



Supply Chain

To excel as a sustainable business providing ethically sourced, vegetarian products from a pioneering worker cooperative – our vision defines not just what we do but how we do it. From provenance to governance, our values and ethics are the very heart of our business.

We maintain transparency in our supply chain by developing close, long-term trading relationships. Suppliers for our own brand products are audited upon initial contact and on an on-going basis, ensuring high standards in farming and employment practice at every step of production. We enjoy visits to our suppliers to learn about their processes, and invite them back to Bristol for the Open Day that we host at our premises every couple of years. Our brand carries a guarantee to be GMO free and 100% vegetarian.



Essential imports commodities from all over the world. We do not participate in boycotting war-torn countries as we believe that farmers and civilians have the right to earn a living. We have farming and manufacturing partners in Sri Lanka, Italy and Egypt who provide our tropical fruits and coconut range, Italian tomatoes and herbal

teas. Most of our branded retail packs are manufactured in-house using our purpose built facilities. We distribute to a number of regions in the UK using our own vehicles and contract external haulier companies to reach farther flung places, including exports to Europe and beyond.

Our products reach our customers through approximately 650 independent wholefood stores, 740 cafes and restaurants, 45 charities, 350 community buying groups, and 80 other wholesalers. We sell exclusively to independents – never to supermarkets, meaning that smaller shops have an added USP and are less easily undercut on prices.

Of the 4,535 products in the Essential range,
2,830 (62%) are organic & 3,945 (87%) are vegan!

We look after our own business and since it belongs to all of us, we are able to make decisions together that ensure our workplace is safe, fair and non-discriminatory. We pay above the living wage to our workers and offer regular employment contracts. Essential are proud to be part of the co-operative movement, allowing for workers to have an equal vote in decisions that will affect them, and ensuring that our principles are embedded in our working practices and policies. Financial reports are given to the members on a quarterly basis, and audited by an external party on an annual basis.

Essential was born out of a drive to do things differently, without harming people or planet. We strive to take all the opportunities available to us to make a positive impact within the food sector. Our warehouse roof provides space to 186 solar panels, generating around 38,000 kWh each year. This is equivalent to 27 tonnes of carbon - the same amount that would be sequestered by 21 acres of mature forest in a year.

We engage with sustainable food and community-based initiatives to further our environmental and social impact in the form of partnerships, sponsorships and in-kind donations. See more about our current partnership with Going for Gold here: <https://www.goingforgoldbristol.co.uk/>

Our accounts are kept with Triodos Bank – a leading ethical bank that offers finance to companies deemed to hold social and environmental benefit. Find out more about Triodos bank here: <https://www.triodos.co.uk/>