

The Plainfield Co-op Newsletter

Winter 2018–19



*Read more about Proctor (above) in the story about Rogers Farmstead on page 10
Photo credit: Gail Falk*

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February 15 for the Spring issue
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About This Newsletter



Walking through the Plainfield Co-op, you can't miss the extensive display of dairy products in the cooler at the rear of the store—milk, cream,

yogurt, butter, and all manner of cheeses. Our shoppers must be dairy lovers, so this newsletter is featuring several articles about dairy, including one very local farm. Many of our shoppers have pets, who may also like dairy, but who have their own section in the store; information for their owners is included in this issue.

Much has been going on behind the scenes, as you can learn here from the Building Committee, Treasurer, Manager, and President's reports. It's time to pause and appreciate all the work that goes into keeping our Co-op alive and thriving.

We welcome your contributions to this newsletter—artwork, photos, letters, articles, relevant poems, questions, suggestions. Submissions are due to the editor by February 15 for the spring issue.

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President's Report

by Jean Hamilton,

My work in local food systems shows me firsthand the impacts of food and retail market consolidation on Vermont's farmers, economy, and citizens. With feet planted into the grass-roots of farm fields, farmers markets, and locally owned groceries, watching corporate acquisitions and mergers can feel like watching an approaching tsunami of wealth inequality, extractive industries, and dismantled public goods. While no one wants their communities to be gutted and polluted, we each struggle to resist the allure of cheaper prices, direct door delivery, and 24/7 access to consumables. How do we survive the tsunami? Or better yet, can we prevent it from sweeping over our community?

This month 200 farm, food, and community organizations sent a letter* to congress in support of Senator Booker's (D-NJ) and Representative Pocan's (D-WI) introduced Food and Agribusiness

*The letter can be found at this url:
https://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/sites/default/files/coalition_letter_endorsing_booker-pocan_ag_merger_moratorium_11-18.pdf



Merger Moratorium and Antitrust Review Act of 2018 companion bills this year (S.3404/H.R.6800). I encourage you to read the letter as it gives a big picture perspective on issues our Co-op was created to confront and grapple with daily. Through local ownership and cooperative principles, we strive to support viable local farms, fairly compensated employees, and vitality in our rural community.

I am encouraged that many of us are beginning to understand the coordination and diverse strategies necessary to protect ourselves against these monolithic market consolidations. The Booker/Pocan bills are a step in the right direction, but within our current systems, one of the strongest ways to protect ourselves is to use our dollars to support the world we want to live in. Our Co-op is under constant pressure from macroeconomic trends that favor cheap prices (extractive industries and consolidated wealth); conventional wisdom says we suffer from bad economies of scale.

In this newsletter's Treasurer's Report, you will see that the Co-op is on track to generate a significant financial loss this year. Much of this loss is the result of increasing our investment in the staff by increasing their wages above minimum wage (starting wage is now \$12/hr) and hiring a management team. These investments have improved our ability to tackle the strategic questions that we now face by stabilizing the backbone of our Co-op: the staff!

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AND, MEMBER BY MEMBER WE CAN CLOSE THE FINANCIAL GAP BY THE END OF THE YEAR!

Can you spend an additional \$200 at the Plainfield Co-op before the new year? Many of us make more discretionary spending on food and gifts this time of year; can you direct some of those purchases to the Co-op? Some ideas...

- CBD balms, tinctures and treats: neighbors young and old are feeling the relief of CBD. Relax and enjoy!
- Gift Certificates: do you have neighbors who still haven't discovered the Plainfield Co-op? A gift certificate is a great way to thank them for being your neighbor and weave them into the community.
- Cheese Platters: the cheese department is a wonder of our small store. Thanks, Jez!
- Beer and Wine: another department that makes me glad I live in Plainfield, VT.
- Local roast coffee, chocolate, baked goods, fruit, candles, and herbal items: our Co-op has gifts for everyone on your list.

Part of preventing the wealth consolidation tsunami from hitting our community is having the courage and strength to stand up against market trends and economies of scale. By shopping locally, ethically, and sustainably, we each have the power to secure wealth right here in Plainfield, maintaining our assets, protecting our farms, supporting livable jobs, and having access to the kinds of products that promote our health and wellbeing. Wherever you spend money this holiday season, please consider the impact!

Experience our Co-op community – Become a working member

Another great way to support the Co-op is by becoming a working member. There are so many benefits to being a working member including experiencing firsthand the web of community that makes our Co-op strong, helping the Co-op save money, and receiving a discount on your purchases. Charlotte Domino is our new Membership Coordinator. Get in touch to find out what kinds of tasks are waiting for your help. Email: info@plainfieldcoop.com. Phone: 802-454-8579.

And a HUGE thank you to all of the working members who are already helping out. It is hard to imagine what our Co-op would be without the help of member stockers and packers, office support, newsletter contributors, building committee, board, and more.

Cash and Checks—saved \$1,200 this year!

We've had success lowering our credit card transaction fees this year, thanks to everyone who has made an effort to pay with cash and checks rather than credit/debit cards. If you haven't already tried out the pre-pay system, give it a try. Folks are loving how easy, quick and helpful (to the Co-op's cash flow) it is to buy a gift card for themselves. Ask at the register.

Grateful for...Staff!

We've had a number of staff transitions over the last quarter, which are detailed in Kevin's Manager's Report. Thank you to all of the staff who have dedicated so much passion, thoughtfulness, and care to the making our Co-op a truly special place.

Wishing us all joy and peace in the new year. ♦

Treasurer's Report

by *Giordano Checchi*

As many of us know 2018 has been a year of major changes. These changes negatively impacted the financial results of 2017 Q4 and up to the 3rd Quarter of this year. In a process that started during the last quarter of 2017, the management of our Co-op transitioned from a Management Collective to a General Manager organization. The new General Manager, Kevin Levesque, was appointed in June 2018, but he spent most of his initial time organizing the Co-op operations. Changes started to be seen in August, and the preliminary numbers of the month of October confirm this positive trend.

The 3rd Quarter is the first indication of how the Co-op is doing under the new management organization. Q3 revenues from sales are 8.0% higher than Q2, 15.6% higher than Q1, and 4.7% higher than 2017 Q3. Gross profit is 12.3% higher than Q2, 7.3% higher than Q1, and 7.7% higher than 2017 Q3. Therefore, we are indeed doing better. The results of the 4th Quarter will tell us if we are on the right track.

The issue are the expenses. While the expenses in 2017 remained in control though 2017 Q3, towards the end of 2017 and for the whole Q1 through Q3 of 2018 the expenses exceeded the gross profit, with one exception: April 2018.

The reason most definitely must be found in the management transition. During this period, we had to hire consultants, we had to increase the use of our line of credit to keep the Co-op current with our suppliers, we spent to seek professional advice about expanding revenues and better positioning the Co-op in its own market, and we had to realign wages. We now expect the positive trend in revenues and gross profits to eventually absorb these extraordinary expenses and revert the trend of our net profit.

It will take time and we will have to wait for 2019 before the net profit numbers will become better. Our managing and non-managing people who work the office and the floor of our Co-op are doing their best; everyone seems to be motivated and encouraged by the present organization. We must trust them and give them the time to prove themselves. Plans of renovation and expansion shall be placed on hold until we are certain that the numbers move towards the expected improvement.

Below is the summary of the current year financials. As Treasurer I would like to encourage all our members and the members of our community to purchase most of your groceries at our wonderful Co-op. And the financials will once again be in good shape. ♦

	2018	2017	% change		
	Q1	Q1+Q2	Q1+Q2+Q3	Q1+Q2+Q3	
Sales	279,506	578,442	901,441	880,687	2.4
COGS	181,663	387,056	605,042	586,492	3.2
Gross Profit	97,843	191,386	296,399	294,196	0.7
Expenses	105,298	209,919	333,710	274,964	21.4
Net Profit	(7,455)	(18,533)	(37,311)	19,232	-294.0

The State of Dairy in Vermont

by Kyla Bedard, Dairy Certification Specialist, Vermont Organic Farmers

(Reprinted with permission by NOFA Vermont)

Dairy farms are quintessential to Vermont's working landscape; a predominant reason for the open meadows, fields of grain and agricultural infrastructure we see statewide. Many farmers choose to farm for the opportunity to work the land, their love of animals, and being an important part of a rural community. Today, this way of life is being threatened by a global oversupply of milk and a broken commodity market in which farmers are being paid close to or below their cost of production. Dairy farming has always had its cycle of ups and downs, but for the last several years, conventional dairy prices have remained depressed without the usual upswing and now there is a similar shrinking of profit margins in the organic industry as well. These negative changes in the dairy

market are forcing smaller farms to go out of business and leading to increased consolidation of the farms that remain. In 2010, there were 1,015 dairies in Vermont but today only 735 remain, of which over 25% (194) are certified organic.

Until early 2017, there was steady growth in the organic milk market and the four milk buyers in Vermont—Organic Valley, Horizon, Stonyfield, and Upstate Niagara—were steadily adding more farms to their truck routes. Organic milk is more expensive than conventional milk for a farmer to produce but it also commands a higher price and, until last year, the price was enough to offset expenses and have money left over for farmers to pay themselves and invest in their farms. However, in the fall of 2017, organic dairy farm income decreased in direct response to the global oversupply of organic milk. Some organic dairies have seen their pay price drop by almost \$10 for every hundred pounds of milk (also known as hundred weight or cwt) and some have been put under a quota by their milk buyers - limiting the amount of milk the buyer will purchase at the organic price. In addition to directly impacting many farmers' bottom lines, conventional farmers who are interested in transitioning to organic may not have an opportunity to do so until 2020.

The cause of this organic milk oversupply is complex and influenced by many factors. There is no national supply man-

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agement system for milk in place in the U.S. - the market is controlled by the milk buyers. Organic milk buyers over-estimated the growth of the organic milk market, and combined with poor supply management, encouraged a large number of farms to transition to organic at a time when the market was perceived to be stronger. As these farms completed their transition to organic, the sudden influx of milk from these farms has contributed to the oversupply.

Additionally, in the western U.S. there has been an expansion of large, 5000+ cow organic dairies, which are often vertically integrated and able to produce more milk at a lower cost. This milk is mostly sold under private labels for companies such as Walmart, Costco, and Target. Different interpretations of the national organic standards by certifiers have allowed many of these large dairies to continually transition youngstock into their operations, which some argue goes against the intent of the standards. On the contrary, Vermont Organic Farmers, the organic certifier of the majority of Vermont's organic dairy farms, believes the standards allow for only a one-time, whole herd transition. The continual transition of youngstock allowed by some certifiers allows these other farms to raise youngstock conventionally at a lower cost to the farms than those in Vermont that are raising them organically, contributing to the oversupply of organic milk.

Finally, there is a shortage of available processing facilities for organic dairy products, impacting the amount of milk that buyers have been able to process and sell. While we've seen slight growth in the demand for full-fat products such as whole milk and butter, this has left an

oversupply of skim milk. Historically, the surplus milk was dried and stored as milk powder, but milk is an international market, and as production and stores of dry milk have increased globally, it has become harder to find a market for that surplus product. We've seen an increase in demand for milk alternatives (e.g. nut beverages such as soy, almond, and coconut milk), further competing with the milk market.

These market circumstances are one of the many challenges both organic and conventional farmers are faced with right now. Farmers have seen an increase in paperwork and regulatory requirements; being certified organic is not an easy feat, it requires thorough record keeping, an annual application and inspection. Coupled with market challenges, dairy farmers are dealing with increased water quality regulations, and public scrutiny due to Vermont's impaired waterways, of which agriculture is a contributor. While there is support from UVM Extension and NOFA-VT farm advisors to help farmers with both production technical assistance and business planning, change takes time and often costs money, and with the added financial challenges of the milk market, is a lot for farmers to handle in addition to milking, feeding and caring for their animals every day, 365 days a year.

Many of us choose to call Vermont home because we have a love for local food, the working landscape and our strong rural communities yet the future of Vermont's working landscape is now in jeopardy. What will Vermont look like without small, family dairy farms and

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what will take their place? How do we protect this way of life? These are tough questions that many in the industry and throughout the state are asking. We have been working with partners to determine what we can do to help dairy farmers in this time of genuine crisis.

Recently, we've seen an increase in non-natural disaster requests for our Farmer Emergency Fund from organic dairy farmers who need financial assistance. Through this Fund, certified organic and NOFA-VT member farms can apply for up to a \$2,500 grant and/or \$2,500 0% interest loan. We realize that this will not prevent farms from going out of business but we see it as a way to provide Vermont organic dairy farmers with

some cash flow in times of emergency, where farmers cannot purchase feed for their cows or need help paying essential bills. We are concerned that as dairies continue to see a decrease in the amount they are paid for their milk, we will see even more requests. In anticipation of this, we are fundraising to grow our Farmer Emergency Fund, with a goal of raising \$50,000. Please consider contributing what you can to this fund to support our farmers. Donate here: <https://nofavt.org/blog/support-organic-dairy-farmers>.

And as always, choosing a brand that is local or that purchases from Vermont farms is a great way to support Vermont dairies in this time of need. ♦



Jersey Girls

by Gail Falk

When Chloe started stocking Rogers Farmstead yogurt in the Co-op cooler last year, it became my daily breakfast food. I've been wanting to visit the Rogers Farmstead, owned by Nathan and Jessie Rogers, since I first tasted their smooth creamy yogurt at the Montpelier Farmers Market a few years ago. I wanted to know what made it so yummy. Thanks to a Newsletter assignment, I got my chance.

As the sun sinks over the Dog River Valley, thirteen tawny Jersey cows amble in to the barnyard from their grassy bottomland pasture. Nate Rogers takes a minute to give an affectionate nuzzle to Maggie and Proctor, two of his favorite “girls,” before sending them with the others to the milking barn in the nightly ritual of the dairy farm. These lovely ladies produce all the milk for Rogers Farmstead’s organic yogurt, pasteurized

milk, chocolate and strawberry milk, eggnog, and mozzarella.

Nate and Jessie Rogers are in their sixth year at the farm along the Dog River, a few miles south of Montpelier. The two met as coworkers at IBM. Nate had grown up on a dairy farm in upstate New York; he had a dream of developing his own farm in Vermont, but he was cautious, having seen the huge financial risks of dairy up close. Jessie and Nate spent several years searching for a Vermont farm that they could afford, with good rich soil and proximity to markets

Shortly after Hurricane Irene, the Vermont Land Trust, which knew of their quest, contacted the couple to tell them about the 133-acre farm in Berlin. The land had been preserved for farm use several years previously, but the farmer working the land had been failing and Irene was the last straw.

Nathan and Jessie loved the farm with its 25 acres of rich grassy bottom and hilltop fields ideal for grain cultivation. It’s a “beautiful property,” says Nate. It had a functional barn. The house was structurally sound but “in horrendous shape.” Nate spent the first year after they bought the farm making the house livable while still working at IBM and sharing the care for one-year-old Tristan.

The Rogers started by cultivating grains, initially growing oats and wheat. And then, slowly, they added cows, choosing Jerseys for their herd because of the richness and taste of the milk. At first, they sold raw milk at the farm, but, before long, they had more milk than



*Nate Rogers with the new processing vat
Photo credit: Gail Falk*

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they could sell. Three years ago, they decided to try yogurt. Jessie came up with the recipe. Nate says they tried many, many cultures and invited friends over for tasting sessions until they came up with the creamy mild flavor that makes their yogurt so distinctive.

For their first year of yogurt production, the Rogers used the production facility at Ploughgate Farm in Fayston to pasteurize milk and produce and package the yogurt. After a year, they decided to plunge ahead; they bought a processing vat and built a production facility next to the barn. Meanwhile, they introduced Montpelier buyers to their products at the Montpelier Farmers market and started retailing at stores in Central Vermont including Hunger Mountain, Plainfield, and Buffalo Mountain Co-ops. Nate says he loves dealing with the small stores like Plainfield Co-op because of their flexibility and openness to trying new products.

Early on, Rogers Farmstead grains and dairy products could be recognized by the charming cow sketches on their labels. The artwork came about through a chance meeting at the Montpelier Farmers Market. Montpelier artist Karen Henderson liked their food and offered to draw sketches of cows for the labels. Jessie's mother, a graphic designer,



*Proctor and Nate
Photo credit: Gail Falk*

turned the drawings into the recognizable labels of the Rogers brand. If you look closely, you will see that each product features a different cow: for instance, Norma is the model for Plain Yogurt, Dinah is beneath a maple tree on Maple Yogurt, and Maggie is surrounded by vanilla flowers on Vanilla Yogurt.

For the holiday season, Rogers Farmstead makes organic eggnog, a particularly delicious and labor-intensive product, as the eggs must be cracked and separated by hand. Soon you will be seeing Rogers Farmstead mozzarella cheese in the Plainfield Co-op cooler. Nate said he realized that no one was making organic mozzarella in Central Vermont, and Jersey milk makes an outstanding mozzarella.

You may have been eating Rogers Farmstead grains without knowing it. In addition to selling wheat and pancake mix retail, the Rogers sell 40,000 pounds of wheat per year to Elmore Mountain Bread, which mills the grain for bread. Woodbelly Pizza makes its pizza with flour that Elmore Mountain mills from Rogers grain. Nate says the



*Their new organic Mozzarella Cheese
Photo credit: Gail Falk*

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Jersey Girls *continued from page 13*

demand for locally sourced grain is so large he could sell much more than he is growing now. He has leased 50 acres out by the airport to expand his production next year and is looking to expand his acreage even more.

At this point Rogers can't expand production any further without expanding the farm. "I'm milking 13 cows now and selling it all," says Nate, and he can sell all the wheat he can grow to a community hungry for locally grown grain. He and Jessie plan to grow the farm slowly. They still depend on Jessie's income and benefits from an outside job at Cabot Creamery's administrative offices in Waitsfield to make the whole enterprise work. They'd like to expand enough to take on a full time worker to give them breaks and back-up.

But for now, the sun has set, the cows are all in the barn, and it's time for Nate to change his clothes and go milk the girls. ♦



Lighting Up the Community Center

Hooray!!!! After over 20 years of curating the Plainfield Community Center Gallery above the Co-op, I am thrilled we finally have track lighting. A special thanks to Andrea Miksic for Salaam's generous donation and thanks to Chris Thomson for the install. Also, we now have not-for-profit status.

The current exhibition is Bread and Puppet Theater's 7th annual Emergent Mosaic, which will be up till mid-December, followed by artist John Howland's sculptured masks under the new lights. Any contribution to assist in this endeavor is greatly appreciated!

Contact me if you are interested in donating or in exhibiting art in The Plainfield Community Center Gallery. Thank You!

Curatrix Alexis Smith

802-371-7239/freealexis@hotmail.com

Organic Dairy Scorecard

from *The Cornucopia Institute* (www.cornucopia.org)

Unlike the industrial dairies, true organic farmers concentrate on soil fertility and nutrient-superior milk production from fresh pasture, and end up with cows that live long and healthy lives in comparison to 'organic' industrial dairies that are so similar to the inhumane and ecologically damaging conventional factory farms. True organic, pasture-based production produces milk with higher levels of omega-3 fatty acids and beneficial antioxidants.

This scorecard showcases brands that partner with family-scale farmers from across the country who supply truly ethical organic dairy products that are worthy of the conscientious consumer's support. The scorecard also helps consumers find products with specific attributes they may desire, such as 100% grass-fed or dairies that use soy-free feed. The ratings also spotlight family-scale organic farmstead dairies that go beyond organic, making it easy for consumers to vote for integrity with their family's food dollars. When we make

informed decisions about the products we choose to consume, whole markets—and perhaps the planet—can be changed for the better.

Our Co-op carries many of the top-rated organic dairy products. (Some local dairies, such as Rogers Farmstead are too small and local to be included.) Cornucopia's five cow rating--beyond organic--goes to Butterworks and Strafford. Kimball Brook, Stonyfield, and Organic Valley all earn four cows--excellent. Our organic ice creams, Julie's and Alden's, both earn very good, three cow ratings.

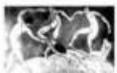
To see the full scorecard go to www.cornucopia.org>scorecards.

Cornucopia also rated yogurts, conventional as well as organic. Butterworks, which the Co-op carries, was at the very top of the list. Rogers Farmstead, featured in this issue of the Newsletter, was too small to be rated, but we love their yogurt! ♦

PLAINFIELD COMMUNITY CENTER



**Space available for your:
Classes
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Art Gallery Exhibitions & Special Events
\$9/hr. for Co-op Members, \$15/hr. for Non-Members
Events: \$35 for Members, \$50 for Non-Members
Scheduling Book at Co-op Register
More Information?
Contact Rosemond London at the Co-op

Using the Community Center benefits The Plainfield Co-op

Whole Dairy Is Heart Healthy

from *The Cornucopia Institute*
(www.cornucopia.org)

A study by the University of Texas published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found no significant link between dairy fats and cause of death or, more specifically, heart disease and stroke — two of the country's biggest killers often associated with a diet high in saturated fat. In fact, certain types of dairy fat may help guard against having a severe stroke, the researchers reported.

The findings not only support, but also significantly strengthen, the growing body of evidence which suggests that dairy fat, contrary to popular belief, does not increase risk of heart disease or overall mortality in older adults. In addition to not contributing to death, the results suggest that one fatty acid present in dairy may lower risk of death from cardiovascular disease, particularly from stroke,

Nearly 3,000 adults age 65 years and older were included in the study, which measured plasma levels of three different fatty acids found in dairy products at the beginning in 1992 and again at six and 13 years later. None of the fatty acid types were significantly associated with total mortality. In fact one type was linked to lower cardiovascular disease deaths. People with higher fatty acid levels, suggesting higher consumption of whole-fat dairy products, had a 42 percent lower risk of dying from stroke. ♦

Broccoli and Cheddar Soup

A hearty soup for colder weather.

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 large onion diced
- 1 large clove of garlic minced
- 1 cup shredded carrot
- 3 cups fresh broccoli (diced)
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 1/2 teaspoon thyme (optional)
- salt & pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 1/2 cups half and half (or milk)
- 1 cup sharp or extra sharp cheddar cheese (add more cheese to taste)
- 1/3 cup fresh parmesan cheese

Instructions

1. Dice onion and mince garlic.
2. In a large pot, saute onion and garlic in olive oil until onions are soft and golden.
3. Add broccoli, carrots and seasonings. Saute for 2-3 minutes. Add chicken broth and simmer until broccoli is softened.
4. Remove 1 cup of vegetables and set aside.
5. Blend remaining vegetables and broth in a blender. Pour blended mixture back into soup pot.
6. Place flour in a small bowl. Add in cream, a little at a time, stirring until smooth.
7. Whisk flour and cream mixture slowly into vegetable mixture. Continue stirring and bring to a boil. Continue stirring until thick and bubbly, about 3-4 minutes.
8. Remove from heat, stir in cheeses and reserved chopped vegetables and serve immediately.

Meat and Dairy's Environmental Impact

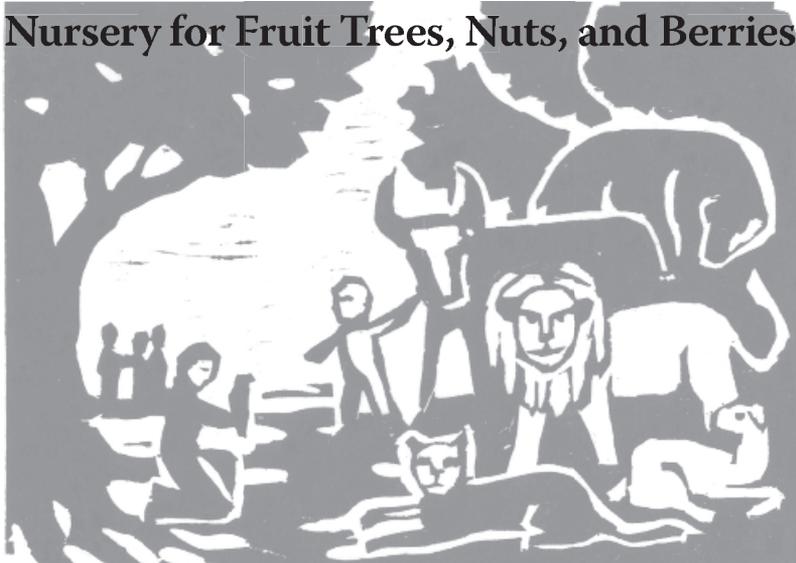
from The Environmental Working Group (www.ewg.org)

Conventionally raised lamb, beef, cheese and pork generate the most greenhouse gases and have the worst environmental impacts of any protein foods. Producing them requires the most resources—mainly chemical fertilizer, feed, fuel, pesticides and water.

Meat, eggs and dairy products that are certified organic, pasture-raised and/or grass-fed are generally the least environmentally damaging. Overall, these products are the least harmful, most ethical choices. In some cases, these products have also been shown to contain more heart-healthy omega-3 fats and carry less risk of contamination with antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

EAST HILL TREE FARM

Nursery for Fruit Trees, Nuts, and Berries



3499 East Hill Rd. Plainfield, VT
Check: www.easthilltreefarm.com

Manager's Report

by Kevin Levesque, General Manager

The weather has changed and winter is upon us. With blankets of snow comes the covering of what we knew in the past, and thus begins the look forward. Recently, we hired a new Maintenance Coordinator for the Co-op after many amazing years with Kathleen Hayes at the helm. I am sure many of you already know Chris Thompson of the local Owl Hill Farm, but if not, then let me just point out how lucky we are to have him join our team at the Co-op. Additionally, our longtime sub Charlotte Domino has taken on the role of Membership Coordinator. Charlotte is extremely passionate about our Co-op members, and we really look forward to the positive impact she will make within, and outside of the Co-op.

As I write this report, I reflect on the upcoming holidays, and how they are different for me this year than years past. This year, I will not be leaving Plainfield and travelling back home to Massachusetts to see family. However, I am lucky enough to be hosting some Co-op members and staff at my home. It's impossible to deny that our town, our village is more than just a place to live for so many here. Plainfield is a community of caring, thoughtful, and hardworking individuals who collaborate despite differences in opinion.

Speaking of holidays upcoming, we are really looking forward to being your spot for holiday shopping needs! We have received La Panciata's stuffing, we have cranberry sauce, gravy, bubbly wine, and so much more to cover your holiday needs. We have more squash than you can shake a stick at, so come down to the Plainfield Co-op and check it out!

Featured Beer

Prior to my time at the Plainfield Co-op, my most recent job was at Hill Farmstead Brewery. Needless to say, I am passionate about local craft beer. A particular brewery I am excited about is Wunderkammer, which is a German word translating to "A cabinet of curiosity." Wunderkammer is brewed by Vasilios Gletsos, and it is based out of Greensboro, VT. Vasili, a former member of Bread & Puppet, lives in Craftsbury and forages many of his beer's ingredients from Craftsbury and surrounding towns, which gives Wunderkammer a true uniqueness based on terroir. Vasili even draws and designs his beer labels! Check out Wunderkammer's newest offering: Gathered #1—a new series where all ingredients used were harvested on a single day—providing a true, single day connection to our own backyard. ♦



Building Committee Report

by Mike Brosky

It's been a busy year for the Building Committee! When the Co-op decided to move to a traditional management structure with a General Manager, it was also decided that more office space was going to be required. In April of this year work began on converting a room adjacent the Community Center into an office with work completed in July in time for Kevin to move in shortly after starting. Some of the work that was completed by Building Committee members and volunteers included purchase and installation of a new window, sanding and re-finishing of the wood floors and upgraded electrical outlets. New wiring was also added to enable a CoPos computer terminal to be installed. Once all of this was completed a team of volunteers and working members painted the walls and the trim.

The next area of focus for the Building Committee was improving the back-stock area of the store, beginning with the installation of a hand washing sink that would enable the Co-op to fulfill a code requirement to have a sink to wash hands separate from the produce sink. As part of the project, the old mop sink closet next to the back door was reinforced and lined while new shelving was added above. A small sink was then

installed in the corner opposite the mop sink.

After the handwash sink was completed in September, the committee has turned its focus to planning for a retrofit of the produce processing area. Over the years splashing water from rinsing veggies has rotted portions of the wooden counter on either side of the produce sink. As a result it was decided to replace the counters with stainless steel counters and shelves and add backsplash protection to the wall above the sink. The Building Committee plans to complete this work in the coming months.

Other projects that are in the planning phase are improvements to the small roof over the front door to prevent ice and snow buildup on the steps below, as well as exterior improvements such as painting the exterior.

Special thanks to committee members Joe John and Jason Mallory, who have dedicated many, many hours of their time to make the recent Building Committee projects happen. We couldn't have done it without them! The Building Committee is always looking for new members – if you're interested in joining please reach out to Mike Brosky at 454-1460, or email: michael_a_brosky@yahoo.com ♦

Co-op Gift Card Keeps on Giving

Did you know you can buy a gift card of any amount either for someone else, or for yourself as a store credit. I love my gift card because I don't have to lug my purse into the store, I go through the checkout line quicker (which helps other shoppers), and having a little extra money on deposit helps the Co-op.

At this holiday season, consider buying a gift card for someone else, who can then decide exactly what they want to purchase—the perfect gift!

Introducing . . . Our New Membership Coordinator!

by Charlotte Domino



Photo credit: Mertz

Hello! I'm Charlotte, the new Membership Coordinator. I've been working at our Co-op for almost three years, and there are many things I've come to appreciate and love about this little store. I

mean, what's not to love? Local foods, local friends, supporting each other through local commerce and economy.

All these good things run and depend on one big, amazing thing; the membership. Our Co-op works on a member owner basis, but what does that even really mean? Every member is an owner of the store. Well again, what does that, realistically speaking, mean?

The understanding I've come to is this: being a member here is a way to be an active and supporting member of our community. Our Co-op works directly with many small businesses—with farmers, with bakers, with dairies, with chocolatiers, and even candle stick makers.

When our building needs work, our Building Committee members, who dedicate their time to keeping us up and running, step up and volunteer their time. If the project gets too big, then we hire local workers to keep it in the community.

Our Newsletter Committee has been steadfast and amazing, creating beauti-

ful, informative and inclusive newsletters for many years. Without our working members, we wouldn't have a newsletter, our building wouldn't be so well taken care of, we wouldn't have the Community Center, the free box, nor would we have our beautiful garden.

Clearly I think our members are amazing and super-valuable and just the best! What do I have to bring to the table as our new membership coordinator?

Well, there are lots of things we've been wanting to do, from small things like improving the lighting in the kid's corner (how great is that, too? Thanks working members!) to keeping working member signage in the store updated. The bigger picture is we want to make membership even more attainable, to help people know and fully understand what it means to be a member.

I, Charlotte, have a few proposals: to have new member initiations a few times during the year, to have more frequent, small scale member meetings, and more things come to me, either through much valued member feedback, looking to other co-ops, or through my own experiences here, all the time.

The recognition for members and working members is good right now, but we can always improve. We have a register discount, which is amazing, but what else can we do? There are so many things the Co-op can provide to the community, with the support of all our members and potential members. (We see you. Don't worry, we'll be here when you're ready to sign up.)

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If you have ideas, please, let us know! If you have questions, we're here for you! Our Co-op already helps the community, and the community already helps the Co-op, but we can do more! Really, in my role as the Membership Coordinator I'd love to enhance this connection and strengthen our Co-op's positive role in Plainfield and make membership more beneficial, attainable, and understood.

Looking forward to seeing you in the store, and thank you for being a member and supporting not just our co-op, but your community as a whole. Thanks so much! ♦

Tapioca Pudding with Berries

Simple, warm and delicious!

Ingredients:

- 3 Tblsp. granulate tapioca
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 egg (well beaten)
- 3 cups milk
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1-2 cups of your favorite berry or combination of berries (I often use frozen berries picked in the summer)

Instructions

1. Combine tapioca, sugar, milk and egg in a medium saucepan; let stand for 5 minutes.
2. Cook over medium heat, stirring until mixture comes to full boil.
3. Remove from heat and stir in vanilla.
4. Stir in 1-2 cups of your favorite berries.
5. Let cool for 10-20 minutes



Benefits of Being a Working Member

by Charlotte Domino

Hello Dear Members!

Our Co-op is in need of working members!

What is a working member? A member who comes into the store to help everything run smoothly. We need little jobs done around the store--stocking, repacking, cleaning, produce, the list goes on and on! If you see something here you're interested in, something you think could be improved, then speak up! Your time to shine is now!

Our Co-op survives with the help of you--caring members with a commitment to our community store, to keeping this community resource open and thriving. Members who work 1 hour a week, get a 3% discount. Members who work two hours a week receive a 7% discount. Discounts exist for a working member as long as they are consistently working. You can choose your hours.

Starting in 2019 working members will be invited to attend free staff yoga classes in the Community Center above the Co-op. We hope to offer more things to entice you in. In the meantime, if you have any ideas feel free to contact Charlotte, the Membership Coordinator, at membership@plainfieldcoop.com. You can also call the Co-op at 802-454-8579.

The main duties we need now--don't be shy, call us today!--are stocking and repack. If you love the repack snacks, speak up! Without manpower we may have to discontinue them for a time.

Looking forward to seeing you! ♦

New Products

by *Chloe Budnick*

Meat

We carry McKnight Farm beef from East Montpelier, delivered fresh weekly. We've added in their stew meat for the winter and soup bones (which pups also LOVE). All available as special order!

We are happy to welcome back beef from Hochschild Family Farm from Plainfield. Weekly, we will have their ground beef and steaks. They also have roasts available for special order.

New addition--Bobolink Farm from East Montpelier. We currently have their frozen merguez sausage. According to the folks at Bobolink, it makes fantastic grilled burgers or meatballs, or pizza topping, or pasta sauce base! Look for fresh lamb through the winter. Legs/roasts available for special order.

Dairy and Refrigerated

Rogers Farmstead continues to impress!



We've now gotten a taste of their eggnog (so good!) and plan to keep it through the holidays at least. You'll also find their choc milk and cream top whole jersey milk and

yogurt here every day. They've got some more new products almost ready to launch and we'll be sure to carry them!

You'll find multiple ways to enjoy this year's apple harvest from Champlain Orchards: lots of apple varieties, bakery treats, cider AND now fresh applesauce.

Ferments

MOCHI! Our friends at Rhapsody delivered their first EVER retail case of mochi to us lucky folks at the Plainfield Co-op recently. It is fun to eat, and more important, delish! Find it in the freezer next to their nato and eggrolls. We are also fully stocked on their Mellow Red and Sweet White miso, tempeh and teriyaki tempeh.

New vendor Micro Mamas out of Weare, NH...such tasty and beautiful fermented treats. Organic and fermented in glass!

Bulk

Back Roads Granola--new flavor (thanks to a Bram request!): Dark Chocolate Pecan Granola

Bakery

Patchwork is now delivering twice a week, including matzoh.



Have you tried any of Bien Fait baked goods? We are carrying their bars and little tarts and cheesecakes. Definitely decadent. AND, check this out "We are committed to improving the lives of children in our community by dedicating 100% of profits to local charities." ♦

The Co-op Feeds Your Pets, Too

by Glenda Bissex

Check out the expanded pet section for more foods, canned and dry, and treats. We have a new, local supplier with an extensive catalog, so members can special order many items that are not regularly stocked. Additionally, bags of raw chicken necks or backs can be special ordered. I started feeding my cat raw necks on a veterinarian's recommendation that chewing them serves as a tooth brush. Be sure to feed only raw bones as cooked ones splinter dangerously.



Glenda's Skitty and Sarah's Toby stay at the top of their game with Misty Knoll's chicken necks!

You may not want to know the ingredients in some mass market pet foods, like meat and grain unfit for human consumption--meat from sick or euthanized animals, moldy grain. Natural and organic formulas are healthier. *Decoding Pet Food: Adulteration, Toxic Ingredients, and the Best Choices for Your Companion Animals*, a report by The Cornucopia Institute, a food/farm research group, is available at cornucopia.org > "reports". Ratings of canned dog and cat food are available at the same website > "scorecards." You will note that the brands of canned food carried by our Co-op are highly rated--somebody did their research!

Ingredients to avoid include:

- carageenan: causes intestinal inflammation with the potential to lead to cancer, even in small doses.
- rendered meat byproducts: meat and bone meal (MBM), animal fat, animal

digest, and/or blood meal. Livestock that are dead, diseased, disabled, or dying (the four Ds) are often rendered and used in pet food,

- grains no longer fit for human consumption: Moldy grains are arguably the most detrimental health hazard in pet food ingredients, due to the toxins produced by the molds. Mycotoxins, including aflatoxins (produced by *Aspergillus* species of fungi), and fumonisins (produced by *Fusarium* species of fungi), are among the most carcinogenic substances known. Many of the more than 300 mycotoxins known to exist are commonly found on corn, sorghum, wheat, rye, barley, oats, and nuts.

Look for quality primary ingredients: the first three ingredients do not contain corn, wheat, corn gluten meal, soybean meal or brewers rice.

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Cheese Blintzes

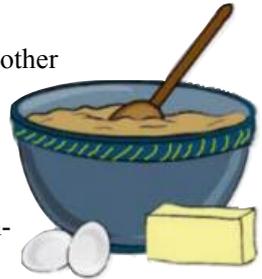
from *Ratner's Dairy Restaurant in New York (with a few additions from me)*. Apparently this was a favorite dish of mobsters Meyer Lansky, Bugsy Siegel, Lucky Luciano not to mention my father and so many other people who grew up Jewish in the New York City area.

Ingredients:

2 cups all purpose flour	2 large egg yolks
1/2 tsp salt	1/4 cup sugar
4 large eggs, room temperature	1 tsp vanilla
2 cups water	2 tsp. lemon juice*
1 cup clarified butter	Sour cream, applesauce, or your favorite blintz toppings (optional)
1 lb farmer's cheese (or ricotta cheese)	*Debra addition
1/4 - 1/2 cup sour cream or yogurt*	

Instructions

1. In a mixing bowl, sift together flour and salt. In another mixing bowl, whisk together eggs and water until thoroughly blended. Beat dry ingredients into wet ones, whisking until batter is completely smooth with no lumps.
2. Grease a small skillet (some people like to use non-stick skillets) and heat between medium and high. Skillet is ready when a drop of water sizzles on the surface. If the water pops or jumps out of the pan, skillet is too hot—let it cool slightly before starting. If water sizzles, it's at the perfect temperature.
3. For each blintz, pour ± 3 tbsp (approx. $\frac{3}{4}$ of a $\frac{1}{4}$ measuring cup) of batter into skillet, then quickly tilt the pan in a circular motion until batter coats entire bottom of the skillet, making a very thin, crepe-like pancake. Batter needs to be added all at once or it will cook before you've had a chance to swirl it.
4. Cook blintz for 75-90 seconds until bottom of blintz is very lightly golden. You can tell it's ready by touching the center of the pancake's surface—it should be completely dry to the touch. Do not flip blintz to cook other side, and do not let edges get too brown or dry. Use a spatula to take blintz out of pan and place on a plate.
5. Keep blintzes separated by pieces of parchment paper, wax paper, or paper towels. This will help keep them from sticking together.
6. When all blintzes are cooked, let cool while you create filling. Combine farmer's cheese, egg yolks, sugar and vanilla in a mixing bowl, then use a fork to mix ingredients well.



You can also make your own pet food. In general, the best balance of ingredients for dogs is 75% meat, organs, and bones (raw), and 25% vegetables and fruits. For cats, who are completely carnivorous in the wild, the best balance of ingredients is 88% meat, organs and bone, and 12% vegetables and fruit. Some ingredients commonly used

include eggs, milk, ground poultry or beef, fish, cooked vegetables, whole grain bread, oatmeal. Veterinarian Dr. Richard Pitcairn has been a pioneer in advocating for natural and home made diets. See his book *Natural Health for Dogs and Cats*, as well as much information online. ♦

7. Place blintz with the less cooked side facing upward. Put 2 tbsp. of filling on the lower part of the blintz, about an inch from the edge.
8. Fold the lower edge of the blintz up over the filling.
9. Fold the sides of the blintz inward, as though folding an envelope.
10. Roll blintz up and over filling like a burrito, tucking the edges in.
11. When blintzes are stuffed and rolled, you are ready to fry them. Pour 1 cup of clarified butter or grapeseed oil (I just use olive oil) into a larger nonstick skillet (12") and heat over medium until hot. Do not let the butter or oil turn brown or start smoking.
12. Cook the blintzes in batches of 4 or 5—to allow space to turn them easily in the pan. Carefully place stuffed blintzes flap-side down into hot oil. Fry for 1 ½ to 2 minutes until bottom of each blintz is golden brown and crispy.
13. Carefully turn the blintzes and fry for an additional 1 ½ - 2 minutes. Blintzes should be evenly browned on both sides.
14. Drain blintzes on paper towels.
15. Serve blintzes warm, either as-is or topped with fruit topping, sour cream, applesauce, or maple syrup.

*Apparently Meyer Lansky liked his topped with sour cream
(so does my father and so do I).*

