

The Compost

**WILLIMANTIC
FOOD
CO-OP**

Vol. 34, Number 1

Annual Meeting 2012

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STORE HOURS:

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Saturday
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Sunday
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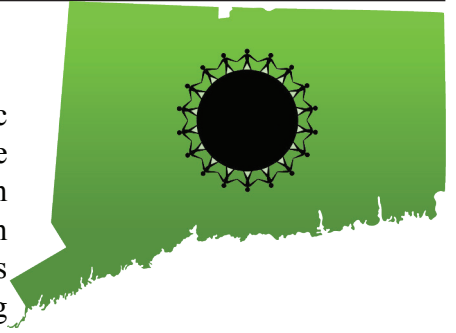
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The Co-op Scoop *Alice Rubin General Manager*

For the longest time, The Willimantic Food Co-op was the only co-op in the state. Now there are 3 more, and a 4th on the way. Fiddleheads in New London has been open for four years, and is really hitting its stride. Things are going so well there that they have been able to hire some staff, after being run entirely on volunteer labor since opening. Last year they hired our long time staff member/buyer, Sheila, which makes it obvious that they are on the right road. The Local Beet in Chester has been open for several years, originally as a privately owned business that has now morphed into a Co-op. They are a very small store –like our original store on Main Street – and have struggled a bit. But, it looks like they have turned a corner and are here to stay. The newest co-op in the state is the Elm City Market, a full service grocery store in the heart of downtown New Haven. This co-op is part of a deal for a developer to serve the needs of New Haven by having a grocery store within the development. When no super market chain was willing to open a store, the developer built the store to be operated as a co-op. They hired the staff to equip, stock, and operate the store, all before there was a membership base. Certainly a different way to do things, but I hear it is doing well and according to their website, they now have over 1,200 members. Another co-op is soon to open in Noank, where the community rallied when the Universal Food Store closed. To run the new Noank Community Market, they have hired two former employees of Puritan and Genesta, a health food store in Mystic that recently closed. In this year of the co-op, it is exciting to think that the Cooperative movement is once again gathering its strength.

This past fall, Sheila invited Kim from the Local Beet, and myself to sit down and talk about doing some purchasing together. We didn't make any solid plans, but it was wonderful to sit and talk shop with other cooperators. The next month we met at the Local Beet. It was great to see the store, and it was great to talk coop some more. In January Sheila, Ellen, and Kim came to Willimantic, along with the folks from the Co-op in Noank. We could have talked all day. Our plan is to go to Elm City Market next.

We have not yet done much purchasing together, although we have been selling cases out of some of our case stack deals to Fiddleheads. This



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allows us to buy the largest quantity that gets us the biggest discount without tying up too much space or cash. I do think that there is more potential to do buying together, though there are obstacles – mainly distribution and warehousing – to figure out before we can do a whole lot.

In addition to these meetings of Connecticut Co-ops, the Willimantic Food Co-op has joined the Neighboring Food Co-op Association (NFCA). This is a group of co-ops in New England that are “working together toward a shared vision of a thriving regional economy, rooted in a healthy, just and sustainable food system and a vibrant community of co-operative enterprise.” While I haven’t been too involved in this group yet, I am headed to the Annual Meeting this weekend, and hope to learn more.

It feels good to be co-operating with other food co-ops, which is one of the Co-operative Principles. I think that our Co-op will benefit from seeing ourselves as part of a network of Food Co-ops who are all trying to serve our communities, as different as they all are. Knowing that we aren’t the only Co-op around is a good feeling, and the timing couldn’t be better as we celebrate the Year of the Co-operative. I feel hopeful that more and more, Co-ops will be seen as a viable alternative to business as usual. ♻️

Board of Director’s Notes *Stephanie Golaski, Board Secretary*

What do pipe cleaners, Legos, and a walk to New Hampshire have in common with beer, wine, and delicious food?

You guessed it—policy governance!

Five members of the Board of Directors (BOD) spent a Saturday in Vermont, honing their Cooperative Board Leadership skills. We also enjoyed the opportunity to spend time together getting to know each other outside of our monthly board meetings. We all left with a better understanding of BOD roles and responsibilities, cooperative governance, and a deeper understanding of finances. The information gathered will help us continue to grow and develop into a stronger, more cohesive board.

Thank you for coming out and supporting the Coop’s 32nd birthday, a great time was had by all!

Our annual meeting is fast approaching, which means getting together for great conversations, yummy food, and board elections. Please support, and reelect, our Board endorsed candidates: Matthew Kyer and Kirk Begg. We will see you on April 22nd !

Happy year of the Coop! ♻️

Meet the Board of Directors Candidates



Kirk Begg

I have been a member and regular shopper at the WFCo-op for about 28 years. My desire to serve on the Board comes from my wanting to contribute to the continued existence of the special thing that is our co-op. I would like my kids, and many future generations, to be able to shop at our co-op, or at other food coops wherever they may live. I was appointed to a one year term on the Board in April 2011.

I grew up in Stratford, CT, a few blocks from the Housatonic River. I went to college at the US Merchant Marine Academy on Long Island and then worked on commercial ships for four years. I went back to school at UConn to help transition to a job ashore and ended up settling in Eastern Connecticut. After finishing

graduate school I worked at UConn for eleven years in the Mechanical Engineering Department. Currently I work in research and development for a French company that is in the business of prescription lenses.

My wife, daughter, stepson and I have lived on Mulberry Rd in Mansfield for the past fourteen years. If not working in our garden, I try to get outside and hike in Eastern Connecticut and beyond.



Matthew Kyer

Matthew has been a member of the Board of Directors since 2010 and currently serves as Vice-President. This summer will mark his twentieth year as a co-op member and as Nan's husband –

both anniversaries worthy of celebration, although, I assure you Nan, one is clearly more important than the other. Matthew teaches first grade in Coventry, where he and Nan live with their two children, both of whom, in their younger days, spent many a Saturday morning shopping at the co-op. ♣

CELEBRATE the INTERNATIONAL
YEAR of COOPERATIVES!



What is the big deal about cooperatives? By working together through the cooperative business model, people are finding solutions to some of the serious problems facing our world. Cooperative enterprise offers a social and economically empowering way of doing business. According to the latest Global300 report, prepared by the International Co-operative Alliance, the world's largest 300 cooperatives generate revenues of USD 1.6 trillion—equal to the GDP of the world's ninth largest economy. Cooperatives operate in all sectors and in all

regions of the world – from agriculture to banking from health to housing and from transport to consumer retail.

“What's ironic about cooperatives is that they are everywhere.

They are part of everyone's daily life, but until you stop and look at their scope and effectiveness you don't realize that this values-based

business model is what people have been yearning for and what governments need in order to support and solve many of these international crises that we face today,” said ICA President Dame Pauline Green. “In these economic hard times when financial institutions are failing, credit unions and banking cooperatives have been able to weather the storms. For the world's economies and the public that invests their money, this is of critical importance.”

The International Year designation provides an opportunity for cooperatives globally to come together and to raise awareness of our way of doing business. The theme for the International Year is “Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World.” Cooperatives are successful, values-based businesses that are owned and democratically controlled by their members—the people who use the co-op's services or buy its goods.

“Through cooperatives, people come together to meet business and social needs,” said NCBA President and CEO Paul Hazen. “They contribute positively to the US economy, bringing jobs to communities, and the wealth generated remains within those communities. The values of self-help and self-responsibility yield sustainable solutions to economic and social problems,” he continued.

More information on the global observance of the International Year of Cooperatives is available at www.2012.coop. To learn more about the US observance, visit <http://usa2012.coop/>. ♣

The Seven Cooperative Principles

- 1. Voluntary and Open Membership**
- 2. Democratic Member Control**
- 3. Members' Economic Participation**
- 4. Autonomy and Independence**
- 5. Education, Training and Information**
- 6. Cooperation among Cooperatives**
- 7. Concern for Community**

Another Farmer's Take on Ed Wazer's Proposals
Wayne M. Hansen, CEO (Completely Exhausted Operator) of Wayne's Organic Garden, Oneco, CT

All the summer of 2011 I charged five dollars per pound for my tomatoes, except for the damaged or otherwise unattractive ones, which I sold as seconds for a lesser amount. Usually I charge this at the beginning of the season for greenhouse tomatoes, mid-June, and then drop it slightly as competition from my fellow marketers, none of them organic, begins to lower my sales. This past year, however, due to a fairly poor tomato crop, I had only some tomatoes and decided to sell them for five all season. Many people bought them early because they looked and tasted good or because they were certified organic and continued to do so, and some drifted to other vendors. Still, with a reduced supply, I was able to do alright in tomato sales. Unsold ones could go in the shares of my subscription plan where I value them the same as at the stand at the market. It worked pretty well.

Like Ed, I work my butt off eight months out of the year, but with a winter market, I'm busy all winter too, if not picking, washing, and packing my 'unethically' grown Swiss chard, then ordering seeds, filling out my annual organic certification application, deciding how many trays of onions to plant, or scrambling to pay the bills. I guess it's a hard life but I've grown used to it, and I don't have children to disappoint with my inattention. My enjoyment comes from the delight of a satisfied customer, the occasional potluck with my peers, and catching odd bits of a Red Sox game between picking and packing something for tomorrow's market. Oh yeah, and I get to eat this delicious stuff even if it's the seconds and the culls.

If a board member actually thinks, as Ed stated, that



we should be competing on price with industrial food, that person has no clue what's going on. At the size of our farms and with our attention to detail, we can only compete on freshness, flavor and quality, not on price. I think we do well on that. If that's what you think, whoever you are, come talk to me and I will try to set you straight. I must agree with Mark however, that many things simply will not sell, even in the Co-op, at a higher price. He knows, I'm sure, because he's sent stuff off to the compost pile or the soup kitchen that he paid for. In fact, the Co-op pays reasonably fair prices under the circumstances. It's not what I get at the Coventry Market, but I don't

have the overhead the Co-op does either, nor does my employee have health insurance from me. Hell, I don't have health insurance from me. I think it's unfair to expect the Co-op, which is a food cooperative, to also be a farmers' cooperative. Having a committee setting local produce prices is unworkable on the face of it. It would be a lot of work, wrangling, and in the end no one would be happy. Pre-season contracts are likewise unworkable. I mean, would the farmer pay up if he couldn't come across with enough potatoes? Would only the Co-op be responsible? It just doesn't work. Farming does not fit well into the industrial model and trying to do so has deprived us of quality, diversity, and flavor, as well as celeriac and kohlrabi.

In defense of my greenhouse-grown chard, I got this idea from the unheated greenhouse king, Eliot Coleman. He heats a greenhouse to just above freezing, as I do, so to have a place to wash vegetables in freezing weather. It is my intent to grow much more outdoors in unheated tunnels and will need this, my only true greenhouse, for that purpose. Eliot also said that to his disappointment the vegetables in that house grew

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somewhat better as they never had to recover from freezing.

Finally, you can attract more flies with sugar than you can with, er, manure. We'll never jawbone people into paying more, but we can addict them with flavor. Over the last twenty years, I have watched the demand for local food expand greatly, because folks will no longer settle for bad food and will and do pay more for it. Sometimes, after I weigh up the onions, tomatoes, peppers and whatever and add it up on my paper bag by the scale and announce "That will be twenty-one fifty," I say out loud to myself and to them "Wow, that's a lot of money." More often than not they respond, "Yes, but it's worth it." So, it's working Ed, you just have to keep at it and keep up the good work.

If we are to see a change in the pay for small market growers like ourselves, it will come as transportation costs to bring industrial vegetables from the south and the west go higher and people get used to the fact that food costs will be a larger portion of their household budget. First we have to get rid of all the processed foods in our diet, spend more time preparing healthy meals, and, as Ed suggested, learn to preserve the bounty and eat more stored crops through the winter as our foremothers did. Now that one seems like a good project for our food co-op in cooperation with our farmers' co-op. Many simply won't have the time or the inclination to can, freeze or dry tomatoes, beans, corn and so on, but a food preservation co-op could take extra produce, even seconds, from farmers and put it to good use. It would also provide employment and generate taxes for our region. This might also be a more suitable venue for Ed's pre-season contracts, since, in time, the canners would know how much they would need for how much product. Industry meets farming!

Meanwhile, eat better and live longer. Food is Medicine! ♣

Brix and Nutrition *Markus Giagrave, Produce*

In a continuing effort to better my understanding of produce health and nutrition, I recently came across an article concerning a unit of measure which I was previously unaware of. Brix, or degrees Brix, historically developed to measure sucrose content of solutions for wine and beer making, has also been used in honey and maple syrup production, has more recently been utilized in the sustainable agriculture field as a way to measure plant and soil health. There is too much information to cover for this article (even if I understood it all), so the following is my simplified understanding of the matter.

A plant which contains a high degree of soluble sugars is a healthy plant. Such a plant will grow at a rapid pace throughout its developing stages with increased resistance to insect damage and disease, yielding abundant nutrient-dense produce. In order for a plant to manufacture those high levels of sugars, all other factors regarding plant growth must be in order and accessible. These factors include, but are not limited to, healthy soil composition with balanced mineral nutrition teeming with microbial life. Weather permitting, these conditions should allow for a healthy plant that will produce fruit with a high Brix level. In this way, a single measurement can give an idea of the nutritional value of a product and, loosely, the condition under which the product was grown. This measurement is difficult to track in the field as plants are growing because the sugar content is constantly changing depending on myriad conditions such as temperature and light levels. For example, a passing cloud will alter the available sugars in the plant and give a different reading than full sun. Produce harvested in the morning will have different sugar content than that harvested near evening. However, in my case, as a

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buyer, I can take a Brix reading of a case of oranges or lettuce and get a good idea of the nutritional value of those products. This is a common *modus operandi* for large fruit brokers to mediate wholesale prices with the growers; a higher Brix level will yield a higher price.

The tool used to measure degrees Brix is a refractometer calibrated specifically for fruits and vegetables. It's a short monocular spy glass with a slanted prism on the end. Juice is extracted from the item being tested, coated on the prism glass, and held to the sunlight. Looking through the monocular will



show a field of blue separated from a clear field by a straight horizontal line against a numbered scale. The sunlight hits the prism and the refracting light shines against the scale. With nothing on the prism, the separation line is calibrated to zero. When a sample is coated on the prism, the sunlight is refracted more and shines further up on the scale. Samples with higher concentrations of soluble sugars will cause a greater degree of refraction and result in elevated readings, which is good. Well, I am excited that the produce department now has a refractometer, and I have begun testing fruit and vegetables for Brix levels, thus the impetus for this article. The notion is to ascertain which regions or growers produce high Brix crops, and try to make those nutrient dense items available to our shoppers on a consistent basis. Time will tell if this is a realistic goal, though it stands to be an educational effort nonetheless. Be on the lookout for some eye-catching signage when we do discover which products contain high Brix readings.

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Winky's Food Review *Winky Gordon, working member*

This issue's food review will have a slightly different focus. Having recently read Bill McKibben's excellent book, *Eaarth*, in which he outlines the imperative of wrestling food production out of the clutch of fossil fuels (and Big Agribusiness), I took a critical look at how the makers of this issue's foods described their use of resources. The food and their makers: Taylor's of Harrogate's Afternoon Darjeeling Tea (\$7.75/ 50 bag box); Spirit Hill Farm's Back Roads granola (\$7.99/lb.); 5 Spoke's Herbal Jack cheese (\$5.59/ 7oz package, on sale.).

I am mighty impressed with the website for Taylor's of Harrogate, <http://www.taylorsofharrogate.co.uk>. It is a wealth of information and provides links to such organizations as the Ethical Tea Partnership and Ethical Trading Initiative (both out of the UK). From a short video on one of these links, here is one trade organizer's definition of ethical trading: A practice that benefits "all the different lives that touch your supply chain" - growers, pickers, manufacturers, transporters, marketers. As testimony to the economic benefit of adopting ethical trade practices, a Chinese manufacturer reports that, despite the 20-30% decrease in working hours required, the company's production actually increased. Check out the website and educate yourself.



The tea itself: delightful. It describes itself as "the champagne of teas selected from the peak of the second flush season." I'm not entirely sure what that means but I found this tea to be lightly perfumed with a sturdy base. It's not super flowery and



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it's not whack-you-in-the-face heavy. While I am a dedicated green tea drinker, I have had several cups of Taylor's Darjeeling with milk and honey and enjoyed it. With 50 bags to a box, this product gives you more than your money's worth. The Co-op also carries Irish and Scottish Breakfast, Ceylon and a few other kinds of Taylor's teas.

What I liked most about what I learned from Spirit Hill Farm's web site, is that the owners have found multiple ways to make a living on their farm – a resourceful approach. Their Back Road granola is the only food product they make and sell in bulk. They are also a bed and breakfast, serve meals from their organic gardens, and make clothing from the llamas they tend. I'm going to guess their place is lovely and a fine example of caring for your land as you let it care for you.

The granola: the ingredients are roasted. This gives a great start to any granola. The roasting of the organic rolled oats, almonds, cashews, etc. gives them a chance to release their flavors making them almost buttery to the taste. The list of ingredients is lengthy and includes maple syrup and honey; you can see them all on the bin where the granola is stored in the bulk foods aisle. At \$7.99/lb., I am unlikely to keep this in my kitchen as a staple. But I will enjoy eating it when I have my occasional Co-op breakfast indulgences. Yogurt, granola, bowl from the kitchen area, mix, sit, eat. (See the Brattleboro Co-op's web page, <http://www.brattleborofoodcoop.com>, for their feature of this product.)


Here are some tid-bits from the 5 Spoke Creamery web site: they use raw milk from their "closed herd" of grass-fed Holsteins (sounds like an exclusive cow club!); they make it fresh, in small batches – milking at 4:00am, cheese production at 9:00am; the 5 spokes

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In Defense of Food by Michael Pollan

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Small Is Beautiful by E.F. Schumacher

are a reference to bicycles which they promote as a good way of getting up close, the way they do with cheese-making; they love the variance that comes seasonally, depending on weather, vegetation, and the cows' personalities (okay, I made that one up). About this last part – the relationship of the natural world to the taste of their cheese, they say, "We basically let nature take over." A creative and enthusiastic approach. Oddly, they neglect to tell you where they are located. I recognize the phone number as being in Westchester County, New York.



I am not usually a big fan of Monterey Jack cheese, finding it pretty dull. The Herbal Jack, however, pleased my palate. The garlic undertone definitely has it going on, giving the cheese zip. The web site also identifies chives and "local herbs" as ingredients, rounding out the garlic influence. It is creamy and good eaten by itself as well as in any dish that calls for cheese. Look for other 5 Spoke products in the Co-op's cheese cooler.

Back to McKibben's book, Eaarth. The bad news: "it" is worse than you think. If McKibben's reporting is accurate, the environmental devastation provoked by heavy duty fossil-fuel consumption is already greater than I want to believe. I had to read this book with other people in order to look at the heart-breaking portrait it paints. The good news: we have control over how much further we push our planet past its limits; there are some inspiring changes already in motion. A person interviewed on the Ethical Trading Initiative's video summarizes a fundamental way we can be part of the change: "buy less but buy better." Shopping at the Co-op, finding good food for good value, is one way you

Alaffia! *Cari Nadeau, HABA*

In central Togo, Benin and Nigeria, 'Alaffia' is a greeting. It is the first thing said when greeting another person. It is also the last.

I am always so thrilled to see companies sharing their profits to help others. This one seriously takes the cake, though. Alaffia is a company that makes body and hair care products...but that's only the beginning. The founder, Olowon'djo Tchala, started the company to provide work for the members of the Sokode shea butter cooperative that he organized in Togo, Africa. His mother is a member of the co-op. The women there are excluded from any formal education so most cannot read or write. Olowon'djo wanted to help the women of his village cultivate a talent they already had and find a way to make a fair trade income with it. These women know shea butter! That is how the Alaffia retail line (everything has shea butter) and the shea butter cooperative started. They will be adding forty seven more women to the co-op this year. It just so happens that their products are fantastic. We have a large portion of their product line and I will have it featured in the store through March. Our best sellers are the shampoos and conditioners in bulk on the HABA endcap. Give 'em a try...your hair will thank you!

As if that's not enough...they are now starting another venture in Togo, a coconut cooperative. It will open the first week of March and provide work for 200 women initially.

But wait, there's more. In 2011, Alaffia built a school for a village that could not afford much needed repairs to their existing building. When it rained, water and snakes came right in. Needless to say, this is not a conducive environment to learning. Construction was completed on December 15th and the children now have a weather proof building. Alaffia also has collected and distributed bicycles (for children to get to far away schools), eyeglasses, desks and school supplies to children in need.

A pursuit that is particularly close to my heart, they plan to provide prenatal care (through birth as well) to over 300 women in the coming year. They hope to end up doubling that number. They will pay all medical costs associated with the care and births. One in ten of these women are victims of female circumcision



(excision), which can cause complications and extreme pain in labor. These women have no money or means of obtaining care otherwise. Many of these women, if left uncared for, will die in childbirth because of complications related to the procedure. They are also working on an educational program to raise awareness and reduce excision. While many countries in Africa have legally outlawed the procedure, at a local level it still very much exists. Unfortunately, most of the women who have undergone this procedure never go to a clinic for prenatal and birth care.



Alaffia's community project goals for 2012 are to: plant 8,000 trees, collect and distribute 500 bicycles, provide prenatal care for 600 women and their babies, and construct a high school. Makes me think I might want to revamp my goals of eating less sugar and watching less Netflix.

I'd like to pass on O's final sentiment in his email about this last trip to Togo: "It is very sad for me to see conditions worsening for poor people worldwide each year. Even in Togo, we see increasing environmental degradation, economic dominance by only a few people, political elitism, and increasing population. I often ask myself if I can do enough. But after seeing the few lives that our efforts touch, I feel even stronger that the fight for social and economic justice for all disadvantaged people must continue at all costs. It is a struggle that your support will make feasible in the end, I am forever humble and grateful to be able to give my life to such a cause, as the only way for my children and their children to have peaceful lives in this earth is to care about human life today."

My hero.

Please visit www.alaffia.com for more information. ♻️

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CT GMO Labeling Bill Proposed *Kristin Fortier*

The Bill, **HB 5117, An Act Concerning Genetically-Engineered Foods** was introduced on February 21, 2012 to our CT State Legislation by Rep. Richard Roy, D-Milford, who co-chairs of The State Environment Committee.

Labeling GMOs is something that we at the Co-op feel strongly about. The Willimantic Food Co-op has signed up to be an advocate and participant of the National Non-GMO Project! Throughout the store you can find products with Non GMO Verified Labels!

There is also a binder at the front desk with a listing of all the products as well as more information and resources from the Non GMO Project. If you'd like to volunteer to help us with this ongoing storewide Non GMO Project let me know, as we could always use more help keeping our lists updated and product labeling current.

What are GMOs?

GMOs, or "genetically modified organisms," are plants or animals created through the gene splicing techniques of biotechnology (also called genetic engineering, or GE). This experimental technology merges DNA from different species, creating unstable combinations of plant, animal, bacterial and viral genes that cannot occur in nature or in traditional crossbreeding.

In agricultural products the most common GMOs are engineered to tolerate herbicides or produce their own pesticides. Herbicide tolerant corn, soy, cotton, and canola are designed to withstand the application of one or more herbicides. GM cotton and corn varieties carrying a gene from the soil bacteria Bt can produce their own toxins, in every cell of the plant, to kill specific insects. Bt cotton and corn varieties are registered as pesticides (PIPs) with the Environmental Protection Agency which is responsible for their regulation. The USDA is responsible for regulating herbicide-tolerant (HT) crops.

Virtually all commercial GMOs are engineered to withstand direct application of herbicide and/or to produce an insecticide. Despite biotech industry promises, none of the GMO traits currently on the

market offer increased yield, drought tolerance, enhanced nutrition, or any other consumer benefit.

Meanwhile, a growing body of evidence connects GMOs with health problems, environmental damage and violation of farmers' and consumers' rights.

Are GMOs safe?

Most developed nations do not consider GMOs to be safe. In nearly 50 countries around the world, including Australia, Japan, and all of the countries in the European Union, there are significant restrictions or outright bans on the production and sale of GMOs.

In the U.S., the government has approved GMOs based on studies conducted by the same corporations that created them and profit from their sale. Increasingly, Americans are taking matters into their own hands and choosing to opt out of the GMO experiment.

Are GMOs labeled?

Unfortunately, even though polls consistently show that a significant majority of

Americans want to know if the food they're purchasing contains GMOs, the powerful biotech lobby has succeeded in keeping this information from the public. In the absence of mandatory labeling, the Non-GMO Project was created to give consumers the informed choice they deserve.

Why Label?

Analiese Paik who runs Fairfield Green Food Guide website, testified in favor of the labeling bill. "From the day of testimony, those who oppose HB 5117, an act that would mandate labeling of genetically modified foods in our state, felt that the FDA was responsible

Ways to Support GMO Labeling

- 1) Write your CT state legislators and ask them to support HB 5117, An Act Concerning Genetically-Engineered Foods.
- 2) Sign the Just Label It! petition asking FDA Commissioner Hamburg to label GMOs
- 3) Shop GMO Free by buying Certified Organic (These products can not include GMO's by law.) and Non GMO labeled products!

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for monitoring the safety of our food supply and had conducted thorough and ongoing safety testing on GMOs. The fact is that the FDA declared 20 years ago that GMOs are not materially different from their conventional counterparts and therefore were generally recognized as safe and required no safety testing. I fail to see how GM corn that produces its own pesticides is not materially different from conventional corn. While we're waiting for the FDA to update its arcane rules, it is essential to label GMOs so consumers can make informed choices.

Polls conducted by professional news organizations including the Washington Post, MSNBC and Reuters/ NPR consistently show that over 90% of consumers want GM ingredients labeled, yet we are one of the only developed countries without GMO labeling laws (Canada is the other). Labeling of GMOs is required in all 15 nations in the European Union, Japan, Australia, Brazil, Russia and China and many other countries. Americans have no way of knowing whether the vegetable oils, sugars, breads, crackers, cookies, corn chips, snack bars or ice cream we're buying are made with GM ingredients.

Currently the only product labels available to guide consumer purchases away from GMOs are USDA Certified Organic and Non-GMO Project verified. Our neighbors in NY and RI are trying to pass mandatory GMO labeling laws so we are not alone. Additionally federal legislation would be even more restrictive: The GE Food Right to Know Act, the GE Safety Act, and the GE Technology Farmer Protection Act."

To learn more please visit <http://www.nongmoproject.org/> for more information on the Non-GMO Project

Information on the bill can be found at http://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/cgabillstatus/cgabillstatus.asp?selBillType=Bill&bill_num=HB5117&which_year=2012.



Local Transition Town Movement Begins

William Hooper

As many co-op members know, our society rests heavily on an assumption of cheap, readily available petrochemical energy, particularly when it comes to food supply. As many of us also know, the age of cheap and readily available petrochemical energy is steaming ahead into its twilight years, and the beginnings of the end – rising fuel costs and food costs, to name two – already impact us. Simultaneously, having burned eons worth of carbon in a few short centuries, we now increasingly reap a disrupted climate and a warming earth.

While these seemingly unstoppable twin dangers barrel down on us, hopelessness, or groundless optimism, might seem attractive escape routes. Somewhere inbetween those extremes, however, useful work can be done; one such avenue is the Transition Town movement, which seeks to empower local communities towards greater self-reliance, resiliency, and post-oil thinking. Several locals recently participated in a regional training for Transition Town work, and groups are now building in Willimantic and several nearby areas. Watch in the next months for a Transition Town presence at local events, and visit www.transitionus.org to learn more and to get involved. In the mean time, catch the "Transition Corner" feature in *Neighbors*.

Membership Update Form

Name* _____

Please help us keep our records up-to-date. Thank you.

Email address _____

Mailing address* _____

Phone # _____

- ☐ I would like to have *The Compost* emailed to me.
- ☐ I would like to continue to have *The Compost* mailed to my home address
- ☐ I would like to pick up a paper copy when I am in the store.
- ☐ I do not care to read *The Compost*

*required

Bulk News *Jon Campo, Bulk*

Greetings and Happy Spring to all. Well, we survived another winter and by the time you read this the mid-summer plants may be blooming if the trend we are seeing now continues. Let me tell you all what is new in the Bulk Department. You may have noticed a bunch of empty candy bins in the bulk aisle. I'm sure you know that candy isn't the highest priority here at the Co-op, but it does sell well, and I think it is important to give folks a healthier alternative to what they might get elsewhere. I have a lot of parents looking for something their children can eat, that they won't have an allergic reaction to. And that is the problem. We don't really sell products with artificial colors or preservatives, and I have had trouble finding clean products that taste good, and also a lot of our candy has been discontinued by our supplier. Carob treats are a vanishing breed (yes, I like carob). Hopefully this will be resolved soon.



Not exactly a bulk item, but stocked in the bulk aisle for now, are new Gluten-free Chunks of Energy, made nearby in Charlemont, Massachusetts. All of their products are made without gluten, but if you have seen me in the store covered in flour you understand why no bulk products can be considered gluten-free. This product is in a sealed package, and they are individually tested for gluten contamination. These have been selling well, and should be restocked soon.



We have a new egg barley pasta (a traditional pasta containing neither egg, nor barley, but delicious) If you need a recipe, I'll put one out by the bin. Fair Trade organic almonds from Equal Exchange are selling well, and super fresh. (We generally get them the day after they are roasted) The new "Back Roads" granola from Spirit Hill Farm is now certified organic, and is selling well, so I guess you all like it. In nut butter land, peanut butter prices are through the roof, but the good news is we now have organic Tahini from Once Again Nut Butters (A worker-owned Co-op) Look for lower prices later this year, if they get some rain down south and out west.

I am excited about local flour I got from Farmer Andy in Coventry. His whole wheat bread flour was great, but is almost gone now. The new flour is a soft whole wheat flour made from white winter wheat, and I have a good supply. It is very similar to Irish Flour, and I



made great soda bread with it, as well as pancakes, waffles and the best dumplings I have ever eaten. It does have a lot of chaff in it, which I love, but if you are fussy, you might object to this. Andy is

such a great guy, and I really appreciate all the work he has done to bring these local products to market. I am so glad to work at a store where we have the option to buy products like this. At the big Co-op I worked at before, we bought almost nothing from local growers as it was considered too much trouble, paperwork, etc. This Co-op has a great sense of community. Where else can you find a place to live, a kitten, a lesson in using a baby sling, a hug when your loved one has passed, planting advice, a good recipe for cornbread? At Whole Foods? But I digress. So that's all from bulk-land. Happy Spring, happy gardening, and I'll see you in the store. 🌱

Rustic Soda Bread Recipe

3+ cups Andy's Rustic Locavore Flour
3 tbs baking soda
2 tbs turbinado sugar
½ tsp sea salt
½ cup currants
2 tbs golden flax seeds
1 tps caraway seeds
1 egg beaten
1 cup sour milk or buttermilk
½ stick butter cut into small pieces



Mix all of the dry ingredients together in a bowl
In another bowl, mix egg and milk together.

Add the dry mixture with wet and stir until combined. Turn out onto a board and knead about 20 times. Form into a round loaf, flatten slightly, and cut a cross on the top. Place a piece of parchment paper in a 9" or 10" cast iron pan. Bake for about 40 minutes or until it sounds hollow when you knock on it. Turn out of pan to cool. Serve with butter and/or cheese. Enjoy. 🌱

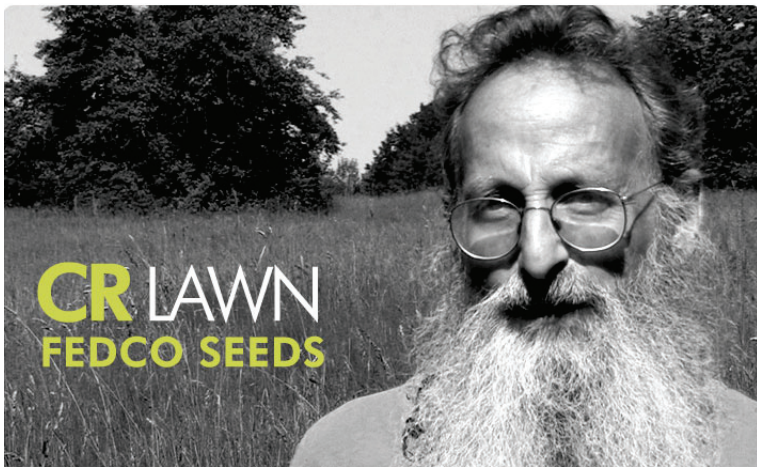


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CR Lawn is the founder of Fedco Seed Cooperative. Fedco has been in the seed business since 1978, and remains one of the few that is cooperatively organized. After 34 years they now serve growers in all 50 states, filling over 24,000 orders, totaling \$3 million annually.

Celebrate Earth Day With Us
At
The Co-op's Annual Meeting!
Sunday, April 22nd
5:30 pm

At the Bruce Bellingham Auditorium,
Windham Town Hall
979 Main St (Entrance at the rear)

Board of Directors' Election
Store Report
Potluck - Please bring your own
place setting
Guest Speaker CR Lawn