



ARCATA EUREKA

Co-op News ≈ Volume 31

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North Coast Cooperative Inc.
www.northcoastco-op.com

co-opnews@northcoastco-op.com

Editor

Melanie Bettenhausen
Member Linkages Director
(707) 826-8670 ext. 132

melanieb@northcoastco-op.com

Coordinator

Amy Waldrip

(707) 826-8670 ext. 120

amywaldrip@northcoastco-op.com

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The Arcata Co-op

811 I St., Arcata • (707) 822-5947

Kelli Reese, Store Manager

kellireese@northcoastco-op.com

Open daily: 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

The Eureka Co-op

25 Fourth St., Eureka • (707) 443-6027

Larry Crabb, Store Manager

lcrabb@northcoastco-op.com

Open Daily: 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

The Cooperative Offices

811 I St., Arcata • (707) 826-8670

General Manager

David Lippman, ext. 124

dlippman@northcoastco-op.com

Membership Services Director

Valerie Davis, ext. 135

valeriedavis@northcoastco-op.com

Human Resources

Lisa Landry, ext. 127

lisalandry@northcoastco-op.com

Accounting

Jeff Peacock, ext. 138

jeffpeacock@northcoastco-op.com

Board of Directors

Dave Feral, Sarah Mora,

Cynthia Coronado-Brown

Austin Beadle, Wayne Hawkins,

Steve Suttell & Nate Wiesner

board@northcoastco-op.com

The Cooperative Principles:

1. Voluntary & Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Member Economic Participation
4. Autonomy & Independence
5. Education, Training & Information
6. Cooperation Among Co-ops
7. Concern for Community

Co-op Buzz:

**Co-op Committed to A Local and Sustainable Food System
Eat Local Challenge Takes Shape for Third Year in a Row**



By Melanie Bettenhausen,
Member Linkages Director

The word ‘local’ gets tossed around more than the word ‘green’ these days.

Have you ever tried to have a conversation without using the word yourself? Do you remember a time when it wasn’t in the media’s vocabulary?

I do, and it was far less than a decade ago.

Here at the Co-op, when we say local, we mean tied to a food system that is generated by the farmers, distributors and consumers in our region.

It’s not about a distance; it’s about a community. It’s about knowing the people who are involved; being able to thank them and support them; and recognizing that we are an integral part of the food system.

Lately the word local has been co-opted by major marketing firms, such as those used by Walmart and Safeway, to mean food produced within a certain distance.

The intent is to capitalize on a trend in social values.

However, some of the food produced includes that grown by major agricultural companies along Interstate 5, or grown within the same state—not exactly in the spirit of the word as we tend to use it at the Co-op.

In our use of the word, local means being part of the local food movement, which is a “collaborative effort to build more locally based, self-reliant food economies - one in which sustainable food production, processing, distribution, and consumption is integrated to enhance the economic, environmental and social health of a particular place”¹.

Somehow, I just don’t see that being the goal of national and multi-national chains.

As we move into the next decade, I’d like to see us focus

on being local—not just using the term—and thinking within the broader context of a regional food system (page 16).

Sifting through news articles and other programs about sustainable-this and grow-your-own-that, I am constantly thinking about how we can expand beyond the choir we are currently preaching to and create something tangible that exists beyond the local food fad.

The Co-op is committed to helping to administer a robust local food distribution system and to providing leadership and advocacy regarding sustainable food.

One way we fulfill our commitment to local foods is with the Eat Local Challenge (page 10).

What better way to reach a broad spectrum of people than to pose a challenge to the entire community to eat local foods for a month?

Not only do we pose the challenge, but we make it possible for people from all walks of life to join in, even if it is by adding just one local item to their diet each week.

The Co-op supports people in their challenge by providing cooking classes and workshops focused on preparing and preserving local foods (pages 12-15), in-store tastings of local products (page 20) and in-store signage that points to local products.

Another way we fulfill our commitment to local foods is through the Trust Your Source program (page 9) which allows shoppers to find out where their food comes from and how it is produced.

The Co-op doesn’t stop its work at its doors. We go out and investigate issues that you have asked us to.

We know you trust the Co-op’s discretion when making purchasing decisions, so we visit farms and producers in the area—and sometimes out of the area—so that we can honestly say we know how food is produced (see page 6 to find out just how local Humboldt

Creamery is under its new ownership.)

Working in the community, we are trying to connect your great ideas regarding a local foods system with the people who can make them happen.

We are also trying to provide support and funding whenever feasible. Look for opportunities to contribute to our regional food system on page 16.

In the Co-op News we

are always striving to bring awareness to local and national food issues (page 2) so that Co-op members can be involved in preserving the integrity of organics and protecting small family farms.

The Co-op knows that all of this effort is made possible by you, the owners, who value a community-based business.

Thank you for being a member and for shopping the Co-op!

1. www.appropedia.org/local_food

On the cover: ‘Localized’ designed by Curtis Arnold, winner of the Eat Local Challenge T-shirt Artwork Contest (see page 10 for more).

Inside

Local Produce Calendar	2
localvores! get your tastebuds ready for summer!	
General Manager’s Report	3
potty talk, new POS system, employee survey	
Co-op is a Unionized Workplace	4
negotiations begin this summer	
Board of Directors	5
election timeline & eating locally	
Humboldt Creamery	6
how local is it?	
New Bag Refund Policy	7
timeline for reducing paper bag use	
Earth Day Essay Contest Winners	8
kids write why eating healthy is important to them	
Member Survey!	8
new question & chance to win \$50 co-op gift certificate	
Trust Your Source	9
co-op’s guide to regional & sustainable foods	
Eat Local Challenge 2010	10
challenge levels, t-shirts & free bags!	
CCF Register Donation Program	11
new list of numbers for community groups	
Cooking Class & Workshop Schedule	12-15
prep for eat local challenge, recipes & more	
Building a Regional Food System	16
value added cooperative kitchen & new IDA program	
Co-OpéRa!	17
the magic fruit in the aisles of your co-op	
Lawn’s Labour’s Lost	18
turn those front yards into gardens & sanctuaries	
The Good Food Buzz	19
great deals on local & bulk products, june-august	
Staff Picks	20
local food favorites & local food tastings	
Members Out Loud!	21
make raw milk legal in humboldt county!	
Financial Statements	22