



Sustainability Guidance for Food Suppliers

Future of Food
Our recipe for sustainability

Version 1 - August 2023



How to use this guide

This pack is designed to guide suppliers to play a part in Co-op's Future of Food sustainability ambition and make a difference for people and the planet. This guidance is organised by thematic area and within each section we cover our Co-op position, our key asks and future priorities. This last section is important as we recognise all suppliers are at different stages of maturity in their sustainability journey. Your usual Category, Value Chain and Technical contacts should be the first point of contact for any sustainability questions. The Ethics, Sustainability & Policy team are always available to provide specific advice when needed, and to discuss any sustainability challenges you have. The Sustainability Delivery team will support you on the progression of key projects and targets.

Due to the high-risk nature of Protein and Produce, we've also included some additional information for these categories at the end of this pack. We'll keep this pack live as new policies and targets are developed and reach out to you when you're directly impacted.

For detailed brand requirements, see Co-op's Codes of Practice Documents. These can be found in [Mycore](#).

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Co-operating for a Fairer World

Introduction by Cathryn Higgs, Head of Ethics, Sustainability and Policy

As the world continues to change in ways that are having a direct impact on our food system, it's more important than ever that we take action to protect our planet and the people we share it with.

Sustainability is a strategic priority for the Co-op and everyone has an important role to play in our sustainability journey. We also recognise that as supplier's you will have your own ambitious targets and commitments, and that delivery of our shared ambition will require Co-operation.

We hope that this guide will support you with the delivery of our shared sustainability priorities. Thank you for your ongoing support and we look forward to working with you on this agenda.

Cathryn

Head of Ethics, Sustainability & Policy



Together we can make a difference

Your Sustainability Contacts

Guy Stuart leads Co-op's Technical, Sustainability and Value Chain agenda. Under him, **Cathryn Higgs** leads the Ethics and Sustainability team. **Rob Scharf** leads Technical and **Nichola Taylor** leads the Delivery team for Value Creation and Sustainability.



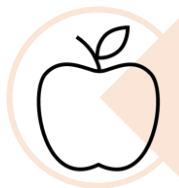
Karen Fisher, Senior Environment Manager

Karen leads the team responsible for setting our Climate action agenda and carbon reduction targets, our approach to water security and our food waste and packaging strategies.



Aisha Aswani, Senior Human Rights & Ethical Trade Manager

Aisha leads the team responsible for delivery of the ethical trade and human rights programme for Co-op food. Aiming to champion the best labour rights in the supply chain.



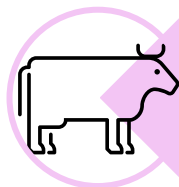
Bryonie Hollaert, Senior Nutrition Manager

Bryonie sits within our New Product development team and is responsible for Co-op's approach to product nutrition standards and healthy and sustainable diets. Ensuring we are compliant with legislation and promoting healthy and sustainable innovation.



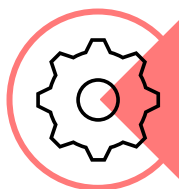
Emily Pearce, Senior Sustainable Sourcing & International Development Manager

Emily leads the team responsible for Co-op's sustainable sourcing and Fairtrade strategies, alongside our approach to international water security.



Joseph Keating, Senior Agriculture Manager & Katie Kaey, Senior Fisheries & Aquaculture Manager

Joseph and Katie lead the team responsible for delivery of Co-op's commitments around British sourcing, close farmers partnerships and high animal and aquaculture welfare standards.



Helen Quaye, Senior Policy Development & Campaigns Manager

Helen leads the team responsible for the communication of sustainable action and leadership at Co-op, alongside our governance processes and policy development.



Rob Marsh, Sustainability Delivery Manager

Rob sits in our Value Creation and Sustainability team and is responsible for ensuring we deliver on our sustainability commitments within our supply chain by working with our suppliers, sustainability and commercial teams


Brand Standards – Our Mandatory Requirements

We are proud to have strong Co-op brand standards that have been developed over many years. You will find more about these in our Codes of Practice documents. These can be found in Mycore

100%


OF CO-OP CHOCOLATE, TEA, COFFEE, BANANAS, AFRICAN ROSES, BAGGED SUGAR, AND COCOA WHEN USED AS AN INGREDIENT IS FAIRTRADE

ALL OUR PACKAGING IS EASY TO RECYCLE AT HOME OR THROUGH FILM COLLECTION BINS IN SELECTED CO-OP STORES



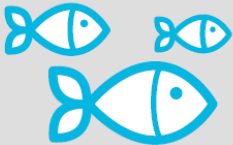
100%

OF OUR FRESH AND FROZEN MEAT IS BRITISH, INCLUDING WHEN USED AS AN INGREDIENT




ALL OUR SEAFOOD IS SOURCED RESPONSIBLY


both farmed and wild




All our fresh pork supply, sausages, gammon and bacon ARE 100% BRITISH OUTDOOR-BRED FROM RSPCA ASSURED FARMS



WE WILL ONLY SELL FRESH MEAT, POULTRY AND FARMED FISH from farmers working to approved farm assurance schemes




ALL SHELL EGGS SOLD IN CO-OP STORES ARE FREE RANGE OR ORGANIC





and we will never use caged hen's eggs as ingredients in our own-brand products

Our entire soy footprint is covered by physical certification under approved schemes or RTRS credits




OUR ETHICAL TRADE PROGRAMME COVERS ALL OUR TIER 1 AND TIER 2 SUPPLIER SITES






We are working to TACKLE MODERN SLAVERY AND HELP VICTIMS OF MODERN SLAVERY REBUILD THEIR LIVES





WE'RE COMMITTED TO WORKING WITH OUR SUPPLIERS to minimise the risks of pesticide use and encourage the use of Integrated Pest Management

ALL CO-OP BRANDED COSMETICS AND HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS are cruelty-free, and Leaping Bunny approved




We take a responsible approach to REDUCING THE AMOUNT OF SALT, SUGAR, AND CALORIES IN CO-OP OWN-BRAND PRODUCTS






IMPROVING THE NUTRITIONAL PROFILE OF OUR CO-OP PRODUCTS through reformulation and new product development


COMMITTED TO HELPING CUSTOMERS LEAD HEALTHY LIVES through the products we sell and the initiatives we are part of






100% OF THE PALM OIL WE USE IN CO-OP own-brand products is covered by RSPO SCHEMES


(the Round table for Sustainable Palm Oil)



WE ENSURE THAT THE WOOD AND PAPER USED IN OUR PRODUCTS comes from a responsible source


NO IRRADIATION OR CLONING







NO PEAT in bagged growing media sold in Co-op stores

NO ARTIFICIAL COLOURS, FLAVOURINGS OR FLAVOUR ENHANCERS in any of our products



NO GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS (GMOS) OR THEIR DERIVATIVES in any of our products





WE'LL BE A NET-ZERO BUSINESS BY 2040

5

Climate Change

Climate change is real and the stability of our planet is under threat. We must take action now to protect our planet, not just for us but for future generations. Food production contributes a significant proportion of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and, at the same time, our entire food system is extremely vulnerable to collapse if it doesn't adapt to the changes we're seeing. At Co-op we're committed to finding solutions to this crisis in a way that not only reduces emissions and protects the natural world, but which also creates a fairer, more just and equal world in the process.

Our Position

Our Strategy: In 2023 we published an update to our [Climate Plan](#), a blueprint for how our Co-op will play its part in addressing the climate emergency.

Co-op's climate plan is far-reaching and co-operative, built and delivered together with our partners, suppliers, members and colleagues. It has three fundamental priorities:

- 1. Making long-term changes to how we do business:** We will be a net zero business by 2035 for our operations, and 2040 across our entire business.
- 2. Setting clear medium-term milestones:** We have reported against our existing climate targets in our [2022 Co-operate Report](#) and will share our 2030 1.5°C aligned targets in 2023.
- 3. Rapidly reducing emissions from our operations and products:** We will continue to take clear, practical steps to reduce emissions from the running of our business and the products we sell.

Our priorities are underpinned by supporting natural restoration and innovation, impactful campaigning, a responsible approach to climate finance, support for our customers and members through lower impact choices, and our active work with others to share and implement climate innovation.

We and other retailers have collectively recognised that our suppliers will need to reduce GHG emissions in order for us to achieve our targets. In conjunction with other retailers, through the [WWF Retailers' Commitment for Nature](#), we issued a request to suppliers to follow our lead in setting short-term and long-term climate targets and to report on progress.

Our Asks

In line with the [WWF Retailers' Commitment for Nature](#), we are asking our strategic suppliers, and are encouraging all remaining suppliers, to do the following:

- ✓ Commit to setting 1.5C degree aligned science-based net zero targets. These should cover all scopes and include near and longer-term milestones.
- ✓ Publish your scope 1, 2 and 3 GHG emissions inventory by the end of 2024;
- ✓ Submit information to Manufacture 2030 on the actions you are taking (see page 16).

Future Priorities

- To enable us to measure progress against Co-op's own scope 3 inventory & target we will need to capture information from our suppliers on the GHG emissions linked to the products you supply us (i.e. product carbon footprint data). If you have done any work to measure the footprint of your products please get in touch with your key contacts
- We are working with WRAP, BRC/Mondra, Manufacture 2030 and others to develop consistent ways of collating product carbon footprint data. The intention is to reduce the burden on suppliers, as we realise this information is challenging to collect.

Useful Resources

- [Science Based Targets Initiative \(SBTi\)](#) - guidance on how to set Science Based Targets
- [Manufacture 2030](#)
- [WRAP - Scope 3 GHG Measurement and Reporting Protocols for Food and Drink](#) - guidance & data sources for scope 3 accounting

Key Contacts

Karen Fisher

&

Joe Hulme
(Climate Change Manager)

&

Jon Savidge
(Supplier Engagement Lead)

Sustainable Sourcing

Climate change and extreme weather is affecting how and where our food is grown, and on top of that we’re consuming foods at a rate that the planet cannot sustain. This is severely impacting the environments we source from, with deforestation, soil degradation, biodiversity loss and water scarcity.

Co-op ensures the ingredients we use in our products are sourced as responsibly as possible, by protecting our most important ingredients and caring for the environments they’re sourced from. We also need to input into external commitments, including legislative asks from Government and campaigns from NGOs.

Key Contacts

Emily Pearce

&

Alastair Pattrick
(Sustainable Sourcing Manager)

&

John Feege
(Crop Protection Lead)

Our Position

- We already have some leading sustainable sourcing policies in place. We also have a series of external commitments that include cross-retailer working.
- Our policy is that all the soy we use in our products, including soy embedded in animal feed will be deforestation and conversion free and responsibly sourced by 2025.
 - 100% of the palm oil we use in Co-op own-brand products is covered by RSPO (the Round Table for Sustainable Palm Oil) schemes. Since 2020 this is 100% segregated RSPO palm unless derogation is granted.
 - All bagged growing media products must not contain peat.
 - Co-op’s Crop protection policy encourages the most environmentally considerate methods of production which also protect the health and wellbeing of the people handling Co-op products.
 - All Co-op’s whole head produce from the UK must be Red Tractor or Organic certified. Fresh produce from overseas must be GLOBAL GAP or equivalent certified.
 - All horticultural products supplied to the Co-op must be certified to GAP standards or an equivalent standard.

Our Asks

- ✓ Undertake responsible sourcing risk assessments on key ingredients and feed.
- ✓ Support implementation of our updated soy policy.
- ✓ Horticulture - reduction of peat from pot plants.
- ✓ All garden & pet care range suppliers must assess the proposed ranges they sell to the Co-op against the Co-op Sustainable Sourcing Policies to ensure they comply
- ✓ Uphold our commitment to the [NFU Fruit & Vegetable Pledge](#)

Future Priorities

- We’re working with suppliers to launch a new Responsible Animal & Fish Feed Strategy.
- We’re developing a responsible sourcing approach to substrate, including working to reduce peat in our supply chain.
- Co-op’s Crop Protection policy includes asks to use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques and phase out highly hazardous pesticides.

Essential Requirements

- ✓ [Soya Code of Practice](#)
- ✓ [Palm Oil Code of Practice](#)
- ✓ [Crop protection policy](#)

Healthy & Sustainable Products

Co-op has an important role to play in helping our members, colleagues and customers lead healthy, sustainable lives and we do this through the products we sell and the initiatives we're part of.

Health and sustainability are closely interlinked. Our plans on healthy, sustainable diets are closely linked with our climate strategy. We're signed up to WWF's Commitment for Nature, which includes the goal of halving the environmental impact of our basket by 2030 - reducing meat in products and increasing veg is vital to achieve this. Additionally, there is even more national focus on health with the HFSS placement restrictions put in place and further HFSS legislation on its way.

Key
Contacts

Bryonie
Hollaert

&

Aoife
McKernan

(Nutrition
Manager)

Our Position

We take a responsible approach to reducing the amount of salt, sugar, and calories in Co-op own-brand products and work alongside categories to achieve this with suppliers.

- We have public commitments to increase veg as ingredients in Co-op own-brand products.
- We're working with categories who'll be impacted by HFSS restrictions to ensure that our placement and promotions of products within these categories are compliant.

We will soon need to report on:

- ✓ % of veg and plant-based protein sold.
- ✓ % of meat and other animal protein sold.
- ✓ Proportion of sales from HFSS products.
- ✓ Total sales of nutrients such as salt, sugar and fibre (by weight).

And need to operate within:

- ✓ HFSS restrictions.*
- ✓ CQUIN framework (which asks for healthier food to be provided to the NHS - affecting the FTG we supply to hospitals).
- ✓ Co-op Marketing to Parents Policy (which states that only non-HFSS products can be marketed to parents, e.g. in back to school campaigns).

Our Asks

- ✓ Be familiar with our Nutrition Code of Practice which outlines our requirements for Co-op's nutrition standards.

We also encourage:

- ✓ Reformulating and developing new products to add more veg where possible.
- ✓ Developing new plant-based products and non-HFSS/healthy products, and ranging/promoting them in as many stores as possible.
- ✓ Where de-list is unavoidable, endeavouring to replace with a product that's equivalent or better in terms of veg content and healthiness.

We may be in touch to discuss...

- ✓ Working together on behaviour change trials to increase sales of veg-containing and non-HFSS products.

Future Priorities

- We are continuing to develop our reporting capability on the split of sales of HFSS/non-HFSS products, with the aim of increasing sales of non-HFSS own brand and branded products.
- We will continue to work on our healthy, sustainable diets strategy, exploring how we can design health and sustainability into the NPD process.

**The HFSS Programme has notified you if your products are in scope of the new regulations. Categories are:*

Soft drinks & milk-based drinks, Savoury snacks, Breakfast cereals (incl. RTE), Confectionery, Ice cream & lollies, Cakes & cupcakes, Sweet biscuits & bars, Morning goods, Desserts and puddings, Yoghurt, Pizza, Potato products, Ready meals, meal centres, breaded & battered products.

Essential Requirements:

- ✓ Nutrition Code of Practice

Packaging & Recycling

Plastic packaging and plastic pollution remains front of mind for customers and NGOs when considering environmental impacts. All of Co-op's own brand food packaging is easy-to-recycle, either via kerbside collection or through the instore soft plastics recycling bins. Now we need to protect our 100% recyclable position and continue to reduce our plastic footprint. We will achieve this through product innovation and a consistent approach, working closely with our suppliers. We are also starting to see a shift of focus from recyclability to replacing single-use materials, so we need to keep refill & reuse front of mind, and develop innovative packaging solutions that surprise and delight our customers.

Our Position

- We're committed to reducing the total amount of packaging we use. Where we do use packaging it's either recyclable at kerbside or through our instore soft plastic collection points
- We committed to a minimum of 50% recycled plastic in rigid PET and 30% in HPDE. We should aim to use minimum of 30% recycled content in other plastics, as any plastics with under 30% recycled content are taxed at £200 / tonne under the Plastic Packaging Tax (April 2022).
- We're working to reduce our plastic footprint by 30% by the end of 2025 (2018 baseline).

Our Asks

- ✓ Protect our 100% recyclability position when developing new products.
- ✓ Remove non-essential packaging, especially plastic packaging.
- ✓ Identify partners and suitable suppliers for refillable and reusable packaging, and work with us to develop our loose produce offer without increasing food waste.
- ✓ Think about ways to utilise packaging innovations that help reduce our reliance on single use plastics - please include the team in your initial conversations to check it's aligned to strategy.

- ✓ Work with us to reduce the carbon intensity of Co-op packaging through weight reduction, use of recycled materials, material substitutions, decarbonisation of manufacturing processes, and transition to reuse models to replace single-use packaging.
- ✓ Data for packaging specification, weights, and recycled content must be accurate in all our systems, as we'll use it to in reporting for EPR and DRS scheme administrators and for HMRC for the Plastics Tax.
- ✓ Don't introduce any new packaging containing PFAS 'forever chemicals' and eliminate it where we do use it currently (target date 2025).

Future Priorities

- Deposit Return Scheme - We will need to comply with labelling and collection requirements as and when they are confirmed.
- EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) legislation - which comes into force in 2023, will extend Co-op's responsibility for own-brand packaging to the point at which it is recycled, and will include eco-modulated taxes based on recyclability from 2024. EPR will increase our packaging compliance costs, and harder to recycle materials will be taxed at a higher rate.

Essential Requirements

- ✓ Packaging Code of Practice

Key Contacts

Rob
Thompson
(Packaging
Manager)

Food Waste

Shockingly, more than one third of food produced is never eaten. Reducing food waste in our operations and supply chains, and by helping customers reduce waste at home, is an important way of meeting our commitment to source and create with care; and is integral to meeting our climate targets and other sustainability objectives.

Reducing food waste in our own operations is a first priority and in tackling food waste, we follow the [food waste hierarchy](#) to take the best decisions for the environment. Our operational food waste is, however, only a very small part of our waste footprint. Most food waste occurs in our supply chains (particularly on-farm) or in customers' homes - and the way we design, specify, package and label products can have a significant impact on how much is wasted.

Our Position

As signatories to the [Food Waste Reduction Roadmap](#), Co-op has made a commitment to Target, Measure, Act on food waste, including:

- *Setting a target to reduce our operational food waste by 50% by 2030, in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 12.3);*
- *Measuring & reporting our food waste data;*
- *Putting in place a food waste reduction plan.*

We are also continuously looking at actions that could help reduce food waste in our supply chains and for our customers at home.

Our Asks

We are asking all suppliers to follow our lead in doing the following:

- ✓ Sign-up to the Food Waste Reduction Roadmap, Champions 12.3 or your national food waste reduction programme.
- ✓ Set a target to halve food waste in your operations by 2030 in line with SDG 12.3
- ✓ Measure your operational food waste and develop a reduction plan.
- ✓ Submit food waste data to Manufacture 2030, together with information on actions taken to reduce food waste.

- ✓ Share unsold edible food with people through partnership with a redistribution organisation or move to animal feed collection. Approved redistribution partners to share Co-op branded products are:

- Fareshare
- The Bread and Butter Thing
- Company Shop
- City Harvest

- ✓ Consider what steps you can take to help reduce waste in your supply chains, including on farm (e.g. flexibility in specifications, grower engagement).

- ✓ Help us understand instances in which we create waste problems in our supply chain - and identify solutions to reduce supply chain waste.

- ✓ Prioritise projects to tackle household food waste, using [WRAP's Best Practice Guidance](#) - e.g. increasing shelf life, pack size/portioning, new innovations - and let us know where we can support on.

Useful Resources

- [WRAP Food Waste Reduction Roadmap](#)
- [Manufacture 2030](#)

Key Contact

Catherine Dishington
(Food Waste Manager)

Farming & Fisheries

We have strong sourcing standards from 100% British across fresh & frozen protein and dairy to our responsibly sourced seafood.

Co-op ensures our farmers, growers & fisheries are at the heart of our business. We are committed to working with our suppliers to ensure welfare is always to the fore and we believe farming and fisheries can have a positive role to play in addressing the challenges of climate change.

Key Contacts

Joseph Keating

&

Katie Keay

&

Mark Kempsell
(Pork, Poultry & Eggs Specialist)

&

Sam Darley
(Agricultural Compliance Manager)

&

Laura Talbot
(Beef, Lamb & Dairy Specialist)

Our Position

- All Co-op fresh and frozen meat is British, including when used as an ingredient.
- All shell eggs sold in Co-op stores are free range or Organic. We also never use caged hen's eggs as ingredients in our own-brand products
- We support animal welfare through schemes such as [Red Tractor](#), [RSPCA Assured](#), and our own-brand animal welfare standards.
- As a minimum all our Co-op own-brand meat, poultry and British dairy products sold are produced from farms that are accredited to a national farm assurance scheme; Red Tractor, which ensures high standards of [animal welfare](#).
- Our Farming Groups and supply chain activity provide networks that help farmers share knowledge and address key issues like climate change.
- Over the past 11 years we have been working collaboratively to develop GHG emission reduction plans, setting ambitious aims to reduce emissions from dairy and protein production.
- All fish supplied to Co-op must be certified to one to the following standards: Aquaculture Stewardship Council ([ASC](#)), Global Aquaculture Alliance Best Aquaculture Practice ([GAA BAP 4*](#)), [Global Gap](#), Marine Stewardship Council ([MSC](#)), [RSPCA Assured](#) or in a credible Fisheries Improvement Project ([FIP](#))
- We're members of the Sustainable Seafood Coalition and we use its voluntary codes of conduct for the responsible sourcing and labelling of fish and seafood products.
- We're also supporting research, through membership of Responsible Use of Medicines in Agriculture (RUMA) that helps identify alternatives to antibiotics.

Our Asks

- ✓ Continue to support us as we change how our farming groups are run.
- ✓ Work together to address any supply issues that arise on farm or in source fisheries.
- ✓ Support us as we hold our suppliers to their developments plans across primary production.

Future Priorities

- We have committed to increasing space by 20% for all primary chickens by the end of 2024
- Moving to whole supply chain data on key welfare and environmental KPIs across protein.
- Support the wider ESP team and our supply base to address the challenges of climate change and meet our sustainability targets.
- Support R&D and innovation projects in areas such as carbon reduction, biodiversity and water quality.
- As our young farmer pioneer programme comes to an end, identify how we support apprenticeships in primary production.
- Continue to champion the conversation around mental health in farming.
- Promote the work of the Co-op at several farming & fisheries events.
- Set up a Farmer Forum to ensure we understand the challenges producers are facing which may impact our supply.
- Complete a full review of our fisheries & aquaculture sourcing policies.

Essential Requirements

- ✓ [Co-op sourcing standards](#)
- ✓ Production & welfare KPIs

Water Security

Water is critical to all life on earth. We have a responsibility to play our part in preserving this precious resource for people, communities and ecosystems in our supply chains. Co-op are committed to be leaders in tackling global water poverty, pollution and scarcity.

Our Position

Access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene remains out of reach for many poorer nations and the climate crisis is only widening this change. At the same time agricultural supply chains, both abroad and closer to home, are exposed to risks faced from too much water, too little water or pollution of watercourses.

We do this in the following ways:

- All our own-brand and branded bottled water raises funds for clean water, sanitation and hygiene projects with The One Foundation and Water Unite. Our [Water Security for People & Planet report](#) shows examples of the importance of this work and the incredible impact of our investment to date.
- We are founding supporters of [WRAP's Water Security Roadmap](#) and through this we have committed to:
 - Monitor and improve efficiency of water use in our own operations;
 - Undertake water security risk mapping in our supply chain;
 - Identify suppliers operating in high water stress areas; and,
 - Where this occurs, to encourage suppliers to engage with water stewardship initiatives in their local catchment.

Our Asks

There are a number of ways you can support on the water security agenda. These include:

- ✓ Sign-up to WRAP's Water Security Roadmap, which provides a practical mechanism to mitigate water risks.
- ✓ Develop your understanding of the water context & risks where your sites are located and develop efficiency or water quality targets as relevant.

- ✓ Undertake a water-related risk assessment for your supply chains to identify water risk hotspots.
- ✓ Where you are operating in or sourcing from an area of strategic importance for water risk within Co-op's supply chain - engage with relevant local water stewardship initiatives / catchment projects (we will signpost as relevant).
- ✓ Submit information to Manufacture 2030 on the actions you are taking. See page 16 for more information.
- ✓ Consider funding donations to Co-op pioneer partners The One Foundation and Water Unite.

Future Priorities

We are in the process of undertaking water risk mapping in our fresh produce and livestock supply chains and will be in touch directly with suppliers over time to discuss potential water security risks and project opportunities.

Useful Resources

[WRAP Water Security Roadmap](#) - actions to take

[WWF Water Risk Filter](#) - risk mapping tool

[Alliance for Water Stewardship](#) - 3rd-party verification for sites that are leaders

Key Contacts

Emily Pearce

&

Karen Fisher

Human Rights & Ethical Trade

Co-op is dedicated to driving improvements in working conditions and aims to be the UK's leading retailer for human rights and ethical trade. We protect the rights of workers and manage human rights risks in the supply chain through support for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, ETI Base Code and our Ethical Trade programme. The scope of the programme covers all own-brand products and reaches over 700,000 workers in almost 3,000 sites, located in over 70 countries.

We have identified eight human rights priority areas, covering 17 sourcing countries to tackle complex issues where risks are greatest. High risk categories include **fresh produce, flowers, tea, cocoa, sugar, protein & seafood and non-food**.

Key Contacts

Aisha Aswani
&
Robin Trenbath
(Human Rights Manager)
&-
ethicaltrade@coop.co.uk

Our Position

- Our 'Sound Sourcing Code of Conduct' sets out the workplace and employment standards that we apply across our supply base, which is based on the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) Base Code and core international labour standards.
- Our Human Rights and Ethical Trade Policy Position Statement and Grievance & Remedy Policies share our approach to protecting workers in our supply chains and our Supplier Guide to Ethical Trade covers the requirements of the Co-op monitoring programme.
- Co-op's supplier engagement programme includes annual ethical trade review meetings and supplier workshops in key sourcing countries.
- We report annually on our activity to manage the risk of Modern Slavery in our supply chain in our Modern Slavery statement.
- We're committed to eliminating unfair and unethical recruitment fees by 2025. Our sponsorship of Stronger Together and Responsible Recruitment Toolkit provides suppliers with free training and tools. We map recruitment fees and put action plans in place with key suppliers.
- Transparency: we have disclosed our top eight human rights priority areas and published our first-tier production site list. We have mapped and published three of our high-risk supply chains and two Human Rights Impact Assessments (read more)
- We are committed to campaigning for the rights of the people who produce our food, with a focus on vulnerable workers and empowering women.

Our Asks

- ✓ Ensure you are meeting our minimum requirements for trade as set out in the "Supplier Guide to the Co-op Food Ethical Trade Programme" and have robust systems to identify human rights issues in your own sites and supply chain.
- ✓ Share with us the steps you are taking to understand & mitigate your key human rights risks and be open about the issues you are finding so we can work together to address.

- ✓ Have appropriate capability, resources and governance structures in place to address human rights risks in own operations and global supply chains.
- ✓ Put in place clear strategy and policies to tackle modern slavery issues, eliminate unfair and illegal recruitment fees and promote gender equality, diversity & inclusion.
- ✓ Understand and demonstrate progress against the proactivity, ownership and partnership behaviours as set out in the Co-op Supplier Ethical Trade Framework and Guidance
- ✓ Attend ethical trade capability-building sessions, access resources available on Future of Food Channel and share your experiences.
- ✓ Join industry wide initiatives to address systemic human rights issues.

Future Priorities

- We will carry out an independent review of our priority human rights focus areas and continue to publish the steps we are taking to mitigate the root causes of issues identified.
- We will support our suppliers in improving human rights across our supply chains through the delivery of our global capacity building programme, reaching over 1,500 delegates in 25 events in 2023.
- We will champion the role of women and vulnerable people in our supply chains, and in 2023 we will support roll-out training to address issues of gender-based violence in the supply chain.
- We will continue to work collaboratively to eliminate illegal and unfair recruitment fees in our global supply chain.

Essential Requirements

- ✓ Suppliers Guide to the Co-op Ethical Trade Programme
- ✓ Supplier Ethical Trade Framework and Guidance

Fairtrade

We're proud to be the largest convenience retailer of Fairtrade products in the UK. We've championed Fairtrade for over 29 years, launching the world's first own-brand Fairtrade product in 1998 and bringing the first Fairtrade bananas to the UK in 2000. Since then, we've continued to lead the way, switching entire own-brand categories to Fairtrade and growing our contribution to Fairtrade producers. There's still a lot to do to overcome unfairness in the food chain, but together we can make a difference.

Our Position

At Co-op we believe **Fairtrade is the gold standard** of ethical and sustainability certifications because Fairtrade offers a unique and leading movement for change.

Working with the Fairtrade Foundation, we focus on leading the way in **7 core Fairtrade categories (cocoa, wine, tea, coffee, sugar, bananas and flowers)**, which are at high risk from poverty, human rights abuses, deforestation and impacts from climate change.

- 100% of our bananas, chocolate, tea, coffee, bagged sugar, roses & cocoa are Fairtrade.
- We're the world's biggest seller of Fairtrade wine. Our South African wine range is 100% Fairtrade across both branded and own-label. New wines from Argentina and Chile are also Fairtrade-sourced wherever possible.
- Under our Fairtrade Ingredients Policy (found in our COP), where we use coffee, tea or bananas as an ingredient, we ensure Fairtrade producers benefit, by funding strategic projects in producer communities.
- All formats of cotton wool are Fairtrade sourced.
- We're the world's only retailer of Fair Trade Charcoal and our rubber gloves are also 100% Fair Trade, partnering with Transform Trade (formerly Traidcraft Exchange).

Our Asks

Continue to grow the contribution we make to Fairtrade producers. This means:

- ✓ Support category teams to increase Fairtrade ingredient volumes and the % of category/range sold on Fairtrade terms.
- ✓ Drive opportunities to increase contributions and impact made to Fairtrade producers and their communities, e.g. living income commitments.
- ✓ Keep us informed of any new Fairtrade ingredient or conversion opportunities and support commodity specific targets with us e.g. sourcing commitments to producer communities.
- ✓ Support categories use of promos, distribution and category plans to grow contribution to Fairtrade producers.
- ✓ Build relationships with producer groups and champion the Fairtrade difference.

Future Priorities

- Fairtrade development plan - strengthening our sourcing standards of key commodities to safeguard supply chains and deepen impact for producer communities.
- Exploring new and strengthening existing sourcing programmes in Fairtrade supply chains. The [Women's School of Leadership](#) (cocoa), [Productivity Improvement Programme](#) (bananas) and [Fairtrade Alliance for Climate-Smart Supply Chains](#) (tea, coffee and flowers) are examples of these projects. We'll approach you if there are opportunities.
- Protect and growing our Fair Trade offering.

What is Fair Trade? (two words)

Fair Trade are principles of trade between companies and producers which pays fairer prices to the producers. There are various Fair Trade schemes.

...And Fairtrade (one word)?

The FAIRTRADE Mark is the most recognised system of certification that sets internationally agreed standards in the production of goods to secure a better deal for farmers and workers., The Fairtrade Foundation is the organisation that licenses use of the FAIRTRADE Mark on product in the UK . Currently only Transform Trade are approved as an alternative Fair Trade scheme.

There are [two main types of FAIRTRADE Mark and sourcing models](#) that Co-op uses - All That Can be (ATCB) and Fairtrade Sourced Ingredient (FSI).

Find out more about what these mean and our commitments to source particular ingredients in our Fairtrade Code of Practice (can be found on MyCore).



Essential Requirements

- ✓ [Co-op Fairtrade Code of Practice](#)

Key Contacts

Emily
Pearce

&

Cate
Hickey
(Fairtrade
Manager)

External Commitments

We report publicly on each of our workstreams in the Co-op Sustainability Report and set annual targets – targets in the current report can be found [here](#).

Alongside our own commitments, Co-op has agreed to a series of external commitments alongside other retailers and brands. We are held accountable to these via annual reporting and public benchmarking. Where relevant, we encourage all suppliers to align with the industry to enable us to tackle these challenges together. Some of these commitments are listed below.

WWF's Retailers' Commitment for Nature

We have joined a coalition of retailers to play our part in halving the environmental impact of UK shopping baskets by 2030.

Courtauld 2030

A voluntary agreement that enables collaborative action across the entire UK food chain to deliver farm-to-fork reductions in food waste, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and water stress that will help the UK food and drink sector achieve global environmental goals. You can deep dive into the targets here [The Courtauld Commitment 2030 | WRAP](#).

UK Plastics Pact

A voluntary multi-retailer commitment to 2025, signatories will:

1. Eliminate problematic or unnecessary single-use packaging through redesign, innovation or alternative (re-use) delivery model;
2. 100% of plastics packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable;
3. 70% of plastics packaging effectively recycled or composted;
4. 30% average recycled content across all plastic packaging.

British Retail Consortium Climate (BRC) Action Roadmap

The roadmap commits us to achieving net zero for our operations by 2035 and for our products by 2040.

UK Soy Manifesto

We've signed up to this collective industry commitment aiming to ensure fully deforestation and conversion free (DCF) soy for all soy coming to the UK by 2025 at the latest..

Fairtrade Climate Pledge

Alongside Fairtrade business partners around the world, we signed a climate pledge committing to do more to protect and invest in the resilience and green transition of global supply chains in the face of the climate crisis.

NFU Fruit & Veg Pledge

We've signed the NFU Fruit & Veg Pledge to make commitments on how we'll work with our suppliers and their growers. From the formation of closer working partnerships with our suppliers and their growers, to the implementation of best practice models across the board, we've worked tirelessly to create long-term relationships which result in a supply chain that is built on honesty, fairness and trust.

IDH Bananas Living Wage

As a coalition of UK retailers, we will strive for workers in our banana supply chains to receive a living wage by the end of 2027. We will progress faster wherever feasible.

Data and Systems

We collect data on the progress of our suppliers against minimum requirements and sustainability targets through 3 main platforms- Sedex for ethical trade and human rights data, Manufacture 2030 (M2030) for site resource use, food waste, water commitments and product carbon footprint information, Authenticate for packaging, supply chain mapping and ingredient information. See below for a list of some of our data systems and platforms that we use for our sustainability reporting requirements.

Authenticate

We have worked with Authenticate on our Farming & Fisheries KPIs for many years, but this year we will be extending the capability of this platform to enable more accurate CSR reporting for our own brand products. We'll be using it to map our supply chains for things like Fairtrade ingredients, mapping our top 30 high risk ingredients, and to link to Sedex site data to allow us to monitor Human Rights risks more effectively. We'll also be linking in internal and external systems to allow us to monitor technical, water and biodiversity risks in our supply chains, automate our packaging reporting, calculate our scope 3 footprint for purchased goods, and to maintain accurate nutritional information for reporting against HFSS, salt and calorie targets, as well as tracking animal and plant protein levels in our ingredients. We expect the platform design to be completed in June 2023.

Manufacture 2030 and The Future of Food Channel

Manufacture 2030 (M2030) is a platform that is used by multiple UK retailers to collect environmental data, assess sector trends and track actions taken. Suppliers can choose to share the information submitted with multiple retail customers and so reduce duplication of effort. The platform also enables action planning towards meeting targets through the M2030 Bee tool, which provides insights on potential interventions and our Future of Food channel allows Co-op suppliers to read and share case studies with the Co-op and supplier peers. Free access is provided to all Co-op suppliers.

Suppliers can sign up to the Future of Food Channel [here](#).

Suppliers can register for the M2030 data collection by sending an email to groceryretail@manufacture2030.com , sharing data through the annual data collection includes access to M2030 Bee online tool.

Sedex

We use the Sedex platform, the world's leading community for managing data on responsible sourcing, to manage our monitoring programme. The Co-op's Senior Ethical Trade Manager was an elected Member Director on the Sedex Board for six years until 2021 and we're active participants in various stakeholder forums and working groups that drive improvement to the platform and auditing methodology.

3Keel

We use 3Keel, an independent 3rd party sustainability consultancy, to manage volume, origin and certification information (annually and on request) of palm oil and soy used in Co-op products. Co-op have joined together with other companies to continue a standardised approach to reporting, to simplify this process for suppliers and increase our understanding around the use of these commodities.

Fairtrade

We work closely with the Fairtrade Foundation to manage, collect and report on Fairtrade ingredient volumes and data. Suppliers are also responsible for keeping MyCore up to date with Fairtrade certification and policy assurances. Full details on our licensing and reporting requirements can be found in Co-op's Fairtrade Code of Practice.

Annual Reporting

Co-op sustainability report is produced annually in April. Our annual reporting process begins in October through to March. For full details on reporting refer to the Codes of Practices on MyCore.



Non Food

How you can support us

Non-Food Documents

- Products in the non-food category are covered by the Non-Food Code of Practice ([found in the Mycore library](#)).

Packaging & Recycling

- Products in the non-food category must also comply with the [packaging code of practice](#)

Human Rights & Ethical Trade

- Support expectation that suppliers put in place a robust due diligence programme to manage human rights risks at all tiers of the supply chain and share the steps they are taking to mitigate risks. Ensure suppliers address root cause of issues by providing support to their suppliers. Encourage suppliers to engage in relevant supplier forums.
- Ask suppliers to understand and demonstrate progress against the proactivity, ownership and partnership behaviours as set out in the [Co-op Supplier Ethical Trade Framework and Guidance](#).



High-Focus Category – Produce

How you can support us

Packaging & Recycling

- Use innovative packaging technology to extend shelf life and reduce food waste.
- Reduce unnecessary plastic where not required e.g. trayless flow-wrap.
- Use at least 30% recycled content in plastics to avoid the Plastics Tax.

Sustainable Sourcing

- Support the delivery of Co-op's Crop Protection strategy.
- Help us uphold Co-op's commitment to the NFU Fruit & Vegetable Pledge
- Take a responsible sourcing approach to substrate, including working to reduce peat.

Food Waste

- Support crop loss and waste measurement and projects to encourage harvest of surplus crops for sharing with community organisations.
- Work with Co-op to raise customer awareness of ways to store produce and use all produce purchased to reduce household food waste.
- Support Co-op to test and learn about loose produce and reducing food waste in the home.

Water security

- Sign-up to WRAP's Water Security Roadmap, identify water risks for your sites / supply chains and support WRAP's collective action water stewardship projects in areas of high water security risk.

Fairtrade

- Ensure you are familiar with and adhere to Co-op's Fairtrade Code of Practice.
- Support supply chain mapping efforts by mapping to producer/ co-operative level (or as far down supply chain as possible).
- Support the Co-op Fairtrade Producer Engagement Strategy by building connections to producer groups in Co-op's supply chain.

Human Rights & Ethical Trade

- Put in place a robust due diligence programme to manage human rights risks at all tiers of the supply chain and share the steps you are taking to mitigate risks.
- Support growers in addressing the root cause of issues and encourage them to engage in relevant in-country supplier forums.
- Understand and demonstrate progress against the proactivity, ownership and partnership behaviours as set out in the [Co-op Supplier Ethical Trade Framework and Guidance](#).

Climate change

- Commit to setting 1.5C degree aligned science-based GHG reduction targets across all scopes and keep us updated on actions you are taking and where we can support.
- Work towards being able to provide us with product carbon footprint data to evidence progress in reducing supply chain emissions, in accordance with WRAP's accounting guidance.

A photograph of several pink pigs in a muddy field with straw. The pigs are in the foreground, and the background is slightly blurred.

High-Focus Category – Protein

How you can support us

Climate change

- Commit to setting 1.5C degree aligned science-based net zero targets across all scopes by the end of 2023 (and publish them by the end of 2025 at the latest).
- Keep us updated on the actions you are taking towards meeting these targets – and let us know where we can support.
- Work towards being able to provide us with product carbon footprint data to evidence progress in reducing supply chain emissions, in accordance with WRAP's accounting guidance.

Sustainable Sourcing

- Work towards a responsible sourcing approach of feed ingredients.
- Meet sourcing requirements in line with policies on forest-risk commodities (soy, palm oil) and where applicable have your own deforestation and conversion-free commitments for the commodities you use as a business.

Packaging & Recycling

- Reduce unnecessary plastic, e.g. trayless flow-wrap.
- Use at least 30% recycled content in plastics to avoid the Plastics Tax.
- Remove the 'forever chemical' PFAS from mince paper and do not re-introduce it in any product development (grease resistant papers used as a plastic alternative are a watch-out).

Food Waste

- A lot of protein waste occurs at home – please support steps to make our products easy to buy in the right quantities so people buy just enough, as well as easy to freeze and cook from frozen so that everything bought gets eaten.
- Plan ahead for artwork updates and product redesign to ensure food waste prevention interventions are factored into product development and labelling on pack.

Water Security

- Sign-up to WRAP's Water Security Roadmap, identify water risks for your sites / supply chains and support WRAP's collective action water stewardship projects in areas of high water security risk.

Human Rights & Ethical Trade

- Put in place a robust due diligence programme to manage human rights risks at all tiers of the supply chain and share the steps you are taking to mitigate risks.
- Support suppliers in addressing the root cause of issues and encourage them engage in relevant in-country supplier forums.
- Understand and demonstrate progress against the proactivity, ownership and partnership behaviours as set out in the [Co-op Supplier Ethical Trade Framework and Guidance](#).

Any questions or projects to propose?

Please do get in touch! We've listed the team members for you in each section.

