

Just Local News

News and views from the Just Local Food Cooperative – August 12, 2005

What's Fresh

The lack of rain for long periods of time this summer has affected some availability of local produce. Not all farms have irrigation on all crops, and even if they do it's hard to keep the soil moisture up enough to not stress plants. Stop at the farmer's market, though, and you wouldn't know there's a drought. There are several certified organic producers now selling at the market, including Wheatfield Hill, Coon Creek and occasionally Sunbow – stop down and give them a try. The produce we've been delivering looks and tastes excellent. Coon Creek and Sunbow consistently do a great job of picking and packing the produce fresh to our orders. New to us this week are **cherry tomatoes** from Sunbow. Sungold is the variety, a sweet and juicy version you can pop right in your mouth or use in salads and sauces. It is an excellent summer fruit. The fragrant bags of herbs are always tempting, the greens are still bright and flavorful, and the zucchini and cukes are definitely in season.

Organic Produce

Zucchini , organic, 3 of 'em cc	\$3.00
Patty Pan Squash , per pound, cc	market
Cucumbers , choose <i>slicing</i> or <i>pickling</i> , per pound, cc	\$3.19
Cherry Tomatoes , sun gold, one pint, sun	\$1.59
Slicing Tomatoes , various, sun	\$3/#
Garlic , <i>Crystal, Chesnok, Elephant</i> , or <i>mix</i> . Per pound. sun	\$7.50
Shallots , Red Sun, per pound sun	\$9.00
Kale , Toscano and Winterbor, big bag sun	\$3.25
Chard , bright lights, big bag sun	\$3.25
Herbs , organic, sandwich bag, choose from: sweet basil, thyme, sage, parsley, rosemary & marjoram sun	\$2.39

Recipe: Patty Pan Fritters

4 cups grated, patty pan squash, zucchini squash also works well.
2-1/2 cups flour
2 eggs, beaten
Salt and pepper to taste

Squeeze as much moisture as possible out of grated squash. Mix with flour and eggs to form thick paste. Fry at medium heat in oil or sweet butter until golden brown and crispy on both sides. Serve warm with sour cream if desired.

Makes 15 small, appetizer-size pancakes.

Why buy organic produce?

- According to the Food and Drug Administration, half of produce currently tested in grocery stores contains measurable residues of pesticides. Laboratory tests of eight industry-leader baby foods reveal the presence of 16 pesticides, including three carcinogens.
- According to EPA's "Guidelines for Carcinogen Risk Assessment," children receive 50% of their lifetime cancer risks in the first two years of life.
- In blood samples of children aged 2 to 4, concentrations of pesticide residues are six times higher in children eating conventionally farmed fruits and vegetables compared with those eating organic food.
- Organic production produces the same corn and soybean yields as conventional farming, but consumes 30 percent less energy and uses no pesticides, according to a revealing new study. A Cornell University professor concluded that the 22-year Rodale Institute Farming Systems Trial, the longest running comparison of organic vs. conventional farming in the United States, showed that "organic farming offers real advantages for such crops as corn and soybeans."

Patty pan squash is perfect for stuffing with cream cheese, spices or other fillings.



Coop News

Our coop has been delivering local food here in Eau Claire since May of 2004. We've helped local farmers sell tens of thousands of dollars worth of fresh food. Our goals are to keep the growth trend going, finding sustainable ways to continue this connection between farm and table. While our delivery service is an efficient way of distributing food, it's not for everyone. We want to open a unique store in Eau Claire, one that celebrates the bounty of local farms, respects the relationships between consumers and producers, and offers a fresh atmosphere for these connections to flourish. We know a great store doesn't come easy, and while we're in a hurry to get it going we're not going to rush the process.

A few months ago we spent some time trying to look into the future and figure out what we'd like to see. In March we applied for a grant with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture. From the DATCP website: "The Agricultural Development and Diversification Grant Program invites proposals for projects that are likely to stimulate Wisconsin's agricultural economy. ADD grants are awarded competitively to projects that may strengthen Wisconsin agriculture through the development and exploration of new value-added products, new markets, or new technologies in agriculture." Well, a few weeks ago they announced that we were the recipient of a grant to help us specifically with marketing and a feasibility study for a full-on local foods grocery store. We have a full year to work on the concept, and we're confident that by working closely with our suppliers and customers we'll find something that will work. If you have ideas or suggestions for us as we explore the idea of a store, please share them with us.

In the short term, we're looking at opening up our downtown warehouse a few times a week once the Farmer's Market closes in October. This limited hours retail store will continue the momentum of the Market over the winter, and allow us to get used to operating a store. We also hope to keep the social and community atmosphere of the market going by inviting farmers and producers to the store and offering space for folks to meet and kids to run around.

Cornucopia Institute's Challenge to Renegade Factory Dairy Farms Gaining Traction

We've printed information on the work that Cornucopia is doing to protect organic standards and family farms – see their website for updated information at www.cornucopia.org

Rule changes and a draft guidance document adopted by the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) would eliminate loopholes allowing a handful of factory dairy farms—some with over 5000 cows—to market milk labeled as organic while confining their cows without pasture to small drylots.

The action was spurred by The Cornucopia Institute's filing of three formal complaints requesting a USDA investigation into the lack of pasture at farms in Colorado, Idaho and California. Pasturing is the cornerstone of organic dairy farming; it improves animal health, protects and builds the soil, creates wildlife habitat, and makes an ideal filter system—important for our waterways.

And what cows eat affects their milk's nutrition. The Danish Institute of Agricultural Research recently reported that organic milk—defined as produced by pastured cows—is 50% higher in vitamin E, 75% higher in omega-3 fatty acids, and 200%–300% higher in antioxidants than conventional milk.

It's Grilling Season

We've got plenty of local meats ready for your grill. Wheatfield Hill Organics and Little Spring Valley steaks and burgers, Beaver Creek Ranch has chicken breasts, turkey apple brats and real hot dogs. We've got plenty of cut up chickens from Gifts from the Good Earth. Steaks, burgers and hot dogs from Golden Hills Buffalo Farm. Lambalot acres kabob cubes. Kostka Family Farm pork brats... the list goes on! Give them a try!

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