



# The Compost

**WILLIMANTIC**  
**FOOD**  
**CO•OP**

**Vol. 35, Number 3**

**Fall 2013**

**91 Valley Street**  
**Willimantic, CT 06226**  
**860.456.3611**

**willifoodcoop@snet.net**

**www.willimanticfood.coop**

## **STORE HOURS:**

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

Saturday  
9:00am - 6:00pm

Sunday  
10:00am - 5:00pm

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### **Co-op Scoop** *Alice Rubin*

So much is going on at the Co-op. I don't even know where to start! Don't worry; it is all good, and very exciting.

Let's start with the store itself and the day to day operations. As our sales continue to increase at a steady but not overwhelming pace, we felt the need to increase our staffing, creating some new positions. In the last issue of *The Compost*, I wrote about the shift in the Management – Bruce as Facilities Manager, and Patty as Assistant Manager. To further strengthen our Management Team, we added the role of Grocery Manager. The Grocery department includes Packaged Grocery, our category with the greatest sales. Steve, who has been our Head Grocery Buyer for quite some time, was hired as the Grocery Manager. This means he supervises all of the buyers, does a lot of the ordering and coordinates our biweekly sales, no small task. He has stepped right up and is doing a great job. He now has Matt as the Grocery Coordinator to help him; together they oversee all that falls under Grocery – which is pretty much everything except Produce and Wellness. Matt has also jumped right in, adding greater organization to many aspects of the inner workings here at the Co-op.

Avery, who had been a part time Produce worker, has been hired full time. Our produce sales just keep increasing. Her extra hours as well as her enthusiasm and merchandising ideas, nicely round out that hard working crew. Our Wellness department is now better staffed with the addition of Chris Dubis. He originally was hired as a part time Cashier, but now divides his time between the front end, the Dairy Case and the Wellness department. This means that someone “in the know” is in the Wellness department seven days a week. Maybe not every hour is covered, but it is an improvement. And, several new Cashiers – Rita, Saige and Kate – have been hired to keep the food flowing out the front door.

The response to our new Sales Flyer (and prices) has been very positive. Although the learning curve has been challenging, we (ok, Steve) has been figuring it all out and it is getting a bit easier to pull off. The most confusing part is that we do not carry everything that is advertised on sale in the flyer. Most of these items are available by preorder, so please ask if that is something you are interested in doing. We are very happy to be offering such good prices on quality food. Please let us know how you like it.

Our work continues on creating a Basic Food Basket as part of our Healthy

## **Willimantic Food Co-op**

**General Manager**  
Alice Rubin

**Management Team**  
Kristin Fortier  
*Front End*  
Bruce Oscar  
*Facilities*  
Steve Scanlon  
*Grocery*  
Patty Smith  
*Assistant Manager*

**Staff**  
Rita Allen  
Sasha Bajjo-Fournier  
Jonathan Campo  
Susan Chasin  
John Clark  
Chris Demorit  
Chris Dubis  
Chad Dunnack  
Markus Giangrave  
Avery Gratton  
Pari Jahandarie  
Kathleen Jenkins  
Saige Johnson  
Cari Nadeau  
Jeffrey Nash  
Josh Ouellet  
Yani Toledo DeMicheli  
Matthew Woodward  
Kathleen Viel

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Stephanie Golaski  
Bryan O' Hara  
Kathleen Krider  
Matthew Kyer  
Joanne Todd  
Johnnie Walker

**Manager Representative**  
Alice Rubin

**Staff Representative**  
John Clark

**Board Scribe**  
Andrea Epling

**Newsletter**  
Shandra Craig  
shandra\_craig  
@hotmail.com  
Sasha Bajjo-Fournier  
Alice Rubin

Food Access project. We hope to have that in place by the time you are reading this. Once this phase of the project is up and running, we will assess how it affects our finances. If it is all looking good, we will start planning for the next phase. We are not sure exactly what this will look like, but the goal is to make healthy food more accessible to everyone in our community. Many co-ops across the country have been creating similar programs and we have been researching many different approaches. Stay tuned for more information.

The benefits of our membership in NCGA (National Co-operative Grocers Association) continue to strengthen our co-op. Recently Cari and Matt attended a two day training in St. Paul, MN. They came back with many great ideas and knowledge to keep our Co-op going in a good direction. Patty will be in Seattle, WA, probably as you are reading this, to attend the Fall NCGA Meeting. I know that she too will come back with much to share. Although not related to our NCGA membership, the Rising Stars Seminar offers some of the best Co-operative Management & Leadership training out there. Steve, Sasha, and Yani will be attending that in Bloomington, IN this fall. Investing in our staff is a great thing that ultimately benefits all of us – workers, members and the greater community. I am very happy we can do this.

Stepping out a bit from the inner workings of the store, I would like to share a little bit about the incredible Board Retreat we had in August. As you might have guessed, expansion was the theme. Our Co-operative Development Services (CDS) consultant Todd Wallace, did a fantastic job of getting us all in motion toward figuring out the Co-op's next move, be it figurative or literal. I think that the entire Board came away from the meeting with a new found sense of direction and a clearer sense of the steps needed to get us going. I am grateful that we have such a committed and hard working Board of Directors. I have great faith in them all, and am very happy to be working with them.

One step further out, was the Press Conference we hosted for Don Williams (President Pro Tempore CT Senate) on the GMO (Genetically Modified Organism) Labeling Bill. Kristin did a great job putting together information on the issue and worked with the local chapter of the Food and Water Watch, as well as GMO Free CT to get the word out. The hard work paid off - thousands of people signed the petition at the Co-op, and many of us also wrote, called, and emailed our elected officials to express our desire to have GMOs labeled. Connecticut is the first state to have a bill requiring the labeling of GMOs. The bill is not perfect. It requires abutting states to also have bills requiring the labeling, but it is an important first step. The Co-op made it onto TV and the front page of the Chronicle - certainly not an everyday occurrence. A big thank you to all of you that helped get this done. ♪



## 2012 Treasurer's Report

Joanne Todd

The Willimantic Food Co-op had a remarkable financial year in 2012. Sales grew 12% which means that members are shopping more at the co-op. The sales growth drove net income to \$149,000, the highest the Co-op has ever had. The Co-op had enough cash to pay off \$92,631 in loans, the rest of the loans from members and from CL&P that were taken to pay for the move to Valley Street. These loans were paid early because the Co-op had more cash than it needed for its operations. The Co-op ended 2012 with \$301,432 in cash and no loans. Having this much cash makes working with vendors easier because management can take advantage of discounts.

Total owners' equity is \$971,528 or 87% of assets. The net income, cash position, and a very solid equity balance means the Food Co-op is strong and well-positioned for growth plans.

2012 net income was budgeted to be \$49,735, which was optimistic after a loss of \$1,007 in 2011. Actual 2012 net income was an incredible \$99,489 more than budget. This difference is mainly due to the increase in sales. High net income is unusual at the Co-op. Since its inception 33 years ago until the end of 2011, the Co-op accumulated \$181,516 of net income in retained earnings. So you can imagine that net income in 2012 of \$149,000 is very unusual. The sales in 2012 were abnormally strong – after sales growth of ½% in 2011, sales grew 12% in 2012. Throughout 2012 management reported to the board that the sales were so unusually high, they did not know whether the growth would continue. It continued throughout 2012 and has slowed to 7.5% in the first quarter of 2013.

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The robust net income allowed the Co-op to give staff a bonus of three weeks of salary as a Thank You for their contributions to the Co-op's success. The Co-op was also able to give more to the community - donations in 2012 increased by \$3,170 over 2011 donations.

Sales growth is good news because members are using the Co-op more, and I think it is because they see good value in the sustainable co-operative model. With growth comes challenges though, like growing out of your store, which we are close to doing.

The fourth co-operative principal is 'Autonomy and Independence'. Financial strength helps the Willimantic Food Co-op be autonomous, independent, and in control of its destiny. With the growth the Co-op is experiencing, we need more room. The future of the Co-op will be expansion in some way. Management and the board are looking at options and the co-op has a good financial foundation for these efforts. 🌱

## Movie Night!

**Sunday, September 15, 6 pm, at the Co-op.**

*Please join your Neighboring Food Co-ops for a screening of*

**PLACE AT THE TABLE**

*"A Place at the Table is an ENGAGING AND ENRAGING movie that will enlist supporters for its cause."*  
— Variety

*"A Place at the Table doesn't offer any answers. Instead, it asks you to help find them by getting involved, which is the mark of an EXCELLENT DOCUMENTARY."*  
— Toronto Film Scene

**Buffalo Mountain Food Co-op: Mon., Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>, 7:00pm** at St John's Episcopal Church, West Church St, Hardwick, VT.

**Putney Food Co-op: Tues., Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>, 7:00pm** at the Next Stage, 15 Kimball Hill, Putney, VT. Admission is by donation with proceeds to benefit Hunger Free VT.

**Brattleboro Food Co-op: Wed., Sept. 11<sup>th</sup>, 6:30pm** in the BFC Community Room, 7 Canal St, Brattleboro, VT, with representatives from the "Empty Bowls Dinner."

**Willimantic Food Co-op: Sun., Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>, 6:00pm** at the Co-op Cafe, 91 Valley St, Willimantic, CT.

**Monadnock Food Co-op: Tues., Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 – 9:00pm** at the Keene Public Library, 60 Winter St, Keene, NH.

**Franklin Community Co-op: Fri., Oct. 4<sup>th</sup>, 6:00pm** at Green Fields Market, 144 Main St, Greenfield, MA.

The Neighboring Food Co-op Association is part of a national campaign connecting efforts against obesity and hunger toward building a healthier country. Don't miss this special screening event, followed by a discussion about making healthy food available and affordable for all.

For more information, please visit: [www.nfca.coop/healthyfoodaccess](http://www.nfca.coop/healthyfoodaccess)

For information and updates on hunger in America, text "FOOD" to 77177.  
To learn more about A Place at the Table, visit [www.takepart.com/place-at-the-table](http://www.takepart.com/place-at-the-table)

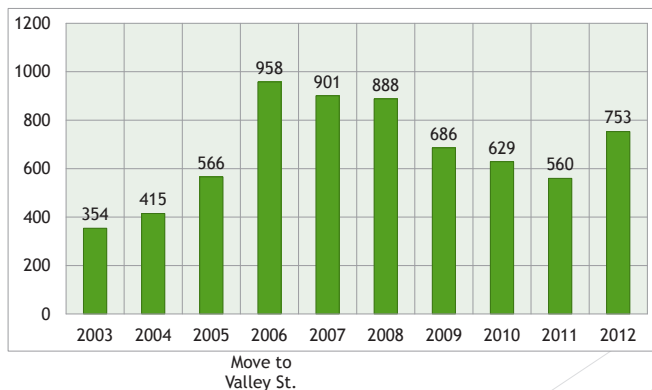
ACTIVE voice participant MEDIA Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



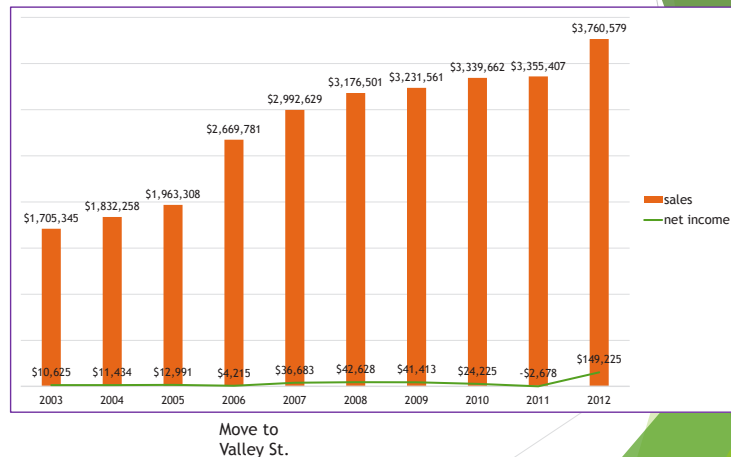
Willimantic Food Coop Statement of Financial Condition 31-Dec-12			
	12/31/2010	12/31/2011	12/31/2012
<b>Assets</b>			
Cash and Equivalents	351,191	151,001	301,432
Accounts Receivable	20,327	23,531	20,978
Inventory	204,104	211,819	231,460
Prepaid Expenses	4,355	4,684	8,165
<b>Total Current Assets:</b>	<b>579,977</b>	<b>391,035</b>	<b>562,035</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>			
Leasehold Improvements	429,481	413,964	395,939
Equipment/Fixtures	177,015	162,699	135,864
Other	547	200	-
<b>Total Fixed Assets:</b>	<b>607,043</b>	<b>576,863</b>	<b>531,803</b>
<b>Other Assets</b>	<b>15,479</b>	<b>17,249</b>	<b>18,340</b>
<b>Total Assets:</b>	<b>1,202,499</b>	<b>985,147</b>	<b>1,112,178</b>
<b>Liabilities and Owner's Equity</b>			
Accounts Payable	66,267	75,275	86,102
Accrued Expenses	55,780	26,581	54,548
Member Loans - Long Term	224,350	91,000	-
Other Loans	91,342	1,631	-
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>437,739</b>	<b>194,487</b>	<b>140,650</b>
<b>Owner's Equity</b>			
Paid in Member Equity	578,581	605,487	638,803
Donated Member Equity	3,657	3,657	3,657
Retained Earnings	182,522	181,516	329,068
<b>Total Owner's Equity:</b>	<b>764,760</b>	<b>790,660</b>	<b>971,528</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Owner's Equity:</b>	<b>1,202,499</b>	<b>985,147</b>	<b>1,112,178</b>

## New Members

Current Members (Active & Paid in Full): 4079



## Sales Past 10 Years





## Healthy Food Access: A demonstration of two Co-operative Principles

Patty Smith

At the Annual Meeting in April, several members expressed their opinion that the Co-op should explore ways to subsidize co-op memberships for folks who choose not to shop at or become members of the Willimantic Food Co-op because it is too expensive. In the last newsletter, I focused on the sixth co-operative principle, *co-operation among co-operatives*. The call of the members at the Annual meeting to make our co-operative more accessible to more people in our community is in keeping with both the fifth and seventh principles – *Education, Training, and Information* and *Concern for Community*. In response to that call, we have begun to work on developing a Healthy Food Access (HFA) or Food for All (FFA) program here. We are not sure what the program will look like exactly, or what it will be called, but we hope to achieve the overall goal of making healthy food and co-op membership accessible to more members of our community.

We have decided to begin by creating a **Basics** program, identifying staple food items already on our shelves that we would choose to sell at close to cost - things like milk, bread, beans, grains, etc. By selling these products at an extremely low margin (keeping in mind that retail grocery is already a low-margin industry), we hope to offer more competitive prices on everyday essential food items of high quality and high nutritional content. We are working with volunteer co-op members and partners in the community who are well-versed in food-security to get this going. **The Basics** program will benefit everyone who shops at the co-op, members and non-members alike. Once we identify which products will be included in the program, we will add a purple “B” to the shelf labels of these products to make them easy to find. We hope to have **The Basics** program ready to go by the time this goes to press, so keep an eye out for **The Basics** “B” and some excellent prices!

Lower prices are only part of the equation, however. Access to healthy food is the centerpiece of our business, but there is also an element of social justice

and the democratization of capital that comes into play. Co-op ownership puts some economic control back into the hands of the consumer, if they choose to take it. Why shouldn't this control be accessible to all (or at the very least, more) people, especially those who reside in the same geographic community as the Co-op? Willimantic Food Co-op's *Concern for Community* is demonstrated throughout the year by our participation in and sponsorship of community events and the many charitable and non-profit organizations we support through fundraising and donations. Even so, co-operatives themselves are not charities; they operate according to the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity. Without the equity - equal capital investment from each member who receives benefits - the Co-op would not be a true co-operative. To give member benefits away for free would not be in keeping with our mission. So, in addition to making our products more affordable, appropriate, and convenient to a more diverse demographic that reflects our actual neighborhood, we would also need to do a better job educating everyone about the benefits of co-operative membership: *Education, Training, and Information*. This is where the idea of subsidized memberships comes in - we can make it a little easier for more people to become member-owners of the Co-op. Some potential ways to do this:

- deferred payment plans
- different levels of membership
- needs-based discounts
- first-year waivers for membership dues

There may be other ways we haven't thought of yet. We will continue to work on it.

There is currently a strong movement in the food co-op sector throughout the country to make co-op products and services available to more people through co-op membership. In our region, the Neighboring Food Co-ops Association and the Co-operative Fund of New England are coordinating efforts and resources to assist food co-ops in New England and New York who are interested in implementing HFA or FFA programs in their stores. Each co-op has its own unique membership

requirements and its own unique community, and so not all HFA programs will look the same. We will keep you updated as our own unique program begins to blossom.

Further resources:

<http://nfca.co-op/healthyfoodaccess>

<http://www.greenstar.co-op/flower>

<http://www.citymarket.co-op/membership/member-discounts>

<http://usa2012.co-op/about-co-ops/7-co-operative-principles> 🌱

## Meet the Staff

### Kate Viel

**Hometown:** Willimantic

**Likes about The Co-op:** The entire atmosphere, the food, the people, coworkers and customers. I love meeting new people and seeing everyone smile all day long!

**In her fridge:** Brown Cow Yogurt, Chipmunk Granola, Pacific Soups, Annie's Mac and Cheese, berries and cheese!

**Favorite Hobby:** reading and crocheting



### Rita Tunador

**Hometown:** Seattle, Washington

**What she like best about the Co-op:** My amazing coworkers and the wonderful people I get to see every day!

**What's in her kitchen from the Co-op:** Baldwin



Brook Raw Milk, Bananas, and Almond Butter

**Favorite hobbies:** Sewing, Cooking, and Gardening

### Saige Johnson

**Hometown:** Guilford, CT

**What she likes best about the Co-op:** The atmosphere and the people, both customers and staff!

**In her kitchen from the Co-op:** Bearitos Blue Corn Tortilla Chips, and Bib's Confections Blonde Brownies

**Favorite hobby:** hiking, writing, anything outside!



### Chris Dubis

**Hometown:** Bow, NH

**What do you like best about the Co-op?** Learning about herbal medicine and supplements.

**What's in your kitchen from the Co-op?** Salad greens and Delice de Bourgogne cheese.

**Favorite hobby:** Darkroom

### Yanired Toledo

**Hometown:** Puerto Rico

**What do you like best about the Co-op?** That it feels more like a family than a workplace.

**What's in your kitchen from the Co-op?** All my fruits and veggies, baked goods, and raw milk.

**Favorite hobby:** Reading 🌱



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## By Small Farmers, For Small Farmers: The Next Step in the Evolution of Fair Trade

By Phyllis Robinson, Education and Campaigns Manager, Equal Exchange

July 22, 2013

### Coming Soon: Farmer-Owned Fair Trade!

The first Fair Trade farmer-owned certification system, referred to as the Small Producer Symbol (SPP, for its Spanish acronym) will arrive this fall on Equal Exchange coffees in food co-ops and natural food stores across the country. Ten years in the making, the SPP certification system represents the small farmers' persistent attempt to ensure a more just trade system for their fellow farmers everywhere. The colorful SPP logo will initially appear on Equal Exchange coffee bags and bulk coffee bins, and will soon become more prominent throughout stores. While the SPP itself is just a little logo, in actuality, the real symbolism of this new Fair Trade seal is anything but small. This bold step forward reflects the fact that today the very folks for whom the Fair Trade movement was built are taking a leadership role in shaping their own destiny. The potential impact this new system will have on small farmers, their co-operative organizations, and the entire Fair Trade movement could be quite profound indeed.

### The Roots of the Conflict

In the early 1980s, a division in the Fair Trade movement resulted in the creation of one international certification system with two distinct ideologies. The early founders of Fair Trade recognized that small farmer organizations trying to access the market were operating on an unfair playing field. The founders' goal was to create a system that could right the wrongs

of hundreds of years of colonialism and unjust trade. Once the system was underway, other traders wanted a faster way to put Fair Trade products on the shelves and decided to open up the system to large-scale plantations. The fact that plantations have *one* owner (versus being owned collectively by a democratically run, small farmer organization), and generally have more access to resources, it is usually faster and easier for them to move products from origin country to market. This means that plantations, with their ease in accessing bank loans, infrastructure, market information, technical assistance, and networks, will almost always carry the same advantage over small farmers that Fair Trade was designed to address.

Eventually, the international Fair Trade certifying system, Fairtrade Labelling Organization (FLO) allowed plantations to become a source for almost all Fair Trade products, with the exception of coffee, cacao, and a few other categories. Small farmer coffee and cacao organizations, typically the most advanced and successful Fair Trade producers, have been living with the fear since the division occurred that the Fair Trade system will one day open their products to plantations as well. Should this happen, many believe that they will once again become marginalized and lose their hard-won market access. After all, if it's easier to source coffee and cacao from large-scale plantations and still call it "Fair Trade," why wouldn't multinational corporations simply take the easier route and ignore the small farmer? In coffee, it took 15 years of Fair Trade before coffee farmers began to see a positive impact on their businesses and in their lives. Sourcing from plantations in tea and bananas has prevented the growth of a strong small farmer



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movement in these two categories. (For more on how the prospects for small farmer-grown Fair Trade tea was inhibited by plantations, see <http://tinyurl.com/lsmxxcl> )

The farmers' fear became more of a reality 10 years ago. At the 2003 annual Specialty Coffee Association of America conference in Boston, coffee certainly wasn't all that was brewing. Alongside the aromas emanating from the brewing of exotic coffees, big trouble was simmering as well. The foreshadowing of conflict was evident from the loud voices and angry faces of representatives of small farmer co-ops, Fair Trade roasters, alternative traders, and other Fair Trade activists, all of whom were tightly packed in a room at the Hynes Convention Center listening to the words of Paul Rice, CEO of Transfair USA, FLO International's U.S. Fair Trade certifying agency (today known as Fair Trade USA).

Rice was lobbying for a change in standards; he believed plantations should be allowed in the Fair Trade system as sources of "Fair Trade" coffee. He claimed that large companies and corporations wanted access to plantation products and that there wasn't enough small farmer Fair Trade coffee on the market. The crowd was wild with outrage. Most small farmer organizations had far more coffee than they could sell on Fair Trade terms and many more organizations of small coffee farmers were waiting for buyers to get themselves listed on the Fair Trade register of certified producers. Finally, against a storm of protest and outrage, Rice acquiesced and agreed to drop this controversial strategy.

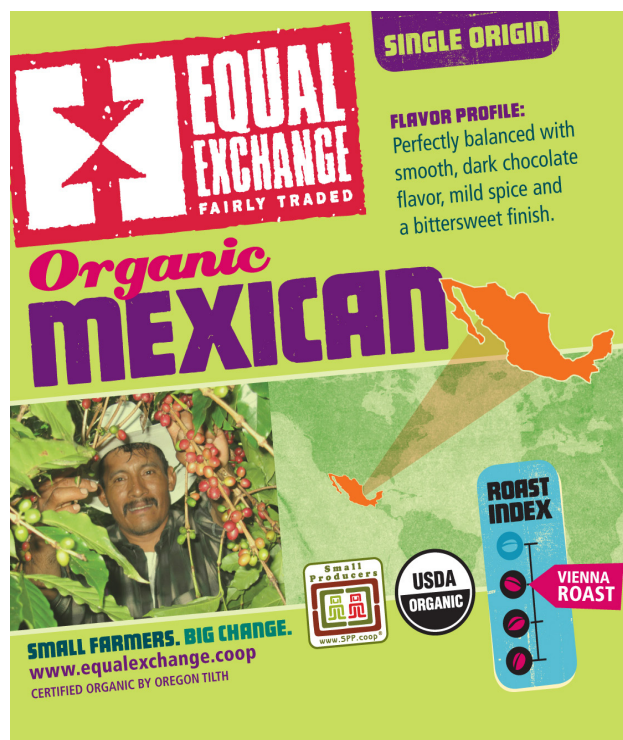
### **By the Farmers, for the Farmers: Why a New Fair Trade Certification System is Necessary**

Although Rice publicly backed down at the SCAA conference, small farmers, roasters, and other Fair Trade activists knew it was just a matter of time before the issue came up again. The pressures to grow a system quickly, the needs of plantations and big corporations, and the money behind it all, were heavy reminders of how decisions are made and how trade typically occurs. Sure enough, in September 2011, Transfair USA announced its decision. Taking the name Fair Trade USA, the organization left the international Fair Trade system that had given it birth. Just days later, it announced its new strategy, "Fair Trade for All", with a certification system allowing plantations in coffee and cacao.

Small farmer organizations weren't idle. The Coordinating Body of Latin America and the Caribbean (CLAC) had been meeting for 10 years to strategize how to keep Fair Trade from being

stolen out from under them. Finally, they had their solution: the Small Producer Symbol (SPP). CLAC has now created its own certification system, run by the non-profit group, the Foundation of Organized Small Producers (FUNDEPPO). The system is impressive, with General Standards incorporating four dozen criteria for small farmer member organizations, including maximum individual farm sizes and a maximum percentage of farm work performed by hired farm workers. Buyers who use the SPP

must meet nearly three dozen criteria, including a minimum of five percent annual volume growth in program purchases. Perhaps most impressive, the SPP is run and governed by the farmers themselves.





After decades of this movement being essentially managed by offices thousands of miles away from source, farmers are now in the driver's seat.



This fall you will begin to see the first Equal Exchange coffee products appear with the SPP symbol on them. Trust that while other Fair Trade products may come from plantations, SPP coffee will never sell out. It will always be authentic. It will always be small farmer.

*Phyllis Robinson is Education and Campaigns Manager at Equal Exchange, a worker-owned co-op who sells Fair Trade coffee, tea chocolate, bananas and a variety of other foods. [www.EqualExchange.Coop](http://www.EqualExchange.Coop)*

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### Winky's Food Review *Winky Gordon*

Some of this, some of that – cheese, chocolate, pineapple, butternut squash soup. Here we go with this issue's food review. Read on!

Like many other makers of “artisanal” foods, the Vermont Farmstead cheese company, (makers of Cracked Pepper Windsordale, \$6.75/ 8 oz. package), has a savvy website. On it, you can read about the company's origin – the result of a community effort to save a local farm in South Woodstock. You can read about each of their cheeses: the Windsordale cracked pepper has a “bold, exuberant zing.” And their short video not only shows cows happily



sashaying down the path but also gives a glimpse of the actual workings of cheese making. Fascinating, and a good use of marketing tools.

Oh yes, and the cheese is good too. On a recent evening, a friend Fran, and I munched on it and made satisfied groaning sounds. I would add “distinctly sharp” and “specifically peppery” to the makers' description of this cheese.

Here's the next tra-la: dark chocolate nonpareils, one of my all time favorite candies. Remember the ones you got (and can still get) at the movie theater? Little did we know, we were eating dark chocolate way back when, before it became chic. And didn't you always wonder why the weird name? Webster's.com tells us that the little white balls of sugar and starch that are the actual nonpareil, meaning “without equal” in



French. Tres chic. Apparently these little white dots are the predecessor of what has evolved into sprinkles, or jimmies, depending on where you come from. Now when we say nonpareil, it is synonymous with the dark chocolate discs covered in the sugar dots. The ones we have at the Co-op are addictive, as evidenced by my need to buy a second batch for this review. At \$5.25/lb, they also happen to be the best deal of our bulk chocolate products. Crunchy, not waxy, enough cocoa to satisfy my dark chocolate cravings.

Remember – dark chocolate is medicinal.

After chomping on the nonpareils, it's a little hard to come back to dried fruit. Nonetheless, I recommend the organic fair trade pineapple (\$10.45/lb.). It's the real thing – no extra sugar or weird coatings. It is fresh enough that it does not leathery. When



dried, pineapple contains 2 to 3 times more sugar than when fresh, making it a super sweet snack. This would probably be a good product to cook with, or add to hot cereal or trail mix. Pineapple, dried or

fresh, is also rich in vitamin C and contains the mineral manganese.

While the fruits of summer are bursting their seams and jumping out of my refrigerator, there is butternut squash to look forward to in the near future. If you cannot wait, Imagine's Organic Creamy Butternut Squash Soup (\$ 5.59/1 qt. carton)

is right there for you. Its all-organic ingredients include: butternut squash (of course, silly), onions, rice syrup, rice flour, and "spice."



I would say nutmeg is among the mysterious spices. In order to make this creamy, sweet soup more substantial, I added brown rice to the bowl, which I like to do with gazpacho as well. One of the most attractive features of this product is that it is absolutely ready-made. Heat and eat. Good for camping trips and other travel where cooking access is limited. It will be on sale Oct 2-15 for \$3.29!

This issue's review is shorter than usual as I have been busily processing beautiful fresh produce from the Co-op, from farmer's markets, from my neighbor's orderly garden, and from my higgledy-piggledy one. Unfortunately, it doesn't usually make sense for me to review produce from the Co-op; by the time the newsletter is out, that fruit or vegetable is often gone. I hope you have enjoyed the cucumbers and carrots and tomatoes and cabbage and melon and... that we are fortunate enough to get at the Co-op. Thank you to all the farmers who grow and bring these foods to us. We need each other.

## Notes From the Bulk Desk *Jon Campo*

Happy fall to all. I hope everyone is enjoying the bounty of this banner growing season. I have a lot of new bulk products to tell you about, some comments about fair trade products, and a few words about discontinued products. First, important olive news: I tracked down oil-cured black olives with herbs. (Thanks for asking, Jay.)

We have a bunch of new candy and snacks in the bins. You may have noticed a bunch of empty bins in the candy area. Because of the extreme weather our main candy suppliers could not ship chocolate products for a long time, and even as I write this the most popular new products (coconut curry cashews and especially the dark chocolate sea salt caramels are still out of stock.) They were on the way from California last I heard, and will almost certainly be back in stock by the time you read this. Other new candy : Chocolate Non-Pareils, Carob Peanut Clusters, and Yogurt Almonds.

In the snack bins, the big news is the Hatch Chili snack mix from Sunridge Foods. We have been having a hard time keeping this in the bin; once folks try it they are hooked... I think the staff is buying more than the shoppers. It is spicy, but not hot. Also, Fig Bars are back, from a different company, and I would say better. Back too, are the Vegetable Chips. I could not get the good ones for a few years, but now I can again. By the time you read this, we should have roasted no-salt pistachios. I know a lot of folks can not have salt, and I should have gotten these a long time ago. If you think of something we should sell, but do not – please ask!

Along the same lines, I have gotten some comments about products that have been discontinued, so I wanted to say a few words about that. There are two ways items get discontinued - lack of sales is one, and hardly needs any elaboration. We just can not stock items that do not sell in a timely manner, for quality as well as monetary reasons. The other way is when an item is poor quality for various reasons. Sometimes there is a general problem with a whole crop, or just a lack of supply/out of stocks.

Another thing that sometimes happens is a company gets bought, and quality goes downhill fast. I am thinking of the organic blueberry and raspberry granola that used to be some of our best sellers. The company got bought by a large multi-national corporation that promises “food solutions for your business” on their website. The cooperation removed all the organic ingredients and substituted poor quality ingredients but kept the price the same. If we have discontinued a product you really like, we might be able to get a smaller amount for you.

Last but not least, fair trade - October is Fair Trade month as well as Co-op month. It seems to me that fair trade has become kind of a murky grey area. There are a lot more angles to this than I can cover here in such a limited space, but I would like to encourage all of you to do your own research. Read producers statements, and try to follow the money trail. Ask questions like: how much of the profits go back to the farmers and producers? How much does the company take for themselves? (Answer at equal exchange - \$1.00 per case of bananas) The more I read up about fair trade the less sure I am about easy answers. Five years ago it was hard to get any fair trade products in bulk, now there are many choices. In my opinion, some

certifying agencies are pretty bogus (Fair Trade USA-yes, someone trademarked the words “fair trade”). Some companies exist almost entirely to improve conditions for producers and farmers (Equal Exchange), and some companies buy direct from farmers who have relationships with them going back

years (Singing Dog Vanilla, Tierra Farm).

My very brief cheat sheet for shoppers: Best - Equal Exchange, Taza Chocolate, Tierra Farm, Deans Beans, Lotus Foods, Alaffia (soap), Dr. Bronner’s, Singing Dog Vanilla. Good: Green & Black Chocolate (most varieties are now F.T.), Wholesome Foods, too many tea companies to mention. The truly bad: “Fair Trade USA” (certifies huge plantations, egregious workplace violations, etc.), Nestles, Hershey’s, Mars, Cargill Foods (notice a pattern here?), Archer Daniels Midland Corp. In the spirit of Fair Trade month, you will find some new F.T. products in the bulk department: new rice from Lotus Foods, lots of new fruit and nuts from Equal Exchange, and the not-so-new organic F.T. vanilla beans from Singing Dog Vanilla for your holiday baking. Speaking of Holidays, I will leave you with a nice cashew recipe from Becca at Equal Exchange, really easy and good - these were such a big hit at the co-op, I had to make another batch! 🌱

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### Caramelized Cashews with Cayenne

[www.equalexchange.coop](http://www.equalexchange.coop)

2 tsp Extra Virgin Olive Oil  
 2 cups unsalted cashews  
 1/4 cup maple syrup (Grade B)  
 1 1/2 tsp cumin seeds  
 1 tsp sea salt  
 1/2 cayenne pepper



Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly brush a baking sheet with 1 tsp olive oil. Toss cashews and all remaining ingredients in medium bowl. Spread cashew mixture evenly in single layer on the prepared baking sheet. Bake nuts until golden brown and coated with maple syrup mixture, stirring occasionally, about 20 minutes. While nuts are baking, brush a sheet of aluminum foil with the remaining oil. After removing nuts from the oven, immediately pour them out onto foil, spreading evenly. Cool 10 minutes. Enjoy! 🌱



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