Merchandising Policy

BRIARPATCH FOOD CO-OP

Our buyers know that our shoppers trust us to bring good products to our shelves. While we emphasize foods that are nutritious, minimally processed, organically grown, free of artificial additives and grown or produced in ways that support good health and welfare for people, animals and the environment, we are committed to providing reasonably priced options that allow our co-op to be a grocery store that is truly welcoming and available to all members of our community.

Across every department in our store, we use the following criteria to choose the products we sell (and choose not to sell):

Products BriarPatch Seeks to Sell

- ✔ Produce and products produced using sustainable farming practices including organically grown agriculture, including products on their way to being certified organic
- ✔ Products from companies that raise or treat animals humanely
- ✔ Products that are locally produced and/or locally grown
- ✔ Products with minimal, recycled or recyclable packaging
- ✔ Products from companies that are committed to fair labor practices socially responsible, including those that pay their employees equitably and/or have hiring practices that promote diversity and inclusion
- ✔ Foods that have no artificial additives
- ✔ Products free of GMOs, including those verified by 3rd parties such as Non-GMO Project Verified
- ✔ Dairy and meat raised without Growth hormones, rBHSt
- ✔ Wellness products free of these ingredients - see Wellness
- ✔ We seek to sell products from businesses owned by or who employ those who have been systemically and culturally oppressed in American history, particularly People of Color and the LGBT+ community

Products BriarPatch Will Not Sell

- ✕ Products with shelf-packaging made from Styrofoam (shipping and packaging materials are an exception when no alternative is available)
- ✕ Products from companies that use animals for testing
- ✕ Irradiated products
- ✕ Processed tobacco products
- ✕ Products from companies with known human rights violations or animal abuse

About Boycotts

BriarPatch evaluates products based on quality, alignment with our Ends, and sales performance. Continued availability depends on demonstrated shopper demand. The Co-op does not participate in or endorse boycotts, organized actions, or external pressure. Instead, every purchase serves as a signal of support. We encourage shoppers to stay well-informed and to thoughtfully consider a range of perspectives when making their decisions. The most effective way to influence what we carry is through choices made at the shelf. Products that do not generate sufficient sales will not be reordered.

What We Mean When We Say...

Fair Labor Practices: There is no child labor, forced labor, human trafficking, abuse or harassment in a product's supply chain. We expect our vendors to meet or exceed legal requirements for labor practices, worker health and safety and housing. There are particular products whose supply chains we (and our shoppers) are especially aware are subject to exceptionally harmful labor practices, and we make a point to only carry (and call out) those products that are committed to Fair Labor Practices, like our chocolates, Equal Exchange bananas and avocados and sugar.

Sustainable Farming Practices: Farming methods that are economically viable, ecologically sound and protect public health. Examples of sustainable farming practices include using renewable energy, like solar panels, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), and crop rotation and diversification and regenerative farming.

Raising and Treating Animals Humanely (Meat, Eggs and Dairy): Animals a) have adequate access to wholesome, nutritious food and a clean water supply; b) have safe housing or pasture and protective housing that allows access to light, air and sufficient freedom of movement; c) are proactively monitored, and treated by licensed veterinarians to ensure good health and d) are cared for by management that is thoroughly trained in animal husbandry and welfare, maintains animal health plan records and is committed to the welfare of animals.

Non-GMO: Products must not be made with ingredients derived from crops grown from genetically modified seed or animals. There are about 26 crops that have genetically engineered varieties, but they make up a large percentage of U.S. agriculture: canola, corn, soy, sugar beets. The Non GMO Project Verified seal's standards require that when these crops are used for food products, every lot has to be tested for GMOs. To prevent non GMO/GMO contamination, the standards require procedures for cleaning facilities and keeping non GMO and GMO ingredients separate. A Non-GMO Project Verified seal on animal products not only means that the animals weren't genetically modified, but that the animal feed they ate was tested for GMOs and contained less than 5% GMO material. Pricing currently only tags Non GMO Project Verified, but we acknowledge other non GMO certifying agencies. Similar to the Organic certification process, non GMO verified is an expensive process that many smaller producers cannot afford even though their practices are identical to those who are certified.

What We Mean When We Say Local

Anything grown or produced within the Sacramento Hydrologic Watershed Region is considered Local (see map) and includes 20 counties. The purpose of designating brands and companies Local is to identify those that are contributing to the local economy, either by sourcing local product, investing in the local workforce, or paying local taxes. The ultimate goal of defining Local is, quite simply, to help us become more aware of where our food comes from and the economic impacts of our buying choices.

We also consider items that come "direct from producers" to be an integral part of the Local definition because it celebrates and highlights the farm-direct relationships BriarPatch has cultivated throughout its history. See following page for detailed map.

WATERSHED = LOCAL

Additional Wine Buying Criteria

When purchasing wine, we prioritize:

- Certified as Organic
- Certified as Biodynamic
- Certified as Made with Organic grapes ("organically farmed")
- Certified by a third party as sustainable (e.g., LIVE, HVE, Terra Vitis).
- Labeled as sustainable, using practices of organic and biodynamic farming, not certified.
- Producers who identify as global majority, women or LGBTQI+ or are co-operatively owned

We prefer

- Producers with full transparency in the sourcing
- Locally produced
- Minimally processed products with few additives
- Products without synthetic or artificial flavors, colors and sweeteners.
- Limited quantity of added sulfites

Additional Meat Buying Criteria

We give local and regional ranchers priority if they meet our criteria and can keep up with our customer demand. All meats must meet the following criteria:

- All meat is from pastured or free-range animals
- All animals are raised on vegetarian diets
- ✕ No use of antibiotics or growth-promoting hormones
- ✕ No feed containing animal by-products
- ✕ No artificial food colorings or preservatives
- ✕ No meat or dairy from cloned animals or their offspring

BriarPatch Co-op Seafood Purchasing Policy

At BriarPatch Food Co-op, our mission is to support a food system that is environmentally sustainable, transparent, and socially responsible. Our Seafood Purchasing Policy ensures that all fresh seafood sold at our service counter meets rigorous sustainability criteria.

We follow the recommendations of the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch® program, a trusted resource that helps consumers and businesses make ocean-friendly seafood choices. This policy applies to fresh seafood in our Meat and Seafood service case only. It does not currently cover Center Store or Wellness departments.

What We Sell

We only purchase and sell seafood that meets one or more of the following criteria, as recommended by the Seafood Watch® program:

BEST

Green – Best Choice

From sources that are well-managed and harvested or farmed using methods that cause little harm to the environment.

GOOD

Yellow – Good Alternative

These options may have some environmental concerns but are still considered responsible choices.

VERIFIED

3rd Party Verified

Products recognized by third-party certification programs recommended by Seafood Watch®. These certifications include:

BAP - Best Aquaculture Practices: Evaluates environmental responsibility, animal welfare, food safety, and social accountability for farm-raised seafood.
ASC - Aquaculture Stewardship Council: Focuses on reducing the environmental and social impacts of aquaculture.
MSC - Marine Stewardship Council: Certifies wild-caught seafood from fisheries that meet sustainability and ecosystem health standards.

AVOID Seafood Watch

We do not carry any seafood rated Red – Avoid. These items typically come from overfished stocks or operations that cause significant harm to marine life or habitats and are not responsibly managed.

Our Additional Commitments

Farmed vs. Wild Seafood

We source both farmed and wild seafood. Wild-caught seafood can be sustainable when harvested responsibly, while well-managed aquaculture can reduce pressure on wild fish populations. We only offer farmed seafood when it is rated as a responsible choice or is third-party verified.

Catch Methods, Regions, and Country of Origin

Not all fishing or farming methods have the same environmental impact. We consider:

- Fishing methods such as handline, traps, or trawling
- Farming systems such as land-based or recirculating systems
- Country and region of origin, with a preference for sourcing from locations with stronger environmental and regulatory oversight
- We prioritize North American sourcing whenever possible and avoid purchasing from suppliers who cannot clearly verify the origin and production method of their seafood

Fair Labor and Social Responsibility

Sustainability includes both environmental and social considerations. While the Seafood Watch® program is increasingly integrating social responsibility into its assessments - such as labor conditions, human rights, and community impacts, these are not yet the primary basis for ratings. At BriarPatch, we go a step further by prioritizing suppliers and distributors that:

- ✔ Demonstrate fair labor practices
- ✔ Commit to ethical and transparent supply chains
- ✔ Avoid links to forced labor or human rights abuse

We believe sustainability must benefit both the planet and the people who bring food to our tables.

Operational Practices

Our policy is supported by daily operations and oversight to ensure full implementation and accountability:

- ✔ All seafood in our fresh service case is clearly labeled as Green, Yellow, or 3rd Party Verified.
- ✔ We maintain full compliance with USDA seafood labeling requirements, including country of origin and production method.
- ✔ A centralized tracking system is used to document all seafood products, their sustainability ratings, and certification status.
- ✔ Our Meat & Seafood Managers regularly review and update the system based on Seafood Watch updates and certification changes.

- Our Sustainability Coordinator works in collaboration with the Meat & Seafood Managers to:
  - Train department staff on sustainability criteria and labeling practices
  - Work directly with purchasers to evaluate new and existing products
  - Conduct annual supplier audits to verify the accuracy of sustainability claims and ensure documentation is up to date

Why This Policy Matters

Unsustainable fishing and aquaculture practices threaten the health of our oceans and the communities that depend on them. By committing to responsible seafood sourcing, we:

- Protect marine ecosystems and biodiversity
- Reduce overfishing and habitat destruction
- Promote supply chain transparency and traceability
- Support ethical labor and sourcing practices
- Empower our community to make informed, value-driven food choices

This policy supports the broader sourcing values outlined in our Merchandising Policy, which includes our seafood buying criteria and cooperative values. For more information on sustainable seafood and the Seafood Watch® program, visit www.seafoodwatch.org.

Third-Party Certification

Third-party certification means that an independent organization has reviewed the production process of a product and has independently determined that the final product complies with specific standards for safety, quality, purity or supply chain or labor practices.

Certification	All Depts.	Grocery	Produce	Wellness	Seafood	Meat/Dairy
USDA ORGANIC	✔					
NON GMO Project VERIFIED	✔					
OTCO	✔					
Certified CCOF Organic	✔					
REGISTERED cdfa ORGANIC INPUT MATERIAL	✔					
WOMEN OWNED	✔					
Certified B Corporation	✔					
GOLD Green America CERTIFIED BUSINESS Meets high standards for social & environmental impacts greenamerica.org/certified		✔	✔			
FAIR TRADE CERTIFIED		✔		✔	✔	
RAINFOREST ALLIANCE CERTIFIED		✔				
PALM DONE RIGHT		✔		✔		

Third-Party Certification (continued)

Certification	All Depts.	Grocery	Produce	Wellness	Seafood	Meat/Dairy
NSF contains organic ingredients				✓		
cruelty free				✓		
ICS				✓		
Friend of the Sea				✓		
Certified Vegan Vegan.org				✓		
MSC Choose Sustainable Seafood					✓	
American Grassfed						✓
Animal Welfare Approved by AGW						✓
Certified Humane Raised & Handled						✓
American Humane Certified						✓
Food Alliance Certified						✓
Global Animal Partnership						✓

Food Ingredients We Prefer to Avoid

Ingredient	Function
acesulfame-K (acesulfame-potassium)	artificial sweetener
acetylated esters of mono- and diglycerides	emulsifier
aerosol sprays with chloroflurocarbon	propellant
ammonium chloride	dough conditioner
Apples, Arctic GE	
artificial colors (red #3, red #40, yellow #5, yellow #6, blue #1, blue #2, green #3)	coloring agent
artificial flavors	flavoring agent
aspartame	artificial sweetener
astaxanthin (artificial)	coloring agent
azodicarbonamide	dough conditioner
benzoates	preservative
benzophenone	artificial flavoring
benzoyl peroxide	bleaching agent for flour
BHA (butylated hydroxyanisole)	antioxidant
BHT (butylated hydroxytoluene)	antioxidant
bleached flour	artificially aged flour
bromated flour	artificially aged and treated flour
brominated vegetable oil (BVO)	flavor carrier
BST (bovine somatotropin)	genetically engineered growth hormone used to increase milk production in cows
butane glycol	humectant, flavor solvent
butylene glycol	humectant, flavor solvent
calcium bromate	dough conditioner, maturing/bleaching agent
calcium disodium EDTA	antioxidant, sequestrant, preservative
calcium peroxide	dough conditioner, bleaching agent
calcium propionate	preservative, antimycotic agent
calcium saccharin	artificial sweetener
calcium sorbate	preservative
calcium stearoyl-2-lactylate	dough conditioner, emulsifier
canthaxanthine	coloring agent
caprocaprylobehenin	fat substitute
carmine (cochineal)	coloring agent, derived from insect
cochineal (carmine)	coloring agent, derived from insect
cottonseed oil	
cyclamates	artificial sweetener
cysteine (l-cysteine)	additive for bread
DATEM (Diacetyl tartaric and fatty acid esters of mono- and diglycerides)	emulsifier
diacetyl	artificial butter flavoring
dimethicone	anti-foaming agent
disodium calcium EDTA	antioxidant, sequestrant
disodium dihydrogen EDTA	antioxidant, sequestrant
disodium guanylate	flavor enhancer
disodium inosinate	flavor enhancer

Food Ingredients We Prefer to Avoid (continued)

Ingredient	Function
EDTA	antioxidant, sequestrant
Equal	artificial sweetener
ethoxyquin	pesticide, often used as a preservative in livestock/animal feed
ethyl acrylate	artificial flavoring
ethyl vanillin	flavoring agent
ethylene oxide	fumigant, disinfecting agent
GMP (disodium guanylate)	flavor enhancer
hepta-esters of sucrose	fat substitute
hexa-esters of sucrose	fat substitute
high fructose corn syrup	sweetener
hydrogenated oil	liquid oils chemically treated to become solid fats: used to prolong shelf life, provide texture
IMP (disodium inosinate)	flavor enhancer
irradiated foods	sterilized by high energy radiation
methyl silicon	antifoaming, antisplattering agent
methylparaben	preservative
microparticularized whey protein	fat substitute
myrcene	artificial flavoring
natamycin	mold inhibitor
neotame	artificial sweetener
nisin	preservative
NutraSweet	artificial sweetener
Olestra	fat substitute
parabens (methyl, propyl, butyl, etc.)	preservative
partially hydrogenated oil (source of trans fats)	liquid oils chemically treated to become solid fats: used to prolong shelf life, provide texture
polydextrose	artificial sweetener
potassium bromate	dough conditioner, flour maturing agent
potassium sorbate	preservative
propionates	preservative
propyl gallate	antioxidant
propylene glycol	humectant, flavor solvent
propylparaben	preservative
rBGH (recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone)	genetically engineered growth hormone used to increase milk production in cows
saccharin	artificial sweetener
Simplesse	fat substitute
sodium aluminum phosphate	leavening agent
sodium aluminum sulfate	leavening agent
sodium bisulfite	preservative, antioxidant, color retention agent
sodium diacetate	preservative
sodium glutamate	flavor enhancer (see MSG)
sodium metabisulfite	preservative, antioxidant, color retention agent
sodium nitrate/nitrite	antioxidant, flavor, color retention agent
sodium stearoyl-2-lactylate	dough conditioner, emulsifier, whipping agent

Food Ingredients We Prefer to Avoid (continued)

Ingredient	Function
sodium sulfite	preservative, antioxidant
sodium tripolyphosate 6	binding agent
solvent extracted oils (as stand-alone ingredient)	cooking oils
sorbic acid	preservative, antimycotic agent
styrene	artificial flavoring
sucralose (Splenda)	artificial sweetener
sucroglycerides	preservative, emulsifier
sucrose polyester (olestra)	fat substitute
Sweet 'n Low	artificial sweetener
TBHQ (tertiary butylhydroquinone)	antioxidant
tetrasodium EDTA	antioxidant, preservative
titanium dioxide 8	whitening agent
trans, trans 2,4 hexadienal	artificial flavoring
Truvia	sweetener
vanillin	flavoring agent

Ingredients We Prefer to Avoid for Wellness

Ingredient	Function
acesulfame-K (acesulfame-potassium)	artificial sweetener
acetylated esters of mono- and diglycerides	emulsifying, gelling, theckening
acrylates copolymer	adhesive, hair fixative, antistatic, binding
ammonium chloride	antimicrobial, surfactant, disinfectant, detergent
ammonium lauryl sulfate	surfactant, foaming, cleansing
amodimethicone	hair coloring
artificial colors (red #3, red #40, yellow #5, yellow #6, blue #1, blue #2, green #3)	colorant
artificial flavors	flavoring
Aspartame	artificial sweetener
astaxanthin (artificial)	antioxidant
azodicarbonamide	blowing agent in production of plastics
behentrimonium methosulfate	antistatic, surfactant, hair conditioning
behentrimonium, any	antistatic, surfactant, hair conditioning
benzoyl peroxide	acne treatment, bactericidal, bleaching, tooth whitening
BHA (butylated hydroxyanisole)	preservative
BHT (butylated hydroxytoluene)	preservative, medicine
bleached flour	whitening, antimicrobial
bromated flour	oxidating & bleaching agent
brominated vegetable oil (BVO)	oxidating & bleaching agent
BST (bovine somatotropin)	growth hormone for dairy cows
butane glycol	solvent
butylene glycol	fragrance, skin conditioning, solvent, humectant
calcium bromate	oxidating & bleaching agent

Ingredients We Prefer to Avoid for Wellness (continued)

Ingredient	Function
calcium disodium EDTA	to improve stability, chelating
calcium saccharin	artificial sweetener
calcium sorbate	preservative
calcium stearoyl-2-lactylate	suractant, emulsifier
canthaxanthine	colorant, antioxidant
caprocaprylobehenin	fat substitute, used in whey
carbomer	emulsion stabilizer, thickener
ceresin	antistatic, binding, emulsion stabilizing
ceteareth 2 ? 100	surfactant, cleansing
ceteareth 5 ? 20	surfactant, cleansing
cetrimonium chloride	antistatic, biocide, emulsifying, antimicrobial, preservative
coca DEA	foaming
cocamide DEA	foaming
cocamide MIPA	foaming, emulsifying, viscosity controlling
cyclopentasiloxane	hair & skin conditioning, emollient, solvent
DATEM (Diacetyl tartaric and fatty acid esters of mono- and diglycerides)	artificial sweetener
diacetyl	fragrance
diazolidinyl urea	preservative
dimethicone	antistatic, emollient, hair conditioning, solvent
dimethylpolysiloxane	emollient, hair & skin conditioning
dioctyl sodium sulfosuccinate (DSS)	surfactant, cleansing, emulsifying
disodium calcium EDTA	chelating, improve stability of cosmetics in air
disodium cocoamphodiacetate	hair conditioning, surfactant, foaming
disodium dihydrogen EDTA	chelating
disodium guanylate	flavor enhancer
disodium inosinate	flavor enhancer
dl-alpha tocopherol	antioxidant
EDTA	chelating, improve stability of cosmetics in air
Equal	artificial sweetener
ethoxyquin	preservative
ethyl diglycol (see polyethylene glycol)	humectant, solvent
ethylene oxide	solvent
GMP (disodium guanylate)	flavor enhancer
hepta-esters of sucrose	food additive, fat replacer
hexa-esters of sucrose	flavor enhancer
high fructose corn syrup	sweetener
irradiated plant material	preservative
isoceteth 20	emulsifying, surfactant
lactylated esters of mono- and diglycerides	emulsifying
lauramide DEA (lauryl DEA)	antistatic, foam boosting
lauramide MEA	antistatic, foam boosting

Ingredients We Prefer to Avoid for Wellness (continued)

Ingredient	Function
methyl silicon	hair conditioner, surfactant, defoamer
microparticularized whey protein	fat substitute
Microbeads	exfoliating
monosodium glutamate (MSG)	flavor enhancer
neotame	flavoring, masking
nitrates/nitrites	flavoring, color retintion, antioxidant
NutraSweet	artificial sweetener
nylon-12	opacifying, viscosity controlling
olefin sulfonate	surfactant
parabens (methyl, propyl, butyl, etc.)	preservative
partially hydrogenated oil (source of trans fats)	emollient
PEG 7 glyceryl cocoate	surfactant, detergent
PEG-150 distearate	surfactant, detergent
PEG-150 distearate	surfactant, detergent
PEG-7 glyceryl cocoate	surfactant, detergent
PEG-7 glyceryl cocoate	surfactant, detergent
Polydextrose	fiber
Polyethylene	plastic
Polyquaternium	antistatic, hair fixative, film forming
polysorbates (60, 80, etc.)	emulsifying, surfactant
potassium bisulfite (see also potassium metabisulfite & sulfites)	hair waving/straightening agent, Reducing agent, preservative
potassium metabisulfite (see also potassium bisulfite & sulfites)	hair waving/straightening agent, Reducing agent, preservative
povidone	adhesive, emulsifier, lubricant
Propionates	preservative
propyl gallate	preservative
rBGH (recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone)	increase growth
saccharin	artificial sweetener
Simplesse	fat substitute, egg & dairy whey protein
sodium aluminum sulfate	acidity regulator
sodium bisulfite	processed foods
sodium cocoyl sarcosinate	hair conditioning, surfactant
sodium diacetate	flavoring, preservative
sodium erythorbate	seasoning, preservative
sodium hydroxymethylglycinate	hair conditioning, preservative
sodium laureth sulfate	surfactant, emulsifying
sodium lauroyl sarcosinate	hair & skin conditioning, foaming, surfactant
sodium lauryl carboxylate	surfactant
sodium lauryl sulfate	denaturant, surfactant – cleansing agent, emulsifying, foaming
sodium lauryl sulfoacetate	surfactant – cleansing, foaming
sodium metabisulfite	antioxidant, reducing agent, preservative
sodium myreth sulfate	wine, excipient in some tablets, bleaching of coconut cream
sodium nitrate/nitrite	oral care, soothing, anticorrosive

Ingredients We Prefer to Avoid for Wellness (continued)

Ingredient	Function
sodium propionate	hair conditioning, surfactant – cleansing, foaming
sodium stearoyl-2-lactylate	surfactant – emulsifying
sodium sulfite	antioxidant, hair waving & straightening, reducing agent, preservative
soyamidopropalkonium chloride	antistatic
stearamidopropyl dimethyl amine	antistatic, hair conditioning, emulsifying, surfactant
sucralose (splenda)	flavoring, skin conditioning
sucroglycerides	emulsifying, stabilizing, thickeners, gelling
sucrose polyester (olestra)	zero-calorie fat
talc	abrasive, absorbent, anticaking, bulking, opacifying, skin protectant, slip modifier
TBHQ (tertiary butylhydroquinone)	masking, perfuming
tetrasodium EDTA	chelating
triclosan	cosmetic biocide, deodorant, preservative

Employee Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have been trained on **Merchandising Policy Procedures** and further acknowledge that I will follow the procedures, as instructed.

_____

Employee Name (Printed)

_____ _____

Employee Signature *Date*

_____ _____

Trainer Signature *Date*