

Industry Leadership - Pesticides

Companies all along the supply chain are demonstrating leadership on pesticides and pollinator health by phasing out pollinator-toxic pesticides in their supply chains, planting pollinator habitat and supporting farmers to transition to an integrated pest management (IPM) approach.

ALDI, a German supermarket chain, became the first major retailer to [ask](#) its German and Dutch fruit and vegetable suppliers to stop using eight pesticides hazardous to bees. ALDI also [announced](#) in January 2016 that it is expanding its selection of organic meat and produce in its U.S. stores.

Whole Foods [issued](#) its Responsibly Grown product rating system in 2014, which grades fresh fruit, vegetables and flowers as “good, better or best” based on established criteria, including pollinator protection. It encourages its suppliers to eliminate or reduce highly toxic pesticides, including four of the most commonly used neonicotinoid pesticides.

General Mills [invested](#) \$4 million in pollinator habitat and is working to disseminate [guidance](#) to growers of key commodities, such as corn and soy, on how to protect and minimize the impact of neonicotinoids and other pesticides on pollinators.

[Pop Weaver](#), [Pop Secret](#) and [Preferred Popcorn](#) announced phase-outs of neonicotinoids on corn seed.

Lamb Weston/ConAgra Foods instituted an [IPM Program](#) and a grower Information Edge Program, which consolidates IPM data and centralizes information. As part of the [Potato Sustainability Initiative](#), the company has adopted specific criteria to minimize pesticide use to protect pollinators.

Sysco [adopted](#) a Sustainable Agriculture/Integrated Pest Management program. The program includes 50 crops for 74 Sysco brand suppliers of canned and frozen fruit, vegetables and potatoes, which covers 180 food factories and nearly 900,000 cultivated acres. Suppliers that participate must [track](#) their pesticide use and aim to reduce the product’s toxicity. In 2013, Sysco suppliers reported avoiding 4.6 million pounds of pesticides and 18.8 million pounds of chemical fertilizer. In 2014, Sysco adopted standards under the program to encourage Sysco brand suppliers to protect and create habitat for pollinators.

Industry Leadership - Organic

Along with increasing organic offerings, leading companies are helping build the organic value chain. They are supporting farmers during the three-year transition from conventional to organic, establishing more secure contracts between buyers and sellers, helping purchase and secure access to land and building needed supply chain infrastructure.

Whole Foods created a [loan program](#) for small, local, independent producers, including organic farmers, to help them expand their businesses.

PCC Natural Markets supports preservation of farmland through [PCC Farmland Trust](#), which the Seattle-based co-op founded in 1999.

Target set a goal to increase its organic food and beverage offerings by 25 percent by 2017 and [met and exceeded](#) the goal two years early. Target also began a new line of organic “farm to shelf” products in 2015, employing innovative practices such as forward contracting and assisting farmers with federal regulatory hurdles. A percentage of each purchase from the Beekman 1802 Farm Pantry products go towards [supporting small farms](#).

Costco is [contracting](#) with Nebraska ranchers to raise cattle on organically managed fields, and in a model that could be applied across the U.S., the company is working with produce farmers in Baja California to help them buy 1,200 acres of land and purchase farm equipment.

The Organic Grain Collaboration is a precompetitive industry effort led by organic food companies to increase the [domestic supply](#) of organic grain in the United States, improve market access for organic grain farmers and improve the resiliency of organic grain production.

Nature’s Path has purchased [5,640 acres](#) to lease to organic family farmers, including Vilicus Farms in northern Montana. They [share risk](#) with the farmers through a crop share leasing program and support farmers to educate the next generation of new farmers.

Clif Bar helped one of its growers, San Joaquin Figs, tackle the cost of [transitioning 300 acres](#) of figs to organic by agreeing up front to buy those figs for seven years after they receive organic certification. In addition, Clif Bar agreed to purchase the grower’s smaller, pre-existing organic fig supply during the three-year transition.

Clif Bar and Organic Valley invested \$2 million to [establish](#) a University of Wisconsin-Madison endowed chair to support organic plant breeding research to help address the critical shortage in [organic seed](#) supply.

Kashi developed a [certified transitional](#) program to create a new market for U.S. farmers in the three-year transition to organic certification.

General Mills [committed](#) to double the organic acreage from which it sources ingredients by 2019, including a [partnership](#) with Organic Valley to drive more acres in the U.S. into organic certification.