



NEWS BITES

NEW!



Co-op Gift Cards

A natural food Co-op Gift Card is an ideal way to give the gift of food adventure, be it savoring quality foods or indulging in the gourmet. A natural food co-op gift card can be activated in any amount and can also be recharged. Co-op Gift Cards can be used to purchase fresh natural foods, health and body care items, cookbooks, classes, regular deli visits for lunch, and even a co-op membership. Co-op Gift Cards purchased at Open Harvest can be used at other Midwest co-ops. For participating locations, see www.mwnaturalfoods.coop.

Inside this issue:

Begin Weight Loss at Breakfast Table	2
Members Ask about Co-op Expansion	3
A Year of Progress	3
Cooking Classes	4
Recipes	5
Should Synthetics be Allowed in Organic Products?	6
Community Events	7
New Produce Cooler!	8

New Membership Benefits!

By Jackie Barnhardt, Outreach and Member Coordinator

Beginning January 1st, Open Harvest rolls out new member-owner benefits. We have made changes to improve service, convenience, and provide savings to our member-owners. We have also created new opportunities to join the co-op.

Membership Appreciation Discount

Membership Appreciation Weekends are changing! We heard your concerns about how the co-op is getting more crowded, the check-out lines are longer, and that it is especially difficult to find a parking place on these weekends. There are also many member-owners who are not able to take advantage of Member Appreciation Weekends because they are not able to come in on the first Saturday or Sunday of the month.

Starting in January, a new system begins in which you, the member-owner, can choose the day of the month to take advantage of the 5% discount on purchases. If you have housemates or family together on a membership, it will be your responsibility to coordinate when to use this once-a-month discount.

You can still special order whole case lots for the extra 5% discount to pick up on the day you choose to use your discount. Call ahead to pre-order, as before.

The register system will prompt the cashier to ask you at the start of the transaction if you would like to use your Membership Appreciation Discount, if it is still available that month. It is good for one day per month, and you can not carry it over if you don't use it each month.

Membership Specials

We are introducing a Membership Specials program that enables us to offer more specially priced sale items to our membership each month! Our Retail Manager, Lyndsay Griffith, searches for great deals and deep discounts on dozens of natural products. Look for new signs identifying Membership Specials.



Lyndsay Griffith, Retail Manager, searching for great member deals.

Membership Grants

Occasionally, we encounter people that have a strong desire to be member-owners, yet face economic hardship. For them the \$25 commitment to Open Harvest puts membership out of reach.

We will offer Membership Grants to twelve people in 2006 (one per month). These one-year grants are intended for people who want to join and support the co-op, but can't afford membership at this time. If you know of someone who might benefit from this, have them ask a cashier for a membership question form. Fill it out and we will contact them. For any questions about this program, contact Jackie at 475-9033.

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The Board of Directors meets the first Monday of the month at 6:30pm at 2012 S.13 St. Members are welcome to attend. If you would like to be on the agenda, call Keith Dubas at 438-0171.

Open Harvest Mission Statement:

The goal of Open Harvest is to provide good health through good nutrition. Open Harvest provides high quality and natural foods with a high level of service and a reasonable price to the community of Lincoln. Open Harvest is a member-owned retail cooperative dedicated to equitable employment practices, support of local producers, consumer education, and sustainable agricultural practices.

Begin Your Resolution at the Breakfast Table

by Marsha Bonne, MS, RD, Twin Cities Natural Food Co-ops; Minneapolis, MN

Weight loss is the #1 New Year's resolution in America. In an effort to shed unwanted pounds, some people cut out breakfast, despite the fact that it is the most important meal of the day. Several scientific studies have shown that people who regularly eat breakfast are leaner than people who skip breakfast.

One clue is provided by the National Weight Control Registry, an ongoing study that tracks the habits of people who have lost at least 30 pounds and have kept the weight off for more than a year. Almost 80 percent of the registry's participants eat breakfast every day.

One of the latest studies at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester showed that adults who regularly skipped breakfast were 450 percent more likely to be obese compared to regular breakfast eaters. Similarly, other research has shown that children who skip breakfast are almost twice as likely to be overweight than children who eat breakfast.

If you're already a breakfast eater, you may be wondering why some selections fail to fully satisfy your hunger. The secret is to eat a varied breakfast, with a mix of foods containing carbohydrates, protein, and a bit of fat. This mix of nutrients gradually releases energy for several hours after you eat and helps maintain blood sugar levels. The carbohydrates will break down first, providing you with quick energy and helping to swiftly fuel your brain after the night's fast. The protein will break down next, and

then fat, potentially delaying hunger for several hours.

When choosing carbohydrate-rich foods, the key is to opt for those high in complex carbohydrates and minimally processed. Whole grains not only provide more nutrients than refined grains, but they also provide more fiber, and a high fiber breakfast can contribute to feelings of fullness. Regular consumption of whole grain foods may also reduce the risk of heart disease. Check ingredient listings for whole oats, whole wheat, whole rye, and so forth. In other words, look for the words "whole" or "whole grain."

Despite the benefits of breakfast and the opportunity it provides for boosting your nutrition intake for the day, breakfast consumption has been steadily declining in the United States for more than 25 years and among all ages. To reverse the trend of declining breakfast consumption, bounce out of bed tomorrow morning and gather everyone 'round the breakfast table—it just may benefit your entire family's weight, as well as your health!

— The PRAIRIE HILL Perspective —



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Membership Asks About Co-op Expansion

By Dave Eckmann, 2005 Board Chair

For those of you unable to attend the Annual Meeting in October, I would like to refer you to the Fiscal Year 2005 Annual Report prepared by Jean Helms. It is a concise, comprehensive overview of the Coop. You can find it at www.openharvest.coop.

The report led to a general discussion about our future. I answered a question on many people's minds—namely, why didn't we move into the space vacated by Godfather's? There were two reasons: (1) it would not solve the parking problem, and (2) we simply weren't ready. Parking has long been a source of complaint. The recent survey indicated that about half the membership finds it inadequate.

We have enlisted the help of a handful of consultants who are aiding the board and management in working through the feasibility stage of an expansion project. A "green light scenario" has been created which provides benchmarks to determine our capacity for moving forward with expansion plans. Since then we have been working to meet these criteria. Some of these benchmarks include 50% sales to members (currently 47%), 2000 active member-owners (currently close to 1900), sales of \$3 million (last year \$2.7 million) and a cash reserve of \$150,000 (currently about \$130,000).

As you can see, we're close. The operation has become more professional with improved training for staff, management and board, better equipment and facilities, a better financial profile and better standing

with local lenders. We need to consider risk. When we moved from Randolph St. to South St. a lot of strategic planning was done. Yet the projections were overstated and the store almost had to close the first year. So, we are working hard to plan more carefully and conservatively this time.

There were good questions asked at the Annual Meeting about expansion/relocation. Most had to do with when and where. The "when" is sometime in the next two years and the "where" is somewhere close by. Right now, lots of things are going on in the South Street area and we are looking at that. Open Harvest is a member of the South Street Business and Civic Association and is talking with developers and civic leaders.

This is complex. Will South Street be declared a blighted area? Where is the city funding for this project? When will it start? Do we buy, build or rent? What will a new store look like? Right now, this is all up in the air. The current board and management have been getting ready. Decisions are not that far off. When we passed the recent referendum updating our legal status, we asked for help from the membership and got it. Coming up is the formation of an expansion committee and focus groups. There will be plenty of work to go around.

Let's continue to work together—that is our strength. If you would like to help or offer comments, you can leave a note in the suggestion box at the store or e-mail: harvest@openharvest.com.

2005: A Year of Progress

By Jean Helms, General Manager

Looking back over the last twelve months, we have made enormous progress as an organization. We celebrated our 30th Anniversary and reorganized as a cooperative in Nebraska. It has been personally gratifying to be a part of our productive forward movement! Thank you to everyone who makes this possible!



In terms of shopping convenience and the overall look of the store, we have accomplished a great deal. The whole store received a fresh coat of paint, the mission statement now surrounds the perimeter above the plants, and we created a functional breakroom for the staff. We have made many purchases to better serve our customers including two bulk units, a produce cooler, track lights, deli scales, and the Health Notes information kiosk.

Another accomplishment was matching funds raised at the registers for Second Harvest. We sent a total donation of \$1,400 to Second Harvest to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina. We are pleased to have this ability to help the Food Banks that serve these areas. Thank you for your generous support!

In looking forward, we will be continuing to assess our needs at both the operational and leadership levels. There are many things that the Board and Management are working on in order to increase our capacity and enable us to take on an expansion project at some point in the future. We will continue to seek input from our member-owners to guide our work and involve you as much as possible in the process.

Here's to another stimulating and productive year!

2006 Cooking Classes

Intro to Natural Foods will be held at Open Harvest. All other classes will be held at 6:30 to 8:30pm at Trinity United Methodist Church 16th and A Streets.

FREE! Intro to Natural Foods

Saturday, January 28, 8-9 am at Open Harvest

For those new to Natural Foods, or just wanting to learn more about them, this free class is for you. Meet at Open Harvest for a detailed store tour with Jackie Barnhardt, Outreach Educator. Lots of samples!

NEW! Feeding your Fussy Kids

Monday, February 6

Are your kids picky eaters? Kris Bohling offers some practical ideas to make eating healthy food more fun for your family. Kris works at Open Harvest and cooks for his fussy kids and will offer ways to help your kids like the food you cook. Samples and vegetarian-friendly recipes included.

Introduction to Foods of Spain

Thursday, February 9

Former Deli Manager Jim Larson returns to prepare Spanish regional dishes, sharing techniques and samples of tapas (little appetizers), salads, and main dishes. Most dishes will include eggs, dairy, and seafood. Jim shares his recipes and samples.

NEW! Cinnamon Rolls 101

Monday, February 13

Just in time for Valentine's Day! Learn how to make old-fashioned cinnamon rolls for your sweetheart. Jackie Barnhardt also includes instructions for caramel rolls and butter cream icing. Recipes and samples included.

NEW! Getting Saucy with

Randy

Thursday, February 16

Learn to use sauces to add flavor and flair to your cooking. Open Harvest staffer Randy Messman shares his culinary talents by demonstrating how to make sauces, and use gourmet prepared sauces. Recipes and samples included.



REVISED! Soups, Stews, and Quickbreads

Tuesday, February 21

Heart warming, body building, hearty soups and stews will satisfy your soul. Instructor Jody Hoover also demonstrates cheese crisps, flatbread, and cornbread. Recipes and samples included.

NEW! The Art of Sandwich Making

Thursday, February 23

Are you tired of take-out food? Sandwiches are a great way to eat tasty, healthy foods on the go. Kris Bohling shows easy ways to make regular old sandwiches special, using vegetarian ingredients. Meat lovers are welcome! Samples included.

NEW! How to Eat like a Vegetarian

Monday, February 27

Want to try eating more vegetarian foods but don't know where to start? Learn about vegetarian nutrition and different reasons to eat more vegetarian foods like tofu, tempeh, tvp, and seitan or to just let the veggies take center stage. Kris Bohling offers recipes, samples, vegetarian Q & A, and resources.

NEW! Delicious Diabetic Dining

Tuesday, February 28

Come and learn how easy and delicious diabetic cooking can be. Bonnie Bake has been cooking for a diabetic for 36 years and shares practical tips on cooking, counting carbs, food portions, reading labels, selecting foods when dining out, and how to use stevia, a natural sweetener. Recipes and samples included.

NEW! Cooking with Tofu

Thursday, March 2

Tofu is rich in protein, calcium, and can reduce cholesterol. Tofu is an extremely versatile food that can be used in sauces and dips, desserts, or as the main course. Kris Bohling will make stir-fry, baked tofu, tofu scramble and a tofu pudding. Recipes and samples included.

NEW! South Asian Cooking

Monday, March 6

Learn how to make fresh and fried spring rolls with peanut sauce for the appetizer and a spicy yellow curry. Kris Bohling shows how to make these and other variations on the basic recipes, using both meat and vegetarian options. Recipes and samples included.

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Eating Well

Open Harvest Wins Chili Cook-off!

In October, the UN-L Culinology department held its second annual chili cook-off. Thanks to a recipe from the Whole Foods Co-op, in Duluth, Minn., and the cooking talents of our new Kitchen Manager, Mike Dowty, Open Harvest won first place for the vegetarian chili category.



Fire Roasted Red Bean Chili

- 1 1/2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 or 2 jalapenos, seeded and minced
- 1 Tablespoon garlic, minced
- 1-28 oz. can fire roasted tomatoes
- 2 Tablespoons chili powder
- 1 Tablespoon cumin, ground
- 1/2 teaspoon oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper, ground
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1-15 oz. can red beans
- 1 teaspoon sea salt

In a medium stockpot, heat oil over medium heat. Add onions, jalapenos, and garlic. Sauté until softened. Add tomatoes and spices. Bring to a boil, reduce to simmer for 15 minutes. Add red beans and salt. Cook an additional 15 minutes.

Getting Saucy with Randy!

Open Harvest cashier Randy Messman often offers up fabulous cooking ideas while ringing up groceries. We asked him to share tips in his new cooking class. Here are two sneak previews.

Yams with Lacinato Kale and Chili Sauce

- 3 medium yams, peeled and diced
- 1 half bunch lacinato kale, spine removed, coarsely chopped
- 3 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1 Tablespoon Thai Kitchen Spicy Chili Sauce (or more, to taste)

Sauté garlic in olive oil. Add yams and cook until softened. Add kale and sauté until wilted. Stir in chili sauce, to taste.

Chicken with Asparagus and Mushrooms

- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 3 or 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 3/4 pound chicken breast, diced
- 1/2 pound asparagus, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1/2 pound mushrooms, sliced
- 1/4 cup Campaño Apricot Ginger Glaze
- 1 pound pasta, cooked

Heat oil, add garlic and chicken. Saute 5 minutes. Add asparagus and mushrooms. Cook until tender. Stir in glaze. Serve over hot pasta.

Registration for Natural Foods Cooking Classes

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone (day) _____ (eve) _____

Check classes desired:

- Jan. 29 Intro to Natural Foods FREE!
- Feb. 6 Feeding your Fussy Kids
- Feb. 9 Intro to Foods of Spain
- Feb. 13 Cinnamon Rolls 101
- Feb. 16 Getting Saucy with Randy
- Feb. 21 Soups, Stews, and Quickbreads
- Feb. 23 The Art of Sandwich Making
- Feb. 27 How to Eat like a Vegetarian
- Feb. 28 Delicious Diabetic Dining
- Mar. 2 Cooking with Tofu
- Mar. 6 South Asian Cooking
- Member-owner-\$15 per class
Member number _____
- Non-Member-owner-\$20 per class

Amount enclosed \$ _____ (do not send cash)

Visa, _____ MC _____ or _____ Dis-
cover# _____

expiration _____

Your payment secures your seat.

No walk-ins, please.

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Should Synthetics Be Allowed in Organic Products?

° Industry at odds over new guidelines

By Gloria Bucco

It's not rocket science. To be labeled "organic" and carry the USDA Organic seal, a product must contain all natural ingredients and be at least 95 percent organic. It seems straightforward enough, yet a lawsuit and recent Congressional action concerning synthetic ingredients in organics has plunged the industry into a turmoil that could result in consumers questioning the purity of their favorite organic products.

In fact, under the national organic standards implemented in 2002, 38 synthetic ingredients have been approved for use in multi-ingredient organic food processing, and manufacturers continue to petition for additional allowances.

Since these allowances are in direct conflict with 1990's original Organic Foods Production Act, a Maine organic blueberry farmer named Arthur Harvey filed a federal lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture asking for a stricter interpretation of organic standards more in line with the 1990 law.

A U.S. Court of Appeals agreed with Harvey's lawsuit ruling that USDA organic regulations were inconsistent with OFPA on several counts. Specifically, the court ruled that OFPA did not permit any synthetic substances in processed foods, and that dairy farms must feed their cows organic feed for a minimum of twelve months prior to sale of organic milk.

Worried that a return to OFPA's stringent guidelines would adversely affect organic manufacturers, the Organic Trade Association lobbied for significant changes to OFPA in these areas.

OTA, based in Massachusetts, disagrees with Harvey and others such as Organic Consumers Association, Consumers Union, The Center for Food Safety, and other advocacy and consumer watchdog groups who support a strict interpretation of the 1990 standard. OTA says its goal is to revise the law to reflect practices

currently in use and vital to continued growth of the organic industry.

"OTA believes that it is better for consumers and farmers if Congress eliminates any confusion by updating the Organic Foods Production Act," states a fact sheet on the OTA website.

Now, a Congressional subcommittee has added a rider to the fiscal year 2006 Agricultural Appropriations Bill that provides for changes to the original Organic Foods Production Act of 1990.

The amendment alters sections of OFPA that relate to synthetic ingredients in organic food processing and changes guidelines designed to transition conventional dairy cows to organic dairy cows.

The current rider essentially negates Harvey's lawsuit. Using language introduced by OTA, it continues to allow the use of synthetic ingredients such as pectin, carbon dioxide, vitamins and minerals in the processing of organic food. It is unclear if other synthetic substances such as leavening, pH control agents, nutrient supplements, firming agents, filter aids, clarifying agents, or cleaners, sanitizers or disinfectants would be allowed with no restrictions and no review by the National Organic Standards Board or if their use would be prohibited.

These agents can profoundly affect organic products. For example, according to Harvey, organic eggs are currently dipped in bleach for packaging, and whole chickens are being sealed in plastic bags containing water with up to 200 ppm of chlorine. He adds that many of these chickens have never been outdoors or exposed to direct sunlight.

"As a consumer, I would not have suspected any of these facts which I learned as an (organic) inspector," Harvey adds.

In a letter appearing on the Organic Consumers Association website, 41 members of the organic

community outlined their concerns with the changes and OTA's position.

The letter maintains that OTA's changes have not strengthened or improved OFPA in any way. "They have only retained the allowance for synthetics that previously existed in the (2002) regulation, added a potential loophole for non-organic ingredients, added ambiguity on the issue of processing aids, removed authority from the NOSB, and failed to strengthen dairy standards," the letter states.

But the OTA counters that it is not proposing any change in the way synthetic materials are petitioned, reviewed, and approved or rejected.

"OTA strongly supports the existing role of the National Organic Standards Board as the gatekeeper on all materials decisions. We propose to keep the system that is currently in place which is that all synthetic ingredients and processing aids must be the subject of a petition to the NOSB," its website states.

Harvey states that he initiated his lawsuit because "the USDA was moving steadily away from organic integrity as envisioned by people who got Congress to approve OFPA in 1990." OFPA, he says, was built on a clear distinction between farming and manufacturing. "Reviewed synthetics are allowed in farming, and none in manufacturing. The moment any synthetics are allowed in the law... then the framework or philosophical basis of OFPA becomes ambiguous. Ambiguity in a law is an invitation for USDA to fashion its own organic system. If history is a guide, USDA will give manufacturers what they want — largely because they have lobbyists in D.C.," Harvey adds.

Gloria Bucco is an independent journalist living in Lincoln who specializes in health and environmental topics. She can be reached at gmbucco@yahoo.com.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Slow Food in Nebraska

By Ruth Chantry

Do you love food and find it vital to preserve the culture, taste and heritage of food? Do you want to support the antithesis to fast food and what it brings to our society? There are many reasons to support and join the newly formed Slow Food Convivium in Nebraska.

The Slow Food movement was founded by Carlo Petrini of Bra, Italy, who recognized in 1986 that the industrialization of food was standardizing taste and leading to the demise of thousands of food varieties and flavors. The organization is active in 50 countries and has approximately 140 local chapters in the U.S. To learn more about Slow Food, visit their website at www.slowfoodusa.org

This first Nebraska chapter is being initiated by individuals that are members of Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society. The missions of NSAS and Slow Food overlap—sustainability, building community and place, and more. To find out more please contact Krista Dittman at branchedoakfarm2@earthlink.net or 783-2124 or Ruth Chantry at rchantry@nebsusag.org or 783-9005.

Friends of Wilderness Park Sponsors Native Plant Sale

Friends of Wilderness Park, a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting Wilderness Park and other environmentally sensitive areas, is sponsoring a native plant sale. The sale will feature native plant varieties that can be found growing in Wilderness Park.

Catalogues and order forms will be available at Open Harvest, Pioneers Park Nature Center, Spring Creek Prairie south of Denton, The Mill, and the Parks and Recreation Center Office at 27th and A Streets. They also may be ordered by calling 477-8282 and leaving a message. Plant orders must be placed by Feb. 26th.

Funds from the sale will be used to support education, a legal fund, and scholarships for the Wilderness Park Day Camp.

The Future of Food Screening

A special showing of "The Future of Food," and animated short, "The Meatrix," will be held on Sunday, February 26, 2006, 1:30 PM at the Joyo Theater, 6102 Havelock Ave.

"The Future of Food" investigates and critiques genetically engineered foods and crops.

Following the film will be a question and answer session hosted and sponsored by the Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society and Nebraska's Slow Food Convivium. Admission: free will donations happily accepted to support Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society. Generous support to bring this film to the Joyo from Rivers Metal Products.

Ecology Now! and Open Harvest Potlucks

UNL's environmental group Ecology Now! and Open Harvest invite you to potluck and Movie nights on February 12 and March 12. Potlucks are held the second Sunday of the month at 5 pm at the Culture Center at 333 N.14th Street. A film follows dinner, TBA.

Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society Annual Healthy Farms Conference

The NSAS is reaching out to new audiences with this year's Annual Healthy Farms Conference on February 3 and 4, 2006. Partnering with UNL Extension's Rural Advantage Workshop, there will be a range of workshops providing valuable information to producers, citizen consumers and resource providers.

The conference will be held at Kimmel Research and Education Center in Nebraska City. Special Guest, Daniel Salatin of Swoope Virginia, will be on hand both days to open the conference and to address

the topic of "Family Friendly Farming" through workshops and discussions. Daniel is the son of Joel Salatin who has become an icon for sustainable agriculture in North America, and works with his father on the family farm.

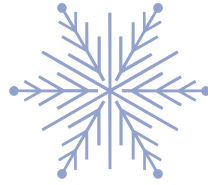
This year's conference agenda offers the following tracks: Soils & Agronomy, Family Friendly Farming, and Agri-tourism. The Family Friendly Farming track will appeal to farm and urban families alike. For more information about the conference, contact Paul Rohrbaugh at

prohrbaugh@nebsusag.org or 402.869.2396.

Friday late afternoon and evening activities include a live-auction fundraiser and Nebraska banquet. Saturday includes an all-day silent auction fundraiser. (We accept donations for the auctions happily!) Register early and don't miss out! Registration may also be made separately for the Friday auction and Nebraska banquet. To donate items for the auction, contact Ruth Chantry at 402.783.9005 or rchantry@nebsusag.org.



Natural Foods
Cooperative Grocery



New Produce Coolers Arrive!

It was very chilly December 5, when the front of the store was disassembled in order to remove the exhausted old produce coolers. Open Harvest purchased them in used condition in 1990, when the co-op relocated from 27th and Randolph Streets.

New energy efficient produce coolers were delivered and connected. Produce Manager Chris Reigle said he's hearing only good comments about the new coolers. New sprayers keep items fresher, by keeping produce moist. Waste has gone down significantly. Labor is saved by not having to remove so much produce at night for storage in the walk-in cooler in the back room. "It's about time," said Chris. Weekday produce sales are topping \$1000 more often.

The new walnut produce bins recently installed were made from sustainably grown trees by Jefferson State Forest Products. The company grows their own trees, uses selective harvest and fallen trees.

"Fresh just got fresher," said Grocery Buyer Pam Bosley.



A-1 Refrigeration crew carefully removes retired coolers.



Assistant Produce Manager Steve Aman stocks the new produce cooler.