

from the book **PRACTICAL PALEO**  
guide to: food quality

Seek out as much real, whole food as possible. This includes foods without health claims on the packages or, better yet, not in packages at all. Think produce and butcher counter meats and seafood. After you've mastered making proper food choices, it's important to begin looking at the quality of the items. While buying the best quality is ideal in a perfect world, don't let those "best" labels keep you from doing the best you can within your means.

**meat, eggs & dairy**

**beef & lamb**

**Best!** 100% grass-fed and finished, pasture-raised, local

**Better:** grass-fed, pasture-raised

**Good:** organic

**Baseline:** commercial (hormone/antibiotic-free)

**pork**

**Best!** pasture-raised, local

**Better:** free-range, organic

**Good:** organic

**Baseline:** commercial

**eggs & poultry**

**Best!** pasture-raised, local

**Better:** free range, organic

**Good:** cage-free, organic

**Baseline:** commercial

**dairy**

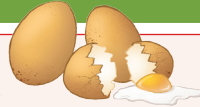
**ALWAYS BUY FULL-FAT**

**Best!** grass-fed, raw/unpasteurized

**Better:** raw/unpasteurized

**Good:** grass-fed

**Baseline:** commercial or organic —not recommended



**seafood**

**Best!** wild fish

**Better:** wild-caught

**Good:** humanely harvested, non-grain-fed

**Baseline:** farm-raised—*not recommended*

**WILD FISH/ WILD-CAUGHT FISH**

"Wild fish" indicates that the fish was spawned, lived in, and was caught in the wild. "Wild-caught fish" may have been spawned or lived some part of their lives in a fish farm before being returned to the wild and eventually caught. The Monterey Bay Aquarium maintains a free list of the most sustainable seafood choices on their website.

**WHAT THE LABELS ON MEAT, EGGS & DAIRY MEAN**

**pasture-raised**

Animals can roam freely in their natural environment where they are able to eat nutritious grasses and other plants or bugs/grubs that are part of their natural diet. There is no specific pasture-raised certification, though certified organic meat must come from animals that have continuous access to pasture regardless of use.

**cage-free**

"Cage-Free" means uncaged inside barns or warehouses, but they generally do not have access to the outdoors. Beak cutting is permitted. There is no third party auditing.

**organic**

Animals may not receive hormones/antibiotics unless in the case of illness. They consume organic feed and have outdoor access but may not use it. Animals are not necessarily grass-fed. Certification is costly and some reputable farms are forced to forego it. Compliance is verified through third party auditing.

**natural**

"Natural" means "minimally processed," and companies use this word deceptively. All cuts are, by definition, minimally processed and free of flavorings and chemicals.

**free-range/roaming**

Poultry must have access to the outdoors at least 51% of the time, and ruminants may not be in feedlots. There are no restrictions regarding what the birds can be fed. Beak cutting and forced molting through starvation are permitted. There is no third party auditing.

**naturally raised**

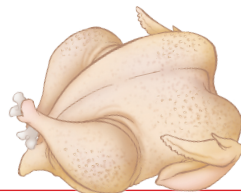
"Naturally Raised," is a USDA verified term. It generally means raised without growth-promoters or unnecessary antibiotics. It does not indicate welfare or diet.

**no added hormones**

It is illegal to use hormones in raising poultry or pork; therefore, the use of this phrase on poultry or pork is a marketing ploy.

**vegetarian-fed**

"Vegetarian Fed" implies that the animal feed is free of animal by-products but isn't federally inspected. Chickens are not vegetarians, so this label on chicken or eggs only serves to indicate that the chickens were not eating their natural diet.



**produce**

**Best!** local, organic, and seasonal

**Better:** local and organic

**Good:** organic or local

**Baseline:** conventional

**WHEN TO BUY ORGANIC:**

Buy organic as often as possible, prioritize buying the Environmental Working Group's "The Dirty Dozen" as organic versus "The Clean Thirteen" - visit: [www.ewg.org](http://www.ewg.org) for details

**PRODUCE SKUs:**

Starts with 9 = organic - ideal

Starts with 3 or 4 = conventionally grown

Starts with 8 = genetically modified (GMO) or irradiated - avoid

**fats & oils**

**SEE THE FATS & OILS GUIDE FOR DETAILS.**

**Best!** organic, cold-pressed, and from well-raised animal sources

**Better:** organic, cold-pressed

**Good:** organic or conventional

**nuts & seeds**

**KEEP NUTS & SEEDS COLD FOR FRESHNESS**

**Best!** local, organic, kept cold

**Better:** local, organic

**Good:** organic

**Baseline:** conventional