

# 3

## Producer Guide

---

We've collected information on a number of companies who make sustainable, kosher food products. Not all products may be available in your area; if not, consider organizing a bulk order to share the cost of shipping, and ask the company whether they have plans to expand to your area. If they perceive there is a demand, they will generally work to meet it.

## Kosher Sustainable Meat

---

Recent scandals in the kosher meat world have led many to reconsider what kosher meat really means. While we might have at one time assumed that kosher meat was healthier and more sustainable, in fact most kosher meat is raised the same as conventional non-kosher meat.

However, a small number of crusaders have launched companies to make sustainably-raised kosher meat available. Raising animals on pasture, the old fashioned way, produces meat that is delicious and sustainable, but is also complex and expensive. Adding on the layers of kosher production makes it even more complicated! Nevertheless, as more and more people are looking for meat that meets their standards of kashrut, as well as environmental sustainability, worker treatment and animal welfare, these companies are in the right place at the right time.

**Green Pastures Poultry:** Founded by Ariella Reback in Cleveland, Ohio, this company offers chicken, duck, turkey, and free-range eggs. Green Pastures Poultry can also help you organize an on-farm slaughter with your community.

**Grow and Behold Foods:** Founded by Naf and Anna Hanau, Grow and Behold Foods currently offers pasture-raised chicken under the product line Sara's Spring Chicken, delivered fresh in the New York, Boston and Philadelphia areas.

**KOL Foods:** Founded by Devora Kimmelman-Block in the Washington, DC area, KOL Foods (which stands for "Kosher Organic Local" offers grass-fed beef, lamb and poultry, shipped frozen nation-wide.

**Red Heifer Farm:** A new farm in New York State that provides kosher, grass-fed beef; currently available at farmer's markets in New York City.

## Kosher Sustainable Cheese

---

Until recently, the world of kosher cheese was pretty bleak. On the one hand you had shrink-wrapped, industrial produced (but kosher certified) brands like Miller's. On the other, you had artisanal, raw-milk and hand-crafted (but not kosher certified) cheeses. These days the tide is turning. While not all certified-organic, the cheese companies below allow you to have your kosher cheese and eat ethically too!

**5-Spoke Creamery:** Cheesemakers Alan and Barbara Glustoff start with raw milk from grassfed cows that are free of hormones and antibiotics, and produce delicious, hand-crafted artisanal cheeses, including Cheddar, Herbal Jack, Colby, Tumbleweed, Talcott, and Browning Gold aged cheddar. Kof-K certified.

**Mainland Grass-fed Organic:** This New Zealand-based company now offers a grass-fed organic cheddar that is OK-certified. Check out The Kosher Blog's Mainland endorsement.

**Organic Meadow Cottage Cheese** - This Canadian company produces organic cottage cheeses that feature kosher certification as well as a mild, creamy taste.

**Organic Valley Cottage Cheese** - The cottage cheese from Organic Valley is hand-crafted without preservatives or additives, free of animal byproducts, hormones or antibiotics and comes from humanely-treated cows.

**Redwood Hill Farm** - These artisanally crafted goat cheeses are delicious and kosher-certified. They offer creamy chevres, goat feta, and several other varieties of goat-milk cheeses. While Redwood Hill Farm is not certified organic, they use almost exclusively organic practices.

**Sugar River Cheese Company** - This Wisconsin-based cheese company produces a wide variety of cheeses (everything from White Cheddar Chipotle to Prairie Jack with

Parsely and Chive) all certified by the Chicago Rabbinical Council and the OK. All of their products are free of growth-hormones (and some of the milk comes from nearby Amish farms). The company also has a charitable giving program.

**Tillamook Kosher Cheddar** – This Oregon-based company is actually a 98-year old farmer cooperative. Like all of their cheeses, the milk used to make their kosher-certified cheddar is free of growth hormones. (For folks living in or visiting the Pacific Northwest, a visit to their factory is also a lot of fun!)

#### **Bonus!**

The biggest difficulty with making kosher cheese is finding a rennet (the milk coagulant) that does not come from an animal – traditionally a cow stomach. Here are some traditional vegetable rennets that are animal-free: fig leaf sap, melon, thistle flowers, safflower, lemon juice, and bay leaves.

## **Kosher Sustainable Wine**

Organic wine can be hard to find, but there is more and more of it available on the shelves. Additionally, many wines from Europe are completely or almost completely organic, even if they're not certified. Ask your sommelier! Kosher Organic wine is even more difficult to find – but it does exist! Here are several wineries that make kosher organic wine.

**Four Gates Winery** – California-based, Organic, Kosher and Kosher for Pesach, not Mevushal, several varieties

**Yarden Chardonnay Odem Organic** – Israel-based, Organic, Kosher, Kosher for Pesach, not Mevushal

**Hafner Winery** – Austria-based, bottled under the name “Queen Esther,” Organically-grown grapes, Kosher for Pesach, Mevushal, several varieties

**Baron Herzog** – California based, Not certified organic, but many of Baron Herzog’s wines come from “sustainably grown/low spray” grapes. Mevushal and many varieties. Ask your supplier or contact the company for more details.

## **Kosher Sustainable Chocolate**

CHOCOLATE. Need we say more? Actually yes – because a run-of-the mill bar of Hershey’s pales in comparison to the sweet cocoa ambrosia listed below. All of the chocolate snacks included on the list are kosher-certified and some combination of organic, fair trade, cane-sugar sweetened, and vegan.

**Chocolove** - Made in Colorado, these chocolate bars are organic, kosher (Scroll K, Denver), and come in a variety of different flavors from ginger to orange peel, to toffee and almonds. They are also some of the most beautifully wrapped chocolate bars we’ve ever seen.

**Dagoba** – Dagoba chocolates are made by an Oregon-based company with organic, certified fair-trade and KSA kosher, and the bars come either plain (milk or dark chocolate) or infused with dried cherry, hazelnut, coffee, hot chili, or mint. Dagoba also makes amazing hot chocolate mix.

**Equal Exchange** – This Massachusetts-based fair trade organization doesn’t just sell coffee anymore. Their chocolate bars and hot chocolate are made with organic ingredients and are certified by the Kashrut Council of Canada.

**Lake Champlain** – This Vermont-based

company makes both conventional and organic chocolates, all of which are certified kosher.

### **Late July Dark Chocolate Sandwich Cookies**

– The cocoa flavor in these cookies stands up to any bar of chocolate – and there’s even more chocolaty-goodness (in creme form) inside! These cookies are certified by the OU and are also organic.

**Seeds of Change** - These chocolate bars look and taste like treasure from a far-off country. Their Santa Caterina bar is filled with exotic bites of mango, toasted coconut, and cashews and, like all their chocolate bars, is certified kosher and made with organic ingredients.

**Sunspire** - These chocolate bars (and baking chips and candies) have it all. They are certified organic and kosher (OU), come in a variety of yummy flavors like raspberry, peanut, and peppermint pattie, are sweetened with natural cane juice and organic sugars, offer vegan-friendly options.

**Terra Nostra** - These chocolate bars are organic, certified kosher and sinfully rich. Terra Nostra is also founding member of Equitable Trade, which gives farmers fair trade benefits with organic chocolate production, and offers several vegan bars. Terra Nostra will soon introduce a line of truffles to go with their bars, specializing in pomegranate and ancho chili flavors.

## **Prices: Can we afford to do this?**

You can’t afford not to! Buying sustainable products may be a little more expensive, but once you know what you are (or aren’t) paying for, the benefits of sustainable foods on the health of your community and the environment outweigh the slight price increase. It may mean that you will have to adjust your institution’s budget to spend more on food, but it is an important adjustment.

### **Tips for buying sustainable foods with price in mind:**

- **Beware of the markup.** Many grocery stores add 150%-200% markup on organic products. A coop or farmers market will likely have lower markups, or none at all. When you buy closer to the source, less of your money goes to middlemen (the costs of running the supermarket, for example) and more goes right to the farmer.
- **Buy in Bulk.** Buying in bulk will keep costs down. Look for pantry staples often available in bulk, such as beans, legumes, rice, flour, nuts, chocolate chips, and much more. Many local co-ops have extensive organic bulk sections. At a farmers market, you may get a good price for a whole case of fruit for your Kiddush fruit tray.
- **Buy in season.** When foods are locally abundant, they may be lower in price (although premium products may always be more expensive, even when they are in season, especially if the season is short, as it is for strawberries or sour cherries). Again, when you’re buying local foods, your money is going all to the local farmer, rather than the shipping and packaging companies.
- **Be selective.** You may wish to pick a few foods to focus on at first. Make the switch to fair trade coffee, or locally-produced milk, or fruit from a local farmer. Big change starts with small steps.