Real Food Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local &amp; Community-Based</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Ecologically Sound</th>
<th>Humane</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Green Light:</strong> best represents standard and counts as real food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Producer**: must be a privately-traded or cooperatively-owned business that grosses less than 1% of the industry leader.

- Independently owned businesses must have full autonomy and decision-making power about business processing & distribution practices.
- All production, processing, & distribution facilities controlled by the producer, its parent or family companies, and contract farmers must be within **150 miles** of the institution.

Products from cooperatively owned businesses must have been produced, processed, and distributed within **150 miles** of the institution. Must be a true co-op rather than contractors to a larger corporation.

**Products with the following certifications:**
- Ecocert Fair Trade Certified
- Fair Food Standards Council Fair Food Program (Coalition of Immokalee Workers tomatoes)
- Fair for Life Certified by IMO
- Fair Trade Certified by Fair Labeling Organization (FLO)
- Fair Trade Certified by Fair Trade USA*
- Food Justice Certified by Agricultural Justice Project

**Single Source product that can confirm in writing the following for ALL employees:**
- Living wage
- Right to benefits
- Day of rest and and overtime
- Seniority
- Equal pay for equal or equivalent work
- Right to return to seasonal position
- Right to freedom of association

**Products with the following certifications or claims:**
- Biodynamic Certified by Demeter
- Food Alliance Certified*
- USDA Organic**
- Protected Harvest Certification
- Rainforest Alliance Certified**

**Fish Only:**
- Marine Stewardship Council
- Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch Guide "Best Choices" (Regional Guide or Buyer's Guide)

**Coffee Only:**
- Bird Friendly by Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center

**Products with the following certifications or claims:**
- Animal Welfare Approved by Animal Welfare Institute
- Biodynamic Certified by Demeter
- Global Animal Partnership Steps 4-5+
- Certified Humane by Humane Farm Animal Farm Care²³

- Produce grown in a farm or garden at the institution, in which the researcher can confirm the use of organic practices
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Yellow Light: counts as real food, but not as strict as Green Light</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Producer must be a privately-traded or cooperatively owned business that grosses less than 1% of the industry leader.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>50% of the ingredients in the product meet the above standards.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Products with the following certification:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <em>Fair Trade Certified Ingredient</em> by Fair Trade USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Products with the following certifications or claims:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <em>Fair Trade Certified</em> by Fair Trade USA*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch Guide &quot;Good Alternatives&quot; (Regional Guide or Buyer's Guide)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <em>Salmon Safe</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <em>Transitional Organic</em> by OIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For multi-source or multi-ingredient products, producer and 50% of the ingredients must meet all of the above criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All Species:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <em>Certified Organic</em> by USDA-AMS* · **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <em>Food Alliance Certified</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <em>Global Animal Partnership</em> Step 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ruminants Only:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <em>AGA Grassfed</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• &quot;Process Verified Grassfed&quot;** by USDA-AMS and either &quot;Never Ever 3 by USDA-FSIS&quot; or &quot;Naturally Raised&quot; by USDA-AMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hogs Only:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <em>Certified Humane</em> by Humane Farm Animal Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Egg-Layers Only</strong>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <em>American Humane Certified</em> (no enriched cage eggs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Cage-Free&quot; by USDA-AMS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For multi-source or multi-ingredient products, producer and 50% of the ingredients must meet all of the above criteria.
| Red Light: **good start but not enough** to count as real food.  
Product _can_ meet real food criteria in other categories. |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Producer is independently or cooperatively owned but does not meet the above criteria. | Products with the following certifications:  
  - *Rainforest Alliance Certified* by Rainforest Alliance  
  - *Food Alliance Certified*  
Products that have been processed or shipped by companies with fair labor conditions comprised of ingredients with unconfirmed labor standards. | Products with the following claims or certifications  
  - "Raised without Antibiotics"  
  - "No Antibiotics Administered"  
  - "Never Ever 3"  
  - "Naturally Raised" by USDA-FSIS  
  - *GAP Certified* (Good Agricultural Practices) by USDA  
Products with the following claims or certifications:  
  - *Global Animal Partnership* Steps 1 & 2  
  - "Grass fed" by USDA-FSIS (Ruminants)  
  - "Gestation Crate Free" (Hogs)  
  - "Free range" by USDA-FSIS (poultry)  
  - "Free roaming" by USDA-FSIS (poultry)  
  - "rBGH-free/rBST-free" by FDA (dairy) |

| Red Light: claim does not necessarily have substance, **not real food.**  
Product _can_ meet real food criteria in other categories. |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Products with the following claims:  
  - "Natural"  
  - "GM Free"  
  - "GMO Free"  
Products with the following certification: *GAP Certified* (Good Agricultural Practices) by USDA | Products with the following claims: |

| Red Light: no way, **not real food.**  
Product _can_ meet real food criteria in other categories. |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Producer does not meet any of the above criteria. | Multi-source, highly processed products with no certification. | Products with the following claims:  
  - Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch Guide “Avoid” (regional guide)  
Confinement or Battery cages, enriched cages, gestation crates, veal crates |

| Multi-source, highly processed products with no certification. | Products with the following claims:  
  - Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch Guide “Avoid” (regional guide)  
Confinement or Battery cages, enriched cages, gestation crates, veal crates | Confinement or Battery cages, enriched cages, gestation crates, veal crates |
**Disqualifications:** Product containing disqualifying characteristics cannot count as real food in any category.

- Producer is known to be found guilty of criminal charges of slave labor or indentured servitude within the previous 10 years; producer is known to have been found guilty of, been cited, or settled a case relating to an OSHA, FSLA, or NLRB violation within the last 3 years.
- Producer is known to be a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO)
- Product is likely to contain GMOs (e.g. non-organic high fructose corn syrup, soy, beet sugar)
- Product contains any of the following: Acesulfame-Potassium, Butylated Hydroxyanisole (BHA), Caramel Coloring, Olestra (Olean), Partially Hydrogenated Oil (trans-fats), Propyl Gallate, rGBH/rBST, Saccharine, sodium nitrate added, sodium nitrite added; Dyes: Red #3, Yellow #5, Yellow #6, Blue #3

---

**Legend**

*Italicics* = There is strong, third-party verification of the claim through a certification

"Text with Quotes" = Industry claim

* = Certification/claim occurs in more than one column

** = Needs verification that it is not from a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO)

1 Producer is defined as the entity that produces the product. Thus, it could be a farmer, rancher, bakery, corporation, etc.

2 For poultry, verify "Free Range" standards are followed

3 Does not include hogs (*Certified Humane* hogs fall under Yellow Light)

4 Ingredients are defined as raw ingredients. Ingredients must meet a given criterion at the first step of the supply chain to qualify as Real Food.

---

For additional guidance on how to best use this guide, see the [Assessment Tips](#) and [Calculator F.A.Q.](#).