

Module 37



**HUMANELY RAISED
AND SUSTAINABLE
PRODUCTS**

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The food choices you make every day have a major impact on the environment, and factory farming in particular takes a considerable toll on the health of the planet. Choosing sustainable products and animal foods that were humanely raised help reduce environmental stress and protect our natural resources.

By choosing to put your purchasing power toward more sustainable and humane options, you're paving the way to create meaningful and necessary change within the modern food system.

What are sustainable foods?

Sustainable refers to foods produced and consumed within a closed-loop system. This means that any waste that would have been produced goes back into the system to nourish the growth cycle.

What are humanely raised foods?

Humanely raised refers to foods produced from animals that are treated kindly, are given comfortable living conditions, and are able to engage in natural behaviors. Products can also be labeled *certified humane*. Keep in mind that this certification still allows for practices like beak trimming.¹

Ways to Support the Sustainable and Humane Food Movement

- **Buy local.**

Foods that have been produced nearby save resources by not needing to travel long distances – often in a refrigerated compartment.

- **Try composting.**

Composting helps close the loop in the food system. Rather than being transported to a landfill and producing harmful greenhouse gases, food scraps nourish the soil.

- **Eat whole foods.**

Instead of eating only part of a fruit or vegetable or a particular cut of meat, expand your palate and culinary skills by trying to make use of all edible parts of food. This helps reduce food waste and adds interest to meals.

- **Limit packaging.**

Seek out foods with minimal or no packaging as packaging takes energy to produce and decades to fully decompose.²

- **Get to know your farmer.**

If you consume animal foods, research local farmers that might have what you're looking for. Make an educated decision by asking them about farming methods and learning about the animals' living conditions. Some farms might even be open to visitors, if you'd like to see it in person.

- **Reduce consumption of animal foods.**

Raising animals for food requires far more input (resources, energy, calories) than the output that is produced. Explore the variety of flavors and textures that plant-based foods have to offer.

FOOTNOTES

- 1| Humane farm animal care comprehensive animal welfare standards comparison by program – chickens, beef cattle and pigs. (2013, November). www.certifiedhumane.org.

Retrieved from www.certifiedhumane.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Comp-Standards.Comparison.Chart_.wappendix.11.26.13.pdf

- 2| National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. (n.d.). Talking trash and taking action.

Retrieved from www.marinedebris.noaa.gov/talking-trash-and-taking-action