

# What the Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op Means to Me

By Mike Manis

What the Sacramento natural food's co-op means to me? This is a great question that made me really think about the reasons why I shop at the only dependable natural, and organic food supplier in the greater Sacramento area. My desire to eat organic and local foods started many years back when I wanted to provide the best health, and nutrition for my body. I began eating more fruits, vegetables, and reading labels to know what I was really eating. Unfortunately finding out where your food comes from is more difficult than one may think. Food is shipped to the United States from all over the world, and comes in many different forms. So how do you know what you are purchasing. Your local chain store doesn't provide this information, and many times the product labels do a poor job of providing it also. This is why I now shop at local natural food stores, and farmers markets. Recently after moving to the Sacramento area I found the Sacramento natural food's co-op to be perfect. It offers good information, great food and, since it is a co-op you can become an owner.

The Sacramento natural food's co-op always has what I am looking for. The co-op offers seasonal produce, along with great bulk foods. Today more than ever I think we need to avoid foods that have been shipped thousands of miles, and the co-op affords me this opportunity. The produce department always labels where their great fruit, and vegetables are grown. This makes it very easy to buy locally or at the least buy fruits, and vegetables grown in the United States. The produce section also provides helpful information on what vitamins, and minerals are in those fruits, and vegetables. Everywhere you look you'll find great information, and I always feel like I learned something after shopping, and that's just the produce section. The produce section is my favorite part of the co-op, but there is much more to the store. If you eat meat there are always great free range chicken, turkey, and beef, along with fresh fish. Cheese can add that perfect touch to any meal, and the co-op has a dizzying array of them. From the goat cheese to the Parmesan I always find myself going home with something I have not tried before. I like to buy bulk foods in an attempt to cut down on waste found in packaging of most products. This is made easy by bringing in your own containers, or reusing old plastic bags. A little forethought and a good variety of bulk foods, one can very easily leave a smaller foot print on the earth. The co-op has a great variety of food for everyone, all while trying to lessen the environmental impact.

The Sacramento natural food's co-op is more than a grocery store to me. The co-op affords me a learning opportunity along with ways to be environmentally sound. Living in an apartment it can be difficult to grow fresh vegetables, or raise your own meat. This means I rely on the local stores and farmers markets to provide me with fresh food. With the recent talk about cloning animals for food I am increasingly cautious of the food I eat. I believe now more than ever we need to support local farmers, and ranchers to stand up to big corporations and supply Americans with healthy fresh food. With so much emphasis on quality and price small farms along with small business are struggling. We as consumers need to be educated in what we are purchasing, and the potential impacts. The co-op has great policies, practices, and is committed to helping the environment while providing healthy food. I will continue to support the Sacramento natural food's co-op as long as they stay committed to their customers and the environment.