

The Plainfield Co-op

Summer 2015

The Cooperative Difference



Credit: Braden DeForge

Hours: 7 days a week 9AM–8PM

Phone: 454-8579 **Website:** www.PlainfieldCoop.com

Email: info@plainfieldcoop.com

Management Collective

Dawn Fancher
Dorothy Wallace
Erica Bosserman
Jeannine DeWald
Jessi Robinson
Karen Starr
Kathleen Hayes
Margie Yoder
Mike Peabody



Nancy Ellen

Regular Staff

Chloe Budnick
Drew Sy
Jonna Wissert
Kristin Brosky
Petra Gates

Substitutes

Anji Murphy
Rosamond Wallstrom
Rose Roetker

Co-op Board Members

Gail Falk, President 802-777-0528
Bob Fancher, Treasurer 860-993-4595
bfancher@hollerithdesign.com
Scott Harris, scott.harris@goddard.edu
Joseph Gainza, jgainza@vtlink.net
Art Chickering, 223-0762,
jodawnc@gmail.com
Karla Moskowitz 454-1273

Committee Contacts

Building: Allen Banbury,
mathman209@yahoo.com
Newsletter: Glenda Bissex,
songboat@vtlink.net
Equity Committee: Bob Fancher,
Joseph Gainza, Scott Harris,
Mike Peabody
info@plainfieldcoop.com

This issue's art by Twinfield students.

Newsletter Advertising Specifications

RATES		
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Quarter Page	\$25	\$80

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Send check made out to **Plainfield Co-op** when your copy is submitted. Ad copy and payment should be submitted to:

Sarah Albert, Ad Coordinator
900 Gonyeau Road
Plainfield VT 05667

Electronic graphics files preferred, but we are able to work with any clear copy.

Questions: 802-476-0526 or sarah@vtlink.net



About This Newsletter

Our theme is "The Cooperative Difference."

How is our Plainfield Co-op different from a natural foods store? How is shopping at our

Co-op different? How is working at our Co-op different? How different would our community be if the Co-op wasn't here? Read on and learn.

The illustrations in this issue were all created by Twinfield students. Thanks to Jan Danziger and her art students for their cooperation. Some drawings depict cooperation--butterflies, for example, depending on flowers for nectar, and flowers depending on butterflies for pollination--cooperation that gives us beauty and food. The farmer whose shoe we see needs the cooperation of the sun, of seeds, of the soil for growing crops, and of customers, perhaps at our Co-op, to sell those crops and be able to continue farming. Life is in many essential ways

a cooperative enterprise.

So is this newsletter that depends on a committee to make it happen; on all the people who write and illustrate it or advertise in it; on Twinfield student Erika Farnham, who gets the print newsletter ready to be mailed; on the postal service and the internet that distribute it, and on you who read it.

We welcome your contributions--articles, letters, photos or drawings, Co-op anecdotes (historical or current). Send to newsletter editor Glenda Bissex: songboat@vtlink.net.

The Newsletter Committee:

Glenda Bissex, co-ordinator,
songboat@vtlink.net

Sarah Albert, design and layout,
sarah@vtlink.net

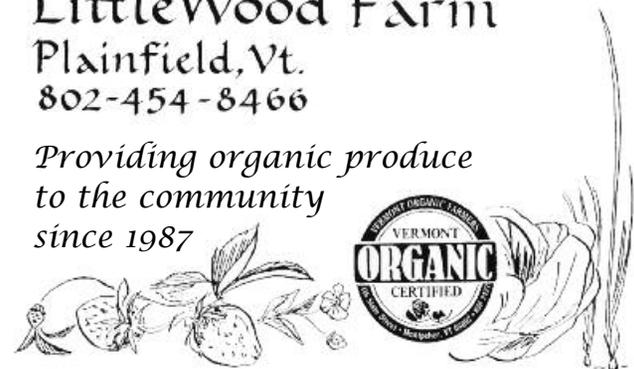
Joseph Gainza, board liaison and editing,
jgainza@vtlink.net

Karen Starr, staff liaison and writer,
ravenbadger@gmail.com

Debra Stoleroff, editing and recipes,
debra@vtlink.net ♦

LittleWood Farm
Plainfield, Vt.
802-454-8466

Providing organic produce
to the community
since 1987



What Does "Sustaining the Environment" Mean?

by Board President Gail Falk

I love this time of year, when the produce bins gradually change over from citrus and vegetables grown faraway, to local greens grown just up the road, such as Robin Taylor's lettuce and Annie Reed's asparagus. We are truly moving into the salad days!

By now you should have received your member patronage refund. If you have any questions about how we calculated the amount, please contact Bob Fancher (Treasurer). Your membership dues continue to be saved in our capital fund, which we use for building repairs and improvements under the capable direction of the Building Committee and Management Collective member Kathleen Hayes. You may have noticed some of the recent changes, such as the ice dam on the roof preventing snow and ice from falling on the driveway, the new ADA-compliant ramp, and our elegant new wine shelf. New flooring that will be durable and easy to clean is planned.

Meanwhile, the Board continues its work of oversight of the Co-op and charting our forward direction. We are fortunate that the store continues to be financially stable, and we can do planning and improving rather than crisis management. At a recent meeting the Board provided guidance on what we mean by our end to "Sustain the environment through [our] operations and the products [we] offer." We agreed to work toward the following goals in the area of Sustainability:

End 3: We sustain the environment through our operations and the products we offer

Operations

- *Building/facility decisions consider long term impact on the environment and energy efficiency. We use green building materials.*
- *We raise community awareness about cooperative economics and practices that best serve the environment as well as practices that harm the environment.*
- *We keep money in the community--local vendors, contractors, and bank.*

Products

- *We carry products that are produced in a way that is not harmful to the environment and does not diminish the ability to produce again.*
- *Packaging: we offer discounts for reused bags, use less plastic, carry more bulk items, carry products with minimal packaging.*
- *Buy locally (within 100 miles).*

We are always interested on your thoughts about how we can best improve the sustainability of our store.

In April the Board and Management Collective met for a half-day retreat facilitated by member Andy Robinson to talk about communication and planning for the future. We hope to undertake a formal strategic planning process this fall that will include plans about expansion of the building.

To accommodate Board member schedules, the Board has changed its **regular monthly meeting date to the third Tuesday of the month**. The agenda is posted a week in advance at the entrance to the Co-op. Members are welcome to attend meetings and suggest items for the agenda by contacting me at gail.falk@gmail.com. ♦

2014 Annual Financial Report

by Bob Fancher

We are starting 2015 with some great financial results. The first quarter results show we are still growing and still keeping operating costs down.

Sales for the first quarter are up 2.8% from the same period in 2014. Some of this increase is due to inflation and some is true increase in sales. While our sales increased, the Cost of Goods Sold (GOGS) decreased by 2.4%. Our Gross Profit (Sales minus COGS) increased 13.4% over the first quarter of 2014!

While our Sales and Gross Profit are going up, our Total Expenses (the non-product related expenses) have stayed level with 2014. Those expenses cover the cost of running the Co-op including utilities, labor costs, insurance and fees.

Over the last two years, the Management Collective has been working on reducing our long-term debts. These debts are loans that we have taken out in the past. At the end of the first quarter of 2015 we only have \$3,784 remaining on our final outstanding loan. This is great news and another sign of your Co-op's improving financial position.



Credit: Elijah Farnsworth

Some Co-ops are concerned about loss of sales to non-cooperative grocers such as Price Chopper and Costco who are offering more organic and 'healthy' products. At Plainfield Co-op we are still increasing sales and growing. We are watching this trend but we don't think it is having a big, if any, impact on us.

Equity Dividends. In 2014, we changed to an equity based model which replaced the previous membership model. Equity means that every member is a part owner in the Co-op. As a result, every member is eligible for an equity dividend.

In 2014, we did very well financially. We made enough 'profit' to be able to give equity dividends to our members. We retained some of the 'profit' to improve the Co-op facility. The rest is being distributed as equity dividends. For dividends over \$10, members will receive checks in the mail. For dividends less than \$10, the dividend will be given as store credit. Your dividend is based on how much you purchased at the Co-op in 2014. The more you bought, the larger your dividend. (Dividend calculations do not include purchases of beer and wine. Not our idea, it is a State rule.)

If you are a member, enjoy your dividend. If you want to become a member, stop in to the Co-op and we will sign you up.

We can all be proud of the growing financial strength of the Co-op. As always, thanks to all our members for their continuing support. ♦

What's Happening at the Store?

by Karen Starr

The trees are budding out, people are climbing out of their winter clothes, gardeners are thinking we might actually have a garden season, and I'm pretty sure I heard Chimney Swifts over the village last night! The store has reemerged from underneath the snow banks in all its dishabille. However, Kathleen Hayes and Janice Walrafen will soon be setting that to rights as Janice cleans up the yard and Kathleen attends to various building repairs. Kathleen will also be applying the final finishes to our new sign to make it more visible and beautiful. We want to remind folks that there is a community picnic table behind the store down by the river. It's a lovely place to just chill with your morning or afternoon coffee.

A great selection of local plant starts is available from Friends and Neighbors Farm as well as tomato plants from Robin Taylor. And of course, both Cate Farm and Littlewood Farm are wonderful places to shop for seedlings, onion sets and the like. Spring offerings from our local growers, of which we're fortunate to have so many, are beginning to appear in our produce cases. You might begin to notice a subtle shift in what's available for sale on our shelves as the buyers make seasonal adjustments. This will include more "summer" beers like IPAs, potato salad and coleslaw in the drink cooler, and picnic supplies among other things.

Nancy would like folks to know that we now have family-sized frozen chicken pot pies available and also frozen, proof overnight, croissants from Mirabel's in

Burlington. They are both very yummy! Margie is interested in hearing what new products you would like to see in the Supplement, Household, and Gift departments. Drop a card in the suggestion box if you have some ideas! Jessi will be out on maternity leave for a bit, but will continue to buy body products. She really wants lovers of Dr. Bronner's liquid soaps to know that you can order them by the gallon at a huge savings: \$50.00/gallon, but with a working membership it's only \$44.00/gallon. Jeannine says there will be summer-long sales on Santa Cruz Lemonades. Look for case deals available, as well as seasonal sales on condiments,

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Credit: Kaitlyn Farnham

Read Your Receipt (or What Your Receipt Can Tell You)

by Gail Falk

If you're like me, you're probably in the habit of saying "No thanks" when the cashier at the Plainfield Co-op asks whether you want your receipt. It's time to change your habit. That receipt--the itemized one--has lots of information that can help you be a more thoughtful shopper.

Products marked **O** are Organic.

Products marked **L** are Local

Products marked **R** are Regional

Products marked **F** are Fair Trade

Products marked **P** are produced by a Co-op.

At the end of your receipt, you'll find the amount you saved in discount if you are a working member.

Your receipt also tells what percentage of your purchases came from Local sources.

My goal is for at least 50% of my purchases to be Local. The receipts help me learn where I could do better next time. For instance, on a recent shop, I was surprised to see that the pound of Cabot butter I'd bought was not Local; I'd thought I was buying from the cows and the workers up the road. Sure enough, I read the label and learned that butter is produced in Massachusetts. Next time, I'll buy Vermont butter.

On my most recent shop, I got up to 79% local and left the store feeling great about the choices the Co-op gives me and how I am supporting the local economy. ♦

Of our total sales in terms of dollars, from May 1, 2014 through April 1, 2015:

- 32% of sales were local
- 37.6% were local or regional
- 32.5% were organic
- 33.5% were organic or non-GMO verified

In terms of number of items sold, the results were similar, generally within one or two percentage points.

Plainfield Co-op

153 Main St
Plainfield, VT
802-454-8579

Tue May 19, 2015 at 11:21 AM #: 1 JD

COLE SLAW, LOCAL, BASS	1	\$2.43 L
MILK, SKIM, ORG, qt.	1	\$2.86 LO
BOTTLE DEPOSIT	1	1.50
RAVIOLI, MONTHLY SPEC.	1	\$7.75 L
Bagel, Whizzo single	1	\$0.50 L

SUBTOTAL :	\$15.04	
TAXABLE : \$0.00	TAX:	\$0.00
From Gift Certificate		-\$3.68
TOTAL DUE :		\$11.36

Item Count : 4

Sale#: 18 Member#: **1358**

Cash : \$11.36 Change: \$0.00

MEMBER SALE (DISCOUNT 3%)

As a Member/Owner you saved **\$0.40**

\$15.04 (100%) of the Items purchased came from LOCAL sources.

T H A N K Y O U

The Role of a Small Co-op in Our Community

by Joey Klein

Certainly the most basic purpose of our cooperative grocery is to serve the food needs and desires of the members. Basic foods at reasonable prices, organically grown if possible and affordable are core purpose. But a small health food store could do this as well. What does our cooperative business model have to offer that makes it important in the life of our community?

One thing that stands out in my mind is our Co-op's commitment to continue operating through hard times. Our Co-op has been on the ropes at times, and a private operator might easily have chosen to close up. Through the rallying of members, our Co-op has gone on to improve and change. The continued input of volunteer energy into the Co-op is quite literally vital to its continued operation. A fine example of this has been the ongoing evolution of the Board of Directors. Community members find the time to serve on the Board for a number of years. The gradual rate of change of the Board membership allows for both continuity to be maintained and new ideas and expertise to be added. The response of the membership to our need to renovate the store showed an impressive amount of expertise, cash and hard work. It feels great to be a part of such an effort.

Another ongoing step in the evolution of the Co-op has been the move to require the purchase of equity for membership. This change was extensively

discussed in several annual membership meetings before being implemented in a relatively trouble free manner. Membership is now more than a commitment to keep the business going, by each member having a personal investment. The added capital goes toward maintaining our historic building and as an asset to enable the Co-op to borrow against as needed. Making each member clearly an owner builds the democratic nature of the Co-op.

Our annual meeting is an important event that distinguishes the Co-op from other business models. It is a chance for consumer members to dialog directly with our Management Collective staff. It is an opportunity for praise, complaint, envisioning, and brainstorming. It also keeps us in practice to be able to participate effectively in large group meetings. We meet new people moving into our community, and catch up with friends we may not have seen for a while. The pot luck meal is always good eating and fun.

We know that now is the time to prepare ourselves and our community for a transition to a less climate-damaging way of life. Economies will become more localized as we transition away from automobile dependency. Ongoing purchasing agreements with local farms will become increasingly important. Keeping our Co-op as a functioning economic and social organization is a worthwhile hedge against these coming changes. ♦

Why I Sell to the Co-op

My name is Kathy Killam and I am the owner and operator of the one-woman show known as Killam Sales & Distribution. I am in my fifth year of business and deal mainly with fresh baked goods.

One of the main reasons that I started my business was that small, local food producers needed a small, local, affordable distributor. To small producers, being able to use a distributor is helpful in several ways, such as using the time that would be spent delivering to increase their production.

A very important aspect of my business is being able to deliver goods to independent stores and co-ops. The co-ops throughout Vermont are vital to the local food industry. However, larger distributors often will not deal with fresh, short-dated products or handle small deliveries; and large, conventional stores are not suited to focusing on these special products.

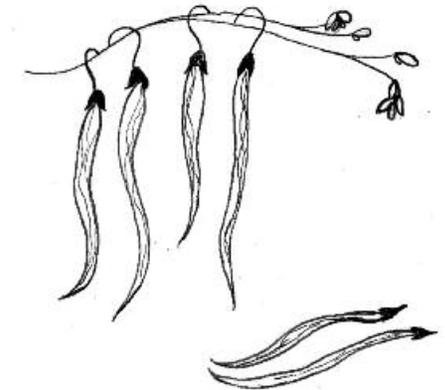
I have loved becoming part of the special community of co-ops and it is a joy to have developed so many personal relationships with both staff and customers. ♦

Why I Shop at the Co-op

I shop at the Plainfield Co-op because I trust that the Co-op will carry food that is ethically and safely produced and as local as possible. I shop at the Co-op because I believe that a strong local cooperative economy is one of the best alternatives to the broader capitalist economic system that we live in. Having multiple bottom lines, not profit alone, and democratic participation is a business that I can get behind.

— Jamie Spector

I've shopped at the Plainfield Co-op for the past 35 years because it offers a variety of locally-grown fresh vegetables, wholesome food, and home made cookies. I appreciate shopping there because of the small store atmosphere and because the friendly and interest-



Credit: Aurora Kelley

ing staff take the time to make shoppers feel a part of the local community. An added benefit for me--the Co-op is only two doors down street from my kitchen!

— Alice Merrill

Why I Work at the Co-op

I work at the Co-op because I love it! I get to see my friends and my community every day. My job is always different -- never a dull moment! I love being able to be so responsive to our members and customers because we are small. I get to dress the way I want to, and tell silly jokes and stories. I get to be myself. I love that we are collectively managed -- I didn't use to love it so much before that!! Now all of us take responsibility for running the store well. If only all the employees were able to make a living wage here, then it would be the perfect job!

Nancy Ellen

Why do I work at the Co-op? Well, I have all sorts of personal motivations such as a steady income, short commute, I was hired despite my age... these are the reasons I stay. The reasons I enjoy staying, however, include terrific co-workers, the opportunity to learn new things, and autonomy in how I run my department. Many of my jobs have allowed me the freedom to structure things my own way but often in a larger context that I had to tolerate rather than embrace. The cooperative model of shared decision-making, independence from the megaculture, and focus on a sustainable and thoughtful interaction with the world-at-large is an environment I can get behind. Whereas many jobs have left me feeling somehow compromised, at the Co-op my integrity and values stay intact.

On a more down-to-earth level, I enjoy working at a small cooperative. Because the store is human-sized, contact can take place face-to-face or across the

store. Unlike saying “Hey” in passing at a big store, every day at our little Co-op I hear folks swapping recipes and how-tos, bemoaning or delighting in the news, inviting each other to events, and just being “glad I ran into you!” Customers (members and nonmembers) and staff cooperate naturally—organically, if you will. Yes, we have our bylaws, ends, principles, structures...but, in the end, it's the everyday interactions that make me count my lucky stars.

Dorothy Wallace

After retiring from the health care field after 30 years of service I still needed to bring in the rashers. To that end, I wanted a part time job that was a little more laid back and relaxed than what I was used to. Even though I had lived in the area for more than 20 years, I was not all that familiar with the Co-op. However, I discovered the Co-op had the relaxed atmosphere I was searching for, and it was refreshing to work with people who were for the most part a healthy population.

Taking on the responsibilities of the supplement buyer presented me with a steep learning curve as these products are not utilized much in typical Western medical practice. Fortunately, I had, and continue to have, the patient support of co-workers with a broad base of knowledge about supplements. The endless parade of new products available also gives me an opportunity to discuss with customers and members what supplements they find most useful.

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I also buy household goods and for our small gift section. It's always tricky to purchase for such small departments, and so I rely heavily on customer/member suggestions and feedback. I'm always happy to hear from people what they would like to have available for gift giving; or about exceptional, especially green, household products. Any suggestions for supplements, gifts, or household products can be left in our suggestion box located at the coffee bar. I will be sure to follow up on them and get back to you!

I am happy to say that working at the Plainfield Co-op continues to be a pleasure. I feel fortunate to have interesting and friendly co-workers and to live in such a great community! I feel proud to be a part of both.

Margie Yoder

I've been a Co-op employee since the summer of 2007. I spent my first two years working mostly nights and week-

ends, running the register, breaking down boxes and stocking shelves. In 2009 we formed the Management Collective and took on our first big project with the storefront renovation. It was amazing to work so closely with the staff, board, and loads of volunteer members who helped make it all happen. My eight year anniversary is in June, and I can say for sure, that I have grown so much in the years I've been here. I've had the opportunity to meet so many wonderful people from the community, learned so much about local, natural and organic foods, and have developed a deep understanding of small business management and sustainable practices. My current title with the Co-op is Lead Buyer, and Grocery/Bulk Manager. I work closely with the finance committee and other buyers to ensure the Co-op is financially healthy while providing healthy, quality products at the best possible price. I look forward to many more years working with all of you!

Jeannine DeWald

Do you want to be a working member?

We need someone to coordinate the printing and advertising for this quarterly newsletter. The person would be considered a working member and receive a discount on Co-op purchases. The job entails keeping track of ad copy and billing for a modest number of ads. It also includes sending the digital file to the printer in Barre, picking up the printed copies and ensuring that the labeling and stamping is done (currently by a Twinfield student volunteer). Job might extend to include handling a few ads for future monthly emails from the Co-op. Estimated time required is 2–4 hours for each issue (an average of one hour/month over a year). Contact Glenda Bissix at songboat@vtlink.net

Why I Love Working at the Plainfield Co-op

by Karen Starr

My love for food co-ops was sealed forever at the first co-op I joined in Wellfleet, Ma. in 1972. Monica, a teacher I worked with, and I went for my first pick up. As we waited in line, a 6 year old who had been absent that day was helping to distribute people's orders. I told him we had missed him in class, but he just shrugged comfortably in his little striped overalls and said, "I had a lot of important things to do today." And since that moment, I have always known that he was absolutely right! Food is important; it is in many ways the center of our lives and the life of our communities.

That's one of the reasons food co-ops have always been important to me as a community organizer. If, as communities, we don't have control over our food supply, we simply don't have control over any other aspects of our lives. All one has to do is to look around to see how so many other issues are con-

nected. Whether your concern is the poisoning of land and water by energy extraction, the drought in California, racial and other discriminations, return on your investment and sweat as a farmer, or the cost of putting food on your family's table, food affects every aspect of our lives.

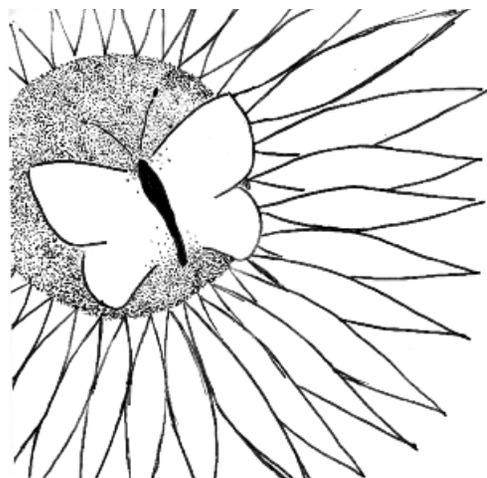
For me this is best described by the Food Sovereignty Model:

"Food sovereignty is the right of peoples, communities, and countries to define their own agricultural, labor, fishing, food and land policies, which are ecologically, socially, economically and culturally appropriate to their unique circumstances. It includes the true right to food and to produce food, which means that all people have the right to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food and to food-producing resources and the ability to sustain themselves and their societies." —Food Sovereignty: A Right For All, Political Statement of the NGO/CSO Forum for Food Sovereignty, Rome, June 2002

The Principles of Food Sovereignty call for:

1. Food for People
2. Valuing Food Providers
3. Localizing Food System
4. Making Decisions Locally
5. Building Knowledge and Skills
6. Working with Nature

<http://www.grassrootsonline.org/issues/food-sovereignty>



Credit: Sadie Fischbeck

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In working toward these goals, and away from reducing everything to dollars and cents, I find myself increasingly looking toward Indigenous cultures for examples of living in respectful relationship to my neighbors and the natural world. Anishinaabekwe organizer, Winona LaDuke, once commented that there is no such thing as sustainable development, only sustainable communities. Sustainable communities start with food security and sovereignty

for all members. I see Plainfield Co-op as an important player in efforts to re-gain control of our food and move toward a localized system of feeding ourselves. I certainly plan on doing my part so that someday soon we will be able to celebrate the fact that we know where every bit of our food comes from and who grew it, or slaughtered it. That will be a day when we can declare that "none of our food is anonymous!" and I will do a little dance. You are all invited to join me! ♦

vermont **70s**
1970s counterculture
and its lasting influence



Were you in Vermont in the 1970s? Whether you were just arriving or your family has been here for generations, the Vermont Historical Society wants to talk to you!! The Society has embarked on a two year project to document state cultural changes stemming from the social fermentation of the 70s. To that end, archivists are eager to collect your memories, stories, papers, photos and any other memorabilia you are willing to share about the period. They are interested in hearing from those who were part of the counter culture as well as those who were not. They have identified Food Co-ops as a specific area of interest, and that would be us!! To find out more or to fill out a survey visit their website at: www.vermonthistory.org/vt70s

What Yogurt Should I Buy?

by Gail Falk

Choosing a container of yogurt these days can be daunting, given the many varieties and the claims on the labels. This article describes the properties of the milk that goes into the yogurt sold at the Co-op and how the yogurt is made.

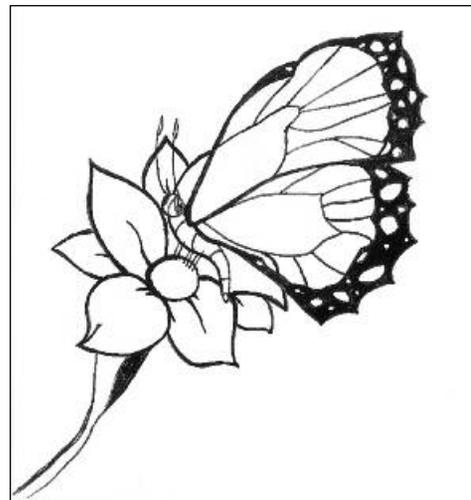
Health Benefits

Yogurt is made by culturing milk with one or more strains of bacteria. These bacteria consume much of the sugar, or lactose, in milk, creating tangy lactic acid, which thickens and naturally preserves the milk. The health benefits of eating yogurt include

Probiotic – Replenishes the bacterial cultures in our digestive systems

Supports the digestion of lactose – Live enzymes help break down the lactose in milk, making yogurt an easier food than milk for many people with lactose intolerance

High protein – Higher in protein than a serving of milk



Credit: Monique Brochu

High calcium – Higher in calcium than milk, and the live cultures help the absorption of calcium in our bodies.

Properties of the Milk in Yogurt

Yogurt can be made from a variety of milks (goat, sheep, etc.) and also non-dairy milk, such as soy and coconut. However, all yogurt we sell at the Co-op is made from cow's milk

- **Vermont Milk?** *Butterworks Farm* yogurt is made 100% from Vermont milk. *Green Mountain Creamery* yogurt is made mostly from Vermont milk.
- **Organic Milk?** Organic standards guarantee that the milk comes from cows that graze outside part of the year, eat organic feed grown without chemical fertilizers, pesticides or GMOs, and are not given antibiotics or artificial growth hormones to boost milk production. The *only* yogurt we sell at the Co-op that is made from organic milk is *Butterworks*.
- **Hormone free?** Hormone-free means that the cows are not given recombinant bovine growth hormones (rBST or rBGH) to increase milk production. All the yogurt that Co-op sells is hormone-free.
- **Pastured or Grassfed?** Pastured means the cows graze on grass a portion of the year and may be fed a combination of hay, corn, soy and grain the rest of the year. 100% grassfed means that the cows are fed only grass. Pastured animals produce milk with a more optimal balance of fats

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(ratio of Omega 3 to Omega 6 fatty acids), and a richer creamier color, because of having more beta carotene and Vitamin E. The only yogurt we sell at the Co-op that comes completely from pastured cows is *Butterworks*. We don't sell any yogurt made from milk that comes from 100% grassfed cows (look for *Maple Hill Creamery* yogurt if you want regional yogurt from 100% grassfed).

• Non-Fat, Low-Fat, or Whole Milk?

All milk comes out of the cow as whole milk, but consumer demand has caused dairies to skim the cream and produce non-fat and low-fat varieties. Recent studies show that children and healthy adults who eat whole milk yogurt are actually *less likely* to be obese than people who eat non-fat and low-fat yogurt. This seems counterintuitive and the reasons aren't completely certain (that would be another article), but, if you like the taste of creamy whole yogurt there seems to be no health reason to avoid it unless you know that you have high cholesterol. Yogurt made from whole milk is naturally higher in certain nutrients found in the fat, such as vitamins A and D and Omega 3 fatty acids.

Properties of the Yogurt

Greek Yogurt or Regular Yogurt? Greek yogurt is yogurt that has been strained to remove some of the liquid (whey). It may be cultured with a different mix of bacteria, with *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* (originally found in Bulgaria) often predominating. Many people prefer the firmer texture of Greek yogurt. Think of it as compressed yogurt: it is twice as high in protein as a comparable serving of regular yogurt but also nearly twice as high in calories.

Whey? The thin liquid that you often find on top is whey. Whey contains proteins, minerals, proteins and probiotics, so if you pour it off, you are pouring out good nutrition. It can be stirred back into the yogurt.

Added Sugar/Flavorings? Because of the tart flavor of yogurt, yogurt producers try to tempt you with all kinds of sweeteners and flavorings. Plain yogurt already has 7-9 grams of sugar from naturally occurring lactose. Every 4 grams of sugar beyond that (you can find the grams of sugar on the nutrition label) are equal to one teaspoon of sugar. Consider buying plain yogurt and mixing in your own fruit or flavorings.

This article is based upon a consumer information pamphlet by City Market in Burlington. Thanks to City Market for the work in collecting this information. ♦

Company/Location	Organic?	Pastured?	Single Source?
Butterworks , Westfield, VT	Yes	Yes	Mostly
Fage , Johnstown, NY	No	No	No
Green Mountain Creamery , Brattleboro	No	Partly?	No
Liberte , MN (owned by General Mills)	No	No	No

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pickles, cold drinks, chips, cookies, crackers, etc.

Just a reminder, we are always looking for working members to help out in the store. It's a great way to get to know what's involved in running the place, meet new people, and get a bit of a discount on your purchases. Talk to Mike for more information. BTW, Mike is looking for someone to cut cheese for a couple hours a week on a regular basis. He'd love to discuss that in particular with you!

For those of you interested in supporting

local producers, the Board and Management Staff would like to remind you that you can track the percentage of your purchases that are local with your register receipts. It's all there in black and white. Some members have been asking when the dividend is going to be issued. The answer is probably before you receive this newsletter. At this time the checks are in progress and should be mailed out soon. Even though it is past the first of the year, it takes a few months for the bookkeeping to get sorted out. We appreciate your patience. Happy Spring everyone!! ♦



Early Summer Menu

by Daniel Marcus and Amba Connors from Wild Bee Farm

*Pappardelle with Asparagus
and Spinach*

*Fresh Green Salad
with Shallot Dressing*

*Spice-braised Rhubarb with
vanilla ice cream*

Ahhh, asparagus! The first of the real wonders of our season. Locally abundant and delicious any way you prepare it. When it first arrives we generally just gobble it down with butter, licking our fingers as we go. As the season progresses we find more interesting ways to present this most excellent of vegetables. This Papperdelle recipe is rich and unctuous, creamy with spinach and the wonderful taste of tarragon. This dish is one that we love to serve to friends.

Papperdelle With Asparagus and Spinach

- 1 package egg noodles (about 8 oz.)
- a bunch of spinach, coarsely chopped
- asparagus cut into 1½" sections
- 1 medium onion, sliced
- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 1 C. reserved pasta water
- 1 C. stock (I like *Better Than Bullion* if you don't have your own.)
- ½ C. cream
- 1 T. fresh tarragon, chopped
- 2 T. lemon juice
- 2 T. olive oil
- 2 T. butter
- 2 T. whole wheat flour

Cook pasta as per instructions on package.

Heat oil, cook onions till transparent.

Add asparagus and garlic, cook till asparagus is cooked but still firm.

Remove and put aside asparagus.

Melt butter in pan, add flour, whisk till it smells nut-like.

Slowly add stock, whisking as you go, making a kind of fragrant gravy.

Add pasta water, cream and spinach; simmer till spinach is cooked.

Add tarragon and lemon juice, stir.

Add pasta and stir till all is piping hot. Serve immediately!

The produce coolers at the Co-op are a miracle of delightful fresh greens. With the creamy asparagus a crunchy Bibb is nice along with some sharper oriental greens, but it's all good. The shallot dressing is simple and one of our favorites. If you don't have *Ume Plum* vinegar, the Co-op does.

Best Shallot Dressing

- 6 T. Olive oil
- 1 T. Ume plum vinegar
- 1 T. cider vinegar
- 1 nice shallot, chopped

Whisk all together till blended

It's also the season for Rhubarb. When you've done all the other usual (and tasty) things we do with rhubarb, (pie, crisp, etc.) try this lovely dessert. It's a bit complex but very worth it; you can make lots as it freezes well. Needless to say, this dish is amazing alone or over Stafford Creamery vanilla ice cream.

Spice-braised Rhubarb

1½ lb. rhubarb, sliced on an angle, about 1½" long

1 C. fresh orange juice

¼ C. honey

½ t. salt

8 cardamom pods

2 star anise

1 vanilla bean, split, seeds scraped and saved

½" piece of ginger, sliced

Place all ingredients in a heavy frying pan and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, till rhubarb is cooked. (About 30 minutes.)

Remove star anise, cardamom & vanilla pods.

Let cool and eat in a dish or as a topping.

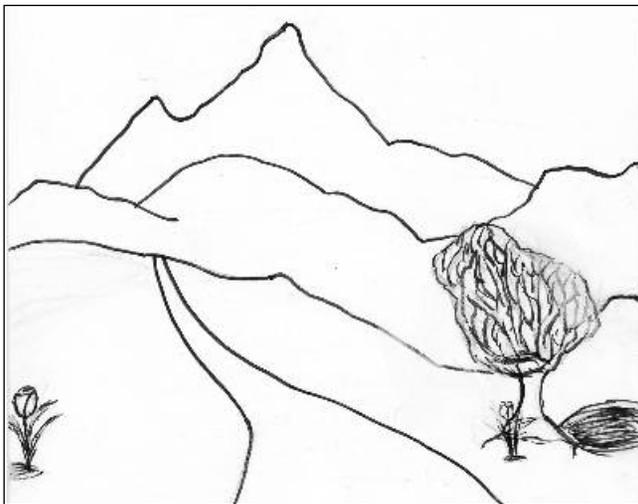
Our very own Co-op wine buyer Nancy Ellen recommends:

With the main meal, I would suggest something light and crisp without being too acidic—A vinho verde such as Pavao or Octave comes to mind,

but a lighter rose would also be lovely—Chateau Routas from Provence is very nice and Baron de Seillac is a truly excellent sparkling rose, also from France. (We currently have all of these, and I'll try to keep them around.)

To serve with dessert, perhaps something a bit sweeter to complement the tartness of the rhubarb, yet still light—Maine Mead Works' HoneyMaker dry mead would be great, and their Apple Cyser (a mead/cider combination) equally good, I think. Or you could choose Lincoln Peak's La Crescent (you can't go wrong with Lincoln Peak!) or Good Karma, a really nice riesling from Red Tail Ridge in the Finger Lakes (a portion of the proceeds goes to the VT Food Bank too).

Like all recipes these come from somewhere and get changed and transformed according to what ingredients are available, the mood of the cook, and the alignment of the stars. So thanks to whoever first originated them! ♦



Credit: Emma Lord

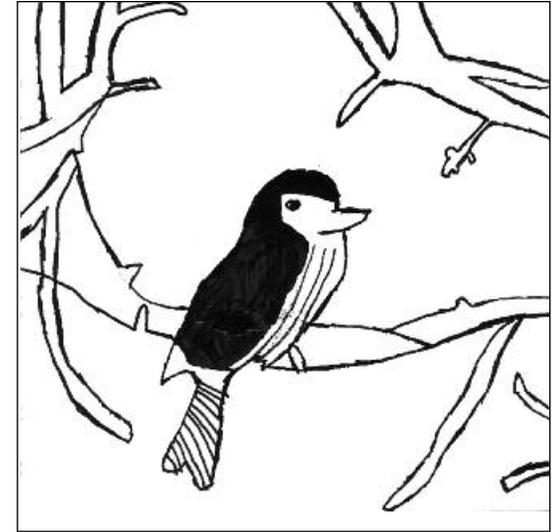
The Cost of Local Food

by Mary McClintock in the Greenfield (MA) Recorder

Considering the cost of food, I think about the people who grow and produce the food as well as the people who buy that food. Because of an economy that has concentrated wealth in the hands of a few people and squandered trillions of dollars on expensive, destructive wars, many people who grow food and many of us who buy it are struggling financially.

I thought about those struggles last week when I saw a post on the Weston A. Price Foundation's Facebook page. It said, "If you stopped spending money at the supermarket next week, they would never notice you were gone. If you took a small fraction of that money and spent it at the farmers market, you would help a local farmer pay the rent. You might even save his or her farm."

Indeed.



Credit: Nihyah Dorf

Along with farmers markets, I'd include farm stands, farm stores, and CSA shares [and food co-ops]. Together, each of us, buying food from our neighbors, we can help save their farms and strengthen the local economy that supports us all. ♦

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