



# Purchasing & Merchandising Policies

## Values in Product Selection

As a core part of its commitment to fiscal, environmental, and social responsibility, the North Coast Co-op strives to purchase and sell products which are environmentally sound and socially responsible, which support our local community and economy, and which meet the needs of our members.

## **Purchasing Policy**

### *Environmentally Sound*

- The Co-op strives to purchase and sell products which have significant positive environmental impacts in their production or use. Significant positive impacts may include but are not limited to: regeneration of soil; restoration of habitat; investment in clean, renewable energy; and removal of pollutants (including greenhouse gases) from the environment.
- The Co-op strives not to purchase or sell products which have significant negative environmental impacts in their production, transportation or use. Significant negative impacts may include but are not limited to: the generation of excessive and/or unnecessary packaging waste; pollution (including greenhouse gases); habitat destruction; and unsustainable harvest of wild populations.

### *Socially Responsible*

- The Co-op strives to purchase and sell products which have significant positive social or economic impacts in their production or use. Significant positive impacts may include but are not limited to: support for labor rights; fair compensation and good treatment of workers; support for co-ops; and positive political, cultural, economic or health effects on producers and/or consumers or on their communities.
- The Co-op strives not to purchase or sell products which have significant negative social or economic impacts in their production, transportation or use. Significant negative impacts may include but are not limited to: lack of respect for the rights of workers or communities; failure to fairly compensate workers and/or treat them humanely; and negative political, cultural, economic or health effects on producers and/or consumers or on their communities.

### *Local*

- The Co-op strives to purchase and sell products which are produced and/or processed locally, particularly when the producer is a local individual or a locally owned entity, and particularly when those products have significant positive environmental and/or social impacts as described above.

### *Meeting Member-Owner Needs*

- The Co-op exists primarily for the mutual benefit of our member-owners. The Co-op respects the diverse needs of our member-owners and strives to purchase and sell products which meet those needs.

### *Exemption*

- Any, and all, products which the Co-op is required to carry to remain an authorized participant in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program shall be exempted from this policy to the extent that requirements of the WIC Program conflict with this policy.

## **Merchandising Policy**

- The Co-op promotes items which, under the Purchasing Policy, fall into the categories of products we “strive to purchase or sell.” We promote local, environmentally sound, and socially responsible products.
- Whenever possible, the Co-op does not promote non-local items which compete with comparable local products we purchase or sell.
- Within the parameters of the budget and the Purchasing Policy, the Co-op strives to provide products at prices which are affordable to as much of the community as possible.
- The Co-op is committed to educating its member-owners and other shoppers by providing accurate, relevant consumer information.
- Co-op merchandising is directed toward adult consumers only. However, the Co-op may direct positive, healthful, educational messages toward children when appropriate.

## **Implementation of Purchasing & Merchandising Policies**

- Co-op staff have sole discretion to interpret and apply these policies. However, the Board may provide guidance from time to time on the interpretation or application of the policies. The Board may also adopt more specific policies or take other actions which affect purchasing.
- The Co-op encourages members to provide input on the implementation of these policies. Co-op staff will consider all such input, but will not be bound by it.
- These policies will be posted prominently in each of the Co-op’s retail locations and on its website.

## **Boycott Policy**

The Board will consider participating in a boycott when a proposal is made to do so by staff, or by a member or group of members. In making its decision, the Board will weigh all available information as for the reasons for and likely effects of the boycott. Decisions to participate in a boycott will be revisited at reasonable intervals or whenever relevant considerations may have changed.