



## FROM WASTE TO WORTH: Why Brands Are Embracing Upcycled Certified®

In a food system where over 30% of food goes to waste, businesses across the supply chain are facing growing pressure from consumers, retailers, and regulators alike, to do more with less. Enter Upcycled Certified®, administered by Where Food Comes From, Inc., the world's first third-party certification for products and ingredients made from surplus food or food byproducts.

As a trusted third-party verifier behind the program, Where Food Comes From helps companies unlock new value streams, meet climate goals, and tell a compelling story of circularity and impact, all while reducing food waste at scale.



### What Is Upcycled Certified®?

Upcycled Certified® verifies products that contain ingredients which would otherwise not have gone to human consumption. These might include:

- Fruit pomace from juice processing
- Spent grain from brewing
- Trimmed product from foodservice or CPG
- Byproducts from oil, dairy, or starch extraction

Each certified product or ingredient undergoes a rigorous, third-party audit conducted by Where Food Comes From to validate sourcing, traceability, and use rate, ensuring credible, transparent claims for brands and consumers alike.

The result? A highly visible on-pack mark that signals your brand is actively part of the solution to one of the world's most solvable climate problems: food waste.

### Upcycled Certified® Is Powering a Global Movement

While Upcycled Certified® continues to build momentum in the U.S., it's also fueling a growing global movement. As more regions embrace circular economy models and food waste reduction targets, demand for upcycled food is accelerating, especially in high-growth categories like pet products, snack foods, and fruits and vegetables.

Across the globe, brands are finding innovative ways to give overlooked ingredients new life and meet evolving customer expectations.

**North America:** From upcycled fruit snacks and baking ingredients in the United States and Canada, to pet treats using upcycled proteins and vegetables in Mexico, the market is expanding rapidly across diverse product categories.

**EMEA:** Upcycled condiments, salmon oil and other fish trim derivatives are gaining traction in the UK, Spain, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, and South Africa, reflecting the region's push to turn overlooked seafood byproducts into premium food and pet products.

**APAC:** Demand is surging in Australia, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore, where upcycled citrus peels, grains, and vegetable byproducts are being transformed into premium snacks, confections, and other high-value products.

**LATAM:** Companies in Brazil and Guatemala are transforming byproducts, such as surplus fruit, pomace, or pulp, into accessible, shelf-stable foods like fruit purees, baking mixes, and snacks.

This global growth reflects the rising interest in transparent, third-party verified claims and highlights the growing commitments from brands to sustainability in the food industry. As the call for authenticity and accountability strengthens, more brands are realizing the value of certification in showcasing their efforts.

### Why Brands Are Getting Certified

Consumers today are hungry for sustainability, especially when it's tied to tangible, real-world outcomes. Food waste is a powerful entry point as it intersects with climate change, hunger, resource use, and land stewardship. Brands that actively tackle food loss don't just reduce their environmental footprint, they build trust, deepen consumer loyalty, and create measurable value across the supply chain. SPINS data underscores this momentum:

- The Certified Natural Enhanced category experienced an impressive 38.98% increase in sales over the past year (52-week period)
- Sales also grew by 37.21% over the most recent 12-week period

The data signals a strong and growing consumer appetite for products that fight food waste and support a more sustainable, circular food system. Whether you're a legacy brand optimizing your supply chain or a startup built on circular innovation, Upcycled Certified® helps you demonstrate your commitment, differentiate in a crowded marketplace, and meet rising consumer expectations.

### Innovation at Every Link in the Chain

Upcycled Certified® meets brands wherever they are in the supply chain, helping them explore new opportunities for products, partnerships, and innovation. Whether you are an ingredient supplier with overlooked or underutilized materials, a CPG brand looking to tell a compelling sustainability story, or a foodservice operator focused on improving efficiency, the program offers adaptable pathways for progress.

Certification is available at both the ingredient and product level, giving you the flexibility to design your supply chain your way, without compromising on integrity.

### Make Your Impact Visible

In today's competitive retail environment, it's not enough to "do good"—you have to show it.

The Upcycled Certified® mark, backed by Where Food Comes From's transparent audit process and growing ecosystem of mission-aligned brands, signals to buyers, partners, and consumers that you're committed to reducing food waste and contributing to a more circular economy.

Retailers like Kroger, Whole Foods, and Sprouts are increasingly prioritizing climate-smart and waste-reducing brands, giving Upcycled Certified® products a clear edge on the shelf. In fact, in the 12 months to March 31, 2025, SPINS Natural Channel data shows brands that are Upcycled Certified® saw outstanding compounded growth rates — as high as 39% - in stores.

More than 600 products and ingredients are already Upcycled Certified®, and momentum is only growing. Scan the QR code to explore the latest Upcycled Certified® Impact Report. If your business touches surplus, byproducts, or food recovery in any form, Upcycled Certified® can help you turn that waste into value.



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