# HOGWASH OR GREENWASH?

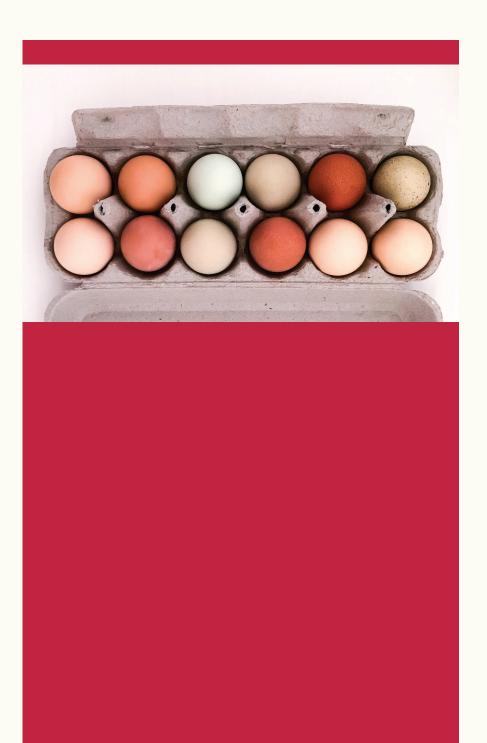
7 ways you've been misled by food labels and what to look for instead



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You've seen an egg carton before. Most are covered in a beautiful photo of a red barn and a happy chicken pecking around outside. Turns out the story behind the eggs inside may not be as idyllic as this pretty picture.



If most food these days has natural sounding labels, how do you confidently know what these claims mean?

Misleading labels are everywhere and there's a name for that. Greenwashing.

# Why is greenwashing a concern?

Because some **truly** sustainable food is often passed over for cheaper options that **appear** just as good due to these misleading sustainable food claims.

If most food these days has natural **sounding** labels, how do you confidently know what these claims mean? Has your food really has been raised ethically and sustainably? One way is to ask your farmer, or better yet, go visit your farmer out at the farm! But we know it's not feasible to personally visit every farm you source your food from. That's why we've put together a list of claims that are often misleading along with what to look for instead, so that you can choose the best quality food.

# Terms are often misleading. What to look for instead!

# Misleading Term:

### Free-Range

According to the USDA, there is no regulation for free range pigs, cattle or egg-producing chickens, meaning this label could even be applied to animal raised in confinement! For meat chickens, it can mean that animals have "access" to outdoors, however, it is unlikely that they will ever venture outside during their lifetimes.

### Clear Terms!

### **Pasture Raised**

All of the animals at Deck Family Farm are grazed on certified organic pastures where they are free to engage in their most natural behaviors; rooting, scratching and pecking to get minerals, roots and grubs from the soil and eating live, fresh, growing vegetation. During the rainiest months, they are housed in roomy barns to give the pastures time to rest.

# Cage-Free & Vegetarian Eggs

"Cage Free Eggs" are most likely from hens that just live inside a crowded barn. Yes, they are not caged, but 3ft<sup>2</sup> of livable indoor space is not much better!

Beware of eggs from "Vegetarian Hens" -you can be sure that they have never been outside, as a chicken's natural diet is composed of bugs they scratch out of the grass!

### Clear Terms!

### Pasture Raised Eggs

At Deck Family Farm, our laying hens are moved on fresh pasture where they are able to scratch, peck and enjoy fresh air and sunlight. They are also an integral part of our rotational grazing practices; the laying hens follow the cows, eating bugs and breaking down the cow pies. This results in healthier pastures, more carbon sequestration and breaks parasite life cycles.

### **Grass fed Beef**

This means the cow has eaten grass at some point in its life, which happens to be true of most beef, but many "grassfed" beef also spend the last few months of their lives being fattened on grain in a feedlot. Some beef is even erroneously labeled 100% grass fed if they've been finished on grass seed-which is a grain, not grass!

### Clear Terms!

### 100% Grassfed Beef

Deck Family Farm beef are raised on 100% grass-based diets which result in significantly higher levels of omega-3 fatty acids (fat burning fat & anti-carcinogenic). Also, well managed, growing pastures act to sequester carbon, thereby reducing green house gases, contributing to a healthier planet.

### Natural

"Natural" means no additives- but tells us nothing about the nuances of how the product was raised and produced. If there is no additional information on the label, it would be safe to assume that "natural" meat was NOT raised in a way that is evolutionarily appropriate or natural in the least.

For plant foods, this term does NOT guarantee there were not herbicides or pesticides involved.

### Clear Terms!

# **Certified Organic**

"Certified Organic" means no herbicides, pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, antibiotics, growth hormones or GMOs. It also ensures hundreds of additional humane and environmentally sound practices.

While some farms claim they follow organic practices, it takes a lot of effort to actually get and maintain the Certification, so you know that the farms that do have it deserve this designation.

All of the animals from Deck Family Farm are raised on Certified Organic Pastures and are never given growth hormones or sub-therapeutic antibiotics.

# Misleading Term: Industrial/Big Organic

Many Big Organic farms grow monocrops, which makes the crops more susceptible to diseases and then overuse "organic approved" herbicides, resulting in poor soil health and sub-par fruit and vegetables. There is a huge spectrum of organic farming practices, so keep in mind that not all organic products have been produced in the most environmentally friendly way.

### Clear Terms!

# Regenerative Organic

At Deck Family Farm, we utilize rotational grazing, which builds soil health and minimizes the need for chemical inputs. We fence off creeks and restore creek-banks by planting native plants to reclaim native riparian habitat which minimizes erosion and rebuilds native trout habitat.

We believe that one of the pillars of Organics is the reuse of materials and reduction of waste. In our Full Farm CSA, we prioritize vegetables, grains, fruits and herbs from farms that use alternative forms of pest control and use practices that regenerate the soil.

### Local

This term is 100% unregulated and open ended. A "local" business could mean that the building is located in your neighborhood but owned by a huge out of state cooperation that sells products that were not locally made and that have little to no local ingredients.

When you see this term, ask yourself:
"Do I actually know where this food came from?"
"Was this grown/made locally or just sold locally?"

### Clear Terms!

### Willamette Valley Grown

You can be sure that the Full Farm CSA's first priority is to sell products grown on farms in the Willamette Valley. In the case that it is not possible to grow an ingredient this hyper-locally, we will also support local business which use as local products as possible (i.e. it is virtually impossible to grow coffee in Oregon, so our Organic Coffee is grown in South America, but sourced from a local Roaster)

Buying real local means your food travels less miles, is guaranteed to be in season and supports the local economy. Plus, it passes through less hands before it gets to you!

### Farm Raised

All food, unless it is wild harvested, is technically raised on some type of farm, so this term tells us essentially nothing about the way it was raised.

### Clear Terms!

# **Open-Gate Policy Farms**

Always ask if you can you actually visit the farm. If the answer is no, you may ask what there is to hide. Transparency is the number one thing to look for, so go see for yourself!

### You Get What You Pay For

You may notice that many of the foods that have the labels you are looking for have a higher price point. But you may also ask "why is all the other food so cheap?" It is because the real cost of growing it has been externalized in a polluted environment and the inhumane treatment of animals which results in sub-par food, with poor flavor and less nutrients. Contrast this to truly local and sustainable food options, which usually cost more because the price reflects a responsible ethic towards environmental and humanitarian issues.

Spending your food dollars wisely isn't just for a healthier planet though- it's **good for your** health too! When we eat nutrient dense, whole foods that were raised in an evolutionarily appropriate way, our health prospers. When we eat fruits, veggies and grains grown from healthy soil, that is free of herbicides and pesticides, and food from animals that were raised outside on pasture, eating the things that they were designed to, we are putting more nutrients and less toxins into our bodies.

### Now That You Know

While there are so many good certification agencies out there, the only way to really stay on top of all of the terms is to get out there and ask yourself if you feel comfortable with how your food is being raised. A great way to do this is to join a CSA so that you can be super connected with your food's origins. At the end of the day, your Local Farmer wants you to see your farm and keep asking questions about your food!

#### You Can Trust Us

At Deck Family Farm, we are committed to the transparency of our farming practices and you are invited to take advantage of our open gate policy Monday-Saturday so you can come see for yourself where your food is coming from and how it was raised. On our Full Farm CSA member store, all of the products are labeled with the farm they came from so that our members can be more intimate with all the items on their grocery list. By partnering with neighboring farms, we are able to bring you the most local and nutrient dense food options available!



# Shop the Farm

Explore our organic-pasture raised products and discover our CSA options.



# Select a Delivery Method

Choose from a variety of pickup locations or home delivery.



# Enjoy Delicious Pasture Raised Meats

Be intentional with your food's impact on your health and the environment.

**SHOP THE FARM**