feed**; however, we do realize that this will take some time. After 1 year of opening, all meats sold will be completely free of all GMO and animal bi-products.

MNGFC strongly believes in the values of the Canadian Organic Standard, which:

Supports and Protects:

Biodiversity

Soil Health

Water Quality

Humane Livestock Practices

Renewable Resources

Organic Integrity of prepared products at all stages

Prohibits:

Synthetic pesticides, herbicides and fungicides

Synthetic fertilizer

Genetically Modified Organisms

Ionizing Radiation

Sewage sludge

Growth Hormones for animals that produce meat, poultry, eggs and dairy products

Cloned animals and their descendants

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Delivery, Distribution, Relationships:

1) All MNGFC producers will be provided with plastic bins to transport their produce and meat to and from MNGFC. These bins will have a required deposit, be labeled and will remain in circulation. When a farmer drops off a full bin, he/she will take an empty one away with him/her. MNGFC staff will be responsible for cleaning and drying these bins and making them available to producers.

2) All produce must be manicured and cleaned before delivery. MNGFC reserves the right to reject produce if it is overly dirty or may give the producer the option to offer it for a reduced price.

3) All produce must be shelf/refrigerator ready (where applicable: in bundles, containers, weighed bags etc.). These regulations will be defined clearly in producer contracts and will be posted clearly at the delivery /drop-off terminal doors/ wash station.

4) MNGFC will co-create contractual agreements for all producers, which will be fair, reflecting good-faith and understanding of “unforeseen” circumstances. Included in the contract will be transparency agreement and producer consent for friendly farm visits as MNGFC sees fit.

* Our definition of “caged” means: confined in any space where the animal cannot move freely. The primary husbandry of conventional egg operations.