Producer Interview with Moses Yoder

By Erica LaFountain

On February 28th, I stopped in at the Yoder Farm. Three young children greeted me when I pulled in and directed me to their father, Moses. In the house, I met Moses’ wife, Amanda; his daughters, Clara and Naomi, who he said do most of the work in their greenhouse. The house was bustling with the smell of cooking food, and the sound of voices speaking German. I sat down with Moses and Amanda and a list of questions.

Erica: You are the source of all of the vegetable seedlings the Co-op sells, right?
Moses: Yes. At first we had a greenhouse for a few years, and sold some seedlings directly to customers from the farmland amount, but I always wanted to find a wholesale customer. The Co-op had their own suppliers at the time. I would stop in now and then and ask the manager if we could sell them a few flats of seedlings. The Co-op would buy a couple of trays here and there. Finally, one year Donna Jewitt (of the Co-op Garden Committee) bought a lot of flats for the Co-op, then she started placing an order from us in the winter time, and it worked out well, so the next year they ordered all their vegetable seedlings from us. Once we proved our quality, we were fully accepted.

Erica: So you said Clara and Naomi do most of the greenhouse work?
Moses: Yes, we oversee the work, but the kids help out a lot. Sometimes the whole family gets involved. Naomi (16), Clara (13), Rebecca (10), and Lafena (8) do much of the transplanting, potting, and watering. The little ones can do much of the transplanting, planting, and watering.

Erica: Where did you learn to farm, or have you farmed in other locations?
Moses: From my father, in Heuvelton. When I was 14, my parents quit farming and moved to Ohio. From 1993 to 2004 I lived there. Then I moved back to the North Country with my wife Erica: Can you describe your practices and why you farm the way you do?
Moses: I grew up using conventional methods, using sprays, and chemicals. In Ohio we had 7 acres of vegetables. We sprayed for bugs and blight. We were spraying, but the sprays are like prescription pills in that after a while you have to change what you’re using to get the same effect. It got to a point where I didn’t want to eat my own produce anymore, and I knew something had to change. I wanted to learn to farm organically but I didn’t know how until I met some other farmers in Ohio. Now we raise our seedlings using organic practices. Our potting soil is from Vermont Compost. We’ve tried others but always return to VC. We rarely need to add anything to it, and we found that could be hard. We ended up closing our farm stand in the fall of 2014, and if we open it again, we’ll try to keep it simple, maybe stocking only vegetables people don’t tend to grow in their own gardens because there are better varieties available. Custom- ers look for some of the familiar names, and most home gardeners are unaware of all the options out there. For example, this year I wanted to introduce Mountain Spring (an earl tomato), and Mountain Fresh (a late tomato), which are both more resistant to disease, have good flavor, and have become favorites. Also Markstrøm cucumbers are fine for small plots, but they don’t produce as well, and aren’t as uniform as Dasher.

Erica: That sounds like a matter of education. I guess it’s hard to convince customers to try an unfamiliar variety when all you have is a familiar label.

Moses: Yes, I’ve been dreaming for years of displaying laminated signs with descriptions of vari- eties, because I think it’s a good idea to introduce new varieties with better attributes, even if they are less recognizable to custom- ers.

Erica: Do you sell vegetables as well as seedlings?
Moses: We used to sell some produce to the Co-op: potatoes, sweet corn, winter squash, and zucchini. When we had a big customer base buying from our farm stand, I always felt responsible to stock all the vegetables at all times, which

New Grower-Owned Business Focused on Local Food

By Doug Welch

After months of planning and preparation, northern New York has its first regional wholesale produce auction. The St. Law- rence Valley Produce Auction consists of farmers and growers from Franklin and St. Lawrence Counties, including members of local Amish and Mennonite com- munities. The growers’ auction facility is located at 25 Martin Road, off County Road 8, north of US Route 11, in North Bangor, NY. Likely buyers will include food service providers, retail farm stands, restaurants, grocery store chains, and landscaping contrac- tors.

The inaugural auction season began on May 1st and continued each Tuesday during the month of May. The season started with the sale of bedding plants and hanging baskets from regional greenhouses, and trackloads of hay, straw, and firewood have also been sold.

The new St. Lawrence Produce Auction building, while under construction. It is located at 25 Martin Road in North Bangor, NY. Photo courtesy of Lindsey Pashow.

As the growing season gets into full swing, large lots of produce will be auctioned off to wholesale buyers. The next step will be to add a Saturday auction as a sec- ond sale day, if it is warranted.

Over the past twenty years, wholesale produce auction barns have become common in oth- er parts of the country such as Pennsylvania, Ohio, and western New York. This is the first one in northern New York and is a promising development.

While the St. Lawrence Valley Auction has been organized as a corporation with a board of directors and with farmers buying shares, it is operating much like a cooperative. Materials for the yellow steel building were paid for by the group, and members provided most of the labor to build it.

The growers have had a number of meetings about how to grow for a produce auction facility and what best practices are to make the auction facility a successful marketing venture. In December, the farmers put in a joint seed order to get bulk pricing. Two recent meetings for growers each had about 35 attendees. Lindsey Pashow, Agriculture Business Development and Marketing Specialist at Franklin County Co- operative Extension, is providing information and technical support where needed.

Expanding local vegetable and fruit production to meet the demand for fresh, local food is an encouraging development, despite the challenges of long distances and low population density. Along with numerous other initiatives, gradual progress is being made in growing our local food system here in the North Country.

Buyers or sellers interested in more information can contact Leon Burkholder at 518-358- 2090.
From the GM

By Andy Peet

I write this on an uncharacteristically warm and sunny day. Folks are stocking up on seeds, the crocuses are popping up in the Co-op’s front yard, and the promise of Spring is in the air.

SEASONAL CHANGES

By the time you read this Spring will be in full swing. We’ll have swapped out the hot cider machine for our cold-brewed iced coffee. The slush machine will make its yearly epic comeback. The plant sale will be underway and hopefully the weather will allow us many opportunities to enjoy our lunch outside. Be on the lookout for season items in the store and please let us know what you would like to see on the shelves.

SALES

So far this year we have struggled to match the strong numbers we had last year. We’re about six percent under where we were this time in 2017. The number of sales and average customers per day are also down. We’re getting better though, March has shown small negative growth but much improved from the start of the year.

The Carriage House has been producing new items in the bakery and deli. New breads, soups, and sandwiches have been making their way to the shelves. The produce department is starting to introduce a cut fresh fruit program. We’ve featured diced pineapple and melon so far and hope to expand the offerings as more fresh fruit becomes available. The health and beauty section has a new look and many interesting new products. This has been our best department so far with over seven percent growth. Our department heads are very motivated which is great as we look to get sales back to trending positive.

ORGANIC EGGS

We have sold certified organic local chicken eggs for two years. For a while it was hard to know how much demand there was for organic eggs in our co-op because they were in low supply. The certified organic eggs would sell faster than we can restock them. Now we have a steady supply thanks to our two certified organic farmers, O & E Farm in Gouverneur and Jacob Hershberg er from North Lawrence. These eggs meet requirements drawn up and enforced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the chickens’ feed is guaranteed to come from crops that have not been genetically modified, treated with pesticides or herbicides, or fertilized with chemical or synthetic products.

All of our farm fresh local eggs are humanely raised in a cage free environment and are approved as part of our routine inspections by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. They are known for their freshness and quality and are provided by hard working local farmers. As a consumer you are looking for a certified organic option you will find it in plentiful supply at the Co-op!

I’m very happy to have local and organic food that I know is fresh and sourced from places that value the Earth and all living things. I am gluten-free and also appreciate the variety of foods available for me to choose from. I think it is great we have the freshest herbs and spices in the region that are in bulk. Our bulk foods are as fresh as possible. I also appreciate our great managers! There are many many aspects of the Co-op I appreciate and that I think work well.

What opportunities have you had to be involved in the Co-op?

I have worked as a Core Worker in the Co-op since 2006 and then Ed and I moved to doing the Herbs and Spices, where I’ve been since 2007. I have had a few breaks from Herbs and Spices over the last 11 years because of personal circumstances that took me away for a while. But I have returned to doing the Herbs and Spices (and added Teas a few years ago) and really enjoy the morning routine and making sure that this part of our Co-op looks good and is providing the freshest herbs and spices that we can find from local sources.

Why have you chosen to run for a seat on the Board of Directors?

I am appointed for one year and then will consider running for a full board term. I think the Board positions are very important. The Board represents and has a responsibility to the membership, all the membership, of the Co-op. We are the stewards and dreamers, and from and about making good food choices,” noted volunteer Rose Rivezzi.

The museum has nearly met its fundraising goals for the construction, but donations are welcome to help offset new and ongoing expenses. The Co-op is collecting donations from shoppers, right at our registers. So far almost $300 has been collected. If we reach $1000 the Co-op will be listed on the Children’s Museum’s permanent donor recognition listing.

For more information about the museum, visit their website at www.northcountrychildrensmuseum.org.

KID’S CO-OP AT CHILDREN’S MUSEUM

Did you know that the new North Country Children’s Museum, which is set to open this spring, includes a “Kids Co-op” exhibit? The exhibit will be one of 7 permanent installations in the museum, which will be located at 10 Raymond Street (the “Red Barn” building) in Potsdam. The Kids Co-op will include a replica cash register, scales, grocery cart, bulk bins, and even a replica brick oven. This is a great opportunity to reach more people in our community and introduce them to the Co-op.

“This will be a way to teach kids about where their food comes from and about making good food choices,” noted volunteer Rose Rivezzi.

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For more information about the museum, visit their website at www.northcountrychildrensmuseum.org.

MEET KIM BOUCHARD

New Board Member

I’ve been a member of the Potsdam Food Coop since we moved here in 1995. Before that we were members of the Moscow, Idaho Food Coop for 6 years from 1989-95 (my husband, Ed Clark, founded the bakery there and worked as their Marketing person.) During the 1970s in California and in England, I was a member of a few different cooperatives, some around food and others that had to do with housing, car ownership and childcare.

What do you appreciate most about the Co-op? What do you think is working well?

I have many years of experience in theatre production which brings with it the appreciation of the complexities of how to manage time, people and resources in healthy and positive ways. While I appreciate that the Board does not “manage” per se , we can bring our expertise of management challenges to advise and support our management team.

I am also interested in how we can expand our services and products to meet the needs of our North Country families and communities.

Our Mission Statement

The Potsdam Consumer Cooperative, Inc. is owned and operated by its members and is dedicated to meeting the community’s need for specialty and whole foods at the lowest possible cost. As a member of the local community interested in its well-being, we will attempt to use local sources whenever feasible.

We strive to provide a pleasant shopping experience and working environment, with an emphasis on education, shared information, and developing our relationship with the community. We encourage environmental respect through the goods we sell and in the manner in which we conduct our daily operations. We are committed to providing a model of responsible business practices based on the cooperative principles of ownership, self-help, and democracy, and we encourage our members to do with housing, car ownership and childcare.

Our Board Members

Lanya Cords, President | lcaords@ciphsup.org
Erica Lafontaine, Vice President | erica.lafontaine@gmail.com
Kayla French, Secretary | kaylafrench@gmail.com
Marshall Issen, Treasurer | mckissack@gmail.com
Joseph Andrieu | andrieu@nysmc.com
Gail Anderson | gail.alla@gmail.com
Kim Bouchard | kimmbouchard@gmail.com
Samantha DiGrossi | sadigrossi@gmail.com
Jessica Diagostino | theldiag@gmail.com
Maggie McKenna | mmckenna.visitor@gmail.com
Tim Meuser | timmeuser@gmail.com
Eric Ochrann | ochranned@gmail.com

Potsdam Food Co-op Staff

Lanie Adair | Packaging Coordinator/Buyer
Baker Adams | Produce Buyer
Chris Affe | Carriage House Manager | carriagehouse@potsdamcoop.com
Cheyne Bennis | Carriage House
Blake Chludzinski | Carriage House
Lynn Clark | Bookkeeping/Marketing | lynn@potsdamcoop.com
Jaye Galusha | IT Specialist
James Gaun | Cashier
Laurie Greenleaf | Payroll Supervisor
Alisha Haller | Cashier/Buyer
Penny Jandreau | Carriage House
Jessie Lafontaine | Lead Cashier/Buyer
Erik Laubach | Lead Cashier/Buyer
Dylan Martinson | Cashier
Ryan Mazzuca | Cashier
Jamie Pease | Cashier
Andy Pett | Intern General Manager/Lead Buyer | andypett@potsdamcoop.com
Jessica Peters | Lead Baker
Allyson Theobalt | Cashier
Dylan Ward | Carriage House

Co-op Community News is the official newsletter of the Potsdam Consumer Cooperative, Inc. in Potsdam, NY. It is published seasonally and serves as a forum for the exchange of information and ideas between Co-op members. Articles appearing in this newsletter may be reprinted in other cooperative newsletters provided credit is given to Potsdam Co-op Community News and to the author of the article. We welcome submissions and comments from members and non-members. Submissions can be sent via e-mail to newsletter@potsdamcoop.com.
two average mug-size servings-so find a friend or enemy to enjoy with!

Ingredients:
1 can of Coconut Milk (use Field Day)
2 tsp. of local Maple Syrup
2 tsp. Cocoa Powder
1 tsp. Turmeric powder
1/2 tsp. Black Pepper

Combine all the ingredients in your blender. Pour full fat coconut milk so you will have to scoop it out of the can, however, you could use any form of milk for this recipe. Blend all ingredients together until smooth and pour into a pot. Warm over low-medium heat. Don’t want to be too hot. Warm it just enough so that I can sip it while watching Gilmore Girls reruns.

Taste your creation. If the taste is not appealing to your little one to eat it, try thinner textures, but if your baby loves it, use it to introduce some of the vegetables, try mixing them with avocados, common first foods, mixed with breastmilk. Wally ate the small amount we offered happily and I was delighted to begin trying different foods.

As a relative to the radish with hormones and I decided to try it. I was told of maca. I didn’t know about it until a few years ago. I was told we hope to keep working with the Co-op in the future.

There are many ways to introduce your baby to foods. I am happy with it and try not to stress over what your baby is or isn’t eating. It’s just for fun in the beginning so enjoy the process! Your child will likely be eating a wide variety of foods by the time he or she is packing for college. No need to worry.

For example, Daniel has met other like-minded farmers and write a book, but I plan to do it because there was a lot of interest in how we grow without sprays.

Moses: So you were exposed to organic practices in Ohio, and there you always learning new things, met other like-minded farmers like Mosie Keim and Daniel Martin [also Co-op suppliers] who were also using organic practices?

Moises: Yes. We learn a lot from each other. We exchange knowledge and techniques with each other. For example, Daniel has been helping us by starting some of the herbs that take longer to germinate and don’t do well to heat our greenhouse yet. Our dairy is certified organic, and we’ve offered to grow certified organic seedlings for the Co-op, we’ve offered to grow certified organic seedlings for the Co-op.

So, I got to see how each studio was set up as well as how immense-ly beneficial they were to their communities. Remotely towns with dying economies were revitalized by people coming to utilize their facilities and historic buildings were repurposed and preserved as they were repurposed as artist studios. Every time I came home I would look around Potsdam and ask, “How is there not a commun-ity work space in Potsdam?”

While I received a grant to pur-chase a professional kiln in 2013, my work space was still not ideal. Since then I’ve been working with the St Lawrence County Arts Council to grow a group called North Country Makers Meet Up. We are open to anyone interested in connecting with other folks interested in creativity in any way. We meet in person once a month and can be found here on Face-book https://bit.ly/2GdRkw.

Through discussions about our monthly gatherings and my need for a work space I am being driven to create a community work space. To start with I am looking for input from the communi-ty. I’ve worked with the Small Business Development Center to design three surveys that can be found here http://www.sara-lynch.com/space-survey. I’m looking to hear from everyone and in particular folks interested in taking classes, renting space of any kind, and attending events. I want this space to truly be fulfilling by our needs as well as helping us grow as a sup-portive and inclusive community.
The Committee met monthly with the General Manager to review issues related to personnel, store operations, and the General Manager. The Committee consisted of co-op President Joseph Andriano, Vice President Stephanie Macaluso, Directors, Treasurer Robin McClellan, Secretary Erica LaFountain.

FINANCE COMMITTEE Chairman: Robin McClellan

2017 was a year of variability. Co-op Sales are often impacted by the weather and in early 2017, the winter storms were particularly bad. In the fall of 2017, General Manager Andy Peet increased staff efficiency. Labor costs have increased, wages across the board have been increased to the highest extent possible. This has helped to lower our expenses and make the numbers from the point of sale system (Catapult) with the new POS system. The response to the increase has been good and the Co-op is meeting the needs of our customers, the Co-op has no long term debt.

The consensus of the Finance Committee is that long-term financial viability requires ever increasing sales, even though the cost has risen. The Co-op has a strong balance sheet – net long term debt.

There are several tasks which Governance is responsible for. This includes reviewing and proposal of revisions to our Bylaws, Governance is responsible for these operational matters; the approval of new members; the approval of new initiatives: Board of Directors and Governance Committee. The Co-op has no long term debt.

One of the financial concerns facing the Co-op is the cost of personnel. The response to this concern has been, and continues to be, two-fold. First, increased staff efficiency. Labor costs as a percent of sales have been increasing steadily over the past three years, due to the increase in health insurance and the increase in the minimum wage. The Co-op is committed to paying a living wage. Changes in the minimum wage have increased, wages across the board have been raised to the highest extent possible. This has helped to lower our expenses and make the numbers from the point of sale system (Catapult) with the new POS system.

Another concern is weak sales. The consensus of the Finance Committee is that long-term financial viability requires ever increasing sales, even though the cost has risen. The Co-op has a strong balance sheet – net long term debt.

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Business Partners

These locally owned businesses have generously agreed to grant the following offers to Co-op members. Present your current Membership Card when asking for the discount. One time offers will be checked off when used.

### Food

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Name</th>
<th>Offer Details</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Bears Gluten Free Bakery &amp; More (Potsdam)</td>
<td>10% off per purchase you will be entered into a drawing to win their featured dessert of the month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Lawrence Gingerbread House</td>
<td>10% off fresh ginger, Monday to Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Itly</td>
<td>$1.00 off any large pizza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 Market St., Potsdam</td>
<td>10% off brewed coffee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple Run Emporium</td>
<td>10% off All Maple Run Emporium brand merchandise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seaway Cash Register &amp; Typewriter</td>
<td>5% off on machines, services, and supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Bay Coffee</td>
<td>10% off with a purchase of $25.00 or more</td>
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<tr>
<td>Downtown Sports &amp; Toys</td>
<td>10% off on all bike share items at both locations</td>
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<tr>
<td>The UPS Store</td>
<td>100 Market St., Potsdam, NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmhouse Forge</td>
<td>5% off on all bike share items at both locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Lawrence Nurseries</td>
<td>10% off regularly priced plant stock</td>
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<tr>
<td>BRICK &amp; MORTAR MUSIC</td>
<td>15 Market St., Potsdam, NY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alpine Foam Insulation</td>
<td>315-262-6544 5% off residential foam insulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RENEW ARCHITECTURE &amp; DESIGN</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rebecca@renewarchitecture.com">rebecca@renewarchitecture.com</a> 5% discount on residential architectural services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health/Beauty</td>
<td>Adam’s Body Shop 15% off Fitness Center Membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Yoga Loft</td>
<td>One time $5 discount for any drop-in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpine Foam Insulation</td>
<td>315-262-6544 5% off residential foam insulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiropedic Office of Dr. Jamie Towle &amp; Dr. Lisa Francy Towle</td>
<td>10% off chiropractic services at both locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back in Motion Family and Sports Chiropractic</td>
<td>15% off initial visit for those without insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jazercise</td>
<td>22 Depot St. Potsdam, NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchestra</td>
<td>15% off regularly priced tickets at the box office (some restrictions may apply)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPS Community/Performance Series</td>
<td>1 time SLC Arts member rate discount on a community arts class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchestra of NNY</td>
<td>1% off local performances tickets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Featured Business</td>
<td>Back in Motion Family and Sports Chiropractic is an innovative holistic healthcare facility located in Potsdam on the corner of Leroy and Clinton Street. Dr. Burns' unique and effective practice methods combine traditional chiropractic adjusting techniques with trigger point therapy and stretching techniques. When necessary, we include other therapeutic modalities such as heat therapy, ultrasound, and electrical stimulation. In addition, we teach you stretches and exercises that you can perform at home to assist you in your healing and help prevent future problems. We dig deep in order to understand and address the root causes of each patient's health concerns. Take a step towards optimal health and wellness today. (315) 261-4686 chiropracticbackinmotion.com Co-op members without insurance receive 15% off their initial visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends of the Potsdam Public Library</td>
<td>10% discount at the regular Saturday 10-1 sale in the library basement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchestracea &amp; Workshops (Beth Robinson)</td>
<td>10% off first lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colton Massage Therapy</td>
<td>10% off first massage or gift voucher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colton Massage Therapy</td>
<td>4808 State Highway 66, Colton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends of the Potsdam Public Library</td>
<td>55 discount on first session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends of the Potsdam Public Library</td>
<td>315-205-0961 RO Box 115 Hannawa Falls, 13537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends of the Potsdam Public Library</td>
<td>10% discount on initial consult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Lawrence County Arts Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orchestra</td>
<td>315-267-3251 16% off local performances tickets</td>
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ANNUAL REPORT...We hope to see this project fin-
ished in early 2018. Finally, you may have noticed a change in the calendar on the website. In late 2017 we moved to using a Go-
google calendar so the calendar can be easily updated and maintained. This change means that if you are a Google calendar user yourself, you can add the Co-op’s to your list and never miss an event!

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEEChair: Maggie McKenna
The ultimate goal of the membership committee is to provide excellent benefits to members and encourage more people in our area to join the co-op. We work in tandem with the marketing committee to communicate the idea that great Co-op is for shopping, of course, but also for networking and entertainment. While workshops and events committee organized all the events for Co-op mem-
bers including the Fall Open House, the Baking Fest and this Annual Meeting with the help of the Board. The committee also organized a farm visit to the Kent Family Farms, which was a great success and well attended. This committee also en-
couraged the board to pass the following resolution: “to remove the board policy that special or-
ders are only allowed to be made by board members. Everyone should be welcome to use this service. We feel that it is more in line with our policies of inclusion and access that our members feel like mem-
ber-owners and good vibes all around.” The motion was passed.

This coming year, the com-
mittee is discussing holding other farm visits, owner appreci-
ation days, and possibly some health week events. Addi-
tionally, we will be considering new ways to revamp our existing annual events. We are also hoping more community people will spread their joy of
community networking and event planning by joining our commit-
tee. As a Co-op member you are free the first day of the month at 6pm above the Carriage House. If you have any ideas of things you’d like to see us working on, please come and reach out to Maggie at mckken-
na.violin@gmail.com.

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEEChair: Erica LaFountain
In the last year, Co-op Board Members Kayla French and
Erica LaFountain have assumed production of the quarterly co-op newsletter. We hope you have enjoyed this new feature fea-
turing local producer interviews, new recipes, Co-op news and events, etc. We continue to bring you articles by Paula Youmell, a local nutritional healer, as well as new regular contributions from local donuls and educator, Mary Michels. We also address diverse issues for new partners. We are always looking for new material, including written sub-
missions or ideas for us to address in print. We would also like to feature more local food-re-
lated artwork. Please contact us at newsletter@potsdamcoop.com with submissions, or to inquire about submission guidelines, or to join the committee!

CONCLUSION
Board President: Joseph Andriano

When I’m not being President of the Potsdam Co-op, I have the pleasure of working as a profes-
sor at Clarkson University, when I interact with students from around the region and around the world on a day-to-day basis. When someone asks me if I am President of the Co-op, it often leads to a lengthy conversation about the idea of local food and local business.

The Co-op was founded 45 years ago on the principle of sup-
porting local, sustainable agricultural and business, and the idea that we are stronger together support-
ing one another. It is important for everyone to feel that we can feel good about buying our food, knowing we are getting products that not only nourish ourselves, but nourish our community.

It is important for us to remem-
ber, as we go through such major changes in the coming years, that young people today are thirsting for businesses like the Co-op. They want healthy, local food choices that are con-
ected with the communities that they are in, but sometimes don’t know how to find them. One of the things that I hope us members can be our selves as sup-
porters of this great experiment in local food systems and local economies, is how can the Co-op re-
achieve the next to the greatest? How can the Co-op model oper-
ate in a way that keeps its values while becoming a part of the 21st century economy? Answering these questions is critical for us to remain viable for another 45 years and beyond.

Yummy dandelion greens: and think living dandelions are a bitter tonic for the liver helping with digestion and helping with the spring cleanse out of win-
ter heaviness in our cells and life force energy. Dandelion is very high in nutrients (again, good for cellular health and building bones – body mineral stores), is a mild laxative, a cancer aid, and is good for skin conditions (think acne, psoriasis, eczema) to name a few, but a few of dandelion’s virtues. Spring brings us dandelion flower and leaves to eat at just the time

Violets are rich in vitamin C, a much needed vitamin after a long winter. Vitamin C helps in the spring detox I spoke of above and the upward movement of life force energy. Spring is a time of upward movement of energy for everything. As new plants pop from the ground daily, our energy levels also rise upward and we try to move and be outside. Viololes are rich in enzymes, chlorophyll, vitamin A, carotenes, rutin helps maintain blood vessel strength and integrity, and many more nutrients.

YOUNG NETTLES

Nettles are by far my favorite plant (and I love all the plants). It is one herb I would add to every herbal formula for its nutritive properties. Nettles nourish every single body cell, help to build strong bones, nourish the skin giving it a good for earsaches and infections.

If you love wild leeks and
make sauerkraut, add a few leeks to your next batch. Cut up the whole leek, leaves to bulbs, and add to the fermentation crock. I put my 28+ day fermented kraut into wide mouth mason jars and puck to the very back of my refrig-
erator. I pull this treat out and enjoy in the long winter months; grateful for the flavor of leeks in November, December, January, February.

Vegetables are the gifts that
our bodies need after a long cold winter. They provide green food, vitamin C (and so many more vi-
tamins and nutrients) along with digestion and helping with the spring cleanse out of win-
ter heaviness in our cells and life force energy. Dandelion is very high in nutrients (again, good for cellular health and building bones – body mineral stores), is a mild laxative, a cancer aid, and is good for skin conditions (think acne, psoriasis, eczema) to name a few, but a few of dandelion’s virtues. Spring brings us dandelion flower and leaves to eat at just the time

our body needs it. Nature is truly wise.

SHEEP AND WOOD SORRELS

Sorrels are from the genus Ox-
alis. OXalis means “sour” and is named due to its high oxalic acid content. Oxalic acid is called “tibotic” when consumed in large quantities because oxalic acid inhibits the absorption of calcium. Oxalic acid is a problem when consumed moder-
ately and with a varied diet. Many domesticated vegetables, includ-
ing spinach and broccoli, contain oxalic. People who are challenged by gout, rheumatism, and gall bladder stones should avoid it. Sorrel is rich in vitamin C (the sour and vitamin C again contribute to the spring cleanse of winter’s stagnation in the body). Traditionally it has been used to treat scurvy, fevers, urinary infec-
tions, mouth sores, nausea, and sore throats.

If you have never been one to graze on your front lawn or the field behind your home near your home, I encourage you to find a good guide book with pictures, descrip-
tions, and healing information and get grazing.

Remember the forager’s ethical principles:

• take only what you need, 5-10% of the plant patch
• make certain to leave plenty of plants so they can reproduce and repopulate the area you are wild harvesting from
• leave plants, flowers, and berries to all other species that rely on them have food

If you over-harvest or take all the plants from a patch or area of wild plants, you are creating a micro-extinction in that area and contributing to the endangerment of the plant in your region at risk. Harvest responsibly and sustainably. If you are purchasing from a wild craft-
er, ask them about their harvesting policies. Just as you choose you cultivated foods wisely, support foragers who take care of the wild plants for future generations to benefit from and enjoy both me-
dicinally and nutritionally (Truly one and the same!).

Sponsors for the conference were: Gregorius College, Institute of Wildland Science, and Adirondack Discovery Initiative, Adirondack Foundation, ANCA, John Brown Lives!, North Country School, NOFA/NY, and Adirondack Discovery Program, NYS Pollution Prevention

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Professor, Adirondack and Adirondack Harvest provided significant support for the event

Director of NOFA/NY, gave the keynote address, an eighty minute discussion of the challenges sur-
rounding food including climate change, the role of corporations, food insecurity, and the impact of international trade agreements. The somewhat dark message was softened by the progress being made by local community organizations, and individuals in raising and addressing issues, and the value of working together over the long haul.

Conference participants CONT-
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Do by Welch

By Doug Welch

St. Lawrence County was
well-represented at the first annu-
al Food Summit at the Wild Center.

The ambitious one-day con-
ference, Feedback: Growing and
Sharing the Abundance was the brainchild of the North Country Food Justice Working Group (FCWG), which is
described as: “a new coalition of non-profit and for-profit organizations, com-
munity members, local businesses, farmers and farm workers, and government agencies who work together to create a network around food including climate change, the role of corporations, food insecurity, and the impact of international trade agreements. The somewhat dark message was softened by the progress being made by local community organizations, and individuals in raising and addressing issues, and the value of working together over the long haul.”

The conference involved a variety of workshops addressing food policies. Just as you choose you cultivated foods wisely, support foragers who take care of the wild plants for future generations to benefit from and enjoy both me-
dicinally and nutritionally (Truly one and the same!).

Conference participants CONT-
INED ON PAGE 7
The Farm Bill Matters

By Anna Kowanko and Margaret Smith of GardenShare

Most of us have heard about the Farm Bill. We know that it does something important, that it is renewed every five years, and that it is massive and far-reaching. But why is the 2018 Farm Bill everyone’s business? The truth is that the Farm Bill is not just about the $100 billion U.S. Farm Bill. To guide your reading (and to provide you topics for your own farm/food advocacy efforts), the main sections are: commodities, conservation, trade, nutrition, credit, rural development, research and extension, rural development, extension, specialty crops and horticulture, crop insurance, and miscellaneous.

As a nation, we have always incentivized farming, dating back to as early as land grants to pioneers. More recently, the earliest rendition of the Farm Bill we know today dates back to the Great Depression and President Roosevelt’s 1933 Agricultural Adjustment Act. During WWII, crop production significantly increased and wartime demand was high in Europe. When the War ended, production stayed high while demand drastically reduced, leaving farmers scrambling with surplus crops and no surplus funds. The idea of the first Farm Bill was to incentivize farmers to grow less. In order to do this, Roosevelt formed a grain reserve, where farmers could buy raw money and store their surplus crops, wait for prices to rise, and then sell their crops. This early program included an amendment for farmers to sell their staples directly to the government, who then used these crops to feed the hungry, the earliest form of the food assistance that is commonly known as “food stamps.”

Since the Bill was made permanent in 1938, Congress has expanded and changed considerably. The Farm Credit Service, formed in 1916, was part of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and funded the Farm Bill, offers loans directly to farmers or subsidizes loans from private banks to help farmers buy private land conservation, mainly for protecting important farmlands for future generations. The Natural Resources Conservation Service, formed in 1935, helps farmers in skills building. It is massive and far-reaching, but something important, that it is big boon to small-scale farmers in the comfort of your home. Of course nothing beats a homemade meal, but there’s plenty to choose from.}

Get this: in 2018 and 2017, you will be able to find the products of many small scale farmers right here in the shelves of this store. Keep in mind that the USDA’s MyPlate nutrition guidelines are pretty satisfying when you are looking for something new and exciting. Don’t be afraid to try something new, even if it’s a little different from what you are used to...

The Farm Bill also supports local foods. Every year use SNAP to help feed about 40 million people who qualify for assistance while protecting the environment. The current administration hopes to impose work requirements for able-bodied recipients. Analysts predict this would drastically reduce the amount of people who qualify for assistance without reducing the need. In St. Lawrence County, 10% of the population, to put it another way, one in five people live in poverty and SNAP is a necessary and important part of many people’s lives (around 13% of the population, to be exact). The last important thing to note about the budget is that while most of the money is allocated for SNAP and assistance to large-scale industrial agriculture, 1% the funds end up going to the “miscellaneous” category, which includes small-scale farmers, organic farmers, “underserved farmers,” beginning farmers, and new growers, and those producing “specialty crops” (fruits, vegetables, and nuts). Take a look at the USDA’s reauthorization recommendations, and you’ll find that these “specialty crops” are precisely the types of foods that are supposed to fill our plate and provide most of our nutrition.

However, there are a few law makers who are fighting for our right to produce and consume healthy food that can boost our local economies. Some of these law makers also fight for boosting the Farm Bill like the National Organic Certification Cost-Share Program, to help organic farmers pay for costly organic certification, and the Local Food and Regional Market Supply Act (Local FARMS Act), to connect farmers to local and regional markets through cost-share and technical assistance programs while also strengthening the infrastructure that connects producers and consumers. The Local FARMS Act also improves consumers’ access to a choice of fresh, local food.

Our legislators will write the policy that makes up Farm Bill 2018, and there will be plenty of opportunities for public input and influence. But don’t forget that those law makers are responsible to the constituents who elected them to be in the House of Representatives, so you may send your opinions and concerns about the upcoming Farm Bill to your NY.21 representative, Congresswoman Elise Stefanik. Make sure to bring her attention to those provisions that help local farmers, Extension Service, organic farmers, and my and everyone else’s access to healthy food! And when you consider the social and environmental benefits of local food, the case for local food is overwhelming.

In the comfort of your home. Of course nothing beats a homemade meal, but there’s plenty to choose from. Give this a try next time you’re looking for a quick meal. You can even try mixing in a little Walabby Organic Cultured Sour Cream to make some tasty mini tacos. These vegan patties are also free of gluten, soy, and nuts. Made from wholesome and nutritious foods like millet, lentils, and organic dairy, there’s nothing in the ingredient list that you can’t pronounce. They are low in calories and fat and make a great addition to any breakfast.

I hope you’ll give some of these new products a try! We encourage you to pass our promotional pricing to our customers and hope you will take advantage of these prices and pass them along to your friends and family. Your feedback is very important to us and our Co-operative model. If there is something you would like to see us carry, please don’t hesitate to reach out.