

GUIDELINES FOR PURCHASING FOOD

at San Francisco Zen Center

These guidelines for purchasing food at San Francisco Zen Center are grounded in more than four decades of experience in daily meditation practice, in farming and gardening organically at Green Gulch Farm Zen Center since 1972, and in harvesting, purchasing, cooking and serving nutritional meals to thousands of Zen Center students, guests and visitors over the years. Suzuki –roshi taught that, “when you cook, you are not just working on food – you are also working on yourself and on others.”

Recognizing that our choice in purchasing food has a far-reaching impact on our health and on the health of the natural world, we commit to purchasing products that are grown sustainably with practices that foster soil health and protect water quality, that promote biological diversity and protect farm-worker health, that conserve energy and natural resources while also supporting a strong, local economy, and that protects future generations. Innumerable labors bring us our food – may we consider how it comes to us.

The guidelines that follow were drawn up by the Environmental Committee of the San Francisco Zen Center Board: Abbess Linda Cutts, Carolyn Cavanaugh, Chuck Gould, Wendy Johnson, Gloria Lee, Jeannie Linam, Sukey Parmelee (Chair), Matthew Ramsay, Keith Meyerhoff and former committee members. Feedback about the document was received and incorporated from the Senior Staffs of the three centers, from the Officers and Directors and from the Board.

The guidelines include nine goals and their accompanying strategies. These strategies are offered as suggestions to achieve the goals and are not intended to be limiting or exclusive.

In the words of Ed Brown:

Food is not matter
but the heart of matter,
the flesh and blood of
rock and water, earth and sun.

GUIDELINES FOR PURCHASING FOOD, 2006

Whenever feasible:

- Goal 1: Know and acknowledge where our food comes from (state, farm). Know and acknowledge how our food comes to us.¹**
Strategies: The Tenzo is encouraged to give a brief monthly report on food sources at a resident, staff, or work meeting.
Visual aids, such as a map, would be helpful to describe seasonal, local, or organic food by category.
- Goal 2: Purchase Green Gulch Farm organically grown produce. City Center and Green Gulch will purchase produce from Green Gulch Farm rather than another vendor if Green Gulch has the item desired.**
Strategies: Green Gulch Farm is committed to competitive pricing.
Green Gulch Farm will send Tenzo an availability list weekly.
The Tenzo will adapt menus to Green Gulch Farm availability.
- Goal 3: Purchase organically grown food.²**
Strategies: Use attached chart as a baseline and meet or exceed these levels.
The Tenzo will adapt menus to utilize organically grown food. The Tenzo and others will continue researching ways to increase organically produced dairy.
- Goal 4: Purchase produce grown seasonally.¹ From May to October seasonal produce will be served at least 90% of the time. From November to April seasonal produce will be served at least 75% of the time.**
Strategies: The Tenzo will use a chart of seasonal availability based on local organic farm listings.
The Tenzo will adapt menus to utilize seasonal produce.
- Goal 5: Purchase locally grown food (within 100-150 miles). Locally grown produce will be served 80% of the time. Locally grown food other than produce will be served 60% of the time.**
Strategy: The Tenzo is encouraged to purchase directly from farmers or through farmer's markets.
- Goal 6: Avoid potentially harmful food additives and processes, such as bovine growth hormones, irradiation, and genetically modified foods.**
Strategy: The Tenzo shall research additives and processes in non-organic food.
- Goal 7: Minimize packaging, reduce energy used for transportation and production, and realize an economy of scale.**
Strategy: Buy in bulk through centralized buyer.
- Goal 8: Stop using plastic food storage containers, especially for hot foods, by 2008.**
Strategies: Hot foods stored in stainless steel at all times by 2008.
Use glass and ceramic containers for some items.
- Goal 9: Provide additional support to achieve the goals and strategies listed above.**
Strategies: The Officers and Directors will establish an Environmental Coordinator, a Zen Center-wide position of environmental oversight, research, education and outreach by FY 2007 (Goal V, Objective 1, Strategy 12 of the SFZC Vision Document).
The Officers and Directors will revise the buyer's job to include researching appropriate sources for food.
Educate the Board, officers, staff, and Sangha about food and agricultural literacy.

¹ *The tenzo and buyer are encouraged to develop a relationship with local farms or suppliers and know that labor practices are fair and that animal practices are humane.*

² *We may purchase non-organic local food if it supports small farms which are transitioning to organic.*

FOOD PURCHASING BASELINE, 2006*

<u>Category</u>	<u>Organic</u>	<u>Local</u>	<u>Non-organic</u>	<u>Local</u>
Dairy (non rsbt) (Organic dairy would cost an additional \$12,000 a year)				
Fresh Milk			100%	Yes
Yogurt			100%	Yes
Cottage Cheese			100%	Yes
Cheese			100%	No
Eggs	100%	Yes		
Produce	95%	Yes		
Dried Fruit	Mostly	Yes		
Nuts	Yes	90% (Cashews not local)		
Dry Goods				
Grains				
Flours	Yes	No		
Cereals	Yes	No		
Rice	Yes	Yes		
Legumes – all	Yes	No		
Processed Grains				
Udon/Soba	100%	No		
Pasta			100%	No
Tomato – cans	Yes	Not sure		
Condiments				
Vinegar	10%	No	90%	No
Apple Cider=org				
Canola Oil				
Used most	100%	No	90%	No
Olive Oil	100%	No		
Other oil	For accents only		100%	No
Sugar	100%	No		
Honey			100%	Yes
Tamari			100%	No
Herbs – dried			100%	No
Beverages				
Teas				
Black/Green	100%	No		
Herb			100%	No
Coffee	100%	No		
Not shade grown				
Peanut Butter	100%	No		
Jam	100%	No		

*Baseline taken from 2006 Green Gulch Farm purchases

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