

Report to the Board of Directors

Ypsilanti Food Co-op Food Ethics Committee Meeting
October 6, 2015

Present:

Beth Currans (co-chair)

Ben Miller (co-chair)

Jon Keim (notetaker)

Grace Sweeney

Jill Dieterle

Lee Azus

Cheryl Farmer

Don Boersma

Betty Keefe

Elaina Ebersole

Cheryl Weber

After introductions, people reported about their research about how other co-ops handle food ethics concerns including labeling and participation in boycotts. These reports were followed by a strategy session identifying plans for the committee.

People reported about approximately 20 co-ops and their approaches to food ethics concerns. Some had participated in boycotts of various products including Horizon Milk, Silk products, and farmed salmon. Some participate in the “How Good” labeling program (<https://howgood.com/#/>). Others label all food not prepackaged (such as bulk, deli, and produce). Most had some version of a “money talks” or “vote at the register” policy in response to specific products.

Of particular interest were two responses to Eden Foods. The first, Berkshire Co-op, contacted by Grace Sweeney, contacted all of their members via email regarding the lawsuit, providing information about the lawsuit. The second, Just Local, contacted by Beth Currans, experienced a similar response to Eden by a small group of members. The full membership wasn’t interested in boycotting, so the co-op identified alternative products for each of the Eden products in stock. This resulted in them dropping some products once members began buying the alternative products. The co-op also sent a letter to Eden explaining their concern with the lawsuit.

The group decided on two courses of action. First, that we would propose a process for addressing various food ethics concerns presented by members. Second, that we would identify educational issues that the committee could work on.

Plan for next meeting: brainstorming session about how to use the committee to address member food ethics concerns and educational issues. Meeting will be at 6:30 on Nov 10th.