



Greenwashing Finds - Key Items to Look For

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I have decided to start an ongoing report of greenwashing items that I find when I go shopping. I thought that I might refresh myself with acceptable logos (Canada and the US) as well as go over the 7 Sins of Greenwashing (don't worry, the card is ALWAYS in my wallet).

First off, GreenLiving has written a great article titled "Understanding Eco-Logos". Here's what they're saying in a nutshell.



This logo will apply to veggies, fruits, meat, dairy and grains. It is a government of Canada creation.

The following must be met in order to have the logo displayed on the products: 95% or more of the product must be organic, must be grown naturally with natural fertilizers, no GMOs, and no synthetic pesticides, ionizing radiation, sewage sludge, synthetic growth hormones, etc. are to be used.

*NOTE: All products that come into Canada will have to adhere to Canada's rules. Even if they have their own organic logo.



United States Department of Agriculture - Organic logo applies to farming, agriculture and food that contains 70-100% organic materials (70-94% has to state "Made with organic ingredients" and 95-99% can use the word "organic" and 100% can state "100% organic"). This certification is handled by the state, non-profit and private agencies and then it is approved by the USDA.

As they are amending the standards and requirements, I haven't found any specific info other than "producers with annual sales not exceeding \$5000 US are exempted and do not require certification, however, they must still follow National Organic Program standards, including keeping records and submitting to a production audit if requested, and cannot use the term "certified organic". Hmm, that doesn't really help when trying to figure out if my food is covered with "organic pesticides"...



The Forest Stewardship Council is an international organization. It applies to wood and paper products and some printing companies.

The FSC's Forest Management Standards ensure that the products come from a responsibly managed forest and complies with their Chain of Custody Standards which ensures that all processes in between the harvesting state to the consumer's hands has met the Forest Management Standards as well. There are 10 principles and criteria (read them here).



EcoLogo was originally started by the Canadian government but is now managed by TerraChoice. This applies to almost any product - from food to renovation materials.

There are too many standards to list due to the companies huge repertoire of products. Each type of product has to meet a separate set of requirements and the entire process is evaluated - from it's raw state to it's disposal. All in all, EcoLogo products have a lower impact on the environment.



TransFair Canada's logo is probably one of the most common. Found on food, drinks, clothing, personal care items and gifts.

TransFair's main focus is on social justice issues. Fair wages for products. They do have environmental requirements but improving work environments, wages and local infrastructure are their core concerns.