

# The Plainfield Co-op Newsletter

*Spring 2022*

*Caring for our Co-op*



***Open Seven Days a Week***

*Monday-Saturday 9 AM–7 PM      Sunday 10 AM–7 PM*

***Phone: 454-8579      Website: [www.PlainfieldCoop.com](http://www.PlainfieldCoop.com)***

***Email: [info@plainfieldcoop.com](mailto:info@plainfieldcoop.com)***

## Staff

Rin Austin, *Floor Staff/Cashier*  
Deb Barnwell, *Floor Staff/Cashier*  
Debra Bothfeld, *Floor Staff/Cashier*  
Laura Conklin, *Displays, Gifts Buyer*  
Jezebel Crow, *Produce, Cheese, Coffee, Tea, and Bulk Herbs Buyer; Produce Staff*  
Anji Domino, *Household Goods, Body Care, Supplements Buyer, Floor Staff/Cashier; Produce Staff*  
Jay Ekis, *Floor staff/cashier, Produce*  
Paula Emery, *Floor Staff/Cashier; Receiver*  
Ken Folta, *Lead Receiver*  
Jamie Lewis, *General Manager*  
Tim Llewelyn, *Produce, Beer and Wine Buyer*  
Eben Markova-Gold, *Floor Staff/Cashier, Floor Trainer*  
Shaelynn Matthew, *Bulk, Dairy, Frozen, Grocery, Meat, and Refrigerated Buyer*  
Stanzi Scribner, *Administrative Assistant*  
Dan Siegel, *Floor Staff/Cashier, Information Technology*  
Leah Tedesco, *Membership & Marketing Coordinator*  
Chris Thompson, *Maintenance Coordinator*  
Annie Reed, *Floor Staff/Cashier*  
Margie Yoder, *Floor Staff/Cashier*

## Co-op Board Members

Cat Klarich, President, [catklarich@gmail.com](mailto:catklarich@gmail.com)  
Lucy Blue, Secretary, [lucy.blue@yahoo.com](mailto:lucy.blue@yahoo.com)  
Rose Paul, Treasurer, [rosegeo@myfairpoint.net](mailto:rosegeo@myfairpoint.net)  
Liz Bicknell, [lizbwestwood@gmail.com](mailto:lizbwestwood@gmail.com)  
Jess Taylor, [jessiet@sover.net](mailto:jessiet@sover.net)



## Substitutes

Adrienne Allison  
Audrey Isom  
Alex Wyman

## Committee Contacts

Building: Vacant  
Marketing: Julia Rapczynski  
[rapczyk@hotmail.com](mailto:rapczyk@hotmail.com)  
Membership: Paula Emery,  
[pemery@pshift.com](mailto:pemery@pshift.com)  
Newsletter: Glenda Bissex,  
[songboat@vtlink.net](mailto:songboat@vtlink.net)  
Website: Julia Wilk,  
[wordandwebworks@gmail.com](mailto:wordandwebworks@gmail.com)

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# About This Newsletter



Caring for our Co-op is the theme of this issue. Our Co-op has cared for us during the past two years of pandemic, creating new, safe ways for us to order and pick up groceries,

dealing with supply shortages and equipment failures and other extraordinary demands on staff. Now we need to take care of our Co-op.

Most of all by shopping there more. Read Treasurer Rose Paul's report to understand the need.

If you think prices are too high, read Paula Emery's tips on how to shop less expensively. Using a "gift card" rather than a credit card saves the Co-op money. Serving on the Board (two seats are open now) is a valuable gift of your energy and ideas. There's lots to be done, as you'll see from President Cat Klarich's report.

But it's spring, and the wonderful things that happen only in this season are blessing us now. The recipes in this issue reflect gifts of the season—spring greens from local farms or from foraging, and maple syrup. The Fedco seed rack is out. Nicko Rubin of East Hill Tree Farm explains why this is the best time for transplanting.

Since the pandemic began, several new staff have been hired whose faces we have yet to see. Masking as well as distancing and limiting the number of shoppers in the store put a chill on the friendly Co-op atmosphere we've always prized. But read on to meet the new staff, unmasked!

If we're not here for our Co-op in every way we can be, then our Co-op may not be here for us, and for the community it helps support, as General Manager Jamie Lewis explains in his report.

We welcome your contributions of letters, photos, cartoons, poems, whatever. Deadline for the summer issue is June 15. ❖

*Editor:* Glenda Bissex  
(songboat@vtlink.net)

*Design & layout:* Elizabeth Mathai  
(elizabethmathai@yahoo.com)

*Staff writer:* Gail Falk  
(gail.falk@gmail.com)

*Recipes:* Debra Stoleroff  
(debrastoleroff@protonmail.com)

*Ad co-ordinator:* Elizabeth Mathai  
(elizabethmathai@yahoo.com)

*Distribution:* for print copies, Lorraine Checchi (lchecchi@myfairpoint.net); for digital versions, Julia Wilk (wordandwebworks@gmail.com)

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## On Board

by **Cat Klarich, Board President**

At the Co-op, spring means local spinach from Littlewood Farm and Blackbird Organics and Owl Hill and LePage Farm. Spring means sap boiling in the sugar shack, seedling starts on the windowsill, and of course, mud season! Just like that overwintered spinach, Vermonters are resilient! As you get out to enjoy the longer days, please stop by the Co-op!

These quarterly newsletters provide the Board the opportunity to update you, the member-owners, on what we've been up to these long, dark months of winter. A big relief is that the USDA Rural Development Grant Application, sponsored by the Central VT Regional Planning Commission, was submitted—signed, sealed, and delivered by the deadline!

A million thanks to member-owners and grant writing rock stars, Mary Niebling and Alice Merrill, and our very own Board Treasurer, Rose Paul, for the countless hours spent writing and researching this grant. If awarded, the grant funds a feasibility study with a comprehensive 5-part scope of work to take a closer look at whether to expand the size of the Co-op in place, or consid-

er a hypothetical move to a more visible (and larger) location. The grant would fund architectural and financial consultations, plus an Internal Readiness component that sets this application apart from our two prior attempts.

Internal Readiness is the process that informs the membership of the options and gets us geared up to vote. In preparation for any big decisions that we will vote on, we need to amend our existing by-laws. Our current by-laws require in-person voting by consensus or 2/3 majority if a consensus can't be reached. As former General Manager Peter Youngbaer joked, "This threshold is more than a Congressional filibuster!" The Board will hold a special member meeting outside, after the snow has disappeared, to address the outdated by-laws. When the Co-op membership is ready to vote on important decisions regarding the Co-op, we want to be sure that everyone's voices are heard!

The Plainfield Co-op has joined other local Cooperatives by petitioning in support of the 135 small, organic dairy farmers in our region who are losing

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their contracts with big buyers Horizon and Maple Hill Creamery. Local farms are part of Vermont's culture, our working landscape. It's an understatement to say that this issue hit close to home. It was a gut punch. Since the news first broke, the Neighboring Food Cooperative Association (NFCA) has announced their commitment to the Northeast Organic Family Farm Partnership and invited us to sign on to help "solve the crisis of disappearing family farms in our region."

Please support your local farms and creameries! Last year, we featured Strafford Organic Creamery at Rockbottom Farm in our newsletter; the year before it was Rogers Farmstead. The Plainfield Co-op is your closest grocery carrying Strafford Organic products. Members can pledge their support of our regional family farms by purchasing their products and other local brands, including Butterworks Farm, Champlain Valley Creamery, Rogers Farmstead, Neighborly Farms, and Sweet Rowen Farmstead, to name a few. For a list of local organic farms partnering with the Northeast Organic Family Farm Partnership, please visit: <https://www.saveorganicfamilyfarms.org/brand-partners> and look for the "seal" at your local Co-ops.

Rose does an excellent job painting a picture of our finances in the Treasurer's report. The picture is bleak, but if spring brings mud and songbirds, it also brings people out of the woodwork. We invite you to stop into the Co-op and shop locally! The Plainfield Co-op accepts EBT and P-EBT payment and you do not need to be a member to shop with us. Some other ways to show your support are to join a committee or the Board.

We have two open seats on the Board—with two additional members we will be an even more robust team. We encour-

age you to reach out with your interest! The Board meets the 4th Tuesday of the month at 6pm via Zoom. Log in:



Every single agenda offers an "Open Member Time" at the beginning of the meeting. Have a big idea? Agenda items can be brought up one week prior for inclusion by submitting them to: [Board@plainfieldcoop.com](mailto:Board@plainfieldcoop.com)

As spring emerges, I hope you all are healthy, have peace in your heart, and enjoy crocuses in bloom! ❖

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**Editor's note:**

*Minutes of Board meetings and agendas can be viewed from the Co-op website: [plainfieldcoop.com](http://plainfieldcoop.com) > Governance > Board of Directors, scroll down.*

## JOIN THE BOARD!

The Values among Cooperatives are: self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity. The Board is guided by these. Currently we have two open seats on the Board. Folks with diverse backgrounds are especially encouraged to join. If you are interested in lending your skills and are passionate about what cooperatives stand for, email: [board@plainfieldcoop.com](mailto:board@plainfieldcoop.com) for more information.

# Plainfield Co-op Treasurer's Report

by Rose Paul, Board treasurer

Snapshot of Co-op profit (loss) at end of fiscal year  
2021 compared with fy 2020

	Jan 1 to Dec 31, 2021	Jan 1 to Dec 31, 2020
<b>Gross sales</b>	\$ 795,185	\$ 812,568
<b>Gross profit margin</b>	34%	34%
<b>Gross income</b>	409,024	417,416
<b>Expenses</b>	447,737	455,993
<b>Profit (Loss)</b>	<b>\$ (38,713)</b>	<b>\$ (38,578)</b>

I will report on how we ended the last fiscal year and take a look at where we are for the first two months of this year.

Our fiscal year runs from January 1 to December 31. On December 31, 2021, we had \$74,700 in our several bank accounts. This is a drop of \$45,000 from the same time last year. One factor that led to the decrease was having to replace equipment that broke down last year. Those costs amounted to \$18,000 for new freezers and \$4,500 for a new furnace, including the labor to install them. Our accounts payable were higher by \$21,588 from the same time in the prior year. We ended 2021 with \$49,003 in accounts payable, compared with \$27,415 the prior year. One bright spot in our cash flow picture is that we consistently paid down our equity loan on time, and at the end of the year we had \$15,171 left to pay on this loan. We were timely on all our bills as well.

Total sales for 2021 amounted to \$795,185, down some \$9,500 from 2020. Our gross profit margin for the year was 34%, which is below our target of 35%. The \$7,000 cost of spoiled food

when our freezers died contributed to missing our gross profit margin target. We ended 2021 with a net loss of \$38,000, on a par with the prior year. However, unlike 2020, there are no government stimulus funds that will pull us out of the red for 2021.

The last quarter of 2021 (September through December) was a slow period for the Co-op, with sales down from the prior year. This trend is continuing through January and February of 2022, although slower sales are typical for these two months. We have a combined net loss of almost \$25,000 for January and February of 2022. This is not unusual for these winter months, but if we continue to see depressed sales as we go through the summer, we'll have to draw down our savings to pay expenses and this will not be sustainable beyond a year or two.

We had another major piece of equipment fail in mid-February, a compressor that served our dairy and meat coolers. Again we had losses due to spoilage and a lack of sales for several days when the

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shelves were empty. The new compressor cost 5,000 including labor—yet another draw on our declining savings.

What can we do to reverse this trend? Shop more at our local Co-op, of course. A little bit more sales from each of us

will result in a net positive financial picture for our iconic, beloved 50-year-old local Co-op! The larger stores are farther away and cost more “food miles” to shop there. The impact of these food miles on our climate, as well as on our pocketbooks with the rising price of gas, make it a reasonable and responsible choice to shop as local as we can. ❖

## General Manager's Report

by Jamie Lewis

Hello all! As I am writing this, we are still in the last vestiges of Winter. By the time you will read this the weather should be transformed into early Spring, AKA mud season. Every season brings with it unique benefits and some challenges. It's all in how we are able to successfully adapt to our environment/adapt our environment to us that is important, and one of humanity's strengths. Of course, in this world, things can, and often are, taken down the wrong path and become out of balance. I think in a glass half full/half empty scenario it's also important to know what's in that glass. (Got VT milk?)

We all have been through tremendous challenges these last few years. Read our Board Treasurer's article in this newsletter and see Rose outline some financial nuts and bolts that are less than ideal. There are reasons for this. Some are “big” picture current events that directly impact our brave little Co-op store and our psyches: the pandemic, the sad and scary events unfolding in Ukraine, inflation, fuel prices etc. I'm not telling you anything you don't know. We have been in survival mode for some time and just like the changing of seasons, I can sense a much needed, much desired shift in gears.



It's going to take a lot of work and cooperation to move forward into a bright future for the Co-op. Whether you are a member, board member, employee, shopper, or any combination of the above, your involvement and support is extremely valuable to our collective success! The impacts of that success are many. Our store supports the community, the livelihoods of the employees, cooperative networks and our local vendors, farmers, and food systems. That's a lot of folks, folks! This is a rich history that deserves to be preserved and celebrated!

On that note, this year marks the 50th

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anniversary of the Plainfield Co-op. Please stay tuned for details on upcoming special events to commemorate the half century mark! Now that I have the philosophical and inspirational part of this article out of my system, a few updates on some practical matters.

The Community Center. As we are currently seeing things evolve and improve with Covid, we are taking a serious look at re-opening that beloved space back up for use. There are some operational and logistical pieces that need to be in order first. By the time this goes to print I am hoping to see progress on that front. I am aware that access to this space is

vital and so very important to many of you. Thank you for your patience.

We are also looking at what are the right steps to take moving forward with relaxing strict Covid precautions, as most other businesses are doing.

Lastly, we are working at improving things on an operational basis in terms of the store. We want to optimize your shopping experience as much as possible and make you feel welcomed and appreciated, because you are! We look to continue to improve and refine product selection for your needs and desires.

That's enough out of me for the moment. Thank you. I look forward to seeing you at the Co-op! ❖



## Our Farmers Thank You

Since 1919, the farm families of Cabot Co-op have been passionate about making the world's best cheese. We use only the purest ingredients to craft our creamy, delicious classics. Just maybe, that's why we've won every major award for taste. Learn more at [cabotcheese.coop](http://cabotcheese.coop)



# RECIPES

collected by Debra Stoleroff

## Irish Colcannon with (Wild) Greens

From Hank Shaw, [www.honest.food.net](http://www.honest.food.net)

Ever had colcannon, the Irish mixture of potatoes, green things and onions? It is to regular mashed potatoes what truffles are to button mushrooms. What's more, the idea of colcannon is infinitely malleable. Traditionally the green thing is cabbage or kale, and, for the most part, green onions or scallions are added to make it colcannon.

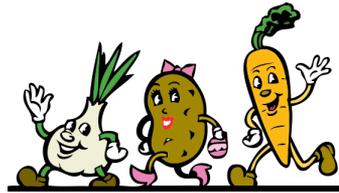
Basically colcannon is 3 parts potato (or other root veggie, like parsnip or turnip) to 1 part green thing and 1/2 part green onion. Butter and cream or milk you add to taste. If you want a store-bought, traditional version of colcannon, use potatoes and kale and scallions. If you are a forager, use any green thing – cow parsnip, nettles, dandelions, etc – and any wild onion.

*Prep Time: 10 mins*

*Cook Time: 25 mins*

*Course: Side Dish*

*Servings: 4 people*



### Ingredients

- 2 pounds waxy potatoes such as Yukon Gold, peeled and cut into chunks
- Salt
- 3 cups of chopped greens, loosely packed
- 1 cup chopped green onions, scallions, ramps, etc.
- 1 cup half-and-half or milk
- 5 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided

### Preparation

1. Put the potatoes in salty water and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until tender, about 20 minutes. When the potatoes are done, pour them into a colander and return the pot to the heat.
2. Add 2 tablespoons butter and the greens and onions. Saute, stirring constantly, until the greens wilt. Sprinkle some salt over the greens as they cook. Add the half-and-half and another tablespoon of butter and bring this to a simmer. Return the potatoes to the pot, turn off the heat and mash well. Add salt to taste.
3. To serve, put some colcannon on everyone's plate and make a little well in the center. Add a dot of butter to the well. ★

# If You Think Co-op Prices are too High - Read This! How to Shop at the Co-op

by Paula Emery, Member since 1987

If you were a Co-op member back in the late 80s you might remember the “spirit-ed” discussions we had about whether or not to carry **packaged ramen**. They were EPIC! In very general terms, the pro side argued that we had to sell packaged ramen in order to keep up with Hunger Mountain Co-op, and the con side warned that packaged ramen would be only the beginning of a steep decline into the sale of packaged foods over bulk foods. Now, over thirty years later, as we face the calamitous rise in the price of packaged foods, we also face an opportunity to revisit the parts of the store that remain much as they were back in the old, pre-ramen days.

Take a look at the array of **international foods** on the lower shelves of the aisle closest to the vegetable produce cooler. There are amazing bargains—including ramen!

## ► Volume

As we are a small store, we have very limited space for storing stock, which means that we are usually unable to take advantage of the lower pricing of large quantity purchases (think pallets and truckloads). Buying in large quantity is how stores like Walmart, Costco, Hunger Mountain Co-op, City Market, and Trader Joes are able to offer lower prices. If you have never been in the back of the Plainfield Co-op, where stock is kept, go back and take a look! We definitely don't have room for pallets, which means that we don't often get pallet pricing, therefore what we pay per item is actually more than what larger stores pay for the same item. On the other hand, you, as a member owner, can avail yourself of high volume pricing in

two ways: you can special order by the case and you can make sure to shop regularly at the Co-op. **The bottom line is that the more we all buy at the store, the more we sell, the cheaper it gets.**

## ► Special Orders

Is there something you always purchase at the Co-op? Does your family go through a lot of oatmeal? flour? peanut butter? frozen pizza? dogfood? Consider special ordering those items for great savings! You can special order any item and you'll get it at cost plus a 30% markup, which will save you a considerable amount of money. Just ask at the register. Remember you can split special orders with friends or family.

## ► Discounted Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables that are not at their prime are removed from the produce coolers every morning and put on a shelf. Everything on this shelf sells for ½ price. After 6:00PM everything on the shelf is free! (Please be considerate and only take as much as you need!)

## ► Membership Sales

There are sales fliers posted at the front of the store that also come to your email, if you are a member. You can save a lot of money by planning ahead and buying things while they are on sale.

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▶ **Bulk = Maximum Volume with Minimum Markup and No Plastic Packaging**

If you are looking for ways to make food more affordable, bulk is the way to go! The Co-op offers as many items as possible in bulk bins: **coffee, flour, beans, grains, granola, nuts and seeds.** You also cut down on your plastic consumption and your landfill loading by buying in bulk.

The bulk bins are very visible in the Co-op, but what you may not see is the **bulk cheese, dried fruits, and snacks.** Look for parmesan, Grafton cheddar, provolone, and mozzarella cheeses that are purchased in large quantities and broken by workers and volunteers into smaller chunks. These items are usually significantly less expensive than the brand name and prepackaged varieties.

Above the fruit you will find **dried fruit and nuts** that were also purchased in large quantities and broken into smaller quantities by workers and volunteers. This makes them cheaper or comparable in price to pre-packaged grocery store offerings.

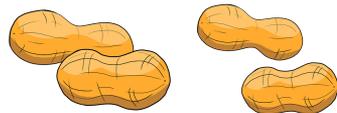
We also have bulk **candy and snacks!** You'll find chocolate covered nuts, pretzels, coconut chunks, honey-sesame crunch and candied ginger all purchased in bulk and repacked for affordability in the snack and candy section.

Buying **culinary and medicinal herbs** at the Co-op saves a tremendous amount of money, as you only need to buy as much as you need — instead of a whole container.

The Plainfield Co-op works hard to stock options that are affordable. You just have to know where to look for them! ❖

## Peanut Butter Machine

Tired of trying to stir up that layer of concrete peanut butter from the bottom of the jar that's been sitting on a shelf for months? Struggle no more for the Co-op now has a peanut butter machine, a gift from Hunger Mountain Co-op! It sits between the coffee grinder and the herbs. Plastic containers are available or you can bring your own.



## Ramp Escabeche

From [saveur.com](http://saveur.com)

Chef Jose Enrique gave us the recipe for a springlike version of escabeche, the vinegar-and-olive oil pickling sauce that's used in Puerto Rican cuisine to flavor and preserve everything from fish to vegetables. Serve grilled ramps right away, or preserve their garlicky goodness for later.

*Yield: makes 2 cups*

*Time: 15 minutes*

### Ingredients

- 8 oz. ramps, trimmed
- 1/2 cup plus 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- Kosher salt
- 1/4 cup rice vinegar
- 1/4 cup honey
- Coarsely ground black pepper



### Preparation

1. Light a grill. In a large bowl, toss the ramps with 2 tablespoons of the olive oil and season with salt. Arrange the ramps on the grill, and cook, turning, until lightly charred, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer the ramps to a glass pint jar, folding them to fit inside, if necessary.
2. In a 2-qt. saucepan, combine the vinegar with the honey and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Cook until reduced by one-third, about 5 minutes. Pour the vinegar over the ramps along with the remaining 1/4 cup olive oil, and season with salt and pepper. Seal the jar and let stand until completely cool before serving. Refrigerate for up to 2 months. ★

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# New Co-op Staff

Since the pandemic began several new Co-op staff have been hired, in addition to our General Manager, but we have not yet seen their faces in the store. Here they are unmasked!

With a limited number of customers allowed in the store at one time, there has been less friendly chit-chat. So here's a little about each of these staff in case you haven't talked with them yet.

## Dan Siegel



Dan is a former helicopter pilot for the US Army and is definitely one of the few members of the Co-op with a high security clearance! He retired from a 30 year career as a software engineer and then fled Texas for Plainfield, where he raises sheep, llamas, chickens and mini horses with his wife, Carla. He loves the laid back atmosphere and the friendly people. Dan is also a life-long student of history.

## Deb Bothfeld

Deb is a retired school teacher and bus driver. She enjoys learning something new every day at the Co-op, seeing old friends and meeting new ones.



## Jay Ekis



Jay is well known in Central Vermont and beyond as an accomplished singer-songwriter and guitarist. He is a Vermont Master Naturalist and enjoys camping, especially in the winter. You can also find him playing tennis, making music, and... sewing! He likes the small, local feel of the Co-op and really enjoys learning about the produce and beer departments.

## Paula Emery

Paula has been a member of the Co-op since 1987. She experienced withdrawals from not being allowed in the store during the pandemic, so she began working at the Co-op in order to be on the inside of the building should there be another shut-down. She now works two shifts. Paula is a retired high school social studies teacher and has a masters degree in history from UVM.



## Chinese Scallion Pancake

From Hank Shaw, [www.honest.food.net](http://www.honest.food.net), a James Beard Award-winning author and chef who focuses on wild foods.

Not a pancake, nor really a dumpling, Chinese scallion pancakes are really something of a flatbread.

Making these pancakes requires a little bit of skill, but I will walk you through step by step below. Any sort of green onion will work, from regular green onions to chives, garlic chives, ramps or any wild onion. I use tri-cornered leeks here. It also really helps to have a tortilla press to quickly flatten the pancakes, but you can certainly use a normal rolling pin. These are best served warm, but are almost as good at room temperature.

*Course: Appetizer, Snack*

*Servings: 6 people*

### Ingredients

- 2¾ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup hot water
- 2 cups minced green onions, ramps, etc
- 1 tablespoon salt
- Sesame oil for brushing, about 2 to 3 tablespoons
- Peanut or other vegetable oil for frying

### Preparation

1. Put the flour in a large bowl and mix in the salt. Make a well in the center. Bring the water to a boil, then turn off the heat. When the water stops bubbling, pour it into the well in the flour. Stir together with a fork until you get a shaggy mass. Wipe the goopy flour off the fork and knead the mass into an elastic dough, which should take about 3 to 5 minutes. Put the dough into a plastic bag or wrap it in plastic wrap and let the dough sit for 30 minutes to 2 hours.
2. Take the dough out and cut it into four pieces. Put three of them back into the plastic bag. For a work surface, I use a baking sheet flipped over that I've lightly oiled with vegetable oil. Roll out the piece of dough into a roughly rectangular shape; it doesn't need to be precise.
3. Paint the dough with the sesame oil, then sprinkle with about a half teaspoon of salt. Sprinkle minced scallions over the dough generously, leaving about 1/2 inch free space on all sides of the dough.



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*Chinese Scallion Pancake continued* >>

4. Roll the dough into a tight log starting from the longer side of the rectangle. Slice the log in half and pinch close the ends of the log to keep the scallions from spilling out. Take one half of the log and roll it tightly into a snail. Flatten the snail with the palm of your hand.



5. Cut up a Ziploc bag or some such into large plastic squares that will cover your tortilla press. Place the flattened snail on one piece of plastic, cover it with another. Squash the dough with the tortilla press, or roll it out with a rolling pin to a thickness of  $\frac{1}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  quarter of an inch.



6. Now you need to fry the pancakes in a little hot oil. I fry and press as I go, keeping the finished pancakes in a tortilla warmer lined with paper towels. You could also put them on a baking sheet in an oven set to 200°F. But if you are a beginner, roll out all your pancakes first.
7. I fry the pancakes in a large sauté pan with about a tablespoon of vegetable oil. I prefer peanut oil because it's used a lot in Chinese cooking. Lard is another good choice. Get the oil hot before you drop the pancake in and cook for about 2 minutes per side, just until you get a little browning on them. Serve by themselves, with soy sauce or with a sweet-spicy dipping sauce.

**Notes**

*Scallion pancakes will keep, wrapped in a paper towel, for a day or two in the fridge. They can also be frozen.*



# Supporting Regional Organic Family Dairy Farms: An Update

by Lucy Blue, Board Secretary

Are regional organic family dairy farms an endangered species? Here's an update about the cancelled milk contracts, what is being done on the national and regional levels to address that, and what we as individuals can do to support the farms. Individually we may be drops in the bucket, but together we can be a tsunami!

## ► The Situation

Last fall 135 organic family dairy farms in the Northeast were notified by Horizon Organic and Maple Hill Creamery that their contracts would not be renewed as of August 2022 (a date which has since been extended to February 2023). The good news is that recently Organic Valley (OV), a large processor, announced that it will take on 90 of these farms, thus saving them from potentially dire consequences. That leaves about 50 farms in need of contracts. However, even for the ones who now have contracts again, this is no time for complacency.

## ► Challenges

Challenges center around supply and demand, exploitation of loopholes by huge dairy farms in other parts of the country, and lack of enforcement of national organic standards. "In Vermont, many organic farmers are not earning back what they're spending to produce milk." Moreover, this year, the cost of grain and gas is high, but these price increases don't always cause an increase in dairy prices. Although some Vermont farms are still operating at a profit, "it's harder for everyone to do that, and

there's less and less wiggle room," - VT Digger, March 21, 2022.

## ► Supporting Organic Family Dairy Farms

U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., who helped author the National Organic Program, recently helped allocate \$22 million for the program's administration. In the accompanying legislation, he directed the program "to deliver the strongest possible enforcement oversight. ... These standards have been delayed far too long, while we have seen the markets of small organic dairies in this region displaced by larger and larger farms that exploit every loophole," he said in a statement to VTDigger.

Leahy "has repeatedly raised the issue with USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack, including on his visit to Vermont in August," reported VTDigger. "The USDA has [also] sent other help to the region, including \$20 million in extra funding for the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center."

Another important initiative has been the formation of a nonprofit called the Northeast Organic Family Farm Partnership (NOFFP), whose mission is "to increase the consumer demand for products made with regionally-produced organic milk, thereby creating market security for the region's current and future family farms."

"In order for the farms dropped by Horizon and Maple Hill Creamery to be offered contracts or find alternative

*continued* >>

markets for their milk, we need a general increased demand for products made with their milk. The increased demand will trigger processors to sign on more farms (like we saw with Organic Valley recently), cheesemakers, and other value-added processors to buy more milk, and eventually, inspire the critical investment necessary for building stable markets for our farms. Hopefully, all the farms that want contracts will get them by Feb. 2023, and even then, we'll be busy working so no farms find themselves in this situation ever again." - Olga Moriarty, Executive Director, NOFFP

"The only long-term solution for these farmers, and all of the region's organic family farmers, is to encourage grocers, food co-ops, restaurants, and foodservice venues to commit to increasing their purchases from the brands who get their milk from these farms. If just 10% of consumers in this region purchased just one additional pint per week of regionally produced organic dairy products, this would equal the entire output of these 135 farms." - [saveorganicfamilyfarms.org](http://saveorganicfamilyfarms.org)

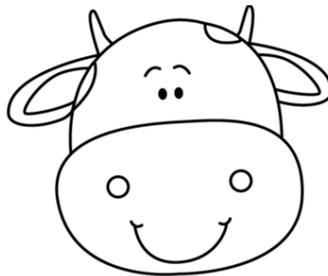
The benefits of organic farming include healthy soils, avoidance or minimization

of harmful chemicals, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions, among others.

### What Can You Do?

1. **Pledge** to buy at least a quarter of your weekly dairy products from brand partners.  
Go to [saveorganicfamilyfarms.org](http://saveorganicfamilyfarms.org) and click on the "How You Can Help" tab.
2. **Spread the word** via Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, email, letter in a bottle—whatever floats your boat. Fun fact: I actually received a letter in a bottle once. It only took three years to get to me!
3. **Donate** to support NOFFP's efforts to educate and build a region-wide commitment to helping to keep the Northeast's organic family farms financially supported and viable.
4. **Shop** at the Plainfield Co-op for the following brand partners of NOFFP: Butterworks Farm, Champlain Valley Creamery, Neighborly Farms, Organic Valley — CROPP Cooperative, Rogers Farmstead, and Strafford Organic Creamery.

Your support is MOOch appreciated! ❖



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Featuring yarns made in Vermont,  
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858 East Hill Road  
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## **Bare-Root Season: Time to move the plants**

**by Nicko Rubin, East Hill Tree Farm**

I love April. Erratic weather, mud, and the plant world springing to life. April is the best time to move trees and shrubs. Perhaps we put a tree in the wrong place, or grew something in a garden bed for a few years and now it is time to move into the field, or perhaps we make our living growing and selling plants; whatever the reason, this is the best time to move plants.

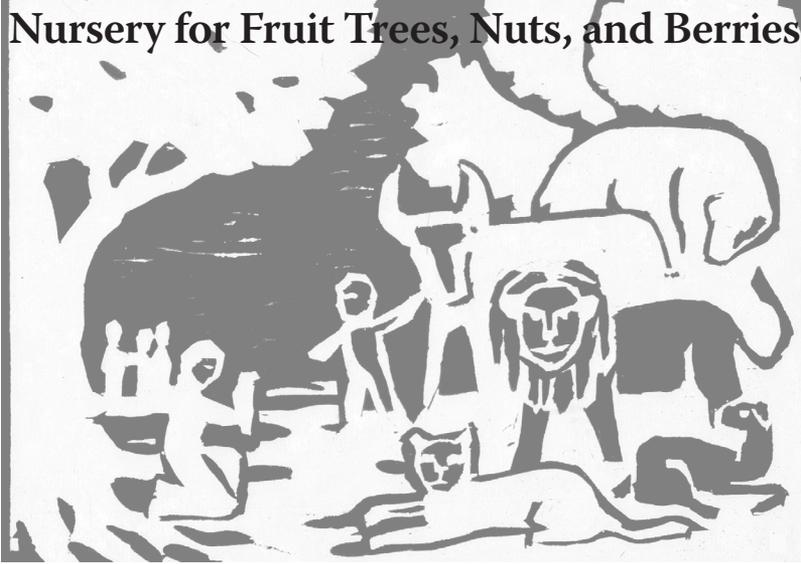
Trees that went dormant in the fall are for the most part still dormant when the ground thaws in April. We can dig up most trees and shrubs this time of year, shake any soil off the roots, and move the now 'bare-root' plant to its new home. If we do this while the plant is actively growing (typically mid-May though mid-October) we will likely kill it.

Here is why this is the time to move plants: The dormant tree with no leaves is not transpiring, and it also lacks the delicate feeder roots that would typically be damaged when a tree is dug up. It will not dry out, or will do so only very slowly. As soon as a tree begins to leaf out above ground, there is a correlation below ground: fine feeder roots begin to grow from the woody roots that overwintered. These fine roots will take up water and exchange nutrients with the soil. These feeder roots are fragile, they will break easily and will be quickly dried out by sun and wind. Similar to the leaves above ground, these fine roots drop off in the fall when the tree goes dormant.

At the nursery we do as much of our plant handling as possible during this narrow 'bare-root season,' once the ground thaws but before plants have begun to grow. If you have plants to move, now is your chance. Happy Spring!

# EAST HILL TREE FARM

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**Check: [www.easthilltreefarm.com](http://www.easthilltreefarm.com)**

## Membership and Marketing Report

by Leah Tedesco

The latest variation on the Marketing Committee's recently-developed promotional flyer is being used to tease the Co-op's upcoming 50th birthday this coming November 11th. An emphasis is being put on rallying customers to load up their gift cards to assist the store financially. Speaking of our birthday, we have just begun discussing an early celebration sometime in the warmer months, and would like the community to weigh in regarding ideas,

donations, and volunteers (date, location, entertainment, food, etc). Contact [membership@plainfieldcoop.com](mailto:membership@plainfieldcoop.com) with your input.

Also, the Marketing Committee has been working with the Fire House and artist Matthew Denton on a design for the other side of the wooden sign by the sidewalk. This new sign will express our appreciation for the service of the firefighters. ❖

# SHORT & SWEET MAPLE RECIPES

gathered by Glenda Bissex



## Maple Butter

from The Official Vermont Maple Cookbook

### Ingredients

- 1 stick of butter
- 1/2 - 3/4 c. maple syrup

### Preparation

Whip butter in a food processor or blender until smooth. Dribble in syrup and mix well. Store in a refrigerated, covered container for up to 3 weeks. Delicious on biscuits, English muffins, waffles and sweet breads. ☆

## Maple Bread Pudding

### Ingredients

- 3/4 c. maple syrup
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 c. milk
- 4 slices stale or toasted bread, cut in cubes (cinnamon-raisin and artisan bread are especially good)
- 1/4 c. raisins

### Preparation

Butter a 1 quart baking dish. Put the bread cubes in it and sprinkle with raisins. Mix together the syrup, milk and eggs, and pour over the bread. Bake at 350 for 30 - 45 minutes, until set. Serve with whipped cream. ☆

## Easy Maple Pralines

from The Vermont Maple Syrup Cookbook

### Ingredients

- 2 c. powdered sugar
- 1 c. maple syrup
- 1/2 c. cream
- 2 c. pecans or butternuts

### Preparation

Boil sugar, maple syrup, and cream together until a few drops of the mixture form a soft ball in cold water. Beat until smooth and creamy. Then stir in nuts and drop from a teaspoon in small piles on waxed or parchment paper. ☆