

Harvest Herald

NEWS FROM THE BLUE HILL CO-OPERATIVE GROCERY AND CAFÉ



It has become clear to me that most people have a limited or vague understanding of what a consumer cooperative is. Even those of us who work, or shop at the Blue Hill Co-op, are often not comfortable trying to summarize the nature of a Co-op. I find it helps to look at it in two layers, the business model and the particular interests or goals of our Cooperative.

The most significant difference between a Cooperative business and other for-profit businesses is that a Cooperative is owned and run by its members. The idea is that all Co-op member/owners have equal shares and equal influence based upon their ability to vote in elections, serve on the Board of Directors, and serve on committees. The General Manager is hired, evaluated, and monitored by the Board of Directors and is responsible to the Co-op members. A typical corporation gives its owners unequal power by selling the rights to make decisions in the form of shares, thereby granting greater power to those with more money invested. Co-op members, however, convey their desires to management and staff by their participation in a pure democracy.

Cooperatives are set up in many different ways for many different reasons. They may be a group of consumers, producers, workers, or other like-minded individuals with a common goal. The fact that we are a cooperative tells us only that we wish to collectively run this business in a fair and democratic manner, sharing the financial risks and rewards.

All the choices we make regarding product mix, purchasing, pricing, policies, procedures, and so on are not determined by the fact that we are a co-op, but by the fact that our members' shared interest

centers around providing honest, unadulterated food choices and supporting the local economy.

As management and staff, our goal is to provide our member/owners with the consumer Co-op that they want. How do we determine what that is? How do we know what 1200 people want as a group?

Let's start with the mission statement and buying policy. These documents were written by the elected members of the board with help from committee members, and serve as the framework for how to proceed.

Our mission statement:

We are a welcoming, vibrant community of owners guided by our belief in the importance of healthful honest food options. Through cooperative principles we support our economy by sourcing locally, and by providing education on food, environmental and social issues.

Our buying policy is too long to put into this article but you can find it posted in the store or by going to our website (bluehill.coop) and reading our Mission & History. It lays out the ground rules for what products we will sell and which items are not allowed.

Those two documents serve as the guide, but that still leaves a lot of gray area within which one can easily run amok. More information is needed to inform our decisions regarding priorities, product mix, and what our members want.

Recently we sent surveys to our members and placed copies in the store. We have tabulated the results of 152 surveys as of late April, with still more flowing in every day.

As with any data, interpretation is in the eye of the beholder, so the results will be made available to all the Board Members, staff, and posted in the store.

Here are my observations.

The most common reasons given for why someone shops at the Co-op are because they support local producers and cooperative principles; they also really like the variety of organic items and bulk products.

According to the survey, the most commonly purchased product types are bulk, produce, café items, and fresh bread. Interestingly, this does not match sales numbers exactly. Packaged grocery items don't do well in the survey, but they consistently top the sales reports.

When asked what they buy elsewhere, but would prefer to purchase at the Co-op, fish and meat received the most votes. Also, many indicated they would purchase more produce, grocery & dairy if the prices were lower.

The most common reason to shop elsewhere is prices. Some went out of their way to say that they don't see our pricing as unfair, but nonetheless prohibitive for shoppers on a budget. The desire to purchase specific products unavailable at the Co-op was the second most common reason to shop elsewhere.

Only 1% of the respondents thought the Co-op staff was not readily available to answer questions and offer assistance. This appears to contradict the local perception, which we have focused on in order to shift.

Only 5% thought they would purchase products that they knew contained GMO's.

Only 4% said certified organic was not important, but 40% seemed to indicate that the certification portion is not the point, it's the practices used to produce the product that matter.

98% indicated that local production

Continued on page 2

MANAGER'S REPORT

was very or somewhat important to them.

80% of respondents do less than half of their shopping at the Co-op.

89% of the respondents were over 46 years old and 47% were 65 and over. (This may say something about who fills out surveys. It was available in paper form, online, through the website, Facebook, and email).

There is a lot more info to interpret, but I think I can make a couple statements based upon the survey results and sales over the past 18 months.

1. Value-driven purchasing (supporting cooperative principles and buying local) is the main reason people cite for shopping here.

2. Lower prices are the essential key to increasing business.

3. When choosing between purity concerns (organic, non-gmo, less packaging) and the potential sales that might come from less pure products, our member/owners want us to stock honest, unadulterated, whole food.

4. We should not strive to be everything to everyone, but keep our focus on the things that set us apart such as local produce, bulk items, natural vitamins & supplements, and quality organic prepared foods. We should also find a spot for some amount of fresh fish and meat.

Mark Deeny
General Manager

BOARD COMMITTEES

BOARD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
THIS COMMITTEE IS CHARGED WITH RECRUITING NEW BOARD MEMBERS AND MAINTAINING BOARD STABILITY OVER TIME. THIS WOULD BE A GREAT POSITION FOR THE PERSON WHO KNOWS EVERYONE. CHAIR: ALLISON WATTERS (AWATTERS@BLUEHILL.COOP, 359-2425).

ELECTION COMMITTEE
THIS COMMITTEE SEES THE MOST ACTION AROUND THE TIME OF THE ANNUAL MEETING, AND IS CONCERNED WITH THE PROPER RUNNING OF THE VOTING PROCESS. AND JUST THINK -- YOU'LL KNOW THE ELECTION RESULTS BEFORE ANYONE ELSE! CHAIR: ALLISON WATTERS (AWATTERS@BLUEHILL.COOP, 359-2425).

FINANCE COMMITTEE
PERHAPS NUMBERS AND BUSINESS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN YOUR FORTE. CONSIDER JOINING THIS COMMITTEE WHICH LOOKS CAREFULLY AT THE CO-OP'S FINANCIAL HEALTH THROUGH PROFIT AND LOSS STATEMENTS, BALANCE SHEETS AND BUDGETS. CHAIR: RICHARD PAGET (TREASURER@BLUEHILL.COOP, 374-5492).

OUTREACH COMMITTEE
THIS COMMITTEE'S PURPOSE IS TO CREATE CONNECTIONS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY THAT FOSTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE CO-OP'S

MISSION AND DESIGN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND EVENTS THAT ANCHORS THE CO-OP'S MISSION TO THE COMMUNITY. CHAIR: LAURA LIVINGSTON (LLIVINGSTON@BLUEHILL.COOP)

OWNERSHIP COMMITTEE
THE MISSION OF THIS COMMITTEE IS TO HAVE THE MOST SATISFIED COOP MEMBERS POSSIBLE! CHAIR: JIM PICARIELLO (VP@BLUEHILL.COOP, 326-8007)

BOARD AD-HOC COMMITTEES:

POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE
FOR THE DETAILS-ORIENTED PERSON, THESE MEMBERS ARE BUSILY REVIEWING CURRENT CO-OP POLICIES AND SUGGESTING CHANGES THAT WILL HELP THE CO-OP RUN MORE EFFECTIVELY. CURRENT MEMBERS: HENRIETTA CLEWS, LAURA LIVINGSTON, MIA STRONG (MIAASTRONG@GMAIL.COM, 359-8722)

RELOCATION COMMITTEE
PEOPLE WITH BUILDING AND FUNDRAISING EXPERIENCE WOULD BE HELPFUL ON THIS COMMITTEE. CURRENT MEMBERS: MARK DEENY, TERRY MASON, RICHARD PAGET, TIM SEABROOK, BRUCE STAHNKE. CHAIR: KEITH HERKLOTZ (KHERLOTZ@MYFAIRPOINT.NET, 374-5492)

Notice of Board Meetings

The Co-op Board usually meets on the third Tuesday of each month from 6:30-9:00 p.m. The meetings are held at the Howard room at Blue Hill Library. They are open to the membership. The next Co-op Board meetings will be held on June 18th, July 16th and August 20th.

CO-OP BOARD OFFICERS & MEMBERS:

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JIM PICARIELLO, VICE PRESIDENT
MARGE MAY, SECRETARY
RICHARD PAGET, TREASURER
JEROME LAWTHOR, KRISTYN LAPLANTE,
ALLISON WATTERS, AARON DORITY,
KEITH HERKLOTZ, LAURA LIVINGSTON

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FALL ISSUE:
JULY 15, 2013**

THE NEWSLETTER TEAM

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ADS: DEBORAH WIGGS; 374-2159
COLUMNISTS/WRITERS: STEVE BENSON,
REBECCA WENTWORTH,
CO-OP STAFF & BOARD

**General Manager:
Mark Deeny
Store Hours**

**7 a.m. – 8 p.m.
(207) 374-2165**

**info@bluehill.coop
www.bluehill.coop**

Letters to the Editor

The Newsletter Team welcomes input. If you have something you'd like to share with other Co-op owners, please send a letter to: Letters to the Editor, Blue Hill Co-op Community Market, PO Box 1133, Blue Hill, ME 04614, or send an e-mail to newsletter@bluehill.coop. Letters may be edited for style, not content, and should be brief. Please include your name, address, and daytime phone number.

STORE DEPARTMENT NOTES



What's cooking?



As spring makes way for summer, my thoughts turn to local produce. You can be sure that whenever possible, we use locally grown food. It feels good to support the farmers who work so hard getting their products to our tables. Yes, these foods often appear to cost more, but honest prices that reflect the value of great quality, are often higher than mass produced foods that incur real, albeit hidden costs to our soils and air, the humans who toil for it, and our physical health.

While we are speaking of costs, you may notice some of our café products have increased in price. I spent the winter going over the costs/prices of our products, and found that due to price increases of many ingredients we needed to raise some of our prices. Still, when I compare to other food venues and their prices, we seem to be on par with many of them while our quality and attention to ingredient purity is an important part of our buying policy. Another thing that I noticed over the winter is an increased demand for gluten-free foods.

More and more people are being diagnosed with wheat intolerances—myself included! Because of this demand, you will see more gluten-free options in our grab-and-go case! Including desserts, sandwiches and salads as well. We also provide many sugar-free options. If you have a special request, please leave it with us at the café counter and we will do our best to make it for you. See you in the café!

CHAR HOGAN
CAFÉ MANAGER



Fresh Produce!



Summer is here and local produce is back in abundance. This month will kick off farm tours organized by the Co-op and Blue Hill Heritage Trust. We will tour several exciting farms this season including King Hill Farm, Four Season Farm, Old Ackley Farm, Blue Zee Farm, and Horsepower Farm. These farms supply much of our local organic food. The tours present an ideal opportunity to see how and where your food is grown. The farmers will guide us through greenhouses, fields, pastures and answer any questions you may have. Don't miss out! This past winter we were able to provide local produce straight through this spring. King Hill Farm, Four Season Farm, Horsepower Farm, Clayfield Farm, Kirk Trabant and the Crown of Maine

ANDY FELGER
PRODUCE MANAGER

kept us in local root crops, squash, garlic and potatoes all winter. We had carrots until well into February this year, until all the local carrots were sold out. The produce department has had some freshening changes as well. New price tag holders were installed above and below the produce cooler to help

clear up the "busy" feeling the previous tags had. The different tag colors will signify local produce and certified organic produce from away. Pink tags that remain in the cooler will point out owner Bonus Buys, which run on a month long basis.



Cheese Press



With the onset of warmer weather the greenery sprang into bloom and the gardens are once again gorgeous. Local farms welcomed the newborns and with them a bounty of local dairy. The result, a blooming variety of cheeses, are again available to us. Look for Blue Ledge Farm goat cheeses, Blythedale Farms Swiss varieties and Maplebrooks' fresh Mozzarella to name a few. Coming soon are Taylor Farm's Farmstead Gouda and Robie Farm's Piermont cheeses among others. I have continued my quest to offer as many local and regional cheeses as possible. We are replacing several of our bulk cheeses with similar cheeses from Cabot Creamery made in regional dairies. I am also happy to report that these cheeses will be more economically priced!

BETH DICKENS
CHEESE MAVEN

As always, I am able to special order cheeses from a variety of vendors. Are you looking for a wheel of Raclette for your party? Perhaps an Epoisses or Saint Augur Blue? Come in and discuss

your needs, and we can help you. Remember if you are a co-op member you pay just 14% over cost!



WHAT'S IN A BANK?

Money is in a bank. And what is money? At surface, money is an expression of deferred payment. Money deals with many of the frustrations of a barter system, i.e. some sort of goods, service or ownership transfer. Dig a little deeper and money begins to represent a little more than goods, service or ownership transfers. We spend money on what we value. The question of value opens up a whole world of questions. There are obvious examples such as what is the market value of a peach? Then there are not so obvious examples such as the difference in the rewards we allot people in the form of salaries or other compensations. Why is that?

So if I may, I'd like to posit that money and how it is allotted represents the whole gamut of human relationships and the value that people put on each other as well. I would question the limits of a definition that is put on money as only a marketplace tool. I do this so that I can figure out why the global economy has developed in the way it has. I do not see the invisible hand of God operating through the marketplace to create a fair economic environment. And my hope is that by ever so gently creating the right functions around money, a fair economic environment will evolve, so the purpose of all my questioning.

Finding functions that set the use of money to operate in all best interests possible, in my mind, should be the result of a process of discussion and trial. To define the term 'in our best interest' can be a fairly involved discussion in itself. We will inevitably tumble into all the belief systems that litter the intellectual countryside.

An experiment in other forms of money use would help us see how a different way to use money might work. In the Massachusetts Berkshire mountain area a money system has evolved which calls itself Berkshares, Inc. and I quote from their web page "a non-profit organization working in collaboration with participating local banks, local businesses and local non-profit organizations. The purpose of a local currency is to function on a local scale the same way that national currencies have functioned on a national scale—building the local economy by maximizing circulation of trade within a defined region. Widely used in the early 1800's, local currencies are again being recognized as a tool for sustainable economic development. The currency distinguishes the local businesses that accept the currency from those that do not, building stronger relationships and a greater affinity between the business community and the citizens of a particular place." (<http://www.berkshares.org/localcurrency.htm#whatare>).



To create a money environment like this takes interest, time and effort. It takes bringing together many different people and functions of a community. I have embarked on this journey and hope others are also traveling down this same path. Hope to meet you soon.

-Rebecca Wentworth

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WELLNESS NEWS



What an amazing age we live in. We now understand the underlying cause of the major degenerative diseases facing our society. It's called silent inflammation, and it underlies arthritis, many cancers, diabetes, Alzheimer's, and heart disease, and can even be linked to depression. When combined with high-glycemic load foods, it leads to obesity. How to prevent and even reverse these conditions naturally is widely known. Even some doctors now talk about it.

Yet, we are besieged daily by millions of dollars worth of products in stores, and advertising in print media and on television, that actively encourages us to eat the very processed, high-sugar, inflammatory foods which cause these diseases. Meanwhile, many more millions coax us to use dangerous pharmaceutical drugs that are directly responsible for approximately 100,000 deaths a year, in order mask the symptoms or keep us alive while we continue the bad diet. Medical schools are funded by Big Pharma and medical students are saturated in pharmaceutical responses to dietary problems.

Well, if you're reading this, chances are you are already savvy to this bizarre scenario, and that's one reason why you support the Coop. But it is possible to shop and eat even here and not necessarily address these health issues.

The modern diet has become far too rich in Omega 6 oils, known as arachidonic acid, which cause inflammation in the body. Though inflammation is essential, without sufficient Omega 3 oils, inflammation goes haywire without necessarily letting us know for a long time. Omega 3 oils are nature's most powerful anti-inflammatory drugs. We find them most often in fish, in chia, flax, and hemp seeds, but also in walnuts.

(Flax seeds can cause thyroid disruption in some people.)

So potent are Omega 3 oils, simply including them yet otherwise not changing a bad diet can heal and reverse chronic heart disease and other inflammatory conditions. Add in concentrated green foods that contain more than 1,000 micro-nutrients and deep systemic healing is possible.

Optimally we would be downing daily green super smoothies and several times weekly wild Alaskan Salmon, or for vegetarians 2-3 tablespoons of chia seeds, but for many this is not the reality.

Supplements such as Now's Green Phyto-Foods, or Barlean's Greens, among others in the Coop's nutrition section, can supply a super-concentrated array of some 35 highly concentrated and cleansing greens. Add to this wild Alaskan Salmon oil by New Chapter or Barlean's, and your body will quickly begin to happily hum. We have other Omega 3 options that have higher concentrations of EPA and DHA, but my research supports the efficacy of fish oils that exist in the natural state and contain the full spectrum of Omegas, which work synergistically with one another. Additionally, they are pressed from the parts of the Salmon that the Grizzlies choose prior to hibernation, due to their even higher concentrations of beneficial properties.

Of course there is a lot more we can do to help ourselves attain optimal health: Probiotics to "reseed" the intestines with vital microbiota, perhaps enzymes to stimulate superior absorption (though "bitters" are better, as they stimulate your body to produce its own enzymes. We now offer Urban Moonshine bitters!)

In other news, new research shows MSM has a powerful anti-histamine impact, helping the body at a very deep level to avoid the auto-immune disruption that underlies allergic reactions. Speaking of which, if you suffer from chronic aches, stuffiness, and lethargy, it may be an allergy to one of the major culprits: dairy, citrus, soy, wheat or eggs. Simply eliminate all of these for one week, then add one in at a time for three days, to see if symptoms return, if in fact they decreased or disappeared during the time of elimination. Relief from symptoms may come and if you stay off the culprit, you may

find that when you start eating the affecting food again, you have no symptoms. However, after a month or two of eating it, the symptoms may return again, due to the buildup in your body. - David Walker



David Walker has served as the Coop's Wellness Manager since 2007, and is completing training as a Health Counselor through the Institute for Integrative Nutrition

BAKER'S BOARD

Almond flour is an amazing ingredient to use as a substitute for wheat in baking. Almonds are a superfood, highly nutritious, full of antioxidants, minerals, vitamins, and so called "good" fats. The American Heart Association has determined that these "good" fats actually lower cholesterol, making this an excellent food for heart patients. Also full of fiber, almond flour has a high protein content compared to wheat or rice flour. Nutritional info on 100 g of these three flours shows almond flour has 21.94 g of protein, compared to 9.71 g in wheat flour, and 5.95 g in rice flour. This makes almond flour much lower on the glycemic scale, and helpful for stabilizing blood sugar, which benefits not only people with gluten intolerance issues, but also diabetics. Combining use of almond flour with low-glycemic sweeteners (such as coconut palm crystals, brown rice syrup, or agave nectar) allows people

to enjoy desserts without the corresponding spike in blood sugar levels typically associated with wheat/sugar based desserts. AND almonds have been shown to be allergenic to only 1% of the population. I have found almond flour to be a very forgiving ingredient to use for baking, and I hope you'll give it a try at home. The coop carries Bob's Red Mill almond meal/flour in the refrigerated section,

near the nut butters. Agave nectar, coconut palm crystals, and brown rice syrup are available as well. Don't take my word for it, try it yourself!



Nancy McMillan
Baker



The question of corn...



How SERIOUS Is It?

According to an article posted this April on the *Prevention* website, allergic reactions to corn are something to watch out for. These can come up after ingesting anything sweetened with high fructose corn syrup (which manufacturers and food processors may increasingly tend to call “corn sugar,” without any significant change in its ingredients) or anything else made from corn.

The article notes a twenty-year low in sales of this additive as well as its weakened reputation during the current period of concern about obesity and diabetes epidemics in the United States. The Corn Refiners Association has responded to these marketing issues by petitioning the Food and Drug Administration to allow them to change the name of High Fructose Corn Syrup to “corn sugar.”

High fructose corn syrup adds sweetness, taste, texture, and freshness to foods, factors that support its wide use in all sorts of food processing. Its preservative and stabilizing functions have led to its widespread use to prolong shelf-life in stores and warehouses. According to the Corn Refiners Association, high fructose corn syrup also maintains moisture in cereals and breakfast bars, keeps ingredients in salad dressings evenly mixed, and maintains the consistency of flavor in many beverages.

The article in *Prevention* points out that Coca-Cola, Wal-Mart and Kraft don't even use high fructose corn syrup in products that they make and sell in other developed countries, especially products children are likely to use. This policy appears to stem from marketing considerations due to concerns and doubts of the people in other countries about genetically engineered corn. In the United States, there is absolutely no labeling of GMO products yet mandated by law, but over sixty other countries around the world do have labeling laws. A lack of demanding and costly long-term scientific studies enables the corporations to claim that there is no evidence of harm associated with corn and other genetically modified foods.

Most commercially available ascorbic acid products, used by many people as Vitamin C supplements, are made with corn. This too, can give rise to an allergic reaction. Fruits, especially

citrus, and leafy green vegetables are a safer means of taking in Vitamin C for those with a corn allergy. Personal skin care products are often made using corn, as well, and these too can cause allergic reactions in some.

An article at LiveStrong.com says, “Corn allergy symptoms usually arise and pass within a few hours without lingering effects. In rare instances, however, anaphylactic reactions can cause patients to lose consciousness and organ function.”

According to the Mayo Clinic, allergic symptoms appear as side effects of histamines that are released by the body to stop an infection that doesn't really exist, due to an error in the identification of invading bacteria. The reactions can happen anytime the person's immune system's antibodies come up against the corn protein, either in its original state or made into sweeteners or other food additives like corn-starch, or cosmetics additives.

According to The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, the symptoms move through the body on the bloodstream. At any time, this flow can be interrupted by anaphylaxis, a sudden escalation of symptoms that can precipitate life-threatening shock.

Unfortunately, but perhaps predictably, there has been little hard scientific research done on the incidence and predictability of corn allergies. Consumers may want to monitor themselves and their children, to see whether they have short-term and manageable negative reactions like itching skin or mouth that last a few hours at most, or more severe reactions like hives or trouble swallowing, which may be worth stricter attention to food choice decision-making. A simple blood test you discuss with your doctor can clarify whether you have this allergy, which is rare but serious. Those with corn allergies can only stay clear of them by staying away from corn.

-- Steve Benson

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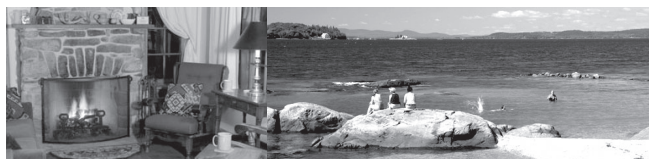
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CONTENTS

Letter from the GM	1
Department Notes	3
What's In a Bank?	4
Wellness News	5
The Question of Corn Syrup	6

On the Wall at the Co-op Café

June

Kathy Hally,
Photography

July

George Jennings,
Objects & Photography
August

Paul Trowbridge,
Watercolors

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