

Trinity Ethical Purchasing Practice Guidelines

Section A – Labels and food purchasing

Food labelling should be simple but it is not. Virtually every product on the supermarket shelf has its own unique set of colour codes or logos claiming to be healthy or free from one harmful thing or another. It can be a minefield working out which product is healthier to buy, and labelling for animal welfare is no different. In fact, some labels you will find on meat products are positively misleading!

What to beware of



The Red Tractor scheme, run by Assured Food Standards, claims to promote good farming practices, but in reality often offers little assurance to consumers beyond simple compliance with minimum legal requirements. It would be much better to find free-range products.



The **Lion Mark** is important for food safety, ensuring your eggs are safe to eat, but guarantees nothing about the conditions in which the eggs were laid.

What do these labels mean?

- These food labels basically confirm compliance with minimum legal regulations.
- Almost all British produce will have these labels.
- The standards do not do enough to prevent the serious welfare issues of confinement in cages, high stocking densities, fast-growing breeds and many mutilations.
- Some of the standards can be lower than DEFRA recommendations (not enforceable by law), e.g. high stocking density so chickens suffer from overcrowding problems.
- One or two of the standards are higher than minimum legal regulations.

Note however that the Red Tractor and Lion Mark schemes also offer free-range production, so their logos may appear on free-range meat and eggs.

Beware clever marketing

Beware terms like '**Farm Fresh**'. They are nothing more than a marketing ploy and mean nothing in terms of animal welfare.

What to look for

The **LOAF** acronym: local, organic, animal-friendly and fairly traded is a useful reminder of how we should shop as much as possible. See <http://www.greenchristian.org.uk/resources/loaf>. Animal-friendly also refers to free-range, which may be the second-best option if organic is not available. Many may feel organic or free-range products, for example meat, are too expensive. Please remember that our current consumption of food derived from animals is unsustainable. It would be preferable for the environment, our health and to minimise animal suffering, to buy less but better-quality meat, and substitute with a vegetarian or vegan option.

Free-range

Animals have access to the outdoors for at least part of their lives. There are EU regulations about what free-range means for laying hens and broilers (meat chickens) but there are no EU regulations for free-range pork and so pigs could be indoors for some of their lives whereas the preferred option is for them to have access to the outdoors throughout their lifetime.

Soil Association



The Soil Association is one of the organic standards which offer many welfare benefits exceeding standard industry practice, including prohibiting confinement systems, ensuring bedding and/or environmental enrichment, ensuring free-range access with shade and shelter, specifying stunning and slaughter practices and monitoring welfare through outcome measures.

LEAF



Leaf (Linking Environment and Farming) is the leading organisation promoting sustainable agriculture, food and farming. They help farmers produce good food, with care and to high environmental standards.

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)



The Marine Stewardship Council Fisheries Standard is applicable to wild-capture fisheries globally (not 'farmed fish'), and has been developed in conjunction with the fishing industry, scientists and conservation groups. MSC-certified fisheries must meet MSC requirements based on three principles: sustainable target fish stocks, environmental impact of fishing and effective management. A list of MSC-certified fish can be found on the MSC website; however, not all fish from any particular MSC certified species is de facto MSC-certified: for example, cod is listed as an MSC certified species, but not all cod fisheries fish for cod in an MSC-certified manner.

RSPCA Assured



RSPCA Assured is the RSPCA's labelling and assurance scheme dedicated to improving welfare standards for farm animals. The standards offer a number of welfare benefits relative to standard industry practice. The scheme covers both indoor and outdoor rearing systems and ensures that greater space, bedding and enrichment materials are provided. In addition, on-farm health and welfare monitoring is required and stunning and slaughter processes are specified. (Previously known as RSPCA Freedom Food.)

Cruelty Free International



Hundreds of cosmetics, personal care and cleaning brands are certified cruelty free under the Leaping Bunny programme. It seems that there is an 'animal-friendly' statement on every cosmetic and household product available, not to mention the different bunny logos out there. It's utterly confusing and can have no real meaning. The Leaping Bunny is the only internationally-recognised certification for cosmetics, personal care and household product brands which are not tested on animals. They audit their entire supply-chain monitoring system to check companies meet the strict criteria.

Conservation Grade/Fair to Nature



The 'Fair to Nature' campaign aims to address declining biodiversity within UK and European agriculture by promoting wildlife-friendly production methods, along with its partners from all sectors such as the RSPB, Bug Life, DEFRA and Kew. Farms with 'Fair to Nature' or Conservation Grade certification commit to using 10% of their farming area to provide certain habitats which support biodiversity.

Rainforest Alliance



The Rainforest Alliance (RA) aims to conserve biodiversity, ensure sustainability in vulnerable ecosystems, and combat climate change while reducing poverty in local communities through agricultural and business practices and consumer behaviour. It believes that only by combining environmental protection, social equity and economic viability can any agricultural practice be truly

sustainable. RA-certified farms are regularly audited by RA auditors or auditors from the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) to ensure that they meet SAN guidelines and are working towards continuous improvement. RA-certified farms must be taking steps to maintain or increase tree cover, conserve soil quality and prevent erosion, reduce chemical use, protect wildlife, and ensure the well-being of workers and their families by facilitating access to education and healthcare.

Fairtrade



The Fairtrade mark indicates that ingredients in the product have been produced by small farmer organisations or plantations to certain social, economic and environmental standards. Farmers and producers are guaranteed a Fairtrade Minimum price which covers the costs of sustainable production, in addition to a Fairtrade Premium which goes towards a communal fund for projects chosen by the community such as education or healthcare. It aims to facilitate long-term trading partnerships and enable greater producer control over the trading process. Buyers must also offer 'pre-financing' if requested by the producer to assist in economic development. Fairtrade producers are required to adopt environmentally sound practices; organic standards are not required, but are encouraged through a higher Fairtrade Minimum.

Store standards



Some stores might have their own standards which can go above other standards, e.g. Waitrose and M&S whose basic-level meat and poultry generally have a higher standard of welfare.

Other labels

Eggs

If you are buying eggs look for organic, free-range, and if possible tree cover, e.g. Sainsbury's woodland eggs.

Chicken and turkey

If you are [buying chicken](#) meat look for organic, free-range, or if not these then good indoor chicken such as Freedom Food and higher welfare products, e.g. Tesco Willow Farm Chicken. However, please note that Tesco and some other supermarkets invent fictitious British-sounding farm names, whereas in fact the meat is imported from abroad where welfare standards are normally lower.

(See <http://www.fwi.co.uk/news/waitrose-cow-cameras-to-show-real-farming-links.htm>.)

Pork, ham, bacon

If you're buying pig meat make sure the animal was born and reared outdoors. There are some good indoor systems for rearing pigs – look out for provision of bedding in the standards.

Beef and veal

If you're buying beef or veal buy British and especially British organic; look out for grass-fed on the label. However, I would urge anyone to think carefully before buying veal (<http://www.ciwf.org.uk/farm-animals/cows/veal-calves/welfare-issues/>).

Dairy produce

Look out for organic, preferably Soil Association certified, milk, yogurt, cheese and butter. Otherwise, look for own-label dairy produce from supermarkets that have also stopped calf-exports such as M&S and Tesco.

Fish

Only buy from sustainable stock. Look for the 'Marine Stewardship Council' logo (shown above). If buying farmed use 'Freedom Food Organic' or 'Soil Association Organic'.

Supermarkets and butchers

According to Compassion in World Farming the most 'compassionate' supermarket in Lewes is Waitrose; Tesco and Aldi do not have a good ethical policy and are prepared to sell cheap intensively farmed produce. For church barbecues the free-range organic meat is often purchased from Standean Farm Butchers (01273 553162). Ask your butcher about the source of their meat before buying, and whether it is free-range and/or organic.

Additional useful information on foods to avoid

- As far as possible, avoid foods containing palm oil unless it is from a reliable sustainable source.
<http://www.rainforestfoundationuk.org/palmoilguide>
- John West Tuna (for unethical fishing practices).
<http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/buyersguides/food/tinnedtuna.aspx>

The left-hand column of this site lists many different foods with a simple quick guide on which to avoid and which are the best: <http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/>.

Further information

If you would like additional information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact Caroline Hodges (01273 473296, or email carolineahodges@gmail.com). I would also welcome any comments which would help me to improve or update this information, most of which is copied from other sites. You may also find the following links very helpful.

Compassion in World Farming	www.ciwf.org.uk
The Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals	www.aswa.org.uk
Green Christian Food Campaign (LOAF)	www.greenchristian.org.uk/resources/loaf
Shrinking the Footprint	www.churchcare.co.uk/shrinking-the-footprint
Operation Noah	operationnoah.org
Ethical Consumer	www.ethicalconsumer.org
Consumers International website	www.consumersinternational.org
Cruelty Free International	https://www.crueltyfreeinternational.org/LeapingBunny
Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF)	www.leafuk.org

Section B – Ethical consumer top tips on cleaning products

Adapted from <http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/ethicalreports/householdcleaningproductsreport/takeaction.aspx>

Top tips

Discover how you can reduce your carbon footprint indoors and enjoy a toxic-free home.



Buy green cleaning products

Avoid toxic and non-renewable ingredients by choosing greener products. Sales of greener cleaning products are increasing every year. There are now many brands to choose from and some are available in supermarkets. See product guides:

- [Laundry detergents](#)
- [Washing-up liquid](#)
- [Dishwasher detergents](#)
- [Toilet cleaners](#)
- [Household cleaners](#)

Wash at lower temperatures

To reduce carbon impact, experiment with washing laundry at the lowest temperatures that give satisfactory results.

Make your own

Go one step further and make your own from the handful of cleaning cupboard essential ingredients. Interest in making your own has also grown bolstered by the TV programmes 'How Clean is Your House' and the more recent 'Superscrimpers'. Here is our guide to [creating your own DIY non-toxic cleaning kit](#).

Campaign for an animal testing ban

Support groups such as ASWA Animal Aid, Uncaged, BUAV, Humane Society International, RSPCA, Naturewatch, the Vegan Society and Viva! More about [animal testing of cleaning products](#). Look for the Leaping Bunny logo on products.

Section C – Ethical consumer top tips on cosmetics and toiletries

Adapted from: <http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/ethicalreports/cosmeticstoiletriesspecialreport.aspx>.

There was once a time when the most basic of [soaps](#) was a luxury for most people. Now some of us bathe daily in a [complex mixture of petrochemicals](#), choosing to cover our chemically dependent skin in ever-increasing quantities of expensive products.

'Natural' products?

Companies are looking to tap into people's desire for more 'environmentally friendly' and less toxic products. The market for 'natural' products is estimated to be growing in Europe at a rate of 20% per year, and the 'Environmental Approach' has been seized upon by producers. This trend has meant, according to the industry body COLIPA, that mainstream producers have reduced their environmental impacts by minimisation of water consumption, waste minimisation and increases in transportation efficiency. Our own research found the evidence for environmental improvements to be more of a mixed bag. L'Oréal for instance scored best for its environmental policy but worst for its palm oil policy. Johnson & Johnson, Colgate-Palmolive and Procter & Gamble all scored middle for their environmental reports but only Johnson & Johnson had an adequate policy on palm oil. ([Read more about palm oil.](#))

Misleading claims

Three in ten women say they only use natural and organic products where possible but there is little clarity over the definitions of 'natural' and organic. Almost half of women don't check the ingredients of the brands they use and a quarter of women don't feel the need to check ingredients if a product claims to be natural or organic. Market research company Mintel says, 'This allows manufacturers to exploit consumer perceptions of natural by using brand names and packaging to imply that a product is more natural or organic than it actually is'. Unfortunately, unlike organic food, there are no legal standards for organic beauty products. Therefore a company can label or name a beauty product 'organic' even if it only contains 1% organic ingredients, and the description 'natural' has no protection at all.

In 2011 the Soil Association and other European organic certification bodies launched a new 'harmonised' certification system, called the Cosmetics Organic Standard or **COSMOS standard**, for organic and natural claims on cosmetics. Companies voluntarily apply for certification.

The '**COSMOS Natural**' standard will ensure that no more than 5% of the total product is synthetic with the list of permitted synthetics being very short and only permitting biodegradable and non-toxic substances.



The '**COSMOS Organic**' standard will ensure that at least 95% of processed agro-ingredients in a product are organic and that where an organic version of an ingredient is available it must be used. It also states that at least 20% of the total product must be organic and, like the natural standard, no more than 5% of the product can be synthetic.

Until such time as organic claims around beauty products can be regulated as they should be, consumers will need to look out for certification labels to make sure they're not being taken for a ride. We give certified organic products an extra product sustainability mark on the score tables in this report.

A 'free from' labelling ban?

Big cosmetics brands are apparently pressuring EU authorities to ban 'free from' and 'no' claims on natural and organic beauty products – such as 'Free from parabens' and 'No sodium lauryl sulphate (SLS)'. Peter Kindersley, owner of [Neal's Yard Remedies](#), suggests that a likely motivation for the proposed amendment of the EU Cosmetics Directive is that 'free from' labelling casts big brands in a poor light by highlighting their failure to remove ingredients of concern. If the big brands get away with banning 'free from' and 'no' labelling it would mean that at the point of purchase consumers would be deprived of information on health-compromising ingredients and, potentially, claims like 'no animal testing', that are so important to growing numbers of consumers.

[We discuss six 'Ingredients to avoid' and SLS specifically.](#)

Animal testing: The ugly truth about cosmetics and beauty products

The globalisation of markets has made national bans on the animal testing of cosmetics (such as we have in the UK) very difficult to enforce in reality. Despite the fact that animal tests for cosmetics ended in the United Kingdom in 1997, and have been banned by law across the European Union since 2009, [laboratory animal suffering](#) for the beauty industry still continues. In laboratories in countries such as [China](#), the United States, India and Russia, cosmetic chemicals are still being rubbed onto the sensitive and shaved skin of guinea pigs, dripped into the eyes of rabbits and force-fed into rats' stomachs. These tests can last for days, weeks or even months. In some countries even the widely condemned 'lethal dose' test is still used, in which animals are forced to swallow massive amounts of a cosmetic chemical to find out the dose that causes death. Tests like these can cause immense suffering and distress – and are increasingly seen as a poor predictor of toxicity in humans.

European laws

Across Europe, animal testing for cosmetics is banned under the EU's Cosmetics Directive, but cosmetics companies can still test on animals in other countries and sell those products back to the EU market. Further information is available from the following link where [Wendy Higgins from the HSI explains](#) more about how this issue is still not going away, and what consumers can do about it.

Packaging

Much of the environmental impact of shampoo and soap comes from its disposable packaging, and some companies have policies in place to address this. Lush are probably the main pioneer in this regard with 46% of its product range (such as solid shampoo bars) formulated so as not to require packaging. The packaging problems stemming from a general trend towards buying soap as liquid in bottles rather than as soap bars is discussed [here](#).

Buy green cosmetics and toiletries

Skincare: www.ethicalconsumer.org/buyersguides/healthbeauty/skincare.aspx

Soap: www.ethicalconsumer.org/buyersguides/healthbeauty/soap-bars.aspx

Toothpaste and mouthwash: www.ethicalconsumer.org/buyersguides/healthbeauty/makeup.aspx

Shaving foam and gel: www.ethicalconsumer.org/buyersguides/healthbeauty/shavinggelfoam.aspx

Makeup: www.ethicalconsumer.org/buyersguides/healthbeauty/make-up.aspx

Deodorant: www.ethicalconsumer.org/buyersguides/healthbeauty/deodorant.aspx

This paper is not comprehensive; I have not included information on textiles and electronics etc., but the sites listed above in Section A have all this information. If you wish to explore further consumer issues the LOAF website is comprehensive:

<https://realisingchange.wordpress.com/consumerism>.

[Guest Post: Moving to a Sustainable Lifestyle](#)

[Preparing for a Greener Christmas](#)

[Conscious Consumption](#)

[Conscious Consumption: Clothing](#)

[Conscious Consumption: Food](#)

[Conscious Consumption: Electronics](#)