

buying guidelines

The Kootenay Co-op Butcher Shop favours local and regional growers, processors and producers committed to sustainable practices, and we source organic products when feasible and available. We create direct relationships to growers wherever possible. Find detailed information about each grower on our packaging, in our sourcing guide, or from one of our butcher shop clerks.

Beef, Bison, Lamb, Pork, Poultry, Venison

We require beef, bison, lamb, pork, poultry, and venison to be raised humanely and without the use of growth hormones. We require all suppliers to verify their growing processes through a third-party certification body (organic, GMO-free, cruelty-free, etc), or to maintain a direct relationship with our buyer. All animals must have clear and traceable sourcing all the way back to the farm.

All meat must be processed in a licensed abattoir that has been inspected as required by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Animals must be slaughtered as humanely as possible, with low stress, short travel times, and a quick and painless death.



Preference is given to certified organic suppliers and True Local suppliers within 160 km of the store.

Beef, bison and lamb must have access to the outdoors, and we prefer animals to be pasture raised and have grass and forage as the majority of their diet. Beef must not be medicated within 90 days of slaughter. Beef must not be kept in a conventional Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO)/ Intensive Livestock Operation (ILO), because the cramped conditions are inhumane and detrimental to the environment. All beef and bison must be wet- or dry-aged, must meet certain grading standards, and must be labeled accordingly.

Poultry must be fed a diet free from mammalian or avian slaughter by-products. Poultry must have access to the outdoors and the ability to scratch outdoors and indoors (clean litter must be provided indoors for scratching, foraging and dust bathing). Free-range birds meet this standard; “free-run” birds do not. A preference will be given to pasture-raised birds.

Pork must not be penned or raised in gestational pens. Hogs must have access to the outdoors, and preferably be pasture-raised or kept in an outdoor enclosure that allows them to root and wallow. They must be fed an all grain/vegetable diet, with exceptions for certified organic whey and similar feeds. Hogs must not be medicated within 90 days of slaughter. Preference will be given to producers who raise hogs to a live weight of 240 lbs, as this creates a good balance between fat and lean. Preference will also be given to certain heirloom breeds.



Seafood

Seafood must be Ocean Wise or Aquaculture Stewardship Council Certified whenever possible, with preference given to wild-harvested products. All farmed fish must be third-party certified, with no open water ocean pens, and farm operations must pose no risk to the eco-system.

Charcuterie, deli, and cured meats

This is the most challenging group of products to source sustainably and with clear traceability – to meet member demand and provide products you can feel good about, we started our own Co-op Smokehouse. Products carrying our Smokehouse label meet all the above buying guidelines, use organic spices, and are prepared and smoked in-house.

For products in this category we cannot make here, we source from other companies and although we strive to extend the above guidelines to processed meats, there are very few options available. We avoid high-risk GMO ingredients, artificial colour and flavour, and most preservatives. We are constantly on the lookout for cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable options that are traceable to a specific farm.