



Costco

Summary Of Costco Grade



Pollinator Health Policy

17 Out Of 45 Points

EXPLANATION OF POINTS ▾

In May, 2018, Costco released a pollinator health policy that encourages suppliers of fruits, vegetables, and live goods/plants to phase out use of neonicotinoid and chlorpyrifos pesticides. The policy encourages use of least-toxic approaches stating, "We support the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies and other creative solutions for the use of least toxic alternatives," and encourage suppliers to "limit the use of all non-essential chemicals and to utilize eco-friendly methods of pest or disease control." The policy also encourages suppliers to avoid regrettable substitution, or the replacement of one hazardous pesticide with another, and it provides a comprehensive list of potential regrettable substitutes that have been identified as acutely toxic to pollinators. Costco's pollinator health policy also states that the company supports and encourages the growth of the organic industry. On its Environmental Impacts & Land Stewardship webpage, the company states that it continues to expand organic offerings.

Costco's pollinator health policy does not include any timebound or measurable commitments to phase out pesticides of concern or expand the adoption of least-toxic practices in company food and beverage supply chains.

Commitment to reduce pesticide use

6 out of 15 points

Avoiding regrettable substitutes

5 out of 5 points

Commitment to least-toxic approaches in non-organic supply chains

1 out of 10 points

Commitment to organic

5 out of 15 points



Implementation

23.5 Out Of 90 Points

EXPLANATION OF POINTS ▾

EXPLANATION OF POINTS

Costco, via its partnership with the Equitable Food Initiative (EFI), received credit for a pilot-scale commitment to track pesticide use in its supply chain and to support growers to shift to least-toxic approaches. On Costco's Environmental Impacts & Land Stewardship webpage, the company states that as of November, 2019, 16 Costco suppliers are partnering with the Equitable Food Initiative on 33

certified operations employing nearly 30,000 workers. In addition to labor and food safety standards, EFI certification also requires an implemented integrated pest management (IPM) plan that includes a stepped approach starting with biological controls followed by cultural, physical, and finally chemical responses. EFI growers also use the Pesticide Risk Tool (PRT) developed by the IPM Institute to track all pesticide applications. The Pesticide Risk Tool tracks total pounds of pesticides used and also helps growers identify high risk uses of pesticides to reduce. Costco states that EFI is in year one of a five-year partnership with The IPM Institute to aggregate and analyze pesticide use data.

In 2020, Costco reported to Friends of the Earth that the majority of cocoa and coffee sold are either certified fair trade or organic. Cocoa is certified under the Sassandra program, which uses the Rainforest Alliance criteria for pesticides. Rainforest Alliance requires integrated pest management and prohibits use of pollinator-toxic pesticides including fipronil and neonics (imidacloprid, clothianidin, thiamethoxam) and includes requirements to mitigate the risk of 166 pesticides known to pose harm to workers, pollinators, wildlife and aquatic life, including glyphosate, chlorpyrifos, diazinon, and malathion. Coffee is certified by Fair Trade International which promotes integrated pest management and restricts use of hazardous pesticides including neonics (clothianidin, imidacloprid, thiamethoxam, acetamiprid), glyphosate, and chlorpyrifos.

In 2016, business analysts reported that Costco's organic sales exceeded \$4 billion, up from \$3 billion the previous year. Costco's website states that organic offerings comprise 33% of produce sales, and the company reported organic produce data to Friends of the Earth. Costco reports helping to incentivize the transition to organic production via multi-year commitments to growers during and after transition.

There is some evidence that Costco has taken steps to support the expansion of organic farming in the U.S. In 2016, it was reported that Costco was working with Nebraska ranchers to transition land to organic production, although there have been no public updates since then. Costco states on its website, "Where it makes sense, we work with suppliers and growers to support the conversion of conventional supplies to organic." To ensure that this important practice helps close the gap between rising demand for organic food in the U.S. and our farmers' ability to meet that demand, Friends of the Earth encourages Costco to specify what actions the company is taking to support the growth of organic agriculture in the U.S.

Costco has not measurably reduced pesticide use in its supply chain. Costco does not publicly demonstrate advocacy for public policies aimed at reducing agricultural pesticide use, protecting pollinators and supporting the expansion of organic agriculture in the U.S.

Track pesticide use in supply chain

3 out of 10 points

Measurably reduce pesticide use

0 out of 15 points

Prioritize least-toxic approaches in non-organic supply chains

5 out of 20 points

Prioritize USDA certified organic

10.5 out of 25 points

Support domestic organic growers

5 out of 15 points

Support public policies

0 out of 5 points



Transparency & Accountability

16 Out Of 21 Points

EXPLANATION OF POINTS ▾

Costco's pollinator health policy is publicly available on the company's website. The policy encourages produce and live goods suppliers to transition away from neonicotinoid and chlorpyrifos pesticides and includes a commitment to continue to grow organic offerings. Costco has educational content online about pesticides and organic food farming, including a clear definition of USDA certified organic and information on the value to pollinator and human health of decreasing use of toxic pesticides and expanding organic offerings.

Costco does not appear to include reduction of pesticides of concern to pollinators and human health or expansion of organic offerings in company Key Performance Indicators or other formal sustainability criteria.

Make policies and commitments publicly available

6 out of 6 points

Oversight

0 out of 5 points

Educate consumers

10 out of 10 points



Collaboration

5 Out Of 10 Points

EXPLANATION OF POINTS ▾

Costco has communicated with Friends of the Earth in the past year. Costco has not briefed Friends of the Earth on meaningful action the company has taken on pesticides and pollinator protection in the past three years.



Complimentary Home & Garden Policies

9 Out Of 9 Points

EXPLANATION OF POINTS ▾

In May, 2018, Costco released a pollinator health policy that encourages suppliers of fruits, vegetables, and live goods/plants to phase out use of neonicotinoid and chlorpyrifos pesticides. In 2019, Costco made a decision to no longer sell products containing glyphosate in any store locations worldwide. In 2020, Costco confirmed with Friends of the Earth that the company had also removed products containing neonicotinoids from its U.S. locations. Costco reports that it now sells a number of organic and alternative gardening products to provide customers with least-toxic options.

Policy for live goods

4 out of 4 points

Policy for on-shelf pesticide products

5 out of 5 points



Bonus Points

0 Out Of 40 Points

EXPLANATION OF POINTS ▾

70.5 Points

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GRADE

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