

IOWA FOOD COOPERATIVE CONFLICT AND ARBITRATION POLICY

The Iowa Food Cooperative strives to build relationships between our members. In the event of a disagreement between members, or between the IFC and its members, the following processes will be used to bring about resolution.

For disputes between IFC Consumers and Producers:

In cases of disagreements between producer and consumer members of the IFC, we strongly encourage attempts at resolution between producer and consumer members. Dissatisfied consumers should deal directly with producers to attempt to remedy problems, but they should also notify the IFC with details on the problem by sending an email to problems@iowafood.coop.

If resolution cannot be reached between the parties involved, the IFC Board may be used to mediate to achieve resolution. Mediation may include steps such as gathering additional information or having the parties involved meet with IFC staff and/or the board. Repeated complaints and problems between a producer and his/her consumers may result in the intervention by the IFC as detailed in the below section.

For disputes between the IFC and its Producers:

Disputes between the IFC and its producers are possible on topics such as proper packaging or product quality. The IFC will work with producers to attempt to resolve these kinds of problems. To resolve disputes quickly and effectively, the IFC will take the following steps.

1. The Iowa Food Cooperative will notify the producer of the problem and what is required of the producer to correct the problem. Notification will be sent by email and the producer will be asked to respond to ensure notification was received.
2. If the same issue persists within six months of the first infraction, the producer will receive a second notification and be required to submit a written plan to correct the issue. The producer will not be allowed to sell through the cooperative until the written plan has been received, reviewed, and accepted by the IFC Executive Committee.
3. If the problem persists a third time, they will be notified and not allowed to sell through the IFC pending review by the IFC full board. The producer will be required to come to a Board meeting to discuss the situation and what they will do to correct the problem. The IFC Board reserves the right to restrict a producer member's ability to sell if it deems the producer unable or unwilling to correct the problem.