

**Fergus Fresh Information and Guidelines**  
**For Local Grower and Producers**  
**Big Spring Market    phone 708-4141**

**Fergus Fresh Mission**

The Big Spring Co-op is committed to facilitating the “relocalization” of food in Lewistown and Central Montana through its Fergus Fresh program. Our goal is to promote and sell local foods of superior freshness and quality that have been raised sustainably. In doing so, we hope to make it easier for Central Montanans to find and purchase fresh, locally grown fruits, vegetables, meats and poultry, eggs, honey, and other agricultural products. Marketing local foods that are raised sustainably will stimulate and help secure and maintain the economic vitality of Central Montana by strengthening the productivity and viability of family farms and independent businesses, encourage resource-conserving grower practices, and promote environmentally sound agriculture.

**Fergus Fresh at a Glance: The Co-op’s Colored Labeling System**

All Fergus Fresh growers and producers are required to fill out the Big Spring Co-op Grower and Production Practices Questionnaire prior to marketing through the co-op. These surveys will be visible in the store and available for consumers to review at any time. In addition to the survey, the producer may also include his/her logo, a photo, a short bio, or other information of interest to consumers.

The Fergus Fresh labeling system is designed to educate and enable co-op shoppers to differentiate between certified organic, sustainably grown, and conventional agricultural products at a glance. While shopping, consumers will be alerted to the system and informed by the following:

- Brochures or rack cards that describe the labeling system
  - Large store signs describing the system
  - Distinctly colored product labels (see ★’s below) on produce, eggs and meat items. Labels will include grower’s name, location, a brief item description, price (regular and/or member special). Label color will denote *general* grower practices at a glance.
  - Fergus Fresh stickers will be attached to all agricultural products from the Central Montana region or “foodshed”.
  - Surveys of grower practices (the grower questionnaires) will be kept in an in-store notebook and available for public review at all times.
- ★ *Certified Organic (green label)* Products that are certified organic in compliance with O.C.I.A., N.O.P. or the State of Montana guidelines. Grower must provide a copy of third-party certification to keep on file at the co-op. Co-op must be notified when status of certification changes.
- ★ *Sustainably Grown (bright yellow label)* Products that are produced or grown using sustainable, organic growing practices, but are non-certified by the State of Montana. *The co-op retains the right to determine who receives the sustainable label; determination is based on practices the grower reports in his or her grower questionnaire.*

- ★ *Conventional (white label)* Conventionally grown produce and agricultural products, and non-organic food purchased from large retailers. Consumers should refer to the grower’s survey for production details on conventional locally grown foods.
- ★ *Fergus Fresh (sunflower sticker)* Any agricultural product (food or fiber) grown and produced within the Central Montana region, the Fergus Fresh “foodshed”.

Food grown or produced in regions outside of the Central Montana region, *but within the state of Montana*, will be labeled according to location and farm or producer name. To receive the sustainable label, the grower must have completed the co-op grower survey and have been designated sustainable by the co-op.

### **The Sustainably Grown Label: Verification and Grower Practices Required**

**The following agricultural products and practices are considered unacceptable from growers who wish to sell under the Big Spring Co-op Sustainably Grown Label.**

Known GMO products or formulations  
 Produce grown using *any* synthetic pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, miticides (see below)  
 Meat or milk raised using growth hormones (see below)  
 Meat, milk or eggs fed rations containing animal by-products  
 Meat, milk or eggs raised using feed or water containing antibiotics (see below)  
 Meat or eggs from livestock that has been exposed to strychnine used for pest control  
 Cage-raised poultry or eggs  
 Poultry fed feed containing arsenic (e.g. Roxarsone)  
 Irradiated foods  
 Foods grown using chemical, petroleum-based fertilizers

### **The Sustainably Grown Label: Examples of Unacceptable Chemicals**

Synthetic pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, miticides usually have longish names, often with numbers and capital letters attached, e.g. Ortho Sevin Garden Dust is Carbaryl (1-naphthyl N-methylcarbamate).

Examples of unacceptable brand-name pesticides include, but are not limited to, the following: Atrazine 4L, Sevin, Lily Miller Cut Worm & Slug Bait, Lily Miller Slug and Snail Bait, Preen, Lysoff, Cylene, Atroban, Cydectin, Python, Durasect, Ultra Saber, Tempo SC, 7XLR, etc. Check the label before you spray or dust!

Unacceptable herbicides include, but are not limited to, the following: 2-4D amine, Roundup, LV6, Hidep, Grazon, Range Star, Tordon, Weed and Feed, etc.

Unacceptable miticides and fungicides include, but are not limited to, the following: Myco Curb, Bayer Advanced Insect and Mite Control, Priority Care 1, etc.

Unacceptable hormones in meats include, but are not limited to, the following: Ralgro, Synovex C, Compudose, etc.

Antibiotics that are unacceptable if *routinely* mixed into feed and water include, but are not limited to, the following: Rumensin, Salinomycin and Narasin, Pen Aqua, Tylan Soluble Powder, Sulmet Soluble Drinking Water Solution, Neomycin, Di-Methox, BMD Soluble, Lincomycin Soluble, etc.

### **The Sustainably Grown Label: Acceptable Pesticides and Herbicides**

There are many pesticides, herbicides, and other products available for organic farming, animal production, food processing and gardening, which are safe and are approved for use by the co-op for its sustainable growers. The Organic Materials Review Institute has an *amazingly long* list of safe and acceptable products at [www.omri.org](http://www.omri.org). Their product list/book is available for either purchase or free download online.

### **Labeling for Locally Produced Meats**

Certified organic meat will be labeled accordingly by the co-op. Producers will be responsible for labeling their own meats as grain finished, grass finished, natural, no hormones, or no antibiotics, etc. All local meats will receive the red Fergus Fresh sticker. Consumers may refer to the grower's Production Practices Questionnaire for details on any local meats.

### **Locally Grown Flowers and Plants**

No flowers or plants will be accepted by the co-op that have been sprayed with synthetic or petroleum derived *pesticides*.

### **Pricing**

An average margin of 36% (margin is the percentage added on to the wholesale price to determine the retail price) will be used for all locally purchased produce. Local growers and producers will be asked to set their own wholesale prices. If asked, the co-op can *suggest* a fair and reasonable price based on national pricing guidelines, local demand and past sales. Growers may offer "special" price reductions to the co-op; the co-op may pass savings on to consumers.

### **Delivery**

- Call 1 week or more ahead before delivering. This allows the GM time to cancel or adjust orders for similar products from commercial suppliers.
- Deliveries should be made during the co-op's scheduled receiving hours. Deliveries outside of that time, without prior arrangement with the GM or Produce Manager, may be refused.
- All deliveries will be received by the GM, produce manager, or designated produce employee.
- The GM or produce manager must approve changes in quantities, prices, or product.
- All produce should be accurately weighed or counted, sized and cleaned by the grower before delivery. Produce is expected to be clean and of first quality. The co-op retains the right to refuse to accept produce/product that does not meet our quality standards.
- All boxes should be labeled *prior to delivery* with date, product and farm name or producer. Delicate produce, like tomatoes, needs to be layered in the box or case. Wet produce, like lettuce, should be delivered in stackable, waxed boxes. . Do not box organic produce in boxes previously used for conventional products.
- Organic products will be labeled "Certified Organic" by the GM or produce manager at the time of delivery. The product will then be stored on the appropriate rack (organic, sustainable or non-organic) in the cooler and employees will label accordingly

### **Invoicing**

- A completed invoice from the producer should accompany all deliveries, one delivery per invoice.
- Invoice must be signed by a co-op produce employee and the grower at the time of delivery.

- Invoice must include grower's name, mailing address, date, number or weight of units, wholesale price per unit, and extended price.
- Big Spring Co-op will pay invoices within 14 days from the date that the invoice is signed by the GM or produce employee.

### **Handling of Certified Organic Produce**

The co-op and its employees agree to follow correct protocol for the handling, storage, display and processing of certified organic products to prevent commingling with conventionally grown products. All certified organic products and ingredients will be labeled as such.

### **Acts of Nature**

Big Spring Co-op and its growers/producers acknowledge that drought, hail, frost, snow, pestilence, flood and other acts of nature can affect crop production in Central Montana! When such acts of nature occur, the grower will notify the GM or produce manager of problems and projected crop adjustments as soon as possible.

### **Producers Meeting**

Each winter the Big Spring Co-op's Vice-president of Producers and the Fergus Fresh committee will meet with growers. Feedback from the previous growing season will be discussed. Using sales and purchase history as guidelines, growers will sign up for crops for the upcoming season. Potential crops (both standard and new), seasonal longevity of crop production, and estimated amounts the co-op will need and each grower can produce will be discussed. New growers will be encouraged and assisted. Pricing will be explained. Grower agreements will be signed.

### **Exclusivity Rights**

Priority is given to the grower for items listed on the grower's agreement. In order to achieve the goal of abundant quality local produce, the Co-op reserves the right to purchase additional produce/product, as needed, from other vendors to meet customer demands and to encourage the development of new growers.

**Know your farmer and shake the hand that feeds!**

