

# 2017 Impact Report

## Year in Review

2017 was a milestone year for Homegrown. We opened 3 stores in the Bay Area as well as a Northern California outpost of Homegrown Sprouting Farms in Discovery Bay, CA.

Our mission is built around four pillars that guide everything that we do. First among them is **Reduce Environmental Impact** with every decision. The world today is rife with obstacles that challenge businesses and individuals alike with obstacles that impair their ability to act in the planet's best interest. We pride ourselves on straining every choice we make through this filter.

The remaining three pillars of our mission similarly guide our decision-making across our every facet of our business – **Craft the Best Food, Provide Exceptional Service, and Cultivate Our People.**

Given the ecological challenges that we face in the food system and beyond, the first prong of our mission feels even more important now than it did when we launched Homegrown in 2009. That Homegrown stands unwaveringly for environmental justice is a part of our brand that motivates us each and every day.

In every aspect of our business we see opportunities to reduce our environmental impact, from food sourcing to greener store design and operational practices.



## Food Sourcing

In the food and beverage industry, the single biggest place we can have an impact is our food sourcing. From rampant use of destructive chemical pesticides and fertilizers to poor animal welfare standards to the harmful use of antibiotics, hormones and nitrates in our meat supply, the American food system is thoroughly broken and we're out here trying to change that.



Our farm in Discovery Bay, CA was prepped through the winter and spring and came online with our first harvests of cucumbers, tomatoes and fresh herbs in late summer. This new farm is 2 acres nestled amid the biggest SALC (Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation) grant-backed wetland restoration project in the State of California.

SALC is a program of the State of California Department of Conservation.

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Both our Discovery Bay, CA farm and our Woodinville, WA farm supplemented our stores' weekly produce orders with hyper-local, hyper-seasonal organic produce.

Every partner (employee) at Homegrown is encouraged to work at least one paid shift at one of our farms to better connect to the raw ingredients we use in our stores, and in turn, the ways through which we can better steward the land through sustainable agriculture.

*We believe that our care for where our food comes from and how people, animals and the land are treated along the way has a positive impact on our communities and the environment.*

## Produce

The State of California tracks annual pesticide, herbicide and fungicide usage. They estimate that 193,000,000 LBS of pesticides are used every year in the State of California alone – that's 193 million pounds, in just one state.<sup>1</sup>

Based on formulas we extrapolated from the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), we estimate that we saved approximately 737 LBS of harmful pesticides by sourcing certified organic produce.

It is extremely important to reduce the amount pesticides currently in use. Pesticides are part of chemical runoff, and residue is commonly found in our water sources. They also contain toxins and carcinogens that have been linked to neurological diseases and certain types of cancers. Pesticides are bad for us but they are even worse for our kids as children ingest 2.5x more pesticide in proportion to body weight than adults do. Additionally,

important pollinators like bees have seen their populations devastated by pesticide use.



## Clean Meat & Dairy

We estimate that we saved 331 LBS of antibiotics by sourcing 100% antibiotic-free meat and dairy. Over 32 million LBS of antibiotics are used for nontherapeutic uses on American farms each year.<sup>2</sup> Experts estimate that antibiotic-resistant (ABR) infections cost the American healthcare system \$20 billion each year.<sup>3</sup>

The drug cycle continues with hormone usage in livestock. Farm animals that are given hormones, like artificial growth hormones, need doses of antibiotics to treat the harmful side effects. The antibiotics that industrial farmers give to animals are the same ones people take, leading to increasing drug-resistance.

20% of all American dairy cows are treated with rBGH, a growth hormone, and the European Union and Canada have banned hormone use in livestock completely.<sup>4</sup>

In our research, we could not find a dependable formula to extrapolate the amount of hormones used per pound of meat or cheese in order to calculate our annual

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.panna.org/press-statement/state-results-hazardous-pesticide-use-common-california>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3234384/>

<sup>3</sup> [http://emerald.tufts.edu/med/apua/consumers/personal\\_home\\_5\\_1451036133.pdf](http://emerald.tufts.edu/med/apua/consumers/personal_home_5_1451036133.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.non-gmoreport.com/articles/may07/misleading\\_rBST-free\\_labeling.php#sthash.3VRk3ynY.dpuf](http://www.non-gmoreport.com/articles/may07/misleading_rBST-free_labeling.php#sthash.3VRk3ynY.dpuf)

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savings. We can report that we used 153,705 LBS of dairy products sourced without any artificial hormones.

Our antibiotic-free and hormone-free meat and dairy sourcing is part of our Never/Never Program. You will never encounter any of these drugs in our food.

## Our Stores

We see in our stores a huge opportunity not just to use the latest green building techniques and materials but also as a vehicle to have a conversation about sustainability with our customers on a daily basis.

## Energy

Each of our stores offsets 100% of their electric power usage with clean wind energy. In 2017, we offset approximately 1,312,644 kWh of electricity consumption with clean wind energy credits.

By using as many LED and CFL light fixtures as we can, we saved 205,334 watts this year alone. Some of our high-efficiency bulbs last 20 times longer than traditional incandescent bulbs, making this not just an energy issue but also a solid waste issue.

In 2016, we retrofitted all our stores with high-efficiency, low-flow water fixtures. As a result, we achieved a 74% reduction in gallon per minute (GPM) water flow rate.

We estimate that we saved 1,134,464 gallons of water by switching to high-efficiency sink aerators, spray nozzles & toilets in 2017. We project that when annualized, these fixtures will achieve a savings of 250,000 gallons per year. These fixtures will be standard for all future stores.

## Green Building

Our green building initiatives go beyond our eco-friendly paint, fixtures and materials selections. We're also proud that over 80% of construction debris from new stores was recycled. While this is mandated in some cities, we require our construction partners to comply in every city we open stores. This is far above industry standard, nationwide.



## Striving for Zero Waste

30% of the world's solid waste comes from the United States, which comprises just 5% of the world's population. We have a serious garbage problem.<sup>5</sup>

50% of plastics are thrown out after one use, often harming animals and polluting wild habitats, especially the oceans, which are now home to miles-long "garbage patches."<sup>6</sup>

To add insult to injury, landfills are the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest producer of methane, one of the worst greenhouse gasses contributing to man-made climate change.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> <http://students.arch.utah.edu/courses/Arch4011/Recycling%20Facts1.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.ecowatch.com/22-facts-about-plastic-pollution-and-10-things-we-can-do-about-it-1881885971.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/lmop/basic-information-about-landfill-gas>

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We actively try to reduce waste across our business, whether it's the tinfoil we use in our food preparation to the packaging we use for our products.

In 2017, we saved 785,200 LBS of recycled waste from landfills. We also composted over 743,600 LBS of compostable material and food waste. That's a grand total of 1,528,800 LBS of waste saved from landfills in 2017.

## Community Impact

Every year we see our community impact extend well beyond our stores. We hope that our commitment to all things local, from food to music to nonprofit partnerships helps inspire our customers to co-invest with us in our own neighborhoods, cities and regions.

From Seattle park restoration projects to trash collection in local lakes via kayaks, our team volunteered to help Forterra and Puget Soundkeeper Alliance keep our city green and clean in 2017. Some of our stores were also the designated pickup locations for Seattle Tilth's amazing local farm CSA program.



Beyond small donations to neighborhood organizations, we also donated \$30,794 of food in 2017 – that's nearly

2,708 sandwiches. As part of our "Unofficial Sandwich Partner Program," these meals were sent to some of our favorite nonprofit partners, including Seattle Tilth, Forterra, PCC Farmland Trust, Northwest SEED and Sustainability Ambassadors to name a few.

We give exclusively to organizations working on the sustainable food system and environmental causes. We have tremendous admiration for the wide-range of work that all of our nonprofit partners do in our communities and nearby wild lands and waters.

In March 2017, cofounders Ben Friedman and Brad Gillis spoke at SXSW in Austin, TX on the topic of *How the Slow Food Movement is Changing Fast Food*.

It's been an amazing 2017 and we can't wait to see what the next year will bring as we continue to refine our sourcing guidelines and work to establish thought leadership on the food service side of the slow food movement.