



### Product Description

Cucumbers are produced for human consumption, and include slicing, pickling, and burpless varieties.

### Mission

The mission of The Sustainability Consortium (TSC) is to improve the sustainability of products when they are made, purchased, and used, with a focus on manufacturers and the retail buyers who decide what products to carry in stores. The information in this document is drawn from our detailed research on known and potential social and environmental impacts across product life cycles. TSC acknowledges that other issues exist, but we have included here those that are most relevant to the decision making of retail buying teams and manufacturers. The topics are listed alphabetically for ease of reading; the order does not represent prioritization or other criteria.

### Sustainability Insights



#### Managing the Supply Chain

##### Climate and Energy

The production of crops requires significant amounts of energy. The burning of fossil fuels to produce this energy, as well as the production and use of fertilizers, result in greenhouse gas emissions. Growers can reduce these impacts by measuring and tracking energy use, performing preventative maintenance on equipment, and replacing inefficient equipment. Additionally, growers can minimize impacts by implementing a nutrient management plan, using precision agriculture, which applies only the amount of fertilizer needed, or low-energy irrigation, and optimizing the size and efficiency of farm vehicles.

##### Fertilizer and Nutrients

Improper management and use of fertilizers can lead to local water pollution and release greenhouse gases during production. Growers should use a nutrient management plan to improve the efficiency of fertilizer and manure use for production. Growers can use precision agriculture, which applies only the amount of fertilizer needed. Where appropriate, growers could plant vegetative buffer zones around streams to help prevent water pollution via nutrient runoff.

##### Supply Chain Transparency

Addressing many of the environmental and social challenges within an agriculture supply chain requires cooperation among companies at different stages of the supply chain. Manufacturers should determine the locations of farms that produce their supply and engage in initiatives that improve transparency, communication, and data sharing. Suppliers can work together to address common issues, such as energy use, water availability and quality, chemical use, worker health and safety, and labor rights.



## Workers and Communities

### **Forced or Child Labor**

In some areas, there is a risk of forced or child labor, characterized by actions such as trafficking, withholding wages or documents, and restricting workers to the work site. Manufacturers should determine if and where forced or child labor occurs, and work with supply chain partners and experts to address these issues, to ensure all workers have fair working conditions.

### **Smallholder Farmers**

Growers on small farms, called smallholder farmers, may have limited access to information, technology, and resources. Manufacturers should determine where their crops are grown, understand if they source from small farms, and work with organizations that help smallholder farmers overcome challenges and achieve greater and more sustainable results.

### **Workers**

Farm workers, especially women and migrants, may face unfair pay, discrimination, and limited freedoms. They may also be exposed to chemicals, dust, or other hazards. Manufacturers can implement programs to ensure they are sourcing from growers who protect labor rights and ensure the health and safety of their workers.