

REDUCING, REUSING and RECYCLING at the PARK SLOPE FOOD COOP

Protecting the environment, especially through the reduction and responsible disposal of waste, is a priority at the Coop. In every decision we make as a Coop, we take the environment into account. This has been true since the Coop began in 1973.

- 1973 PSFC starts buying local produce, decades before the term “locavore” even exists.
- 1974 PSFC begins donating unsellable but edible food to soup kitchens.
- 1975 Wooden produce crates begin to be picked up for reuse by a crate recycling company. Some are also returned directly to farmers.
- 1976 PSFC starts recycling cardboard.
- c. 1978 PSFC eliminates PVC cheese wrap and starts using polyethylene instead.
- 1980 PSFC establishes a Compost Committee and all inedible produce is hauled regularly to a community garden.
- 1989 PSFC begins recycling office paper.
- 1991 PSFC installs an air-conditioning system that uses no CFCs and no HCFCs. Since the system uses almost no electricity the Coop contributes to prevention of the electrical overload/blackouts during the summer demand peaks.
- 1991 PSFC starts using refrigeration and frozen food systems that recover cold and heat. Some of the cold air lost by the refrigeration cases is recovered for air conditioning. The heat from the frozen food compressors is used to heat our hot water.
- c. 2000 Every new member of the PSFC receives a reusable shopping bag.
- 2001 PSFC installs a new refrigeration system that drastically reduces the use of CFC/HCFC refrigerants. Instead of pumping large amounts of refrigerants all over the building, the cold is delivered via food grade glycol. The glycol is cooled by a short loop of refrigerant on the roof.
- 2005 PSFC starts using a wind-power supplier for all our electricity.
- 2007 PSFC takes all unusable electronics to a dedicated recycler to keep e-waste out of landfills.
- 2008 PSFC becomes the first Brooklyn supermarket to earn the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Energy Star Rating.
- 2008 PSFC bans the sale of bottled water and the distribution of plastic shopping bags.

What else do we do?

- Compared to other supermarkets, the PSFC sells a much greater volume of product and has more people per square foot. Less square footage means less space to cool, heat and light, making us inherently more energy efficient.
- We don’t refrigerate products unnecessarily. For example, beer is delivered at room temperature and we keep it at room temperature.
- We recycle all of our internally generated plastic film. Our trash hauler takes our baled recyclable material to be re-sold as raw material for manufacturing.
- We actively compost fruits and vegetables that cannot be sold or donated to local soup kitchens. We reimburse the cost of composting bins at the several community gardens that receive our compostable food waste. The composting program results in lightweight garbage that minimizes our trash hauling fees.
- We have a large selection of organic and minimally treated produce. We sell only organic ornamentals such as jack-o-lantern pumpkins and flowers because it’s better for farm workers, for water tables and for the soil.
- We purchase minimally packaged produce and as many locally produced bulk grains and beans as possible.
- Our Shop & Cycle Committee offers secure bicycle parking eight months out of the year, allowing many more members to bike to the Coop.
- The Signage Committee commits to using materials and inks that are as non-toxic and long-lasting as possible.
- The Environmental Committee holds drives twice a month to collect items not recyclable by the city. Collections happen in partnership with TerraCycle, which upcycles the material we send to them.
- Our managers are advised by a group of members with professional expertise in energy efficiency. This member input encourages the Coop to continually access new technology (e.g. lighting and refrigeration) to reduce our energy footprint.
- We pay a moderate premium to purchase BPA- and BPS-free register paper rolls.