

Mystery Meat No More

Straight from the Source, Pasture Raised Meats at the Co-op

By Matthew Stanley

Christine Deck greets us with a friendly smile as a rooster sends his crow echoing across the sunlit valley. It is a warm and dry Sunday afternoon in the Willamette Valley just outside Junction City, a perfect day for a tour of the Deck family farm. We've made the trip to pick up some of the farm's pasture raised meat, specifically the raw milk fed pork and some grass fed ground beef to supplement the Co-op's Meadow Harvest supply. It has been a while since the Co-op has carried any locally raised pork. We now sell the Decks' boneless pork chops; stir fry pork; nitrate free, uncured bacon; ground pork; and four kinds of fresh pork sausage.

Back on the farm, Christine takes us to the barn shed where two-week old lambs are curling up in the sun. They have to be in the shed this young or the herd may abandon them in the pasture. Across the shed Christine shows us a pregnant sow, days away from giving birth to a litter of heritage breed piglets. Heritage breeds,



Christine explains, are endangered or threatened species, mainly the result of the mono-culture production of Big Pork's cross between Duroc, Hampshire, and Yorkshire breeds, the perfect mix to withstand ultra-intensive husbandry. I couldn't help but think it seemed unethical

to be eating an endangered pig breed, but Christine offered that buying and consuming these unique varieties helps to create a market for them, thereby ensuring the breed's preservation.

Standing there, watching the hay dust

Continues on page 6

Seeds of Change

By Merianne Myers, Board Chair

It's Spring! We are now officially in the season that begs us to plant something weeks before we should be planting something. If it weren't so inspirational, it would be frustrating. The Board of Directors at the Co-op is cultivating a brand new idea in honor of the occasion. We think, with a little dedication and a lot of organic compost, it could become one of the prize

perennials in our community gardens.

This summer we will be sponsoring three community garden plots; 1 each in Astoria, Warrenton and Seaside. The hope is that we can identify a few families who could use some help in accessing healthy, homegrown food but might not have the resources to find it on their own. We will be providing seed, soil amendments, expertise from

Continues on page 4





Taking the Co-op Challenge

By Matthew Stanley, General Manager

1355 Exchange Street
Astoria, OR 97103

ph 503.325.0027
fax 503.325.7797
www.astoriacoop.org
store@astoriacoop.org

Hours of Operation

Mon–Sat 9–7pm
Sunday 11–5pm

Board of Directors

President: Merianne Myers
Vice President: Tom Duncan
Ute Swerdloff
Karin Temple
Mindy Stokes

Management & Staff

Matthew Stanley, General Manager
Maren Ludwig
Dale Flowers
Judith Griffis
Nels Olson
Mick Mitchell
Kendall McEuen
Mary Becksworth
David Plechl
Bee Eirth
Tony Giglio
Lindsay Frech
Misty O'Brien
Jennifer Rigley
Sarah Jaroszewski

The Seven Cooperative Principles

1. Voluntary and open membership
2. Democratic governance
3. Economic participation by owners
4. Autonomy and independence
5. Education and training
6. Cooperation among cooperatives
7. Concern for the community

Want to Help the Co-op?

For volunteer opportunities, call
503.325.0027.

Your local cooperative grocery store continues to experience growth, new memberships, and increasing recognition as an inviting, friendly, and healthy place to shop. It is easy to forget that we own the beautiful store on the corner of 14th and Exchange Streets.

How fun to think of ourselves as grocery store owners! We don't own just any old grocery market, but one that strives to provide its community and region with fresh organic produce and unique local goods. We represent a genuine intent to carry only those products that are safe and healthy for our families.

Folks in high places have not missed the impact, both economic and social, of cooperative enterprise. USDA funded research shows that the cooperative model, used in a vast array of industries and public works operations, aligns with the values of the majority of Americans. Our 3,000 square foot store is your business, because it reflects your values.

What a refreshing way to view the standards that drive us all as consumers! We want to pay a premium for goods that are ethical, sustainable, and offer us optimal nutrition. We desire to find these products in a warm and friendly environment. We'd like to see the businesses we patronize base their decisions on a concrete set of fair and righteous principles. Furthermore, we want to know that our hard earned cash will stay in the community, that very likely some of it will end up back in our own pockets. Yes, for now, Wal-Mart can be the largest seller of groceries in the U.S. But if the aspirations and true intentions behind American consumerism continue to develop, our affair with all things big and cheap will come to an end. Let us all

level in the opportunity to be participants in the fortification of all things small and local.

It is in this spirit that we invite you to take the Co-op Challenge. For one month, we extend the opportunity to join us in tucking away our club cards in the kitchen drawer and focusing all our grocery shopping at our grocery store. Let's ask for receipts and keep track of what we spend. Let's notice the difference in health we feel, both from the healthier food choices and from the absence of stuffed parking lots and chaotic shopping atmospheres. Let us all get to know the group of people who stock the shelves and keep our store fresh. We want to build a relationship with you. It only makes sense that we know you, see you regularly, and share our experiences as we try to live healthier lives. After all, you own the store we work in!

For some, this truly will be a challenge. Price is a big consideration for all of us. Shop the produce and bulk departments. Take advantage of sales and make sure to shop with a list. We assure you that many fellow owners shop on a strict budget at the Co-op. For others, the challenge will mean stepping out of our comfort zone, trying new things, and sharing them with friends and family.

We'd love to hear about your experience with the Co-op Challenge. Bon appétit, fellow Co-op owners! ★

For an inspiring article entitled "The Curse of Bigness," by Christopher Ketcham, check out orionmagazine.org.

"A striking idea for consumers: Doing business with a cooperative means doing business with an entity that shares the same values as most Americans."

Elect To Run

By Merianne Myers, Board Chair

The Annual Meeting and attendant Board of Directors election is coming up in May. Our Board of Directors is currently made up of 6 dedicated members. Our by-laws allow us to have up to 9 members. We would love to welcome you to our little team which meets monthly to provide oversight and shepherding skills intended to help the Co-op steer its way safely and soundly into the future.

The work is interesting, educational, inspiring and worthy. The opportunity to meet fellow Co-ops on a more meaningful level is a lovely and surprising benefit. The Co-op is important in some way to everyone who reads this newsletter. If you would like to step up your commitment to something you already believe in by serving a term on the Board of Directors, we would be happy to hear from you.

If you have questions about how the election works and how you can participate, you are welcome to contact me: meriannemyers@gmail.com or 503-861-8149. ★

New Sunday Co-op Hours

By Matthew Stanley

No more confusion. The Co-op is now open EVERY DAY from 9AM-7PM. Yes, downtown is quiet on Sunday evenings, but the co-op is getting busier everyday.

We want to be your regular grocery shopping place and we want to be there for you as much as possible.

Help us spread the news regarding the new hours! ★

Member Spotlight



Jeff & Deidre Goldberg

How did you find out about the Co-op?

“We drove by the old store at 14th and Duane. It has been a long time and we have been shopping here ever since.”

Why did you become members of the Co-op?

“It was the place that we shopped, so it only made sense. Our Co-op has the things we like to eat.”

Why would you recommend the Co-op? “Because the regular grocery store doesn't have everything we need for our organic, healthy eating habits.”

Do you have a favorite product at the Co-op? “We love the fresh fruit and veggies.”

Shanan Reef

How did you find out about the Co-op?

“Back when I learned about all the chemicals that were put into food, I saw the sign on the Co-op building that said 'health food,' so I checked it out.”

Why do you shop at the Co-op?

“I want organic, natural, local, healthy food. I trust the staff to carry products that are safe and healthy.”

Do you have a favorite product at the Co-op? Is there something you get here that you don't get elsewhere? “Honestly, I do all my shopping at the Co-op. I love everything here.”



Robert Stang & Merilee Cameron



How did you find out about the Co-op?

“We joined before we moved here. We like to support local food producers wherever we go, and the Co-op has local produce and groceries.”

Why do you shop at the Co-op?

“We love the organic fresh foods. We also truly appreciate the personal customer service we get at the Co-op.”

Do you have a favorite product at the Co-op?

Robert: “Creamy Chickpea Salad.”

Merilee: “I love the kale salad and the daily soups are wonderful as well.”

Walnut Salad w/ Roasted Cherry Tomato & Shredded Goat Cheese

By Matthew Stanley

Ingredients:

Dressing (equal parts):

Flora Organic Walnut Oil
organic maple syrup
organic balsamic vinegar

Salad:

1 head organic romaine lettuce
1 pint cherry tomato
2 Tablespoons organic olive oil
½ cup organic raw walnuts
River's Edge Astrae Goat Cheese with
Cinnamon Rind
Parmesan Reggiano
sea salt
freshly ground organic black pepper

Whisk together dressing ingredients and set aside. Coat cherry tomatoes with olive oil and sprinkle with sea salt and freshly ground pepper. Bake at 350° until they start to shrivel and smell good. Chop romaine lettuce and set in bowls. Grate Astrae and Reggiano cheeses over lettuce. Sprinkle on walnuts and the roasted tomatoes. Pour dressing mixture over salad. Toss and enjoy!

Seeds of Change : from page 1

throughout the greater community and workshops in growing, cooking and preserving. In exchange, the folks who will reap the garden rewards will be providing the elbow grease and devotion to the gardens.

We have reserved our garden plots, contacted the OSU Master Gardeners, identified some potential workshop leaders and are now looking for two to three families per plot to do their part. If you would like to be part of this exciting new project, we would welcome your help. Maybe you have been canning and freezing from your garden for years. Maybe you have a wealth of time-tested recipes to share. Maybe you'd like to help in the garden itself, once in awhile, or take on a part of the actual chore list for producing workshops (think schlepping). Maybe you have an idea that hasn't occurred to me. Whatever your thoughts, I welcome your input, offers and comments. Contact me at: meriannemyers@gmail.com.

This is a fine opportunity for the Co-op to give something back to the community that supports it so steadfastly. Additionally, we aim to increase that support base by introducing new people to our belief that good food, conscientious shopping, and community involvement improves our neighborhoods, the world, and the future for all of our families. ★

Co-op at the Sunday Market

By Matthew Stanley

This year your Co-op will have a presence at a handful of Sunday Markets. We'll have a tent with information on our store and some good eats for sale as well. Our first day at the market will be opening day, May 9th. Let us know if you'd like to participate in any way. With willing volunteers to help out at the tent, we can do more markets and get the word across to more people. Go Co-op! ★

Produce Report

By Tony Giglio

Spring is in full swing and it's time to start getting excited about produce once again. It's been a great winter and while we say goodbye to our warm, comforting, cold weather favorites we must now brace ourselves for the onslaught of berries, grapes, melons, cherries, and the wonderful world of stonefruit.

April welcomed the first peaches and cantaloupe out of Mexico. Expect to see more of these throughout May. Don't shy around this early fruit. It has traditionally been very high quality and quite delicious. But you don't have to take my word for it, stop by the store sometime and try some. I will be offering cut samples of these fruits as they come in. ★

Ode To Rutabagas

By Karin Temple, Board Member

On certain winter days	the gold of rutabagas.	with her loot	in baconrind stock	For that belly-filling meal
you can find me in	Black runes tell of	which rolled	with bayleaf and onion—	I will always grow
my garden bent over	Hard Times past [†]	onto the kitchen table	triple satisfaction	one row of rutabagas
short and stocky	of cold globes bouncing	greeted by cheers	of rich earthy smell	banking my trust
in a padded old coat	in a rucksack	and ready hands	sun-captured war glow	in my reliable roots
digging	my mother running	to cube and cook	and sweet comfort taste.	for good times and bad.

[†]The "Hard Times past" are the first winters after World War II when my mother went out at night to steal food from a farmer's field and coal from freight trains.

New Products

By Matthew Stanley

Earth Café Raw Pies and Cheese Cakes – Earth Café makes organic raw vegan pies! These pies cater to the sweet tooth of vegans, vegetarians, raw foodists, persons with wheat/gluten allergies, lactose intolerants, diabetics (sweetened with agave), and all health conscious people. Earth Café pies are rich and creamy and come in four amazing flavors. They are the healthiest cheesecakes out there. Check them out in the cooler!



Josephson's Smoke House Smoked Fish – That's right, the Co-op is teaming up with another local producer of fine foods! We now carry Astoria's own Josephson's Smoke House smoked salmon and albacore tuna. Michael Josephson reminded us of how much fish it takes to make a small amount of smoked product. Look for the beautiful display in the grocery aisles.

South River Miso – South River miso makes raw, un-pasteurized miso packed in glass containers. It is made in small batches according to the traditional Japanese method. "I have found that, with very few exceptions, families, which make a practice of serving miso soup daily, are almost never sick.... I believe that miso belongs to the highest class of medicines, those which help prevent disease and

strengthen the body through continued usage...Some people speak of miso as a condiment, but miso brings out the flavor and nutritional value in all foods and helps the body to digest and assimilate whatever we eat." (The Book of Miso). Check out www.southernrivermiso.com for more information on these high quality traditional misos now found in the Co-op cooler. Note: Because these are made seasonally and in small batches, the Co-op will have a limited supply until the fall.

'Om Grown Granola – If you are looking for a local food product, this is it. Every ingredient is produced in our fine state of Oregon. Oh, and it's a raw food, so it's extra good for you. Even the Nori seaweed is from the Oregon coast! Check out this granola on the produce dry rack next time you need a healthy snack and you want to be a locavore, too.

Udi's Gluten Free Bread – These new gluten free breads have gotten rave reviews. Check them out in the freezer by the other specialty breads. They boast a wonderful consistency compared to other gluten free sandwich breads.



Abby's Table - Abby's Table Sauces, Dips and Dressings are 100% organic and free of gluten, dairy, soy, casein and refined sugar. Handmade in Portland, Oregon, Abby's products are refrigerated to maintain optimum nutritional integrity.

Choose from savory and sweet varieties. Thanks for supporting another local food producer doing things the sustainable way.



The Whole Leaf – We are proud to feature this line of organic whole leaf green tea. These teas hail from a small tea shop in San Diego whose owners make frequent trips to China to source their teas directly from growers. The Whole Leaf packages their teas in light proof bags in order to preserve the teas' freshness and health enhancing properties. Check out their web page at www.thewholeleaf.com for tips on brewing whole leaf green teas and to purchase traditional clay teapots.

Cave Man Bars – A minimalist approach to making food bars is being taken at the local level. All Cave Man bars are sweetened with brown rice syrup, a sweetener low on the glycemic index. These guys are already selling like hot cakes! Try Almond Coconut, Peanut and Sea Salt, Cinnamon Pecan, and Coconut Flax.

Basket Deals

Have you noticed the standing display baskets in the grocery aisles? We load these up with great deals for Co-op owners, so be sure to check them out. We change them frequently as supplies last.

dance in the sunlight as it filters through the wooden barn slats, it becomes quickly apparent that mono-culture meat production and the highly centralized meat industry can never provide the same transparency we easily gain access to at the Deck Farm. Visions of hidden camera shots inside feed lots come to mind. Similar footage can be seen in *Food Inc.*, a film that strives to create awareness surrounding the meat industry and the inhumane, unhealthy, and unjust practices associated with it. The subsidization of genetically engineered corn feed has driven down commercial meat prices. The result has been a dramatic increase in U.S. meat consumption. Those who wish to avoid meat created by this system will be confronted by considerably higher prices, better tastes, and the general satisfaction of knowing where their meat comes from and how it was raised.

The Co-op board has had several discussions surrounding the expansion of our meat selection. We spent time tracking down distributors and calling farmers directly. Most farms raising meat on pasture are not set up for retail sales. A seeming majority sells beef by the side or whole pigs, usually not processed at a USDA inspected abattoir. For these farmers, and the scale of their operation, it may make business sense to sell meat in large quantities. It ensures all edible cuts are sold. For customers savvy enough to know what to do with so much meat and such a variety of cuts, it may also be the most economical way to buy it.

Not all consumers can afford to invest in large quantities, and farmers that do want access to the retail market face considerable barriers to entry. Chicken, for instance, is unavailable from local farmers because no USDA facilities exist to process them. Because the Decks slaughter their birds on

the farm, law requires that they sell their fryers using a pre-order system at the farmers' market. Customers order their chicken (they choose from various breeds) a week in advance while the chicken is still alive. Only then can the end consumer purchase the meat. A Willamette Valley slaughterhouse is said to be opening in the summer, so fingers crossed that we'll be able to carry the Deck's pasture raised fryers.

"Freshness Factor: All Co-op meat is flash frozen within 24 hours of butchering. Unfrozen meat at grocery stores is infused with CO2 to maintain color. It may be several days old."

We also researched several meat distributors in our area. They carry meat producers who raise chicken that is "free range" and antibiotic and hormone free. Pork from companies like Carlton Farms is touted as natural, but it is difficult to procure more information than that. It certainly would not be possible to visit the specific farm where a Carlton cut of pork was produced. Further information from chicken companies like Draper Valley seemed promising. However, their chickens are fed genetically engineered corn and soy. To avoid consuming GE fed protein, we tried Coastal Range Organics, a company that seemed like a regionally based supplier we would be glad to support. We found Coastal Range is owned by Foster Farms, one of the major players in the factory farm chicken industry.

It may seem that we are being overly demanding in our selection process, but for several reasons, we'll wait for the Deck Farm to get their fryers ready for retailing. We've decided that meat consumption is part of the food system with which we do not desire to make concessions or sacrifice the ideals and principles that are the foundation of our Co-op. Meat done on a

large scale offers no transparency. The resources required to grow large amounts of grain and haul them to corporate farms do not get reflected in the price of meat at the market. It is a dishonest business. The danger of widespread exposure to contamination increases with each increase in concentration of farming and centralization of processing.

At a recent meeting of local food system advocates, I sat down with several local meat producers. The huge barrier to success for them is the lack of a local or county USDA inspected processing facility. In an industry where the cards are stacked in favor of large agribusiness operations, our inclination to be highly selective regarding meat consumption offers us an opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to our mission and values, specifically our desire to build community through food by supporting small local producers. Too many of the small farmers I've met work day jobs to maintain their farms. We have reduced the societal value of farming to such an extent that it is no longer a financially sustainable enterprise. But this is slowly changing. Our Co-op's selection process will serve to bolster the market for meat that has been raised on pasture, on a small scale, and with an overall intention that does not solely reflect financial gain, but environmental sustainability, consumer and animal health, and access to information.

The rural community is experiencing what some may call a regentrification. Middle class citizens are giving up their day jobs and taking up farming. And they choose this path not as a hobby, but as an alternative way of life. We must all admit that somewhere inside us there lies a desire for self-sufficiency and a connection to the land.

These folks also serve as new avenues for the preservation of generational farming

knowledge that may otherwise be lost. The Decks' next step is to learn, along with other farmers in their community, how to run their farm on live power (the use of horse instead of gasoline).

Thinking of horse drawn plows and kids growing up farming, it is easy to see our country tour outside Junction City as a drive into the past. We can only hope, though, that this is the future of farming; a return to preindustrial, diversified, local food production.

In the beginning, meat produced locally will be expensive for most, and consumption may decrease on the individual level. But our support of these family farms will help recreate farming as a livelihood deserving of respect and financial freedom. If we seek a sustainable local economy, not driven by low prices, but rather by quality, safety, the promotion of health, and the power of information; then meat consumption is an excellent place to begin our work. Thank you for supporting the Co-op's and all other sustainable small farmers. ★

Lives in Transition: *Spreading the Message of Whole Foods*

By Mindy Stokes, Board Member

I work at Clatsop Community College in the Lives in Transition program as an instructor. This program is offered at multiple community colleges around the state. Its focus is on students returning to school after a long hiatus and those coming to higher education for the first time. One aspect of the program is Stress Management/Coping with Depression. It is in this section that my skills as a wellness educator, yoga teacher and women's studies professor come in handy. Many of my students have been beat up by life: poverty, trauma, drug and alcohol addictions. Each student enters my classroom with a different set of life experiences, but all have one thing in common: they want to get better.

My students are searching for answers to

health and well-being. What should I eat? What should I feed my kids? How much exercise do I need? Can I continue to eat sweet treats? Can I manage my stress any better? Unfortunately, there's a myriad of misinformation about well-being everywhere we look. We are all familiar with non-fat cookies loaded with 27 grams of sugar per serving or low-fat vanilla yogurt topped with a high-fructose corn syrup laden fruit-like substance. For many people these are the healthy choices.

As their instructor, I have the opportunity to teach students about buying whole foods by shopping the perimeter of their grocery markets. We talk about cooking as a lifestyle choice. I encourage them to hang out with their food and be joyous about it. "Food is not something to fear, it is everything to love," I explain.

This term, I invited various professionals from the area to my classroom. Their purpose was to discuss food, where it comes from and how to eat healthy, whole foods with ease. Matt Stanley was my first speaker. He graciously agreed to show *Food, Inc.* and provide thoughtful discussion about the disturbing topic of how our food is treated before it hits our dinner plates. What occurred was amazing.

I witnessed thoughtful dialog about issues that hit all hearts: humane treatment of animals and how to eat unadulterated foods on a budget. Matt was open and honest with my folks. He provided a safe environment to discuss these intimate and most important details with students who previously have been left behind in this green food movement. The next day, two of my students changed the way they and their families eat. And my class continued our food discussion for weeks. What I learned was invaluable: people are not selfish and self-centered about their food choices, mostly they don't know what to do, and they almost always want to live better. ★

Pumpkin Pear Soup

By Merianne Myers, Board Chair

This soup is so easy, so delicious and so packed with healthy ingredients it ought to be a law. Did I mention it was easy?

- 1/2 chopped onion
- 2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 3 peeled, cored & sliced pears. Any kind but make sure they're ripe for maximum flavor.
- 1 15oz. can of pumpkin. The Co-op carries organic canned pumpkin. Make sure it's not the pie filling type.
- 1 1/2 cups vegetable broth
- 1 cup milk

Sauté onion and ginger in butter until tender but not brown. Add pears and sauté for another minute. Add pumpkin and broth. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, simmer covered for 5 minutes more. Cool slightly and puree in a blender, food processor or food mill.

Return the mixture to a saucepan, add the milk and reheat. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Lime Sour Cream

To push this soup right over the top and really bring out the flavors, add a dollop of lime sour cream.

- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 1/2 teaspoon lime zest
- 1 tablespoon lime juice

This will benefit from sitting in the refrigerator for a bit. Make it first and it will be perfect by the time the soup is done. Use the leftover topping for tacos, black beans, chili and more.



1355 Exchange St. Astoria OR 97103

Astoria Co-op Calendar of Events

April 22nd	Owner Recognition Day. All Owners Receive 5% Off All Purchases!
April 22nd	Food Tasting. 4:00-6:00 PM
April 22nd	Board of Directors Meeting at the Co-op. 6:30 PM
May 8th	Owner Recognition Day. All Owners Receive 5% Off All Purchases!
May 9th	Sunday Market. The Co-op will be spreading the news of our store!
May 9th	New Sunday Hours Begin. The Co-op is now open 9AM-7PM everyday!
May 23rd	Annual Meeting and Picnic @ Shively Hall. 12:00-2:00 PM
May 27th	Owner Recognition Day. All Owners Receive 5% Off All Purchases!
May 27th	Food Tasting. 4:00-6:00 PM
June 12th	Owner Recognition Day. All Owners Receive 5% Off All Purchases!
June 24th	Owner Recognition Day. All Owners Receive 5% Off All Purchases!
June 24th	Food Tasting. 4:00-6:00 PM
June 24th	Board of Directors Meeting. 6:30PM

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Food Tasting

Don't miss our food tasting events every 4th Thursday starting at 4 pm. We will be sampling new products and dishes prepared from ingredients available at the Co-op. The board of directors invites you to stick around and attend board meetings starting at 6:30 pm.

Owner Recognition Days

Owner Recognition Days are every second Saturday and every fourth Thursday of the Month. Members enjoy an additional percentage off all store purchases these days!

- April 22nd
- May 8th
- May 27th
- June 12th

- June 24th
- July 10th
- July 22nd
- August 14th