

## Certified sustainable Sysco subsidiary lays out eco-strategy

*Fulton Provision Company to replace older processing machines as part of Food Alliance certification*

by Sustainable Food News  
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Fulton Provision Company, Sysco Corporation's meat processing and distribution subsidiary, Monday laid out a sustainability strategy as part of its recent certification under the Food Alliance's (FA) comprehensive eco-labeling program.

**Sustainable Food News** first reported on [Fulton's certification earlier this month](#), when it was announced at the FA's 10th Anniversary Dinner.

The nonprofit's executive director Scott Exo told **SFN** at the annual event that Fulton was certified in February, the first meat processor to do so. Both FA and Fulton are headquartered in Portland, Ore.

Fulton processes, packages, and delivers beef products, and supplies more than 1,000 customers throughout Oregon, Washington, Idaho, California, Utah, Nevada, Arizona and Montana. The company was founded in 1921 and is headquartered in Portland, Ore. It was acquired by Sysco in July 2001.

"Consumers are concerned about health and food safety," said Tom Semke, Fulton's senior vice president of sales and marketing. "They are asking more questions about where their food comes from and how it was grown. As a meat processor and distributor, we see sustainability as extending the commitment we have to food safety to a broader context of protecting human and environmental health."

FA's certification standards address pesticide use, labor conditions, animal welfare, humane animal care, and wildlife habitat stewardship.

"The Food Alliance audit covers different ground," said Semke. "It's very comprehensive in terms of social and environmental issues."

Over 275 farms and ranches in 17 U.S. states, Canada and Mexico are certified as sustainable by FA. These producers manage over 5.1 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.

Food Alliance has certified three distribution facilities, 13 processors offering cheeses, dried beans and lentils, and frozen and canned fruits and vegetables, and three business units of a major Pacific Northwest produce distributor; in addition to Fulton Provision.

Certified businesses can use the green, FA eco-label on its products to show off social and environmental responsibility. Sales last year of FA-certified food products were estimated to hit \$100 million.

Some of the steps Fulton has taken to reduce its environmental footprint include installing energy efficient lighting with a dimmer system that turns off lights automatically in empty rooms, installing self-closing doors on all coolers, recycling paper, cardboard, steel drums, aluminum, and damaged pallets, using biodiesel in all delivery vehicles, and enforcing minimum tonnage requirements for delivery routes.

Fulton also uses recycling water chillers on two packaging machines which prevents clean city water from being pumped into the sewer. Fulton sources beef from FA-certified Country Natural Beef ranches.

Fulton's goals for further improving its environmental footprint – required as part of its certification - include adding additional recycling water chillers to packaging machines, replacing older processing machines with more efficient models that will substantially reduce daily power spikes, and recycling packaging film that is currently discarded with waste.

Fulton is also working with a local company to develop a method for converting solid, inedible fat and trimmings into biodiesel.

Addressing social responsibility, Fulton is also partnering with Work Force Oregon and Mt. Hood Community College in a pilot program to provide underserved and educationally challenged job seekers with food safety and sanitation skills for careers in food processing.

Last month, the American Grassfed Association (AGA) said its board has voted to start certifying grass-fed meat operations under a new industry-backed standard administered by Food Alliance. The AGA represents more than 300 grassfed livestock producers.