

VIRCOQUA FOOD COOP

PEA SOUP

SPRING 2016

New Season... New Chapter!

cover story page 6

SPRING 2016

The Pea Soup is published quarterly and printed on recycled paper.

Viroqua Food Co-op

609 N Main St

Viroqua, WI 54665

<http://viroquafood.coop>

OPEN DAILY 7am - 9pm

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Download the Pea Soup at: viroquafood.coop

To receive an email reminder when each new download is available, sign up on our website. To be removed from the Pea Soup mailing list, email: marketing@viroquafood.coop

Owner Classifieds are FREE for VFC Owners!

To place a classified ad in the Summer Pea Soup Newsletter, email: marketing@viroquafood.coop
Information is due by **April 29**.
Please limit ad(s) to 30 words or less.

Advertisements:

Ad sizes and prices are as follows:

1/8 page: 3.5"w x 2"h – \$30

1/4 page: 3.5"w x 5"h – \$65

Email your Summer Pea Soup ad by

April 29 to:

marketing@viroquafood.coop

Pea Soup is intended as a vehicle for communication among Co-op owners and shoppers. Articles pertaining to health and nutrition are presented for informational purposes only. VFC recommends consulting a healthcare professional for medical problems and advice.

Ads printed in this publication are not necessarily endorsed by Viroqua Food Co-op.

BOARD'S EYE VIEW

Look for the P6 Labels



If you shop regularly at the Viroqua Food Co-op, chances are you've seen the P6 labels and signs sprinkled throughout the store. But do you know what the label really means, and why we're so excited to support products with that label?

P6 is an initiative that was designed by food cooperatives to help consumers choose products made in line with their values. It's named after the sixth cooperative principle: Cooperation Among Cooperatives. It helps stores like the VFC, and shoppers like you, support equitable and just trade relationships between farmers, producers, retailers and consumers. It's rooted in cooperative principles and values, and aligns well with our mission at the VFC.

In order for an item to carry the P6 label, it must be produced by a business that is at least two of the following three criteria: 1) local, 2) cooperatively owned (or nonprofit), or 3) small. As large corporations increasingly move into the organic food business, the P6 label helps consumers like me buy products from organizations with business models I want to support.

As an owner of the VFC, I'm proud our Co-op has been an early adopter of the P6 Program. Over 185 P6 Producers had products in our store last year. In March, we'll

continue our annual tradition of hosting a P6 Tailgate Party in the store's parking lot. You'll get the chance to meet local P6 Producers and try samples of their food (see article on page 4).

Part of supporting P6 Producers is financing their growth. That's why the VFC has established the Micro-lending Initiative open to any P6 Producers who supply the VFC. In 2016, our zero-interest loan is going to Wisco Pop! We were proud to provide the seed money necessary for Wisco Pop to start their bottling line two years ago. This year, Wisco Pop will use the loan to establish a certified organic line of their local sodas. Bringing organic options to our community is an important part of the VFC's mission, so we're excited to do this and support one of our P6 Producers at the same time! Learn more on page 11.

Here in the Driftless we're lucky to have many P6 Producers to supply our Co-op with delicious and nourishing foods, wellness products, and more. Next time you're at the Co-op, I encourage you to look for the P6 label on the shelf and read the stories of P6 Producers throughout the store. And I hope to see you at the P6 Tailgate Party on March 26!

Leslie Kruempel,
VFC Board of Directors

VFC BOARD OF DIRECTORS



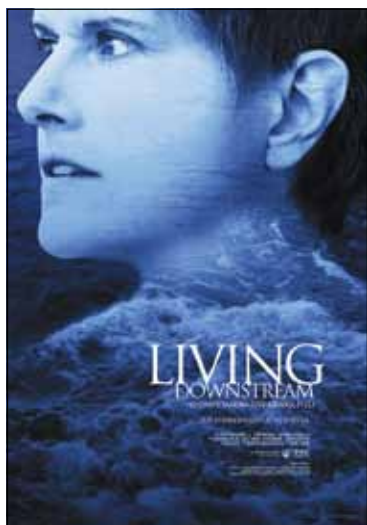
VFC Board of Directors (L-to-R): Luke Zigovits (Treas.), Peter Bergquist (Sec.), Curt Brye (Pres.), Michael Link (V.Pres.), Eric Newman, Leslie Kruempel & Larry Homstad.

The next Board meeting is on Wednesday, March 16 at 6:30pm in VFC offsite office #2 (513 N Center Ave). Changes are posted in VFC Owner Services area. To make a presentation or ask questions at the meeting, please contact Board 10 days in advance. Email:

vfcbod@viroquafood.coop

MARCH DOCUMENTARY SCREENING

FREE MOVIE & ORGANIC POPCORN AT THE ARK!



Living Downstream

Thursday, March 24, 6:30-8:30pm
The Ark (401 E Jefferson St, Viroqua)
Length of Film: 85 minutes

Description: Based on the acclaimed book by ecologist and cancer survivor Sandra Steingraber, Ph.D., *Living Downstream* is an eloquent and cinematic documentary that follows Sandra during one pivotal year as she travels across North America, working to break the silence about cancer and its environmental links.

After a routine cancer screening, Sandra receives some worrying results and is thrust into a period of medical uncertainty. Thus,

we begin two journeys with Sandra: her private struggles with cancer and her public quest to bring attention to the urgent human rights issue of cancer prevention. Several experts in the fields of toxicology and cancer research make important cameo appearances in the film. Their work further illuminates the significant connection between a healthy environment and human health.

At once Sandra's personal journey and her scientific exploration, *Living Downstream* is a powerful reminder of the intimate connection between the health of our bodies and the health of our air, land, and water. Learn more:

<http://www.livingdownstream.com>

P6 TAILGATE PARTY

Saturday, March 26, 10am-2pm, VFC Parking Lot

10% off All Products Sold By Attending P6 Producers!

ENTER DRAWING TO WIN BASKET FULL OF P6 GOODIES!



Details in article on page 4!

Drawing to Win Basket of P6 Products
Grill Out Featuring P6 Foods
Free Samples from P6 Producers

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2016 P6 Tailgate Party

Join us Saturday, March 26, 10am-2pm!

With more daylight and warmer temperatures, spring is in the air! That also means that we're gearing up for our 4th Annual Principle Six (P6) Tailgate Party—hooray! You are invited to the Tailgate Party on Saturday, March 26 from 10am-2pm. We have a wide variety of our favorite P6 Producers joining us in our parking lot, under a big heated tent, sharing samples of the foods they produce and information about their businesses.

Our deli is having a P6 Grill Out featuring their favorite P6 foods from 11am-2pm. We've also heard rumors that a life-sized Equal Exchange P6 Banana may make an appearance! This is a family-friendly event that's fun for all, but if the life-size banana doesn't do it for you—be sure to come to take advantage of the one-day sale: **10% OFF all products sold by attending P6 Producers!**

Our P6 Tailgate features the following VFC P6 Producers:

- **Artisan Deli Foods** produces traditionally made sauerkraut using green cabbage and salt. Ursula and Barry Thomas own the company and make their kraut at the Food Enterprise Center in Viroqua, WI. They use green cabbage produced by southwestern Wisconsin farms when available.
- **B&E's Trees** is owned by Bree Breckel and Eric Weninger. They produce certified organic maple syrup on 64 acres outside of Cashton, WI. They age their syrup in bourbon barrels for a year to make the most delicious treat you must try: bourbon barrel aged maple syrup!
- **Black Garlic North America** makes delicious cured and aged black garlic outside of Hillsboro, WI. The business is owned and run by Craig Dunek and Tommy Torkelson.
- **Driftless Organics** is a certified organic farm located outside Soldiers Grove, WI, and is owned by brothers Josh and Noah Engel and Mike Lind. They grow a variety of vegetables, oil seeds and raise grass fed beef. Their produce and sunflower oil can be purchased at the VFC year round.



- **The Flower Basket** is a full service floral and plant shop that also grows microgreens, herbs and vegetables in the off season. They also offer gardening education classes to the greater community. Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School purchased the business in 2015. Learn more about their story on page six.
- **Hansen's Country Bakery** makes bread from scratch, including sourdough boule, multigrain batard, parmesan garlic batard and cranberry walnut batard. The bakery is located outside of La Farge, WI and is owned and operated by Bekah and Josh Hansen.
- **Kickapoo Honey** is owned and operated by the Bomkamp Family in Highland, WI. From taking care of their hives to extracting and bottling the honey, they are 100% hands-on and passionate about bee health as well as pure honey.
- **St. Brigid's Meadows** is owned and operated by Dawn and Vince Hundt on Poplar Coulee Ridge above Coon Valley, WI. They produce delicious, certified organic grass fed cheeses in cheddar, mozzarella and pepper jack.
- **TerraForm Botanicals** is owned by Laura Poe, a Registered Dietician, Holistic Nutritionist and traditional foods expert. She makes herbal extracts in small batches by hand using organic herbs in Viroqua, Wisconsin.
- **Underground Meats** is owned by Johnny and Ben Hunter. They specialize in making a variety of traditional dry cured salami and other charcuterie in Madison, WI using local and sustainably raised pork, beef, lamb and goat.

Principle Six (P6) Cooperative Trade Movement is a national labeling program for food co-ops (see sidebar page 6). P6 is guided by three overarching criteria: local, cooperative, small. Products that meet two of these three criteria are marked as P6 on the shelf at VFC. Learn more about P6 on our website: www.viroquafood.coop/good-food/principle-6

End of a Legacy

This year in the Meat Department, we've undergone many changes, but none so significant as the loss of Lange Organic Farms.



Rich Lange

Rich Lange was a pioneer in the organic meat movement and faithfully served our Co-op for the last 20 years! He provided us with local, fresh, certified organic ground beef, chicken, pork, turkeys, and other choice cuts.

We were extremely lucky to have a partnership that reliably served our Owners for so many years. Rich Lange passed away this last autumn, and with his passing the Viroqua Food Co-op wants to express our deepest condolences to his family and friends. Rich was a dear friend to many at the Co-op and he will be greatly missed.

Melissa Stussy has been promoted to VFC Meat Buyer. Melissa comes to this

position with a drive to learn and grow. She has already participated in making significant changes to the department all the while working with a very limited set of producers to keep our cases full. Along with the loss of Lange Organic Farms, the VFC also witnessed the closing of Black Earth Meats which provided us with a variety of local, high quality meats.

With the loss of these two big vendors, we've been scouring our region for new and consistent sources for fresh meat that continues to fulfill our commitment to great local and/or organic meats. We are now in the process of vetting new farms and their farming practices to ensure we meet our customers' needs.

Along with sourcing for our fresh meat case you might have noticed a concerted effort to more consistently offer fresh fish, as well as an increase of frozen seafood such as scallops, cod, walleye and salmon.

The Meat Department, under the watchful eye of Melissa, is working hard to



improve your choices while still offering the variety of high quality local and/or organic meats to which you are accustomed. Be on the lookout for continual improvements and changes in the Meat Department next time you are in!

Thank you!

**Andrew Anderson, Deli Manager
& Melissa Stussy, Meat Buyer**

A Time To Grow



Many of us are owners of the Viroqua Food Co-op in order to support a more sustainable food system while feeding ourselves clean food.

When we take the next step, and go for the über-local action of growing our own food, we meet a whole new realm of possibilities, experiences and connections. We add degrees of freshness and ranges of flavors that trump any store bought samples. When gardening, we get to breathe clear air, catch some sun rays, stretch our bodies doing meaningful work, and expand our conscious thinking into elemental landscapes.

Standing clearly in the present moment

we can make our own choices for the future, no matter what has happened in the past. Gardening each and every year is different, every growing season is a learning opportunity. So pick up some pretty P6 seed packets and locally-grown, healthy plant starts from the VFC Garden Center. We have the **widest variety of seeds** in town—and **our seed potato selection** can't be beat. Our greenhouse is filled with many beautiful cultivars brought in by local P6 Growers.

Choose life! Choose beauty! And thanks for choosing the VFC!

**Arwyn Wildingway
Plants & Seeds Buyer**



Principle Six (P6) is a national labeling program that promotes local, cooperative and small farmers/producers. The P6 label shows you the products that embody our highest values.

Principle Six Criteria:

If a farmer/producer meets at least two of the three criteria, their products receive the P6 label:

• LOCAL

A product grown or produced within 100 miles of the VFC, or having value added within that radius.

• CO-OP/NPO

Cooperative ownership of the business, nonprofit status or the business sources the majority of their products' ingredients from cooperatives or nonprofits.

• SMALL PRODUCER

Independently owned and operated, and selling direct to VFC or through a regional distributor.

Look for P6 labels like this on the shelf



The Flower Basket is part of the P6 program at the VFC because:

- **Local:** The Flower Basket is located less than one mile from VFC.
- **Small Producer:** The Flower Basket is owned by the Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School.

P6 PRODUCER PROFILE: THE FLOWER BASKET

The Flower Basket is a true staple of Viroqua. They are a full service floral shop and greenhouse located at 520 East Terhune Street in Viroqua. The business started at its current location in the 1940's with the name Hillcrest Garden Center.

Over the years, ownership has changed hands a number of times. In the past few years, long-time owners Kim and Al Petersen became interested in selling the business. A group of Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School (PRWS) parents caught wind of their plans and worked with Kim and Al for two seasons to learn the ins and out of their operation. **In August 2015, with full support from the Petersens, the Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School officially purchased The Flower Basket and three-acre property it rests on.**

The PRWS is eager to take up the legacy of The Flower Basket and continue serving the local community to meet their flower and gardening needs. They are working with the Petersens' business model with continued support and mentoring from the Petersens and offer a full service floral shop and greenhouse year-round. From their storefront on Terhune Street, they offer fresh & silk flower arrangements for all occasions as well as homegrown annuals, perennials, garden supplies and accessories.

As much as possible, they grow or locally source the plants and flowers they sell. When they are not able to source locally, they have close relationships with several regional suppliers that match their values.

The Flower Basket business/PRWS garden on the property is host to student learning opportunities. They also offer adult educational classes on a variety of gardening topics (check out their Facebook page for upcoming events). They also offer space for meetings and groups within their sunny and warm greenhouses.

Those working at The Flower Basket are enthusiastic about its future and they have



The Flower Basket Staff (L-to-R: Jess Krueger, Arwyn Wildingway & Joshua Estep) enjoy microgreens in The Flower Basket greenhouse.

many ideas for how they can grow the business to better serve this community. Over the next few years, they have visions of transitioning flower and food production to organic methods, growing more of the flowers on-site that are used in their floral arrangements, building a commercial kitchen for growing edible greens, building a variety of nature paths and gardens, as well as offering garden and plant education to children and adults in the community year round.

Currently, The Flower Basket provides VFC with fresh bouquets, bulb gardens, houseplants, wheatgrass for juicing, microgreens and fresh herbs like basil and rosemary. This spring they are providing VFC with annual flowers in single, as well as combination pots. Keep on the lookout for more great products from The Flower Basket in the VFC Garden Center and in our Produce Department.

When purchasing The Flower Basket products, you are supporting a number of full-time and seasonal employees, as well as the work of the Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School. Learn more at: www.prwsflowerbasket.org

OWNER DISCOUNT DAYS

MARCH

25th - 26th

Friday thru Saturday

15% OFF

Plants, Seeds & Soils

excludes: all houseplants



APRIL

20th - 22nd

Wednesday thru Friday

15% OFF

Cleaning Products

*includes: all powder
& liquid cleaning solutions*

MAY

17th - 19th

Tuesday thru Thursday

15% OFF

Entire Greenhouse

*includes: all
planting supplies located outside*



welcome NEW OWNERS!

We want to welcome the following new owners who joined the Co-op November 11, 2015 - January 23, 2016:

Danny Andersen	Susan Haser
Danika Andersen	Bryany Everson
David Hettenbach	Judith Komp
Brianna Fiene	Kristina Olson
Michael Brudos	Jean Rozeske
Marissa Mason	Jason Neuerburg
Tanya Clifton	Ddam Balin
Margo Horwitz	Karin Mahony
James Winderl	John Greb
Onna Wallace	Edred Benton
Alisha Sowle	Tracey Benton
Inger Williams	Lucinda Swartz
Richard Williams	Kris R. Olson
Jenny Gilbertson	Anna Jahns
Susan Molini	Julie Massenburg
Tami Becker	Mary LaGrange
Megan Krenz	Jenna Miller
Marnie Hofmeister-Pooley	Jackie Reeves
Ashley Lewison	Byron Reeves
Sue C. Anderson	Ryan Bjerkos
Megan Volden	Dennis Malone, JR.
Kirsten Berra	Guy Flint
Loren Cade	Cristina Koenecke
Margaret Cade	David Koenecke
	Jan Swisch

MOVED? recently married? divorced?

Please notify VFC so we have accurate records and mailing information for you.

If you want to separate a two adult household membership into two single adult household memberships, ask a cashier for the Owner Separation Form, email us at: info@viroquafood.coop or download it at: viroquafood.coop/you-own-it/stay-in-touch

Pushing The Limits... VFC Expansion Update

We've been a little quiet about our expansion plans lately, but we've been busy behind the scenes! We're working hard on site assessments, preliminary planning and real estate. **I'm excited to announce the purchase of the Sidie Lawn & Sport Center property located on Broadway and Center!** This was a necessary purchase to facilitate expansion plans, and a long time coming, but it's not the only hurdle to expanding our Co-op.

Our next step involves the City of Viroqua. You may have noticed traffic counters in several positions around the Co-op in December. This study will help the City understand how Co-op shoppers affect the neighborhood and to estimate what our growth means for future traffic and pedestrian safety.

The traffic related to the Co-op is just one piece of a larger issue. It's likely we'll need to expand the Co-op into the parking spots that are adjacent to the building, pushing all parking to areas across Center Avenue—not optimum for the safety of our shop-

pers! Especially in the winter season with snow, snowplows and cars entering and exiting the lots. The question becomes: is it possible to close a portion of Center Avenue directly behind the Co-op? The Viroqua City Council is investigating and carefully moving through the protocol to determine what's best for the City and for VFC. We'll get a chance to voice our opinions and concerns. I'll keep you posted.

Look for more updates now that plans are heating up. We'll know soon what our options are for design and timeline, and we'll share progress with you regularly. I'm so excited to serve our community better with expanded services and more space. We want to share the VFC Experience!

Please take the time to fill out the VFC Owner Survey in March. **We've added special expansion questions and look forward to your comments in this survey.** Don't miss it!

Jan Rasikas,
General Manager

Circa February 2005; construction on the 609 N. Main St. VFC Building.



Co-op Survey Time!

Take the Survey & Enter to Win a \$100 Co-op Gift Card!

Viroqua Food Co-op is conducting an Owner Survey in March 2016. Your feedback provides valuable information to VFC Management and Board of Directors, helping us to improve store operations and to better serve you. Your participation is voluntary but the more responses we receive, the more accurate the survey. This year's survey will include questions about VFC expansion plans, yet it is shorter than the one we conducted in 2013. The survey takes 10-15 minutes to complete.

Viroqua Food Co-op's purpose is built around our shared values and needs, and is expressed in our Mission Statement and Ends Policies. Like all cooperatives, we are a democratic organization. The owner survey is one more way for you to let the VFC Board and Managers know if we are meeting your needs. In appreciation for your participation, everyone who completes the survey will automatically be entered into a drawing for a \$100 Co-op gift card.

If we have a valid email address on file for you, getting to the survey will be easy! You will receive an email with a link that will take you directly to the survey. If we do not have your email on file, we will mail a postcard with the survey's online address.

Take the postcard and your owner number to the computer nearest you. A laptop will be provided here at the Co-op for completing the survey.

We are working with the Survey Research Center at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls to conduct this evaluation, which ensures your anonymity and an unbiased assessment of the data. Your individual responses will not be associated with you, in any way.

The survey will be conducted from March 21-April 8. We thank you in advance for your participation and support. Results will be shared in the Pea Soup and on the VFC website.

This project has been approved by the UW-River Falls Institutional Research Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, Protocol # H2016-XXXX.

Questions/Concerns Regarding Survey?

Concerns about this survey can be directed to:

Molly Van Wagner, Director of Grants and Research
101 North Hall, River Falls, WI 54022, (715) 425-3195

VFC BOARD UPDATE

from Curt Brye, VFC Board President

Here's a highlighted summary of the November, December and January VFC Board meetings. Further details may be found within the regular Board meeting minutes located on the VFC website at: www.viroquafood.coop/board-of-directors/board-minutes. You may also contact the Board directly via the VFC website!

Board Meeting – November 18

- Brian Dahlk, CPA from Wegner CPA's, provided review of FY 2014-15 audit results and financial performance of Co-op.
- Board monitored "Net Income Q1," "Board Job Description," "Board Code of Conduct," and "Role of Board Officer" for compliance with Policy Governance.
- Board approved two requests for redemption of Class C shares.
- Board reviewed new Board member orientation.
- Board continued discussion of expansion-related topics plus GM's monthly update of Co-op operations and November conference call with our CDS Consultant.

Board Meeting – December 9

- Board reviewed articles from CDS Library regarding role of Board members in expansions as on-going part of Board's Learning Initiative.
- Board received and discussed conceptual drawings and cost estimates from GM as received from Weiser Bros. Construction for store expansion at current location.
- Board reviewed GM's monthly update of Co-op operations and our December conference call with our CDS Consultant.
- Board began review of FY 2014-15 Ends Report received from GM.
- Annual Board / Management Team Winter Dinner 12/13/15 at Rooted Spoon.

Board Meeting – January 18

- A VFC Owner made brief presentation to the Board.
- Board reviewed "Treatment of Owner-Members and Customers" for compliance with Policy Governance.
- Leslie, Mike and Peter shared their experiences of CBLD Leadership Training Workshop they attended on 1/9/16 in Minneapolis.
- Board reviewed and approved Annual Planning Calendar for 2016.
- Board completed review and approved FY 2014-15 Ends Report from GM as compliant with VFC Ends Policy.

VFC in the Community

Dec 2 & Feb 3: Bjorn Bergman, VFC Outreach Coordinator, attended National P6 Board Meetings.

Dec 3, Jan 7 & Feb 4: Bjorn Bergman attended Viroqua Chamber Main Street (VCMS) Board Meetings.

Dec 11: VFC hosted Annual Holiday Open House from 3-7pm (photos on page 18)

Dec 16 & Feb 4: Bjorn Bergman attended Vernon Co. Farm to School Meetings.

Jan 6: Bjorn Bergman taught Farm to School lessons to Viroqua Elementary School 1st and 2nd Graders.

Jan 14: Bjorn Bergman shared seasonal recipe ideas on WIZM 1410am La Crosse "Coulee Region Cooks."

Jan 15: Bjorn Bergman taught Farm to School lessons to Viroqua Elementary School 3rd Graders.

Jan 20: Bjorn Bergman attended the VCMS Quarterly Connection at Dave's Pizza.

Jan 21: A public screening of "Food Patriots" was held at The ARK.

Jan 23 & Feb 20: VFC Board Members hosted "Coffee and Conversation with the Board" in the VFC deli seating area.

Jan 27: VFC mailed out Patronage Refunds to qualifying VFC Owners, totaling \$8,264.

Jan 24-27: GM Jan Rasikas attended National Co-op Grocers (NCG) Board of Directors Meeting.

Feb 1: Jan Rasikas & Bjorn Bergman met with Director of Southwestern WI Community Action Program.

Feb 18: A public screening of "The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil" was held at The ARK.

Feb 24: Jan Rasikas attended the Fifth Season Co-op Annual Meeting.

Feb 25-27: VFC Staff Members Dylan Pederson, Tony Hooverson and Tyler Hooverson attended the 27th MOSES Organic Farming Conference in La Crosse.

Co-op Principle Seven: Concern for Community

While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

VFC in the news

WPR's *Wisconsin Foodie* visited the Viroqua Food Co-op this past Summer and shot video in our store for an upcoming episode. In this installment, the crew visits the Driftless area, "home to one of the best food scenes in the Midwest."

The show also features one of our major organic produce suppliers, Driftless Organics, along with our good friend (and former VFC Produce Manager) Dani Lind and her business Rooted Spoon. VFC is featured in the middle of the episode when Dani goes shopping at VFC with the host of *Wisconsin Foodie*. Be sure to keep your eye out for many familiar VFC Staff faces!

The episode was released online and aired in February 2016 on Wisconsin Public Television. You can now watch it online here: <http://video.wpt.org/video/2365634186/>



Driftless Folk School Discounted Classes with VFC Ownership!

VFC Owners receive a \$10 discount on the upcoming DFS Classes:

Fruit Tree Grafting

Sunday, April 3

Instructor: Rikardo Jahnke

Restorative Pruning of Old Apple Trees

Saturday, April 9

Instructor: Lowell Rheinheimer

Raspberry Fields Forever

Saturday, April 16

Instructor: Dan Johnson

Wide World of Fermentation

Sunday, May 8

Instructor: Laura Poe

Home Creamery

Saturday, May 14

Instructor: Linda Conroy

Cheesemaking: Cheddar and Gouda

Sunday, May 15

Instructor: Linda Conroy

Go to the Driftless Folk School website to see full descriptions of classes and/or register for a class at: driftlessfolkschool.org

P6 Microloan Recipient: WISCO POP!

We are excited to announce that Wisco Pop is the recipient of the 2016 VFC P6 Microloan! The VFC P6 Microlending Committee is pleased to fulfill their entire request of \$3,500 to develop a certified *organic* soda line.

Wisco Pop is owned and operated by Austin and Hallie Ashley and Zachary Mathes. They specialize in making delicious soda without artificial flavors, preservatives, corn syrup or caffeine at the Food Enterprise Center in Viroqua. To learn more, check out their website at: www.wiscopopsoda.com

With the support of a 2016 VFC P6 Microloan, Wisco Pop aims to develop a 100% certified organic soda line. While they have always used fresh organic citrus, ginger, and other organic ingredients in their sodas, they are excited to take their business to the next level with organic certification. "We feel it is the right move to offer 100% certified organic soda and vote with our dollars to encourage and support organic farmers," Mathes said. The loan will help finance the development of new labels, organic certification of their production facility and the purchase of certified organic ingredient inventory.

The VFC has a deep commitment to local and organic farms, businesses and foods. As a result, the P6 Microlending Committee is excited to have the opportunity to support one of our local P6 Producers with financing to transition their product lines to 100% certified organic. Wisco Pop previously received a 2014 VFC P6 Microloan for \$1,500 that helped finance bottling their sodas for the first time.



The VFC P6 Microlending Initiative was created in 2012 by the VFC Board of Directors as a way to make interest-free loan(s) of up to \$3,500 available for farms and producers selling to the VFC or at the Viroqua Farmers Market. Loans are aimed at financing new projects or infrastructure for small farmers/producers that will help them grow their businesses and must be paid back within one year. Through this P6 Microlending Initiative, the VFC strengthens small, local farms and producers that supply the Co-op and creates opportunities to improve their operations. To learn more, visit our P6 Microlending Initiative page: <http://s.coop/lv82z>

Congratulations, again, to Austin, Hallie and Zachary of Wisco Pop! We look forward to having your locally produced certified organic sodas on our shelves at the VFC in the near future.

**In Cooperation,
VFC P6 Microlending Committee**

VFC's 1% Wednesdays

On the 2nd Wednesday of every month, we donate 1% of the Co-op's gross sales to a local nonprofit organization selected by VFC owners.

November 2015



Outreach Coordinator Bjorn Bergman presents a donation of \$333 to Mary Christenson of Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School.

December 2015



Marketing Mgr. Charlene Elderkin presents a donation of \$288 to Becky Salmon of Passages, Inc.

January 2016



Marketing Mgr. Charlene Elderkin presents a donation of \$308 to Kadie Bruegggen of Couleecap.

We want to celebrate the following **STAFF ANNIVERSARIES:**

TWELVE YEARS:

Arwyn Wildingway: 3/31/04

SIX YEARS:

Linda Gallardo: 4/14/10

Laura Burnham: 4/20/10

Eric Speck - 5/24/10

THREE YEARS:

Jamie Cermak: 4/24/13

Tony Hooverson: 5/25/13

TWO YEARS:

Melissa Stussy: 4/10/14

Megan Cisneros: 5/30/14

Lucas Gravatt: 5/30/14

ONE YEAR:

Tyler Hooverson: 3/1/15

Isabela Candelaria: 3/3/15

LeeAra Siler: 4/13/15

Haley Stafslie: 4/28/15

Cough & Cold Tea

Tea for 1; Double Recipe for 2!

TEA INGREDIENTS

- 2 tsp dried organic Tulsi (Holy Basil from local Sweet Springs Farm)
- 1/4 tsp dried/fresh ginger pieces
- 1/8 tsp cinnamon chips or cloves
- 8 oz boiling water

DIRECTIONS

- Pour boiling water over combined ingredients in tea pot.
- Cover & steep 10 mins.
- Strain tea, then add lemon & honey to taste.

Enjoy a healthy new season!

Mary Kehoe,
Bulk Herbs, Spice & Teas Buyer

THINGS WE LOVE



B&E's Trees - Bourbon Barrel Aged Maple Syrup

B&E's Trees hit lightning when they put their maple syrup into bourbon barrels. Earthy richness meets the complexity of bourbon in a treat that is delicious on ice cream, pancakes, salmon, and in cocktails. B&E's Trees Maple Syrup has spoiled me for all other maple syrups.

Hail the King!

-Kat

American Provenance - Horseshoes & Hand Grenades Natural Beard Balm

American Provenance is a company that I stand behind completely; from the products they create to the philosophy that backs their business. I use American Provenance "Horseshoes and Hand Grenades" beard balm daily. It conditions my skin, keeps my beard healthy and feeling great, and the scent truly is "Sharp, Spicy & Enticing."

-Jess



Twisted Oaks Farms - Ham Steak

Hailing from Oxford, Wisconsin, this hamsteak is by far one of the most joyous experiences that my tastebuds have encountered this side of the Mississippi!

-Chris

Hidden Springs Creamery - Sheep Milk Driftless Cheese

Sheep's milk cheese made the old fashioned way outside of Westby, Wisconsin. Small batches, four flavors, light and fresh. *Annnnd* totally okay to treat as a single serve of cheese spread for one!

-Sarah



Two Local P6 Producers receive 2016 Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Grants

Two of VFC's local P6 Producers just received *Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin* Grants from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP). Both of these businesses have production facilities at the Food Enterprise Center located on 1201 North Main Street in Viroqua.

- **B & E's Trees, LLC** (La Crosse); In cooperation with Central Waters Brewing Company, create a value-added marketing, packaging and distribution plan designed to increase awareness of the culinary diversity of Wisconsin including a bourbon barrel-aged maple syrup and a maple barrel stout beer.



- **Fizzeology Foods** (Viroqua); Expand the product line and create three new jobs at Fizzeology Foods, a company that purchases produce seconds from local farms, much of which would otherwise be wasted, and distributes the produce to retail consumer markets statewide.



Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Grants are administered by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP).

Designed to help farmers and food processors reach new local markets, the grants will provide consumers access to even more Wisconsin-grown food products, ranging from fresh fruits and vegetables to Wisconsin barley and organic maple syrup.

"I'm pleased DATCP was able to provide support for these innovative local food projects," said *Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin* Program Manager Teresa Engel. "The grants are intended to support the diverse sectors of Wisconsin agriculture, and outcomes generated by the grant recipients will provide benefits to local communities and serve as models for others in the local food industry."

DATCP received 23 funding requests of over \$750,000. Ultimately, seven local food projects, totaling \$200,000, were selected to receive grants.

The other five 2016 grantees are:

- **The Cannery Public Market** (Green Bay); Develop cross-promotional marketing and sales programs to increase local farmer sales at the new Cannery Public Market in Green Bay and increase collaboration between diverse groups of buyers and farmers.
- **Eastside Farmers Market** (Madison); Provide support to the Eastside Farmers Market in Madison as it relocates from the Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center to the new Eastside Central Park.
- **Hodan Community Services, Inc.** (Mineral Point); In cooperation with business development partner, Innovation Kitchens LLC, create new capacity and opportunities for Wisconsin value-added foods and food businesses.
- **REAP Food Group** (Madison); Provide producer-buyer matchmaking and brokering services that will result in an increase of more than \$300,000 in local sales for producers in southern Wisconsin from wholesale buyers.
- **Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative** (Madison); Expand the market opportunity for Wisconsin farmers by increasing June and July sales of lettuce, zucchini and yellow squash and extending the timing of sales of winter squash through the Thanksgiving holiday.

The program has been funded since 2008. Since its inception, it has funded 45 projects, totaling \$1.2 million. Previous grant recipients have generated more than \$7 million in new local food sales, created and retained 187 jobs, and benefitted more than 2,365 producers and 1,380 markets!

Learn more about the program at: http://datcp.wi.gov/Business/Local_and_Regional_Food_Program

CO-OP COOKS

More Recipe Ideas & Fun Food Photos:

www.viroquafood.coop/good-food/recipes



Spring is the perfect time to shake off the cold and throw a brunch party to celebrate the return of the sun and warmer days with your favorite folks. This frittata—essentially a crustless quiche—is an ideal dish for your get-together. It is super easy to

serve for a crowd and is gluten-free, which is certain to delight some of your guests. Plus, it is full of seasonal goodies everyone is sure to love. Eggs are an iconic food, the true symbol of new



life, fertility and springtime, so featuring them is a natural choice.

This is a great way to

use leftover ham, which is a classic food served at Easter and other celebrations this time of year. Foraged foods like ramps and morels are appearing, and make great additions to this dish. If they aren't available, use leeks instead of ramps, and your favorite mushroom instead of morels. Of course, there's creamy, melty cheese to tie it all together, which is legally required in all Wisconsin-made dishes.

You can make the melted leeks or ramps several days ahead of time, which would make throwing the frittata together for your hungry crowd a snap. Serve with a fresh green salad and crusty sourdough bread with butter, and brunch is served! Just don't forget the coffee.

**Laura Poe, Sampling
Assistant & Wellness Staff**

Ham & Gruyere Frittata with Melted Leeks

Prep time: 20 mins. * Cook time: 1 hr. 20 mins. (for leeks & frittata)
Serves: 6



INGREDIENTS FOR MELTED LEEKS

- 3 cups leeks or ramps, thinly-sliced (~3 large leeks)
- 3 Tbsp butter
- 1/2 cup white wine or water
- Pinch of sea salt



DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 350°F.
- When prepping leeks, be sure to rinse dirt out from between all layers. Only use white & light green parts of leek for this recipe—dark green tops can be thrown into batch of broth for extra flavor! If using ramps, use entire plant, excluding very end of bulb. Cut in half down middle & thinly slice.
- Place leeks, butter, white wine & salt in small baking dish & cover. Bake for 1 hr., stirring once halfway through. When done, leeks should be extremely soft & fall apart when stirred.
- Set aside & prepare rest of frittata, or refrigerate until ready to use.



INGREDIENTS FOR FRITTATA

- 8 large eggs (look for pasture-raised, organic eggs)
- 1/3 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 cup gruyere cheese, grated (can use havarti or swiss)
- 1/2 cup ham, diced small
- 1/2 cup sautéed morel or other mushrooms
- 1 cup melted leeks (recipe above)
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 1/4 tsp black pepper

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter either cast iron skillet or glass pie dish.
- In large mixing bowl, whisk together eggs & heavy cream just until eggs are beginning to incorporate. Be careful not to over mix!
- Gently fold in the cheese, ham, mushrooms, leeks, salt & pepper.
- Pour into prepared baking dish. Bake for ~20-25 mins., checking after 20 mins. to avoid over baking. Frittata should still be slightly jiggly in middle & still yellow without browning much on the top. Cooking too long will result in a tough, spongy frittata instead of one that is light & fluffy, so this is important!
- Remove & let cool for 15-20 mins. to set before serving.

Monique's Ruby Beet & Celery Root Soup

Serves: 8 * Recipe minimally modified from *Cooking with the Seasons* by Monique Hooker

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 pound beets, peeled & coarsely grated
- 1/2 pound celery root (celeriac), peeled & coarsely grated
- 4 cups chicken stock (additional recipe on page 375)
- 1 cup water
- 2 Golden Delicious apples, peeled, cored, & coarsely grated
- 1 tsp caraway seed, crushed
- 2 Tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1/2 cup crème fraîche (optional) (additional recipe on page 379)
- 1 Tbsp chopped fresh parsley (optional)
- Salt & pepper

DIRECTIONS

- In large pot, sauté onion in oil until translucent, about 2 mins. Add beets, celeriac, stock & water. Bring to boil, then lower to simmer & cook for 20 mins.
- Stir in apples, caraway seed & vinegar. Season with salt & pepper to taste, then simmer for 20 mins. more.
- Serve soup in bowls garnished with dollop of crème fraîche & parsley, if desired.

VARIATIONS

- Beets combine well with other root vegetables. Instead of celery root, turnips, parsnips, or parsley root make good flavor combinations.
- Instead of caraway seeds, other seasonings might include celery seeds or celery leaves, dill seeds or dill weed.
- Crumble bacon bits on top of the soup before serving.
- Sour cream may be used instead of crème fraîche.

Monique's Touch:

By grating root vegetables like beets & celery root before making soup, 2 things are accomplished: cooking time is cut in half & all the sugar in the root is released quickly, which sweetens the soup naturally. Occasionally, mature roots will not be as flavorful as they should, so I add a bit of sugar to taste in the pot at the beginning of the cooking time.

I have always had reliable chefs in my life who I can call up for a tried-and-true recipe, cooking tips, kitchen-work-arounds, etc. Even though I have my late mother's 200+ page family recipe cookbook to lean on, there are two other role models in my life who I strive to mimic for numerous reasons: Monique Hooker (my mom's very dear friend and professional chef) and Heidi Krattiger (my co-worker's wife and very dear friend of my own)!

These two talented ladies exemplify important cooking rules I've adopted into my own style: cook with what's in season, incorporate what I like to eat into new recipes whenever I can, and

while recipes are a great base from which to start—always use my instincts, eyes, nose, and ears when working with food! They have been kind enough to let me share their recipes here with you. Please note I've selected these for you because they are not only crowd pleasers, but quite simple to throw together when you get past the idea of working with a new recipe, a new ingredient, or a new method of preparation... Here's to something new!

Shana Meshbesh,
Marketing Assistant

Heidi's Beet & Feta Tart

Serves: 4-6 * Recipe by Heidi Krattiger

CRUST INGREDIENTS

- 1 sheet of *Monique's Simple Pie Crust*



CRUST DIRECTIONS

- Line tart pan with pastry dough.
- Line with foil paper & fill with pie weight.
- Partially bake at 400°F for ~30mins., or until cookie colored.
- Remove pie weight & foil paper.

FILLING INGREDIENTS

- 1 onion, 1 leek or 3-6 ramps, properly cleaned & finely sliced
- 1 Tbsp oil or butter
- 3 beets, coarsely grated
- 1 cup cream
- 1 egg
- 8 oz. feta, to taste
- Fresh or dried thyme, to taste
- Salt & pepper



FILLING DIRECTIONS

- Spread grated beets around 9"x13" pan & roast at 350°F for ~30mins. or until soft.
- Ensure onion, leeks or ramps are properly cleaned, then finely sliced. Sauté in oil/butter until translucent, ~2 mins.
- Combine sautéed onion/leek/ramps with roasted beets & cream. Thoroughly mix, then cool.
- Add 1 egg, 4 oz. feta, salt & pepper to taste, then mix & pour onto partially baked crust.
- Top with additional 4 oz. feta crumbled on top, then bake at 350°F for ~30mins., or until set in the middle. Garnish with fresh/dried thyme.

Heidi's Tips:

About 5 mins. before finished, garnish with other favorites such as crushed walnuts or even sautéed asparagus or morel mushrooms!

Wisconsin FFA Foundation

Awards \$22,550 in SAE Grants to students

Organic Valley & VFC Sponsored Organic Agriculture SAE Grants for High School Students

Wisconsin has 255 FFA Chapters statewide and over 19,000 members. A total of 29 Wisconsin FFA Members from 24 different chapters were recently awarded \$22,550 in Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) Grants from the Wisconsin FFA Foundation.

The Wisconsin FFA Foundation awarded the 2015-16 SAE Grants in four categories: aquaculture, dairy, organic agriculture and start-up. Successful candidates were chosen based on the level and scope of their SAE in accordance with their age, future goals and plans for the program, as well as financial need.

Through the SAE Program, students create their own business or build career skills through an existing operation. They apply concepts learned in the classroom to real-world challenges and work experiences, learning valuable lessons from the outcomes. The program is one component of the agricultural education opportunities available to students throughout Wisconsin.

To apply for a Wisconsin FFA Foundation SAE Grant, students must complete a five-page application explaining their SAE Program, how much funding they are in need of, the expected use of those funds, and future goals with their SAE as well as FFA and other school activities. Their FFA Advisor must also submit a statement about their involvement in the organization and the student's vision with their SAE.

Established in 1929, the Wisconsin Association of FFA is an association of the National FFA Organization whose mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. The letters "FFA" stand for Future Farmers of America. But FFA is not just for students who want to be production farmers; FFA also welcomes members who aspire to careers as teachers, doctors, scientists, business owners and more.

The FFA operates on local, state and national levels. Student members belong to chapters organized at the local school district. In order for a school district to charter and maintain an FFA Chapter, there must be a certified licensed Agricultural Educator hired by the school district who then also serves as the Chapter Advisor.

FFA Members are part of a total program in agricultural education, consisting of classroom instruction in agriculture, supervised agricultural experiences where students gain career skills and on the job training and leadership development through the FFA Organization.

Learn more about the Wisconsin FFA Foundation and sponsorship opportunities by visiting:

www.wisconsinffaoundation.org

Organic Agriculture Supervised Agricultural Experience Grants were sponsored by Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative and Viroqua Food Co-op.

Each grant is worth \$500 and five were awarded to:

Jesse Priest, Brillion FFA;

Organic Vegetable Production/Aquaponics/Hydroponics

Alivia Heller, Cochrane-Fountain City FFA;

Organic Vegetable Production

Alex Krueger, Janesville Craig FFA;

Bee Pollination Service & Honey Production

Ellie Windl, Thorp FFA

Organic Herb Production/Roadside Stand Construction

Jodie Weyland, Winneconne FFA;

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HOMEMADE FOR SALE

A Book Review

I'll admit it. A few years back, my wife and I had the idea of quitting our day jobs, going all in and starting a local food business. We wanted to start selling our jams, preserves, pickles and pesto to others. For a short time, we started looking into what it would take to start said food business. We immediately became daunted by the hoops and hurdles of laws and regulations and, most of all, the cost of starting our dream food business. After being overwhelmed by the process, and not finding any easily accessible info on the topic, we put the idea out of our mind, thinking it was out of reach.



Now that I have read *Homemade for Sale* by Lisa Kivirist and John Ivanko, I can only think one thing—I wish this book had been published a

few years ago. *Homemade for Sale* is the perfect guidebook for folks interested in exploring or starting their own food business, whether that be in a home kitchen or commercial kitchen.

The book is thoughtfully organized into sections that are helpful to any food aspiring entrepreneur. The first section called “What’s Cooking?” talks about the best way to navigate cottage food laws, which are state laws that allow certain types of small-scale food businesses to operate from home kitchens. Making products under cottage food laws can be a low cost way to get your feet wet with starting a

food enterprise. Depending on your state, you can get approved to make products in your home kitchen with your only expense being getting a license or two and getting a safety check. When developing a business under cottage food laws, the authors stress the importance of understanding them in your locale and using your state agency as your primary resource for up to date and accurate information. This section also covers important topics like how to pick a successful product and a guide to self-assessment to see if you are ready to dive in and start your own food business.

The second, and longest, section in the book is called “Selling your Story: Marketing.” As a member of the VFC Marketing Department, I really feel like this section does a fantastic job explaining what I feel is one of the most important recipes to a successful startup food business—a well thought out marketing plan. Topics include naming your product, designing the logo/packaging, pricing, where to sell your product, promotions and making a simple business plan. As the authors point out, the more you think about how your product is going to meet customer demand, be promoted and be sold, the more successful your business will be right out of the gate.

The third section, titled “Organizing, Planning and Managing the Business” covers all the things you need to know about running your food enterprise from a business standpoint. They cover organizing, planning, putting together a successful home kitchen production system,



making your business legally compliant and outline small business financial management.

The last section, titled “Scaling Up” is for food entrepreneurs who want to take it to the next level and begin producing their products in a commercial kitchen as a way to open up new markets.

Additionally, the book is sprinkled with profiles of a variety of food artisans from different states that used cottage food laws to start their own food businesses. Each story has its own unique perspective that might help new entrepreneurs navigate hurdles in their state to begin a successful food business.

If you have a hint of interest in starting your own food-based business, I urge you to pick up a copy of *Homemade for Sale* and dig in. Who knows, a few years down the road, you might start producing a value added product in an area commercial kitchen and be able to sell it to the Viroqua Food Co-op!

Bjorn Bergman

Outreach Coordinator

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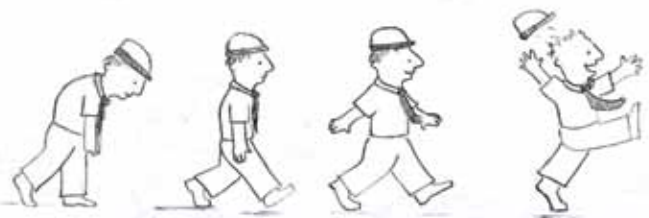


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