

Product Origin FAQ

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Does PCC have a standard for labeling where products are made?

PCC has developed a Product Origin standard that outlines our compliance with Country-of-Origin labeling laws, encourages vendors to disclose where products were made, and clarifies how PCC defines products identified as “local.” Under this standard, we encourage vendors to be as transparent as possible in identifying where ingredients are sourced and where the product is made. You can read the full Product Origin standard [here](#).

I see shelf tags in the store that say “local”—what geographic range does that include?

Products at PCC with a “local” shelf tag include those from Puget Sound, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and British Columbia.

Why are products marked as local when the ingredients come from other countries?

When we designate a product “local,” we are referring primarily to its place of production. “Local” product ingredients may originate somewhere else but be processed or manufactured locally. For instance, Tony’s Coffee is designated “local” even though the beans are grown outside the United States.

What is PCC’s position on Country-of-Origin labeling laws?

[Country of Origin Labeling](#) (COOL) is a consumer labeling law, established originally in 2002, that requires retailers to identify the country of origin on certain foods, including some meats, seafood, produce, peanuts, ginseng, and macadamia nuts. There has been significant opposition to COOL, even causing a dispute within the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2015, where Canada and Mexico argued that the United States’ labeling law put their imported meats at a disadvantage in the marketplace. This dispute led to Congress repealing COOL requirements for beef and pork in 2016. Despite pushback to COOL, [PCC has been a strong supporter](#) and advocate for mandatory labeling rules and transparency in the supply chain.

What is PCC's position on requests to boycott certain products?

We are a local, independent, retail grocery co-op. Our mission is focused on supporting and advocating on behalf of issues that directly affect our local community food system, such as organic farming policies and food access.

We do not get involved in national, international, or political matters that don’t directly affect our local community food system. Many dedicated organizations do important work in those areas, and we respect the roles they play.

As a co-op, we’re built on democratic principles. Our members, including our staff, often hold diverse views. We respect our staff’s right to support causes that they personally believe in during their own time. And while we

welcome uncomfortable conversations and approach them with empathy, respect, and a genuine commitment to listening, we also expect any dialogue to reflect our co-op values, staff policies, and be conducted in a respectful manner. We do not allow any protests within our store premises.

We have clearly documented and transparent product quality standards that govern our product sourcing decisions. While product choices are guided by strong sourcing standards, we also listen closely to what our community wants. If items on offer don't resonate, we regularly review and remove them. We encourage members to vote with their dollars, because every purchase is a way to shape our shelves. This process keeps things fair, consistent, and community-driven.

Why can't PCC just require companies to fully disclose where all ingredients are from?

Various agencies, including the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), have established laws and regulations around product labels and disclosure of certain information about products. Some laws, like the Country-of-Origin Labeling law, set stricter requirements for disclosing where certain ingredients or foods come from and generally, food packaging must display the name and location of the business responsible for the food. PCC encourages companies to be as transparent as possible about the sourcing of their ingredients but cannot require beyond what is set forth in law. Additionally, a company that makes a multi-ingredient product may source ingredients from different suppliers depending upon availability. Since companies need to ensure their packaging is relatively consistent and accurate, labeling of potentially ever-changing information poses a challenge.

Does PCC's Product Origin Standard apply to political/military activity or humanitarian crises?

As a small, local and independent grocery retailer built on cooperative principles, PCC engages in issues directly relevant to our regional food system, the grocery industry, and the local communities we serve in the Puget Sound area.

PCC's Product Origin standard specifically applies to the activities around food and commodity supply chains and the actions of companies, brands, and employers. There are regions in the world where specific commodities are at higher risk of having labor and human rights violations of workers along those supply chains, and this standard outlines our right to respond to those situations. For example, cocoa produced in certain parts of the world are associated with higher incidents of child labor or slave labor.

While we understand that there are many incidents of oppression against communities happening globally, many of the conflicts happening worldwide are complex and multifaceted. Our stores serve diverse communities of individuals with different backgrounds, cultures, and identities. We encourage shoppers to vote with their dollars and purchase items from brands they want to support.