

# The Sentinel

## What is real food?

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Shopping for healthy food can be daunting. "organically grown" versus "certified organic" versus "chemical-free" - what do they all mean?

- Food Alliance Certified means that the farm has made a commitment to protect, conserve, and enhance soil, water, wildlife habitat and biodiversity; to conserve energy, reduce and recycle waste; reduce the use of pesticides and other toxic or hazardous materials; support safe and fair working conditions; healthy, humane animal treatment; no genetically engineered or artificial ingredients; transparent and traceable supply chains.

Food Alliance certification is backed by independent third-party inspection.

- Certified organic means that the farm has been certified under U.S. Department of Agriculture standards. The USDA requires that anyone who produces, processes or handles organic agricultural products must be certified by a USDA-accredited certifier in order to sell, label or represent their products as "organic."

To become certified, an organic producer, processor or handler must develop, implement and maintain an organic system plan. Organic certification is not a reflection or comment on the quality or purity of the product. It is evidence of the operations' adherence to a prescribed system of agriculture food production that involves the building and enhancing of the soil naturally, protection of the environment, humane treatment of animals and avoidance of toxic synthetic substances.

- Naturally grown is primarily a means of ensuring fair and orderly trade of organic products. To be granted the CNG certification, farmers don't use any synthetic herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers, antibiotics, hormones, or genetically modified organisms.

CNG livestock are raised mostly on pasture and with space for freedom of movement and their feed is grown without synthetic inputs.