

Factsheet Commonly Used Terms at Public Markets

Public Markets have enjoyed new popularity and have seen substantial growth throughout the province. As consumers browse the markets, many different terms can be found to describe the types of foods vendors sell.

Local Foods

Local food relates to the distance between food producers and consumers. Buying local means buying food that is produced as close to the community as possible.

Reasons Why Consumers Choose Local

There are many reasons why consumers choose local foods including:

- Less pollution due to shorter distances food travels.
- Positive impacts on the local economy.
- Knowing your food producer and where your food comes from.

Grass Fed

Any animal that has spent a portion of its life on grass could be labelled as a grass fed animal. Grass fed means that the animal's food source is grass and forage, with the exception of milk consumed prior to weaning. These animals are not fed grain or

grain by-products and have access to pasture for grazing.

The producer is responsible for recording when supplements are given to the animal, including the amount and the frequency, and supplements provided by recording them on receipts, ingredients, and ear tags.



Grass fed animals are not found to be safer than grain fed animals. Some bacteria, such as *E. coli* O157:H7, are found naturally in our environment. Both grass fed and grain fed animals are subject to contamination. This is why it is important to ensure good food safety practices regardless whether you choose to consume grass fed or grain fed animals.

Reasons Why Consumers Choose Grass Fed Animals

There are many reasons why consumers choose grass fed animals over grain fed animals:

- Ethical reasons – animals spending time outdoors to feed
- Health reasons – meat from grass fed cattle, for example, may contain less total fat than meat from grain-fed raised animals
- Environmental reasons - greater range of plants, soil microbes, and wildlife, reduce the external inputs needed (i.e. fertilizer, water, feed)

Free-Range

Free-range refers to an animal that is allowed to have access to the outside rather than being constricted to a cage.

Free Range Eggs & Poultry

Free-range eggs are from hens kept in open barns and have access to the outdoors.

Free-range poultry are chickens/turkeys that have access to the outdoors.



Natural Foods

Foods labelled as “natural” generally mean:

- The natural food or ingredient of a food is not expected to contain, or to have ever have contained, an added vitamin, added mineral nutrient, artificial flavouring agent, or food additive.
- A natural food or ingredient of a food does not have any component removed or significantly changed, except the removal of water.
- A natural food or ingredient of a food that has been produced through the ordinary course of nature without the interference or influence of humans.

Products that are referred to as “natural” must use the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) guidelines which provide clarity and consistency regarding product labels. The Guidelines on Natural, Naturally Raised, Feed, Antibiotic and Hormone Claims can be found at:

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/labeti/natall/instmpanie.shtml>

Information for this fact sheet is adapted from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency at <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/toce.shtml>

For more information on food safety, visit the Department of Agriculture’s food safety website at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/agri/foodsafety>