



Principia College Green Dining Standard

Principia shall prioritize the purchase of food, as well as food-related supplies and equipment that meet industry certifications intended to minimize negative impacts on ecological systems and human health and safety, while at the same time upholding palatability, nutritional, financial, and performance criteria.

Purpose and Intent

- To meet the diverse nutritional needs and preferences of students, staff and faculty
- To prioritize the purchase of sustainable food (e.g., third-party certified, humane, locally sourced)
- To encourage a campus culture of balanced, healthy, joyful, minimum waste dining
- To create a Sustainable Food Task Force designed to communicate, evaluate and uphold the Standard

To this end, keeping financial and other considerations in mind, Principia College will seek to prioritize sustainable, nutritious food throughout its dining operations. Working with commercial vendors, local farmers, and community-based organizations, we will increase the availability of sustainably produced food – locally sourced when practicable – in an effort to contribute to thriving local, regional and global economies, a healthy environment for present and future generations, and a high quality of campus life.

Rationale

The Principia, established on the principle that “education carries with it the obligation to use technical skills and intellectual attainments for the betterment of humanity” (Policy 10), is an institution dedicated to “seek[ing] continuously to improve its educational facilities and business practices in order to keep abreast of educational progress and in key with changing world conditions” (Policy 11). Among the many ways in which Principia demonstrates dedication to its foundational policies is through a growing commitment to sustainable practices.

Developing a Green Dining Standard is a practical step in formalizing this commitment, promoting sustainability at an institutional level, and serving as a model for others. Menu items are of special importance because unsustainable food systems have direct and negative consequences for biodiversity, climate, and essential natural resources (e.g., soil, water) – as well as human health and well-being.

Definition of Sustainable Food

The necessary procurement of food is a powerful tool for promoting sustainability campus-wide, and globally. Although there is no legal definition of 'sustainable food,' a working definition developed by the [Alliance for Better Food and Farming](#) describes it as food that is produced, processed, distributed and disposed of in ways that:

- Contribute to thriving local economies and sustainable livelihoods, including in producer countries;
- Protect the diversity of both plants and animals and the welfare of farmed and wild species;
- Avoid damaging or wasting natural resources or contributing to climate change; and
- Provide social benefits, such as good quality food, safe and healthy products, and educational opportunities.

Principia's Green Dining Standard seeks to promote sustainability in the campus food system by keeping in mind the following five Objectives that, together, comprise an integrated, goal-oriented embrace of sustainable food that reaches deep into our supply chain. Through this Standard, we pledge to:

- Increase the availability of fresh, minimally processed foods, ideally sourced locally/regionally;
- Increase the availability of menu items that meet sustainability metrics, ideally through displaying an industry mark/logo that has been verified by an independent audit (see Appendix I); these metrics help to ensure socio-ecological sustainability in production and supply, while also encouraging best practices in animal welfare;
- Minimize supply chain food miles with an aim to preserve freshness and nutrition, support and engage regional economies, and reduce fuel and energy;
- Minimize adverse environmental impacts associated with Dining Services' operations, including climate-altering greenhouse gas emissions, reliance on nonrenewable resources, and the production of waste, especially from events and other catered activities; and
- Remain economically viable and accountable to our customers in achieving the goals of this Standard.

Strategies and Goals

These five Strategies and ten Goals were inspired by and adapted from food policy task forces and programs at the Association for Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education ([AASHE](#)), [University of California Berkeley](#), [Sustainability Institute at the University of New Hampshire](#), [Sustainable Food Strategy Task Force at the University of Virginia](#), [Salt Lake City Sustainability Food Policy Task Force](#), [The Real Food Challenge](#), and [American Dietetic Association's Sustainable Food System Task Force](#).

Strategy 1: Create a Sustainable Food Task Force

Goal 1: By 2020, the Green Dining Standard is adopted and a Sustainable Food Task Force comprised of key purchasing agents (Executive Chef, College Store Manager), Director of the Center for Sustainability, and at least one Student Representative is created to oversee compliance with the Standard, evaluate and adjust goals, celebrate and communicate successes, and make recommendations going forward.

Strategy 2: Prioritize a Sustainable Supply Chain

Goal 2: By 2021, a purchasing inventory will be in place to clearly identify and track sustainable food purchases.

- Principia shall track the percentage of local and/or second- or third-party verified food and beverage expenditures in fulfillment of our [AASHE STARS](#) and [Green Dining Alliances](#) audits and ranking.

Goal 3: By 2022, at least 10% of total procurement of food and food-related supplies and services will come from sustainable sources as defined by the 'Qualifying Criteria' articulated in Appendix I and Appendix II.

- Principia shall aspire to increase this percentage by 10% annually.

Strategy 3: Minimize Adverse Environmental Impacts

Goal 4: Conduct a monthly waste audit of Dining Services to ensure Zero Waste operations, [defined](#) as diverting a minimum of 90% of waste from landfills or incinerators.

Goal 5: Continuously work to reduce waste arising from food production and consumption on campus.

- As an example, non-recyclable single-use plastics, such as Saran™ wrap and food prep gloves, could be replaced with compostable alternatives.

Goal 6: Reduce pre- and post-consumer food waste

- Continue the practice of 100% composting of pre- and post-consumer waste.
- By 2020, operationalize a food donation system, such as with the Alton First Presbyterian Church’s *Saturday Café*, as an alternative to the disposing of leftover food that does not meet our standards for reheating.
- By 2020, design an internal system to evaluate the necessity of disposing of food that has surpassed its expiration date; these items might be offered for a limited time as part of a “food bank” available to students in need.

Strategy 4: Encourage Sustainable Food Systems on Campus

Goal 7: By 2022, provide nutritionally balanced vegan options on the hot line at each meal.

- Aspire to increase vegan and plant-forward options on the salad bar and pre-packaged section.
- Provide vegan options for dairy products, such as yogurt and cheese, by special order and upon request.

Goal 8: By 2022, operationalize a plan to increase the number of [plant-forward](#) and [plant-based](#) main dishes on the hot line by 50%.

- Consider participating in James Beard Foundation’s [Blended Burger Project](#)

Goal 9: By 2022, at least 10% of leafy greens are grown and sourced on-site from student-led projects (e.g., aquaponics, green roof), farm leases (Three Rivers Community Farm), and/or new capital investments (e.g., Freight Farm).

- Principia shall aspire to increase this percentage by 5% annually.

Strategy 5: Promote Education for Sustainability Awareness

Goal 10: Continually engage in outreach to increase awareness of Principia’s “green dining” initiatives, including increased transparency related to sourcing and ingredients.

- Develop/sponsor signage and other outreach materials.
- Embrace further learning for kitchen workers, such as by incorporating sustainability awareness into regular staff training, investing in professional seminars, or hosting guest instructors.
- Provide updated digital access to sourcing metrics, including distance and/or third-party certifications.
- Increase ingredient transparency; e.g., provide updated digital access to the ingredients used in recipes served in the Scramble Room and in the Pub.
- Consider utilizing [JAMIX](#) kitchen management software to measure the carbon footprint of recipes, track allergens, and provide nutritional data.
- Consider becoming a [Fair Trade Campus](#) as a way to increase awareness.

APPENDIX I

QUALIFYING CRITERIA: CERTIFICATION MARKS









Each underlined title is a clickable link providing more detailed information.

[Second-party certification](#) means that “an industry, trade or special interest group that gains revenue from the sale of certified products, has critical involvement in the certification, either through administration of the certification program, verification of the claims or creation of the standards and methods. These certifications are very common and often portrayed as third-party.” In contrast, [third-party certification](#) indicates “an independent party with no vested interest in the outcome undertakes of an audit.” The table that follows is by no means an exhaustive list, but it represents the more trusted and prominent certification marks. Additional qualifying eco-labels may be [found here](#).

<p><u>AGA Grassfed Association</u></p> <p>Ruminants evolved to eat grass (not grain); grassfed cows are healthier and require far fewer antibiotics. In addition, pasture-based farming restores natural ecosystems and wildlife habitat, reduces reliance on petrochemicals, regenerates soil, and lowers emissions.</p> <p><i>Third-Party Verified</i></p>		<p><u>AGW Certified Grassfed</u></p> <p>This accreditation by AGW (A Greener World) is used in the U.S. and Canada; it guarantees that animals are fed a 100% grass and forage diet. They are raised outdoors on pasture/ range and managed according to the highest welfare and environmental standards.</p> <p><i>Third-Party Verified</i></p>	
<p><u>American Humane Certified</u></p> <p>This label indicates that the producer’s care and handling of farm animals meets science-based animal welfare standards of American Humane Association. Outreach to farmers in the implementation of best humane practices is emphasized.</p> <p><i>Third-Party Verified</i></p>		<p><u>Animal Welfare Approved</u></p> <p>Animals are raised on an independent farm, on outdoor pasture or range, for their entire lives. This requires audited, high-welfare production, transport and slaughter practices. According to The Hartman Group, it has the single highest impact on consumer purchasing of any food label.</p> <p><i>Third-Party Verified</i></p>	 
<p><u>Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC)</u></p> <p>This label certifies environmentally and socially responsible farmed seafood. It intends to transform global markets by promoting the best environmental and social aquaculture performance.</p> <p><i>Third-Party Verified</i></p>		<p><u>Best Aquaculture Practices</u></p> <p>This ensures seafood comes from aquaculture facilities that address environmental, social, food safety, and traceability issues throughout producers’ operations. <u>Certified facilities</u> in Illinois are Ethos Seafood Group and Vita Food Products.</p> <p><i>Third-Party Verified</i></p>	

<p><u>Certified B Corporation</u></p> <p>These businesses are accelerating a global shift to redefine success in business and build a more sustainable economy. B Corps include bakeries, chocolate, coffee/tea, dairy, grains, healthy snacks, produce, seafood, and vending and restaurant supplies.</p> <p><i>Second-Party Verified</i></p>	<p>Certified</p>  <p>Corporation™</p>	<p><u>Certified Humane Raised & Handled</u></p> <p>These production facilities must meet precise, objective standards for farm animal treatment. “The goal of the program is to improve the lives of farm animals by driving consumer demand for kinder and more responsible farm animal practices.”</p> <p><i>Second-Party Verified</i></p>	
<p><u>Certified Naturally Grown</u></p> <p>This certification model relies upon peer inspections, transparency, and direct relationships. The food is free of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and GMOs. This certification embraces produce, mushrooms, livestock, apiaries (bees), and aquaponics.</p> <p><i>Second-Party Verified</i></p>		<p><u>Certified Sustainable Protected Harvest</u></p> <p>Verified certification standards focus on reducing the impacts of toxic pesticides. To qualify, growers must stay below an established total number of Pesticide Risk Units per acre, as established by the Pesticide Environmental Assessment System (PEAS).</p> <p><i>Third-Party Verified</i></p>	
<p><u>Demeter Biodynamic</u></p> <p>This label confirms biodynamic farming practices; e.g. farmers avoid using synthetic chemicals and set aside at least 10% of their acreage for biodiversity. The entire farm (vs a particular crop) must be certified.</p> <p><i>Second-Party Verified</i></p>		<p><u>Domestic Fair Trade Association</u></p> <p>This organization fosters collaboration which supports family scale farming, fair conditions for workers, and mission-based traders in North America; it aims to promote human rights and dignity, and strengthen communities.</p>	
<p><u>Equitable Food Initiative</u></p> <p>This rigorous certification partners with growers and retailers to create a more transparent food chain. “The EFI Standards [are] the only ones that include labor practices, food safety and pest management under a single certification label.”</p> <p><i>Third-Party Verified</i></p>	 	<p><u>Fair Food</u></p> <p>This program is a partnership among farmers, farm workers, and retail food companies. It ensures humane working conditions and fair wages for the workers who pick produce on participating farms.</p> <p><i>Third-Party Monitoring Organization</i></p>	

<p><u>Fairtrade (American and International)</u></p> <p>Promotes fairer trading conditions for disadvantaged producers by tackling poverty and empowering producers in the world's poorest countries. The standards apply to both producers and traders.</p> <p><i>Third-Party Verified</i></p>		<p><u>Fair Trade Certified (USA)</u></p> <p>The global market enables and encourages compromise at the expense of farmers, workers, and fishers. Fair Trade Certified goods support companies that empower laborers and strive to protect the environment.</p> <p><i>Third-Party Verified</i></p>	
<p><u>Food Alliance Certified</u></p> <p>This label covers agricultural operations, food processors, and distributors. It seeks to ensure safe and fair working conditions, and the humane treatment of animals.</p> <p><i>Third-Party Verified</i></p>		<p><u>Food Justice Certified</u></p> <p>The program seeks to bring justice and fairness "from farm labor to retail"; a 3-tiered labeling system communicates to consumers how many links in the production chain are certified.</p> <p><i>Third-Party Verified</i></p>	
<p><u>FairWild</u></p> <p>This foundation promotes the sustainable use of wild-collected ingredients, with a fair deal for all those involved in the supply chain. Increased demand for wild plant ingredients poses ecological and social challenges; FairWild works with partners worldwide to improve the use and conservation of wild plants.</p> <p><i>Third-Party Verified</i></p>		<p><u>Global Animal Partnership</u></p> <p>Promotes and facilitates continuous improvement in animal agriculture, encourages welfare-friendly farming practices, and informs consumers about animal farming systems. The label relies on a <u>5-Step® Animal Welfare Rating Program</u>. Opt for steps 3,4,5, and 5+.</p> <p><i>Third-Party Verified</i></p>	
<p><u>Marine Stewardship Council</u></p> <p>MSC seafood supports independently certified sustainable fisheries. Good management practices help to ensure healthy fish stocks and habitats, as well as secure livelihoods for fishing communities.</p> <p><i>Third Party Verified</i></p>		<p><u>Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch</u></p> <p>This outreach program helps consumers and businesses to select seafood that's fished or farmed in ways that support a healthy ocean, now and for future generations. A rating system characterizes seafood items as "Best Choices" or "Good Alternatives", while also showing what to avoid.</p>	

<p><u>Milk with Dignity Supply Chain Program</u></p> <p>This program brings farmers, farm workers, buyers, and consumers together to secure dignified working conditions in dairy supply chains. Industry leaders, such as Ben & Jerry's, have made legally binding commitments to protect workers' human rights.</p>		<p><u>Orangutan Alliance Certified</u></p> <p>This certification seeks to eliminate unsustainably sourced palm oil in consumer products, including a range of processed and packaged food. This helps conserve critically endangered rainforest species, such as the orangutan.</p> <p><i>Third-Party Verified</i></p>	
<p><u>Palm Oil Free</u></p> <p>Because "palm oil" has a plethora of derivatives (click here for a list of palm oil names), it's difficult to determine if a product is genuinely palm oil free. This logo guarantees a product has been audited & certified by POFCAP using strict international criteria and standards.</p>		<p><u>Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO)</u></p> <p>This is the primary certification standard for the use of palm oil and its fractions in food and oleochemicals. It encourages the adoption of sustainable practices by its members and promotes the uptake of certified sustainable palm oil globally.</p> <p><i>Third-Party Verified</i></p>	
<p><u>Rainforest Alliance Certified</u></p> <p>With this certification, a farm, forest, or tourism enterprise is audited to meet social, environmental, and economic sustainability standards. For example, biodiversity conservation, improved human well-being, natural resource conservation, and effective planning and farm management systems are embraced.</p> <p><i>Third-Party Verified</i></p>		<p><u>Salmon Safe</u></p> <p>Salmon Safe works with U.S. west coast farmers, developers, and environmentally innovative landowners to reduce watershed impacts. Over 500 certified farms and vineyards follow Salmon-Safe water quality and habitat conservation practices.</p> <p><i>Third-Party Verified</i></p>	
<p><u>Savory Institute Holistic Management</u></p> <p>This community works to advance holistic land management, facilitate the regeneration of grasslands, and employ Holistic Planned Grazing to properly manage livestock.</p>		<p><u>Savory Institute's EOVTM</u></p> <p>Ecological Outcome Verification (EOV) is the scientific methodology that measures and trends ecological outcomes (e.g., soil health, biodiversity, water and mineral cycles, energy flow) on participating producers' land. The label applies to meat, dairy, wool, and leather.</p>	

<p><u>Shade Grown Coffee</u></p> <p>This coffee is produced from plants grown under a canopy of assorted shade trees. Because it incorporates principles of ecology which promote natural ecological relationships, shade grown coffee can be considered an offshoot of agricultural permaculture or agroforestry.</p> <p><i>No official label / unregulated See also "Bird Friendly Coffee"</i></p>	 	<p><u>Smithsonian Institution's Bird Friendly Coffee</u></p> <p>This program aims to protect quality habitats from the threat of deforestation under the Bird Friendly seal. Bird Friendly coffees come from farms using a combination of foliage cover, tree height, and biodiversity to provide quality habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife.</p> <p><i>Third-Party Verified</i></p>	 
<p><u>Sustainably Grown Certified</u></p> <p>This certification recognizes innovation in sustainability, maps risk in supply chains, and identifies opportunities to improve practices. For example, Del Monte Farms has certified products.</p> <p><i>Third-Party Verified</i></p>		<p><u>USDA Organic</u></p> <p>The USDA states that the goal of organic foods and organic farming is to "integrate cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve bio-diversity." Contents are legally regulated and should be 95% or more certified organic, meaning free of synthetic additives (pesticides, chemical fertilizers, dyes) and processed without industrial solvents, irradiation, or genetic engineering. The remaining 5% may, as needed, be comprised of foods or additives from an approved list.</p> <p><i>Third-Party Verified</i></p>	
<p><u>Wildlife Friendly Certified</u></p> <p>These products are associated with grassroots programs that incorporate strong, measurable targets for safeguarding locally rare or endangered species in ways that respect farmers and artisans, the land, and wildlife.</p> <p><i>Second-Party Verified</i></p>			

APPENDIX II

QUALIFYING CRITERIA: NON-CERTIFIED / OFFICIALLY REGULATED

- **Free-Range**

- **Definition:** The USDA defines Free-Range eggs as being produced by hens that are housed in a way that allows for unlimited access to food and water. Hens are free to roam and given continuous access to the outdoors during their laying cycle.¹
- **Clarification:** Only Free-Range (not Cage-Free) eggs qualify toward Principia's Sustainability Strategy 2 / Goal 2 related to sustainable food and food-related supplies and services. See Appendix IV for additional detail.



- **Local**

- **Definition:** The *U.S. Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008* defines “locally or regionally produced” as any agricultural food product that is raised, produced, and distributed in the locality or region in which the final product is marketed (so that the total distance that the product is transported is less than 400 miles from the origin of the product) or the State in which the product is produced.
- **Background:** In the U.S., most food consumed has travelled an average of 1,500 miles. Fifty years ago, 70% of products found in grocery stores was grown, produced, or processed within 100 miles.²
- **Sysco St. Louis:** [Click here](#) for local products available through Sysco St. Louis

¹ <https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2016/09/13/usda-graded-cage-free-eggs-all-theyre-cracked-be>

² <https://foodprint.org/issues/local-regional-food-systems/?cid=254>

APPENDIX III

NON-QUALIFYING TERMS AND CRITERIA

To contribute to Principia’s sustainable food strategies and goals, food products must carry at least one certifying mark (Appendix I) OR must demonstrate that they are “Free Range” or “Locally or Regionally Produced” (Appendix II). Products claiming to be “natural” and/or antibiotic or hormone free have no direct relation to sustainable production metrics and do not contribute to Principia’s sustainable food goals.

- **Natural**
 - The term “natural” is unregulated and undefined by the FDA. “Natural” is not verified by a third party, and it can mean whatever the brand wants it to mean.³
 - The USDA has defined “naturally raised” for meat and poultry products free from growth promoters, antibiotics, animal by-products, or fish by-products.

- **Antibiotic Free / No Added Antibiotics**
 - Use of this claim is not backed by any standard.
 - Although this claim can be verified through the USDA Process Verified program, it does not require an audit.⁴

- **Hormone Free / No Added Hormones**
 - When referring to pork and poultry, this claim is meaningless because it’s illegal (in the U.S.) for pork and poultry to be administered hormones in the first place.⁵

³ <https://www.pomona.edu/administration/dining/sustainability/certifications>

⁴ <https://www.greenamerica.org/ge-crops-gmos/gmo-inside/animal-concerns-labels>

⁵ <https://www.greenamerica.org/ge-crops-gmos/gmo-inside/animal-concerns-labels>

APPENDIX IV

ADDITIONAL TERMINOLOGY AND CLARIFICATION

- **Meat**
 - **Grass-finished:** Livestock which have only eaten grass and forage their entire life.
 - **Grassfed:** Livestock which started on a grass diet, but either received supplemental grain feed, or are finished on a fully grain-based diet. They are not necessarily pasture raised. Many “grassfed” cows spend their last remaining months eating grain in feedlots.
 - **Consider Food Miles:** The distance travelled should be taken into account; most grassfed beef sold in the U.S. is [imported from Australia](#).
 - **Resources:** Local Pasture Raised Meat: [Eat Wild](#) and [Savory Hub Network](#)
 - Certified Local Example: [Cabriejo Ranch](#) (Springfield, Missouri)
 - **Suggestion:** [Blended Burger Project](#)
 - Beef is resource-intensive with high water and carbon footprints. The environmental impact can be reduced by blending at least 25% fresh mushrooms into burgers. The prestigious James Beard Foundation is championing this technique.

- **Eggs**
 - **USDA Certified Organic:** Chickens are given organic feed, they are not given antibiotics or raised in cages. They must also have access to the outdoors so they can get some exposure to sunlight. This is the only set definition by the U.S. government for egg carton labels.
 - **Free Range:** [Defined by the USDA](#) as being eggs “produced by hens that are not only housed in a way that allows for unlimited access to food and water and provides the freedom to roam within the area like cage-free hens, but also gives the hens continuous access to the outdoors during their laying cycle.”
 - **Cage-free:** [Defined by the USDA](#) as being eggs “produced by hens housed in a way that allows for not only unlimited access to food and water, but, unlike eggs from caged hens, also provides them the freedom to roam during the laying cycle.” Cage-free systems vary from farm to farm and can include multi-tier aviaries. They must allow hens to exhibit natural behaviours and include enrichments such as scratch areas, perches and nests. These eggs are source-verified through semi-annual on-site farm visits. [According to the Humane Society](#), “cage-free hens are able to walk, spread their wings and lay their eggs in nests, vital natural behaviors denied to hens confined in cages; [however,] most cage-free hens live in very large flocks that can consist of many thousands of hens who never go outside.

- **Organic (as a principle):** A farming system that uses environmentally friendly methods of weed, pest, and disease control. The [principles](#) of health, ecology, fairness, and care are prioritized. [Organic farming](#) is based on minimal use of off-farm inputs and promotes and enhances biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity.
 - Small family owned farms, such as [Three Rivers Community Farm](#), may grow produce using organic principles, but not receive USDA certification due to cost.
 - **Why Organic Food Can Cost More:** Organic farms are more labor intensive and tend to be small, so they don’t benefit from economies of scale. These farms don’t receive federal subsidies as conventional farmers often do, therefore not only does growing food conventionally not reflect full cost of production (because of subsidies), but it also doesn’t reflect the full cost of environmental and human harm.