



West End Well Food Ethics Charter

Radical and Realistic

The West End Well's Food Vision

Part of the Well's mission is to contribute to the development of a truly sustainable, ethical and accessible food system in Ottawa. We believe that this means seeing changes to our food system in three key areas: how food is produced, how it is sourced, and how accessible it is to people in Ottawa. We believe that we can achieve a radical change over time through consistent, realistic effort.

Radical and Realistic

We are committed to the principles outlined in this charter and we will strive to reflect them wherever possible. We recognize that changing our food system will take time. We believe that in order for the West End Well to exist long enough to be a real and sustained part of that change, we will need to be realistic and patient in how we work towards these principles.

How do we want to see food produced? Why?

We believe that in order to be truly sustainable and ethical, food must be produced in ways that maintain and improve the health of our soils and waterways, encourage biodiversity, do not introduce harmful substances into the environment, treat animals humanely and result in nutritious and delicious food.

Where do we want our food to be from? Why?

We believe that in order for our food system to be resilient and secure over the long-term, we need staple foods to be produced locally. To enable this, we need to pay farmers and food processors living wages, and we need to encourage and support diverse economic activity around food production and processing in our community.

How can we make good food accessible to everyone? Why is this important?

We understand that food that is in line with this food vision is generally more expensive than conventional alternatives. As such, this type of food is often only accessible to a portion of the population. The West End Well is committed to exploring ways to make good food more accessible to everyone in the community. We believe this is important because social change is only possible when it is inclusive.

The West End Well's Procurement Principles

In order to be in line with this vision, the West End Well will purchase food for its grocery and café based on the following guidelines:

1. As our first choice, we will source local, organic products.
2. When local and organic is unavailable, we will source local, conventionally farmed products that have been produced using practices that are as closely aligned with our vision as possible.
3. When local is unavailable, we will work with local farmers to address this over time if at all possible and meanwhile we will source organic products from a distance.
4. When not possible to source organic products from a distance, we will source core* conventional products from a distance.
5. In cases where preferred^, core* products are only available at prices that create a barrier, we will also carry conventional products to address the need for accessibility.
6. We will build long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with local food producers and processors to ensure that we know how products are grown and prepared. This will maximize the benefit to farmers and to the West End Well.
7. We will work with other food vendors in walking distance of the West End Well to ensure that the West End Well fills a specific niche in the community and to help ensure that customers' food needs can be met within walking distance.

***Core** = groceries that we are committed to carrying at all times

^Preferred = products that align with the West End Well's food vision