



Friends of the Earth
Climate-Friendly Food
For Healthy Kids and a Healthy Planet

Conversation Guide: Understanding Farm Practices



About the Guide

This guide is designed to help food purchasers build a stronger relationship with suppliers. You can use these questions to learn how a farmer approaches soil health, pest management, biodiversity, livestock, and farm resilience.

This guide is not meant to be an assessment. If you are interested in assessing how a producer's practices align with your procurement goals, please see the Farmer Questionnaire for Regenerative & Climate-Smart Practices.

If farmers report having a certification, please see Friends of the Earth's [Regenerative Food Label Guide](#) to assess the strengths of an organic or regenerative certification. While looking for products with certified organic or other meaningful regenerative labels is ideal, there are many uncertified farmers and ranchers using organic and regenerative practices.

Start the conversation

"We're interested in learning more about how you farm (or ranch) and the practices you use to care for your soil, biodiversity, and farm environment. There's no single definition of regenerative or climate-smart farming, so we're hoping to understand your approach."

1. Certifications:

Do you participate in any certifications, labeling programs, or other initiatives that verify your farming practices?

2. Farm Practices:

What are some of the practices you're most proud of on your farm or ranch?

3. Soil health:

How do you build and maintain healthy soil?

4. Pest Management:

How do you manage pests? Do you use any preventive practices? Do you avoid any pesticides (which includes herbicides, insecticides, and fungicides) due to their toxicity to health or the environment?

5. Biodiversity and habitat:

How do you support biodiversity or beneficial insects on the farm?

6. Livestock:

If you raise livestock, how do you manage grazing, animal welfare, and feed?

7. Farm goals:

Are there practices you're working toward, or changes you're hoping to make?

Close the conversation

"Thank you for sharing how you farm (or ranch). This helps us better understand the practices behind the food we purchase and how we can build stronger partnerships with producers. Is there anything about your practices that we didn't talk about that you would like to share?"



About Friends of the Earth's Climate-Friendly School Food Program

Friends of the Earth's Climate-Friendly School Food Program helps school districts make shifts toward delicious, plant-forward, and organic menus that benefit students and the planet. We work with over 100 school districts in California, as well as state agencies, NGO partners, and organic and regenerative farmers. We provide organic procurement and plant-based technical assistance and marketing materials, support student and community engagement strategies, and link school districts with the resources they need in order to be successful. Our Organic School Food Initiative, launched in California, aims to make organic foods available to every student. We also partner with school districts and NGOs to advocate for state and federal policy change. For more information or to request support please email climatefriendlyfood@foe.org.

