

**Effective Date:** June 1, 2021

**Applicability:** University-wide

## **SUSTAINABLE AND HEALTHFUL FOOD PURCHASING POLICY**

Sustainable, Equitable, Ethical, Diverse (SEED)

*Planting the seed for a better tomorrow*

### **A. Introduction**

Lehigh University, hereinafter occasionally referred to as the University, is committed to the purchasing of sustainable and healthful food and to transforming the traditional university food system into one that is more sustainable, climate-friendly, diverse, inclusive, and equitable. To promote this commitment, the Sustainable and Healthful Food Purchasing Policy lays out specific guidelines and goals when purchasing food for the University and when communicating these efforts to the Lehigh community and beyond.

### **B. Mission & Vision**

Lehigh University is committed to the advancement of a healthy, environmentally responsible, and equitable food system. Lehigh Dining Services, the Office of Sustainability, Student Auxiliary Services, and Purchasing Services, through the increased purchasing of local, seasonal, humane, fair trade, ecologically sound, and plant-based food and beverage products, strives to be the model for sustainable and sociological change within university dining. Our vision is to create an environment, through our words and actions, which inspires the Lehigh University community to make positive changes to their eating and purchasing habits that will improve themselves and the world around them.

### **C. What is Sustainable Food?**

Throughout this policy, the term “sustainable food” is used several times. Lehigh University defines “sustainable food” as food that nourishes producers, consumers, communities, and the Earth. Specifically, sustainable food:

- provides social benefits to, and supports, the health, rights, and economic security of the people producing, purchasing, preparing, and consuming the food;
- strengthens connections within and between local and distant communities;
- protects the diversity and welfare of all plant and animal species;
- preserves environmental and biological resources for future generations; and
- avoids damaging or wasting natural resources and contributing to climate change.

### **D. Relationship with Existing Policies and Campus Efforts**

Lehigh University has a deep history of creating and supporting a sustainable university food system. In 2013, Lehigh joined the [Real Food Challenge](#), a national movement focused on leveraging the power of youth and universities to create a healthy, fair, and green food system. The Real Food Challenge aimed to “shift \$1 billion (20 percent) of existing university food budgets away from industrial farms and unhealthy food and toward

local and community-based, fair, ecologically sound, and humane food - what [they] call Real Food - by 2020.” To achieve this goal, a partnership between Lehigh’s Office of Sustainability, Dining Services, Sodexo, Student Auxiliary Services, and Purchasing Services was created. In 2017, University President John Simon officially [signed the Real Food Challenge pledge](#) which publicly reaffirmed Lehigh’s commitment to reaching 20 percent Real Food by 2020.

The following graphic shows Lehigh’s annual academic year progress in achieving the goal.



Over the course of seven years, Lehigh was able to increase its baseline Real Food percentage from 2 percent to the committed 20 percent by 2020 goal. Through these efforts, over \$250,000 was diverted from traditional food budgets at Lehigh to more sustainable food purchasing. These efforts also supported one of Lehigh Dining’s goals in Lehigh’s [Campus Sustainability Plan 2020](#). Lehigh’s official commitment to the Real Food Challenge ended in 2020.

Despite the conclusion of the Real Food Challenge, Lehigh University remains steadfast in its commitment to food sustainability. In 2020, surveys were distributed to current and incoming students, faculty, and staff to gather data about food consumption on campus. From the almost 1,100 responses, valuable information about trends and preferences were collected along with input about food quality and selection, disposables and packaging, and food waste. Further stakeholder engagement was performed through focus groups aimed at gathering additional information. These focus groups included the Office of Sustainability, Lehigh Sustainability Council, and the Eco-Rep Leadership Program. This Sustainable and Healthful Food Purchasing Policy incorporates the input from campus stakeholders.

In October 2020, Lehigh published its [Sustainability Strategic Plan 2030](#), an interdisciplinary and interdepartmental effort that builds on the University’s two previous sustainability plans, the [2012 Campus Sustainability Plan](#) and the [Campus Sustainability Plan 2020](#). This plan is the culmination of a one-year strategic planning process, during which the Office of Sustainability and the Lehigh Sustainability Council engaged the Lehigh campus community as well as the broader Bethlehem community. This plan is broken down into six focus areas: Climate Action, Educational Experience, Campus Operations, Culture & Engagement, Health and Wellness, and Focused Leadership. The Health and Wellness focus area contains goals directly related to this policy and other food sustainability efforts.

## E. Annual Metrics & Measuring Success

### Established Metrics

The purpose of this policy is to establish and represent what Lehigh University sees as a sustainable university food system. Central to this purpose is the creation of sustainable menus and the purchasing of sustainable raw food materials. To achieve the food purchasing goals and subgoals outlined throughout this policy within the established timeframes, the following key annual metrics have been established to measure success.

- Percentage increase of sustainable foods both overall and within individual food categories
- Percentage increase of plant-based foods
- Increase in annual dollars contributed to the local economy through food purchases

## Baseline

To measure success over the years, Lehigh's FY 22 food purchasing has been established as the overall baseline, as it will be the first full fiscal year after the approval of this policy. A table including data from that baseline assessment will be included in the appendix after its completion. After the baseline year is completed, specific overall goals and subgoals will be established and documented above with appropriate timeframes.

It is possible that the baseline may only include purchasing from a few on-campus dining locations. Although this is a sufficient baseline from which to measure overall institutional progress, it will not be sufficient as the assessment scope is expanded. As new locations are added to each assessment, the first year each food location is included will become the baseline for that location. Our goal is to include as many dining locations as possible by 2025 in the assessment.

## Measurement Standards

The following standards are used to classify food purchases in regard to the established annual metrics above. These standards were created in consideration of the criteria from the Real Food Challenge and the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education's Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (AASHE STARS). It is worth noting that although AASHE STARS standards considers sustainable foods more environmentally responsible than plant-based foods, equal weight was given to each in the creation of the following standards. These standards will be continually updated as the Real Food Challenge and AASHE STARS standards are updated. All food standards are shown together in a comprehensive table in Appendix A.

### Sustainable Foods

#### *Local and Community Based\**

1. Single-ingredient products
  - a. Ownership: Producer must be a privately or cooperatively owned enterprise.  
*AND*
  - b. Size:
    - i. Produce: Company, cooperative, or individual farms must gross \$5 million/year or less\*\*
    - ii. All other products: Company, cooperative, or individual farms must gross \$50 million/year or less\*\*  
*AND*
  - c. Distance:
    - i. Meat, Poultry, and Fish: All production, processing, and distribution facilities must be within a 500-mile radius of the institution
    - ii. All other products: All production, processing, and distribution facilities must be within a 250-mile radius of the institution
2. Aggregated single-ingredient products
  - a. At least three-quarters (75%) of the product (by volume) must meet the criteria for single-ingredient products
3. Multi-ingredient products
  - a. Ownership: Company must be a privately or cooperatively owned enterprise

*AND*

- b. Size: Company, cooperative, or individual farms must gross \$50 million/year or less\*\*

*AND*

- c. Distance: All processing and distribution facilities must be within a 250-mile radius of the institution.

*AND*

- d. At least half (50%) of the ingredients by volume must come from producers that meet the criteria for single-ingredient products

\*Note: a company, cooperative, or individual farm still satisfies the size requirement if they are pushed above the size threshold due solely to Lehigh University's purchasing.

\*\*Note: if a business is a subsidiary of a parent company, it must be evaluated on the basis of its parent company.

*Fair Trade/Labor\*\*\**

1. All products

- a. Equitable Food Initiative certified
- b. Fair Trade certified (Fair Trade USA)
- c. Fair Trade Federation member
- d. Farms unionized through FLOC (AFL-CIO), FUJ, PCUN, UFW
- e. Food Justice certified (Agricultural Justice Project)
- f. Worker-Driven Social Responsibility programs
  - i. Fair Food Program (Fair Food Standards Council/Coalition of Immokalee Workers)
  - ii. Milk with Dignity (Migrant Justice)

2. Multi-ingredient products

- a. At least one of the primary ingredients (20% by volume) meet any of the above criteria

*Ecologically Sound\*\*\**

1. All products

- a. American National Standard for Sustainable Agriculture (ANSI/LEO-4000) (Silver or higher)
- b. Bee Better Certified (Xerces Society)
- c. Biodynamic certified by Demeter
- d. Certified Sustainably Grown
- e. FairWild
- f. Food Alliance certified
- g. Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) verified (e.g., Certified Naturally Grown)
- h. Protected Harvest certified
- i. Rainforest Alliance certified
- j. Regenerative Organic certified
- k. USDA Organic and approved certifiers
- l. USDA Transitional Organic

2. Coffee

- a. Bird Friendly by Smithsonian

3. Produce
  - a. Produce grown in a farm or garden at the institution, in which the researcher can confirm the use of organic practices
4. Seafood
  - a. Marine Stewardship Council blue ecolabel (paired with MSC Chain of Custody certification)
  - b. Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch (Best Choices, Good Alternatives, and Recommended Eco-Certifications)
  - c. Salmon Safe certified
5. Multi-ingredient products
  - a. At least half (50% by volume) of the ingredients meet any of the above criteria

*Humane Animal Care\*\*\**

1. All products
  - a. AGA Certified Grassfed
  - b. American Humane Certified Free Range/Pasture Raised
  - c. Animal Welfare Approved (A Greener World)
  - d. AWA Grassfed by A Greener World
  - e. BuyingPoultry (Best Choices and Better Choices)
  - f. Certified Humane Free Range/Pasture Raised
  - g. Certified Humane Raised and Handled
  - h. Global Animal Partnership Steps 2+
  - i. NOFA-NY or PCO Certified 100% Grassfed

*Women and BIPOC-Owned Businesses\*\*\**

1. All products
  - a. Economically Disadvantaged Woman-Owned Small Business certified (U.S. SBA)
  - b. Minority-Owned Business certified (NMSDC)
  - c. Woman-Owned Small Business certified (U.S. SBA)

\*\*\*Note: a producer that does not officially have one of the above sustainable foods standards in any category may be counted if it can be proved that they adhere to the standard's requirements and guidelines.

Plant-Based Foods\*

1. Unprocessed or minimally processed:
 

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Fruits, Vegetables</li> <li>b. Whole grains</li> <li>c. Legumes</li> <li>d. Mushrooms</li> <li>e. Nuts</li> <li>f. Seeds</li> <li>g. Herbs</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>h. Spices</li> <li>i. Cereal grains and flours</li> <li>j. Plain oatmeal, pasta, and noodles</li> <li>k. Fruit or vegetable juices</li> <li>l. Tea</li> <li>m. Coffee</li> </ol>
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2. Processed culinary ingredients derived from plants or nature:
  - a. Vegetable oils crushed from seeds, nuts, or fruits such as olives
  - b. Starches extracted from corn and other plants
  - c. Sugar and sweeteners obtained from plants
  - d. Honey extracted from combs and syrup from maple trees
  - e. Soy sauce
  - f. Vinegar
  
3. Simple processed foods composed primarily of unprocessed or minimally processed plant-based foods and plant-based culinary ingredients:
  - a. Canned or bottled vegetables, fruits, and legumes
  - b. Tomato extract, pastes, or concentrates
  - c. Salted or sugared nuts and seeds
  - d. Fruits in syrup
  - e. Unpackaged freshly made breads
  - f. Cereal products such as flavored oatmeal
  - g. Tofu and tempeh
  - h. Fermented alcoholic beverages such as wine, beer, and cider
  
4. Vegetarian/vegan alternatives to meat and dairy:
  - a. Plant-based 'milks'
  - b. Plant-based meat substitutes
  - c. Plant-based margarines and spreads
  
5. Animal products (i.e. meat, poultry, fish, seafood, eggs, and dairy) and their derivatives, drinking water, and most ultra-processed foods do NOT qualify as plant-based foods.

\*Note: these lists are not exhaustive and only show the most common examples from each category.

#### Disqualifications\*

1. Egregious human rights violations
  - a. Forced labor (including Prison labor): Producers have been found guilty of criminal charges of forced labor within the previous 10 years OR products that have been produced in prisons or using prison labor (through state or county correctional industries or through lease to, or partnership with, private agricultural or food processing companies)
2. Labor violations
  - a. Producer has been found guilty of or has been cited for three or more cases relating to serious, repeat, or willful Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), or Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) violations within the last three years
3. Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)
  - a. Producer is a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO)
    - i. Except for dairy that has been aggregated from multiple farms if the average farm size is less than 200 cows
    - ii. Except for farms that only use CAFOs when it is deemed unsafe or impossible for the animals to be fed free range
4. Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)

- a. Products made with genetically engineered ingredients (including corn, soy, rapeseed, beet sugar, papayas and summer squash) and their derivatives
  - i. Unless these ingredients are used in trace amounts or the product carries a certification that precludes the presence of GMOs (Non-GMO Project Verified or any of the certifications that qualify as Ecologically Sound)
- 5. Ultra-processed foods
  - a. Products made with the following ingredients: Aspartame; Butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA), Butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT); Caramel coloring; Partially hydrogenated oil (trans-fats); Potassium bromate; Propyl gallate; rBGH/rBST; Saccharine; Sodium nitrate added; Sodium nitrite added; Dyes: Red #3, Red #40, Yellow #5, Yellow #6

\*Note: Worker-Driven Social Responsibility programs are exempt from disqualifications.

## Assessment Plan

Assessments of dining locations are conducted annually as they had been through Lehigh's participation in the Real Food Challenge. A team of students working with Lehigh's Office of Sustainability collects and analyzes food purchasing data each semester. Data is collected during October and November for the fall semester and during February and March for the spring semester. At the end of each semester, the student team presents their findings to the Campus Food Systems Working Group and this group determines overall progress and compliance with standards. Based on the findings, the working group advises necessary changes to food purchasing. The Campus Food Systems Working Group will review this policy after the first year, once the baseline is completed, and then continue to conduct annual reviews after that year.

## Progress Documentation and Communication

To document and share progress, achievements and lessons learned are included in each annual report for Lehigh's Sustainability Strategic Plan 2030. Key metrics are conveyed to the campus community to ensure transparency and accountability. Point of sale signage is updated annually as the University progresses through its sustainability efforts.

## Feedback Communication

To encourage input from students, faculty, and staff to bring forward new ideas and opportunities, a google form link is included in all updates and emails about our sustainability efforts. This google form is used solely for feedback and comments about food purchasing efforts. Point of sale signage includes a QR code that is linked to this google form as well. In addition to this form, Lehigh Dining's email is used as another method of feedback collection from the campus community. The Campus Food Systems Working Group reviews this feedback on a consistent basis and incorporates it when appropriate.

## Priority Setting

To maximize sustainability efforts within the limited financial capacity of Lehigh University, priorities must be set. The Annual Metrics & Measuring Success section of this policy was created in consideration of these priorities. This limited financial capacity will also be considered when establishing new goals and measuring institutional success.

## F. Food Purchasing Goal Setting & Benchmarking

The following goals are the food purchasing benchmarks that will guide the University in its creation of a sustainable food system:

- Increase the purchasing of sustainable food both overall and within individual food categories measured in percentages
- Increase the purchasing of plant-based food measured in percentages
- Increase the contribution to the local economy measured in dollar amount

These goals are continuously monitored, updated, and made more specific as baseline and future year data is collected. After the baseline year is completed, more specific overall goals and subgoals will be established and documented above with appropriate timeframes to replace these existing goals and benchmarks. Each of these goals will contain hard targets in terms of the respective measurement standard.

## G. Communications Targets and Strategies

Lehigh University is committed to continuing to improve food options that are healthy, sustainable, equitable, supportive of the local community, and inclusive. The following communication targets and strategies take into consideration the University's views and the views of the campus community. The University aims to achieve all of the following targets and strategies outlined in this section and all other goals in this policy by 2030 as aligned with Lehigh's [Sustainability Strategic Plan 2030](#).

### Faculty and Staff

To educate faculty and staff members about our efforts, motivate them to become involved, and encourage continuous participation, the following targets and strategies have been created:

- Host annual sustainability training for 100% of Lehigh Dining personnel
- Increase Lehigh's participation in Sodexo sustainability recognition programs such as [Sodexo's Better Tomorrow 2025](#)
- Utilize Lunch & Learn events at least once a year to host annual seminars about the University's sustainable food purchasing practices
- Utilize the Knowledge at Noon program once a year to convey information about food sustainability efforts annually
- Send biweekly updates about food initiatives and seasonal menus that align with sustainability efforts with an open rate goal of 40%
- Incorporate aspects of the University's food sustainability efforts in the [Sustainable Office Program](#)

### Students

To communicate our efforts to students and encourage constant engagement and participation, the University aims to tailor this policy and its implementation to their interests. The following targets and strategies will assist in this communication:

- Host naming contests for updated aspects of this policy and future food efforts as they occur
- Send biweekly updates about food initiatives and seasonal menus that align with sustainability efforts with an open rate goal of 40%
- Integrate sustainable food culture with existing and future academic programs and courses
- Combine food sustainability communication with University culture to create lasting change
- Host a minimum of one major food sustainability programming event in dining halls per semester



- Utilize the Eco-Rep Leadership Program to give sustainable food presentations to various groups each semester

## Vendor Communication

Constant communication with vendors is essential to create strong partnerships that enhance sustainability. The following targets and strategies will assist in forming strong partnerships:

- Hold annual reviews between Lehigh Dining and key vendors to ensure awareness of key food goals and incorporate as many agencies as possible in these reviews to create multi-agency engagement and extend impact and reach
- Include sustainability and other key targets of this policy during contract and annual addendum negotiation management between Sodexo and key partners
- Create an ongoing conversation between local vendors and the Lehigh community and build out those relationships through events hosted by Lehigh featuring those local vendors

## H. Cultural and Social Commitments

Lehigh is committed to developing a more inclusive university food system; one that includes both cultural and social considerations. To do this, all people and all backgrounds should be represented in purchasing choices, especially in a time where the topics of food justice and food inequity are more important than ever. Further, these topics are crucial to Lehigh because South Bethlehem, the home of the University, is considered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to be a food desert. By incorporating cultural and social aspects in the University's food purchasing and by calling attention to them in a separate section, the University affirms its dedication toward the cultivation of a culturally and socially equitable university food system.

### Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity

Lehigh is dedicated to creating a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable campus community and does this through strategic planning, training, education and research, community relations, policy development, and communications. This Sustainable and Healthful Food Purchasing Policy aligns with the diversity, inclusion, and equity goals of the University and aims to be a driving force in fostering an inclusive food system. Sustainable food, as Lehigh has defined it, strengthens connections within local communities. This focus on local food is crucial in maintaining local land as farms that preserve a region's diversity, both in terms of ecology and culture. It is also important that the University reflects cultural diversity and inclusion in meal choices to accommodate all Lehigh students, faculty, and staff. The University should also avoid purchasing foods supplied by producers whose practices negatively impact marginalized and lower-income communities. Finally, a focus on including more fair trade foods to ensure equitable treatment of workers can go a long way toward the creation of a diverse, inclusive, and equitable food system.

### Marketing Materials

Marketing is essential to the success of this policy as information about new sustainable food efforts and progress in achieving our goals must consistently be disseminated. All marketing materials will be inclusive of everyone in the Lehigh community and efforts will be continuously made to ensure this inclusivity. Dissemination of marketing materials must also be done in equitable ways to reach all people regardless of their level of access to traditional information sources like the internet. Diverse marketing principles are vital in the

success of this policy. Ensuring printed materials contain translations and adding captions to videos are examples of marketing materials that are in compliance with diverse marketing principles.

## Food Cost Considerations

Ensuring the affordability of food goes a long way toward creating an equitable food system at Lehigh, as food insecurity is common among college students. However, the University recognizes that increasing sustainable food choices will be more expensive, especially in the early goings. Additionally, the cost of food is often difficult to predict due to the inherent instability of pricing. In recognition of this, the University will take these factors into consideration when making sustainable food purchases and will intently strive to maintain food system equity and security.

## Policy

Lehigh University will be implementing a review process to ensure that all policies, past and present, are inclusive, equitable, and antiracist. Aligning with Lehigh's policy standards and the actions of Lehigh Dining, the University commits to ensure that this policy and any future additions or addendums are inclusive, equitable, and antiracist.

## I. Waste, Disposables, and Packaging

A critical part of any sustainable food purchasing policy is the consideration of waste, disposables, and packaging. Not only are these considerations present in the definition of sustainable food, but addressing them can create significant environmental and human health benefits. Avoiding disposables and excess packaging significantly reduces natural resource consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. It also prevents the accumulation of these items in landfills which typically do not readily biodegrade. Avoiding disposables and packaging can also prevent exposure of toxic contaminants present in these materials, such as PFAS, to consumers. Beyond disposables and packaging waste, food waste is also a significant sustainability consideration. Decreasing food waste is important because it keeps food out of landfills or incinerators, can result in an economic benefit for the University, and can work to eliminate hunger in local communities.

## Stakeholder Support

There is significant support from campus stakeholders around actions to reduce waste, disposables, and packaging. Current students, faculty, and staff encourage composting, food waste reduction, recycling improvements, plastic and food packaging reduction, and many more food-related sustainability initiatives. Specifically, there is a lot of support on campus for reusable and bring your own container programs, biodegradable packaging, and sustainability improvements at retail dining locations. This support shows that reducing waste, disposables, and packaging are not only a concern of Lehigh Dining, the Office of Sustainability, Student Auxiliary Services, and Purchasing Services, but also a concern of faculty, staff, and students throughout campus.

## Previous Efforts

Over the past years, Lehigh has already made progress in addressing these issues. The use of [eco-containers](#), a reusable container that allows students to take food on the go when they don't have time to dine in, has been expanded in recent years. This program, along with compostable packaging for grab-and-go retail locations, the elimination of polystyrene, the [reusable dishware program](#), and others, have already gone a long way to

eliminate waste from dining operations. Lehigh University has also implemented a [paper straw policy](#). In August 2018, Lehigh Dining made the commitment to exclusively offer paper straws, which diverts approximately 50,000 plastic straws from landfills each year. Additionally, Lehigh has installed over 50 [water bottle refill stations](#) on campus since 2014. These stations have eliminated the use of over one million single-use plastic water bottles. Beyond these efforts, a [leftover food notification platform](#) has been developed. This platform was created in an effort to prevent food waste and reduce food insecurity of Lehigh students. Lehigh has also installed an Enviropure® System for treating food waste in one of their dining halls, Rathbone. This system breaks down some food waste into grey water that is deposited directly into the sewer which diverts waste from the landfill. As a result of many of these efforts, Rathbone Dining Hall earned its status as a [two-star certified green restaurant](#) in 2016.

## Future Efforts

All of these actions have made a positive impact in reducing Lehigh's waste, disposables, and packaging; however, more work is still needed. To continue efforts to reduce waste, disposables, and packaging at Lehigh, several goals have been established in the [Sustainability Strategic Plan 2030](#). Specifically, efforts are being made to develop campus-wide composting, eliminate single-use plastic water and soda bottles across campus, implement a reusable eco-container program in retail locations, develop a broader campus zero-waste strategy, create university-wide sustainable catering standards, and launch campus-community food sustainability awareness initiatives. Progress in these initiatives will be measured through an annual [Sustainability Strategic Plan 2030](#) progress report.

## J. Index of Terms, Definitions, and Certifications

**Food justice:** Begins with the idea that access to nourishing food is a basic human right. Poverty, geographical disadvantages, non-culturally appropriate food options, and exploitative marketing all hinder food access in marginalized communities. Food justice is the concept that communities have the right to grow, sell, and eat healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food whose production supports the well-being of the land, workers, and animals ([Source](#)).

**Food inequity:** Refers to the adverse effects of both the production and distribution of food that marginalized communities face. Globally, we currently have an inequitable food system that disproportionately burdens and denies access to communities of color and high poverty. In an equitable food system, race, class, geography, and other social identities would not be indicators for whether or not you have a voice in and access to a nourishing food system ([Source](#)).

**Food desert:** Areas where people have limited access to a variety of healthful foods. This may be due to having a limited income or living far away from sources of healthful and affordable food. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines a food desert as an area that has either a poverty rate greater than or equal to 20% or a median family income not exceeding 80% of the median family income in urban areas, or 80% of the statewide median family income in nonurban areas. In order to qualify as a food desert, an area must also meet certain other criteria. In urban areas, at least 500 people or 33% of the population must live more than 1 mile from the nearest large grocery store. In rural areas, at least 500 people or 33% of the population must live more than 10 miles from the nearest large grocery store ([Source](#)).

**USDA:** United States Department of Agriculture; the federal agency that proposes programs and implements policies and regulations related to American farming, forestry, ranching, food quality, and nutrition ([Source](#)).

**Diversity:** The attributes, backgrounds and experiences of the students, faculty, staff and alumni that enhance the core mission of Lehigh University; to advance learning through the integration of teaching, research, and service to others (Lehigh University).

**Inclusion:** The achievement of a work environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to the organization's success (Lehigh University).

**Equity:** Ensuring everyone has what they need to be successful (Lehigh University).

**Antiracist:** Someone who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing an antiracist idea (Lehigh University).

**Food insecurity:** The disruption of food intake or eating patterns because of lack of money and other resources. Food insecurity does not necessarily cause hunger, but hunger is a possible outcome of food insecurity ([Source](#)).

## K. Additional Resources

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# L. Appendix A: Lehigh University Measurement Standards

Lehigh University Measurement Standards					
Sustainable Foods					Plant-Based Foods*
Local & Community-Based*	Fair Trade/Labor***	Ecologically Sound***	Humane Animal Care***	Women and BIPOC-Owned Businesses***	
<p><b>1. Single-ingredient products</b></p> <p>a. Ownership: Producer must be a privately or cooperatively owned enterprise.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p>b. Size</p> <p>i. Produce: Company, cooperative, or individual farms must gross \$5 million/year or less**</p> <p>ii. All other products: Company, cooperative, or individual farms must gross \$50 million/year or less**</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p>c. Distance</p> <p>i. Meat, Poultry, and Fish: All production, processing, and distribution facilities must be within a 500-mile radius of the institution</p> <p>ii. All other products: All production, processing, and distribution facilities must be within a 250-mile radius of the institution</p>	<p><b>1. All products</b></p> <p>a. Equitable Food Initiative certified</p> <p>b. Fair Trade certified (Fair Trade USA)</p> <p>c. Fair Trade Federation member</p> <p>d. Farms unionized through FLOC (AFL-CIO), FUJ, PCUN, UFW</p> <p>e. Food Justice certified (Agricultural Justice Project)</p> <p>f. Worker-Driven Social Responsibility programs</p> <p>i. Fair Food Program (Fair Food Standards Council/Coalition of Immokalee Workers)</p> <p>ii. Milk with Dignity (Migrant Justice)</p> <p><b>2. Multi-ingredient products</b></p> <p>a. At least one of the primary ingredients (20% by volume) meet any of the above criteria</p>	<p><b>1. All products</b></p> <p>a. American National Standard for Sustainable Agriculture (ANSI/LEO-4000) (Silver or higher)</p> <p>b. Bee Better Certified (Xerces Society)</p> <p>c. Biodynamic certified by Demeter</p> <p>d. Certified Sustainably Grown</p> <p>e. FairWild</p> <p>f. Food Alliance certified</p> <p>g. Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) verified (e.g., Certified Naturally Grown)</p> <p>h. Protected Harvest certified</p> <p>i. Rainforest Alliance certified</p> <p>j. Regenerative Organic certified</p> <p>k. USDA Organic and approved certifiers</p> <p>l. USDA Transitional Organic</p> <p><b>2. Coffee</b></p> <p>a. Bird Friendly by Smithsonian</p> <p><b>3. Produce</b></p> <p>a. Produce grown in a farm or garden at the institution, in which the researcher can confirm the use of organic practices</p>	<p><b>1. All products</b></p> <p>a. AGA Certified Grassfed</p> <p>b. American Humane Certified Free Range/Pasture Raised</p> <p>c. Animal Welfare Approved (A Greener World)</p> <p>d. AWA Grassfed by A Greener World</p> <p>e. BuyingPoultry (Best Choices and Better Choices)</p> <p>f. Certified Humane Free Range/Pasture Raised</p> <p>g. Certified Humane Raised and Handled</p> <p>h. Global Animal Partnership Steps 2+</p> <p>i. NOFA-NY or PCO Certified 100% Grassfed</p>	<p><b>1. All products</b></p> <p>a. Economically Disadvantaged Woman-Owned Small Business certified (U.S. SBA)</p> <p>b. Minority-Owned Business certified (NMSDC)</p> <p>c. Woman-Owned Small Business certified (U.S. SBA)</p>	<p><b>1. Unprocessed or minimally processed:</b></p> <p>a. Fruits, Vegetables</p> <p>b. Whole grains</p> <p>c. Legumes</p> <p>d. Mushrooms</p> <p>e. Nuts</p> <p>f. Seeds</p> <p>g. Herbs</p> <p>h. Spices</p> <p>i. Cereal grains and flours</p> <p>j. Plain oatmeal, pasta, and noodles</p> <p>k. Fruit or vegetable juices</p> <p>l. Tea</p> <p>m. Coffee</p> <p><b>2. Processed culinary ingredients derived from plants or nature:</b></p> <p>a. Vegetable oils crushed from seeds, nuts, or fruits such as olives</p> <p>b. Starches extracted from corn and other plants</p> <p>c. Sugar and sweeteners obtained from plants</p> <p>d. Honey extracted from combs and syrup from maple trees</p> <p>e. Soy sauce</p> <p>f. Vinegar</p>

## Lehigh University Measurement Standards

Sustainable Foods					Plant-Based Foods*
Local & Community-Based*	Fair Trade/Labor***	Ecologically Sound***	Humane Animal Care***	Women and BIPOC-Owned Businesses***	
<p><b>2. Aggregated single-ingredient products</b></p> <p>a. At least three-quarters (75%) of the product (by volume) must meet the criteria for single-ingredient products</p> <p><b>3. Multi-ingredient products</b></p> <p>a. Ownership: Company must be a privately or cooperatively owned enterprise</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p>b. Size: Company, cooperative, or individual farms must gross \$50 million/year or less**</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p>c. Distance: All processing and distribution facilities must be within a 250-mile radius of the institution.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>AND</b></p> <p>d. At least half (50%) of the ingredients by volume must come from producers that meet the criteria for single-ingredient products</p> <p><small>*Note: a company, cooperative, or individual farm still satisfies the size requirement if they are pushed above the size threshold due solely to Lehigh University's purchasing.</small></p> <p><small>**Note: if a business is a subsidiary of a parent company, it must be evaluated on the basis of its parent company.</small></p>	<p><small>***Note: a producer that does not officially have one of the above sustainable foods standards in any category may be counted if it can be proved that they adhere to the standard's requirements and guidelines.</small></p>	<p><b>4. Seafood</b></p> <p>a. Marine Stewardship Council blue ecolabel (paired with MSC Chain of Custody certification)</p> <p>b. Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch (Best Choices, Good Alternatives, and Recommended Eco-Certifications)</p> <p>c. Salmon Safe certified</p> <p><b>5. Multi-ingredient products</b></p> <p>a. At least half (50% by volume) of the ingredients meet any of the above criteria</p> <p><small>***Note: a producer that does not officially have one of the above sustainable foods standards in any category may be counted if it can be proved that they adhere to the standard's requirements and guidelines.</small></p>	<p><small>***Note: a producer that does not officially have one of the above sustainable foods standards in any category may be counted if it can be proved that they adhere to the standard's requirements and guidelines.</small></p>	<p><small>***Note: a producer that does not officially have one of the above sustainable foods standards in any category may be counted if it can be proved that they adhere to the standard's requirements and guidelines.</small></p>	<p><b>3. Simple processed foods composed primarily of unprocessed or minimally processed plant-based foods and plant-based culinary ingredients:</b></p> <p>a. Canned or bottled vegetables, fruits, and legumes</p> <p>b. Tomato extract, pastes, or concentrates</p> <p>c. Salted or sugared nuts and seeds</p> <p>d. Fruits in syrup</p> <p>e. Unpackaged freshly made breads</p> <p>f. Cereal products such as flavored oatmeal</p> <p>g. Tofu and tempeh</p> <p>h. Fermented alcoholic beverages such as wine, beer, and cider</p> <p><b>4. Vegetarian/vegan alternatives to meat and dairy:</b></p> <p>a. Plant-based 'milks'</p> <p>b. Plant-based meat substitutes</p> <p>c. Plant-based margarines and spreads</p> <p><b>5. Animal products (i.e. meat, poultry, fish, seafood, eggs, and dairy) and their derivatives, drinking water, and most ultra-processed foods do NOT qualify as plant-based foods.</b></p> <p><small>*Note: these lists are not exhaustive and only show the most common examples from each category.</small></p>

## Lehigh University Measurement Standards

### Disqualifications\*

#### 1. Egregious human rights violations

- a. Forced labor (including Prison labor): Producers have been found guilty of criminal charges of forced labor within the previous 10 years OR products that have been produced in prisons or using prison labor (through state or county correctional industries or through lease to, or partnership with, private agricultural or food processing companies)

#### 2. Labor violations

- a. Producer has been found guilty of or has been cited for three or more cases relating to serious, repeat, or willful Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), or Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) violations within the last three years

#### 3. Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)

- a. Producer is a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO)
  - i. Except for dairy that has been aggregated from multiple farms if the average farm size is less than 200 cows
  - ii. Except for farms that only use CAFOs when it is deemed unsafe or impossible for the animals to be fed free range

#### 4. Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)

- a. Products made with genetically engineered ingredients (including corn, soy, rapeseed, beet sugar, papayas and summer squash) and their derivatives
  - i. Unless these ingredients are used in trace amounts or the product carries a certification that precludes the presence of GMOs (Non-GMO Project Verified or any of the certifications that qualify as Ecologically Sound)

#### 5. Ultra-processed foods

- a. Products made with the following ingredients: Aspartame; Butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA), Butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT); Caramel coloring; Partially hydrogenated oil (trans-fats); Potassium bromate; Propyl gallate; rBGH/rBST; Saccharine; Sodium nitrate added; Sodium nitrite added; Dyes: Red #3, Red #40, Yellow #5, Yellow #6

\*Note: Worker-Driven Social Responsibility programs are exempt from disqualifications.