

# A New Kind Of Farm in the Southern Berkshires



Justin, Mael & Tashiana prepare to work the fields at Community Cooperative Farm

By Matthew Novik

Community Cooperative Farm (CCF) seeks to change farming paradigm and produce great food in the process.

When five recent graduates of small west coast liberal arts colleges decided to move to Massachusetts and start a farm, they most likely heard some jeers. Their majors were varied, ranging from global politics to linguistics, with plenty of stops in between. However, none of them had studied agriculture. And none of them had studied business. But they did have a dream. And that dream was Community Cooperative Farm.

They lost two founding members in the first year, but now, a year and a half into the process and in the middle of their second growing season, their ranks have grown to nine farm-

ers. Their mission is simple. "We farm to feed ourselves completely, and after that we try to feed as many others as possible," says Justin Torrico, a founding member. "Once our member-farmers are fed, we go to local stores, restaurants and farmers' markets to share what we've grown with the community."

For these farmers, however, it's about more than just food. They operate a farm that is devoted to a strong food supply, cooperation in community, environmental stewardship, preservation of heirloom plant varieties, sustainable farming practices and community education. And even though they did not have the experience going in, all of the CCF farmers are serious about what they do. "I never before imagined myself farming, but I was here five days after graduation," said Mael Raoult, another founding member. "I've always believed that if you have a passion for something, it's gonna happen. And that passion will help you learn what you need to in order to make it so."

And, in virtually no time, CCF has

thrived. Right now, they operate three small farm sites in Great Barrington, Sheffield and Mount Washington, and they're working on a fourth site in New Marlborough. They gain access to their sites through unique cooperative relationships with community members. "For use of our Mount Washington site we traded a pig and a farm share," said Torrico, as he weeded around some beautiful Mammoth Red Rock Cabbage. As for the Sheffield site: "We were approached by a former childhood teacher of one of our farmers. She had heard about what we were doing and wanted her land to be sustainably farmed." CCF was happy to oblige and a reasonable deal was made. With these kinds of relationships, Community Cooperative Farm was started on only a \$1,500 budget. After all, how else were a bunch of poor former college students going to start a farm?

What is most obvious upon a visit to Community Cooperative Farm is the

CCF continued on page 8

## Agriculture Policy Affects You: Here's How

By Winton Pitcoff, Executive Director, New England Farmers Union

Federal agriculture policy is about more than just farming. It's about food, land use, clean air, clean water, the economy, health care and much more. The laws and regulations that set policy for our nation's farmers are made every year in Washington, D.C., and it is more important than ever that consumers who care about the food they eat get engaged in this process.

Agriculture makes up 4.6 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product, but we spend less than one-quarter of one percent of the federal budget to support it. With the current tight federal budget, and calls for cuts to all agencies, programs that determine whether farms thrive or fail and what foods are safe and affordable are being threatened.

New England Farmers Union (NEFU) is bringing the voice of our region's farmers and consumers to Washington, to ensure that the issues that are most important to New England are represented in the debate. As Congress begins to discuss the 2012 Farm Bill, we are working to educate every one of the 35 senators and representatives from our six states.

Much of the farm bill discussion is currently focused on subsidies paid to commodity crop growers: farmers in other regions of the country who grow thousands of acres of wheat, corn and soybeans. But the programs that support

those farmers don't support New England's small, diversified farms. Our farmers depend, instead, upon small grants that help them develop and implement sustainable management practices so that they can remain viable and continue to provide healthy food to their communities. For example, there are federal programs that:

- Build infrastructure so that small dairies can build plants to make cheese;
- Cover the cost of fencing so farmers can use intensive grazing methods;
- Provide insurance to protect farmers from catastrophic losses due to weather or market conditions;
- Pay for equipment that reduces fuel use on farms;
- Feed the hungry by giving seniors and low-income parents coupons for farmers' markets.

These programs have a proven track record of success, leveraging other investments and giving farmers the tools they need to grow their businesses. Many of these programs were started as a response to the dust bowl of the 1930s, when the federal government acknowledged that our nation's health and strength depends on the soil, which affects our ability to

POLICY continued on page 4

Presorted Standard  
US POSTAGE PAID  
Permit #95  
Great Barrington  
MA 01230

42 Bridge Street  
Great Barrington, MA 01230  
413.528.9697  
www.berkshire.coop  
Mon - Sat 8 am - 8 pm  
Sunday 10 am - 6 pm



### Inside This Issue

- Notes from HQ ..... Page 2
- Co-op to Co-op in El Salvador ..... Page 2
- A No Package Life ..... Page 4
- Thoughts on the Co-op Movement ..... Page 6
- Local Food Policy ..... Page 7
- Information Session: Anti-Idling Law..... Page 9
- Departmental Reports ..... Page 12

# Notes From HQ: The GM Report

By Art Ames, General Manager



Happy summer! I think it was early in June when I ran into the first person who decried that it was “too hot.” I prefer to wait until at least mid-August to be tired of the season. Right now I’m reveling in it. I’m enjoying the myriad of music festivals that are held throughout our region, playing the new music I hear on my little community radio show, spending time outdoors and enjoying the local swimming hole to cool off. I sincerely hope you are doing your version of the same. Welcome back as well to the many, many summer residents—some of whom are co-op owners—who return to us each year. It’s good to see you, and unfortunately, no, we are not going to be able to open a version of Berkshire Co-op Market in (fill in the blank with a significantly out-of-state town of your choice) anytime soon. But I am flattered that you asked.

On to the business at hand.

## Physical property

Yes, indeed, we have made some changes out in front of the store. We took away a tree that has since found a new home, and moved our shopping carts outside. We still are working on the landscaping element so that we can beautify the new space, so be patient. We will also redo the front foyer area and make it friendlier for communication access, and use that space fairly often for community access as well. I readily admit that while we are pleased with the changes, they are not ideal. It’s just another sign that the services we try to provide are sometimes challenged by our space restrictions, and we’ll continue to try and balance it all.

We’ve been delayed in trying to fix the potholes and surface cracks of our parking lot and entrance. I wish we had more

control sometimes with unresponsive contractors, but it is simply the nature of trying to do business. I think it is all resolved now, and hopefully by the time you read this the work will have been done. If not, it should be done very soon.

After the last extensive weeding of our native plant garden along Bridge Street we seem to be winning the mugwort war, and the native plantings are really flourishing. It was also a nice feeling to need to trim our elm trees, as they seem to be thriving as well. Who knows? Maybe the town can look at this species as a possible inclusion in the eventual downtown street reconstruction as efforts continue to reintroduce the elm to our area.

## Product & Department changes

Although we wanted to move a few departments around, we just could not pull it off before the delightful craziness of summer descended upon us. Consequently, we will move the cheese, meat, seafood and grab’n’go sections after Labor Day. We continue to make changes in our Produce Department however, as new shelving is being installed in order to be able to offer you even greater variety, particularly now that we are expanding our family of local growers and including products such as broccoli, cabbage and other greens, with more to come.

Some of you may have noticed that we moved most of the candy and chocolate bars away from the checkout area and put them all together at the end of a front aisle. We’ve also focused more on other items at the checkouts including sunscreens, lip balms, fresh fruit, etc. While we still offer smaller versions of candy type snacks, we did want to try and de-emphasize that a bit, and I think we succeeded.

## Personnel

Changes continue to happen. Eric Jesner, who was our Wellness Manager, has moved with his family to South Caro-

lina. We’ll all miss him and his even-keeled demeanor and depth of knowledge, and we wish him all the best. We were fortunate enough to be able to promote Brenna St. Pierre from within to become our Wellness Buyer. Brenna has worked with us for about four years in our kitchen, and it’s nice to be able to avail ourselves of her education and knowledge in this new capacity. We’ve also completed the hiring process for our new Owner Services Manager and welcome Kira Smith to our family. We are delighted that Amy Demarest, who held this position previously, has transitioned to another role with us that will continue to focus on owner issues and is more conducive to her needs. There are also new faces amongst our cashiers, kitchen and café staff, and we are still looking to add another person to our Wellness/Grocery staff. Please take a moment to say “hi” to some of these new folks as they adjust to our family atmosphere.

## Expansion/Relocation

G2G Resource Group is the company that we are using to perform our marketing study in anticipation of our growth plans. They paid us a visit on July 15<sup>th</sup>, to do some in-person analysis and observation, and we expect the study to be completed in the next few weeks. In the meantime, I continue to investigate potential sites and potential expansion plans. We would like to have a site determined and a contingent offer in place by the end of the year and will continue to make steady and careful progress. We continue to focus on the downtown Great Barrington area as our most desirable choice.

## Food Prices

Local products, particularly produce, seem to be holding the line. We have seen a rise in other crop prices—often due to challenging growing conditions—including citrus, avocados and red pep-

pers. On the grocery side, we are unfortunately finally seeing the impact of anticipated commodity pricing increases in grains and sugar, particularly. Cereals are going up along with bread. I expect a rise shortly in some dairy items, such as yogurts. Beyond that, these things tend to rise in groups, so we *could* be all right until the fall. Once again, food prices are rising and will continue to rise. I do not think this is a temporary situation, but an evolving pattern as this country begins to catch up to the rest of the world in what we will spend as consumers to feed ourselves. I note that this is an issue that we will all grapple with, and not just at the co-op. As is often the case however, the “original” foods tend to be affected first, and more manufactured products follow. Consequently, you may initially see prices rise faster in smaller stores such as the co-op and perhaps even stores like Guido’s, as we simply deal with a higher percentage of fresh foods.

## Product Identification

I’d like to acknowledge the tough assignment that we present to our Marketing team. We ask them to inform our shoppers about everything, including events, products, ingredients and much more, and then ask them to do it in such a way that we don’t overload you with information or bombard you with clutter. They’ve created a new sign program to help you identify local product and gluten-free items, and they are working on others. Let us know what you think. I continue to encourage you, however, to simply ask if you have a question. That is what we are here for. Speaking of marketing, check out our new hats! They’re pretty cool, and we’ve even brought in a new style to go along with the more traditional baseball caps.

That’s it for this issue. Stay in touch, and we’ll do the same.

## A Director’s Note From Erica Spizz

### Co-op to Co-op Trade Potential in El Salvador

This past June I was on a study tour delegation to El Salvador to visit producer co-ops and look for ways that we could potentially develop co-op-to-co-op trade relationships. The tour was sponsored by the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA). This trip was a first step in a four-year project funded by USAID out of the U.S. foreign aid budget. For an entire week, I traveled with a group of Americans from food co-ops located around the United States. Many of us on the trip work in different roles in our co-ops; as board members, managers and consultants. In addition to meeting El Salvadorian cooperative producers and leaders, we were also there with a goal—to determine the best use of our resources to further cooperation in a country seeking to rebuild its postwar economy.

El Salvador is hands down a gorgeous country. As we drove the country roads, we got to see its volcanic mountain ranges, rainforests, lakes, valleys—and most stunning of all—the radiant Pacific



*Gifts of Berkshire Co-op canvas bags were much appreciated.*

coast. Experiencing the beauty and the bounty of its land, the possibility inherent in all El Salvador’s natural resources is palpable.

We visited two organic coffee producing co-ops, an organic cashew processing facility run by another co-op, as well as dairy co-ops, a loroco (an exotic

local produce item) processor and co-op sugar producers. Not only was the trip inspiring and educational, it turned out to be a lot of fun as we sampled coffee, cashews, cashew juice, sugar, produce and cheeses. Without exception we were greeted warmly by other cooperators, and left each meeting with the spark of newfound co-op friendships. It was a trip remarkable for seeing firsthand how cooperation matters to people and communities outside our own country.

Our hosts shared with us their triumphs and challenges. For example, financing growth is an issue for Salvadorian cooperatives as the financing process does not lend itself to easy credit. Some cooperators continue to be stymied by issues of poverty and crime, which have been rampant in the country since the war. Yet cooperatives in El Salvador are a beacon of hope for the communities where co-ops are located. In many instances, the co-ops provide the only well-paying

**TRADE continued on page 5**

# THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BOD@BERKSHIRE.COOP



Daniel Seitz,  
President



Erica Spizz,  
Vice President



Craig Swanson,  
Treasurer



Crispina  
French-Swindlehurst,  
Secretary



Betsy Andrus



Lawrence  
Davis-Hollander



Melissa McGarrity



Sally  
Michael-Keyes

## THE LEADERSHIP TEAM



Art Ames  
General Manager

generalmanager@berkshire.coop



Bob Crowle  
Business Manager

businessmanager@berkshire.coop



Seth Marcantonio  
Store Manager

storemanager@berkshire.coop



Matt Novik  
Marketing & Communications Manager

marketing@berkshire.coop



Daniel Esko  
Grocery/Wellness Manager

grocery@berkshire.coop



Andrei Smerechniak  
Produce Manager

produce@berkshire.coop



Jeff Schilling  
Fresh Food Manager

freshfood@berkshire.coop



Michele DiSimone  
Front End Manager

customers@berkshire.coop



Kira Smith  
Owner Services Manager

ownership@berkshire.coop



### OUR ENDS

*The Berkshire Cooperative Association cultivates a sustainable local/regional economy and cooperatively builds a vibrant community.*

*To this end, the Berkshire Cooperative Association:*

- E1. Operates a financially successful, community-oriented natural foodstore that specializes in consciously selected fresh food and meals, with reasonably priced options
- E2. Flourishes
- E3. Is a model of social and environmental stewardship
- E4. Is accessible, welcoming, inclusive and innovative
- E5. Fosters the growth of local/regional food systems
- E6. Develops an informed and engaged community
- E7. Promotes healthful living
- E8. Supports a sustainable environment

### OPERATIONAL VISION

- To be a transformative force in the community
- To serve as a model of a sustainable business alternative
- To nurture social and economic well-being in an environmentally sensitive manner

### OWNER APPRECIATION DAYS

10% OFF TO OWNERS IN GOOD STANDING

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21<sup>ST</sup>, 2011

FRIDAY, JANUARY 20<sup>TH</sup>, 2012

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18<sup>TH</sup>, 2012

THURSDAY, JULY 19<sup>TH</sup>, 2012

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20<sup>TH</sup>, 2012

### BOARD MEETINGS\*

HELD THE 4<sup>TH</sup> WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

6:00 PM • BERKSHIRE CO-OP OFFICES • 307 MAIN STREET

WEDNESDAY, JULY 28<sup>TH</sup>

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24<sup>TH</sup>

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28<sup>TH</sup>

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26<sup>TH</sup>

### OTHER EVENTS

COOKING WITH KIDS - 8/20 10-11

FARM TOUR - PROJECT NATIVE - 8/20 - 2-3

PRESERVING THE BOUNTY CANNING WORKSHOP 8/13 - 4-5

GROW YOUR MIND, GROW YOUR FOOD @

WOVEN ROOTS - 8/15 - 10-3

PRESERVING THE BOUNTY KIDS MAKE DILLY BEANS 8/20 - 10-11

GROW YOUR MIND, GROW YOUR FOOD

@ FARM GIRL FARM 8/22 - 10-3

GROW YOUR MIND, GROW YOUR FOOD @

COMMUNITY COOPERATIVE FARM - 8/24 - 10-3

FARM TOUR - COMMUNITY COOPERATIVE - 9/17 - 2-3

FARM TOUR - BLUE HILL FARM - 9/23 - 4-5

ANNUAL MEETING - NOVEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup>

\* Board Meetings are open and Owners are welcome to attend. Owner-input time is reserved from 6:45 – 7 pm to speak on any topic. If you need more time or want to address something in more detail, you can request to be placed onto our meeting agenda. Please recognize that we need to set an agenda and post it in advance of any meeting, so we need to receive your request at least two weeks before the meeting. Send requests to bod@berkshire.coop

# Food Co-op Movie in Production

## Food For Change Planned to Be Released In Spring, 2012

Education, participation, independence and cooperation: These are four of the seven cooperative principles that keep food cooperatives rooted in their mission, which is to serve their communities. *Food for Change*, a work-in-progress documentary planned for release next spring, looks at how food co-ops manifest these principles in their day-to-day operations.

The film takes a contemporary and social-historical look at cooperatives in the United States, exploring three periods of co-op expansion: the first wave following the financial collapse of 1929 when co-ops proved to be a mitigating factor against hard times; the second wave of the 1970s driven by a counterculture desire for whole and organic foods, and the third wave, currently underway, aimed at both of these concerns.

*Food For Change's* release is timed to coincide with the United Nations designation of 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives. The plan is to show the film in hundreds of locations across the country on the same day and to follow up with national discussion on the coopera-



tive ways of doing business.

To date, 64 co-ops in 25 states, including Berkshire Co-op Market, have contributed nearly 40 percent of the budget needed to complete and distribute the movie.

Please visit [www.foodforchangemovie.com](http://www.foodforchangemovie.com) to watch the trailer, view scenes from the movie, and learn more.

And, come spring, look for the film at festivals and theaters near you



**POLICY** continued from page 1  
feed ourselves. Out of that came the Soil Conservation Service (the precursor to today's federal environmental protection programs), which repaired much of the damage of the dust bowl over the next few decades. Recent federal budget cuts and proposed reductions in agriculture and conservation spending are putting our soil and the future of our food supply at risk again.

We know, however, that New England's model of agriculture is working: The number of farms in our region increased from 28,000 in 2000 to 33,000 in 2009. In order to continue that growth and success, we need to maintain the kinds of federal agricultural programs mentioned above. With five members of Congress from our region on agriculture committees, we have a real opportunity to use our successes and experience to change the shape of federal policy.

Berkshire Co-op is an active member of NEFU, helping to shape the message that we bring to Washington. Members of the co-op can join NEFU at a discounted rate ([http://newenglandfarmersunion.org/pdfs\\_docs/NEFUNFCAMembership.pdf](http://newenglandfarmersunion.org/pdfs_docs/NEFUNFCAMembership.pdf)) and receive regular updates on what's happening in the process and alerts on how to get involved. Congress is making decisions about our food and our farms. Let's make sure they are listening to New England.

## Change is Simple: Thoughts From a Sustainable Mom

By Michele DiSimone



Back in the beginning of May I got inspired.

I had recently watched a few documentaries and stumbled across a few blogs online that got my wheels turning toward making some big changes in my home. The two things that finally pushed me over that line were the documentary called *Bag It* (currently available in the lending library for owners of the co-op) and a blog called *The Zero Waste Home*. The documentary is about plastic bags and plastic in general, and it pretty much made me want to eliminate all plastic from my life. The blog is a little different because it addresses a lot more than eliminating plastic; it is about a family that is eliminating and avoiding all waste in general.

So, like I said, I got inspired. That inspiration led me to start working toward eliminating the plastic and waste from my home as well. But the question is: How the heck does one start such an overwhelming task? Oh yeah, did I mention that we are a family of five with a dog and a cat and that I work full time as a Front End manager at the co-op?

Well, with no other choice, I just dove in. I started immediately with my buying habits. I researched online and found ways to educate my family (*The Story of Stuff* is a good start; you can watch it online). At first, I only allowed myself to buy a small percentage of packaged items with any kind of plastic (like snacks and cereal). I brought my bags—for bulk and produce or anything at all really—and my jars when I shopped. When I couldn't buy in bulk, I bought products in glass, cardboard or paper whenever possible. I saved my jars to reuse them instead of recycling them. I cleaned out my pantry and worked toward weeding out the packaged goods (by serving them, not throwing them away, although some did end up in the compost).

Then, about a week later, a bear got into our garbage can outside. There is just nothing like being on the path of eliminating the waste in your home, and then looking out the window to see two months worth of trash spread across your lawn (yes, two months; we aren't very good about paying our trash bill since we don't need pickup very often). I couldn't believe the waste in front of me. And I was determined to make it end.

The hard part? The majority of our waste was from those delicious packaged snacks that my family loves to eat. Even though they are all-natural and organic, that certainly doesn't mean that they are the most environmentally friendly. All of that stuff had been put in the trash because it wasn't recyclable. And we certainly don't want more recycling to overcompensate for the trash—we just want to drastically reduce our waste in general

(this includes reducing the amount of recycled products, by the way).

So I started this journey and there is obviously no turning back. Once you can figure out how to make it an easy and everyday practice to not use any packaging, it actually does become easy. It means thinking ahead and being prepared, or simply choosing to not buy something at all because you don't have anything to put it in. This may seem extreme—and in a way it is. However, I hope that by living this way and helping people to realize that it is very possible, we can at least be an inspiration for someone else out there who might want to be living this way as well. In fact, I was encouraged to start a blog about my adventure. For anyone interested, I encourage you to check it out: [www.changesimply.blogspot.com](http://www.changesimply.blogspot.com). I am always open to comments and suggestions.

As for my kids, in case anyone is wondering how all this translates for them, they are doing really well. Buying clothes can be tricky since the kids are all growing so much, but we just do our best to buy secondhand or find nice stuff from people who are ready to pass it on. If we do have to buy new, we make sure that the company is local and/or environmentally conscious in their practices so that we know that our money will



My youngest, Lucas, after a no-waste shopping trip. And yes, that is bacon in a jar.

be going toward something good. We like to remember the saying "vote with your dollar." The kids understand why and how to live without most packaging in their world and they are more aware of things that they simply didn't notice before. They are noticing other people's habits more as well, and while this can be tricky, it is a good lesson for all of us. We choose to live this way but we don't ask anyone else to do the same. However, if anyone is inspired enough to take just one thing from what we are doing, then we have succeeded in making change simple.

# MY CO-OP \$50



In each newsletter, we ask a co-op employee what they would buy if somebody gave them a **guilt-free fifty-dollar gift card** to buy items at the store that they love, not just grocery staples.



## CIAN DALZELL LEAD GROCERY BUYER

Truth be told, if I had an extra \$50 to spend at the co-op, I'd probably buy the awesome American Red Cross flashlight/radio. It has both a crank and a solar panel, NOAA stations as well as AM/FM, and a digital alarm clock (with the all-important sleep function). I spend a lot of time in my garden, and I'd like to be able to take a radio with me that powers

itself. However, I'm told that since that one item costs about fifty bucks on its own, this choice doesn't make for an interesting article. So I'm going to pretend someone gave me that radio and look elsewhere in the store for fun items.

**Cobalt Glass Mug** - \$9.89: It's my favorite color and made in the USA. I can't live without tea and I'd never have to worry about finding my mug among all the ones filled with coffee.

**Bardwell Farm's Manchester Cheese** - about \$7/cut: It's a flavorful, earthy goat cheese from pastured goats, so each wheel has a unique taste. As an added bonus, the farm's only about 120 miles north of here. While not within our definition of local, Bardwell is pretty close.

**Manouri** - about \$4/cut: This is a great cheese. I like it better than feta because it's creamier and less salty. The question is whether this cheese would end up on a salad or made into a modified cheesecake. Either way I'd be happy.

**Pine Nuts** - \$11.25/6 oz: With local basil available, I can't pass up an opportunity for pesto with pine nuts.

**Q-Tonic Ginger Ale** - \$6.59: It's a mellow ginger ale for grown-ups: not too much ginger and not too much sweetener.

**Blueberries** - \$4.99/pt: Whether they're from Windy Hill Farm or Pelletier Farm, the local blueberries we are selling taste amazing. Fresh berries are my favorite local treat. I'll eat them in yogurt, with cream, in a baked dessert.... Any vehicle for blueberries will do.

**Orion Magazine** - \$7: This is one of my favorites. It's a great place to learn about alternative business and economic models, and the future of the land and its cultures. It's just about the best magazine to read while sitting beneath a tree on a summer afternoon.

**TOTAL: \$50.72**

# A Brand New Bag!

Our new paper bags may look the same on the outside, but looks can be deceiving.

You might not have even noticed, but we have recently transitioned to more environmentally friendly paper bags at our checkout counters. Our previous bags were pretty good, made from 100% recycled paper, but only 40-50% post-consumer waste (PCW). Our new bags, however, are 100% recycled PCW. For those of you who don't know the difference, check out the box below. The bags are also printed with biodegradable water-based inks, are 100% recyclable and are Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified to ensure responsible use of forest resources. They also have a new handle design. This means fewer handle detachments and less double bagging, which ultimately means reduced bag usage.



## What's the difference between recycled material and post-consumer waste?

Post-consumer waste is trash produced when someone has used — that's past tense — a product. The term describes the process most people imagine when they think of recycling: the garbage you set out at the curb is cleaned and used to make more products. However, quite often, recycled paper is made with pre-consumer waste. This is byproduct from the paper manufacturing process, such as the trimmings left over after the paper is cut to size.

They are both great, but if you're looking to buy products that have been removed from the consumer to garbage to landfill process, PCW is for you.

### More reasons to use PCW paper:

- Producing recycled paper causes 74% less air pollution, 35% less water pollution, and creates five times the number of jobs than producing virgin paper from trees. It saves old-growth trees, forest ecosystems, native habitat, and biodiversity.
- The average person in the U.S. consumes about 700 lbs of paper, making US the largest consumer of paper in the world. Ninety percent of the printing/writing paper comes from virgin tree fiber.
- Conventional paper is also bleached using chlorine or chlorine derivatives, which create dioxins and other toxins and pollutants.
- Once used, paper generally ends up in the municipal waste stream, making up to 40% of the total waste, instead of being recycled and reused.

Information courtesy of [PlentyMag.com](http://PlentyMag.com)

## Cooperative Possibilities Abound in El Salvador

TRADE continued on page 5

jobs in certain areas. Additionally, co-ops are taking a strong self-help approach to finding ways to educate their children and improve access to health care and fresh water. There are a lot of passionate people with vision in these co-ops, doing important things for the right reasons. We left understanding that supporting their efforts through trade would directly impact their lives and the communities the co-ops help sustain.

We also met cooperative leaders in San Salvador. Felix Córcomo, president of INSAFACOO, a government agency set up to assist co-ops in El Salvador, said, "Co-ops here are going through one of their best moments right now. Co-ops have been abandoned by previous administrations, but now there is an interest

in the government about co-ops." From him we also learned that cooperators are working on establishing a national bank to try to address the issues that co-ops are having with financing.

In El Salvador we met real cooperators producing products we could potentially sell in our store. We still have to do research to learn how to do this, but we also came away from the trip knowing there is potential for co-op to co-op trade with El Salvadorian co-ops. We believe such relationships could be mutually beneficial. We would all be helping to build a value chain based on the high quality goods we want and the economic fairness Salvadorian co-ops depend on for survival.

## BE ON THE B.O.D.

*The Co-op's Board of Directors needs you. If you want to be more involved in your co-op, get in touch with them and get some more information. The election takes place at Annual Meeting in early November.*

**BOD@BERKSHIRE.COOP**  
or Call 413.528.9697 x39

# Summertime is Burgertime

## Hot weather is here, and for this co-op employee, it's all about the BBQ

By Ted Moy

Passing through the neighborhood on an afternoon walk, signs of summer's approach are clear. Children are playing throughout the day, occasionally breaking out the hose for some water play and a cool sip. You can't help but catch that familiar aroma of a charcoal grill—maybe as much as three blocks away—distinct and powerful enough that you'd swear your neighbor was hosting a barbecue to which you were not invited. Though this may be true, it is not time to get upset. No, it's time to fire up the leftover charcoal you saved from last year's Labor Day celebration and revel in your own gray smoky glory.

For as long as I can remember, grilling has been synonymous with burgers. My father would take a trip to the wholesale warehouse mega-store and bring home a box of frozen beef patties, formed in perfect discs and separated by paper (though the only purpose I saw in the paper was so my butter knife chisel had a general guide for when I was given the task of separating the solid cylindrical blocks of burger). Now that I am in charge of my own food budgeting, box-o-burger doesn't touch my grill. I prefer a hand-formed patty made from a fresh, local meat selection mixed with a "never accurately reproduced spice mix." Notice the term "meat selection." In recent years, specifically since seeing the movie *Food, Inc.*, choosing the right meat has been a moral dilemma. I am happy to trade out my traditional beef burger for turkey, or

when I am lucky ground venison, but never again will factory-farmed meat be a part of my diet.

In choosing the proper meat, I consider my own hierarchy of attributes. First

farm, just over the hill. By opting to buy directly from the farm or through a local distribution channel such as the co-op, I am happy that my dollars are staying within the local economy. If the farm is not nearby, I rely on labeling and loca-

look first for meat that is organic, then to see if it is free of antibiotics, added growth hormones and stimulants. Meat packaged simply with the word "natural" does not make the cut. Knowing that my chicken, or the cows my burger comes from, were raised humanely is equally important. Factory farms not only disregard the well-being of the animals, but the quality of product is often compromised. To find the best that my dollar can buy I look toward small farms and organic labeling.

When desirable meat options are not available, my house simply does without. I have found grilling vegetables to be a fantastic alternative. Squash, zucchini, Portobello mushrooms and eggplant are some of my favorites right now. I treat my veggies like I do my meat. On an ordinary day, a little olive oil, garlic, salt and pepper will do. When I'm feeling like I need to get bold, I reach for my personal favorite: the Smoky Habanero Route 7 Grill BBQ Sauce.

Summer smells are in the air and I am happy to contribute. Remember, if you wish to visit a farm, call ahead. Farmers are very busy folk and you don't want to distract them from their work. When the right meat is unavailable, don't be afraid to try something new. Grilling vegetables never seemed appetizing to me until I tried it for myself, and now squash, peppers and Portobellos fill up half of the grilling surface. I am proud of what I choose to put on the grill, and hopefully you can be too.



off, do I know the farmer? If the farm is located nearby, I attempt to arrange a visit to the farm and see the operation for myself. Get to know the farmers. Generally they are very nice people, and if you catch them at the right time, would be happy to tell you how well they run their operation. I am proud every time I can say that my meat came from "this"

tion. With so many meat options relatively close to me, I do not feel the need to get my meat from halfway across the country.

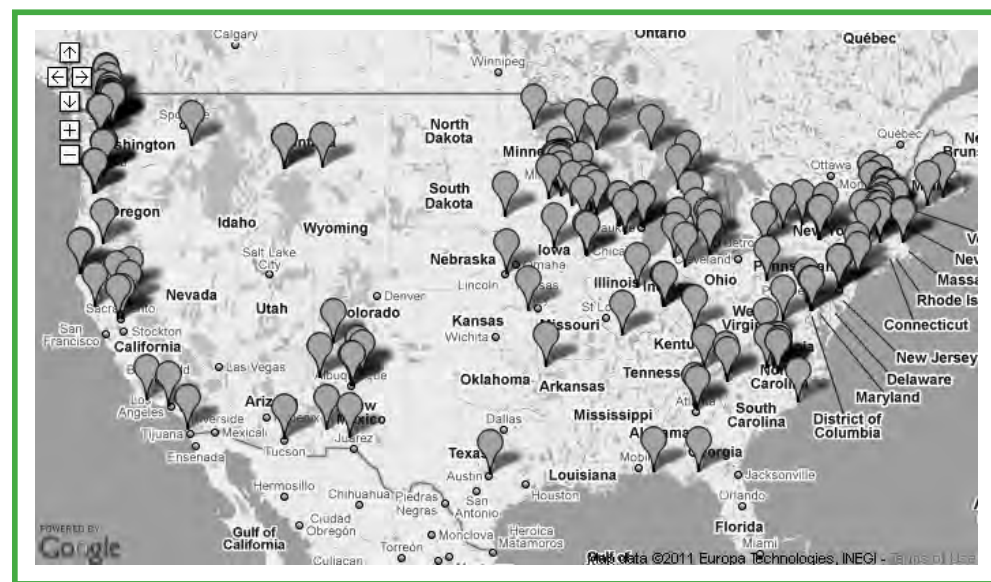
Next is a good practices check. Knowing the farm grants me firsthand knowledge of the treatment of their animals. Without knowing the farm, relying on good labels becomes essential. Personally, I

# This Isn't Just A Store, It's A Movement

By Matthew Novik

This June, I was lucky enough to attend the Consumer Cooperative Management Association annual conference in San Diego, California. CCMA is the largest gathering of U.S. Consumer Cooperatives each year, drawing over three hundred cooperators from more than fifty co-ops nationwide. This was my second CCMA in as many years, and I have left each conference with the same overall feeling. There is no place where it is more apparent that food co-ops are more than just grocery stores. Instead, they are the foundation for a social and economic movement that gains strength every day and has the power to change the way we see the relationship between business and community.

According to the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives, consumer grocery cooperatives account for close to 2.1 billion dollars in sales revenue, 15,000 jobs, 252 million dollars in wages and benefits paid, and 316 million dollars in valued-added income. And those numbers are from 2007, the last time the center did research on the impact of cooperatives on the U.S. economy. When you walk the halls at CCMA, it becomes more than apparent that co-ops are growing like mad and that the impact from four years ago pales compared to that of today.



**That's a lot of co-ops! This map, courtesy of National Cooperative Grocers Association, shows just how many co-ops are sprouting up in the country.**

At CCMA, you meet a lot of new people. There are four pieces of information that start most conversations: your co-op's name, your location, your square footage and your annual sales. (In my case the answers are Berkshire, western Massachusetts, 4,500 and nearly eight million.) The next thing you usually find yourself talking about is expansion. It seems that every person you meet is from a co-op that is in the before, during or after stages of an expansion, relocation, or addition of a new location. Then there are the startups, whose numbers are so great that CCMA has begun a new workshop track devoted to them specifically.

So, why is this important? What's so special about co-ops? To put it simply, it's all about the business model. On average a co-op food store operates on a profit margin that is three to five percent lower than a privately owned natural food store. When you are talking millions of dollars in sales, that percentage difference can result in some pretty large numbers. In a private business, a portion of the profit gets reinvested in the business and the rest goes towards paying for the owner's expenses. In a good good year, the excess goes towards a boat, a pool, a car, or whatever else they want or need to buy). At a co-op, the small profit that is kept is reinvested in the store and there

is no single end benefactor. The difference goes to the community in one way or another.

Some co-ops give that money back to their owners: The La Montanita Co-op in New Mexico has given back an average of nearly \$150,000 a year in patronage dividends since they started the program in 1990. Some co-ops educate: The Weavers Way Co-op in Philadelphia uses its Farm Education Program to teach students of all ages about science, humanities and nutrition, using a farm as a classroom. Some co-ops reach out into the schools: At the Davis Food Co-op in California, their Carrots in the Classroom Program visits classes from Pre-K to middle school to teach about cooking, shopping locally, sustainability and nutrition. No matter how they choose to reach out, food co-ops are devoted to helping the communities they serve. And they do it with the earnings of a for-profit grocery store that exists not just to do business as usual, but also to incorporate their business into the health of their community.

As I boarded the jet to take us back home from San Diego, it was to this that my mind was drawn. These co-ops are very different. They serve communities that are as diverse as this nation itself. Some serve the poor, some college students, and some vacation destinations. But they all have the movement in common. And I, for one, am as thrilled as ever to be a part of it.

# Local: It's Policy, Not Marketing

## A Discussion on Food Policy Around Local Products

By Matthew Novik



For a long time, “organic” was all the rage. So much so that big business food began to co-opt the term, interpreting it loosely and using the general concept as a marketing ploy. It wasn't until 2002, when the National Organic Program was enacted, that labeling standards were put into effect. These new rules made it illegal to label a product as “organic” without first becoming certified to do so. The NOP set up standards for organics that apply to all situations, and regulate the industry across the board.

These days, the hot word is “local.” With growing public concern about community economy, big agribusiness, food supply, sustainable agriculture and carbon footprints, people are starting to turn their attention to local food. And,

of course, that means that some people are trying to use the term to make money without honoring the values.

We've all heard the stories: Lettuce grown in Mexico and sold as local in New York; Canadian produce calling itself local because it opened a business office in the United States; a company called Local Farms even though the food is grown thousands of miles away from where it is sold. These are the dangers of marketing and manipulation in the year 2011. The problem is very similar to that of organics before the NOP. However, when it comes to local, it's not quite as easy to regulate the labeling.

Unlike organic farming, there is no standard for local food. It can depend on the size of the state, the closeness to borders, the ocean, the mountains and all the other factors that make every place in this land special in their own ways. Unfortunately, this part of what makes local so important also leaves it open to those willing stretch the truth in order to make a buck.

These dishonest practices will eventually lead to a consumer base that does not trust the word local and assumes the lie before the truth can be proven. At the co-op, we don't want to see it come to that. We have an open and transparent food policy that includes our definition of local for this region.



**“Local” is defined as being within a circumference of 100 miles by shortest distance between points (as the crow flies). To be tagged as local, a product must also satisfy one or more of the following requirements:**

- Products that are grown locally on sustainable farms;
- Products that are cooked, prepared, assembled or otherwise produced locally;
- Products that add to and enhance economic development through job and business creation that involves more than simple transportation or distribution.

What does this mean? In simple terms, it means that a business must be within a 100-mile radius and must grow, change, cook or process their product in a significant way in order for that product to be labeled as local. So, if a distributor simply packs a product and reships it, it doesn't count. If they receive several products and use them to form a new one, they pass the test and get the label.

As you shop our aisles, you will notice shelf tags with our new local logo (pictured to the left). If you see that logo on a product, you can rest assured that it has passed the test of the policy above. In a consumer system where you can't always trust what you see, we hope that this helps you in your shopping decisions.



## RECIPE RESOURCE

stronger together

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

# Melon Tabbouleh

### Ingredients

- 3/4 cup bulgur\*
- 1 cup boiling water
- 1 large bunch curly parsley, washed and finely chopped
- 2 cups honeydew melon, seeded, peeled and diced
- 1 bunch scallions, sliced thin
- 2 tablespoons fresh mint, minced (about 1/2 ounce)
- 1/4 cup lemon juice (about 2 lemons)
- Salt and ground black pepper, to taste
- Pinch of cayenne pepper
- 1/2 cup diced red bell pepper (optional, for garnish)

### Preparation

In a small bowl, pour the boiling water over the bulgur and let it sit for 15-20 minutes, until the water is absorbed and the bulgur is tender. Allow the bulgur to cool. Mix the parsley, melon, scallions, mint, lemon juice, salt, pepper, and cayenne in a large bowl. Toss with the cooled bulgur. Garnish with diced red pepper.

\*Bulgur is a quick-cooking form of whole wheat; unlike cracked wheat, it has been parboiled. Bulgur has a nutty, earthy flavor, and can be found in your co-op's bulk department or packaged grains section.

Serving Suggestion: Enjoy this light, summery Middle Eastern salad with stuffed grape leaves or serve with grilled meats, poultry or kabobs.

**Total Time:**  
30-40 minutes  
**Servings:** 6-8

**NUTRITION**  
**Per Serving:**  
Calories: 93  
Fat: 0g  
Cholesterol: 0mg  
Sodium: 17 mg  
Carbohydrate: 21 g  
Dietary Fiber: 5 g  
Protein: 3 g

Recipe Resource is courtesy of The National Co-op Grocers Association & [strongertogether.coop](http://strongertogether.coop). Visit the website for more recipes, interesting news and information about the national cooperative movement.

# Choosing Sustainable Seafood Just Got a Whole Lot Easier



*The co-op is partnering with FishWise to do its part to educate about and protect our oceans and their delicate and damaged ecosystems.*

The world's oceans are in trouble. Each day, we are bombarded with reports about overfishing, destructive fishing practices, pollution from fish farms, and toxins in our favorite seafood. Given the ever-changing information about seafood, it's no surprise that some of you are unsure about what kind of seafood you can buy that's healthy for you and for the environment.

With this in mind, Berkshire Co-op Market is proud to announce a new partnership with FishWise ([www.fishwise.org](http://www.fishwise.org)), a not-for-profit marine conservation group based in Santa Cruz, California. FishWise works with retailers around the country to help them improve the sustainability of their seafood offerings via assistance in finding the most environmentally preferable products, and helps them communicate these efforts to customers via training employees and point-of-sale information.

When you visit the service case in the next few weeks, you will notice that all of the fresh seafood has been labeled to include a sustainability color ranking. Green signs are for "best choices" (abundant, well-managed and caught or farmed in environmentally friendly ways), yellow signs are for "good alter-

natives" (have some concerns regarding how they are caught or farmed), and red signs are for items deemed "unsustainable" (overfished or caught or farmed in ways that can cause harm to other marine life or the environment).

The seafood labels will also contain information related to catch method (how the fish was caught or farmed) and geographic origin, making it easier for you to choose sustainable seafood options.

If you have a question about anything in the seafood case, ask the staff! They will all be given full sustainable seafood training. There will also be materials, which you can take home and share with your friends and family, covering:

- The FishWise program;
- Popular sustainable seafood items in your region;
- Low-mercury seafood choices.

Berkshire Co-op Market is excited to be working with FishWise, and we look forward to providing you with the most up-to-date information to help you make informed decisions when purchasing seafood. Thanks for supporting us in our commitment to ensure healthy ocean ecosystems for generations to come.



By Ted Moy, Merchandising Coordinator

Here at the co-op, we like to tell you about some of our favorite vendors or, "Five-Star Vendors" as you have already come to know them. Though we appreciate smiling faces, they alone will not get vendors on our favorites list. Certain criteria must be met to be considered for this special group, all of which align with Berkshire Co-op Market's ends policy, specifically when dealing with the environment, the community, and promoting healthy living. To excel in one or more of these categories puts a company in the running for inclusion on our list.

Environmental stewardship is a major part of the co-op's mission. Therefore it is imperative that Berkshire Co-op Market not only practice good ecological decision-making, but also encourage the same in our clientele. Evidence of the care we take in our business decisions can be seen across the store, from the availability of reusable bags to our recent switch to 100% post-consumer waste paper bags. We hope it is evident that we will be ever mindful of the waste we produce within the store, and we hope this attention is passed along to our customers when they make purchasing decisions. Recently, one of our staff and her whole family have taken on a zero waste challenge (see Sustainable Mom, page 4). One big obstacle she encountered in this mission was being aware of the disposable containers and utensils used for packaging and consuming food. We have a fantastic solution to these problems in *To-Go Ware* brand products, our newest Five-Star Vendor.

FROM THE TO-GO WARE WEBSITE: "Founder, Stephanie Bernstein, was a college student at the University of Michigan when "to-go" culture began to emerge and find its way into the practices of local businesses. After enjoying some ice cream "for-here" with her sister, she found it disturbing that even though she had not left the establishment, she had still been served in "to-go" plastic, and was expected to throw away her dish and spoon. Inspired by the college students who diligently carried their reusable coffee mugs around with them, she believed you could encourage people to expand this practice and use more durable, reusable methods for food as well as beverages, allowing for on-the-go convenience while remaining responsible citizens of planet Earth.

"*To-Go Ware* offers solutions for a world with life on the go. Life is moving fast for everyone these days, and sometimes that can cause us difficulty in making responsible lifestyle choices—especially when it comes to food! With the explosion of "to-go" culture, there is no shortage of disposable containers and utensils crossing our paths everywhere we go, and we've all started to feed the landfill more than we may realize. How many plastic forks and spoons do we toss away each week? How many plates, to-go boxes, napkins and cups? Start to do the math and see what that adds up to per year. You may be surprised at the impact you have.

"If we cannot abandon our need for to-go convenience as we move through our busy lives, we can certainly integrate ways of being more mindful and conscious of the impact our lifestyle has upon the planet. Our hope is that *To-Go Ware* can provide you the tools to make that difference, allowing you to be a Solutionary in these to-go times." - [www.to-goware.com](http://www.to-goware.com)

The grocery department's Maeve Dillon has this to say about *To-Go Ware*:

"I inherited my first tiffin from my grandmother during my adolescence. She had kept it in her apartment for a few decades, but the portable tiffin was resilient, and did not have a single tinge of rust on it. This was my first tiffin, but certainly not my last.

"I really started using *To-Go Ware* when I first started at the co-op. It was my first pre-ordered item as an owner, and it has served me well. I have the two-tiered pyramid tiffin and I take it everywhere with me. Their stainless steel portable products are high quality and allow me to maintain a healthy lifestyle on the go. I've turned my entire family on to the *To-Go Ware* product line and urge everyone to test drive the non-plastic alternative; you won't be disappointed!"

Berkshire Co-op Market currently sells the "Classic" and "3-Tier" tiffin sets. These 100% stainless steel food carriers are great for bringing home take-out, for everyday lunches, or for packing a picnic. They will hold hot or cold food and are easy to clean. Also available at the co-op is *To-Go Ware's* Reusable Bamboo Utensil Set. "Reduce Your Forkprint" and bring your own utensils wherever you go. These tools are a great addition to your reusable arsenal as they are made of bamboo, a sustainably sourced material. They are durable, heat and stain resistant, and do not absorb flavors. The flatware and chopsticks are wrapped together in a recycled PET plastic holder, which gives a second life to a previously discarded plastic bottle.

## New Farm Practices Cooperation

CCF continued From page 1

even mix of enjoyment and dedication that leads them. They weed the crops with smiles on their faces. They play music in the fields. Friends come to visit and join right in, happy to help. And, with all that fun going on, they still manage to achieve great things and run their farm in a very conscientious and special way.

"Often it seems that farming is seen as us versus nature. We try to cooperate with nature as much as possible, and I think that helps our crops to succeed," says Raoult. "When crows were eating our corn we just put bowls of corn around the field. We didn't want to shoot the crows, so we just try and get along with them." Another example of their devotion to the planet is the fact that CCF has only used four tractor hours on their six

acres of crops so far this year, choosing to do most of the work by hand instead. "We figured that if we were truly to be devoted to the environment, why would we rely on fossil fuels to grow our crops?" says Torrico. "In fact, we hope to eventually eliminate tractor use hours altogether."

"At the co-op we are thrilled to be working with a group like Community Cooperative Farm," says General Manager Art Ames. "Not only are their values in line with ours, but they also grow interesting and beautiful produce." Speaking of that produce, you will see more and more of it. We are now carrying their green cabbage and a few varieties of kale. Expect to see much more as the growing season goes on.

Catch up with Community Cooperative Farm at [communitycooperativefarm.wordpress.com](http://communitycooperativefarm.wordpress.com).



# New Program: Learn About Farms, Food and More

*Grow Your Mind, Grow Your Food days are hands-on farm education sessions aimed at teaching the community about local agriculture while providing work assistance to a local farm that supplies the co-op*

*By Jenny Schwartz*

Grow Your Mind, Grow Your Food is a new program at Berkshire Co-op Market with a goal to provide volunteer agricultural work experience for our owners and customers. Get to know your farmers, experience their daily work, and educate others on the importance of supporting local food. This year we are collaborating with Greenagers, a local organization funded by the Center of Peace Through Culture. Led by Will Conklin, Greenagers connects youth with various agricultural experiences such as trail and farm work in our community. We will be working with their summer farm work program, which will demonstrate basic farm tasks learned from their experiences this growing season. For more information on Greenagers, visit their website: [www.greenagers.org](http://www.greenagers.org)

Our first host farm will be Woven Roots Farm in Lee, MA, on Wednesday, August 15<sup>th</sup> from 10-3pm. Once a farm that primarily produced garlic, Woven Roots has recently become a CSA and is one of the few farms in our area that has developed four-season growing practices. Look out

for local carrots in February! Our very own Jen Salinetti, along with her husband Pete and children Diego and Noella, will be delegating the tasks. You may see Jen working at the front end when she's not in the fields. Laura Meister from Farm Girl Farm will host the following week, on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, with students from the Railroad Street Youth Project. Our last collaboration with Greenagers will be at Community Cooperative Farm, a new CSA in Sheffield, MA on August 24<sup>th</sup>. This CSA, which started up in May 2010, is run by nine individuals with an education and passion for agriculture. They grow vegetables, fruits, wild edibles and grains that are heirloom, non-hybrid and chemical free. Eggs and pasture-raised meats are produced as well.

The co-op will be providing a free lunch and there will be Q&A sessions with the host farmers. It is open to children and adults and no experience is necessary. Space is limited so please sign up at the front desk. If you have questions, please contact Jenny at 413-528-9697 or email: [Education@berkshire.coop](mailto:Education@berkshire.coop).

## GROW YOUR MIND, GROW YOUR FOOD - 2011-

August 15<sup>th</sup>, 10-3pm - Woven Roots Farm - Lee

August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 10-3pm - Farm Girl Farm - Egremont

August 24<sup>th</sup>, 10-3pm - Community Cooperative Farm - Sheffield



*Cooperative farmers hard at work at Community Cooperative Farm in Sheffield. They are one of the three farms that will be visited in the co-op's newest program.*

## Info Session: Mass No-Idle Law

Did you know that there is a Massachusetts state law that says it is illegal to let your car idle for more than 5 minutes? It's true, check it out: The following information came straight from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.

The Statute, MGL, Chapter 90, 16A says:

"No person shall cause, suffer, allow, or permit the unnecessary operation of the engine of a motor vehicle while said vehicle is stopped for a foreseeable period of time in excess of five minutes. This section shall not apply to:

- Vehicles being serviced, provided that operation of the engine is essential to the proper repair thereof, or
- Vehicles engaged in the delivery or acceptance of goods, wares, or merchandise for which engine assisted power is necessary and substitute alternate means cannot be made available or,
- Vehicles engaged in an operation for which the engine power is necessary for an associated power need other than movement and substitute alternate power means cannot be made available provided that such operation does not cause or contribute to a condition of air pollution."

The Regulation, 310 CMR 7.11, tracks this language.

**Note: the regulation applies to all motor vehicles.**

### Penalties

- Penalties can range from \$100(MGL Chapter 90, Section 16A) to as much as \$25,000 (MGL Chapter 111, Section 142A);
- Drivers and/or companies can be held responsible for paying the fine;
- Local police have the authority to enforce the law, as do health officials or other officials who hold enforcement authority.

**The goal of the Massachusetts Anti-Idling law is to improve air quality by reducing unnecessary air pollution from idling vehicles. The law limits unnecessary engine idling to five minutes.** Drivers sometime wonder when idling might be considered necessary. The following questions and answers are intended to help drivers determine when engine idling could be considered necessary and when they should shut the engines down.



**Why is there an anti-idling law?** It's basic common sense: there is already too much pollution in the air. Massachusetts consistently has days when air pollution exceeds ozone standards.

**Is all engine idling prohibited?** No. While the law does prohibit unnecessary idling, it also recognizes that there are times when idling is simply unavoidable and lists three specific exemptions: when an engine is being repaired and operating the engine is necessary for the repair; when a vehicle is making deliveries and associated power is necessary; and when the engine is used to provide power to another device.

**IDLE continued on page 10**

# Notes From The Sustain Ability Committee

The Sustain Ability Committee is an environmentally focused group founded by concerned co-op staff members and committed to bringing sustainability and conservation to the home and work environments—ultimately, to become a model for cleaner and more efficient living. Inspired by the Ends Policy of Berkshire Co-op Market, our goal is to observe, model, educate and advise our owners, customers and staff on how to implement easy change that can help our environment and even save some money.

Earth Day marked our first group effort to make

our committee known by posting ways one can make environmentally friendly changes at work, home, with their children and out on the town (see box to the right).

Since Earth Day we have finalized our new recycling station at the front of the store. We have new bins with clearly marked signs to designate paper, plastic and glass. Due to space, this is to be used for items consumed in our store. We cannot accept personal recycling at this time but we hope to do so in the future. We also did some research into our take-out packaging and why we chose this brand. It turns out that the containers we use are pretty much the most eco-friendly product that is available to us. They are made



from 100% resourced fiber, a minimum 35% of post-consumer recycled content and are colored with vegetable-based inks. While we occasionally receive complaints about the durability of the products, we also want to be sure that our choices are as environmentally friendly as possible. We would also like to remind you that you can bring your own container and have it weighed by a cashier to receive a tare number. This number will be deducted from the total weight of your container and its contents.

Lately, we have been concentrating on reducing waste.

We are reusing the bags our towels come in as demo refuse bags, we are collecting unwanted office junk mail and contacting the senders to be removed from the mailing list, and we are continuing to concentrate on our in-store recycling efficiency. Oh—and if you are looking for some free packing peanuts, we have them! We hate to throw them out so if you need any please stop by the front desk and we will assist you.

Our newsletter is on our website. Instead of taking a paper one, you can view it online at: [www.berkshire.coop/news\\_links.html](http://www.berkshire.coop/news_links.html)

If you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact us. Our email address is [SustainAbility@berkshire.coop](mailto:SustainAbility@berkshire.coop)

## At Home

- Help in the area: Contact CET for an energy audit, they'll come to your house for free. [www.cet.com](http://www.cet.com)
- The power of cloth: Use handkerchiefs, rags and cloth napkins instead of paper.
- If you're not using it, unplug it: chargers, appliances and other electrical devices draw electricity when not in use.
- Bag the bag: Reuse trash bags or buy biodegradable bags.
- Make it dirty: Compost your kitchen scraps.
- Mother Nature's power: Use a clothesline to dry laundry outside.

## With the Kids

- The gift of reuse: Recycle newspaper and magazine ads to wrap gifts.
- Paperless bag lunch: Pack lunches in reusable containers.
- Restore the green: Plant new trees.
- Green thumbs: Start a vegetable garden together.
- Share the road: Carpool to and from work and school.

## In the Workplace

- A green office: Build a Recycle Station and teach people to use it.
- Consider what you print: Most documents are just as good digital. If you need to print, use recycled paper.
- Bring your own: Carry a water bottle and coffee mug to work.
- Sustainable clean up: Use rags instead of paper towels.
- Alternate transport: Bike, walk, carpool or use public transportation to work.

## Out and About

- Turn the key: Limit auto idling to 30 seconds or less.
- Think ahead: Don't forget your reusable bags.
- Rethink the trip: Can you walk where you are going?

## IDLE continued from page 9

**What are some examples of how the exemptions work?** The two more common situations facing most drivers are the exemptions allowed for making deliveries and to run a device that does not have its own power. Common sense will help drivers determine whether engine idling is necessary or not.

• **Deliveries:** School buses that must run their engines to operate flashing lights while picking up or dropping off passengers are a good example of necessary idling. State law requires the operation of flashing lights while loading and unloading children at school or on regular school bus routes. With no other power source to operate the lights other than running the engine, idling the engine is necessary.

• **Additional devices, or auxiliary power units:** Refrigerator units on trucks with perishable goods or vehicles operating special equipment, such as a lift on the back of a truck to move goods in and out of the truck or wheelchair lifts in buses or vans that may require engine power to operate are common examples of equipment that are operated with the engine power. Another example might include "bucket" trucks that allow a worker to reach wires on telephone poles or tree branches for trimming.

**Are there other times when it's OK to idle not listed in the law?** The law prohibits unnecessary idling, then lists three exemptions to that rule. So there are other times when idling is permitted as long as the idling is absolutely necessary.

For example, running the engine to operate the windshield defroster to clear a windshield of ice on an extremely cold day is a good example of necessary idling. It's a safety problem if you cannot see where you're going and if the windshield is not warm enough to melt snow and freezing rain while driving. Running the engine while actively clearing snow and ice off the vehicle and to warm the windshield and interior of the vehicle is necessary idling.

Our common sense also tells us that heaters and air conditioning units almost always bring the vehicle's interior into a comfortable range in a short time. We also know that heaters and air conditioning units work faster when the vehicle is being driven, not when it is left idling. So most vehicles, most of the time, will reach a comfortable temperature within the first five minutes of driving. Some heavy vehicles, such as buses or trucks, may need some additional time to bring interior temperatures into a comfortable range.

## What are a few examples of unnecessary idling?

• Sitting in your car in a parking lot with the engine on during mild or cool weather is unnecessary. The interior of your car will stay warm for 5 to 10 minutes on all but the coldest days.

• Leaving the vehicle running while unattended to let the heater warm it or the air conditioner cool it for extended periods of time is unnecessary idling (it is also in

violation of motor vehicle law). Five minutes should be the maximum amount of time unless weather conditions are extreme, and the engine should not be left running while the vehicle is unattended for any length of time.

• Operating devices not related to transporting passengers or goods. Letting the engine run for an hour or more to play a movie or to charge a cell phone causes unnecessary pollution, is a nuisance for others nearby and puts excessive wear and tear on the engine.

**Am I causing more pollution by stopping and starting the engine?** No. Once the engine has warmed up, an idling engine causes more pollution by running than by stopping and starting up again. Studies indicate that the trade-off for light- and medium-duty gasoline powered vehicles is about 10 seconds (i.e. the vehicle will produce more pollution idling longer than 10 seconds than it will by shutting down and restarting the engine). The time trade-off on medium- and heavy-duty diesel engines is about 30 seconds.

**Won't I wear out my starter if I keep stopping and starting the engine?** Fleet managers of companies with strict anti-idling policies report that they do not replace starters in their vehicles more frequently than vehicles that are left running for extended periods. In fact, more damage occurs to engines that are left idling over long periods of time.

**Who would I complain to if I see a vehicle idling unnecessarily?** The best place to start is your local Board of Health. Other possibilities include local police, DEP or the EPA. Enforcement personnel cannot respond to every complaint about idling vehicles, and there are instances when it is not obvious why a vehicle needs to idle longer than five minutes.

But many of the complaints about excessive idling are about the same vehicles in the same locations routinely left idling, many times out of habit. For people living or working near those vehicles the exhaust that they are subjected to is not just a nuisance, it's a real health problem.

**Where would I find copies of the law and regulation?** The law is Massachusetts General Law (MGL) Chapter 90, Section 16A and the regulation is 310 Code of Massachusetts Regulation (CMR) 7.11. The wording is the same for both the law and the regulation. Enforcement authority and fine structures differ somewhat between the law and the regulation.

**Do the anti-idling law and regulation apply to all vehicles?** The law and regulation apply to all motor vehicles. All motor vehicles contribute to air pollution and can create a nuisance if the exhaust is affecting others. Why should people be allowed to pollute the air unnecessarily?

Source: Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, 2007 Idling Reduction Toolkit.

# Education & Outreach at the Co-op

By Jenny Schwartz

Summer is in full swing and that means the Food Adventures Program participated in the second year of Undermountain Elementary School's Eat Well and Learn summer camp program in Sheffield, MA. Food Adventures is a nutrition, education and healthy cooking program in collaboration with the Nutrition Center. The Eat Well and Learn Program, created by first-grade teacher Susan Weinstein and horticultural specialist Peggy Henden-Wilson, is a four-week camp program in which approximately 35 children grades first through fifth alternate between working in the garden and cooking in the kitchen. The goal of the program is to educate children on how to grow their own food and then prepare healthy meals from what they harvest. The co-op supplies additional ingredients when needed. While one group is out in the garden with Peggy, the other group is in the kitchen preparing meals for themselves and the hungry gardeners.

The first week of the program consisted of getting to know the children and familiarizing them with the garden. When they arrived in the morning they were all assigned different jobs in the kitchen, including dishwashers, table cleaners, sweepers, etc. Our first recipe was a salad wrap that was made using lettuce from the garden, carrots, beets and radishes. Three students went outside to harvest the lettuce by gently twisting and pulling the plant from the ground. One of the children proudly remembered working with the school's garden club earlier in the spring, helping to plant the lettuce. Peggy provided us with a generous handful of lemon thyme, which we used for the dressing. We passed it around and took turns smelling the citrus aroma. When the kids finished shredding and grating the ingredients they placed them into a whole-wheat wrap and drizzled on homemade maple vinaigrette. The kids learned how to fold the wrap and then cut it in half. One half was for them, while the other was given to a gardening friend. The kids enjoyed the wraps and were introduced to previously unfamiliar vegetables like beets and radishes.

Out in the garden, some kids vigorously planted a variety of vegetables and pulled weeds while others helped Peggy put together some raised beds. Kids worked to the beat of the music that emanated from the speakers of Peggy's car. Sweaty and tired, they welcomed the salad wraps, and the cold water that had been poured into reusable mason jars. Being sprayed with the garden hose was an appropriate camp activity after they finished eating. It is camp, after all! There aren't many times during the school year when you can walk through the halls of your school in a bathing suit.

Tuesday's gardeners worked with us in the kitchen on Thursday, when we made a salad using sugar snap peas, snow peas, tomatoes and an herb dressing. The children had harvested garlic scapes on Tuesday, which we used to make a pesto with Parmesan and Asiago cheeses, olive oil, lemon juice, and a little salt and pepper. Once it was blended, they spread it onto a fresh baguette from Berkshire Mountain Bakery. The gentle kick from the spice of the garlic scapes received mixed reviews from the group, but there were many requests for seconds.

As the weeks continued, the children made breakfast foods such as mini vegetable frittatas and a hot quinoa cereal with fresh fruit. We talked about what children eat for breakfast in other countries and identified the ingredients of the traditional meals by different food groups. Garden children harvested garlic and herbs that were later used in a savory ratatouille made with eggplant, zucchini, red and yellow peppers and yellow squash. After finishing their snack the children participated in a taste test of blueberries that were fresh, commercially frozen, canned and processed. The purpose of the activity was for the children to taste test the same food prepared in various ways and make observations about the differences. We wrote down the similarities and differences of taste and texture, and finally which they liked the best. The other half of the camp group did the same experiment with carrots.

Our last week of camp concluded with making vegetable dumplings and zucchini bread with a berry sauce. Many campers deemed them as favorite recipes of the summer. One child commented while eating the zucchini bread, "I can't believe I am eating this; I usually hate zucchini!" We look forward to seeing many of these children back in the program when we continue our in-school and after-school programs at Undermountain Elementary School in the fall.



*After making quinoa cereal, these kids are adding fresh blueberries and getting ready to chow down with fresh fruit.*



*Kids learning to weed the garden before they eat the vegetables it provides — and having fun doing it!*

## UPCOMING FARM TOURS

- **PROJECT NATIVE GARDENS** -  
Saturday, August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2-3 pm  
Housatonic, MA

\*There will be a free workshop at Project Native after the tour.  
You must sign up to participate.

- **COMMUNITY COOPERATIVE FARM** -  
Saturday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2-3pm  
Sheffield, MA

- **BLUE HILL FARM** -  
Friday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 4-5pm  
Great Barrington, MA

Photographs by Susan Weinstein

# THE DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

## Your Personal Updates from Our Departments

### Fresh Foods *From Jeff Schilling Fresh Food Manager*

**Staffing:** We are very happy to announce that Lynn Pino, our kitchen supervisor, has been promoted to Assistant Fresh Foods Manager. We just can't wait to see what she has to offer with these new and varied responsibilities. Look for Lynn around the store as she will be overseeing the cafe, meat & seafood counter and the food bars.



**Changes in Seafood:** The world's oceans are being over fished and their ecosystems are being harmed by destructive fishing practices and open-system fish farms. At the co-op, we are not only conscious of the problem but intend to do

whatever we can to help. To that end, we recently signed up as a participant in the Fishwise Retailer Program (see page 8). *Fishwise*, a nonprofit organization designed to improve the sustainability of seafood retailers, will provide comprehensive assistance in training, informational resources, product sourcing and communication.

We will be training staff, looking for sustainable alternatives for our seafood case, adding new signs that include the Fishwise Color Coding System and providing new information that explains the plight of the oceans and how your purchasing habits can help.

The downside of this project may be the removal of your favorite fish from our case. We hope that you understand that this is an important issue and we would not remove products unless it was the right thing to do.

**Café Recycling Center:** In the near future, we will be looking at ways to improve our recycling and refuse system in the Café. We hope to target recycled material more specifically (paper, plastic, glass, etc.) and separate food waste for our compost program. Please bear with us as we attempt to find the plan that accommodates the needs of the earth with the needs of our food traffic.

Jeff can be reached at [freshfoods@berkshire.coop](mailto:freshfoods@berkshire.coop) or 413.528.9697 x 24

### Grocery *From Daniel Esko Grocery Manager*

**Summer Staff:** Summer is a fun and exciting time of year around these parts. It is also the busiest time of year at the co-op. Grocery staff members are put to the test daily to keep up with summer business and make sure you all get the best service we can offer. All that work, however, doesn't keep us from bringing in new products, resetting our shelves and continuing to offer what we believe are the best grocery items on the market today.

**Resets:** Those of you who happen to be chocolate lovers have probably already noticed that we moved the bulk of our chocolate selection away from the registers and into a new permanent endcap over by the hot bar. We realized that, as it was, customers only got to see the chocolate that was on the line they happened to choose. We wanted to make sure that everyone in the store got to see all of our wonderful chocolate bars, so we just had to move them. We have kept some chocolates and candies at the checkout stands. But this move also opened up the opportunity to add some healthier impulse buy items as well. Maybe you want an apple or a banana on your way out? Or, on a hot day, nothing satisfies like the Fruitful Bars that are now located at the front end.

**New Product: Himalania Goji Berry Line.** We are carrying their plain, chocolate and yogurt covered Goji Berries, Goji Trail Mixes and Goji Nut Crunches. From the Himalania website: "Himalania Goji berries are grown organically and they have been certified as 100% organic, which is very rare for Goji berries. Himalania Goji berries are beautifully red and purplish and are harvested once a year during the summer. Himalania dried Goji berries contain 20 amino acids, 8 necessary amino acids, 3% polysaccharides, and more than 30 macro and micro elements. Himalania dried Goji berries are free of excipients and are 100% natural. Goji berries are an excellent choice for a healthy and delicious snack." Try some today! They are located on their own rack near the front of the store directly adjacent to the chocolate endcap.

**Featured Product: Katalyst Kombucha.** Summer is the season for refreshing drinks. And kombucha is a great one. We think Katalyst is one of the best kombucha brewers on the market today. Not only do they taste great, they are local (Greenfield, MA - 47 miles), certified USDA Organic and Fair Trade Certified. We carry their Bliss-Berry, Schizandraberry, Ginger Devotion and Green Lovin' flavors. Give them a try.

Daniel can be reached at [grocery@berkshire.coop](mailto:grocery@berkshire.coop) or 413.528.9697 x 18

### Produce *From Andrei Smerechniak Produce Manager*

We are in the thick of it folks. The local growing season is here and we are swimming in produce from our farmers. And the selection gets deeper every day. As I write this update, here is a list of the local produce we have on the shelves. Remember that many of these products come from three or four different farms over the course of the summer. Remember, too, that there's a lot more to come.

#### LOCAL RIGHT NOW:

Corn: Howden Farm – Sheffield, MA  
Escarole: Indian Line Farm – Egremont, MA  
Radishes: Left Field Farm – Middlefield, MA  
Romaine Lettuce: Sol Flower Farm – Ancramdale, NY  
Fennel: Woven Roots Farm – Lee, MA  
Cilantro: Indian Line Farm – Egremont, MA  
Red Leaf Lettuce: Happy Valley Farm – Rome, NY  
Green Winterbor Kale: Sol Flower Farm – Ancramdale, NY  
Red Bib Lettuce: Left Field Farm – Middlefield, MA  
Green Leaf Lettuce: Happy Valley Farm – Rome, NY  
Lacinata Kale: Left Field Farm – Middlefield, MA  
Napa Cabbage: Community Cooperative Farm – Sheffield, MA  
Red Kale: Farm Girl Farm – Egremont, MA  
Beets: Woven Roots Farm – Lee, MA  
Purple Carrots: Indian Line Farm – Egremont, MA  
Fresh Dill: Left Field Farm – Middlefield, MA  
Walla Walla Onions: KD Farm – Sheffield, MA  
Yellow Crookneck Squash: Left Field Farm – Middlefield, MA  
Green Savoy Cabbage: Sol Flower Farm – Ancramdale, NY  
Green Cabbage: Community Cooperative Farm – Sheffield, MA  
Carrots: Woven Roots Farm – Lee, MA  
Blueberries: Pelletier Farm – Becket, MA  
Boothby Blonde Cucumbers: Farm Girl Farm – Egremont, MA  
Fresh Basil: Indian Line Farm – Egremont, MA  
Cucumbers: Woven Roots Farm – Lee, MA  
Pattypan Squash: Farm Girl Farm – Egremont, MA  
Yellow Squash: Bow Wow Farm – Sheffield, MA  
Beefsteak Tomatoes: Indian Line Farm – Egremont, MA  
Spinach, Arugula & Mesclun Greens: Equinox Farm – Sheffield, MA  
Heirloom Tomatoes: Farm Girl Farm – Egremont, MA  
Organic Tomatoes: McEnroe Farm – Millerton, NY  
Orange Heirloom Tomatoes: McEnroe Farm – Millerton, NY  
Heirloom Romano Beans: Left Field Farm – Middlefield, MA  
Green Beans and Yellow & Purple Wax Beans: Joe Church Farm – Canaan, CT  
Garlic: Farm Girl Farm – Egremont, MA

Andrei can be reached at [produce@berkshire.coop](mailto:produce@berkshire.coop) or 413.528.9697 x 28

### Wellness *From Brenna St. Pierre & Hesty Morely Wellness Buyers*

We are sad to report that Eric Jesner has left the department and moved on to Dixieland. We will miss him, but we are thrilled to announce that Brenna St. Pierre has been hired as our new Wellness Lead Buyer. Brenna has been with the co-op for some time in the Fresh Food Department and we are thrilled to add her knowledge and skills to our corner of the store. Hesty Morely now has the title of Assistant Buyer and will continue to lend her expertise as well.

This quarter, we'd like to tell you about some new natural body care companies that we have recently added to our shelves.

**Flourish Natural Body Care:** Handmade on a farm in Woodstock, VT, Flourish products capture the essence of nature. Their concept is to pair wholesome raw ingredients, bold modern packaging and intoxicating essential oil blends in a luscious palette of color and richness. The entire line is made by hand in small batches. Plus, the packaging and ingredients reflect a genuine concern for natural resources and quality of life. We now carry hand lotion and body creams in honey blossom, lavender mint and lemongrass, and shampoo in honey blossom, lavender mint and patchouli tangerine.

**Humble Soap:** These all-natural bar soaps are handmade in Williamstown, MA, just 60 miles from here. They make all-natural bar soaps in some of the most interesting and unusual varieties. We are stocking anise & charcoal, honey & cinnamon, coconut milk, humble bar, coconut confetti, orange peel, oatmeal and lavender. Try them out, we think you'll like them.

Wellness can be reached at [wellness@berkshire.coop](mailto:wellness@berkshire.coop) or 413.528.9697 x 21