

Co-op Community Newsletter



Potsdam Food Co-op
& Carriage House Bakery and Deli



Your local grocer since 1973

Producer Interview: Jacob Hershberger

By Erica LaFountain

On July 31, I met Jacob Hershberger on his farm in North Lawrence. The farm is situated off 11B on a seasonally-maintained dirt road. When approaching, one first sees the Hershbergers' cows on pasture, then their large garden and a tidy house and barns. I had come to find out more about Jacob's egg-laying operation. He showed me to the chicken coop behind the house where some of his children were feeding the flock of laying hens, many of which were outside enjoying the beautiful sunny day. Jacob has provided the Co-op with certified organic eggs for most of the last year.

Erica: Can you tell me about your farm?

Jacob: Everything we do here is free of chemicals and pesticides. We have laying hens and meat birds. We've been shipping organic milk for about 10 years. Horizon Organics picks it up. Organic milk was my first venture. We grow produce and sell to the new St. Lawrence Valley Produce Auction in North Bangor. We have sold vegetables from the house but, living on a quiet road, we don't have a roadside stand. We haven't gotten our produce certified yet, but it is grown with the same practices. I'm also getting my maple syrup certified.

Erica: Will you be selling it to the Co-op?

Jacob: I'm told there isn't a lot of demand for organic syrup there.

Erica: It's possible consumers don't know what distinguishes certified organic syrup from conventional syrup since forests aren't apt to be sprayed by chemicals.

Jacob: Yes, it's actually the cleaners and defoamers used that set a maple syrup operation apart from a conventional one. Also, I use Treesaver spouts, which naturally prolong sap flow.

Erica: Have you farmed in other locations?

Jacob: I moved here from Ohio, which is where I grew up. I began pursuing organic farming soon after moving here. I wanted my children to know only organic farming practices.

Erica: Can you describe how and why you pursued organic practices?



Jacob: I went to an Amish man, Dan Mast, in Fort Plain, NY, to check out his milk-receiving stations. He told me he was going to go certified organic and he convinced and inspired me. Now I would farm organically even if there was no market for the products. I wouldn't go back to using chemicals. I see it this way: when you farm organically, Mother Nature helps you.

Erica: Did you learn from other organic farmers?

Jacob: I was the first Amish fellow in this area to go organic with my dairy, and I thought I would remain the only one, but many others have followed. With the eggs, it was the same: there were no Amish doing it in this area, so I had to locate English from further away who were raising an organic flock on this scale, and then check with our certifier. I did talk with John Cleary, the field rep for upstate New York from Organic Valley, though we don't sell to them. They weren't picking up eggs in this area, but were helpful to me.

Erica: You said many others in your community have gone organic. Did you convince others to change their practices or did they

transition independently?

Jacob: Whenever someone asked, I would talk to them about it. I proved that it works. But I didn't preach it because people would have thought I was crazy back then.

Erica: Now that there are others in your community growing organically, do you work together, and talk about farming practices?

Jacob: Oh yes, we share ideas now, and can support each other. I love that.

Erica: I'd like to get some details about your laying operation.

Jacob: We have around 170 laying hens. They are a breed called Golden Comet. As far as feed, I get 17% Fertrell Ration from Melvin Martin. I mix some on my own, and I get corn and soybean meal for that from Green Mountain feeds. We rotate the hens between two grazing areas with a permanent coop in between. In the winter, they often won't go out even if we let them, but as you can see they are grazing outside now.

Erica: What about your meat birds?

Jacob: We raise Cornish Rock Cross meat chickens for ourselves. *Continued on page 6...*

Gazpacho

By Sally Lynch

This is my adaptation of an out of print Joy of Cooking recipe for gazpacho, a cold Spanish soup. When our kids were little, they called it soup-salad. It is a great way to enjoy fresh produce. With garlic bread, it is a filling meal and only uses the oven briefly. It is best made ahead and chilled for a few hours.

THE SOUP

- 2 large, ripe tomatoes, finely chopped
- 1 green pepper, seeded, finely chopped
- ½ c. fresh herbs, such as chives, parsley and basil, finely chopped
- 1 c. peeled, finely chopped cucumber
- ½ olive oil
- 3 T. freshly squeezed lemon or lime juice
- 3 c. cold water. The colder the better
- 1 t. salt
- ½ t. paprika

Put in a large pot, cover and chill until thoroughly cold.

THE BREAD

- One loaf of firm, unsliced bread
- Garlic, peeled and finely chopped
- Olive oil to taste

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Baguettes, the long, skinny loaves, make great garlic bread, but I recently made it with a white/whole wheat, slightly sweet loaf and it was delicious and filling. Cut the loaf into thick, 1 inch slices, but not all the way through, so the oil and garlic stay in the loaf. Put the loaf on a rimmed baking sheet. Spread the slices apart with one hand and put the chopped garlic between the slices, then drizzle olive oil between the slices. Drizzle the top with olive oil, and bake a couple minutes, until crisp. Serve the warm garlic bread with the cold gazpacho, preferably outside, since garlic bread is messy.

Save The Date!

Local Food Fest

(Formerly the Open House)

September 8

11:00 - 2:00

Become a contributor! Before making a submission to the newsletter, please familiarize yourself with the Newsletter Submission Guidelines available on our website and in the store. The next newsletter deadline is October 1 with delivery around November 15. Submissions can be made via email to newsletter@potsdamcoop.com.

From the GM

Hello from Your New General Manager!

By the time you're reading this, I'll have been on the job for two months. Hopefully by now I've had a chance to meet many of you in person but if I haven't, or if I didn't get a chance to tell you my story, here's a brief introduction:

Born in Malone, I grew up shuttling between my parents' homestead on the Orebed Road in Pierrepont and my grandparents' houses closer to the village of Canton. I have fond memories of North Country rural living, from snow forts in the winter to Grandpa Kepes' (heavily sweetened) rhubarb juice in the summer. I attended Colton-Pierrepont Central School until 5th grade before transferring to Canton's McKinney Middle School (from the purple-and-gold Colts to the brown-and-gold Bears). I graduated from Hugh C. Williams in

2005 and headed West, just in time for the first snowfall in the Wasatch Mountains of Utah. I spent the next few winters balancing a passion for powder skiing and a love of reading in New Mexico, enjoying the steeps at Taos while earning my bachelor's degree from St. John's College. Living in Santa Fe was my introduction to a sophisticated local food culture where cutting-edge cuisine shared space with centuries-old agricultural traditions and where co-ops and farmers markets reigned supreme. In many ways it was an exotic climate and culture (see: the smell of roasting green chiles in the fall) but I recognized a shared commitment to land and community from my childhood here in New York.

Contracting work with the Forest Service and a desire for new perspectives led me north to Missoula, Montana, where I arrived in the fall of 2012. Initially I worked as a nurse aide before

taking over leadership at the tiny (sadly now defunct) Missoula Community Food Co-op in 2013. After nearly three years managing the co-op I left to pursue job opportunities in the Missoula restaurant scene and with the Western Montana Growers Cooperative, a wholesale cooperative of farmers and ranchers. The work gave me an up-close view of two distinct pieces of the local food economy, complementing what I had already learned while at the food co-op. While I enjoyed my experience with Missoula's local food culture, New York's North Country was never far from my mind and I often thought of the potential that my home region held for similar endeavors. When someone (probably my mother) forwarded the co-op's advertisement for a general manager I was cautiously excited: here was a job that would facilitate my return and offer the potential to shape the future of a North Country

food economy. Six months later, here I am, ready to get to work building the future of the Potsdam Co-op and the North Country's local food economy with it. I am immensely grateful to my lovely partner Nicole for being willing to join me on this adventure (although she would likely point out that she'd secured a job at St. Lawrence University before I knew for sure about the co-op job). Our long-haired orange cat Captain is gradually accustoming himself to the rural lifestyle as well, presenting us with his first dead vole just this morning.

From here (July 15) it is hard to see exactly what will come to pass and when, but know that changes are in the works. The Potsdam Co-op has survived for nearly fifty years thanks to the dedication and commitment of its members—today, finding ways to thrive for the next fifty years is our challenge. Much of the co-op's historical niche (whole,

organic, specialty, and ethnic foods) is currently being co-opted by the big corporate retailers (Price Chopper, Aldi's, Walmart), which challenges our ongoing viability. The co-op community remains strong and we will find ways to survive their competition. Developing a vision and a strategy is an ongoing process, but I can point out several areas where we intend to focus: local foods (from lettuce to lefse), the unique products of our superb bakery and deli, our dedication to superior customer service, and the community engagement that comes with our history and our mission to be more than just another grocery store. I welcome your feedback and engagement because without our member owners we are nothing.

Thank you for participating!

In solidarity,
Lee Van de Water

potsdamcoop.com | [@Potsdam_Co-op](https://twitter.com/Potsdam_Co-op) | facebook.com/PotsdamCoop | statigr.am/potsdamco_op

STAFF PICKS

See What Products in the Store the Staff are Loving this Quarter!



Erik L: GTS Pu-erh Root: "This sparkling probiotic cider has the taste of root beer with the system and immune benefits of reishi and turkey tail mushrooms. This great tasting drink has the added benefit of a billion probiotics!"



Alissa H: Gladrags Pantyliners: "I am all about sustainable menstrual products. They are safe for our bodies and good for our Earth!"



Jimmy G: Poor Devil Pepper Co.: "The Kali Curry is my favorite but all of them are good! I put it on everything!"



Laurie G: Gardein Skillet Meals: "So tasty and stupid easy to make! These vegetarian frozen meals are my go-to after a long day at work with no time to come up with a meal to make!"



Ryan M: AquaViTea Kombucha: "Every day I come into work and pour myself some of the Bluebernie kombucha! Made in Vermont and on tap, it's a great way to start my shift!"

Our Mission Statement

The Potsdam Consumer Cooperative, Inc. is owned and operated by its members and is dedicated to meeting the community's need for specialty and whole foods at the lowest possible cost. As a member of the local community interested in its well-being, we will attempt to use local sources whenever feasible.

We strive to provide a pleasant shopping experience and working environment, with an emphasis on education, shared information, and developing our relationship with the community. We encourage environmental respect through the goods we sell and in the manner in which we conduct our daily operations. We are committed to providing a model of responsible business practices based on the cooperative principles of open membership, democratic control, limited return on share capital or investments, return of surplus to members, continuous education, cooperation among cooperatives and concern for our local community.

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Store Hours
Daily 8:00am - 7:00pm
Except major holidays

The Co-op Accepts

- Cash
- Checks
- MasterCard/VISA
- EBT/SNAP
- Co-op Gift Cards
- Potsdam Chamber of Commerce Gift Certificates

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Allyssa Theobald | Cashier
Lea Wangerin | Carriage House
Dylan Ward | Carriage House

Co-op Community News is the official newsletter of the Potsdam Consumer Cooperative, Inc. in Potsdam, NY. It is published seasonally and serves as an open forum for the exchange of information and ideas between Co-op members. Articles appearing in this newsletter may be reprinted in other cooperative newsletters provided credit is given to Potsdam Co-op Community News and to the author of the article. We welcome submissions and comments from members and non-members. Submissions can be sent via e-mail to newsletter@potsdamcoop.com.

The Roots of Autumn

By Paula Youmell, RN

In the spring I wrote an article on edible wild foods, *Wildly Enhancing Cell Health with the Seasons*, to share some yummy and nutritious local, wild options. I am carrying this concept into fall foods.

Roots, edible and medicinal, are warming, nourishing medicine. Roots are wonderful fall food for when we start to turn our energy back inward in preparation for the winter season. There are many root veggies, and many varieties of each root veggie. I recommend you get familiar with them for cooking in soups, stews, stir fries, and roasting in the oven: beets, parsnip, turnip, rutabaga, celeriac, kohlrabi, Jerusalem artichoke, to name a few. I cannot forget our cultural favorite standbys of carrots and potatoes—both white and sweet potatoes. Root veggies are powerful nutrition for our bodies. When autumn rolls around, I encourage you to let go of the California imported spring and summer vegetables to embrace all varieties of locally grown and seasonal root veggies.

While many are familiar with autumn roots for food, there are a number of autumn roots that can also be used for medicinal purposes. Two favorite medicinal root herbs are dandelion and burdock.

Dandelion root is a bitter tonic. Bitter is a flavor that is not commonly eaten by modern folks. Bitters in dandelion activate the whole digestive tract, increase digestive juices and their flow in the digestive tract, rev up your digestion, support the elimination function of the intestines, and promote the flow of liver bile.

Dandelion roots can be eaten much like the roots of the burdock plant. The roots contain starchy reserves and calories for surviving the winters. Chop the roots and stir fry in toasted sesame oil and top off with a bit of amino acids or soy sauce. You may be pleasantly surprised with the bitter tang and your digestive tract will benefit.

Roasted dandelion root is considered a pleasant coffee substitute. I will be honest, roasted dandelion drink is just fine if that is what you're looking for. But, if you are looking for coffee, you'll be disappointed.

Burdock root is another fine bitter addition to the diet benefiting the digestive tract in the same manner as dandelion root. Burdock is used to strengthen di-

gestion and to relieve indigestion and gassiness.

Burdock root, known as gobo, is eaten in Japanese culture. If the outside is stripped off, the remaining root is tender, crunchy, and sweet. I prefer to leave the bitter outer layer of the root for its medicinal benefits in the digestive tract. Cook the roots the same ways you would cook dandelion root. Both roots can be added to soups, stews, stir fries, etc. Burdock root can also be eaten raw.

Another gift of both of these roots is their starchy fiber. This fiber helps to feed good gut bacteria and supports the restoration of healthy gut microbial balance. Your gut health is the seat of your whole body's health.

Burdock and dandelion roots have many traditional medicinal uses for clearing the body of infection, strengthening the female reproductive cycle, treating skin conditions such as acne, and helping to clear infection from the body. Both plant's roots have many more traditional uses. I recommend becoming familiar with the usefulness of these plants and add them into your eating and medicinal infusion habits.

MAKING HERBAL INFUSIONS WITH PLANT ROOTS (DECOCTION)

I recommend making infusions, not herbal teas. Herbal teas are when you steep the herbs for 3-5 minutes to enjoy the flavors of herbal plants. Medicinal infusions are when you steep the herbs for at least 3-4 hours, covered in a quart canning jar or in the pot. If you can, steep the infusion overnight. Long steeping allows more of the medicinal properties of the plant material to infuse into your final product. Strain the herbal infusion in the morning and reheat very gently to preserve the nutrients (do not boil), or simply enjoy at room temperature.

When making infusions with the hard parts of herbs (roots, bark, or seeds) use a minimum of 1 rounded tsp. per cup of water. I generally use closer to 1 TBSP. per cup of water.

- Chop root pieces as small as you can
- Bring 1 quart of water to boiling
- Reduce heat to very gentle simmer
- Add root pieces and cover the pot
- Simmer very gently for 15-20

minutes

- Turn off heat
- Let the infusion sit covered overnight to make a strong medicinal infusion
- Strain and bottle in the morning
- Reheat if you prefer to drink warm or hot. Do not let this medicinal decoction boil as it ruins the medicinal properties and nutrients in your herbal infused medicine.

MAKING INFUSIONS WITH LEAVES AND FLOWERS (SOFT PLANT PARTS)

- When making infusions with the soft parts of herbs (leaves, flowers) use approximately 1 tablespoon of dried herbs per cup of water. For a stronger infusion, use more.
- Boil water.
- Once the water reaches boiling, shut off the stove's heat.
- Add the premeasured, dried herbs.
- Cover and let steep for at least 30 minutes. Overnight is best.

COMBINATION HERBAL INFUSIONS WITH HARD PLANT PARTS & SOFT LEAVES / FLOWERS

If you are making mixed infusions with hard parts that need to simmer and the leaves & flowers that do not need simmering, simmer the hard parts first. Turn off heat and then add leaves/flowers. Then let the herbal medicine steep covered overnight. Strain in the morning.

A good combination with the dandelion and burdock root is stinging nettle dried leaves. This creates a cleansing and nourishing medicinal infusion.

Resource Books: (just a sampling, there are many good books)

- Peterson's Field Guides of Medicinal and Edible Wild Plants
- Edible Wild Plants A North American Field Guide, Outdoor Life Book
- Edible Wild Plants, John Kallas
- Indian Herbology of North America, Alma Hutchens
- The Encyclopedia of Edible Plants of North America, Francois Couplan
- The Wild Medicine Solution, Guido Mase
- Roots An Underground Botany and Forager's Guide, Douglas B. Elliot

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM UPDATE

The North Country Children's Museum in Potsdam is now open! Thanks to all of you who donated to the Museum in the Co-op's name at the Annual Meeting in February, and also thereafter at the registers in the store. Together we raised a total of \$423.70 as of June 30th!

As you know, one of the seven permanent installations in the Museum is "Kids Co-op." This interactive mini grocery store is complete with grocery carts, bulk bins, scale, cash register, and replica brick oven complete with a bakery peel. "Kids Co-op" gives us a great opportunity to advertise our store, as well as healthy eating, and the cooperative

business model. It will also help us to connect with more people in our local communities as well as those museum visitors from outside this area.

The North Country Children's Museum is also offering Summer Day Camps for 7 - 12 year olds. These are being held Monday to Friday from 9am - 3pm and offer kids two unique, fun-filled, hands-on educational camps to choose from. Both camps are held at the Museum in downtown Potsdam in the Red Barn at 10 Raymond Street.

Find out more about the NCCM at www.NorthCountryChildrens-Museum.org and at facebook. [com/NCChildrensMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/NCChildrensMuseum).



Join the Outreach Committee

By Kayla French

In July, the chairs of the marketing committee, membership committee, and newsletter committee, along with Laura Cordts, Board President, and Lee VandeWater, new GM, met to discuss the role these committees have been playing for the Co-op, and the direction we may want to go in the future.

This meeting was held because

we realized there is much overlap in these committees. The newsletter is not a separate entity from marketing, though it is not entirely a marketing tool, for example.

At that meeting we decided to create an umbrella committee called 'Outreach.' This committee will house sub-committees of marketing, membership, and education (which will be the resting place for the newsletter). Outreach will work to, as the name

implies, reach out to the community to educate on food issues and cooperative principles, bring in new membership, and retain and engage current membership.

Outreach will meet monthly (or as needed, as determined by the chair) to discuss big-picture vision. At those meetings it will be determined which sub-committees (or members of those sub-committees) should be working independently or in

conjunction with each other on specific projects- events or new educational signage for example- in the interim between meetings. Sub committees can meet on an as-needed basis, or as determined by the sub-committee chair. The point-of-contact for the outreach committee as a whole will be Lee VandeWater. This will be a management committee as opposed to a board committee.

Some things that may fall under the outreach committee's responsibility will be: educational materials; events; newsletter;

blog; membership drives; in-store visuals; press-releases; emails; social media; etc.

If you have a skill set that would benefit the Co-op in the areas of education, marketing, or membership, or have an interest in the types of projects the outreach committee will be working on, consider joining the committee! Check the Co-op's Google calendar for our next meeting or talk to Lee in the store and he'll get you set up with the next meeting date.

Symposium Highlights NNY Cooperatives

By Doug Welch

The 2018 North Country Symposium, entitled *Owning Our Future in the North Country*, was held on April 16 at St. Lawrence University in Canton. The annual event is in its 16th year and its themes are usually related to economic development, education, or the environment. Financial support for the North Country Symposium is made possible through the Ellen C. Burt Endowment for North Country Education. This year the symposium highlighted the role cooperatives can play in advancing economic development in Northern New York.

Keynote speaker Doug O'Brien, President and CEO of the National Cooperative Business Association, provided background and history of

cooperatives while also sharing relevant information about cooperatives and ESOPs (Employee Stock Owned Programs) in the North Country. Kinney Drugs and Stewart's Shops, both with a significant presence in the North Country, are employee owned. Stewart's is currently about forty percent employee owned and is looking to increase this percentage. Unlike publicly traded companies that strive to keep shareholders happy, employee-owned companies focus on their customers and the well being of workers.

Cooperatives can create new businesses and jobs through the pooling of resources and skills. The models of cooperatives or employee ownership could also keep a business from closing because a buyer could not otherwise

be found or the current owner wishes to retire.

Currently, there are approximately fifty cooperatives in the seven counties of the North Country Regional Economic Development Council. The most common and familiar cooperatives to Northern New York residents are large dairy cooperatives and our numerous credit unions. Dairy cooperatives enable farmers to navigate the vagaries of the regional and national milk markets. Credit unions are particularly focused on the serving the needs of local communities and their residents. In addition, credit unions often provide small communities or employee groups with financial services that might not otherwise be available. One of the more surprising cooperatives is Best Western hotels which includes

several locations in Northern New York.

There are other cooperatives in the region that play important roles in community life. For example, our own Potsdam Food Cooperative and North Country Food Cooperative in Plattsburgh are long term fixtures in their respective communities.

Cooperatives can also empower people or create opportunities. The Adirondack Artists Guild in Saranac Lake is twenty years old and has fifteen artist members. By forming a cooperative they have been able to have a gallery that would be hard to afford individually. Here in St. Lawrence County, the smaller gallery at Lake St. Lawrence in Waddington, with a half dozen members, is also a cooperative. In Beekmantown, near Lake Champlain, fifty-five mobile

home-owners faced a crisis when the owner decided to close the mobile home park where they lived. Instead, they are working on forming a cooperative that will empower them to move from a crisis to keeping and owning their homes. Other cooperatives such as Black River Co-op Preschool and Saranac Cooperative Nursery School in Dannemora meet social needs that are not always addressed in other ways and benefit working families in the region.

More information about this year's North Country Symposium, including a video-recording of the proceedings and slides of Mr. O'Brien's keynote presentation can be found at the Symposium's web page: <https://www.stlawu.edu/north-country-symposium>

GET TO KNOW BOARD MEMBER: Jessica Diagostino

Describe Yourself in 25 words or fewer:

My name is Jessica. I am 31 years old, married, and have a daughter named Lillian. I love to read and watch movies and travel!

What are some of your favorite products at the Co-op?

During the summer the Co-op carries an ancho rubbed pork chop from The Piggery in Ithaca and I am OBSESSED with it! I even get some to stock up on for the winter months. But everytime I visit the Co-op I have to pick up a loaf of the katamala and rosemary flatbread or a scone (the cheese is my favorite) and a pack of dried mango. It is so sweet you would think it was candy!

What is the food culture like in your home? ex) do you cook, bake, garden, entertain?

My husband and I met in culinary school when we were both studying baking and pastry so there is a lot of baking and cooking going on! My husband usually does the cooking during the week though - he is the creative one but I am always in charge of the large Hanukkah and Passover meals each year. We have tried multiple times to have a small herb garden or to grow strawberries but it hasn't gone well!

What food culture do you come from, and how have your food habits evolved to include the Co-op?

My mother, while I was growing up, was always a very good cook and introduced me to a lot of different food. By 6 I was eating lobster and sushi and I loved it! We traveled a lot as a family and eating the local cuisine was

always a big part of those trips as well. So when I moved up to the North Country 5 years ago I was desperate to find a place that had some "not normal" foods but also foods that were local and fresh and I was so excited to find the Potsdam Co-op. I love trying the new things that come in.

What are some of the other ways you're involved in your community?

I am also a volunteer and shareholder of the North Country Showcase store in Massena which supports local artists and manufacturers. It carries only products built or produced in the seven county North Country region. I also run the store's blog. They always have fun classes and events going on and I have met some really amazing people there (as well as here at the Co-op!)

Join the Board of Directors!

By Erica LaFountain, Governance Committee chair, and Board Vice President

As a member-owner, you own the Co-op and can shape it by voting, and making suggestions, but if you want to be more engaged, if you have special skills, a unique perspective, or a long history with the Co-op, please consider running for a seat on the Board of Directors. In particular, we are seeking nominees with skills in outreach, marketing, and finance.

Board members are chosen by the membership of the Co-op to represent them in establishing and overseeing policy, and directing the vision of the Co-op. The store operations are the purview of the General Manager and staff, while the Board supports, advises, and oversees the General Manager as needed.

Board members qualifications:

- You must be (or become) a member-owner of the Potsdam Food Co-op.
- You must be able to fill the

Board expectations as outlined below

Board member expectations:

- Prepare for and attend monthly meetings as well as an annual retreat. Regular meetings are currently the 3rd Tuesday at 6pm above the Carriage House Bakery.
- Serve on a committee.
- Represent the Board at Co-op events.
- Terms are 3 years, and members can serve 2 terms consecutively.

Board member benefits:

- Receive a 15% discount on store purchases, with Board officers earning a 20% discount.

Lastly, the Board strives to create an environment of respect, positivity, and productivity. It is a big responsibility, but it is fun, interesting, and engaging. Board meetings are open to all member-owners. Feel free to attend one to get a feel for it.

If you are interested in running for a seat on the Board, please email Erica at Erica.LaFountain@gmail.com. Board members are chosen at the Annual Meeting in February.

Become a Member-Owner



Join the Co-op!

2% discount for all member-owners. Working one hour per adult in your household will earn your household a 10% discount for a month. Core workers work three hours per week to earn a 20% discount. Interested? Call (315) 265-4630.

Cornucopia De-Codes Egg Labels

Originally published July 11, 2018 at Cornucopia.org

Egg cartons are increasingly cluttered with third-party certification claims and a myriad of potentially misleading statements. Some of these are meaningful to egg buyers, and some of them are nothing more than marketing gimmicks.

The USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is the agency responsible for ensuring the truthfulness and accuracy in labeling of poultry products. You can find their explanations for labeling terms on their website. However, many successful lawsuits claiming misrepresentation and consumer fraud illustrate that the FSIS is not really on guard.

Cornucopia has de-coded the

labels below to help you find the best eggs for your family.

All Natural: This label is entirely meaningless. The hens can be housed in battery cages with each bird allowed floor space less than the size of a standard sheet of copy paper. The hens are generally fed GMO corn and feed which may include animal byproducts, and they may be packed into giant industrial barns housing over a million birds. This is how the vast majority of laying hens are raised in the U.S. These horrendous conditions produce a very cheap egg in the market. Cornucopia notes that you get what you pay for in terms of flavor, nutrition, environmental impact, and quality of life for both birds and farmers.

Cage-Free: This label means there are no battery cages and the

hens have an average of one to 1.2 square foot of space per bird. They are likely eating the same low-quality feed noted above, but they are able to perch, spread their wings, and walk around a bit more than if caged. This still leaves them more vulnerable to being injured or even pecked to death by other hens, and the air quality in these massive buildings is miserable. They spend their entire short lives indoors. Some of these operations have "floor birds" while others use aviary systems with multiple tiers, packing birds in every possible square foot, wall-to-wall, floor-to-ceiling.

No Antibiotics: A percentage of laying hens do receive antibiotics, but it is less common than in other areas of livestock production (like beef). A limited number



of FDA-approved antibiotics are available for egg farms, provided they comply with FDA guidelines. Eggs can only be labeled as antibiotic-free if egg farmers choose not to use any antibiotics in feed or water as the pullets (young hens) are growing or when hens are laying eggs. (Certified organic eggs are always antibiotic-free.)

Free-Range: This label guarantees the hens are "cage-free" and theoretically have some form of outdoor access. However, a "free range" label does not require a specific stocking density, guarantee frequency or duration of outdoor access, or determine what kind of outdoor access is actually provided ...*Continued on page 7*

Business Partners

These locally owned businesses have generously agreed to grant the following offers to Co-op members. Present your current Membership Card when asking for the discount. One time offers will be checked off when used.

Food

 <p>LITTLE ITALY RESTAURANT & PIZZERIA</p>	<p>30 Market Street, Potsdam \$1.00 off any large pizza</p>	 <p>St. Lawrence Valley Roasters Jernabi Coffeehouse</p>	<p>11 A Maple St, Potsdam 10% off brewed coffee</p>	 <p>FIRST CRUSH LOVINGLY BAKED • WINE BLENDED</p>	<p>32 Market St, Potsdam 10% off 7am-2pm Monday to Friday</p>	 <p>3 Bears Gluten Free Bakery & More (Potsdam)</p>	<p>For each \$10 purchase you will be entered into a drawing to win their featured dessert of the month</p>	 <p>Purple Rice 20 Elm St #105, Potsdam</p>	<p>\$2 off one lunch special (one time offer)</p>
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Retail

 <p>MAPLE RUN EMPORIUM MapleRunEmporium.com</p>	<p>49 Market St, Potsdam 10% Off All Maple Run Emporium brand merchandise</p>	<p>Seaway Cash Register & Typewriter 14 Bray Road, Norwood</p>	<p>5% off on machines, services, and supplies</p>	<p>The UPS Store </p> <p>200 Market Street • Potsdam, NY 13676 (315) 265-4545 • store5986@theupsstore.com</p>	<p>10 free B&W, self service copies, daily</p>	 <p>5% OFF Folkstore purchases for Co-op member-owners (other discounts also apply)</p> <p>NORTH COUNTRY FOLKSTORE 53 Main Street, Downtown Canton 315-386-4289 • tauny.org • M-F 10-5, S 10-4</p>
 <p>Farmhouse Forge James Gonzalez, blacksmith 315-566-1130 10% off www.FarmhouseForge.com</p>	<p>Downtown Sports & Toys (formerly The Cornerstore) 75 Market St, Ste 100, Potsdam</p>	<p>10% off with a purchase of \$25.00 or more</p>	<p>The Computer Guys 4 Clarkson Avenue, Potsdam / 2564 State Highway 68, Canton</p>	<p>10% off on all in stock items at both locations</p>	 <p>Friends of the Potsdam Public Library 10% discount at the regular Saturday 10-1 sale in the library basement</p>	
<p>St Lawrence Nurseries 325 Route 345, Potsdam</p>	<p>10% off regularly priced plant stock</p>	 <p>BRICK & MORTAR MUSIC</p>	<p>15 Market St, Potsdam 10% off sheet music and accessories</p>	<h2>Featured Business</h2>		

Home Services

 <p>ALPINEFOAM INSULATION</p>	<p>Alpine Foam Insulation 315-262-6544 5% off residential foam insulation job</p>	 <p>RENEW ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN REBECCA N. WILD, ARCHITECT rebecca@renewarchitecture.com 5% discount on residential architectural services</p>
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Body Shop Fitness and Salon
in Potsdam offers a safe & clean co-ed fitness center, with machines to fit your fitness needs.

Additionally, they have free weights, squat racks, resistance bands, and ropes; everything you need for full body conditioning. Fitness classes are available weekdays. Check their facebook page or North Country Now for class listings, or call for more information: 315-262-0482. **Co-op members receive 10% off membership.**

Health/Beauty

 <p>Body Shop Fitness & Salon, Inc. 47 State Highway 915 Potsdam, NY 13676 315.262.0482 www.bodyshopfitnessand salon.com</p>	<p>10% off Fitness Center Membership</p>	 <p>The Yoga Loft North Country Center for Yoga and Health 17 Main Street, Canton NY</p>	<p>One time \$5 discount for any drop-in class</p>	 <p>ALCHEMISTRESS 17 Maple Street, Potsdam, NY</p>	<p>10% off body art (excluding specials)</p>	<p>Alexander Technique Lessons and Workshops (Beth Robinson) (315) 212-0562 73 Leroy Street, Potsdam</p>	<p>10% off first lesson</p>
<p>Chiropractic Office of Dr. Jamie Towle & Dr. Lisa Francey Towle 16 Park Street, Canton / 3276 State Route 11, Malone</p>	<p>10% off chiropractic services at both locations</p>	 <p>10% discount ACUPUNCTURE by Design</p>	<p>Two locations: 143 Market Street & 25 Market Street, Potsdam</p>	<p>Colton Massage Therapy, Catherine A. Klein, BA, LMT 4808 State Highway 56, Colton</p>	<p>\$10 off first massage or gift voucher</p>	<p>Knead of Life Helen M. Kenny, NYS LMT Hannawa Falls</p>	<p>\$5 discount on first session</p>
<p>Jazzercise 22 Depot St/PO Box 624 Potsdam</p>	<p>1 complimentary class to new customers (may not be combined with other offers)</p>	<p>Back in Motion Family and Sports Chiropractic 17 Leroy Street, Potsdam</p>	<p>15% off initial visit for those without insurance</p>	<p>Potsdam Center for Innovative Dental Technologies, Aaron Acres, DMD 83 Market Street, Potsdam</p>	<p>10% discount</p>	 <p>315-265-0961 PO Box 115 Hannawa Falls, 13647</p>	<p>10% discount on initial consult</p>

Entertainment

 <p>CPS Community Performance Series Presenting excellence in the performing arts at SUNY Potsdam since 1980</p>	<p>15% off regularly priced tickets at the box office (some restrictions may apply).</p>	 <p>SLC ARTS</p>	<p>St Lawrence County Arts Council</p> <p>1 time SLC Arts member rate discount on a community arts class</p>	 <p>The Orchestra of Northern New York</p>	<p>Orchestra of NNY 315-267-3251</p> <p>15% off regular priced tickets</p>
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...HERSHBERGER

Our current laying flock will be slaughtered in the fall for meat. We start a new flock each spring from chicks, they start laying in the fall and we slaughter them a year later before they enter their molting period.

Erica: Do you believe that eggs produced organically are more healthy for consumers, or just for the land, and the birds?

Jacob: Definitely. The yolks are bright yellow, and that tells you.

Erica: Do you find certified-organic standards appropriate, or onerous and a nuisance to adhere to?

Are there ways in which you go beyond organic standards?

Jacob: I actually think the organic rules should be tightened up. For example, there are a lot of big chicken houses that have gone up between here and Chazy in recent years. They are Certified Organic, but I don't know how there can be thousands of birds in one barn and have enough room for grazing. So I think the rules are too lax. When I made my coop I was surprised to find there were no guidelines about how much indoor and outdoor space to provide. I merely submitted my own plans and they approved them. Big operations like that undercut all the smaller producers.

Erica: How long has your egg operation been certified organic?

Jacob: Since October 2017. I worked about a year to get that together. I had one hang-up that pertained to tracking the eggs, and Eric Jesner [the former GM at PFC] was able to help by calling the certifier, Pro-Cert, in Canada. They helped us come up with a solution that suited our small operation: we write the date on the egg cartons, rather than a lot number.

Erica: Do you consider the North Country a good place to farm, or do you think the long, harsh winters and the local economy make it marginal compared to other areas of the country?

Jacob: It's a good place for dairy. I love living here. We usually don't get the hot weather and humidity of Ohio, though this



year is an exception. Land prices are what brought us here. The Amish settlement I'm in started a year before we came and we were family number 10. I wasn't the first to buy, but I was looking at this area along with Moses Yoder's dad, Johnathan, even before any others moved here. Between the land prices and the soils, it was a good place to settle.

A Note from Erica: This is the last of four local producer features that I've written over the past year. The reason behind them, aside from sheer curiosity, is that without background information, customers are left to just compare prices on the shelves. Once we have a picture of the farmer and the practices behind the product on the shelf, the price is no longer the only factor. I hope these interviews of Mosie Keim, Daniel Martin, Moses Yoder, and Jacob Hershberger have given you some insight into the families behind your food, and encourage you to purchase their products in the store. I, for one, was deeply impressed by their knowledge, commitment, and practices.

Please feel free to pick up where I've left off and do your own producer interviews! Contact newsletter@potsdamcoop.com if you're interested.

CBD Products at our Co-op

By Alissa Haller

Some of you may have noticed that our store brought in CBD (cannabidiol- a medicinal derivative of cannabis) products this year. It started when we were contacted by a rep who had a line of CBD lotions. As a buyer, I try to think of what products our customers would want while also considering quality and price point. As I sat down with the rep and he spoke about the science and in depth details, I only had two questions: (1) is it pot? and (2) does it actually work?

He offered me a small jar of the lotion and I put it on my neck since I had slept wrong that night and had a lot of pain. As he spoke about the different products, I didn't get any tingling sensation one might get from Icy Hot. I kind of forgot I even put it on until he asked, "So, how is your neck?"

It worked so well! I was shocked. He was also able to explain the process of what makes CBD different from marijuana. Since both come from the hemp plant, it is easy to see where the

confusion comes from.

CBD is derived from hemp and has only trace amounts of THC (tetrahydrocannabinol is the psychoactive substance that would produce a high) whereas a typical medical marijuana product has higher concentrations of THC. In New York State, CBD has to have under a certain percentage of THC to be considered legal and all the CBD products on our shelves meet that standard. So, no, our lotions, gel caps, and oils won't get you high.

Legally, CBD must be extracted from the root, stem, or seed of hemp-not the leaves.

The main reasons people take CBD is for its remarkable painkilling effect. I just started taking it for anxiety and I have been happily surprised with its effects! Of course, these are just my own personal experiences and you can find a lot of information about CBD online. Many compa-



nies claim that there are no side effects and that it can assist in many different areas of wellbeing. All of this information, of course, should be taken cautiously and one should always speak to their doctor before taking any new product.

In our store we currently carry Procana and Green Earth Medicinals and each company has informational pamphlets. Green Earth Medicinals also offers free consultations when you call their number.

IRON FOR PREGNANCY AND POSTPARTUM

By Mary Michalek, New Day Doula

Iron plays a crucial role in keeping you and your baby healthy. Every time you breathe, oxygen travels to all the cells in your body. If you are pregnant, the oxygen also travels to the human inside of you. In order to transport that oxygen, your body relies on hemoglobins in your red blood cells. What helps you produce enough hemoglobins? Iron. This important mineral has a very big job to fill in making sure you and your baby are safe and thriving. Additionally, when you're pregnant, your body produces extra blood so that there is enough for the baby as well as you. That means you need even more iron.

According to the World Health Organization, "Iron deficiency is

one of the most common forms of nutritional deficiencies, particularly among vulnerable groups such as women, children, and low-income populations." Women who are pregnant or recently gave birth are even more vulnerable.

During the postpartum period, your body also requires additional iron. After all, your body not only just went through a huge ordeal with the whole birthing process, you also lost a good deal of blood and an entire organ - the placenta. Women's bodies will continue to bleed several days to weeks after birth. It is a really good idea to continue consuming extra iron during this period.

So, okay, you need iron. Now how do you get it? You can always take iron supplements if you suspect you are deficient. However, they often cause constipation,

which is also not fun. The brands Flora, Garden of Life, and Solgar contain non-binding natural iron. Some of these can be found at the Co-op

You can also increase your iron through dietary choices. Interestingly enough, there are two forms of iron - heme and non-heme. Heme includes animal-based sources of iron, such as lean beef, turkey, chicken, lean pork, and fish. If you eat meat, the Co-op supplies many frozen local meats to choose from. Non-heme includes plant-based sources of iron. Some non-meat options that are high in iron are legumes, dark leafy greens, whole grains, pumpkin seeds, and dried fruits. All of these are also easily found at our Co-op.

Help your body out and eat some high-iron foods today!

Everything You Wanted to Know about Vanilla (But Didn't Have Time to Ask)

By Alissa Haller

This information was compiled from one of our regional spice suppliers from Mike's Spice Enterprise in Amherst, NY.

As most of you well know, the price of Vanilla (in all forms) has greatly fluctuated in recent years. There have even been period where vanilla beans were unavailable and prices skyrocketed. I thought it would be interesting to share this information since labels can be confusing and it is hard to discern what "natural" and "pure" mean. While going through my supplier files, I found this document from 2005. It was written by Mike Zarchan who supplies some of our bulk spices and teas:

"In 2005, the Vanilla Bean market has been gutted by large crops of beans from a variety of countries, dropping the price dramatically. Due to these devel-

opments, it is important for you to know what to look for when you are buying vanilla from your supplier.

Pure: This is a legal designation that can only be added to a Vanilla Extract or Flavor that has a Vanilla Bean content of at least 13.35 ounces per gallon and whose only Vanillin source is the vanilla bean. If that vanilla you are buying does not say PURE on the front label, you have no guarantee of any level of Vanilla Bean content in the product. The flavor of vanilla comes from vanillin which occurs naturally in other natural products such as cloves. In imitation vanilla, it can be synthetically extracted from lignin (wood pulp). The quality of Vanilla Bean determines the flavor of the finished product.

Natural Vanilla: This term applies to Vanilla Extract or Flavor that does not warrant the



term PURE due to a lower vanilla bean content than the legal minimum but uses all natural products. As there are no standards for Natural Vanilla, the strength and flavor of the vanilla will vary greatly from one manufacturer to another. This was the most commonly sold vanilla product on the market in 2004.

Vanilla Extract: This term means the base of the vanilla product is alcohol. A 35% alcohol solution is required for PURE Vanilla Extract. The term extract

has nothing to do with the PURE designation.

Organic: This classification has nothing to do with Pure Vanilla but guarantees the vanilla beans have not been treated with pesticides. Many vanilla plantations do not treat their crops with pesticides but do not apply for the ORGANIC classification (which can be quite costly). Organic Vanilla Extract can have a very small amount of Vanilla Beans in relation to Pure Vanilla Extract since it does not legally qualify for the legal designation of PURE. Vanilla is not PURE unless it says PURE prominently next to vanilla on the front label. The ingredients list on the vanilla bottle has nothing to do with the legal PURE classification.

Pure Vanilla Natural Flavor: This designation has the same legal requirements as Pure Vanilla Extract except the base used is Glycerin instead of alcohol. Glycerin products tend to be less volatile than alcohol and are safer to store and transport."

...**EGG LABELS** to the birds. As Cornucopia has noted before (read our report, Scrambled Eggs), the USDA has agreed that screened porches, sometimes with concrete floors, may constitute “outdoor access.” And even when outdoor space is offered, after birds have been confined for the first 20 or more weeks of their lives, they oftentimes have no interest in going outside where there is no food, water, or shade.

Large barns may have only a few pop-holes for birds to venture out. Sometimes the circulating fans in the barns can cause gale-force winds blasting through the openings, discouraging most birds from venturing outdoors. And some common door designs deprive birds of seeing the open sky. Instinctively scared of aviary predators, they won’t venture out. The vast majority of free-range birds in commercial egg facilities never actually go outside. The term “free-range” is not subject to USDA oversight, so there is a lot of room for marketing interpretation with this label.

Vegetarian Diet: This likely means that the chickens are fed a grain-and-soy based diet only—their feed does not include animal byproducts. This label was popularized due to fear that disease would be spread by chickens consuming animal by-products. Unfortunately, it also means the hens, who are actually omnivorous, have no access to the animal protein from insects, worms, and other small animals they would eat if allowed outdoors. This diet

requires the supplemental feeding of the synthetic amino acid methionine.

Omega-3: This means the hens’ feed has been fortified with omega-3s, likely from a small amount of flaxseed. If a hen is allowed to forage in well-maintained outdoor environments, their eggs are often higher in omega-3s without supplementation due to their more natural diets.

Organic: The USDA organic label means the hens must have outdoor access, cannot be caged, eat exclusively certified organic feed (meaning no feed grown with pesticides, herbicides, and chemical fertilizers), and are not given antibiotics.

Still, the USDA has allowed producers to use screened porches in place of true outdoor access. And many “organic” laying houses are massive, containing as many as 200,000 birds.

Pasture-Raised: The term “pasture-raised” is not regulated by any government body, aside from basic laws preventing labels misleading consumers. For example, a chicken producer who lets their broilers out onto grass only a few hours a week may be able to label their product pasture-raised.

Since there is no set standard for this term, and it raises bucolic visions of chickens and turkeys pecking at insects and eating free-growing vegetation, this term can be extremely misleading.

However, some producers that “pasture-raise” their hens represent the gold standard of egg production. These producers only

confine their hens at night and during inclement weather—rotating their mobile chicken coops out in the pasture. They are otherwise free to wander outdoors and into the coops at will. Pasture-raised operations vary widely.

Depending on the pasture quality, the hens may forage insects and worms to supplement their diet. Joel Salatin, who literally wrote the book on pastured poultry, says that even with best practices, 85% of what the birds eat during the summer is stored grain. In the winter, stored grain might be 100% of their feed.

Even in pastured poultry, the feed quality is very important. Cornucopia recommends eating eggs from organic, pasture-raised hens. The gold standard in egg production is when hens live in mobile housing on well-managed and ample pasture, including cover from shelters, bushes, and trees. We refer to this management model in our scorecard (a cut above the standard organic egg) as “enhanced outdoor access.”

So it’s very important that the hens laying your eggs are eating certified organic grain. “Local” pastured eggs might give the chickens a nice life, but if they are feeding conventional feed, most of what the birds are consuming is contaminated with toxic agricultural chemicals.

Some large companies are marketing eggs as “pastured” when they are housed in fixed barns surrounded by abundant green space. However, the birds don’t go out in the same numbers or have the

same quality of feed as when they are rotated in the field.

Humanely Raised and/or Humanely Handled: This is not a defined term, so any claim that the final packaged product is “humane” in any way should be accompanied by an explanation of what that term means. The USDA has approved third-party certification programs making “humane” claims, including Animal Welfare Approved, Certified Humane, and American Humane Certified.

Animal Welfare Labels: Although the organic standards include some limited animal welfare considerations, they are not currently being enforced as many consumers expect. Further, many third-party animal welfare labels amount to little more than marketing gimmicks. For instance, Certified Humane has no outdoor access requirements, no limit on size of flock, and allows beak trimming. At this time, the animal welfare certifier with the strictest standards is Animal Welfare Approved.

Third-party animal welfare labels are free to change their standards (if they have any) whenever they like, and their inspection process may not even include viewing the farm in question. When choosing a third-party animal welfare label, it’s important to choose one that is transparent about their standards (you should easily be able to find the exact language on their website) and how a producer can obtain their label.

Pathway to Good Food

By Michael Greer of the Buildings and Grounds Committee

Twenty five years ago a few of our members donated their precious time and even more precious sandstone slabs to the Co-op so that we could create the authentic look around our quaint little store. The parking lots, gardens, walkways, and even the big trees went in at that time and we had a dream of a green, welcoming space to entertain the eye and calm the spirit. Those flowers and trees have fared pretty well, but our front walkway needs some attention. A few of the stone slabs have deteriorated, and will need replacing. We’re looking for a few old side-walk slabs to cover an area 48” by 76”, preferably in just two pieces. If you have a stash that you’ve been saving for just the right special project, this may be the one. Contact Michael Greer at 315-528-7507, or speak to Lee at the store.

Excerpts from “Shattering Meaningless Food Categories”

By Bill Schindler, Ph.D.
Director of Eastern Shore Food Lab and Associate Professor of Anthropology, Washington College
www.ancestralinsight.com
@drbillschindler

[...] I believe there is no better way to begin and support a much-needed food revolution that results in genuine and lasting changes on human diet, health, and sustainability than for us to engage in meaningful discourse over important food related issues... [We] have the power to change [our food system], but first we need to be able to truly talk about food. Unfortunately, the forces that have worked to separate us from our food, where it comes from, and how it is made have also, in the process, blurred the lines between real food and the highly processed foods that superficially look the same and bear the same names. This creates a barrier that prevents dialogue from reaching the critical point.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to serious conversations about food, and as a result the one we should address first if we want to create real, meaningful change in food, diet, health and sustainability, is the way we categorize food. Categories are extremely powerful forces [...] Over time, the way the world is categorized shapes the way we, and subsequent generations, view it. The creation of the food categories we use today, ones that we all take

for granted and regularly use, was only possible because we have been so incredibly distanced from our food over the past several generations. Relying on these categories during our discussions of food actually prevents us from engaging in a meaningful conversation.

Take for instance even the most basic food categories such as bread, meat, [...] and butter. We automatically default and rely upon food categories like these as the basis for almost all conversations about food - even those conversations that would be considered deep and meaningful. We use them as if everything that comprises each category is equivalent to one another in some way when in reality, the differences are so dramatic in terms of nutritional and cultural-historical value, impacts on human and environmental health, ethical dilemmas, and economic impacts that they have no business being lumped together in the same categories at all!

For instance, we are so focused on “gluten” that we lump together under the same “bread” label, the most highly processed, big box, supermarket sandwich bread containing over 30 ingredients that, thanks to modern science has gone from raw ingredients to finished loaf in less than an hour with a hand built, slow fermented sourdough loaf of bread containing nothing more than flour, water and salt and relying on wild yeasts and bacteria along with time honored traditions of

controlling time, temperature and humidity by skilled artisans over several days. How can we call both of these vastly different products, bread?

We lump together meats as if there is common ground between factory-raised beef and wild hunted venison in discussions concerning nutritional values, ethics, and sustainability of eating meat. [...] We can engage in the same mental exercises with butter comparing the virtues of pasteurized sweet cream butter made from the cream of grain fed cows with those of raw, cultured butter made from the cream of grass fed cows so full of active microflora that it rivals even the healthiest of yogurts. The differences here are not meaningless “foodie” nuances as the food industry would have you believe. I would argue they have real meaning and they are important! [...]

The system that has worked so long and hard to separate us from our food, knowledge about food, and skills to transform raw materials into food, can only survive if we continue to be content with letting other people tell us how to eat and continue to ignorantly rely upon the system to produce and process our food for us.

We need to take control back and we can do that by re-learning how to obtain, produce and process our own food. This does not mean we all need to become full-time foragers, hunters, and farmers to support our families or cook, ferment and cure every

single thing we eat entirely from scratch all the time, for the rest of our lives. No, what we need to do is much more realistic and accessible than that.

I am advocating that each and every one of you take a soul-authored food challenge. Select one thing that you absolutely love to eat. Learn everything you possibly can about it. Then gather, all of the basic ingredients required and transform those ingredients in your kitchen into the final product - entirely 100% from scratch, yourself. The final and, perhaps most meaningful step, is to share your masterpiece with the ones you love, and to talk about everything you learned throughout the journey.

Perhaps you could create a sourdough mother from scratch, grind grain into flour, ferment, and bake a hand built loaf of sourdough bread. Or, purchase raw milk directly from a dairy farm, allow the cream to separate and skim, ferment the cream, and churn into cultured butter. Or, purchase a chicken from a local farmer, butcher it, and engage in a full nose-to-tail experience with it whereby you use each and every single part of the bird - make liver pate, cook the heart, roast the chicken, make bone broth from the carcass, skim the fat and cook with the resulting schmaltz.

If vegetables are more your style, take a foraging class and gather, directly from your local environment, everything you need to make an entirely wild salad and

make the dressing from scratch. Grow, gather, blanch and peel tomatoes, cook the liquid down to a paste, add spices and natural sweeteners and make a traditional, probiotic-rich, lacto-fermented ketchup.

The experience you author can be as complicated or as simple as you want to make it. It may take a day, a week or even a month to complete depending on your particular journey. [...] It is the only way to truly understand the food; the processes involved with obtaining and processing it; the dietary, ethical and environmental implications for eating it; how different iterations of it can vary; and ultimately make your own informed decisions as you navigate the very confusing world of food and human diet.

[...] At a bare minimum the very act of engaging with your food at this intense, visceral and sensory level, even just once, helps to shatter meaningless food categories and provides the necessary context within which we engage in real meaningful conversations about food, make informed decisions about how to feed ourselves and our families and, perhaps most powerfully on a global scale, also makes us informed consumers.

Keep an eye out for Bill Schindler’s upcoming book. Check out his website and blog at www.foodevolutions.org

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Community News

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