

Just Local News

News and Views from the Just Local Food Cooperative

Issue 6

Late November 2004

Warehouse Found

We're ecstatic that our patient search for a warehouse has resulted in quite a find. With the confluence of the two rivers a very short walk away, and the new RCU building in our view, our new warehouse space at 104 Gibson Street offers us many opportunities. Don't get me wrong though, this spot is rough, raw and needs a lot of work. (And we're brazenly asking you to help in any way you can!)

Pizzas and Dough

Fresh from the Crossroads Kitchen in Menomonie, we're thrilled to introduce you to On Fire! Ovens Organic Italian Dough. These frozen doughs are packed as two 8oz balls. You can choose from white or wheat, and each ball makes a 12" pizza crust. This frozen dough is also great for dinner rolls and breadsticks. Or, roll them out really thin and brush with olive oil, then sprinkle with salt and sesame seeds for delicious crisps. \$3.75 for a package.

On Fire! also makes a fine frozen pizza. We're stocking the Mediterranean Pizza, which is a 12" vegetarian style. Toppings include organic green and red peppers, organic red onions, green olives, mozzarella, provolone, and parmesan cheeses (from Wisconsin, of course!), organic tomato paste and organic tomatoes, herbs and spices. All of this on top of the dough described above. The pizzas weigh in at over 26oz and are \$9.50 each.

Erb's Classics

Anyone that has been to the Farmer's Market in the last few years has probably seen or sampled Erb's Classics snack sticks. Up in Hillsdale, 50 miles Northwest of Eau Claire, David Erb and his family raise Dorset sheep. David is an entrepreneur focused on bringing unique lamb products to market. We'll be carrying his locally famous snack sticks and summer sausage. The products are produced by Louie's Finer Meats in Cumberland, an award-winning sausage maker.

The snack sticks come in 8 ounce packs, which is about six actual sticks, for \$5. They are available in BBQ, Cheddar Garlic, Apple Cranberry and "original" flavors. The summer sausages are a 15 ounce chub and come in Cheddar Garlic, Apple Cranberry and "Original" flavors. These are priced at \$8.00 each. Pair the summer sausage

with some Crystal Ball Farms cheddar cheese and you've got yourself a date.

Brownies

River Chocolates in Menomonie has just made available to us their delectable, irresistible Rich Belgian Chocolate Brownies. I will wager a bet that you've never had a brownie so good. Why? River Chocolates uses fair trade and organic chocolates whenever possible. They have a buyer who actually travels the world over to find small farms and plantations that make specific chocolates. Their brownies expertly combine three different Belgian chocolates and cocoas with fresh local butter and free range eggs. These brownies are crusty and flaky on the outside and fudgy in the middle. They are sealed in a wrapper just like the truffles and come in only one size - delicious (6 ounces). At only two dollars you may want to add this to your standing order! And if you haven't tried their Truffles and Chocolate sauces yet - well, try them! They make the truffles by hand, usually on Thursday just before delivery. Stay tuned for gift packs and other holiday items from River Chocolates - available soon!

Local Organic Garlic

Sylvan Hills is a certified organic vegetable farm west of Menomonie owned and operated by Larry Diehlmann. Larry is offering us his garlic and we're currently negotiating on some root crops... more details soon!

Holy Cow!

We bought a good chunk of a cow from Wheatfield Hill organics and will soon be offering all the regular butcher cuts of beef - steaks, roasts, stew meats and more. We bought the cow so you don't have to!

Fresh Organic Pasta

Have you ever had fresh pasta? How about the packaged "DiGiorno" brand or the like? Through our buying club you can get fresh organic pasta made right here in Wisconsin by Bella Luna aka Mondo Brothers. Why use fresh pasta?
-Refrigerated pasta cooks in half the time of dried.

- Refrigerated pasta has a mouth appeal with rich flavor.
- Bella Luna's unique packaging provides a refrigerated shelf life of up to 90 days from the date of manufacture, and can also be frozen for up to 6 months
- Their pastas are made from the finest all natural ingredients

Varieties offered include Angel Hair, Fettuccine, Linguine with garlic & parsley, Plain Linguine, Ravioli with Cheese, Tri-Color Tortellini with cheese, Cheese Tortellini with roasted garlic, and Tortellini with Cheese . You can order them by the package or by the case, and prices are \$1.85 for 9 ounces of the plain pastas and \$3.44 for a 9 ounce package of the filled pastas. (These prices are for when you buy a full case when our buying club puts together a case, slightly higher by the "each").

Local Food, Everywhere!

Are your friends from out of town jealous that you get great local food? Send them to LocalHarvest.com. Local Harvest is a very well used directory of local food throughout the country. Just enter a zipcode and you'll be taken to a list of farms in that area. Enter a product and you get a list of farms across the country that produce it. A few of our current customers even found out about us at Local Harvest!

Local Malaysian, Thai and Japanese at Pinang

The folks at Pinang Restaurant have been great customers of ours since the beginning. Jordan and I often call ahead to order some healthy food while we're on the route. Then we swap with them - milk for lunch. These folks moved to Eau Claire to share their excellent food with us, and I for one am thrilled that they came. My favorite appetizer is the Satay Tofu - it's their homemade (aka "local") tofu made into little pockets and fried, then

Just Local News is published regularly by the **Just Local Food Cooperative**. Our goal is to connect local and fair-trade producers with consumers in the Chippewa Valley. All articles within written by Aaron Ellringer unless otherwise noted.

they stuff them with sprouts and other fresh goodies and top it with a zingy peanut sauce. Excuse me while I wipe the drool from the keyboard, fbgnjhl;' , there. They also make unique flavorful smoothies with exotics like avocado, green tea and tapioca, or regulars like coconut and pineapple.

Local Food in the Schools

We're learning of and exploring a few projects that combine local food and children in the schools. One concept is the novel idea of serving fresh local food to the kids for lunch (and breakfast where applicable). A few of our customers are working on parent-driven initiatives

already, including the Montessori School. Since we have established relationships with local farmers, I think Just Local Food is in a good position to facilitate connections between them and the foodservice providers in the school district and elsewhere. There are a number of similar "farm to school" projects underway throughout the US and the world.

Another project we're working on is a brief curriculum for elementary schools. Our delivery truck and "the milkman" will come to classrooms to educate and entertain kids using local food as a central theme. This is in the early stages of development and we'd love any assistance or guidance you might be able to

provide.

If you are working on something like this already, or you would like to work with others who are, or have kids in schools where you'd like us to go, please let me (Aaron) know!

Wish List

Thanks to those who responded to our requests in the last *News*, we sure appreciate the calculators, towels and bags you all gave and can always use more of those.

This time we're dreaming about some bigger items - mostly because our warehouse move has us thinking big! As always, let us know if you can help or know someone who can! Here goes:

-**oil fired boiler or furnace** - our warehouse doesn't have heat, and with our newly found biodiesel making skills we could heat our building on local waste grease if we

had an old boiler or furnace that runs on fuel oil. If you happen to have a functional electric shop heater we'd use that too until we find what we're looking for.

-electrician- the warehouse also doesn't have electricity, so we'll be having an electrician come in and put in a few outlets. There is ample service and a few breaker boxes in place already. We would consider barter or partial barter for these professional services - so if you know of a friendly electrician let us know!

-banquet tables- our buying club breakdown will go smoother as we acquire more worktables to split items and separate them out.

-referrals- our business has grown to where it is due almost entirely to word of mouth and customer referrals. thanks for that! If you know of anyone who might be interested please pass their name, address and/or phone number to us so we can share the bounty of local food with them!

-egg cartons, paper grocery bags, calculators, towels & rags- our egg suppliers will take all the cartons they can get back. We use grocery bags for our buying club members. Calculators get some hard use from our delivery drivers. Towels and rags are used to remediate milk spills and to clean out our truck and coolers.

Not Too Shabby!

We've included a flyer for "not too shabby", a special holiday sale in Fall Creek featuring Local art and food for sale. One of the organizers is Martha Hamblin from ROMAR Greenhouse, who you may recognize from the downtown farmer's market or from our brief offerings of their vegetables this summer. Check it out!

Online ordering

I'm happy to say we don't have online ordering yet. Why happy? Well, our business has grown more than expected, and our customers have been more supportive than even us optimists imagined. Online ordering took a backseat to getting more producers and items on our price list, to delivering more products to customers, and to searching out a warehouse to base our operations. I have also discovered that my mid-90's computer programming skills are pretty worthless these days. While exploring the many options for online services, I've learned the complexity and expense of reliable e-commerce products. The expenses add up quickly when something goes wrong - which we know will happen. They also add up when we add products and change prices and descriptions, which in our business happens frequently. So instead of outsourcing this work, we're now looking to expand our worker

collective and increase our tech savvy significantly. That will put the dot com back in justlocalfood.com! I won't make any promises like "online ordering coming soon" anymore. That is until we have our new tech person on board. Until then, I will continue to post our current price lists on our "delivery" page on our website. And you can always simply send an email with a list of things you'd like to order to lissa@justlocalfood.com, which could technically be called "online ordering," eh!

The following story about our supplier Mike Hansen of Gifts from the Good Earth is reprinted from the Country Today, online at thecountrytoday.com

Chickens donated to National Guard families

By Sara Bredesen Staff writer

MILLADORE - Mike Hansen wanted to do more than give active-duty National Guard troops a pat on the back for their commitment in Iraq. He wanted to help their families back in Wisconsin.

He gave them chickens.

"I was frustrated that I couldn't do anything, and I was out feeding chickens and I said, 'Hey, I can do something.' "

Mr. Hansen donated 186 organic, pasture-fed birds to families with members serving with the 128th Battalion. That's about 790 pounds of meat valued at \$2,300.

Mr. Hansen said he sees the soldiers and their families making a much larger sacrifice than he is.

"In my mind, it doesn't hurt me as much as it hurts to have a family member gone for a year and a half," he said.

In October Mr. Hansen visited a local National Guard Armory to say the chickens were available. Contacts were made through the Department of Military Affairs Family Assistance Center Mr. Hansen delivered the birds to armories in Eau Claire and Marshfield for distribution to units around Wisconsin.

"We get calls all the time from people wanting to donate all kinds of things," said Carolyn Morgan, lead family assistant coordinator with the Department of Military Affairs. "It's the first time we had chickens donated."

"The way that Mike did it was awesome," she said. "He was willing to do everything as far as delivery, willing to drive wherever we needed them to go to be dropped off."

She said there is often a problem with storage and distribution for a lot of the donated items, but the chickens were delivered to the armories on a day when volunteers were there for training.

Martha Viduski, one of the family liaisons with National Guard Services, took some of the birds to the southeastern part of the state for distribution.

"It's absolutely wonderful when people in the community show support for the families," she said. "It's a tough thing the families are dealing with, and of course, it's really tough on the soldiers, and to know that the community supports them with a pat on the back or something like the chickens is really great."

Some of the birds will be used for dinners at support group gatherings and others will be given away as door prizes. Ms. Viduski said she has heard from some of the families that have already received birds.

"I've heard some of them say that they couldn't believe he did that," she said. "They were astounded at the amount of the donation."

For Mr. Hansen, it wasn't a question of money.

"For me, this is about my faith, and I believe that as a Christian you are part of a community, and you have to play a roll in that community," he said. "I get frustrated sometimes when people say they can or can't do something, so I just did it."

He said he is thankful for the publicity he is getting - not for himself, but for the project.

He called it an extension of his "Chickens With a Mission" program, in which he offers poultry at reduced prices for fund-raisers.

"As far as I'm concerned this is Chickens With a Mission, and the mission is supporting families that are supporting us," he said.

Mr. Hansen said he is contacting area churches to spread the word. The next step is to spread the word at conferences and through the media.

"Any opportunity I get to say something to somebody about garnering support, I will," he said. "I would love to see others in the agricultural community come out and do something."

Another 1,800 birds are available from a southwestern Wisconsin producer, but it will cost about \$10,000 to buy them for the project.

"These aren't standard birds that buy for \$1.10 a pound at the grocery. These are top quality, and these (military) families deserve that as much or more than anyone," he said.

Mr. Hansen said he is looking at this as an ongoing project and wants others to do the same. He said the 128th Battalion represents 640 families, and his small donation of birds makes only a small dent.

"Just knowing that I can make someone else's day goes a long way for me," he said. "I just like to be part of the community and contribute."

Special Holiday Delivery Times

We know a lot of our customers want to have a local foods Thanksgiving feast, so we'll be moving our Friday November 26 delivery to Wednesday the 24th. As the date nears, we will add Tuesday the 23rd if needed to accommodate the increased orders.

And then we have Christmas, which is on a Saturday this year. We're moving our delivery up one day to Thursday December 23. This allows you the opportunity to give fresh local food as gifts!

You Can Visit the Bullfrog Fish Farm

Open "casually" Year 'round

7 days a week Noon- 6:00 PM. and with a weekend accent!

We are farmers, processors, mongers and more. Our chores and activities keep us at the farm 7 days a week so why not be available or open? Open "casually"- While we always appreciate your business, when stooping by, you may find us cutting and smoking fish for our restaurants... moving our fish about, feeding them or cleaning tanks... Sometimes we could be teaching school kids about fish farming, chefin' for a group or ...really any multiple of things. Therefore we are open "casually" as to not disappoint folks who may expect another kind of service. If your visit requires immediacy or certain kinds of attention it may be best to call ahead.

The Bullfrog Fish Farm is just south of Menomonie. You can get directions online at eatmyfish.com or by calling the farm at 715-664-8775. Or just get a taste of the farm delivered to your door by ordering one of their excellent fresh or smoked rainbow trout products!

Our co-op

Just Local Food is organized as a **worker owned cooperative**. Each member is part owner/investor and has equal decisionmaking power. **Just** as in justice for the farmers, the earth, the workers, and the consumers. **Local** as in produced nearby in Western Wisconsin and regionally where appropriate.

Home delivery:

To get local fair trade food **delivered to your door** every week, call Lissa at 577-5564

Buying Club and billing:

To sign up for the buying club and ask questions about billing and invoices, call Crystal at 579-0106.

JustLocalFood.com