

	Organic production	Animal welfare	Locally grown	Ecologically sustainable	Labor issues	Family/ co-op owned	Products
American Grassfed		✓					Livestock
American Humane Certified		✓					Livestock
Animal Welfare Approved		✓				✓	Livestock
Certified Humane		✓					Livestock
Certified Naturally Grown	✓		✓	✓			Crops & Livestock
Demeter Biodynamic	✓			✓			Crops & Livestock
Domestic Fair Trade				✓	✓	✓	Crops & Livestock
Family Farmed		✓	✓	✓		✓	Crops & Livestock
Food Alliance		✓		✓	✓		Crops & Livestock
Predator Friendly		✓		✓			Livestock
Protected Harvest				✓			Crops
Buy Fresh, Buy Local			✓				Crops & Livestock
USDA Organic	✓						Crops & Livestock



The term eco-label generally refers to a seal or logo on a commercial product that was produced under a set of standards that address environmental issues, animal welfare and/or social justice concerns. Eco-labeling can be an effective marketing technique for producers and manufacturers to differentiate their products in the marketplace as well as communicate their values and principles to consumers.



This resource aims to provide crop and livestock producers in the U.S. with basic information for determining which (if any) eco-label programs would be appropriate and beneficial for you and your farm. More detailed descriptions and contact information for these labeling programs can be accessed through the websites listed below each summary.



Note: Each label and its organization has very detailed standards and verification styles so it is important to visit the organization's website and investigate further before deciding which label may be right for you. Information in this document is subject to change.

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American Grassfed (AGA)

Applies to ruminant livestock (cattle, bison, sheep and goats) as well as poultry and pork. Ruminants' diet must consist entirely of forage and must have continuous access to pasture for the animals' lifetime. Grass, forbs, browse, hay, haylage and silage are acceptable forage crops, as are grain crops in their vegetative phase. Feeding animals grain and grain by-products that have passed this phase is prohibited. Animal must not be given sub therapeutic antibiotics or hormones. Confinement of animals in a feedlot or pen where forage is not grown is prohibited, though exceptions include emergencies and inclement weather and cannot exceed 30 days per year. Livestock well being and humane handling must be maintained throughout the animal's life and through slaughter. Third party audited at no charge by American Welfare Approved (AWA). Producers complying with AWA standards can display both AGA and AWA logos on products. www.americangrassfed.org



American Humane Certified

Protects the welfare of farm animals through standards reviewed by the American Humane Association's Scientific Advisory Committee. Standards are specific to laying hens, cattle and swine. Producers must minimize animals' stress by allowing expression of natural behaviors and by providing access to the outdoors, appropriate shelter and housing, clean and sufficient food and water, optimum health and security, and rapid treatment of sickness and injury. Handlers must be competent in animal husbandry and welfare skills. Third party verified through web-based video monitoring, annual audits and online records. www.thehumanetouch.org



Animal Welfare Approved

Animals must be allowed to behave naturally and live in a state of physical and psychological well being from birth to slaughter. Only independent family and cooperatively owned farms are eligible for certification. Standards are animal specific and are developed to maintain practical, high-welfare farm management. Standards require outdoor access and natural daylight provided for all animals. No fee is required for this third party certification. www.animalwelfareapproved.org



Certified Humane Raised Handled

Promotes high quality of life and well being of farm animals throughout their lifetime. This third party certification prohibits antibiotics and growth hormones, and provides animals with ample space, adequate food, water and shelter. Natural animal behavior is encouraged. Animal caretakers must be knowledgeable and skilled in animal husbandry and welfare techniques. www.certifiedhumane.org



Certified Naturally Grown

Producers commit to sustainable practices by adhering to natural biological cycles. The use of direct marketing is highly encouraged. This label utilizes the USDA National Organic Program's standards for crop and livestock production, but provides an alternative certification process that omits monetary and paperwork requirements. Verification occurs through peer [continued in next column]

inspection, meaning that certified producers audit each other's farms annually. Producers are also subject to randomized plant tissue testing for chemical residue. Each certified producer's application and up-to-date records are posted online for public viewing. The certification is free, although a yearly donation from producers of \$50 to \$175 is encouraged to maintain the program. www.naturallygrown.org



Demeter Biodynamic

Biodynamic agriculture involves the use of ecological and philosophical principles to manage the farm as a living organism. Demeter's certification process complies with the USDA Organic standards including the three year land transition requirements. Additional requirements are site specific and depend on the unique qualities and characteristics of the farm. Biodynamic agriculture values farmers' continual transition to holistic and sustainable methods, which is reflected in the certification process. www.demeter-usa.org



Domestic Fair Trade Association (DFTA)

DFTA translates the values of international fair trade to support regional and local agricultural networks in North America. With a commitment to health, justice and sustainability, DFTA's principles support democratic ownership and control of small and family scale farms, farmer led initiatives, sustainable production methods, safe and fair labor rights, indigenous people's rights, equality and opportunity. The organization works to connect producers, processors, retailers and consumers to form healthy and lasting network relationships. Label is pending. <http://dfta.info/>



FamilyFarmed.org

Farms are family owned and managed and farm labor comes primarily from family members. Farms must be small to mid-size and utilize sustainable methods (i.e. certified organic, transitioning to organic, or integrated pest management). Animals must have access to pasture and cannot be given synthetic hormones or non-therapeutic antibiotics. Farms must currently be located in the Midwest region in order to have access to the Chicago market. Certified producers make a commitment to be economically and socially invested in their communities. www.familyfarmed.org



Food Alliance Certified

Promotes and certifies the use of a wide range of sustainable and socially just agricultural practices. Standards include safe and fair working conditions for laborers, healthy and humane care for livestock, no hormones and non-therapeutic antibiotics, no genetically modified crops or livestock, reduced pesticide use, conservation of soil and water resources, and the protection of wildlife habitat. Food Alliance asks farmers to set goals that continually improve their practices to be more sustainable and just. A coalition of farmers, scientists, processors, distributors, grocers, farm worker advocates, environmentalists, and consumers were involved in the creation and development of this label. www.foodalliance.org



Predator Friendly

Aims to merge the interests of conservationists and farmers and ranchers. Through pasture management strategies, the coexistence of both predator wildlife and livestock is promoted. These strategies generally include guardian animals, intensive observation, fences and producer education about local wildlife. Pasture use and calving and lambing should be scheduled during times of low predator risk. Practices and standards are developed based on the ecological characteristics of the specific region. www.predatorfriendly.org



Protected Harvest

Uses the principles of integrated pest management, which aims to reduce the application of chemicals on farm crops by encouraging the beneficial ecological relationships among agricultural crops and insects, microorganisms, etc. Biointensive practices include field scouting, weed, disease, and insect management, ecosystem restoration. Producers first seek to prevent pest problems with mechanical controls then biological controls. Chemical controls may be utilized only as a last resort but must stay below a designated number of "Toxicity Units." Genetically engineered crops are prohibited. www.protectedharvest.com



Buy Fresh, Buy Local

Food Routes Network (FRN) developed and organizes the Buy Fresh, Buy Local campaign, which assists grassroots organizations promote locally grown products in their region. FRN provides organizational support, communication tools and marketing resources to local and regional chapters throughout the nation. A chapter must already exist locally for producers to use the label, however, FRN provides assistance and tools to groups looking to begin a new chapter in their area. Labels are tailored to display the name of the specific region. <http://www.foodroutes.org>



USDA Organic

The National Organic Program regulates the methods, practices and inputs for crops and livestock in the United States. Crops are produced with the use of intensive management, cover cropping, crop rotation, compost, animal waste and certain synthetic and non-synthetic inputs (refer to the National List of Prohibited and Allowed Substances for a complete listing). Irradiation, sewage sludge and genetically engineered seeds are prohibited. Organic seed is preferred and land must have no input of prohibited substances at least 3 years prior to crop harvest and sale. Livestock must be fed 100 % organic feed and cannot be given growth hormones or antibiotics for any reason. All livestock must have access to the outdoors and ruminants to pasture, but temporary confinement is acceptable under certain conditions. www.usda.gov