

The Compost

WILLIMANTIC
FOOD
CO-OP

Vol. 33, Number 3

End of Summer 2011

Co-op Scoop *Alice Rubin*

October is a busy month – it is Co-op Month, Non-GMO Month and Fair Trade Month. Co-op Month is a time to celebrate and educate the world about Co-ops. While our food co-op is one of only 3 (a 4th is about to open) retail food co-ops in the state, until recently

we were the only one. These days, new food co-ops are opening all over the world and many other cooperative ventures, including housing co-ops, worker owned co-ops, are all on the rise. This is a good shift for our economy. These businesses bring local control and much needed services to communities. They employ many people at fair wages, helping to keep money in those communities. Co-ops are not in business to make money for the pockets of distant owners. Instead, their profits go to the workers, the businesses, and sometimes, directly back to the owners in the form of patronage rebates. Our Co-op is looking into implementing patronage rebates – a system that allocates a percentage of the Co-op's profits each year and returns it to the owners based on the dollar amount of their purchases. We will keep you posted on our progress with this project.

The Non GMO Project has been working since 2005 to educate consumers about GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms). Currently there are no labeling laws making it impossible for us to know if what we are eating contains any GMOs. The NON GMO Project has been working on a NON GMO certification program – if you look, many of the non organic products that the co-op carries will say “Non GMO Project Verified”. Since no one is required to tell us if a product contains GMOs, the NON GMO Project verifies that there are none. Backwards if you ask me, but it works. They have a very informative website: www.nongmoproject.org.

Fair Trade Month has been happening since 2004. Fair Trade works to promote doing business in a way that is fair to the producers, the environment, and the workers. This allows us to eat things like bananas and chocolate, and drink coffee, without exploiting anyone, or harming the environment. We sold 7,500 pounds of coffee last year, all purchased from Equal Exchange, a worker owned co-op.

These educational opportunities remind me that even though in many ways we are a small, local food co-op, we are also part of something much bigger. So big in fact, the UN has designated 2012 the Year of the Co-op. I look forward to participating in a full year of education about and celebration of co-ops. The cooperative business model is a great way to do business - to bring good food and products to people in our community, to support people growing food and baking and making value added products – all without the goal of making money beyond what we need to sustain our business and community. Imagine if all businesses were run as co-ops... 🌱



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STORE HOURS:

Monday - Friday
9:00am - 8:00pm

Saturday
9:00am - 6:00pm

Sunday
10:00am - 5:00pm

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Board of Directors Meetings are held the first Thursday of the month at the Covenant Soup Kitchen at 7 pm. Open to all members.

Board Notes *Kathleen Krider*

Hello, welcome to the dog days of summer. I often think of summer time as when the livin' is easy but not if you're a farmer, clam shack owner, or summer camp director! I'm not any of those but I am the newly appointed Chair of the Board of Directors so it's my turn to get busy.

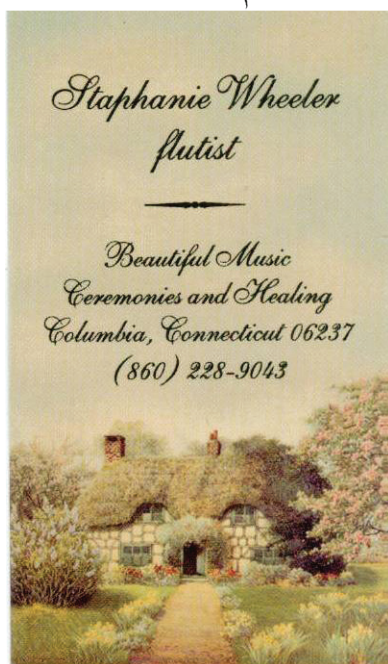
I'd like to introduce all the members of the Board at this time, starting with the other officers. Matthew Kyer is the Vice Chair, Joanne Todd serves as the Treasurer, and Stephanie Golaski is the Secretary. We are rounded out and assisted by Johnnie Walker, Bryan O'Hara, Kirk Begg, Maiga Doocy (staff rep) and the management team consisting of Alice, Bruce and Shandra. One of our goals it to be sure that the Board "board" that hangs up in the store is up to date. It's important to us that the members know who we are and what we're up to.

In June the board attended a retreat hosted by Thane Joyal of the CDS Consulting Cooperative. The CDS (Cooperative Development Services) is dedicated to building and strengthening cooperative businesses. This year's retreat focused on maintaining healthy board relations, an overview of our Policy Governance document and its value to us, and how to link strategically with you, the member owners. This is especially important as we look to the co-op's future, and decide where to put the BOD's attention. Knowing how to guide a successful business isn't intuitive for most of us so board training is critical. Our management team is proven in its professionalism and we hope to be able to support them well. A thank you to all the Board members who were in attendance.

We continue the work of gathering information required to move the co-op forward. This often reminds me of the children's book "Frederick," by Leo Lionni. It can look like we're doing very little when in fact all that we're doing is big and will have major impact when the right time comes. Simply learning Policy Governance and how it can assist management in looking at growth takes time. You'll find a survey in this newsletter that took quite a bit of time, and it's not even that long! Monthly, we monitor aspects of the store, management, and keep track of financials. Our agendas are jam packed with fun stuff. Always on the agenda is a place for members to speak out. Your thoughts matter.

Recently Dan Britton and Maria Gogarten moved on from the board to pursue other endeavors. Dan recently served as our Board Chair and I feel the very big shoes he left behind. All board members are important contributors and on behalf of everyone I want to thank Dan and Maria for giving their time to the Coop.

The end of summer is a busy season; the co-op is busy, the board is busy, and now I must go goof off. Enjoy. 🌿



Meat Buying Club Update

I thought I had the right idea...and our members voted overwhelmingly to have meat available at the Coop through the Buying Club. But it doesn't seem like it is going very well - very few orders have been placed. So, I am wondering what to do.

Will you give me some input? Is the process too difficult? Are the prices too high? Is it not the meat you were looking for? If you email me with your thoughts, or leave a note in the comment book at the first cash register, I would really appreciate it.

Thanks, Alice
willifoodcoop@snet.net



Willimantic Food Co-op

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Newsletter

Shandra Craig
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Seeing the “Big Picture” at the Co-op

William Hooper

As some of you may know, E.O. Smith high school participates in the “Big Picture” school program. A select group of students at its Depot Campus learn in a high school setting defined by interdisciplinary approaches to material, which includes seminar classes, experiential learning, internships, and real-world work. This past spring, I enjoyed the distinct pleasure and honor of serving as a mentor to River Lefebvre, a Depot Campus student.

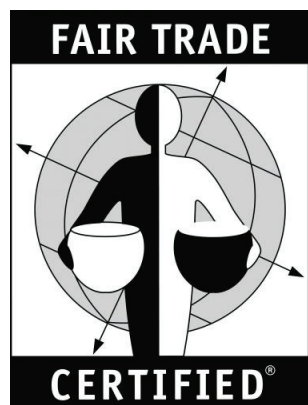
River asked the Co-op staff for guidance on a possible project concerning Fair Trade initiatives—what they meant, why the Co-op had them, and so forth. The Co-op staff, busy as they were with the day-to-day needs of running a grocery, took the time to connect him and me, so I was able to serve as a guide and mentor for this project on behalf of the Co-op. River and I worked through basic questions and theories of economics and exchange, covered some of the history of labor movements and the development of free trade and fair trade ideologies, and talked about the role and value (as well as the costs) of fair trade, and the role of for-profit companies like Equal Exchange, who certify and sell the goods. River jumped from this starting point into a deep pool of ideas, connecting implications of market drives, humanitarian goals, and personal ethics into a larger framework. His final “report” came in the form of

a display and accompanying presentation, with which he helped many of the Co-op staff better understand exactly

what all these terms meant and how they fit together.

The building of a mentor relationship with River was meaningful and valuable for me, and it was a pleasure to provide the starting points for an eager learner to move forward on his own, bringing back many ideas and facts that were new to me. Anyone in the Co-op who is interested in similar volunteer work in connection with the Depot Campus is encouraged to contact Brad Martin, director of the program, at Bmartin@eosmith.org. Don’t think you need formal teaching credentials, or huge amounts of free time – many of the mentoring connections are done by pairing students with mentors who work in a field, and the student’s mentoring may come during the workday

as they assist with tasks. On the other hand, if summer vacation, or retirement, or empty-nest feelings, have you at loose ends, ask yourself if there is a skill or a passion you would like to share. Students have looked for mentor-teachers in a wide variety of fields, so whether your skillset is French literature or small engine repair, there may be a Big Picture learner who would benefit from your time and experience. 🌱



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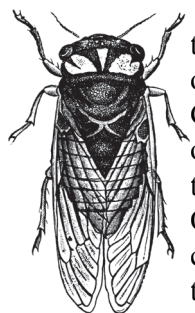


Thank you to the Willimantic Food Co-op for being a partner in innovative education!!

Special thanks specifically to Kristin Fortier and Will Hooper for mentoring River last year.

For further information about the mentoring program at the E.O. Smith Depot Campus or Big Picture Learning, please contact Brad Martin at bmartin@eosmith.org or (860) 487-2261.

Summer in the Garden *Angela H. Fichter*



Nothing spells the sound of summer more than the cicadas drumming the membranes on their abdomens for that ratchety noise. Go by a tree or bush that is full of them on a hot summer day for the full effect of the chorus. There are hundreds of species. One of the most common is the dog-day cicada, which, aptly enough, appears on those cloying, hot days in mid-summer.

When you hear the cicadas, take that as a reminder to check your zucchini patch. It's important to check the zukes frequently so they don't become as big as footballs. They are more tasty and tender when picked young. When you pick any type of squash or cucumber, turn over the leaves of the plant and destroy any eggs that you find. If you do this when the leaves are first fully out and before the plant has even blossomed, you can spare the plant from many devouring insects, and thereby protect your future harvest.

If by some magic you planted your corn early, despite sopping wet gardens, then you are busy competing with the raccoons for your harvest now. I used to think that the sun rose and set on the Silver Queen variety, but I've been converted by the new extra-sweet hybrids. The advantage of the latter is that if you buy the corn from a farm stand, rather than grow your own, it will stay sweet in the fridge for days. When we used to grow our own corn, we'd put the pot of water on to boil before even picking the corn so as to save as much sweetness as possible in the kernels, because once picked the sugars turn to starch. The kind of hybridization that makes corn sweeter reaps a reward for the consumer. I must admit though that I fail to see the need of breeding vegetables that are simply a different color than the vegetable historically has been. There is a reason for the expression, "Red as a beet." In fact, beets are commonly used as food coloring agents. The point of yellow beets, purple carrots, and blue potatoes escapes me.

Another item we closely associate with summer is ice cream. I remember my grandfather making ice cream from

scratch. The mystery of how salt and ice and hand churning can turn cream and sugar and flavoring into instant heaven is a mystery every young child would enjoy investigating. My hard work for obtaining ice cream as a child involved chasing down the ice cream truck with a dime clutched in my sweaty hand. But when you're no longer a child, those ice cream calories can pack on weight. That's when it's time to reintroduce yourself to Mr. Hoe. Forget about the tiller. Get a hoe with the blade angled back towards you, rather than at a 90 degree angle, and get out in the garden at 7 AM, before the summer heat can wilt you. Your vegetables will be grateful if you eliminate their competition. Then treat yourself to ice cream at lunch. Happy Summer! 🌿



**BUY LOCAL
FROM LOCAL**

Farm Report 2011

Markus

Yet another huge thanks from the produce department to all of our growers that have helped to make this year successful for the Food Coop. We appreciate your hard work and understand the struggles with government [corporate] regulations making it ever more difficult to maintain your business. It has been a pleasure to work with those who have kept our displays full of fresh CT grown fruit and vegetables. This abundance we have seen will continue through the fall and into the winter to keep us all well fed. Thanks to our veteran producers: Tobacco Road Farm, Full Moon Farm, Dave Crocker, High Hill Orchard, Birdsong Farm, Highland Thistle Farm, Turtle Ledge Farm, Still River Farm, Himmelstein Farm, and Wayne's Organic Garden. We have also been excited to work with newer growers establishing themselves in our area: Shunduhai Farm, Sweet Acre Farm, and Philomel Gardens. We will continue our work to help folks establish and sustain healthy production systems in our area, for we regard this to be imperative to the health of our families as well as our local economy. 🌿

Stephanie J. Smith, LPC

Licensed professional counselor

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Preparation of Bulk Seed Foods, Part II

Kristin Fortier

See the Birthday issue of the Compost for Part One

With the expansion of our Bulk Department, I started to think about all of the seed foods (legumes, grains, rices, seeds, and nuts) and how we prepare them. Preparing seed foods makes them more digestible and their nutrients more readily available.

The benefits of preparing seed foods:

~Deactivates enzyme inhibitors (block digestion)

~Neutralizes phytic acids (block mineral absorption- iron, phosphorus)

~Neutralizes tannins and lectins (irritants)

~Pre-digests complex starches & sugars (hard to digest)

~Begins breakdown of gluten (hard to digest: can be toxic)

~Begins breakdown of cellulose (impossible to digest)

For the preparation of grains there are two general categories. Those containing gluten, such as oats, rye, barley, and especially wheat benefit from being soaked or fermented. Buckwheat, rice, and millet do not contain gluten and are on the whole more easily digested. Here is a quick sampling of grain preparations taken from the sources listed at the end.

Breakfast Oats

1 cup oats, rolled or cracked,

1 cup warm filtered water mixed with 2 tbsp whey (do not use powdered whey, as it is denatured), yogurt, buttermilk, kefir, or lemon juice 1/2 tsp sea salt 1 cup filtered water

Mix oats with warm water mixture, cover and leave in a warm place for at least 7 hours and as long as 24 hours. Bring an additional 1 cup of water to a boil with sea salt. Add oats (rinsed and drained), reduce heat, cover, and simmer several minutes. Remove from heat add your favorite additions and serve. Serves 4.

Rice

2 cups long grain or short grain brown rice

4 cups warm filtered water plus 2 Tbsp whey, yogurt, kefir, or buttermilk (use lemon juice or vinegar if you avoid dairy).

4 cups water or stock

1 Tsp sea salt

2-4 Tbsp butter

Place rice and warm mixture in a flameproof casserole and leave in a warm place for 7 hours- 24 hours. (The longer the soak the more phytic acid removed.) Drain and rinse. Bring to a boil in clean water or stock. Skim, reduce heat, stir in salt and butter and cover tightly. Without removing the lid, cook over lowest possible heat for about 45 minutes.

Quinoa

2 cups quinoa

6 cups warm filtered water with 2 Tbsp whey, kefir, buttermilk, lemon juice or vinegar. Soak quinoa in solution for at least 7 hours (longer is good too!) in a warm place. Rinse and drain well. Cook following your recipe. Cooking time may need adjusting due to the soak.

I encourage folks to delve further into the resources on which I base my article. Most of the research stems from the work of Dr. Weston Price, who in the 1920's looked at traditional cultures and their diets, dental health, bone structure, overall health, and outlook. He compared these results to the same groups once the introduction of modernized foods arrived and how it affected health. The information gives a picture of how traditional cultures had huge regard for the value of their foods and their preparation and in turn, promoted optimal health. As modern culture stepped in with its processed foods, health changed. Modern food processing, environmental pollution, and the stresses of modern lifestyles can toxify and interrupt the fine systems within our bodies that create good health. Trailing back to our ancestors and how they ate and prepared foods might help us to find our own optimum health!

Sally Fallon w/ Mary Enig Ph.D., *Nourishing Traditions: The Cookbook that Challenges Politically*

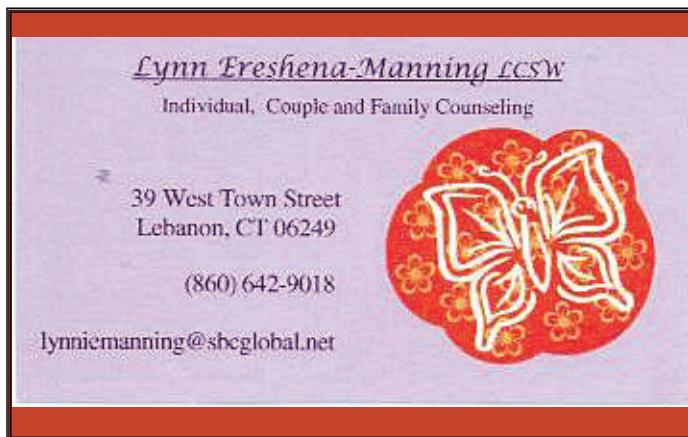
Correct Nutrition and the Diet Dictocrats (Washington D.C.: New Trends Publishing, 2001), 452-510

Ramiel Nagel, *Cure Tooth Decay: Heal & Prevent Cavities With Nutrition*, (Los Gatos, CA, Golden Child Publishing, 2011) 67-84, 118-120.

Ramiel Nagel, *Living with Phytic Acid*, March 26, 2010 <http://www.westonaprice.org/food-features/1893-living-with-phytic-acid.html>

Bee Wilder, *Nuts, Seeds and Legumes Must Be Prepared Properly*,

<http://www.healingnaturallybybee.com/articles/foods18.php#a10>

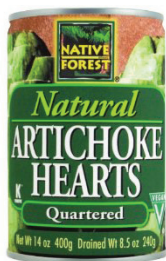


And now for something completely different...

~Monty Python

Helen's Food Review *Helen Scanlon*

In this issue, I take a little break from writing about lotions, soaps and the like to write about my other great love: FOOD.



First up, I bring you---

Native Forest Artichoke Hearts, 9.9 oz jar

Yes, I **love** artichokes. But, canned artichokes can be...underwhelming. Spongy. Grainy. That is not an artichoke...

An artichoke is a deep green bud with a tasty little heart hidden deep inside its core. Dipped in lemon and garlic-infused olive oil or just plain ol' butter, a 'choke is a unique gastronomic delight. When you are done biting the leaves dripping in the sauce of your choice, the artichoke's heart magically appears. The heart reminds you that your dining experience is not quite over, thank goodness, and that it saved the best for last. Joy!

Certain varieties of canned 'choke hearts kinda make me feel all melancholy—how could this happen to such a tasty little treasure? Artichoke lovers like myself nearly weep at the sight of a mushy canned 'choke heart on a plate, all forlorn and stripped of its dignity. What a shame.

Ah, but chin up, artichoke fans! Native Forest brand has damn-near perfect artichoke hearts-- in a jar. Yes, they are sustainably farmed—and they are wonderfully tender and delicious. Firm, without being tough. Soft, but not mushy. Native Forest jarred artichoke hearts also taste really fresh—it evokes images of piles of tooth-scraped petals and dishes of warm golden butter.

Native Forest artichoke hearts in the jar are whole and packed in water with only a little salt and a touch of citric acid---ready to rinse and eat.

As an artichoke lover, I can happily report that Native Forest remains faithful to the succulent spiny flower we have all grown to adore. Also available quartered in a 6.5oz glass jar.

Then, there is the wonderfully yummy---

Bob's Red Mill Granola, 12oz bag, flavors include: Apple Blueberry, Natural, Honey Oats and Cinnamon/Raisin.

A new granola has hit the Co-op shelves—and it's super delicious! Bob's Red Mill Granola has just the right amount of sweetness and it packs an energy punch. I didn't run for the mid-morning snack when I had this for breakfast. Nope--I *sauntered* to the mid-morning snack, as my stomach wasn't screaming at me like that plant in Little Shop of Horrors. This good stuff kept hunger at bay like a pro: It fills the tank quite nicely!

Let me tell you, I am a bit of a granola snob. I want my

granola to have real flavor and not feel or taste like horse sweet feed. (Have I tried horse sweet feed? Um, yes I have—just a tiny taste. It was gross and tough, but horses like it. But I digress...)

In short: Bob's Red Mill makes a fabulous granola. At first taste I was saying "mmmmmmmm" and digging in with a second spoonful. A couple of "mmmmmmmm's" later, I picked up the bag and exclaimed, "what IS this stuff? It's pretty darn good!"

I'm hooked. Who doesn't like to mmmmmmmmm their way through a bowl of granola? And—Bob's Red Mill is an employee-owned company. Nice.

It's perfect with some vanilla or plain yogurt and a cup of tea. It makes for a fantastic quick meal, and it's also a tasty dessert or snack. You can even heat it up like a porridge for super-soothing, good-for-you tastiness. Great comfort food!

Grab a bag and enjoy.

Helen is a former Willi Co-op employee. She loves good food and perfect pedicures. 🌿

Turning the Compost *Shandra Craig*

It's time to turn *The Compost*. Last year we spent \$15,750 to print and mail the Co-op's newsletter. Unfortunately this is just not a sustainable expense, with advertising income covering just 10%. We currently mail out roughly 3,500 printed copies of the newsletter four times a year. This plus the additional copies we print for new members and outreach events totals more than 60,000 sheets of paper every year. While *The Compost* is our most consistent form for written communication with our members, we do not have any real idea how many of you actually receive it, and read it. From emailing 2200 electronic editions of *The Compost*, we do know that about 30% read it.

What I am proposing we do is have three e-newsletters a year, with one printed edition mailed out every spring, coinciding with our annual meeting. Members can opt to receive the newsletter directly in their inbox or read it online, directly from our website. The Co-op will continue to print some hard copies to have at the store for new members and those of you who are technologically adverse.

So what do you think? I hope that this change will lighten the Co-op's budget and ultimately strengthen our communication with the membership. We are working to make the Co-op's website more current and user-friendly, and I hope to gain a better understanding of how to serve the membership's communication needs and want.

Please send me your thoughts to shandra@snet.net or call me at (860)456-3611 M-Th 8-3:30. 🌿



Co-op's Private Label Vitamins!

We have some exciting news from the Health & Beauty Department! The Co-op now has a private label vitamin line. What does that mean? Well, we have a company that makes vitamins for us and puts our beautiful label on the bottles. The company that is manufacturing the vitamins is called Reliance Vitamin Company and has a great reputation for quality and service. I also really like that they offer us access to information on all of their ingredients, including testing outcomes on ingredients for each finished supplement. This line is comparable to Now Foods or Twinlab and the prices are fantastic. Come see them on the supplements endcap. Let me know what else you would like to see in this new line! 🌱



Dietary Supplements Under Attack *Cari Nadeau*

Over the years, dietary supplements have been periodically under attack from the FDA and various bills proposed by politicians. Supplements have been gaining popularity over the years and their opposers (the FDA and politicians with their hands in the pockets of the pharmaceutical companies) continue to search for ways to put the supplement companies out of business. Senator Durbin of Illinois is proposing a bill that would require enhanced registration and labeling requirements for supplement manufacturers. While thorough labeling of a product is important (and already exists), further rules may make costs increase and/or limit our access to supplements.



This bill was proposed after a young boy ate a 'Lazy Cakes' brownie, which is made with high doses of melatonin, as well as valerian. He became lethargic, fell asleep and couldn't be woken up for a while. The boy's 15 years old brother bought the brownie,

which was labeled for adults only, at a convenience store and shared it with his younger brother. While incidents like this one are unfortunate, it has nothing to do with supplement companies. Health issues arising from the ingestion of energy drinks, melatonin brownies, etc. are a separate issue entirely. These products are food, made by food companies. Supplement companies should not be punished for this. According to the Poison Control Data Center, no one has ever died from a dietary supplement. The issue of the safety of these food products needs to be taken up separately from the supplement industry. There are

plenty of laws that already exist to regulate the supplement industry: DSHEA (Dietary Supplement Health & Safety Act of 1994), the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act, the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act and Good Manufacturing Practices Guidelines. In my experience, supplements are very responsibly labeled and the companies producing them are conscientious and have high standards of integrity.

Senator Durbin's bill would require that the FDA, along with the government's Institute of Medicine (IOM), compile a list of ingredients that they deem potentially dangerous. While this doesn't necessarily sound like a bad idea, let me explain why the Alliance for Natural Health (www.anh-usa.org) calls this "Dietary Supplement Labeling Act" a "huge smokescreen." The FDA and the IOM are notoriously biased against supplements. There is no telling how they would use this bill to the detriment of the supplement companies. Once an ingredient is on this list, how would a supplement company have any power to challenge it? Potentially, the FDA could have unlimited power over the supplement industry.



Ultimately, the passing of this bill could lead to regulations and controls on our choices to purchase supplements. This is another attempt to control our health care choices and availability. As labeling requirements already exist, this bill would, in the least, be redundant and create more red tape and paperwork, increasing and/or restricting access to supplements. If the bill were to be abused by the FDA, we could end up unable to purchase supplements or needing a prescription for them.

Please contact your senators at <http://senate.gov> and your representatives at <http://house.gov>. For more information, see www.anh-usa.org. This website has a link to the bill as well as a letter you can instantly email to your senators and representative.

Resources: www.anh-usa.org, www.naturalgrocers.com, www.westonprice.com. 🌱

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Join Us in Celebrating Your Right To Choose Non-GMO!

With concerns on the rise about the health and environmental impacts of genetically engineered foods (GMOs), we hope you'll join us in celebrating Non-GMO Month this October. Throughout the month, hundreds of natural grocers across the country will host programs designed to raise consumer awareness, empower shoppers to confidently make Non-GMO choices, and protect the long-term availability of food and products that haven't been genetically engineered.



Unfortunately, misinformation about GMOs is common. Though plantings of GMO Crops reached all-time highs last year, with 93% of soybeans, 86% of corn, and 93% of the cotton planted in the United States genetically modified, the public knows little about them, their prevalence in our food, or how to avoid them. Further, the biotech companies who control this new technology have effectively prevented researchers from publishing studies on the potential risks of GMO consumption.

Even without any science showing GMOs to be safe, genetically modified foods do not need to be labeled in North America. And it is estimated that over 80 percent of conventional processed food contains genetically modified ingredients. Presented with these concerns, a group of conscientious retailers put their heads together to create the Non-GMO Project.

The Non-GMO Project believes that you have a right to know what's in your food, and a right to choose Non-GMO. To this end, they maintain North America's only third-party standard for GMO avoidance. Since the Project's inception, thousands of products have been verified to this



rigorous standard, and many of your favorite foods may already bear the Non-GMO Project Verification Mark on their packaging.

This seal indicates that the ingredients and practices used in making your food have met a strict standard focused on traceability, segregation, and testing of high-GMO-risk ingredients (e.g. corn, soy, canola, sugar, etc.) Keep an eye out for this trustworthy label while you shop for dinner, or your favorite snack. For a complete list of participating products, or for more information on GMOs, visit:

<http://www.nongmoproject.org>



GMO FACTS

GMO=Genetically Modified Organism (alternately, GE or genetically engineered). GMOs have been created in laboratories, using gene-splicing biotechnology. This process allows scientists to create combinations of plant, animal, bacterial and viral genes that do not occur in nature or through traditional crossbreeding. The process is somewhat unpredictable, and can lead to unintended and uncontrolled changes in the organism's DNA.

The vast majority of GMOs on the market are bred for herbicide tolerance and insecticide production. Despite biotech industry messages to the contrary, there are NO GMOs available designed for increased yield, improved drought tolerance, or nutritional superiority or any other consumer benefits. At the same time, there is a growing body of peer-reviewed research linking GMO consumption with decreased fertility, allergies, abnormalities in organs and immune response, and more.

In the EU, all products containing more than 0.9% GMO are required by law to be labeled as such. With no similar consumer protections in place in North America, the Non-GMO Project was created to fill the information gap. If you are concerned about GMOs and would prefer not to feed them to yourself or your family, choose "Non-GMO Project Verified" products. Find out more at www.nongmoproject.org.

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Small Farmer Co-operatives: Saving Coffee—and the Earth

By Nicholas Reid, *Equal Exchange Natural Foods Sales Representative*

Equal Exchange has credited co-ops with building Fair Trade coffee and making the alternative trade system possible, by keeping farmers organized in developing countries, and connecting them to consumers through co-ops like Equal Exchange and their local food co-ops. This October, while we celebrate Co-op and Fair Trade Month, and consider the values and successes of these two movements that are so intrinsically connected, Equal Exchange would like to push ourselves even further. The support and collaboration of co-ops is crucial to the future of organic coffee.

Declining yields due to soil exhaustion and global warming are threatening specialty coffee production, and the livelihoods of thousands of farming communities that rely on it. Once charged with making coffee cultivation economically viable for small-scale producers, Equal Exchange now asks co-ops to support those farmers in their efforts to adapt, innovate and invest in the future of high-quality, organic coffee.

The history of commercial farming in Latin America (and in the United States) is one of extreme short-sightedness, environmental destruction and an ever-increasing reliance on chemical and technological inputs. One need only look at the former sugar plantations of northeast Brazil, now deserts and agricultural wastelands, or the destruction of local communities and ecosystems that banana cultivation led to in Central America, to see that modern agriculture effectively raped the soil of nutrients, destroyed local flora and fauna that sustained the land, and nearly ended the possibility of human existence in those areas.

Specialty coffee grown by small-scale farmers is inherently a more sustainable form of agriculture than large scale plantations, but it, too, has felt the pressure of the corporate race to the scientific bottom. Regardless of our progress in the last 20 years, small farmers are struggling to compete, and scrambling to maintain healthy, productive farms and soil. Without the benefits of the three insidious sisters of modern chemical fertilizers (NPK) and carcinogenic pesticides, organic farmers are experiencing declining output and soil exhaustion. Traditional fertilizer techniques in composting and mulching are falling short.

Global warming, a global problem that disproportionately affects higher altitudes and subtropical regions, exactly where the majority of our coffee and cacao farmers operate,

is exacerbating the problem. Changing weather, rainfall and temperature patterns are threatening coffee cultivation (and traditional agriculture, in general) around the world. The future of specialty coffee is perilous at best; organic production is threatened even further.

We, at Equal Exchange, believe it is our responsibility to support our farmer partners as they invest in modern, sustainable agricultural methods and adapt to climate change. We know we cannot rely on Monsanto or Cargill; big business cannot solve these problems. With that in mind, we have partnered with agronomists at the CESMACH co-operative, who approached Equal Exchange with a proposal

for a soil fertility project in the communities in which they work.

The first round of the project, funded by Equal Exchange and carried out by CESMACH, concluded in the summer of 2010. It involved taking soil samples in the coffee communities of the co-op, to analyze the nutrient profiles. Armed with an overview of the health and deficiencies of the soil

in each community, Equal Exchange and CESMACH are preparing to implement the next round of the project, which will be funded through food co-op sales in October.

The second phase of the project will explore the potential to produce organic fertilizer to meet the specific needs of each community, using locally available, low-cost inputs. The goal is to develop guidelines for composting (and other alternative agricultural techniques) that individual farmers can use. In the long run, the hope is to develop more centralized services for soil improvement and progressive agriculture, such as a facility to manufacture fertilizers for members (and potentially to sell locally). Not only are we excited about the impact on small-scale, organic coffee production in Chiapas, but for the overall agricultural capacity in those communities: the ability to grow more food and more products to sell locally and abroad, and develop scalable models for all our partners around the world.

This October, the Equal Exchange coffee you buy at your local food co-op is funding sustainable advances in agriculture in Mexico, literally making the earth richer and securing organic coffee production for the long term. Examples of visionary collaborations like these are what make cooperative Fair Trade so inspiring. The products we consume have the potential to produce something incredibly powerful: to make farming communities stronger, and to build a healthier planet. We have the ability to buy a pound of excellent coffee and make a direct investment in a brighter future. *That is Small Farmers. Big Change.* 🌱



Get to know the Co-op staff! They've been here for a while, but *The Compost* hasn't had space to introduce them. Without further adieu, please welcome our newest front end staff!

Kathleen

Hometown? Chaplin, CT

What do you like best about the Co-op? Everything. The staff, members, volunteers: everyone.

What's in your kitchen from the Co-op? Produce, all of it.

Favorite hobby? Cooking



Sasha

Hometown: Rockville, CT

What do you like best about your job at the Co-op? Stocking the dairy cooler on Monday mornings.

What's in your kitchen from the Co-op? Greek Gods Fig Yogurt.

Favorite hobby? I'm working on sewing and crafting for my home.



John

Hometown: Willimantic, CT

What do you like best about the Co-op? The Co-op community. It's played an important role in my family and in the greater community.

What's in your kitchen from the Co-op? Local produce is the best.



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Bulk News Jon Campo

Happy Fall from the Bulk Department. I hope you all rode out the hurricane O.K. Things are getting settled from our reorganization of the bulk bins, and hopefully everyone is finding what they need. There are a few things you may find interesting. We have a couple of new granolas - "Classic Wheat free" From Grandyoats in Maine. I really like this: simple but good, and it is currently their best seller. And from upstate New York Mu Mu Muesli, which is uncooked and made by a very nice young couple who is making it in part to support their art. It is made in small batches and has good ingredients, some organic. It has been well received so far. We have a new supplier for our nice Italian "00" Caputo Pizza flour. The price is much better, and people really love this product. I had intended to provide a recipe for pizza dough in this space, but this turned out to be a bigger project than I anticipated. If anyone has a really good slow rise recipe for pizza dough, I'd love to see it. We now have Fair Trade Sugar in bulk, at least as often as I can get it. I still do not have a source of Fair Trade Chocolate in bulk. We have new pine nuts from Spain that are significantly more expensive than the Chinese ones we had been getting. There have been some serious problems with Chinese Pine Nuts this year, namely something called "Pine Mouth Syndrome". Symptoms include a tinny metallic taste in your mouth that can last for months, nausea, vomiting, and other things too unpleasant to mention in a family newsletter. We don't seem to have gotten any of the affected nuts, which were mostly sold at Trader Joes and Whole Foods, but I was told that our supplier did have some complaints from other stores and co-ops.



On a lighter note, here is a wonderful recipe for autumn entertaining. This is a recipe that was given to me years ago by my late friend Doris Grant, a wonderful cook and hostess extraordinaire. It has been in her family for generations. Doris was known for her Pound Cake, and was generous about giving recipes. I once overheard a humorous exchange at a meeting in our town between her and another woman I'll call Emily. She was complaining that her cake didn't come out like Doris's. It turned out that she had substituted duck for chicken eggs, margarine for the butter, and had preheated the oven. There are a lot of recipes that are alright to play around with, but this isn't one of them. I suggest you follow the directions exactly. This is great cake to have on hand for unexpected guests. Enjoy. 🌿



Grant Pound Cake

Do not preheat the oven.

Cream together:

1 cup butter, salted (two sticks)

3 cups sugar

6 large eggs

1 tsp. vanilla

Add to the above mixture alternating:

1 cup sour cream

3 cups white flour (I use pastry flour)

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. baking soda

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt

Pour into well greased angel food pan (tube pan).

Bake at 300 for about $1\frac{1}{2}$ - $1\frac{3}{4}$ hours, until a thin knife or toothpick comes out clean.



The Farmer's Kitchen

From Ann Withey of Full Moon Farm in Hampton.

I chose a recipe featuring green beans because we grow them all season in succession plantings and green beans are a vegetable that *everyone* in my family enjoys -- that's a rarity in this house. I believe most people do like green beans. We usually grow *Provider* beans which is a bush variety that is very productive. So, here's the recipe that is in my head:

Asian Style Green Beans

Sesame oil to coat wok or pan

1 lb. green beans -- ends snapped

1 clove minced garlic

small piece of fresh minced ginger

$\frac{1}{4}$ c. water (enough to steam the beans)

Soy sauce to taste



Heat sesame oil in wok or pan to med/high heat. Add green beans and stir fry for 3 or 4 minutes -- adjust heat so the beans don't burn. Add minced garlic and ginger and stir an additional 30 seconds or so. Add water, lower heat, cover and let the beans steam for 2 or 3 additional minutes -- stirring occasionally. Add soy sauce to taste and serve. Leftovers are tasty cold the following day.

Any favorite Asian sauce could be substituted for the soy sauce. Chopped scallions add a distinct flavor. Toasted sesame seeds can be added. Many variations are possible with this recipe.

Member Survey!

Please take a few minutes and give these questions some thought! Thank you in advance!

You can also fill out the survey online: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SKW9CZF>

Does the current physical space of the Coop meet the needs of your shopping experience? (Is the coop's physical space adequate for its purpose?)

yes ☐

no ☐

Would you be interested in the Coop providing additional services?

yes ☐

no ☐

Please circle all that apply:

deli cafe processing kitchen warehouse

food and garden supply

additional enterprises (please suggest)

Should the Coop expand its role in the community?
If so, in what ways?

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www.coopfund.coop

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Original artwork by Jacqueline A. Cormier

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