

Co-op
America's



Dear Readers,

When you buy Fair Trade, you become part of the proud history of people standing for human rights.

Committing to purchase Fair Trade sugar (p. 1) is one of the newest ways to stand for people and the planet—and one of the oldest. In the late 1700s, as people across Great Britain learned about the horrors of the slave trade, many began buying sugar that came not from plantations, but from farms free of slave labor. Each purchase supported human rights, educated more people, and helped end the British slave trade.

Likewise, when you buy solar (p. 4), you take a big step to curb the climate crisis and signal the market to go green at great speed and scale.

And when neighbors get together to do green home repair (p. 2), you save money and build community.

That's what green practice is—advancing many solutions with steps you can take every day.

Here's to going green,

Alisa
Alisa Gravitz

Executive Director

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RealMoney

Live healthier. Save more. Invest wisely. Make a difference.

REAL LIVING

The Sweet Side of Fair Trade

Fair Trade white, brown, and powdered sugar is now widely available. Buy it to help protect sugar farmers and the environment.

Sustainability has always been an important value at Food For Thought, the gourmet organic food company Timothy Young started over ten years ago. All of his products—from strawberry preserves to corn muffin mix—include certified organic fruits and vegetables. Social justice has also been a strong part of his mission, so when he saw the opportunity to sweeten his preserves with Fair Trade Certified™ sugar, he leapt at it.

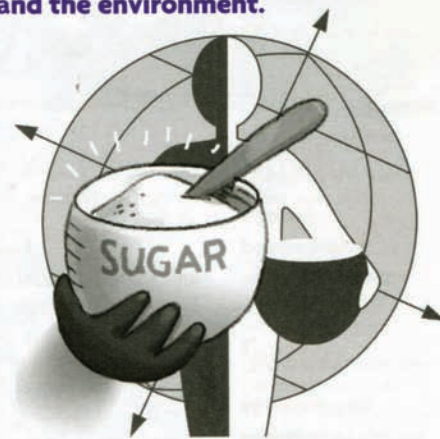
"Choosing Fair Trade, organic sugar was an easy decision for us," says Young. "The fruit we use comes from local farmers with whom we have direct relationships, so we know that both people and the planet are being treated fairly. Now we can also guarantee that the sugar we use is providing a fair wage to small-scale farmers around the world."

Young uses Fair Trade Certified sugar to make his unique preserves, and you can use it in our own kitchen. Fair Trade sugar, which made its US debut in 2005, is now widely available to consumers in grocery stores and online—giving people the opportunity to buy white, brown, and powdered sugar that benefits both people and the planet.

Conventional Sugar: Not So Sweet

About 85 percent of the sugar sold in the US is grown domestically, but much of that farming is controlled by large corporations under conditions that harm the environment.

About half of the sugarcane in the US comes from southern Florida, where the sugarcane industry has been encroaching on the Florida Everglades for nearly a century. More than a billion gallons of water are diverted away from the Everglades to the sugarcane fields every day, according to the Everglades Trust Foundation. In addition, phosphorus run-offs from the sugar industry have



devastated the Everglades' ecosystem, and the sugar lobby (called "Big Sugar" by critics) has worked aggressively to avoid responsibility for repairing the damage.

The sugar lobby has consistently worked to postpone the deadlines for cleaning up contaminated water and has shifted the burden of paying for clean-up to tax payers, says Joe Browder, board member of the nonprofit Friends of the Everglades.

"Sugar controls the way water flows through South Florida, both environmentally and economically," says Browder. "It is depriving the protected Everglades of water in the dry season, and dumping excess water into all the Everglades and south Florida coastal communities in the wet season. When sugar growers need to keep their land dry, they treat the rest of south Florida like a toilet. And those issues are no closer to being resolved in favor of the Everglades."

US trade policies protect the jobs of domestic sugar farmers, but they result in sugar prices in the US that are usually about three times the price of sugar on the world market, damaging farmers around the world who cannot compete in an unfair

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The Sweet Side of Fair Trade

continued from page 1

what?

Buy Fair Trade Certified™ sugar and vanilla.

why?

Get white, powdered, and brown sugar while supporting small-scale farmers around the world.

wow!

Encourage the market for even more Fair Trade goods, where the workers who made or grew them have enough to meet their needs, improve their communities, and protect the Earth.

US sugar market. High sugar costs also affect manufacturers of food products and beverages in the US, and their customers; a 2003 report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) estimates that the US sugar program costs consumers roughly \$1.5 billion dollars a year.

And these protectionist policies don't necessarily help small farmers. The OECD estimates that over 40 percent of US policy benefits go to just 1 percent of all sugar producers.

Sugarcane farming abroad does not have a better record. The World Wildlife Fund estimates that, because of habitat destruction, intensive water use, heavy use of chemicals, and polluted wastewater, sugar may be responsible for more biodiversity loss than any other crop worldwide.

And the harvesting of sugar has often been plagued with labor problems. According to a 2004 report by Human Rights Watch, up to one third of sugarcane plantation workers in El Salvador are under 18 years old, and reports from the Philippines, China, and Tanzania all expose rampant use of child labor on sugar plantations.

Better Options: Fair Trade Sugar

If you want a sweetener that is easy on the environment and supports your local economy,

you can look for locally grown organic maple syrup or honey. But if it's sugar you need, Fair Trade Certified™ sugar is now increasingly available in stores throughout the US and online.

Through Fair Trade, farmers are paid a guaranteed price for their products—a price that covers their living costs while also helping to improve their communities. The Fair Trade price also includes a “social premium,” which is used for social projects decided upon democratically by the farmers, and an additional premium is paid for sugarcane that is certified organic.

“Fair Trade certification ensures that sugarcane farmers receive a fair price for their harvest, helping farmers around the world put food on their tables,” says Anthony Marek, public relations director at TransFair USA, which certifies Fair Trade sugar for sale in the US. “It also creates direct trade links between farmers and buyers, and provides access to affordable credit. And Fair Trade premiums allow farmers to invest in and improve their communities.”

Sugarcane farmers in the Chikwawa district of Malawi have put the Fair Trade premiums to life-saving use. Before the Kasinthula Cane Growers sugar cooperative was certified by the Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International in 2002, people in the farmers' villages were beset by waterborne illnesses like bilharzias, cholera, and dysentery. The cooperative's first project using the Fair Trade premiums was the drilling of two wells, which now provide clean drinking water to two villages and help prevent these diseases. The cooperative has also used its Fair Trade premiums to bring electricity to the village of Chinangwa, and members are currently at work building a school.

In addition to guaranteeing farmers a fair price, Fair Trade certification also helps farmers use environmentally sustainable farming practices. On Fair Trade farms, producers must adhere to strict standards regarding the use and handling of pesticides; the protection of natural waters, virgin forest, and other ecosystems of high ecological value; and the management of erosion and waste, according to TransFair USA.

And the premiums that come with Fair Trade certification often enable farmers to switch to organic farming—90 percent of the Fair Trade Certified™ sugar in the US is also certified organic.

Also Available: Fair Trade Vanilla

Not only can you now sweeten your recipes with Fair Trade Certified™ sugar—you can also use Fair Trade Certified vanilla extract. After being sold in Europe for a number of years, Fair Trade vanilla is finally available to US consumers.

Vanilla is generally regarded as one of the most labor intensive crops on the planet. According to TransFair USA, it can take three years from planting the vine to the first bloom.

Attention was brought to vanilla farmers after 2000, when political turmoil and environmental disasters in Indonesia and Madagascar, the world's largest vanilla-growing countries, caused a severe shortage in the worldwide vanilla supply. Farmers in Africa and Latin America started planting vanilla in hopes of reaping the benefit of higher vanilla prices caused by the supply shortage; however, most companies simply switched to using less expensive synthetic vanilla flavoring, causing natural vanilla prices to plummet. The lack of income from their vanilla crops forced vanilla farmers around the world to abandon or uproot their crops, driving them even further into poverty and even causing riots and violence in some areas. Fair Trade certification has brought much-needed stability to world vanilla farmers, who can now invest in their crops knowing that they will be able to sell their harvests for a fair price.

And like sugar and all Fair Trade Certified commodities, Fair Trade vanilla is farmed with the environment in mind. About 90 percent of the Fair Trade vanilla certified for sale in the US by TransFair USA is also certified organic.

It's still hard to find Fair Trade vanilla on store shelves—so ask your local grocery to carry it, or order it through Frontier Co-op, (www.frontiercoop.com).

Fair Trade Guide & More

- **Co-op America's Guide to Fair Trade:** Our free guide (you'll only pay for shipping) can help you educate others about Fair Trade and take action to help it grow. Call 800/58-GREEN or visit our Web site, www.fairtradeaction.org.
- **Co-op America's Fair Trade program:** Learn about other Fair Trade Certified™ products by visiting our Web site, www.coopamerica.org/programs/fairtrade/products.

FAIR TRADE SUGAR RETAILERS:

- **Alter-Eco** ☐, 415/701-1212, www.altereco-usa.com.
- **Dean's Beans** ☐, 800/325-3008, www.deansbeans.com.
- **Equal Exchange** ☐, 774/776-7333, www.equalexchange.com. Wholesale and retail.
- **Frontier** ☐, 800/669-3275, www.frontiercoop.com.
- **La Siembra Cooperativa** ☐, 613/235-6122, www.cocoacamino.com.
- **Wholesome Sweeteners** ☐, 800/680-1896, www.wholesomesweeteners.com. Sells brown, white, and powdered sugar. Wholesale and retail.

RETAILERS OF ITEMS MADE WITH FAIR TRADE SUGAR:

- **Food for Thought** ☐, 888/935-2748, www.foodforthought.net. Jams made with Fair Trade sugar.
- **Simply Organic** ☐, 800/437-3301, www.simplyorganicfoods.com. Fair Trade baking mixes.

What You Can Do

Go Fair Trade for your sweet needs by purchasing Fair Trade Certified sugar. If your local grocer doesn't have it, ask that they carry it and order it online until it's available locally.

Learn more about Fair Trade and take action to promote it by joining Co-op America's Fair Trade Alliance and by requesting a copy of our new *Guide to Fair Trade*. 🍃

—Sarah Tarver-Wahlquist

Divine Chocolate Chunk Bars

This year, Fair Trade chocolate company Divine Chocolate ☐ launched its first-ever "Hungry to Change the World" Recipe Contest. Emma Grinde's Divine Chocolate Chunk Bars won second place. To find other recipes from the contest, visit www.divinechocolateusa.com.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup melted butter
- 2 cups Fair Trade white sugar
- 1 cup Fair Trade brown sugar
- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp. Fair Trade vanilla
- ½ tsp. salt
- 4 eggs
- 1.5-oz. bar Divine milk chocolate, chopped
- 1.5-oz. bar Divine dark chocolate, chopped

Mix all the ingredients together. Pour mixture into a greased 9 X 13 pan. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes.

CONCERNED CONSUMER

Chemicals in Car Seats

The car seats that keep your children or grandchildren safe while riding in an automobile could be offgassing toxic chemicals. A 2007 study by the Michigan-based Ecology Center found that of the 62 leading-brand car seats it tested, one-third had one or more components containing high levels of toxins linked to cancer, neurotoxicity, reproductive toxicity, or other health problems.

The chemicals for which the Ecology Center tested include:

BROMINE: Indicates the presence of brominated flame retardants. These toxins may be linked to cancer, neurotoxicity, hormone disruption, and fertility problems. They break down in sunlight, increasing exposure.

CHLORINE: Indicates the likely presence of polyvinyl chloride (PVC), which releases carcinogenic dioxin when manufactured or incinerated. Soft PVC plastic contains "plasticizers" that can offgas and are linked to hormone disruption.

LEAD: A potent neurotoxicant, lead is linked to kidney, nerve, and reproductive toxicity. It can break down into easily inhaled dust.

HEAVY METALS: including antimony and arsenic, both carcinogens.

"Children have the highest exposure and are the most vulnerable population in terms of exposure to chemical-laden dust and inhaling toxic fumes, since their systems are still developing," states the study.

While a third of all the seats the Center tested had significant toxicity issues, the good news is that least-toxic options are readily available. Over 40 percent of seat cushions tested contained no brominated flame retardants and 77 percent of the seats were free of PVC-plastic. All of the 62 car seats were found at national chains Babies 'R' Us and Target.

Best and Worst Car Seats

INFANT SEATS: The Graco Snuggly Emerson won top marks from the Ecology Center for protecting infant health. Testers found some bromine in the shade, but the rest was free of the chemical, and the entire seat was

free of chlorine and lead. It received a 0.2 rating on a 0-5 scale, with 0 being the least toxic. The Evenflo Discovery Churchill came in a close second with a 0.4 rating.

Worst infant seats include the Combi Centre EX Mango and the Peg Perego Primo Vaggio Toffee. Testers found bromine all over the Combi, and found chlorine in its shade. It received a 5.0 rating, the highest possible for toxicity, and the Peg Perego Primo came in at 3.8.

CONVERTIBLE SEATS: When it comes to seats that convert from a rear-facing infant seat to a forward-facing toddler seat, you can't go wrong with a Cosco Scenera 5-Point or an Eddie Bauer 3-in-1 Convertible Montecito, which both received 0.4 ratings. Bottom dwellers in the rankings included the Britax Marathon Platinum and the Cosco Alpha Omega Elite, with a 5.0 and a 2.9 ranking, respectively.

BOOSTERS: Best performers in the child booster category were the Evenflo Big Kid No-Back Gold Dust (0.2) and the Britax Parkway Express (0.5). The Graco Turboboooster Emily and the Graco Turboboooster SafeSeat (Step 3) Athens both got dismal 5.0 markings.

To choose a healthy car seat or see how your child's seat ranks when it comes to toxic ingredients, check the Ecology Center's car seat database at www.healthycar.org.

The study reflects only those seats sold in late 2006, so the Center notes that you shouldn't make assumptions for seats sold earlier than that based on the study.

If you already have a problematic car seat, consider replacing it, if you can. "Based on available evidence, the chemicals we tested in car seats do not pose an immediate health concern," writes Jeff Gearhart, director of the Center's Healthy Car campaign. "However, children are exposed to these chemicals from numerous products. Altogether, these exposures can and often do result in higher levels in children over time." 🍃

—Tracy Fernandez Rysavy