

## Food Services of America is first broadliner to have ops certified sustainable

*Citing consumer skepticism toward green claims, distributor seeks independent verification for Woodburn, Ore., facility*

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Food Services of America (FSA) said it has become the first broadline foodservice distributor in the United States certified for sustainable business practices.

FSA, the nation's sixth largest broadline foodservice distributor serving customers in 15 western and mid-western states, said the first of its nine regional distribution facilities, located in Woodburn, Ore., recently passed a third-party audit by Food Alliance.

Portland, Ore.-based Food Alliance certifies farms, ranches and food processors for sustainable agricultural and production practices such as safe and fair working conditions, reduction of pesticide use and toxicity, healthy and humane care for livestock, no genetically modified crops or livestock and no hormones or non-therapeutic antibiotics.

Over 300 farms and ranches in 23 U.S. states, Canada and Mexico are certified as sustainable by Food Alliance. These producers manage over 5.5 million acres of range and farm land, raising beef, lamb, pork, dairy products, mushrooms, dried beans and lentils, wheat, and a wide variety of fruits and vegetables.

Annual sales of products certified under its comprehensive eco-labeling program hit \$100 million in 2007, and cumulative sales of Food Alliance-certified products reached \$350 million since the group's inception in 1998.

Food Services of America president Randy Irvine listed customer demand and the opportunity to demonstrate industry leadership as reasons the company sought certification.

"With the corporate scandals of the last few years, and with greenwashing, people have become really skeptical," said Irvine. "If a company is going to make sustainability claims, I think those claims should be independently verified and substantiated."

Irvine said FSA is hearing from restaurants, schools, hospitals, and foodservice operations that sustainability is increasingly important.

"There's a movement building and we want to be in the forefront of that movement," he said.

FSA's certification started with a pilot program to offer more local and sustainable products in Oregon, Irvine said.

FSA carries Food Alliance-certified products including Shepherd's Grain flour, cheeses from Rogue Creamery, and canned products from Truitt Brothers.

"The response has been very good," he said. "So, we definitely want to work with suppliers who are willing to consider Food Alliance certification, bring more of those products on board, and have more to offer to our customers."

FSA's Woodburn facility has also taken a number of steps to reduce its environmental footprint including installing energy efficient reflective roofing on eight acres of buildings - reducing the amount of energy needed for air conditioners and freezers.

The company also installed energy efficient lighting with motion detectors to turn lights on and off automatically in warehouse or office areas; recycling water used for washing trucks; recycling paper, cardboard, shrink wrap and scrap metal; collecting stormwater runoff in a filtering pool on the property rather than allowing it to run into the sewer; and reducing delivery fleet fuel consumption by adding more fuel efficient tractors, enforcing idling policies, adding automatic cutoffs for refrigeration units when doors open, and limiting road miles with distribution management software.

"By holding itself to an independent standard for social and environmental performance and allowing a third-party to inspect their facility and evaluate management practices, Food Services of America is offering its customers transparency and accountability," said Food Alliance executive director Scott Exo. "Companies willing to do that are companies you can trust."