

CO-OPERATIVE BUSINESS RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS



**Support Safer  
Chemicals**

the **Co-operative Group** *The* **CO-OPERATIVE BANK**



[www.co-op.co.uk](http://www.co-op.co.uk)

**Every day, tens of thousands of chemicals are used and released into the environment. They can be in everything – from soap, food and perfume to computers, TVs and furniture.**

**Consumers are increasingly concerned about the impact some chemicals might be having on their health, and the environment in which we all live. So until science can give us the answers, the Co-operative Group has decided to take action.**

As a retailer we've identified over 30 chemicals that we are banning in Co-op brand products – if they are present, we are working to remove them and we guarantee they're not in any new products.

We are making sure the chemicals are not present in the end product, but we're also following this up by making sure we avoid their use in the multitude of manufacturing processes involved. For example, there are no brominated flame-retardants in the fabric on garden furniture – instead we use the safer, non-brominated version, and we've made certain that a range of chemicals, including artificial musks and phthalates that can disrupt hormone activity, are not present in our household range, which includes fabric conditioners and household cleaners. We're taking the same approach with our health and beauty range, paying particular attention to baby products, and we are also looking to exclude certain chemicals from printing inks used, for example, on our packaging.

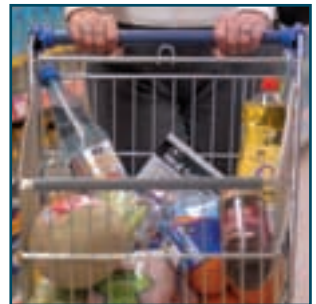


We worked with environmental specialists, and in line with internationally set priorities such as OSPAR, to decide which chemicals to target. We have also been in close dialogue with Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, whose Retailer Charter we are also committed to. We continue to review our list of chemicals as new information comes to light and you can get an update on our website.

On the site you can find out how we've taken a lead when it comes to the use of pesticides too – our ground-breaking approach was recently upheld by the Government's Food Standards Agency as a model for others to follow in avoiding pesticide residues in food, and we're attacking other chemicals present in food with the same vigour.



Eliminating these substances is not an easy task – we have over 3,500 Co-op brand food lines and over 500 own-brand non-food products, but we're proud of our track record when it comes to championing the consumers' cause and we are committed to doing so again on this issue.



The Co-operative Bank and Co-operative Insurance Society (CIS), both part of the Co-operative Group, are also taking action in this area – the Bank focused on it in its most recent 'Customers Who Care' campaign.



The Bank's Ethical Policy, as determined by its customers, states that it will not 'invest in any business whose core activity contributes to the manufacture of chemicals which are persistent in the environment and linked to long term health concerns.'

As well as this commitment, it continues to phase out the use of products, for example in fixtures and fittings, that contain such chemicals and, with WWF, it's calling for the phasing out of all chemicals which are persistent (don't readily break down) and bioaccumulative (those that tend to build up in living things, particularly body fat).

CIS has screened materials it provides to customers, assessing printing inks and solutions, paper and envelopes and is working with suppliers to eliminate certain problematic substances, where suitable alternatives exist. What's more, along with the Bank, it is extending this approach to other key materials, including office equipment, furnishings, stationery and cleaning supplies.



**For the first time in over 20 years, the European Union is considering a major overhaul of chemical legislation. Let us know what you think by visiting us at stand 110/111 and let your MP and MEP know too.**

## THE CO-OPERATIVE GROUP

The Co-operative Group is the UK's largest consumer co-op. As well as being a food retailer with over 1,600 food stores nationwide, The Co-operative Bank, Co-operative Insurance Society (CIS), Travelcare, **smile**, Co-op Pharmacy, Co-operative Funeralcare and Priory Motor Group are also part of us. We employ over 70,000 people and in 2002 our sales topped £7.7bn.

But it's not just our size that's impressive. We are also proud of the fact that we are a co-op – that means we are owned and democratically controlled by our members and meeting their needs as customers, and working with them to improve the communities we all share, are our top priorities.

If you decide to shop, bank, book your holiday or insure your car with us, you're also doing your bit to support responsible retailing. With the backing of our loyal customers we've often led the way when it comes to responsible business.

- The Co-operative Bank is the only high street bank to publish an Ethical Policy – every three years its 2.23 million customers are asked to vote for the ethical policies and issues they want the Bank to focus on
- this year we scooped the Sustainable Development award at the Worldaware Business Awards in recognition of our commitment to fair trade
- last year CIS was awarded the accolade of Best Social Report by Accountability and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
- in 2001 the Co-op banned over 20 pesticides used for food production worldwide – in recognition of this ground-breaking move we won the Green Apple Award in 2002
- last year The Co-operative Bank won the overall Judges' Award for Corporate Social Responsibility at the Corporate Conscience Awards – the first UK company and the only bank in the world to win this global award



- Travelcare is committed to giving open and honest advice to holidaymakers
- we banned the testing of own-brand toiletries and household products on animals almost 20 years ago
- virtually all CFS (The Co-operative Bank and CIS) premises are now powered by 'green' electricity
- we sell organic food in even our smallest neighbourhood stores
- in 2002 we launched Britain's first fully degradable plastic carrier bag
- this summer CIS announced it was to give an incentive payment to motor vehicle repairers who agreed to carry out repairs rather than dump damaged parts



**We are proud of our achievements and we know there will be many more.**

### **DO WE SOUND LIKE YOUR KIND OF BUSINESS?**

If so, why not join? It only costs £1 and you get a host of exclusive benefits, including money off holidays booked with Travelcare and drinks bought from our online off licence (**[www.co-opdrinks2u.com](http://www.co-opdrinks2u.com)**). Plus, as you're into politics, why not look into standing for election to your local Co-operative Group committee – then you can make sure we continue to be the business you want us to be.

**The Co-operative Group – a business to be part of, a business to be proud of.**

the **Co-operative Group**

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