

Silver City Food Co-op Purchasing Guidelines

Our ultimate aspiration at the Silver City Food Co-op is to provide products of the highest quality standard. We prioritize purchasing products and from vendors, with trusted third-party certifications, including:

- Organic: The highest and most sought after standard for all store items
- Regenerative Agriculture: Supporting methods that restore soil and ecosystem health.
- Fair Trade: Ensuring ethical labor practices and fair wages for farmers.
- B Corporation: Brands verified to meet high standards of social and environmental performance.
- Produced by a Cooperative: Supporting the democratic co-op model globally and locally.
- Environmental/Marine: Rainforest Alliance, Wild Caught, and Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certifications.
- Non-GMO certified

For high quality, non-organic packaged and prepared foods, our purchasing guidelines require products to be "clean." They must contain:

- No artificial additives or synthetic preservatives.
- Minimal processing.
- Wholesome, recognizable ingredients.

Our fresh produce department commits to buying only certified organic items as our primary standard, with a few exceptions:

- New Mexico Produce: Fresh produce grown locally, within the state of New Mexico may be exempt from organic certification requirements. However, it must be "unsprayed" (grown without synthetic pesticides), produced following safe handling practices, and have specific sourcing details.
- Specialty Produce Items: On occasion, non-organic specialty produce may be stocked if certified organic versions are unavailable.

Our meat department is committed to strict ethical and biological standards. We source and sell meat that is:

- Humanely Raised: Animals must have access to pasture, adequate space, and be raised under verified animal welfare protocols.
- No Antibiotics or Hormones: Grown entirely without the use of subtherapeutic antibiotics, growth hormones, or synthetic steroids.
- High-Quality Feed: Animals must be fed vegetarian, 100% grass, or certified organic feed, completely free of animal by-products and low-quality fillers.

Health and Beauty Products: We require product that have at least the minimum following standards

- No animal testing: We only stock products that are cruelty-free and not tested on animals.
- Clean, non-toxic ingredients: Free from harsh synthetic chemicals, including parabens, phthalates, artificial fragrances, and sulfates.
- Sustainable and transparent sourcing: Preference for organic and plant-based ingredients sourced with respect for the environment.

Supplements Products

- We prioritize vendors who verify their products through independent programs to ensure label accuracy and

screen for heavy metals or contaminants.

- Formulations: Free from unnecessary synthetic binders, artificial fillers, and artificial colors.

Our ingredient standards, at times, may conflict with other co-op goals. We may make exceptions on a case by case basis, for various reasons, including the following:

- Supporting Local New Mexico Production: Food grown, made, or produced in New Mexico may be purchased even if it does not meet the strictest “clean” standard. We may determine the greater good of supporting our local economy, farmers or producers outweighs stringent ingredient limits in this category.
- Cultural Diversity: We may feature diverse food items throughout the store that do not meet the strictest "clean" guidelines. This promotes inclusivity, diversity and cultural accessibility in our community's food choices.
- Special Dietary Needs: Products catering to specific dietary needs (e.g., gluten-free, vegan) may be stocked even if they conflict with the strictest "clean" ingredient requirement, ensuring accessibility for all shoppers.

We will endeavor to support independent businesses wherever feasible, and weigh that into our purchasing considerations.

Packaging & Sustainability: We will prioritize vendors utilizing minimal, recyclable, compostable, or plastic-free packaging to reduce our operational waste footprint.