

## Belfast Co-operative Food Buying Policy

Purpose (from the co-op's bylaws): the purpose of the co-operative is (a) to operate an economically viable, membership-owned and -controlled natural foods and products distribution system, (b) to provide a forum for education and action concerning nutrition, the food distribution system, community organizing and related issues, and (c) to voluntarily aid, support and assist by gifts, contributions or other means organization in the community and groups of similar purpose.

### Purpose of the buying policy:

The Belfast co-operative Buying Policy serves to provide the managers with guidelines for purchasing stock and services for the store, and to inform members, vendors and the public about our co-op's values and purchasing goals.

### Our goals:

Wholesome food is necessary for our well-being and we strive to satisfy a range of needs and tastes by purchasing the freshest, purest and highest quality foods available at reasonable prices. While recognizing our size limitations, when available we prefer to buy organically grown and produced products (without chemical fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides or preservatives) at prices fair to the producer, the store and our members and customers. We are committed to buying from local growers and producers whenever practical. We search out new sources, both local and global, for pure, delicious, whole foods. We provide our members and customers with information on products and changes in the whole food industry.

### Our values:

We support farmers who practice sustainable agriculture, the goals of organic agriculture, and humane treatment of livestock and poultry. We also strive to support socially responsible producers, co-operative and worker-owned businesses, the use of renewable resources, limiting packaging and recyclable materials.

### Our guidelines:

We strive *not* to buy foods which contain artificial sweeteners, colors, flavors, preservatives or additives; antibiotics or growth hormones; cottonseed or hydrogenated oils. Nor do we knowingly buy foods utilizing methods of genetic engineering or irradiation. We strive to limit our shelf space for foods containing chemically refined oils and highly refined sweeteners such as sucrose, fructose, corn syrup and high fructose corn syrup.

The Belfast Co-operative Buying Policy applies to products stocked in the store. Pre-order buying choices through the co-op are determined by individual co-op members and customers.

A copy of the Buying Policy will be given to each vendor with the understanding that this policy applies to their products and that we strive to do business with vendors who are in accordance with our policy. While the Buying Policy is one criteria which shall be considered in dealing with vendors, it is not the sole criteria and we realize that supporting flexibility by co-op buyers is only good and sensible business practice.

The Board of Directors will review this policy annually with input from affected workers, members, customers and suppliers.

*Submitted by Purchasing and Product Policies committee: approved February 27, 2003 by the Board of Directors*