

LINC Foods Value Added Guidelines

General Guidance:

Must be made by farmers or processors with a food processor license. Ingredients will be organic if available and the cost is not significantly higher than non-organic options.

Examples of organic ingredients: coconut, many seeds, rice, dried fruits, sweeteners except honey, extracts, flours, oats, olive oil, coconut oil, canola oil.

Examples of non-organic ingredients: pectin, peanut-free tree nuts, dates, honey, certified GF oats, certified GF flours, vinegar, grapeseed oil.

Flours:

No bleached flour.

Produce:

Fresh produce must be organically grown and local. Dried produce ingredients must be organic and through LINC where practical.

Sweeteners:

Sugars and syrups must be organic. Honey must be local and raw (never heated above 120 degrees).

Flavorings and colors:

Use only “pure”, “natural”, or “organic compliant” flavorings and colors. No artificial flavorings or colors.

Fats:

No trans fats or artificial fats (for example Olestra).

The LINC application should include copy of State and Health Department license or certifications. A member is required to inform LINC if there is a license change, kitchen change, etc.

Justification for LINC Sponsoring Sales of Locally-Made Value-Added Products

While recognizing the Value-Added foods are one step up the food chain from fresh produce and local unprocessed meats, it is also recognized that all foods we make require non-local inputs, and that even meats and grains go through value-added steps – sometimes off the farm (for example, malted barley).

The advantages of selling locally produced products include:

- They utilize local labor in production,
- Finished goods do not need to be shipped far,
- They can be made without as many preservatives, because the time period between manufacture and consumption can be shortened,
- They increase LINC income.
- Year round availability
- No local ingredients but still has local labor and organic ingredients

Everything we produce and sell through LINC requires non-local inputs.

Locally grown **Critter Products** rely on the following non-local inputs:

- Starter animals such as chicks,

- Feed,
- Medications,
- Housing, litter,
- Tools and machinery, including outbuildings,
- Butchering facilities or services,
- Scales, food packaging supplies and additives (sometimes),
- Cleaning and sanitation chemicals,
- Fuel and power.

Locally grown **Produce** relies on the following non-local inputs:

- Seeds, plastic growing trays and pots.
- Potting soil, fertilizers and soil amendments,
- Pest Control supplies
- Garden Fencing, trellises, ties, etc.,
- Mulches, row covers, tunnels, green houses etc.,
- Tools and machinery, including outbuildings,
- Scales, food washing packaging and storage facilities,
- Cleaning and sanitation chemicals,
- Fuel and power.

Locally made **Value-Added** products rely on the following non-local inputs:

- Ingredients (can be non-local, local, or a blend),
- Licensed kitchen,
- Cooking utensils,
- Scales, food packaging supplies and additives (sometimes),
- Cleaning and sanitation chemicals,
- Fuel and power.

Samples of LINC Value-Added Products/Processes

- Dairy: Cheese, Yogurt, Butter, Kefir
- Meats: Sausage, Bacon, Cut
- Vegetables, Fruits, Fresh Herbs:
 - Cut, Frozen, Canned, Dried, Sauces, Salsas, Juices, Pickles and Relishes
- Flowers: Fresh, Dried, Edible, Arrangements
- Oils and Vinegars
- Legumes and Grains: Flour, Cereal, Mixes, De-hulled, Cleaned, Malted, Roasted
- Sweeteners: Spun Honey, Flavored Honey
- Baked Goods: Cookies, Pies, Breads, Cakes, Muffins, Granola, Crackers
- Other: Body Care, Beeswax
- Re-Packaged Items: Items include Organic, Allergy-Friendly, and/or Non-GMO shelf-stable foods that are single or multi-component.
- Mushrooms: Cultivated yes-wild crafted not sure (liability concerns if wrong item).

The following are guidelines that Natural Foods provides members:

Artificial colors

Artificial in terms of food means “a substance not duplicated in nature.” There are currently seven artificial (synthetic) coal-tar based dyes on the market. There is evidence that four of the seven being used cause cancer in laboratory animals. The FDA has banned 17 food dyes since 1918 because of their potentially toxic effects. Furthermore, six of the seven being used in the US have been banned in other countries.

Artificial flavors

There are over 2,000 flavorings – 500 are natural (which can be safe) and the rest are synthetic. The synthetic flavors are made from many different chemicals. Some can be toxic to the nervous system, the kidneys, or liver, but because they are usually consumed in small amounts they are relatively safe. There are also “flavor enhancers,” which are substances that seem to bring out or improve the flavors of a food. One example is MSG. As with any synthetic compound, sensitive people can have allergic reactions. Some sports products at Natural Grocers may contain artificial flavors.

Artificial sweeteners:

- **Acesulfame K** (aka Sweet One™ or Sunette™): The FDA approved this artificial sweetener in 1988. Although this substance is on the FDA’s Generally Considered As Safe list, which is a list of additives believed to be harmless, its safety is still in question. The chemical structure of acesulfame K closely resembles that of saccharin, a weak carcinogen. Findings of several studies showed a group of rats fed acesulfame-K developed more tumors than those not fed it. Acesulfame-K was also found to raise the blood cholesterol levels of diabetic rats.
- **Aspartame** (Nutrasweet™): The FDA and CDC (Center for Disease Control) have received more complaints from the use of this substance than any other food additive. Adverse reactions include high blood pressure, headaches, insomnia, ovarian cancer, brain tumor, PKU (Phenylketonuria), seizures, brain damage in fetuses, extreme swelling, throat swelling, allergic effects, and retina deterioration. Keep in mind, these dangerous side effects are worsened when Nutrasweet is heated or used in cooking.
- **Sucralose** (Splenda™): Sucralose is a no-calorie sugar substitute derived from sucrose (sugar) through a process that selectively substitutes three atoms of chlorine for three hydrogen-oxygen groups on the sucrose molecule. This makes sucralose a chlorocarbon, a substance that has long been known for causing organ, genetic, and reproductive damage. The Merck Manual and OSHA Hazardous Waste Handbook state that chlorine is a carcinogen. Sucralose has also been shown to cause swelling of the liver and kidneys.

Bleached flours

Milling whole wheat into white flour removes approximately 83% of the nutrients. Often times, white flour suffers further processing with chemicals used to whiten and preserve the product. Chlorine dioxide (similar to Clorox) is used to bleach flour is an irritant to both the skin and the respiratory tract. Benzoyl peroxide is another chemical used to bleach flour. The bleaching process leaves residues of toxic chlorinated hydrocarbons and dioxins, both harmful for you and the environment. Methionine, an essential amino acid found in flour, reacts with bleaching chemicals to form toxic compounds called methionine sulfoxine, which has been found to cause nervousness and seizures in animals. In addition, the bleaching process further destroys nutrients that have not already been depleted by the high heat of milling.

Cloned animals/cloned animal dairy products

Fresh dairy products from confinement dairies

Fresh dairy products from cows given rBGH (recombinant BGH)

Hydrogenated and/or partially hydrogenated oils

Hydrogenation is a process that takes an unsaturated fat, such as soybean or other vegetable oil, and makes it more solid at room temperature, thus more saturated. A large percentage of the once healthy fats are converted to the trans-configuration, also known as trans-fatty acids. This process changes the molecular shape of these fatty acids, which negatively alters their biological functions. Excess trans-fatty acids can promote increased cholesterol and triglyceride counts, make blood platelets stickier and encourages blood clotting, worsen an essential fatty acid deficiency, interfere with the body's detoxification system, interfere with insulin receptors, increase inflammation, and negatively impact the immune system.

Irradiated food

This is a process of exposing foods to radioactivity to prolong the shelf life and reduce the risk of bacterial contamination. This process is currently approved for meats, grains, some produce, herbs, and spices. The radioactive rays can cause "off" flavors and textures, reduce vitamins, minerals and enzymes, and create chemical changes. All irradiated foods must be labeled as such, however, products containing irradiated ingredients do not require labeling. Prepared or packaged foods for restaurants, hospitals, or cafeterias are also exempt from labeling. Although you will NOT find irradiated food at Natural Grocers, keep a look out when shopping at other establishments.

MSG (Monosodium glutamate)

Non-organic produce

Conventional farming is in a perpetual cycle of using numerous pesticides to treat the soil and plants. There are many concerns with the use of these chemicals. First, many chemicals used today are known toxins to the body. In addition, banned pesticides such as DDT still linger in our soils. Secondly, large-scale pesticide spraying has created enormous pollution problems. A small percentage of the applied pesticide actually hits its intended target: the pests. Excess goes into groundwater, rivers, and the air. Lastly, is the concern of nutrient value. Not only do pesticides reside in the flesh of the foods they are sprayed on, they also soak into the soil and deplete its nutrients. Therefore, if the soil is nutrient depleted, the food that is grown in that soil has less nutrient value. Organic farming is a method of growing foods with natural materials such as composted animal manure, fishmeal, seaweed, or alfalfa meal. Organic growers manage pests through prevention – proper soil management, cleanliness, timely planting, companion planting, and beneficial insects. Some organic growers may use some natural pesticides such as Bt and insecticidal soap, if needed. Additionally, by law, certified organic foods cannot be genetically engineered, irradiated, or be grown with synthetic materials.

Olestra

This synthetic fat is a combination of soybean oil and sucrose. These ingredients are manipulated into molecules too large for the colon to absorb or digest. Therefore, Olestra passes untouched through the digestive system. This product has the potential to replace fat in such foods as chips and crackers. Preliminary studies suggest that Olestra causes tumors in laboratory animals. Olestra interferes with fat-soluble vitamin absorption, which includes vitamin A, E, D, K, Co-Enzyme Q-10, carotenoids, lutein, lycopene, and beta-carotene. Clinical studies have shown that 8 grams per day (equivalent to 16 Olestra containing potato chips) caused dramatic depletion of fat-soluble vitamins within 2 weeks. This fake fat may also cause intestinal cramping, flatulence and loose stool.