



Product Policy

Updated September 28th, 2022

The Erie Food Co-op is a community owned grocery store with two locations. Each location has a unique community that it serves, who may have differing preferences on product selection. The Erie Food Co-op strives to meet the needs of our member-owners and our community, while selling food and items that are within our values. Every effort is made to provide choice through transparency. Our buyers evaluate and reevaluate our products, looking for balance around the following priorities:

- Produced locally or regionally
- Organic and sustainable agriculture
- Affordable staples
- Non-GMO
- Cruelty free
- Certified humane
- Antibiotic and hormone free
- Fair trade
- Naturally flavored or colored
- Meets the needs of people on specialty diets, such as wheat-free, gluten-free, dairy-free, vegan, etc.

Choice and Transparency

The Co-op seeks to be a trusted source for our member-owners and customers. We strive to be a place where one can make fully informed decisions and shop according to their values. We believe that individuals should have the right to place preference and importance on values that meet the needs of their lifestyle. At each location we serve a unique and diverse community, with varying access to financial resources, and try to meet the needs of as many of them as possible. To this end, we will be transparent in our marketing and presentation of items so that our customers can make the most informed choice.

Local

Our buyers make every effort to start the process for new products in our hyper local area (Erie County). We believe in building partnerships with our neighboring local businesses and do our best to highlight those products in the store. We further prioritize local producers as those in the radius of Buffalo and Cleveland, as well as those from the state of Pennsylvania.

Organic and Sustainable Agriculture

The Erie Food Co-op aims to have products developed using organic and sustainable methods of agriculture in order to promote the nurturance of soil, crops, animals and humans. Organic Foods, according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) are those grown without the use of pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, sewage sludge, genetically modified organisms, or ionizing radiation. Animals that produce meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy products do not take antibiotics or growth hormones. The USDA organic label is an indicator that a product is following the USDA's stringent guidelines. We also encourage our buyers to go to the source and learn about the production methods of suppliers who do not carry the USDA Organic seal in order to ensure their products are within our values.

Nutritional Content

The Co-op emphasizes products that meet the needs of the individual. We seek out foods that are minimally processed and free from harmful additives. Additionally, we strive to provide a variety of items that meet the needs of people on special diets.

Products that contain the following will be clearly marked:

- Artificial sweeteners
- High fructose corn syrup
- Trans fats
- Hydrogenated oils

Producer Values

The Co-op places significant importance on the values of our suppliers. We look for suppliers whose practices include fair treatment of their employees and customers. We have a preference for small, locally owned, or cooperatively owned business partners where possible.