

CO-OP NEWSLETTER

under the sun

FREE!

SPRING • 2018

MIDDLEBURY NATURAL FOODS CO-OP



the green life issue

BETWEEN THE ROWS

Keeping The Soil in Organic

THE DEEP DISH

Reducing and Reusing Before Recycling

SPRING MEANS RAMPS!

Tips For Sustainable Harvesting

CO-OP SHOPPING

Moving Towards Zero-Waste

PLANTING BUTTERNUT SQUASH
HIGH MOWING ORGANIC SEED CO, S.P. BURGESS



MIDDLEBURY
NATURAL
FOODS
CO-OP

OPEN 8:00AM / 7:00PM EVERYDAY
9 WASHINGTON STREET / MIDDLEBURY, VERMONT
(802)388-7276 / middlebury.coop
EVERYONE WELCOME!

WHY DOES THE CO-OP EXIST?

The Co-op exists to help our member-owners customers and the community benefit from:

- HEALTHY FOODS
- VIBRANT LOCAL ECONOMY
- ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE & ENERGY EFFICIENT PRACTICES
- COOPERATIVE DEMOCRATIC OWNERSHIP
- LEARNING ABOUT THESE VALUES

WHAT IS OUR BUYING CRITERIA?

Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op strives to select products that are local, organic, and free of:

- ARTIFICIAL PRESERVATIVES, COLORS, FLAVORS
- ADDED HORMONES AND ANTIBIOTICS
- TRANSFATS • PARABENS
- HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP
- ANIMAL TESTING

To contact the Board of Directors:
board@middlebury.coop
(802) 388-7276

If you would like to receive an electronic copy of this newsletter, or if you have any questions or comments please contact:

Karin Mott
karinmott@middlebury.coop
(802) 388-7276 x307

BECOME A MEMBER!

- DISCOUNTS AT LOCAL BUSINESSES
- MEMBER DEALS • PATRONAGE REFUND
- A VOICE AND A VOTE

membership@middlebury.coop



under the sun

QUARTERLY • SPRING 2018

3 CO-OP CONVERSATIONS

A Letter From Glenn, GM

4 A WORD FROM THE BOARD

Food Waste Practices and VT Law

6 THE DEEP DISH

Reducing and Reusing before Recycling

8 RALLY FOR CHANGE

Charter House Coalition

9 CO-OP SHOPPING

Moving Towards Zero Waste

12 BETWEEN THE ROWS

Keeping The Soil In Organic

14 SPOTLIGHT ON...

High Mowing Organic Seed Co.

16 PATRONAGE DIVIDEND

2018 Update

18 THE INSIDE SCOOP

Meet Steve

19 FOOD FOCUS: RAMPS

Ramp Pesto Recipe

CONTRIBUTORS

Nadine Canter Barnicle
Emily Landenberger
Glenn Lower
Karin Mott
Gina Sherwood

Dear Co-op Friends,

I love that our spring newsletter celebrates Green Living. Not only is it my favorite season of the year (and Vermont has four fantastic seasons to choose from) but in the current political and global climates, nothing seems as important as caring about the health of people and the environment. We take pride in the fact that the Co-op plays a key role for so many of our shoppers who want to live healthier lives for their families/communities and for the environment. I like to think of the Co-op as having a triple bottom line of people, planet, and profit.

When I think of Green Living, my brain thinks about: Green Up Day, clean solar energy, healthy food grown by farmers working with nature (not with chemicals), better insulation, more walking, more biking, clean water for drinking and swimming and fishing (I love to drink, swim and fish!)

I also think about our Co-op. We do a lot already: our expansion was a major effort to keep our downtown healthy and vibrant. This was a huge challenge. It's easy to see why businesses choose to locate out on the strip leading into town ... lots of space to sprawl, lots of parking, opportunities for future expansion, less sharing needed with neighbors, easier decisions and solutions, etc. We decided that staying as part of the downtown was so important that we were willing to deal with the added expense and challenges of expanding in our current location.

I could also write about the energy steps we took with our expansion ... better insulation, air lock entrances, experimenting with meat and produce behind glass doors ... our hope is that we are preparing for decades of helping people live healthier lives, but there's always more that can be done.

Some members got my attention recently by pointing out that we didn't do enough planning to support people using bikes. They were right. We should help set the example. I met with Laura Asermily who has been a major educator about the benefits of bikes in our community, and we are working on making it better. Thank you, Laura and other members. We can do more! We need to do more! Each of us! What change in your life will you pledge to help with community health and the environment? For me, I'm going to publicly pledge to ride my bike to work more often in 2018, and I'm determined to finally install PV solar panels on the roof of my house this year!!! I only ask all my Co-op friends to please hold me to those pledges. Happy spring everyone.



I'll be seeing you innnnnn the Co-op,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Glenn".

Glenn Lower, General Manager
Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op

a word from the board

Our food waste practices: keeping up with our ends and meeting the new VT law By Nadine Canter Barnicle

As my hero Jim Henson anthropomorphized through his alter ego Kermit, *"It's not easy being green."* That is unless you are the Co-op with a staff, management team and board who aim to be "green" every day. This means having systems and practices in place that nourish and protect our bodies and the earth... Not an easy thing to do when you are a business that deals in perishables and foods with shelf lives. I was fortunate to work with 16 Middlebury College seniors this past fall in the **Environmental Studies Community-Engaged Practicum (ES401)**. We studied Climate Change and Solid Waste in Vermont and beyond by evaluating the goals and impacts of implementing Vermont's Universal Recycling Law (ACT 148). Much of this article borrows from the research these students conducted.



Act 148 was passed in 2012 to increase diversion rates of solid waste into recycling programs keeping recyclables and organic materials out of landfills.

Aside from being difficult to site, landfills are also some of the largest sources of greenhouse gases. The law requires that Vermonters divert all compost and recycling from landfills. The law prioritizes alternative food waste options, encouraging donation, composting, feeding livestock and converting to energy with the goal of re-conceptualizing how we manage and think about food waste viewing it as a resource, not waste. The restructuring of the waste system through Act 148 is being implemented in stages. Initially, the law applied only to large producers of waste, but smaller producers are being phased in year by year, requiring proper

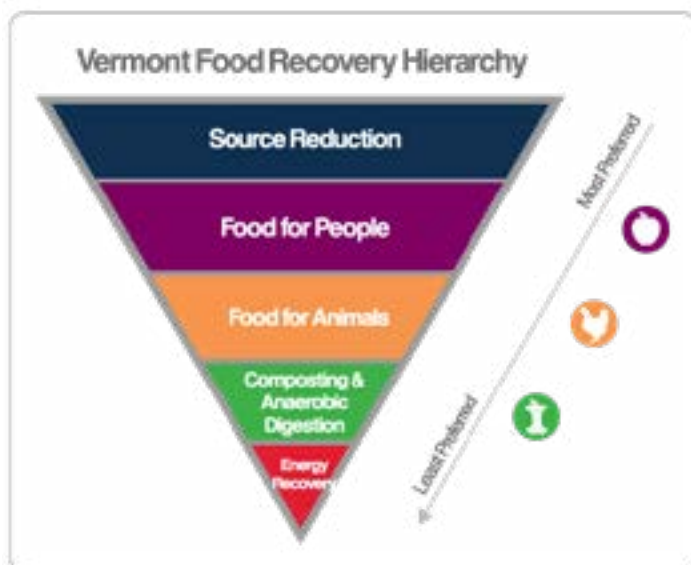
sorting of trash, recyclables and compostables down to the household level.

Our Co-op will need to be in compliance with Act 148 by July 2020.

As I looked into how we are preparing for this new law, it turns out we are way ahead of the game. You see in 2017 we donated perfectly good food (12,619 pounds to be precise) that we could not sell to the *Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO)*. And, that is not all - food that cannot be donated goes to compost. This compost is primarily picked up by area pig and poultry farmers, but we also have *Casella* check once a week for any remaining compost unclaimed by farmers. We generate approximately 82,125 lbs/year of post-consumer scraps as compost which come mostly from the Produce department, the deli kitchen, some from Bulk, and also from the compost bin near the cafe where customers deposit their lunch scraps. All recyclables and food scraps produced and disposed of by the Co-op are already being properly sorted and leave our site free of cross-contamination between trash, recycling and food scraps.

"if global food waste was a country, its carbon footprint would rank third, behind only China and the U.S."

On a larger scale, the diversion of food scraps from landfills is important in reducing the methane emissions produced by Vermont. The environmental impact of food waste is of a high magnitude; *"if global food waste was a country, its carbon footprint would rank third, behind only China and the U.S."* (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2013). Greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the decomposition of organic wastes such as food scraps in landfills are a contributing factor to climate change. In landfills, the decomposition of food, the single largest component of municipal solid waste reaching



faster than other material in the landfills. As a result of the rapid decomposition, the methane is often released before landfills are capped, directly releasing it into the atmosphere without any opportunity for capture (Gunders, 2012). Diverting the materials that are a primary source of methane production would work to reduce the harmful environmental effects of the landfills.

Perhaps Kermit (aka Jim Henson) didn't quite have it right and we can look to the leadership of the Co-op and say it can be "easy being green."

Please note the primary source for much of this article appears in: "Middlebury Union High School Food Waste Recovery Initiative Final Report." Middlebury College Environmental Studies Program, ENVS0401B, Fall 2017.



our landfills in the United States, accounts for 23% of all methane production in the country (Gunders, 2012). The anaerobic decomposition that happens when organic materials are placed into landfills produces the methane, a greenhouse gas with an effect approximately 25 times stronger than carbon dioxide (CalRecycle, 2013). Their organic nature and high moisture content causes food scraps to decompose

Monthly Board of Directors' Meetings

Co-op members are welcome to attend Board of Directors' meetings. They're usually scheduled for 6:30pm on a Wednesday, in the MNFC meeting room on the ground floor of 1 Washington Street. Time is set aside at the beginning of each meeting for members to express concerns or suggestions. The schedule is posted at middlebury.coop/participate/meetings-elections/

Join us, All are welcome CO-OP ANNUAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY JUNE 6TH
@AMERICAN FLATBREAD, MIDDLEBURY
5:30 - 7:30



We'll talk about the past year,
meeting our ENDS,
and what the future may hold
enjoy flatbread, salad,
soft-drinks, and dessert

BOARD ELECTIONS SPRING 2018

IT'S YOUR CO-OP

VOTE!

LOOK FOR YOUR BALLOTS IN THE MAIL THIS MAY

VOTING BEGINS 5/1/18 AND ENDS 5/31/18 AT 7PM

*Board members serve three-year terms,
elections are held every Spring.*

contact the Board at:
board@middlebury.coop

The Deep Dish

THE BENEFITS OF REDUCING & REUSING



Significant progress has been made since the development of modern recycling programs in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Most of us have access to curbside recycling services and we're rarely more than a few steps away from a recycling bin, even in public places. Thanks to streamlined all-in-one recycling services offered by the Addison County Solid Waste Management District which save us from having to sort our recyclables, one could argue that recycling is pretty darned convenient these days. So convenient, in fact, that we might have forgotten about those other two "R's." We all know that recycling is the right thing to do, but perhaps we could use a reminder that the most effective way to reduce waste is to not create it in the first place.

Recycling an item definitely beats sending it to the landfill, but it still takes a significant amount of energy to recycle an item and transform it into something "new." As a result, reduction and reuse are the most effective ways you can save natural resources, protect the environment and save money. *-Emily*

THE BENEFITS OF REDUCING & REUSING

- ✓ PREVENT POLLUTION CAUSED BY REDUCING THE NEED TO HARVEST NEW RAW MATERIALS
- ✓ SAVE ENERGY
- ✓ REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE
- ✓ SAVE MONEY
- ✓ REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF WASTE THAT WILL NEED TO BE SENT TO LANDFILLS AND INCINERATORS
- ✓ ALLOW PRODUCTS TO BE USED TO THEIR FULLEST EXTENT

IDEAS TO HELP YOU REDUCE + REUSE

BUY IN BULK

When you bring your own containers to buy bulk items, you save packaging waste and you can also save money. At the Co-op, you can bring your own container to buy foods such as flour, grains, maple syrup, and honey in the Bulk department; soaps, lotion, and bath salts in the Wellness department; on-tap beverages such as kombucha, coffee, and tea; and Deli items from the salad bar or hot bar.

BUY USED AND REFURBISHED

You can find everything from clothes to electronics to building materials at specialized reuse centers, architectural salvage yards, and consignment shops. Often, used items are less expensive and just as good as new. Middlebury has several wonderful thrift stores and if you're in Burlington, check out ReSOURCE.

PLAN AHEAD

Planning your weekly meals in advance, utilizing leftovers, and shopping the refrigerator first are great ways to reduce food waste.

[For more tips on reducing food waste, click here.](#)

THINK TWICE BEFORE DISCARDING AN ITEM

Consider alternative uses. The mesh bag your citrus came in can be reused for future produce purchases and that empty two-liter bottle can [make a fun hanging planter](#)

BUY REUSABLE ITEMS RATHER THAN DISPOSABLE

...and incorporate reusable items into your daily routines. For example, you can bring your own silverware and coffee mug to work and bring your own shopping bags to the store.

DONATE GENTLY USED ITEMS WHENEVER POSSIBLE

You can drop them off at a thrift store, consignment shop, or you can post them to Front Porch Forum. Let your trash be someone else's treasure!

MAINTAIN AND REPAIR PRODUCTS

...like clothing, tires, and appliances, so that they won't have to be disposed of and replaced as frequently. Think quality over quantity when purchasing these kinds of items.

LOOK FOR PRODUCTS THAT USE LESS PACKAGING

When manufacturers make their products with less packaging, they use less energy and fewer raw materials. This reduces waste and costs. These extra savings are often passed along to the consumer.





RALLY FOR CHANGE

ROUND UP AT THE REGISTER, MAY 10TH - 16TH
YOUR CO-OP WILL MATCH YOUR DONATION

MAY
10TH - 16TH



CHARTER HOUSE COALITION, Middlebury Vermont

Where Neighbor Helping Neighbor Happens Every Day

Right on the Village Green through the Work of Over 1200 Volunteers

Our Mission

Charter House Coalition (CHC) is a growing community of volunteers in Addison County that provides meals and housing for individuals and families in need.

How we do it

At Charter House Coalition you can find a roof over your head on a cold night, a warm meal any day of the week, a bus pass to get you where you need to go, boots on your feet, and much more.

This happens through volunteer-based programs (1200 strong!) Including;

- Friday night community suppers • Saturday morning breakfasts • Sunday afternoon grill
- Weekday community lunches • A "Farm to Table" community garden
- A family shelter and a warming shelter for individuals 10/15-4/15 every year.

WHAT WE NEED AND HOW CAN YOU HELP

Our 220-Year-Old Building Has Urgent Needs...

As a result of an architectural assessment, an energy efficiency study, and top-to-bottom professional evaluation of the condition of Charter House, we have discovered that many urgent repairs and critical renovations are required. We can share the list if you're interested. Here are two important ones:

- ***Kitchen expansion is critical and major renovation is required by State regulations.***
- ***Replacement of an obsolete heating system is essential to provide appropriate living conditions and reduce out of control fuel costs.***

CO-OP SHOPPING MOVING TOWARDS ZERO-WASTE



Take a moment to think about your day, What did you eat? Where did you go? Did you print anything? Did you throw anything in the trash or the recycling bin?

Now ask yourself.. Did I produce any waste with my meals? Could I have walked to where I needed to go? Did I absolutely need to print that, or could I have gone about it another way? How will I improve for tomorrow?

The pressure to "shop green" can feel like one more task on a long to-do list of responsible life choices we try to make every day. At the Co-op, we want to make shopping with earth-friendly savvy a simple and enjoyable experience. On the following pages, you'll find lots of suggestions for creating less waste, consuming less energy and saving money through your Co-op shopping habits.



KITCHEN & GROCERY

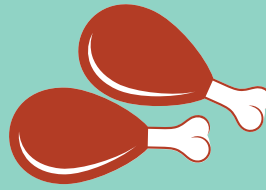


Reusable Items:

- Canvas Bags
- Insulated Bags
- Compact Bags
- Lunch Skins®
- Blessing Basket Totes
- iLids®
- Bamboo Utensils
- Water Jugs
- H2O Filter
- Kleen Kanteen®
- Camelback®
- Glass Storage containers
- Mugs and Cups
- Beeswrap®
- LOCAL Dishscrubbers by Wonderland's Bohemian



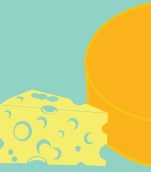
MEAT & FROZEN



Shop Bulk:

- Regionally grown Frozen Fruit and Vegetables.
- Frozen Fresh Pet Food.
- Local, regional, sustainability sourced meat & seafood.
- In-house prepared, minimally packaged meat.

CHEESE



Reusable Containers: Beeswax Shop

The cheese department or as much cheese

WELLNESS



Reusable Containers:

Small containers for shopping zero waste and making your own products!

Shop Bulk:

- Lotion
- Conditioner
- Vermont Soap®
- Dr Bronner's® liquid soap
- Beeswax
- Echinacea
- Fillable Capsules
- Bentonite Clay

CO-OP KITCHEN



Reusable Containers:

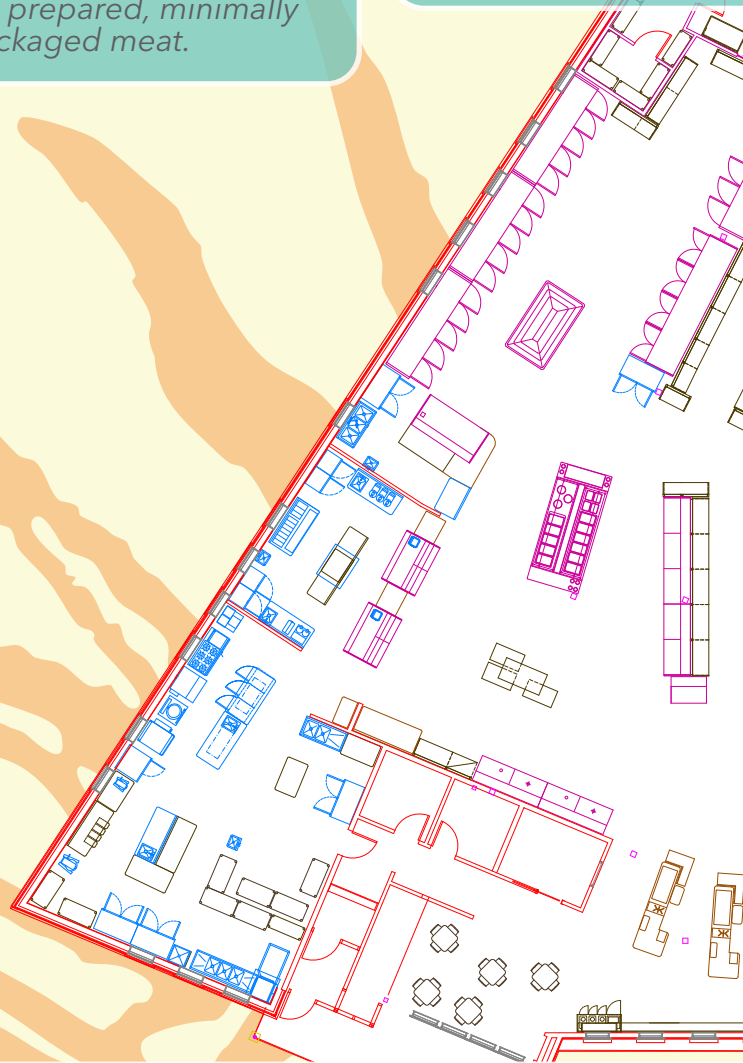
Bowls, plates

Bring your own container

Bring your own mug for a discount on co-op brewed coffee, tea, hot cocoa (winter) iced coffee (summer)

Shop Bulk:

- Hot bar
- salad bar



REUSABLE BAGS ARE

Paper bags are biodegradable, and have a negative impact on the environment. Paper bags consume trees, water, and energy to create, and to ship them. They can sit in a landfill for years unable to decompose.

....Next best thing to bringing your own is reusable bags.

Boxes are saved from shipments.

- Boxes are kept by the registers,



CHEESE



Reusable Containers:

Beeswrap®

Bulk:

Beeswrap® will cut you as little waste as you would like!

DAIRY



Reusable Containers: Egg Cartons, Milk Bottles,

- Local milk in returnable glass bottles.
- Egg carton recycling program - bring your used egg cartons and they will be used again!
- Maple Meadow's egg shipping boxes are returned to the farm used and over and over again.

BULK



Majority of the shopping here can be done zero to little waste.

Reusable Containers: Spice Jars, Kombucha Jugs & Bottles, Mr Natural's Reusable Coffee Filter™

- Buy what you need, a little or a lot!
- Bulk buckets for honey and maple syrup are returned to the vendor and re-used. Remember to weigh your container before filling with bulk items.

Shop Bulk:

- Kombucha on tap • Granola
- Pasta • Grains • Flour • Sugar
- Beans • Maple Syrup • Cooking Oils • Olives • Tea • Coffee
- Spices

PRODUCE



Reusable Containers: Beeswrap® 3B® Reusable Produce Bags

- Delivery boxes are returned to the farmer and re-used whenever possible.
- Our produce team makes a point to source minimally-packaged fruits, vegetables, and herbs.

Shop Bulk:

- Greens • Mushrooms
- Root Vegetables • Tofu

REUSE YOUR BEST BET..

recyclable - but they have a significant environmental footprint, compared to reusable bags. Energy is used to refine the paper and energy. Energy is used to refine the paper bag to stores. Once discarded, paper bags do not break down - due to lack of oxygen.

Bring your own bag? REUSE A BOX!
Boxes are available for customer use.
so if you don't see one - just ask! •





BETWEEN THE ROWS

KEEPING THE SOIL IN ORGANIC

What comes to mind when you think of organically-grown produce? Does it conjure a pastoral scene with fields of fertile soil dotted with lush, healthy plants? What about hydroponic 'vegetable factories' and 'vertical farms' where production is hermetically sealed in huge warehouses filled with LED lights and nutrient pumps? Should industrial-scale hydroponic operations like these qualify for organic certification, or should fertile soil remain the non-negotiable foundation of organic farming?

The USDA's National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) has been granted the authority to make this decision, and in a series of narrow votes at a meeting in November 2017, they chose to allow the majority of these operators to remain a part of the organic program. This decision dealt a disappointing blow to many long-time organic farmers and organic farming advocates who had been working tirelessly to protect the integrity of the organic label. On one side of the argument is a multimillion-dollar hydroponic industry with powerful lobbyists. The global hydroponic market is projected to hit \$490 million by 2023. In the United States, approximately 100 hydroponic operations are already certified organic including berry giant, *Driscoll's*. On the other side of the debate are organic farming pioneers who are now mourning what they see as the devaluation of the organic brand they fought for decades to establish.

Dave Chapman, a longtime Vermont-based organic tomato farmer, along with a small army of other organic farmers and organic farming advocates, packed the room at the November 2017 NOSB meeting in a last-ditch effort to protect the integrity of the organic label. They organized dozens of rallies across the country leading up to the Jacksonville meeting and inspired hundreds of organic advocates to champion the cause.

A RALLY IN THE VALLEY

One such rally took place right here in Vermont in October of 2016 and was dubbed the Rally in the Valley. The rally drew over 250 people who shared the belief that all good farming begins with the soil, including over 100 organic farmers from Vermont, Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Pennsylvania. Congressman Peter Welch, Senator Patrick Leahy, and legendary organic farming expert Eliot Coleman were part of the lineup of elected officials and organic farming leaders who addressed the crowd that day, urging those in attendance to keep the pressure on the Department of Agriculture.

The US government is alone among developed countries in granting the much-desired "organic" label to hydroponic growers. Hydroponic production is a soil-less process that has long been the norm in industrial-scale conventional greenhouse production. Now it is fast becoming the norm in organic certification for several major crops, such as tomatoes and berries. As Chapman points out, by changing the fertilizer brew in their mixing tanks to "natural" (but highly processed)



SENATOR PATRICK LEAHY



CONGRESSMAN PETER WELCH



AUTHOR ELIOT COLEMAN

soluble fertilizers, and then switching to *"approved pesticides"*, the industrial-scale hydroponic producers can miraculously become *"organic"* overnight.

Experts say the explosive growth in hydroponic imports may force some organic farmers out of business in as little as five years.

Farmers in Vermont are already feeling the impact of the influx of *"fauxganic"* produce and are seeing their wholesale orders reduced in favor of the cheaper hydroponically-grown produce.

Local organic tomato farmers Mia & Freeman Allen of *Mountainyard Farm* in Ripton, VT were among those in attendance at the *Rally in the Valley* and are feeling the effects of this change. According to Mia, *"How confusing to learn that the "USDA Certified Organic" label no longer applies to only soil-grown produce. We believe that the fundamental principle of organic agriculture is a healthy soil teeming with mycorrhizal life."*

WHY SHOULD CONSUMERS CARE?

First and foremost, this issue matters because we care deeply about our local organic farmers. They are an integral part of the fabric of this community and our rural economy is dependent upon their success. This decision is a direct threat to their livelihood. Another reason to care stems from the fact that the traditional organic system of agriculture not only reduces the use of certain fertilizers and pesticides but also contributes to the health of the soil and the rest of the environment, thanks, in part, to its ability to sequester carbon from atmospheric CO₂. Organic philosophy is rooted in building soil fertility. When the USDA first established organic standards, they specified the tenets of organic farming to be as follows:

"Soil is the source of life. Soil quality and balance are essential to the long-term future of agriculture. Healthy plants, animals and humans result from balanced, biologically-active soil." It's clear: all of the benefits organic farming offers to health and climate begin with fertile soil.

WHAT CAN CONSUMERS DO?

- Vote with your food dollars by purchasing organic tomatoes and berries from local farmers. Although USDA's National Organic Program has allowed hydroponic operations to be certified organic, Vermont Organic Farmers (VOF) does not certify hydroponically grown produce.
- Shop seasonally. When we buy fruits and vegetables in their appropriate seasons, we can buy them from local farmers and be certain about their growing practices.
- Establish a demand for soil-grown organic produce. When buying organic produce that isn't local, contact the growers and ask about their growing methods.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT... **HIGH MOWING** *Organic Seeds*



Spring is just around the corner and if you enjoy gardening, you're likely yearning to get your fingers into the soil as soon as Mother Nature allows. In the meantime, as you dream up your garden plans and place your seed orders, we invite you to check out the incredible variety of local, organic seeds offered by **High Mowing Organic Seed Company** of Wolcott, VT.

HISTORY High Mowing Organic Seeds began in 1996 with just 28 varieties, many of which originated in founder Tom Stearns' backyard. Since then, the company has grown exponentially, and what started as a one-man operation is now a thriving business making available to home gardeners and commercial growers over 600 heirloom, open-pollinated, and hybrid varieties of vegetable, fruit, herb and flower seed. True to their roots, High Mowing Organic Seeds continues to grow many of the varieties they sell on their 40-acre farm, setting

them apart from the majority of other seed companies. Seeds that are produced here in Vermont come with the added bonus of regional specificity, meaning that they are more attuned to life in our unique growing conditions. They have already established relationships with our soil, our pollinators, and our specific climate, making them more likely to thrive in your garden.

PHILOSOPHY At High Mowing Organic Seeds, they believe in re-imagining what our world can be like. They believe in a deeper understanding of how rebuilt food systems can support health on all levels - healthy environments, healthy economies, healthy communities, and healthy bodies. They believe in a hopeful and inspired view of the future based on better stewardship for our planet. Every day that they're in business, they are growing; working to provide an essential component in the rebuilding of our healthy food systems: the seeds.





THE SAFE SEED PLEDGE The Safe Seed Pledge was created in 1999 when High Mowing Organic Seeds guided a coalition of 9 other seed companies in drafting a statement about the signers' stance on genetic engineering. To date, the Pledge has been signed by over 370 seed companies worldwide. In signing the Safe Seed Pledge they affirm their commitment to non-GMO (genetically modified organism) seed. They feel that the regulatory framework for the introduction of genetically modified crop varieties is flawed and that GMO seeds themselves present a threat to plants' genetic diversity through their ability to pollinate non-GMO plants. The pledge reads as follows:

"Agriculture and seeds provide the basis upon which our lives depend. We must protect this foundation as a safe and genetically stable source for future generations. For the benefit of all farmers, gardeners and consumers who want an alternative, we pledge that we do not knowingly buy or sell genetically engineered seeds or plants. The mechanical

transfer of genetic material outside of natural reproductive methods and between genera, families or kingdoms poses great biological risks, as well as economic, political and cultural threats. We feel that genetically engineered varieties have been insufficiently tested prior to public release. More research and testing is necessary to further assess the potential risks of genetically engineered seeds. Further, we wish to support agricultural progress that leads to healthier soils, genetically diverse agricultural ecosystems and ultimately healthy people and communities."

When asked what it is about seeds that makes him so passionate, Stearns replies, *"I see seeds as one of the best educational tools. For me, I've seen myself as an educator more than anything else. I see my work focusing on helping people rebuild their local food systems. Seeds are an important, yet easy, tool to recognize the importance of these systems, and seeds are one of the mediums by which this message can be conveyed"*.

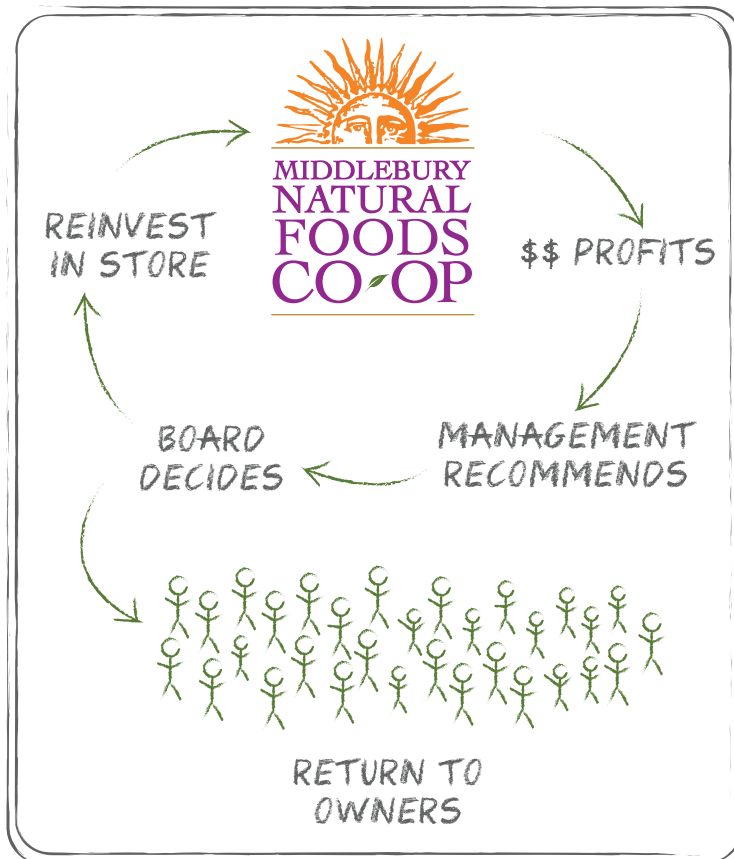


MIDDLEBURY NATURAL FOODS CO-OP

PATRONAGE DIVIDEND

IT'S YOUR CO-OP

2018 Patronage Refund Update



Patronage refunds are the cooperative way of sharing our profits with member-owners. Because we had some big expenses related to expansion this year, our financial plan predicted that there would be no profit for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2018. If there is no profit, there can't be any profits to share, and thus no patronage refund checks mailed out this July.

We are working hard in our newly expanded Co-op and expect to be back to making a profit in the new fiscal year April 2018 - March 2019. Profitability is healthy for the business, so we want to get back there as soon as possible. Your support is critical to that success.

On the following page, you'll find a list of Frequently Asked Questions about Patronage Refunds, as well as a reminder of the many other benefits of member-ownership at our Co-op.

If you have any additional questions that these resources don't answer, please feel free to reach out to me at

388-7276 ext. 222
or glennlower@middlebury.coop

Thank you for your continued support of this community owned grocery store.

Glenn Lower, General Manager
Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op

Frequently Asked Questions

What are patronage refunds? A patronage refund is the cooperative way of sharing the profits with member-owners. As a member-owner of the Co-op, patronage refunds give you an ownership share of the profit that your own purchases helped generate.

How much is given? Member-owners receive a share of the allocated profits in proportion to how much they purchased during the fiscal year. The more you shop, the more you are eligible to earn. Member-owners must be current in their \$20 annual equity investment to be eligible for patronage.

How does it work? A portion of patronage is retained by the Co-op in your name to be used for the capital needs of the Co-op. A portion is returned to you as a patronage dividend check. At the end of each fiscal year, if there is a profit, the Leadership team (Board and the General Manager) decide how much is retained and how much is returned.

Do other co-ops do this? Yes, the majority of food co-ops in the U.S. are doing patronage including our peer co-ops in Burlington, Montpelier, and Brattleboro.

How much is given? The amount varies depending on the Co-op's profitability, current needs and long-term goals. Some years it will be similar to the old 2% discount. Some years it will be less. For example, in the first year following an expansion, typically there is no profit, so there would be no patronage. This actually helps the Co-op return to profitability much faster, and thus keeps the Co-op stronger and more secure during challenging times.

How is owning a share in a co-op different than owning stock in a corporation? The co-op can only be owned by the people who use it, not outside investors. The Co-op exists to provide service to the users, not solely to make a profit. Profit returns are based on how much you use the service, not on how much stock you own. And the Co-op gives equal voting to all members.

What are some member-owner benefits?

- 🌿 Ownership of your community Co-op
- 🌿 Opportunity to elect MNFC Board of Directors
- 🌿 A vote and a voice on Co-op issues
- 🌿 A share of Co-op profits in the form of a **patronage dividend** when the Co-op is profitable
- 🌿 Weekly members-only discounts through our **Member Deals** program
- 🌿 Discounts at 20 local businesses through the **Co-op Connection** program
- 🌿 New member coupons
- 🌿 Member-owners age 60 or better receive 5% off purchases* every Tuesday and Thursday***excludes alcohol**
- 🌿 Opportunity to qualify for our needs-based **Food For All** program
- 🌿 Opportunity to volunteer to earn additional discounts through our **Member-Worker** program

the inside scoop

meet Steve, Finance Manager



Karin: You've been with us at the Co-op for 14 years - what brought you here?

Steve: I was working at CSAC as a financial analyst. We contracted for services with Elderly Services, and I would meet yearly with

Joanne Corbitt to work out these budgets. Joanne and Glenn (coop GM) are long- time friends, and when the Finance Manager job opened up, Joanne suggested to Glenn that he call me. The rest is history.

K: Finance Manager...what do you DO, exactly?

S: I'm responsible for the financial health of the Co-op - keeping the Co-op on steady financial footing. I watch over our funds, making sure they are in safe places, and that they are being spent and accumulated correctly.

K: Are you from VT, originally?

S: I grew up in northern New Jersey, but have been coming to VT for as long as I can remember. Every Friday afternoon, my family and I would pack up and drive five hours to ski at Mad River Glen (also a Co-op!) - for the longest time, I thought that's what everybody did on the weekend!

In 1979, I came to St. Michael's for college, and I never left. I love VT.

K: What do you love most about living in VT, besides the beer?

S: Beer IS a really big part of it, but the summers are great, too. I love living in a small state with a small population. There's a closeness here that I don't think you find everywhere. Also, I love the water.

K: You have a reputation for being as skilled on the water as you are in an Excel Spreadsheet. What's that all about?

S: I love being on the water in the summer. I'm a lifelong sailor - I learned to sail before I learned to walk! Racing sailboats has been a life-long passion.

K: You also have a reputation for "saving the planet, one light bulb at a time". Can you talk a little bit about how you've embraced Green Living in your personal life, as well as at the Co-op?

S: Energy saving has been an avocation of mine since I was a teenager. My father and I developed hot water solar systems in the '70's, using woodstoves to heat domestic hot water. In college, I worked for two summers, making the campus of St. Mike's more energy efficient through work study programs with their Facilities Manager. In every professional job that I've had, I've played a role in implementing energy efficient projects.

Over the last 14 years, I've worked on dozens of energy efficiency projects at the Co-op, helping us to reduce propane and energy use **(As we're talking, the motion-sensitive lights turn out behind us - thanks Steve!)**. At home, I have a solar array to make electricity. In the winter, my hot water is plumbed through the woodstove.

K: OK, I can't let you go without asking you to tell us about your previous life behind the wheel of some pretty edgy machines - are you willing to share?

S: For many years, starting in high school, I belonged to the local Sports Car clubs and was involved in a form of racing called Auto-crossing. This was done at airports, large parking lots and on the ice of Mallets Bay (on Lake Champlain). In conjunction with this, I restored dozens of European sports cars (Porsche, BMW, Alfa Romeo, and Fiat). In the last 20 years I have been building small boats and restoring vintage motorboats.

K: You spent some time working at a local Greeting Card Company, and have a knack for the turn of phrase - any special "Steveisms" you'd like to share?

S: "Turn if off if you don't know why it's on"; "Sail Today...Live Tomorrow"; "Soda is an Empty Promise"; "Beer Comes First"

Thank you, Steve!!! -Karin

Food Focus: Ramps

Ramps, *allium tricoccum*, are wild leeks that can be found in wet, densely wooded areas through central and eastern US and Canada. They grow in dense clusters in marshy areas and around rivers, streams, and brooks. Ramps thrive in early spring when the leaves of the forest canopy are thin, allowing light to pass through to the forest floor. They can be identified by their broad, smooth, green leaves and their garlic-like aroma. **Their taste can be described as a pungent mix between a green onion and garlic.**

Ramps are extremely sensitive to over-harvesting and habitat disturbance so, when harvesting ramps in the wild, please do so responsibly: **tread lightly; move often, never harvesting more than a few ramps from each cluster; and harvest from the center of each cluster rather than from the outskirts.** The ramps can repopulate an area in the center of a cluster more easily than they can from the outer edges.

Of course, if you'd prefer to purchase your ramps, you can find them in our produce department during their brief & fleeting season!

Wondering what to do with them? Check out this fresh, simple ramp pesto recipe. It makes a delicious spread on crusty bread, a perfect add-in to your favorite hot or cold pasta dish, a flavorful pizza topping, or a tasty chicken marinade.

Happy ramp season!



Ramp Pesto

Emily Landenberger



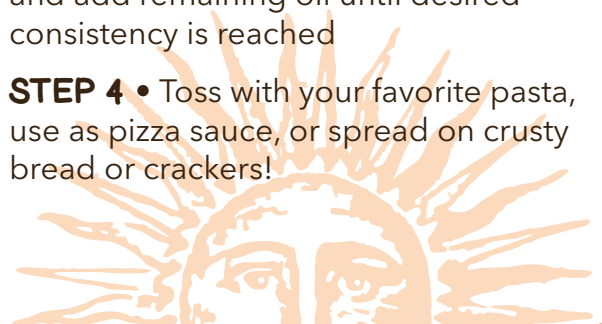
- **2 C** Ramps
(Cleaned, roots removed, and roughly chopped)
- **1/2 C** Fresh Basil or Parsley
- **1** Lemon, juice and zest
- **1/4 C** toasted nuts of your choice
(pine, walnut, almond)
- **1/2 C** Fresh grated hard Italian Cheese
(Parmigiano Reggiano, Grana Padano)
- **1/2 C** Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- **Dash** Salt & pepper - to taste

STEP 1 • Clean the ramps and trim off the roots. Roughly chop the bulbs, shoots, and leaves of the ramps.

STEP 2 • Place them in a food processor and add all remaining ingredients except the olive oil.

STEP 3 • Turn on the food processor and drizzle in most of the olive oil. Pause, mix with spatula, turn back on and add remaining oil until desired consistency is reached

STEP 4 • Toss with your favorite pasta, use as pizza sauce, or spread on crusty bread or crackers!



CO-OP CALENDAR

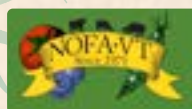
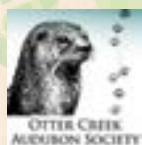
WEEKLY SALES*, MEMBER DEALS*, & EVENTS

JOIN US SATURDAY MAY 5TH



12:00PM - 3:00PM

MAKE A SEED BOMB!
ENJOY FREE QUESADILLAS
GRAB A GARDEN FRIENDLY FREEBIE!
MEET GREEN-MINDED ORGANIZATIONS



REMEMBER...
B.Y.O.B.
BRING YOUR
OWN BAG

APRIL

FEATURED CO-OP CONNECTION BUSINESS
PRO SKIN STUDIO
10% OFF

**STORE
CLOSED**
SUNDAY 4/1
FOR HOLIDAY



EARTH DAY
SUNDAY 4/22
BRING YOUR
OWN BAG!



4/5 - 4/11 PROBIOTICS

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF AMY'S

4/12-4/18 ASIAN CUISINE

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF SHAKER MAPLE FARM

4/19 - 4/25 SPRING GREETING

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF CASCADIAN FARM

4/26 - 5/2 FIESTA DINNER

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF WELLNESS PET PRODUCTS

MAY

FEATURED CO-OP CONNECTION BUSINESS
JUMELLES WELLNESS MIDWIFERY
2% OFF INITIAL PRETNATAL APPT • 2% OFF BIRTH TUB RENTAL

**GREEN UP
DAY**
SATURDAY 5/5
FUN FUN FUN



**STORE
CLOSED**
MONDAY 5/28
FOR HOLIDAY



5/3 - 5/9 MOM

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF GREEN SEED HERBALS

5/10 - 5/16 RAMADAN

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF MCKENZIE MEATS

5/17 - 5/23 FISH TACOS

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF REAL PICKLES

5/24 - 5/30 MEMORIAL DAY

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF TIERRA FARM

5/31 - 6/6 STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF HENRY & LISA'S

JUNE

FEATURED CO-OP CONNECTION BUSINESS
TEXTURE HAIR SALON
10% OFF YOUR 1ST VISIT



ANNUAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY JUNE 6TH, 5:30 - 7:30

@AMERICAN FLATBREAD, MIDDLEBURY HEARTH
EVERYONE WELCOME!

6/7 - 6/13 VEGGIE GRILL

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF VERMONT CREAMERY

6/14 - 6/20 FATHER'S DAY

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF NEWMAN'S OWN

6/21 - 6/27 SUMMER SOLSTICE ROLLS

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF NEIGHBORLY FARMS

6/28 - 7/4 INDEPENDENCE DAY

MEMBER DEALS: 20% OFF WOOD'S MARKET GARDEN

*please note, weekly promotions are subject to change

MIDDLEBURY NATURAL FOODS CO-OP
OPEN 8:00AM / 7:00PM EVERYDAY
NINE WASHINGTON STREET, MIDDLEBURY, VERMONT
(802)388-7276 / middlebury.coop