

# OP 7: Food and Beverage Purchasing

6 points available

## A. Credit Rationale

This credit recognizes institutions that are supporting sustainable food systems through their food and beverage purchases. Institutions can do this by prioritizing the purchase of environmentally and socially preferable food and beverage items. These actions reduce the social and environmental impacts of food production and help foster robust local economies and food security; improved conditions for farm workers; healthier animals, soils and waterways; and secure livelihoods for farmers.

## B. Criteria

Institution and/or its primary dining services contractor conducts an inventory to identify food and beverage purchases that have the following sustainability attributes:

Attribute	Examples
<b>1) Third Party Verified.</b> The product is ecologically sound, fair and/or humane as determined by one or more <a href="#">recognized food and beverage sustainability standards</a> (see G. Standards and Terms).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Certified Organic, Fair Trade, and Humane products (irrespective of geographic origin).</li><li>· Manufactured products that carry a recognized third party label (irrespective of the percentage of ingredients that are certified).</li></ul>
<b>2) Both Local and Community-Based.</b> The product does not meet the criteria outlined above, but is grown, raised or caught by a <a href="#">community-based producer</a> within 250 miles (400 kilometres) of the institution. All production, processing and distribution occur within 250 miles.  This category provides a path for campus farms and gardens and small local producers to be recognized in the absence of third party certification. Products from <a href="#">intensive livestock operations</a> (e.g., CAFO-permitted facilities), large producers (\$5 million or more in annual sales) and geographically dispersed producers are excluded from this category.  Distributors, bottlers and packers are not considered to be producers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>· Single ingredient products from on-campus gardens and farms and owner-operated farms and fisheries (and cooperatives of owner-operators) for which all facilities are within 250 miles.</li><li>· Multi-ingredient and multi-source products (e.g., baked goods, dairy products, jams, sauces) from local producers for which 50 percent or more of the ingredients (by weight, excluding water) are both local and community-based (or else third party verified).</li><li>· Local products sourced through a <a href="#">food value chain or food hub</a>, farmers' market, <a href="#">farm-to-institution program</a>, or equivalent program that aims to support a sustainable local food system.</li></ul>

<p><b>3) Other Sustainability Attributes.</b> The product is environmentally or socially preferable in ways that are not recognized above.</p> <p>Although products reported in this category are considered to be conventionally produced and do not count toward scoring, identifying them can provide a more comprehensive picture of the institution's sustainable purchasing efforts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Products with <a href="#">credible sustainability claims</a> and labels not formally recognized above.</li> <li>· Single ingredient products from large local producers or for which some portion of production, processing or distribution occurs outside 250 miles.</li> <li>· Multi-ingredient and multi-source products from local bakeries, dairy cooperatives, coffee roasters, breweries, and other local processors and manufacturers for which less than 50 percent of the ingredients are both local and community-based.</li> </ul>
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Products that meet more than one of the criteria outlined above (e.g., products from local producers that are Certified Organic) should not be double-counted.

While products with sustainability attributes may be sourced through distributors or other third parties, the attributes of distributors do not count. For example, a product purchased from a local distributor may only be considered local if the product itself meets the criteria outlined above.

Transparency in the supply chain is a fundamental component of a sustainable food system. Products without verifiable sustainability attributes do not count in any of the categories outlined above. For each product that has one or more verifiable sustainability attributes, the inventory provides (at minimum):

- Product description/type.
- Label, brand or producer.
- The category in which the product is being counted (i.e., Third Party Verified, Both Local and Community-Based, Other Sustainability Attributes) and/or a brief description of the specific sustainability attribute(s) for which it is being counted (i.e., information about the producer and any sustainability certifications or claims justifying its inclusion, e.g., "Certified Organic", "local farm-to-institution program").

The inventory may provide details for just those products that meet the criteria or it may be comprehensive, i.e., inclusive of all purchased food and beverage products whether they meet the criteria or not. See F. Measurement for further guidance on conducting an inventory.

Institutions in the U.S. and Canada with students running the [Real Food Calculator](#) may upload Calculator results to fulfill the inventory requirement. Likewise, products that have been student-verified to be "[Real Food A](#)" or "[Real Food B](#)" may be counted as "third party verified or both local and community-based" (see E. Reporting Fields).

This credit includes food and beverage purchases for on-campus dining halls and catering services operated by the institution or the institution's primary dining services contractor (e.g., Aramark, Bon Appétit Management Company, Chartwells, Sodexo). Outlets that are unique to the institution or its primary contractor (e.g., retail concepts developed and managed by the institution or contractor) are included. On-site franchises (e.g., national or global brands), convenience stores, vending services, and concessions may be excluded; they are covered in the *Sustainable Procurement* credit in Purchasing.

## Part 1

Institution's dining services purchase food and beverage products that are third party verified under one or more recognized food and beverage sustainability standards or both local and community-based.

## Part 2

[Conventional animal products](#) comprise less than 30 percent of the institution's total dining services food and beverage expenditures.

Conventional animal products include all meat, fish/seafood, poultry, eggs, and dairy products that are NOT third party verified or both local and community-based (as outlined in the table above). Please note that products reported in the "other sustainability attributes" category are considered to be conventionally produced.

## C. Applicability

This credit applies to all institutions that have on-campus dining services operated by the institution or the institution's primary on-site contractor.

## D. Scoring

Each part is scored independently.

### Part 1

Institutions earn the maximum of 4 points available for Part 1 of this credit when 75 percent of total food and beverage expenditures are on products that are third party verified or both local and community-based. Incremental points are awarded based on the percentage of total food and beverage expenditures dedicated to products that meet the criteria. For example, an institution with expenditures on third party verified and local community-based products totaling 18.75 percent of total food and beverage expenditures would earn 1 point (1/4 of the points available).

*Points for Part 1 of this credit are calculated automatically in the STARS Reporting Tool as follows:*

Attribute	Factor		Percentage of total dining services food and beverage expenditures that meet the criteria (0-100)		Points earned for Part 1
Third Party Verified or Both Local and Community-Based	0.053	×	_____	=	
Other Sustainability Attributes	0		_____		
Total points earned →					

### Part 2

Institutions earn the maximum of 2 points available for Part 2 of this credit by purchasing no [conventional animal products](#). Incremental points are available based on the percentage of dining services food and beverage expenditures comprised of conventional animal products. For example, an institution for which conventional animal products comprise 15 percent of its total food purchases would earn 1 point (half of the points available for Part 2).

Points earned for Part 2 of this credit are calculated according to the formula below. STARS awards only positive points; points will not be deducted if purchases of conventional animal products exceed 30 percent of the institution's total food and beverage expenditures.

$$\text{Points Earned} = 2 \times \{ [(100 - A) - 70] / 30 \}$$

A = Percentage of total dining services food and beverage expenditures comprised of conventional animal products (0-100)

## E. Reporting Fields

### Required

- ☐ Percentage of dining services food and beverage expenditures on products that are third party verified under one or more recognized food and beverage sustainability standards or both local and community-based (0-100) (Real Food Calculator users report "Real Food A" and "Real Food B" here)
- ☐ Does the institution wish to pursue Part 2 of this credit (expenditures on conventional animal products)? (If data is not available, respond "No")

*If yes, provide:*

- ☐ Percentage of total dining services food and beverage expenditures on [conventional animal products](#) (meat, poultry, fish/seafood, eggs, and dairy products that are NOT third party verified or both local and community-based) (0-100)
- ☐ A brief description of the sustainable food and beverage purchasing program, including how the sustainability impacts of products in specific categories are addressed (e.g., meat, poultry, fish/seafood, eggs, dairy, produce, tea/coffee)
- ☐ An inventory of the institution's sustainable food and beverage purchases that includes for each product: the description/type; label, brand or producer; and the category in which it is being counted and/or a description of the sustainability attribute(s) for which it is being included (upload)
- ☐ A brief description of the methodology used to conduct the inventory, including the timeframe and how representative samples accounted for seasonal variation (if applicable)

*If uploading output from the Real Food Calculator, provide:*

- ☐ Percentage of total dining services expenditures on Real Food A (0-100)
  - ☐ Percentage of total dining services expenditures on Real Food B (0-100)
- ☐ Which of the following food service providers are present on campus and included in the figures reported above?
  - ☐ Dining operations and catering services operated by the institution
  - ☐ Dining operations and catering services operated by a contractor
  - ☐ Student-run food/catering services

- Franchises (e.g., national or global brands)
- Convenience stores
- Vending services
- Concessions

### Optional

- A brief description of purchased food and beverage products that have other sustainability attributes not recognized above (e.g., local products that do not meet the “community-based” criteria, regionally sourced products, and products with credible sustainability claims)
- Additional percentage of dining services food and beverage expenditures on conventional products with other sustainability attributes not recognized above (0-100)
- The website URL where information about the programs or initiatives is available
- Additional documentation to support the submission (upload)
- Data source(s) and notes about the submission
- Contact information for a responsible party (a staff member, faculty member, or administrator who can respond to questions regarding the data once it is submitted and available to the public)

## F. Measurement

### Timeframe

Report the most recent data available from within the three years prior to the anticipated date of submission.

### Sampling and Data Standards

Institutions may choose to track food and beverage purchases for a 12-month consecutive period or use a representative sample that includes data from at least two full months during a 12-month consecutive period (e.g., fiscal or academic year). When using samples, institutions must accommodate seasonal and other variations in sustainable food and beverage availability and purchasing. For example, an institution could select one month in the autumn when seasonal produce is still available (e.g., September or October) and one month in the winter or early spring that falls outside the normal growing season (e.g., February or March).

This credit is based on total food and beverage expenditures in the following categories:

- Dairy - fluid milk, cheese, yogurt, ice cream
- Meat - beef, lamb, pork, game; including frozen or canned meat products
- Poultry - chicken, turkey, other fowl
- Eggs - shelled eggs, liquid egg product, powdered egg
- Fish/Seafood - all fish or seafood products, including frozen or canned products
- Produce - fresh, cut, or frozen fruits and vegetables
- Grocery/Staple - grains; staples; vegetarian/vegan meat alternatives; most boxed, bottled, jarred, and canned products
- Tea/Coffee - hot and cold coffee and tea products including bottled beverages, coffee beans, loose and bagged tea
- Other Beverages (non-dairy) - soft drinks, sports drinks, milk alternatives
- Baked Goods - baked products (pastries, breads, sweets)

Institutions may not exclude any of the product types or categories outlined above from the total food and beverage expenditures figure.

## **G. Standards and Terms**

### **Community-based producer**

Community-based producers are small independently or cooperatively owned enterprises (and cooperatives of small owner-operators) engaged in growing, raising, harvesting, processing and/or manufacturing food or beverage products. Distributors, bottlers, and packers are excluded.

The “community-based” designation is intended to recognize small local producers that may not have the resources necessary to pursue third party sustainability certifications. The expectation is that larger local producers and geographically dispersed companies will achieve third party certification to verify the sustainability attributes of their products.

Small producers are defined as having less than \$5 million (US/Canadian) in annual sales. Most independently or cooperatively owned local enterprises will have less revenue than that (e.g., owner-operated “family” farms, micro enterprises, and other small businesses). If you have reason to believe that a local producer may be larger or function as a subsidiary of a large parent company, it is often possible to find information about ownership and estimated revenue from internet searches and small business directories (e.g., [manta.com](http://manta.com)). If you cannot find any information online, many businesses will provide such information directly upon request.

### **Conventional animal products**

Conventional animal products include meat, poultry, fish/seafood, eggs, and dairy products that are not third party verified to meet recognized sustainability standards or else both local and community-based. The percentage of total dining services food and beverage expenditures on conventional animal products should be calculated using the following formula:

$$100 \times [ ( A - B ) / C ]$$

A = Expenditures on animal products (meat, poultry, fish/seafood, eggs, and dairy products)

B = Expenditures on animal products that are third party verified or both local and community-based

C = Total food and beverage expenditures

### **Credible sustainability claims**

Consistent with the ISEAL Alliance, credible sustainability claims are clear, accurate and relevant, and are backed up by systems that are transparent and robust. For guidance in determining whether a particular claim is credible or not, visit <http://www.challengeithelabel.org/>

### **Farm-to-institution program**

Farm-to-institution (a.k.a. farm-to-table, farm-to-fork, farm-to school) programs connect community-based producers with nearby institutional purchasers like colleges and universities. See for example, the USDA's [Farm-to-Institution Initiatives](#) and Bon Appétit Management Company's [Farm-to-Fork](#) program.

### **Food value chain or food hub**

Consistent with the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#), food value chains and food hubs are defined as follows:

Food value chains represent an innovative business model in which agricultural producers, manufacturers, buyers, and other related supply chain actors form collaborative, transparent partnerships that attempt to combine product differentiation strategies with commitment to shared operational values and social mission goals. Unlike traditional corporate marketing approaches, which focus on the superior attributes of a firm's products or services, value chains address customers' desire to promote social improvement. They incorporate social or environmental mission values within the traditional scope of product differentiation strategies, focusing on such issues as:

- Supporting the local economy;
- Farmland preservation and viability;
- Providing humane treatment and animal welfare;
- Expanding community access to fresh food; and,
- Demonstrating environmental stewardship.

Food hubs are an important subset of food value chains. Many farmers and ranchers, especially smaller and mid-sized operations, often lack the capacity to access retail, institutional, and commercial foodservice markets on their own, and consequently miss out on the fastest growing segment of the local food market. By offering a combination of aggregation, distribution, and marketing services at an affordable price, food hubs make it possible for many producers to gain entry into new larger-volume markets that boost their income and provide them with opportunities for scaling up production.

### **Intensive livestock operations**

Consistent with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), intensive livestock operations are:

...agricultural operations where animals are kept and raised in confined situations. [These operations] congregate animals, feed, manure and urine, dead animals, and production operations on a small land area. Feed is brought to the animals rather than the animals grazing or otherwise seeking feed in pastures, fields, or on rangeland.

These industrial facilities are also known as ILOs, "factory farms", and concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs). Because of their potential negative impacts on water quality, air quality, human health, and animal welfare, ILOs are typically regulated by national, state or provincial authorities, e.g. departments of natural resources, water, or the environment.

Because of the prevalence of industrial livestock production in some regions, a medium-sized or large scale producer of animal products should be assumed to be an intensive operation unless the institution can verify otherwise through transparent information from the producer or an appropriate national, state, or provincial permitting agency, e.g. the U.S. [National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System \(NPDES\) permit program](#). (Unlike the U.S., no federal agency in Canada has defined or set rules specific to the operation and permitting of ILOs).

In a U.S. context, see also the [NPDES Permit Writers' Manual for CAFOs](#) and the [Regulatory Definitions of Large CAFOs, Medium CAFO, and Small CAFOs](#). In a Canadian context, see also [A Review of Selected Jurisdictions and Their Approach to Regulating Intensive Farming Operations](#) (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs).

### **Local**

Local refers to the community in which an institution is based. While recognizing that institutions may define "local" in various ways based on their context, for purposes of STARS reporting "local" may not extend

beyond 250 miles (400 km) from the institution's main campus. To the extent feasible, actual driving distance should be used to define the radius.

### **Real Food Calculator**

The [Real Food Calculator](#) is a tool to track institutional food and beverage purchasing over time. College and university students use the Calculator as a platform for discussion and action with dining services and administrators. The Calculator is managed and hosted by the [Real Food Challenge](#), a U.S.-based campaign and network of student food activists.

The standards behind the Calculator are compiled in the [Real Food Guide](#), which defines “Real Food” as products that fulfill specific criteria at least one of four categories:

- Local and Community-Based
- Fair
- Ecologically Sound
- Humane

Each product is ranked based on how many of the four categories it qualifies for: “Real Food A” meets the criteria in more than one category (e.g., meat that is local and humane). “Real Food B” meets the criteria in only one category (e.g., produce that is ecologically sound but not local). Real Food Calculator results report the ratios of “Real Food A”, “Real Food B”, and conventional food.

### **Recognized food and beverage sustainability standards**

Products with the following attributes may be reported as “third party verified” for the *Food and Beverage Purchasing* credit:

- [AGA-Certified Grassfed](#)
- [American Humane Certified](#) (eggs)
- [American National Standard for Sustainable Agriculture \(ANSI/LEO-4000\)](#)
- [Animal Welfare Approved and AWA Grass Fed](#)
- [Certified Bird Friendly](#) (coffee)
- [Certified Humane Raised and Handled](#)
- [Certified Local Sustainable](#) (Canada)
- Certified Organic under an [IFOAM-endorsed standard](#), e.g.,:
  - [Canada Organic Biologique](#)
  - [EU Organic](#)
  - [Red Mexicana de Tianguis y Mercados Orgánicos](#)
  - [USDA Certified Organic](#)
- [Certified Sustainably Grown](#) (SCS)
- [Demeter Certified Biodynamic](#)
- [Ecocert Fair Trade](#) certified (EFT)
- [Equitable Food Initiative](#) certified (EFI)
- [Fair Food Program](#) (Fair Food Standards Council / Coalition of Immokalee Workers) (tomatoes)
- [Fair for Life](#) and other IMO certifications
- [FAIRTRADE](#) Mark (e.g., [Fairtrade Canada](#), [Fairtrade America](#))
- [Fair Trade Certified](#) (Fair Trade USA)
- [FairWild Certified](#)
- [Food Alliance Certified](#)
- [Food Justice Certified](#) (Agricultural Justice Project)



- [Global Animal Partnership Certified](#) (Steps 3-5+ only)
- [Hand in Hand certified](#) (Rapunzel Fairtrade)
- [LEAF certified](#) (Linking Environment and Farming)
- [Marine Stewardship Council Blue Ecolabel](#) (paired with MSC Chain of Custody certification)
- [Milk with Dignity](#) (Migrant Justice)
- [Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch “Green - Best Choices”](#) (if unavailable, “Yellow – Good Alternatives” and “[Recommended Eco-Certifications](#)” will count)
- [PCO Certified 100% Grassfed](#)
- [Protected Harvest Certified](#)
- [Rainforest Alliance Certified](#)
- [Salmon Safe Certified](#)
- [Sea Choice “Green - Best Choice”](#) (if unavailable, “Yellow – Some Concerns” will count)
- [Small Producers' Symbol](#) (FUNDEPPO)
- [Transitional Organic \(USDA\)](#)

Institutions located outside the U.S. and Canada may use equivalent [credible sustainability claims and certifications](#) to identify ecologically sound, fair and humane products.

## Scoring Example: Food and Beverage Purchasing

### Part 1

Example College spent \$10 million on food and beverages during the past year. An inventory of those purchases reveals that:

- A. \$500,000 was spent on Certified Organic produce, dairy products and meat; Fairtrade coffee and chocolate, Rainforest Alliance certified tea and bananas, and Certified Humane animal products (counted as Third Party Verified)
- B. \$750,000 was spent on produce, dairy products and eggs purchased directly from small local producers and through a local farm-to-institution program (counted as Both Local and Community-Based).
- C. \$150,000 was spent on dairy products from a regional cooperative that aggregates milk from many producers, the majority of which are large farms and/or located more than 250 miles from the institution (counted as Other Sustainability Attributes).
- D. \$100,000 was spent on products from a local bakery that does not fully meet the “both local and community-based” criteria (counted as Other Sustainability Attributes).

The College’s remaining purchases were on products that do not meet any of the credit criteria. Therefore, expenditures on products that are Third Party Verified or Both Local and Community-Based (A + B) total \$1.25 million (12.5 percent of the total). Expenditures on products with Other Sustainability Attributes (C + D) total \$250,000 (2.5 percent of the total).

Attributes	Factor		Percentage of total dining services food and beverage expenditures on products in each category (0-100)		Points earned
Third Party Verified or Both Local and Community-Based	0.053	×	<u>12.5</u>	=	0.6625
Other Sustainability Attributes	0		<u>2.5</u>		0
<b>Total points earned for Part 1 →</b>					<b>0.663</b>

### Part 2

Of the above purchases, \$3 million was spent on animal products, \$0.5 million of which were Third Party Verified or Both Local and Community-Based. The remaining \$2.5 million was spent on conventional animal products (both with and without sustainability attributes). Therefore, the percentage of total dining services food purchases comprised of conventionally produced animal products = \$2.5 million ÷ \$10 million = 25 percent.

A = Percentage of total dining services food and beverage expenditures on conventional animal products = 25 percent

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Points earned for Part 2} &= 2 \times \{ [(100 - A) - 70] / 30 \} \\
 &= 2 \times \{ [(100 - 25) - 70] / 30 \} \\
 &= 2 \times \{ 5 / 30 \} = 0.33 \text{ points}
 \end{aligned}$$