



# 2019 Food Co-op Impact Report





## Our favorite question

Each day, customers ask “What is a food co-op, and how is it different from a regular grocery store?”

The short answer is that a food co-op is a grocery store owned by your neighbors (and by you, if you choose). Unlike corporate chains, we’re totally independent and owned by folks in the community who shop here. Everyone is welcome to shop, eat and hang out at the co-op.

But a co-op is so much more than that—we’re a vibrant hub full of people who are passionate about food, caring for each other and our world. We’re a bridge between farm and city, connecting people who grow and love fresh foods. We are a force for good in the world—empowering organic farmers, fair trade producers and supporting other cooperative businesses that are also working to improve people’s lives.

**Co-ops are for everyone, we’re all about community and good for the world!**



## For everyone

Who says healthy, organic and delicious has to be exclusive? Not us. We want to welcome everyone to the table where great food is served. We think that all of us, every parent and caregiver, every coach, every friend, every teacher and every kid are hungry for delicious, healthy food that nourishes us. Co-ops are on a mission to make sure that everyone in our community can get it!

With over 2,000 products on sale every month at the co-op, something you love is always on sale. Co+op Deals discounts and coupon savings average 20% off regular prices.

Our Co+op Basics groceries offer lower prices without compromising on values. Some competitors claim their value products are “natural,” or “sustainable.” Our Co+op Basics groceries bear third-party certifications like USDA Organic, Non-GMO Project Verified, Fair Trade Certified and Certified Humane so you know how your food was made.



Save an average of **20%** on your favorite products with  
**Co+op Deals**

Over **2,000** products on sale each month!

## Welcome to fresh

Flavorful and healthy, fresh foods are the best! Crisp veggies, sweet fruits, pasture-raised eggs, organic milk, sustainably sourced fish and humanely raised meats—co-ops are a community destination for delicious, fresh food.

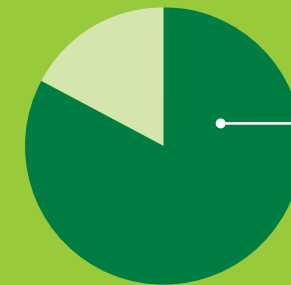
Food co-ops want everyone to enjoy the pleasures and health benefits of fresh foods, which is why we unite to advocate for increased funding for federal programs that double the money SNAP shoppers receive to purchase locally grown fruits and veggies. The Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program provides grants that nonprofits use to partner with food co-ops and farmers markets to increase access to those fresh, healthy foods everyone loves.

We know everyone wants the freshest, best produce for their dollar—which is why fresh foods with imperfections get donated to our local food shelves—still delicious, still nutritious—nourishing our neighbors in need.



Food co-ops donated  
**1.3 million**  
pounds of food in 2019

### Making healthy food more accessible



**83%**

Percentage of food co-ops that offer income-based discount programs for their community.





## All about community

We're owned by our community, not some corporate office 1,000 miles away. So, instead of focusing on Wall Street investors, we focus on what our neighbors want — nourishing everyone according to their budget and cooking style. We know how to get the best local food because we greet our farmers by name every time they deliver their bounty to our doors. And we're passionate about giving back to our community because we know that good food is just the beginning of what we can achieve by working together.

When you shop at the co-op, you're supporting local farmers and producers as well as investing in supply chain transparency. We have made a commitment to empowering entrepreneurs and small business owners in our area by bringing their products to market — but shoppers are the ones who keep them in business.



The average co-op works with  
**178** local farms  
& producers

At the average food co-op,  
**23%** of sales come from  
local products





## Rooted right here

We're staffed by the community and we're a gathering place for the community. And, because we're a co-op, we're owned by the community. No other grocery store is so deeply rooted right here.

In addition to raising money for local non-profits and food shelves, many co-ops work with their communities in ways that reflect each community's unique needs. For example, many co-ops offer community dinner nights where healthy meals are under \$5, and some connect their customers to local producers by organizing farm tours during the growing season.

Co-ops offer classes and community events because education and concern for community are in our DNA. Cooperative businesses follow seven principles: we're open to all, democratically run with everyone equally invested, we're self-sufficient, promote education, support fellow cooperatives and put community first!

In 2019, food co-ops donated  
**\$8 million**  
to community organizations



EVERYONE WELCOME



Food co-ops offer an average of  
**2 classes**  
and community events per week





## Good for the world

Food co-ops are owned by people, not a corporation, so we prioritize our community, our farmers and our planet. When you shop at a food co-op, you help strengthen our collective impact.

Organic products make up 39% of sales at the average food co-op. Organic farming keeps waterways clean, builds rich and fertile soil that has been proven to help slow global warming and creates habitat for pollinators like bees and butterflies...things we need for an abundant and healthy food supply.

Certified organic food by law cannot be grown using toxic pesticides, synthetic fertilizers or GMO seeds. Food co-ops unite with organic farmers, companies and brands to lobby Congress in support of strong national organic standards that reflect what customers expect from the label.

# 39%

**of sales come from  
organic products**  
at the average food co-op





## Products with transparency

Co-ops sell \$29 million of Fair Trade Certified products every year—fair trade certification means that workers are paid a livable wage, have safe working conditions and are able to invest in community development projects like hospitals, clean drinking water and schools. Fair trade also prohibits child labor.

Each year, co-ops sell \$62 million of cooperatively produced goods and \$102 million of products from Certified B Corporations. Like co-ops, B Corps champion the triple bottom line that is the hallmark of sustainable businesses: people, planet and profit.

Food co-ops regularly partner with companies to promote products that increase awareness and raise money for causes like hunger, education and sustainable farming methods. In 2019, we built a school in the Philippines with Vita Coco, raised money for Feeding America and helped raise funds for school gardens in co-op communities.



## Products with benefits

Fair trade certified products

**\$29M**

B Corp certified products

**\$102M**

Cooperatively produced

**\$62M**



## Responding to the climate crisis

Food co-ops are working individually and together to reduce our carbon footprint and respond to the climate crisis. We are measuring and reducing our greenhouse gas emissions from electricity, fuel use and refrigerant gases.

Since 2012, food co-ops have been working with fair trade farmer co-ops in Peru to offset a portion of greenhouse gas emissions associated with our annual business travel by planting and protecting trees in the Peruvian Amazon. We call it Co+op Forest.

Trees naturally absorb carbon dioxide—a greenhouse gas—from the atmosphere, effectively slowing the rate of climate change. As of 2019, Co+op Forest is home to an estimated 1.8 million trees and the region has been named a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, to serve as a model of sustainable communities.



Our Peruvian partners prepare to plant native tree seedlings in the Co+op Forest.

## Reducing our carbon footprint



Refrigerant gas emissions down **23%**



**1.3M** pounds of food diverted from landfill preventing 777,808 lbs. CO<sub>2</sub>



The average food co-op has reduced total energy use **10%** since 2016 (electricity and fuel)



# Together we go farther

While each food co-op is unique and owned by its community, we're also part of a network of neighborhood stores across the country that work together toward the day when everyone has the good, local, healthy food they deserve.

## People Powered Deals

Many food co-ops began as buying clubs for people wanting affordable food with less impact. To continue to deliver on that promise, food co-ops created our own buying club in 1999—National Co+op Grocers (NCG). By combining purchasing power on packaged groceries, we can deliver great deals on great products and serve our local community and farmers better.

## Food Policy for the People

Through NCG, food co-ops have a united voice on Capitol Hill when it comes to issues our shoppers care about like federal programs that increase access to

healthy food for everyone, protect food transparency for consumers and support organic farmers.

## Cooperation Increases Impact

Through NCG, food co-ops unite on issues that matter to our communities. In 2019 food co-ops raised over \$77,000 for National Farm to School Network to increase kids' access to and knowledge of healthy food and sponsored national climate leadership awards for companies in our supply chain that are meaningfully addressing climate change.

## Cooperatives Do Business Better

Not only is NCG a cooperative, it is also a Certified B Corporation. NCG shares our co-ops' triple bottom line — people, planet and profit — and shares our commitment to making the world a better place. Through NCG, food co-ops donated \$75,000 to the Food Co-op Initiative, a nonprofit helping communities organize new food co-ops and improve access to healthy food since 2005.





### About this Content

This content is based on 2019 co-op impact metrics data collected by National Co+op Grocers.

Our co-op is a member of National Co+op Grocers, (NCG) — a business services cooperative for retail food co-ops located throughout the United States. NCG represents 147 retail food co-ops operating over 200 stores in 38 states.

