



Alfalfa House Community
Food Cooperative Limited

Members' Survey 2007

SURVEY COUNT 140



1 How long have you been a co-op member?

6 months or less	17%
6 months - 1 year	17%
1 year - 2 years	21%
2 years - 3 years	15%
3 years - 5 years	15%
5 years - 10 years	7%
over 10 years	8%

2 How often do you shop at Alfalfa House?

more than once a week	17%
weekly	32%
fortnightly	28%
monthly	18%
rarely	4%

3 Where else do you buy food/household goods?

<i>other health food stores</i>	51%
<i>large chain supermarkets</i>	81%
<i>convenience stores</i>	21%
<i>farmers' markets</i>	41%
<i>grow own fruit/vegetables/herbs</i>	34%
<i>other</i>	24%

4 What other products do you buy from Alfalfa House?

<i>fruit and vegetables</i>	88%
<i>refrigerated goods (i.e. dairy, tofu, yogurt)</i>	76%
<i>cleaning and household goods</i>	56%
<i>oils + liquids (i.e. honey, rice syrup, tamari)</i>	74%
<i>grains and cereals</i>	90%
<i>herbs and spices</i>	66%
<i>flours</i>	62%
<i>spreads (i.e. nut butters, tahini)</i>	57%
<i>nuts and seeds</i>	79%
<i>dried fruits</i>	76%
<i>packaged and canned goods</i>	46%
<i>Japanese macrobiotic products</i>	36%
<i>discounted fruit and vegetables</i>	26%
<i>coffee/tea</i>	47%
<i>chocolate/confectionery</i>	59%
<i>slices/cakes (sold on counter)</i>	29%

5 Are there any particular products you would like to see the co-op stock? SEE PAGE 3

6 How do you rate Alfalfa House's overall pricing?

excellent value	19%
good value	53%
average	17%
a little overpriced	10%
very overpriced	0%
no answer	1%

7 Do you feel the 10% discount is a good ongoing saving for your \$20 lifetime membership?

Yes 99% No 1%

8 Does price affect how much you buy at the co-op?

Yes 70% No 30%

9 Why do you shop at Alfalfa House?

<i>organic</i>	94%
<i>health benefits of good nutritional foods</i>	76%
<i>vegetarian/vegan</i>	46%
<i>gluten-free foods</i>	19%
<i>special dietary needs</i>	17%
<i>environmental</i>	88%
<i>ethical</i>	87%
<i>limited packaging</i>	82%
<i>the discount</i>	38%

10 Would you accept a higher mark-up for imported goods so local and Australian produce could have a lower mark-up?

Yes 83% No 16%

11 Would you be interested in attending information nights at Alfalfa House on products and their health benefits and cooking/recipe suggestions?

Yes 49% No 51%

12 If yes, would you be willing to pay a minimal fee (approximately \$10-\$15) to attend?

Yes 64% No 34%

13 Do you read the e-newsletter?

Yes 84% No 16%

14 If yes, do you find it informative and/or interesting?

Yes 96% No 4% FOR COMMENTS, SEE PAGE 4

15 Do you visit the website?

Yes 43% No 57%

16 If yes, do you find it informative and/or interesting?

Yes 94% No 6% FOR COMMENTS, SEE PAGE 5

17 Do you like the size of the store?

Yes 70% No 30%

18 Would you like to see Alfalfa House move to bigger premises?

Yes 64% No 36%

19 If yes, would you accept a move to a nearby suburb such a Marrickville?

Yes 70% No 30%

20 If offered, would you be interested in an online home delivery service?

Yes 43% No 57%

21 How would you rate the overall standard of service at Alfalfa House?

wonderful	50%
good	42%
average	2%
hit and miss	6%
poor	0%

22 Do you volunteer in the co-op?

I have in the past	29%
Yes, I currently volunteer	12%
No	59%

23 If yes, has it been a worthwhile and valuable experience?

Yes 98% No 2%

24 What could be done to make volunteering better?

SEE PAGE 5

25 If you haven't volunteered and would like to, what would make it easier to do so? SEE PAGE 5

26 Would you be interested in participating in a more in-depth or face-to-face survey?

Yes 61% No 39%

27 Any further comments? SEE PAGE 6

WRITTEN RESPONSES + COMMENTS

5 Are there any particular products you would like to see the co-op stock?

- a broader range of goods like the Katoomba co-op
- almond meal, organic dips/spreads, low fat muesli options (current muesli has high fat content)
- alternative medicinal products
- amazake
- Amy's refried beans, organic puff pastry
- any vegan products
- any with no/less packaging, decaf coffee
- Alpine organic quark
- baby/infant foods, nappies and wipes
- basic moisturiser for body and face (natural oil workers has one)
- better range of gluten-free pasta (or spelt pasta)
- biodegradable disposable nappies; more packaged/prepared food, eg, Nutroast mix, vege burgers, sausages; vegan spreads without canola
- body moisturiser other than coconut oil
- body wash, moisturiser, 100% recycled toilet paper packaged in paper
- brown basmati, soaked dehydrated nuts & seeds
- Chandrika Ayurvedic soap, pies (like they have at Macro, they're great) – you could have an order sheet and stock to order to avoid waste
- chickpeas (normal ones as well as split chick peas)
- Chinese dates, tomatoes all year round, safflower oil, previous brand of flaxseed oil
- choice of conditioners/shampoo, dental floss
- cloth nappies
- concentrated apple and pear juice
- dandelion tea bags
- dates (Iranian), almond paste
- different rices and lentils – stuff that is unavailable in other larger stores (ie, specialty flours/rices/grains)
- dips. I know the humous etc was discontinued due to going off too quickly, but if there are other varieties/brands available, it would be good; sorry I can't offer suggestions.
- Dr Hauschka skin care products, bottled water
- duck eggs
- falafel
- fresh chai tea
- fresh coconut cream (available at Paddys, Flemington)
- Lupin bread (as sold in Katoomba Co-op); organic meat and wild seafood; quality rice noodles, bean noodles
- frozen goods, eg, soy ice cream, organic frozen vege, cakes
- frozen meats, chicken
- goats milk
- hemp oil
- ionic sea minerals
- mainly want unpackaged fruit+vege, good lettuce

- miso soup
- mixed/gourmet lettuce, tomatoes and cucumbers in winter
- more cleaning products
- more greens
- more honey varieties, cider vinegars
- more packaged and canned foods, organic meat, packaged cleaning products
- more pre-made sauces and biscuits
- more quality packaged rice and vege patties
- more relevant herbs and spices; an ever-changing cheese selection (I get bored); less rice, flour and puffed cereals; more miso; chocolate with less or no sugar
- more varieties of humous, tahini, spreads I use on my children's sandwiches as an alternative to butter
- No, I think the range is fantastic. I would prefer more of an emphasis on local produce even if it meant not stocking some things.
- non-wheat, yeast-free breads run out very quickly
- nutritional yeast or something similar; vegan cheese
- organic ice cream, especially the soy delicious from turtle mountain! But I know it's a lot to ask. More gluten-free stuff – I might be able to help with that soon.
- organic meat
- paw paw in season – not seen it before
- possibly larger variety of cheese and other dairy products and dips
- puffed tofu, vegan stuff
- puffed wheat
- quark, Grants toothpaste
- really good alcohol, e.g., lark distillery, tas
- rice milk with calcium, dried hawthorne berries, Mungalli Creek Biodynamic cheeses, red clover that's actually purple
- Rosnay olives
- scent-free laundry liquid
- sliced spelt bread, sliced spelt fruit loaf
- slivered almonds
- sometimes fresher fruit and vegies, it looks a little tired quite often
- sorbolene cream, fresh pasta
- soy cheese, e.g., Minichol, humous
- spirulina, sambal obek, green pepitas
- spreadable butter
- takeaway fair trade coffee and tea, BYO mug of course!
- more baby food + snacks
- unpackaged vegan pies
- very low power economy light bulbs
- Vogel Plantaforce low-sodium stock cubes, Braggs Animos wheatgerm, lime marmalade (used to have this then disappeared)
- more marinated artichokes, chickpea flour
- As a new vegan I am desperate for non-dairy options. Summer Hill Organic Market is excellent, however, I would prefer to buy from you! More dairy-free products e.g., butter/margarine. A greater range e.g., olive oils, skin care.

- Yes, the things I buy from Dr Earth such as almond milk, organic cereals in packets but I always buy my oats and muesli from you not packaged and I love that.

14 Any comments about the e-newsletter?

- a good mix of information – good recipes
- a little busy and cluttered
- always packed with information that is useful and interesting; good updates on co-op news; colourful format – great to read; extras such as recipes also much appreciated.
- colours are great, recipes good, product info good, general news good
- colours arresting
- Find it interesting sometimes – would like expanded non-pdf newsletter. Too much colour, hard to read.
- should be more web-connective (broader info base)
- would prefer longer more in-depth content. I'm pretty sure I'm in the minority though!
- getting better all the time
- Good to know what's in the shop and it is a great way to communicate with customers/members what is going on, philosophy etc; also educational.
- I have not read it yet but will do.
- I like learning about new products.
- I like the unique and colourful design layout, the informal writing, more approachable and friendly.
- I really want information rather than entertainment, so succinct is good.
- I think it could be a little more 'personal', make the personalities of the staff come through more.
- I would pay \$5-\$10 for an information night. I enjoy the personal stories/anecdotes in the e-newsletter.
- It is a lot of text on each page. Maybe less text on each page, more pages and more links could make it more interesting.
- It's great, love the colours.
- lovely bright colours and diverse topics
- More info on how the co-op is doing financially and any plan for the future (not about food).
- more photos of the hot staff!
- sago recipe; still have cockroaches
- The colour block format makes it a more attractive read.
- The e-newsletter is great, it's concise and always interesting.
- Recipes are great to know how to use ingredients.
- very well-designed and informative
- well-presented
- well-presented and educational, like recipes and individual reports
- what newsletter?
- Would be great if this concept could be expanded to larger newsletter.
- would like more recipes
- would like to receive

16 Any comments about the website?

- again it's a lot but maybe some interactive things like the environmental footprint quiz etc.
- could do more, could do with broader links to like-minded organisations and other sources of related info, eg, organics
- fabulous
- good to see the content list is not static
- great site
- have only been there a couple of times to find out about hours and products
- have only been to check if something I want is stocked
- I haven't gone to the website, but I will check it out.
- I like the fact that it is updated regularly, also very informative/educational.
- I love how detailed the product listing is.
- I shop every week. I prefer to catch up with the news of the shop.
- I will visit it, hasn't occurred to me to do so until now.
- increasing layers are great, eg, articles, MC minutes, how about staff minutes?
- Is it possible to open earlier one day a week/night?
- It is very simple which is what I like.
- Mostly I use it to make a shopping list.
- not yet
- Pricing would be useful on the site to help me budget.
- Product lists are useful.
- recipe section?
- was down for a while
- well-designed
- Will have to visit to comment
- You should/could have an Alfalfa blog, where members could share recipes, advice etc.

24 What could be done to make volunteering better?

- a database matching skills to required tasks
- better organisation and training for new volunteers
- cheerful t-shirts with monograms
- clearer task delineation and procedures
- extra hours in my day for cooking, cleaning looking after my baby, sleeping
- greater recognition, valuing of contributions
- As the MC didn't respond to my concerns a few years ago and therefore since I said I would not again volunteer, I have been forced to miss out on the extra discount.
- I have a medical condition (CFS) otherwise would like to volunteer
- I have enjoyed the experience, however, I have heard other volunteers say they didn't have such a good experience and I still think they should go to staff meetings.
- If I worked fewer hours in the week I would

definitely do it.

- it was a bit confused
- just can't do it with health problems
- more info on opportunities available
- more time available to me! I am working and studying at present so life is full enough.
- not sure
- perhaps more structured 'to do' list – particularly for casual volunteers. A slightly more comfortable area to work in out the back, ie, hygiene etc.
- Response to q22 (Do you volunteer in the co-op?): I would like to.
- Response to q22: Too many children to look after; I would like to in the future.
- Several more hours in every day! While working full time it just feels too much.
- Someone to take over my other job.
- Sorry, family commitments don't give me the time to volunteer at this stage.
- Well, I only volunteered 2 hours a week or fortnight, so was always just on very repetitive jobs – refilling bins – can't be helped I suppose.
- would be good to have more info on volunteering
- perhaps member and staff profiles

25 If you haven't volunteered and would like to, what would make it easier to do so?

- Two small children prevents this, sorry.
- a contact name or specific person to speak to when I arrive
- acknowledgement and response
- an introductory/information night
- I look forward to volunteering when I retire.
- carpentry
- child-friendly jobs
- childcare, express induction sessions for would-be volunteers, online postings
- do-at-home tasks that come up
- clearer information on times/availability for volunteers (days, hours etc) and also specific details of tasks/duties
- **Don't really know** how to approach it! I indicated that I wanted to on membership form and thought someone would contact me.
- don't change too much! I love you just the way you are!
- getting motivated on the weekend, but that's my problem.
- give up full-time work and move closer.
- having a nice staff member to be there to answer questions
- I am unable to lift heavy items so anything apart from that. I may need to cancel coming in at short notice.
- I am unsure of how to go about volunteering.
- I appreciate the energy and commitment of staff

and management to create a friendly place to shop with excellent stock/produce.

- I do not have any spare time.
- I don't have the time, sorry.
- I have volunteered in the past but recent job is not allowing me to do so. So it is mainly a commitment from my end.
- I would help; I just find the shop so claustrophobic – not pleasant to serve in at all.
- I would like to but I think it wouldn't be too hard I just need the time and talk to people in the shop. They are usually helpful.
- I would like to volunteer in the future, I just don't have the time for it at the moment.
- If the shop were closer to me. I live in the city.
- If the systems were easier and there were more signs – it's quite alienating if you don't know what to do.
- I'm working full-time and travelling a lot – so a bit time poor, volunteering difficult at the moment.
- Is there a notice or the board behind the counter about it? I haven't looked – maybe there is. I have limited time so knowing that just an hour or two would be beneficial.
- knowing if there are specific shift times, different tasks on different days (e.g., unloading deliveries)
- make a list/table of tasks that people could sign up to do
- many products are priced well above the RRP so the basic discount only brings the price to a normal price. Volunteering means working for about \$3/hour for me.
- may volunteer in the future; no time at the moment
- more hours in the day, shop moving to Marrickville much easier to get to for me
- more regular notice when volunteers are needed
- more routine in my own life
- more time in my life
- night packaging
- afford to volunteer
- not trying to do three jobs, just too little time
- other ways besides shop activity to earn discounts.
- Years ago (1995) hired a hall, had music, members cooked amazing food, mulled wine and chai tea, couches, cushions, candles – raised \$2000 for Alfalfa and whatever way members contributed to the night their hours became extra discounts.
- range of different activities - stuff that could be done after hours - database/website maintenance
- sorry - I'm too time poor at the moment

27 Any further comments?

- Or it might be my imagination. Oh yes, hot water in the shop in the sink.
- 1. I'd love to be able to buy a box of soymilk without having to order it. I never get it together to order, so I find I buy it elsewhere 'cos it's easier. So if

there was more storage room would this make this easier? Yeah let's move but not too far.

2. Three more cheers for the co-op runners – so tight, fast, wonderful.

- keep it coming
- A larger store would be great but I love its current location and would not like to see it move suburbs.
- Addison Road, Canterbury would be good; big space, shop available, cheap rent
- Are products CCF (choose cruelty-free)? Either 'V' for vegetarian label, would help or list all ingredients endorsed? Lovely shop and atmosphere; love how there is hardly any packaging, too, and you can buy as much as needed rather than too much.
- discourage long/chatty mobile phone use in the co-op with a friendly sign
- Dr Earth King St, Newtown once a month does a consecutive Sat, Sun and Tues 21% discount on nearly all stock and open until 8pm on these days as well.
- Even though I don't volunteer regularly or shop as often as some other people, I love Alfalfa House – more power to you!
- fascinated by the carob bars and foods
- great place – when is the mural coming?
- great place, wish we had more time to travel over etc.
- I am very happy with the co-op's opening hours and being open every day. I would like to see a wider range of products at more competitive prices. Fruit+vege could go – too much seems to be wasted – staff don't know how to look after it.
- I appreciate the gradual improvements. This survey should have been online on AH website – still worth doing even if response is poor!
- I do support Alfalfa House concept fully.
- I find the practice of pricing very expensive items by the 100g rather than by the kilo confusing and misleading. I've been caught a couple of times. Consistency of pricing is necessary I believe.
- I like the individually-wrapped butter pieces in varying sizes; more affordable. Please bring it back! The fruit is expensive compared to other organic shops. Vege prices are good though.
- I love Alfalfa House.
- I love the co-op. In particular the staff and the constant improvements.
- I really enjoy shopping at the co-op and would be very sad if it moved to larger premises nearby or otherwise.
- I think Alfalfa House is great. I'd shop much more often if we lived closer. I especially like buying in bulk and the limited packaging.
- I think Alfalfa is a great shop and provides the local community with a great alternative to other shopping options.
- I think it's fabulous that Alfalfa House has survived and flourished so long.
- I think the state of the shopfloor may be the next biggest deterrent to people off the street shopping

(recognising many improvements have already been made).

- I think there is a potential for Alfalfa to grow and would be keen to assist.
- I understand the possible prospect of a move to larger premises but currently love the intimacy, service and location of Enmore.
- I usually get a huge bulk load of lots of things and am always holding up other people buying only a few items – I've never seen the second till working. On a positive note, out of the 6 organic shops I am familiar with, Alfalfa is my favourite and the one I rave about – mainly due to price, variety and bulk.
- I wish shop staff would concentrate on serving customers rather than chatting.
- I would probably not shop at Alfalfa House if it moved further away – unless it was right near a bus stop from Newtown. It's a long walk now. Most of all I value the work that you guys put in to researching the origins of the goods.
- I'd be interested in convenient but less ethical food. Not sure how this would work!
- I'd like to see bulk products (eg, grains, nuts, eggs) products labelled with date unpacked onto shelves and use-by dates as I have found some products to not be as fresh as they could be.
- I'm a carpenter if you need one to help in the shop – call me.
- In regards to store size: I enjoy the intimacy of it. When I'm feeling rushed I wish there was more counter space, but that's my issue. I like that the co-op exudes a more peaceful environment.
- It can be difficult to balance co-op principles and ethics in today's sociopolitical climate. I think AH does a great job balancing ideals with reality. Thanks for existing!
- It is good simply to know that Alfalfa House exists.
- It would be great to see fresher salad greens, and if possible a larger selection of veges.
- I've really enjoyed being a member over the years and think you all do a fantastic job. Please keep up the great work at Alfalfa House. I think the bread could be labelled better and clearer. It's often quite hard to tell what's what in that large clear bread bin.
- Knowing how synergy feels makes me smile, knowing you are there, prospering and flourishing is perfect
- buy food at the shop only sometimes a little bit. I am vegan (macro) and moved to Sydney from Katoomba – have found quality and choice of fruit + vege at Alfalfa poor by comparison with Katoomba co-op, also limited range of products, larger premises would support better range of products and hopefully better fruit and vege.
- Nice work! I look forward to my shopping day very much.
- Not fussed about moving, happy either way.
- I believe you take the integrity of being organic

very seriously, unlike other organic suppliers

- Please don't move to Marrickville. We have so few good quality stores in Enmore/Newtown. Marrickville has heaps of produce stores! For me it would mean having to get in the car to come over and I don't want to do this! The current store is small but it seems sufficient – it only gets busy during the weekends and even then it works fine.
- Please put nutritional labels on products so I can see fat content and other nutritional info.
- questions 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19 – in fact, many questions are answered conditional on other factors
- Quality and range is good and improving; main problems (aside from queuing sometimes) are the plastic drums that taint food especially oil stuff like nuts and flours and unhulled tahini that won't flow in winter.
- Registers not visible to shoppers so we can't pick up errors. Day old bread never marked as such. Should be aware when purchasing stale bread.
- delivery days, not enough info
- RIP Electropop Saturday
- Rip up floor lino and replace. Paint shop bright fresh colour/s. Office looks fantastic!
- Shop feels a bit grubby because of the premises. I think it might put some people off.
- Shopping at Alfalfa House is a really lovely experience.
- skimpier outfits for all staff. Something exciting in the window on the far right, get moving on the mural.
- Sometimes staff can come across a little judgmental when answering enquiries about products/availability – I have found this belittling/off-putting rather than educational or inspiring – just a thought to consider.
- Sometimes we are charged for the weight of the jar in addition to the contents, so we need to watch that one. I have paid for using my own paper bags at times. Thank you.
- spices and herbs often lack freshness; if customers don't put lids on tightly, same for nuts
- store is a bit small, but great atmosphere
- thank you
- Thank you, it's always a good place to be. I always run into a few friends here – like another home
- Thanks for the survey – great changes over the past 7 years.
- very happy with all in general
- would like to see more fresh fruit+vege, more variety
- the fruit + vege area or overall space needs a bit of re-organisation, so that when anyone enters the store, they do not bump into others and not feel crowded.
- You guys are doing an awesome job!
- You guys rock and it's the best to be able to hug your staff and share music and recipes with everyone!
- Your tamari and shoyu work out more expensive in bulk than buying new bottle at Dr Earth.
- You're great. Keep it up.