



Sustainable Procurement

Starting the Conversation with Your Suppliers & Farmers

"How you purchase ingredients matters—it affects not only your business but the entire food system. This checklist or list of questions is designed to facilitate meaningful and straightforward conversations with your suppliers about sustainability.

Reviewing your entire supply list can feel totally overwhelming—no one has time for that! Instead, keep it simple. Start with your top 10, top 5, or even just your top 2 most-used products.

Focus on whole ingredients rather than processed ones to make the process more streamlined and impactful. By asking the right questions and fostering open, honest dialogue, you can make informed decisions that benefit both your establishment and the environment.

Remember, creating sustainable change requires collaboration across the entire food system!"

Questions to Ask Your Supplier

Sourcing Practices

- How do you source your produce?
- Where do you source your products from?
- Can you provide information on the farms or aquaculture businesses where you source your produce/fish/ meats/ dairy?
- Are your products certified organic or sustainably farmed?

Some keywords of sustainable farming practices to look out for can include:-

- **Wages of farmers and team**
- **Water management processes** - *Efficient use and storage of water & conservation practices.*
- **Biodynamic**- *Biodynamic farming is the practice of raising livestock alongside plants and crops, managing the farm as one intertwined system where the needs of each species support the other. Biodynamic farms promote soil health and resilience since they mimic how plants and animals naturally exist.*
- **Polyculture** - *Contributes to soil health and prevents soil from being compacted to allow soil health and nutrients.*

- **Regenerative farming** - farmers rotate different types of crops over time. This helps limit pest infestations and nourishes beneficial microbes in the soil with a more diverse diet.
- **Biodiversity** - Diversity amount of crops & life within the farm

Environmental Impact

- What measures do you take to minimise environmental impact? Is this measured?
- Do you have any traceability or LCAs (Life Cycle assessments for this product)?
- Do you use eco-friendly packaging for your products? Can you reduce or eliminate packaging in our deliveries by using reusable tubs instead of boxes?
- How do you manage food waste and food loss from the farmers in your business?
- Are there any possibilities for buying secondary vegetables/by-products?



Local and Seasonal Produce

- What local produce do you offer?

Our tip is to define what local means to your business, e.g.:- a 4-hour radius - 400 km radius or Australia


- How do you ensure the freshness and quality of your seasonal products?
- Are there any upcoming seasonal items we should be aware of? How will I be informed of any products in abundance?

Fair Trade and Ethical Practices

- Do you support fair trade practices?
- How do you ensure fair wages and working conditions for your workers & for the farmers you buy from?

Certification and Transparency

- What certifications do your products hold (e.g., Fair Trade, Organic, Rainforest Alliance)?
- Can you provide documentation or proof of these certifications?
- How is your relationship with your supply chain? Do you find they are mostly transparent?



We hope these questions guide you toward a more sustainable approach in sourcing for your menus and establishment. Once you've found the right products and suppliers, train your team, tell your customers, and proudly feature your farmers' names on the menu.

As Marco Pierre White once said, "Mother Nature is the true artist, and our job as cooks is to allow her to shine."

For any more information, please get in touch with us at
The Table Food Consultants.