As the MNFC Board continued to examine our local food system, I’ve been heartened to see so many of our community members put so much creative energy toward strengthening our local food system. At the Co-op our General Manager Glenn Lower and some of our Board members are working with the Addison County Local Food Collaborative and the Farm to School initiative to help get more locally produced food into local institutions. In our own store, our dedicated managers and staff are working to increase the percentage of local and organic food in the store. In a private sector/public sector collaboration local food producers are developing food storage facilities and doing on farm research to increase the quality and quantity of crops that can be grown locally.

While these are positive signs many challenges remain. There are many “hard questions” being asked. What are the changes each sector of the food system will have to make to create a vibrant local food economy? Where will we find the local and regional farmers to meet increased demand? How will that system assure that food is produced in ways that are healthy for our entire community and for our planet? What political advocacy is necessary to further these ends? As the Board of Director’s develops its vision for the future, we will continue our educational work based upon these questions.

I recently attended the Farm to Institution Forum at the Vermont Northeast Organic Farmers Association Winter Conference. Attendees looked at the blocks to getting more locally grown food into more Vermont institutions and ways those blocks might be overcome. The participants were farmers, processors, distributors, institutional food purchasers, food stores and support organizations from all around the state of Vermont. Some participants were competitors in their sector of the food system, yet they came together with a willingness to freely offer information about their own operations so that everyone benefited.

Spring is the time to celebrate the new growing season. We invite you to join us at our Annual Meeting on the Middlebury Town Green on June 4th for celebration and lively discussion.
The number of member-owners has grown steadily in recent years. Only current (share paid) member-owners are considered in the count.

"Local" sales are defined as grown or value-added within Vermont. Our emphasis on LOCAL will help build a sustainable local economy and contribute to a better world.

Equity is the accumulation of all retained earnings (profits + member shares) over the years. Equity provides future strength and stability for our community-owned store.

Sales have grown steadily since the Co-op expanded in October 2004.

Profits have also been healthy in recent years. As a community-owned co-op, any profits are used to improve the business for the benefit of the member-owners and community. This is one of the critical differences between a co-op and a chain business whose purpose is to increase profits for stockholders outside the community.