

# pea soup

AUTUMN 2017



## Preservation Time!

Bjorn Bergman shows us how easy it is to make small-batch lacto-fermented foods on pages 6-7!

# Board News & Views

By Larry Homstad, VFC Board Vice President

Harvest time is beginning! It is the best time of the year for many of us – a time to enjoy the bounty of the land (and some hard work) gives us. Check out this issue for some great fall foods featuring cool weather favorites such as apples, squash and fermented veggies.

The VFC Annual Owners Meeting happens in just a few days! Please check the Co-op calendar, come to the meeting and be sure to VOTE in the 2017 Board Election and Article V change!

Our Board President, Curt Brye, is stepping down after many years of serving the Co-op and keeping the Board focused. We will miss his leadership and continue to seek his advice when we feel it's needed. THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR DEDICATION CURT!

The expansion is underway, progress is being made, and staff, owners and customers are excited! There may be some difficulties shopping due to construction, but our Co-op needs your continued support – even if there is some disarray. Of course, our wonderful staff will always be here to help you with your needs.

The Capital Campaign continues. Remember, buying stock provides you a good rate of return on your investment and lets us borrow less.

The Board has received a lot of input from members in the past few months. Members have shared their questions, concerns and (for most) their support of this growth period for the much loved institution the Viroqua Food Co+op has become. The VFC Board and Management have been researching alternative energy and conservation practices for the expanded facility. If you have technical or financial suggestions for practical and cost-effective solutions, please share them with the Board.



VFC Board of Directors (L-to-R): Eric Newman, Mike Link, Eric Snowdeal, Karen Mischel, Curt Brye, Peter Bergquist, Larry Homstad

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Curt Brye, *President*  
Michael Link, *Vice President*  
Peter Bergquist, *Secretary*  
Eric Newman, *Treasurer*  
Larry Homstad  
Karen Mischel  
Eric Snowdeal

*The Board meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 6:30pm at VFC's offsite office. Changes are posted on the VFC website. To make a presentation or ask questions at the meeting, please contact a Board member 10 days in advance. Contact the Board at: [vfcboard@viroquafood.coop](mailto:vfcboard@viroquafood.coop)*

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

Cover photo by Shana Meshbesh

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# Expanding on a Solid Foundation

By Jan Rasikas, General Manager

A big shout out and THANK YOU to the VFC Owners who have invested in Class C shares! We're steadily moving toward our \$1 million goal. You may ask, "How can we begin the project if we haven't raised all of the owner equity?" Our local lender, Bank of Cashton, is confident in our success and supports us with a bridge line of credit if we need it; this allows us to take advantage of the summer weather to keep us moving on construction. We are underway and our cherished Co-op will soon have some exciting new ways to serve you.

I believe in this project and understand the great responsibility that the VFC Owners and Board of Directors have entrusted me with to do what is best for the Co-op and the community. VFC is my family, my community, and my passion; nothing could make me jeopardize its well-being. Our Co-op has become an essential part of life here for many folks. Every step we take to provide healthy food choices to our families will take us closer to our mission of healthy individuals, a healthy community, and a healthy planet.

VFC always was and always will be a community-owned co-op. Owner/ community wants and needs inform every decision we make through their purchases, surveys and direct input – but ultimately someone must be held accountable for business decisions. Our Board functions as your representatives in this democracy – and this is how cooperative businesses function all around the world.

It's refreshing to see owners care so strongly that they want to have deeper involvement in this Co-op expansion. Still, please know that we

must consider and make decisions that best represent all Co-op owners and shoppers.

In 2012, VFC embarked on an extensive planning and evaluation process to determine if this expansion was the right move. We understand that some of the owner input and visioning that guided this expansion may not be in everyone's recent memory. This has been a long road and has included extensive communications and owner input all along the way.

VFC expanded once before in 2005 with the new construction of our current building. The Board of Directors used the identical process then to engage owners as we have for the current expansion – starting with



a Community Conversation followed by several years of study, an owner survey, and many in-person events to gather owner input.

In retrospect, the 2005 expansion held significantly more risk than the current expansion project. VFC had no track record of profitability, fewer members, fewer local and organic farm suppliers, and not much tourist trade. Thanks to the visionary Board members (and Bank of Cashton) who had confidence and were willing to take a leap of faith, we did it.

Check out the comparison below:

2004-2005 Expansion/Relocation	2017-2018 Expansion
<b>Owner-members:</b> 800+	<b>Owner-members:</b> 3,600+
<b>Store Size Increase:</b> 380% retail space (from 920 sq ft to 4,400 sq ft)	<b>Store Size Increase:</b> 110% retail space (from 4,400 sq ft to 9,250 sq ft)
<b>Staff Size Increase:</b> over 250% within two years (from 15 to 50)	<b>Staff Size Increase:</b> over 40% within three years (from 65 to 91)
<b>Class C Investments:</b> \$600,000	<b>Class C Investment Goal:</b> \$1 million
<b>Sales:</b> increased from \$1.4 million to \$7 million in 10 years	<b>Projected Sales:</b> Market Study projects \$11 million in sales by 2020
<b>Cost:</b> \$2 million <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•\$600,000 in Class C Shares</li> <li>•Bank of Cashton primary loan of \$800,000 carried a 75% USDA Rural Development Loan Guarantee</li> <li>•TID funds \$208,000 returned to VFC</li> <li>•\$50,000 Vernon Co. revolving loan</li> <li>•Secondary loan of \$350,000 from Northcountry Co-op Development Fund (now called Shared Capital)</li> </ul>	<b>Cost:</b> \$7.8 million <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•\$1 million in Class C Shares</li> <li>•Bank of Cashton primary loan of \$3.45 million, with a 90% USDA Rural Development Loan Guarantee</li> <li>•Free grant dollars or dollars that return to VFC in 7-10 years amounting to \$2.75 million</li> <li>•\$600,000 additional funds from Bank of Cashton</li> </ul>

...continued on page 17





# A Guide to Winter Squash

Choosing which winter squash can be confounding – here are common varieties you will find in our store and love!

**W**inter squash are harvested late summer through fall, then cured or “hardened off” in open air to toughen their exterior. This process ensures the squash will keep for months without refrigeration. When selecting any variety of winter squash, the stem is the best

indication of ripeness. Stems should be tan, dry and on some varieties, look fibrous, frayed or corky. Fresh green stems or those leaking sap signal that the squash was harvested before it was completely ripe. Ripe squash has a vivid, saturated color and a matte, rather than glossy, finish.



### Acorn

Mild, versatile flavor and a tender-firm texture that holds up well when cooked. Hard rind helps squash hold its shape when baked.

**Best uses:** baked, stuffed, cubed and added to grain salads

### Kabocha (Green/Red)

Smooth, dense, intensely yellow flesh that is similar in sweetness and texture to sweet potato.

**Best uses:** curries, soups, battered and fried as Japanese tempura



### Blue Hubbard

This huge squash is perfect for feeding a crowd! Bright orange flesh has a buttery, nutty flavor and a dry, flaky texture similar to baked potato.

**Best uses:** baked, mashed and topped with butter, sea salt and black pepper

### Pie Pumpkin

Mildly sweet squash with a rich pumpkin flavor, perfect for pies and baked goods. Different from carving pumpkins, these are bred for sweetness and size.

**Best uses:** pies, custards, baked goods, curries and stews



### Butternut

Vivid orange flesh is sweet and slightly nutty with a smooth texture that falls apart as it cooks. Rind is edible but squash is usually peeled before use.

**Best uses:** soups, purees, recipes where smooth texture is highlighted

### Red Kuri

Vivid orange, mildly sweet and smooth, dense squash with a delicious chestnut-like flavor. Makes a rich and velvety puree.

**Best uses:** Thai curries, soups, pilafs and gratins, baked goods



### Delicata

Rich, sweet, flavorful yellow flesh tastes like a mix of chestnuts, corn and sweet potato. Quick-cooking with a thin, edible skin. Highly seasonal.

**Best uses:** sautéed until caramelized, broiled, baked

### Spaghetti

Pale golden interior is stringy and dense – in a good way! Use a fork to pry apart cooked flesh which resembles spaghetti in texture and mild flavor.

**Best uses:** baked and separated, then dressed as you would pasta



### Carnival

This hybrid squash inherits its tender-firm texture from Acorn and its sweet, nutty flavor from Sweet Dumpling, offering the best of both parents.

**Best uses:** baked, stuffed, broiled with brown sugar

### Sweet Dumpling

Petite, softball-sized squash with a pale gold, dry starchy flesh that is similar to a potato but which is renowned for its rich, honey-sweet flavor.

**Best uses:** baked with butter and cinnamon







Learn more when you sign up for the Driftless Folk School classes – and get a \$10 discount as a VFC Owner, too!

# Seasonal Ferments

Sauerkraut: the lacto-fermented gateway to food preservation and getting creative in the kitchen!

**F**or those interested in trying fermentation for the first time, sauerkraut is the perfect way to start! Sauerkraut (salted and naturally fermented cabbage) is high in probiotics, full of nutrients, tasty, and a great way to preserve local cabbage each autumn. Best of all, it is easy to make with the great starter recipe on the next page. Once you've mastered basic sauerkraut, begin experimenting! Spice up your kraut by adding any herbs and spices. Some great combinations with cabbage include: caraway seed, garlic, ginger, turmeric, cumin, and hot peppers.

Find more ideas with these great basic fermentation books you can purchase from our book section: *Fermented Vegetables* by Kirsten & Christopher Shockey and *Wild Fermentation* by Sandor Katz.

Get ready to fall in love with making and eating sauerkraut!

## Sauerkraut FAQ's

### How is Sauerkraut fermented?

Sauerkraut is made by the natural and traditional process of lacto-fermentation. Lactobacillus are one of many bacteria that are naturally present on the surface of all vegetables, including cabbage. When these bacteria are put in the optimal environment for their growth (i.e. with salt, under a liquid brine) they break down the sugars in the vegetables and produce lactic acid, which naturally pickles them. Thus, sauerkraut is a lacto-fermented food.

### How do I know my sauerkraut won't kill me?

Memorize this fermentation mantra: "If it is underneath the brine, you'll be fine!" According to the USDA Microbiologist Fred Breidt Jr., there is not a single documented case of food-poisoning from people eating properly fermented vegetables.\* The key word is "properly." In the case of making sauerkraut or any other lacto-fermented veggies in a proper way, the key is to keep them under the brine and Lactobacillus bacteria will thrive. This bacteria produces so much lactic acid as it breaks down the carbohydrates in the veggies, that harmful bacteria (e.g. E. coli and botulinum) can't grow because the environment is too acidic. At the same time, sometimes things can go wrong. Maybe you didn't check your sauerkraut often enough and the cabbage was above the brine and started to mold. Use your judgement and your senses when fermenting. If something seems off, just be safe and toss the batch.

### Do I need a crock to make sauerkraut?

No. The best way to get your feet wet in the world of vegetable fermentation is small-batch fermenting. All you need is wide-mouth quart mason jars as your fermentation vessels and regular mouth ½ pint mason jars as your follower weight—and you are in business!

### Where can I learn more?

Attend a class from the local nonprofit Driftless Folk School. They have a variety of instructors that teach classes on basic vegetable fermentation. Be sure to click on the button for VFC Owners when you sign up so you can get a \$10 discount! These classes are a fantastic way to get hands-on experience with skilled fermenters. Here are some upcoming classes:

- **Fermented Vegetables 101:** Sauerkraut, Pickles and More with instructor Laura Poe  
**Sunday, September 3**
- **Beyond Cabbage:** Fermentation for the Season with instructors Heidi Krattiger & Bjorn Bergman  
**Saturday, November 11**

\*Resources: [www.foodsafetynews.com/2014/03/fermenting-veggies-at-home-follow-food-safety-abcs/#.WWetUIjyuUk](http://www.foodsafetynews.com/2014/03/fermenting-veggies-at-home-follow-food-safety-abcs/#.WWetUIjyuUk)



## Basic Sauerkraut

Prep: 30 minutes (+5-20 days fermenting at room temp.) Makes: ~1½ qts

- 1 medium (3 lbs) green cabbage  
(remove outer leaves and core, then slice thinly)  
3-5 tsp sea salt
1. In stainless-steel bowl, mix sliced cabbage and 3 tsp sea salt thoroughly. Let mixture sit at room temp. for ~20-30 minutes. The salt will draw brine (liquid) out of cabbage. If short on time, massage mixture vigorously with hands to form brine in 5-10 minutes.
2. Sample mixture (should taste salty, but not salty like the ocean). If saltiness is to preference, move on to next step. If saltier sauerkraut is preferred, add another tsp of sea salt, mix well, and repeat tasting.
3. Once layer of brine forms in bottom of bowl and saltiness is to preference, tightly pack cabbage and cover with brine in one ½-gallon (or two 2-qt wide-mouth) mason jars with hands or tongs. Once mixture is in jar, some brine should be present on surface. Weigh down using ½-pint regular-mouth mason jar filled with water (as weight) to keep cabbage covered in brine. If not covered – see “mantra” in left column!
4. Place mason jar in bowl or pan to catch any brine that might overflow out of jar(s). Ferment should sit out of direct sunlight on kitchen counter for 5-7 days. Check sauerkraut every day and press down on mason jar weight to remove air bubbles from within ferment in order to keep all veggies under brine.
5. After 5-7 days, remove mason jar weight and sample using fork. Ask yourself: *How does it taste? Do I like the level of sourness and the texture of the ferment? Is the cabbage crunchy or soft?* If you like the flavor and texture – put lid on jar(s), place in fridge and consume within 1 year. If a more sour/less crunchy ferment is preferred, put jar weight back and let it ferment for a few more days. Repeat taste testing until done to preferred sourness and crunchiness.

# VFC News

## VFC Launches Capital Campaign

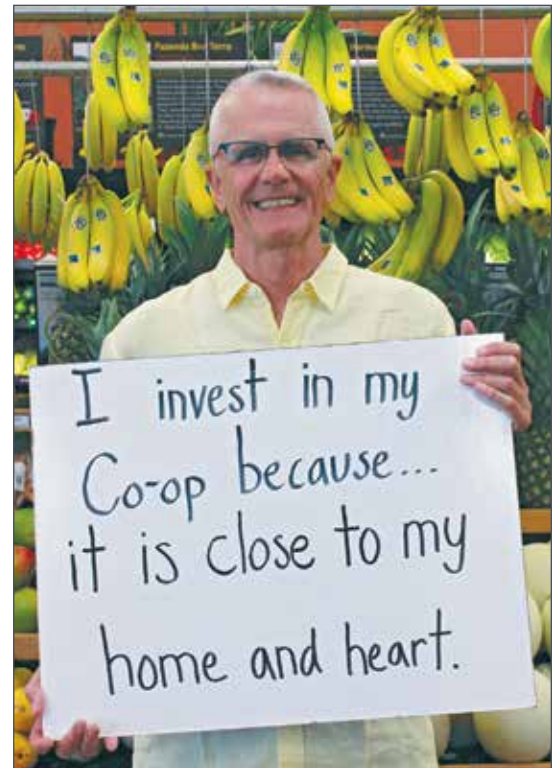
On June 15, VFC opened up our Class C Stock (Series II & Series III) to our fully-invested VFC Owners who are also Wisconsin residents. To kick off our Capital Campaign we hosted a successful Launch Party at the Rooted Spoon in Viroqua. Attendees learned more about investing in our expansion project from onsite experts (Cindy Hangartner, New Market Tax Credit Attorney; Eric Speck, VFC Finance Manager), discussed ideas with our Board of Directors, and also got to peek at our future floor plans with VFC Management.

As of August 15, VFC Owners have already pledged to invest over \$700,000 in Class C Preferred Shares. We hope that by the time you read this, VFC will have reached its goal of selling \$1 million in Class C shares.

Owners have told us how much

they appreciate this local investment opportunity as it is a really great way to grow their money while supporting the future health and vitality of the Co-op and community at the same time. It truly takes a village – and together we are creating some big change for our community and local economy. All of the investments that have been coming in have propelled the momentum to flow upwards to our goal.

If you wanted to invest but haven't done so yet, there may be a future opportunity. In this year's election ballot, you may vote to approve a change in Article V, which will make more shares available to VFC Owners who live in Wisconsin. Check the Expansion Blog



and Investments page on our website for current information on the Capital Campaign.

Together We Grow!

## VFC Staff Vote to Unionize

On April 17, 2017, the Viroqua Food Co+op received a petition for election from the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union requesting to represent many staff for the purposes of collective bargaining.

The VFC is unwaveringly supportive of the principles of democracy, fairness and community. The VFC fully recognized employees' right to organize and join a labor organization. It also recognized and respected the rights of its employees who voted against joining a labor organization.

The election was held on May 5, where 41 out of 48 eligible employees

voted (some employees were ineligible for union membership). By a narrow margin of 5 votes, VFC Employees elected to be represented by the UFCW Union. Since that election, VFC has respected the majority's designation of the UFCW as its exclusive bargaining agent.

That said, throughout the VFC's 22 years, the Co-op has maintained a history of strong relationships in its small community with 3,600+ members and employees. VFC has treated each employee as an individual with respect and dignity. VFC has remained mindful of growing its business and remaining financially

viable for the good of all its members, and is committed to ensuring that its staff have the best pay, benefits and working conditions in the industry. In fact, even before May 5, VFC employees received more favorable wages and benefits when compared to other area food co-ops and private grocery businesses.

The Viroqua Food Co+op is currently in contract negotiations with UFCW Union. Consistent with VFC's history and practice, we remain equally dedicated to the service and fair treatment of both our union and non-union employees.



# Cooperating for Success

## How VFC benefits from our National Co+op Grocers membership

**A**sk any manager at the Viroqua Food Co+op, and they will tell you: VFC would not be the successful co-op it is today were it not for our membership in the National Co+op Grocers (NCG).

NCG is a food co-op's co-operative, providing business services for retail food co-ops throughout the United States. Viroqua Food Co+op is one of 150 NCG food co-ops in 38 states that are owner-members of NCG. Every co-op has a designated representative to NCG, usually the co-op's general manager, and these representatives duly elect NCG's Board of Directors from their peers. Through NCG, the VFC works together with other co-ops to strengthen the entire retail food co-op system. That's why the NCG slogan is "Co+op, Stronger Together."

Our NCG membership is an example of Cooperative Principle 6 at its best: **Cooperation among Cooperatives.** Uniting with other co-ops to create NCG gives VFC access to a depth of resources, expertise and purchasing power we simply wouldn't have on our own. Since its founding in 1999, NCG has continually added services that respond to the needs of its members. These valuable programs are available to us as NCG members, but as an independent co-op we always have the freedom to choose what is right for us.

NCG membership serves the VFC in many ways – it touches everything we do. It is not possible within the scope of this short article to list all the programs and benefits VFC receives from NCG membership, but let's focus on a few:

### Competitive Pricing

With our collective purchasing power, NCG negotiates better pricing

for member co-ops than any of us could separately. Those great prices you see in the Co+op Deals flyer? That's NCG. The every day low prices in our Co+op Basics program, including the great prices on the private label "Field Day" line – that's NCG.

VFC also receives discounts based on national contracts for packaging and store supplies, credit card processing, gift card program, and merchandising equipment. NCG's purchasing agreements save VFC both money and time so that we can focus on forming deeper connections with local suppliers and pass the savings on to you.

In addition to purchasing power, there's pricing expertise. In response to many co-ops facing fierce competition, NCG developed a pricing strategy to help co-ops stay relevant in an increasingly competitive market.

"VFC's pricing strategy went into action in 2016 starting in the produce section," says GM Jan Rasikas. "Have you noticed our everyday low prices on organic, fairtrade avocados and bananas, or the great deals every week in the Fresh Deals flyer? Thanks to NCG and our strategic-thinking managers, you can always find great deals at the Co-op!"

### Professional Development and Training

We are proud professionals here at VFC, and that is largely due to the numerous training opportunities offered through NCG. Online trainings on a wide variety of topics in 13 different categories are available FREE for any employees of NCG-member co-ops. Some examples are:

- Priced to Compete: Pricing Strategy for Co-ops
- Competitive Landscape: What



### Co-ops Do to Thrive

- Courageous Leadership Today Stronger Co-ops Tomorrow
- Category Management
- Natural Foods Training

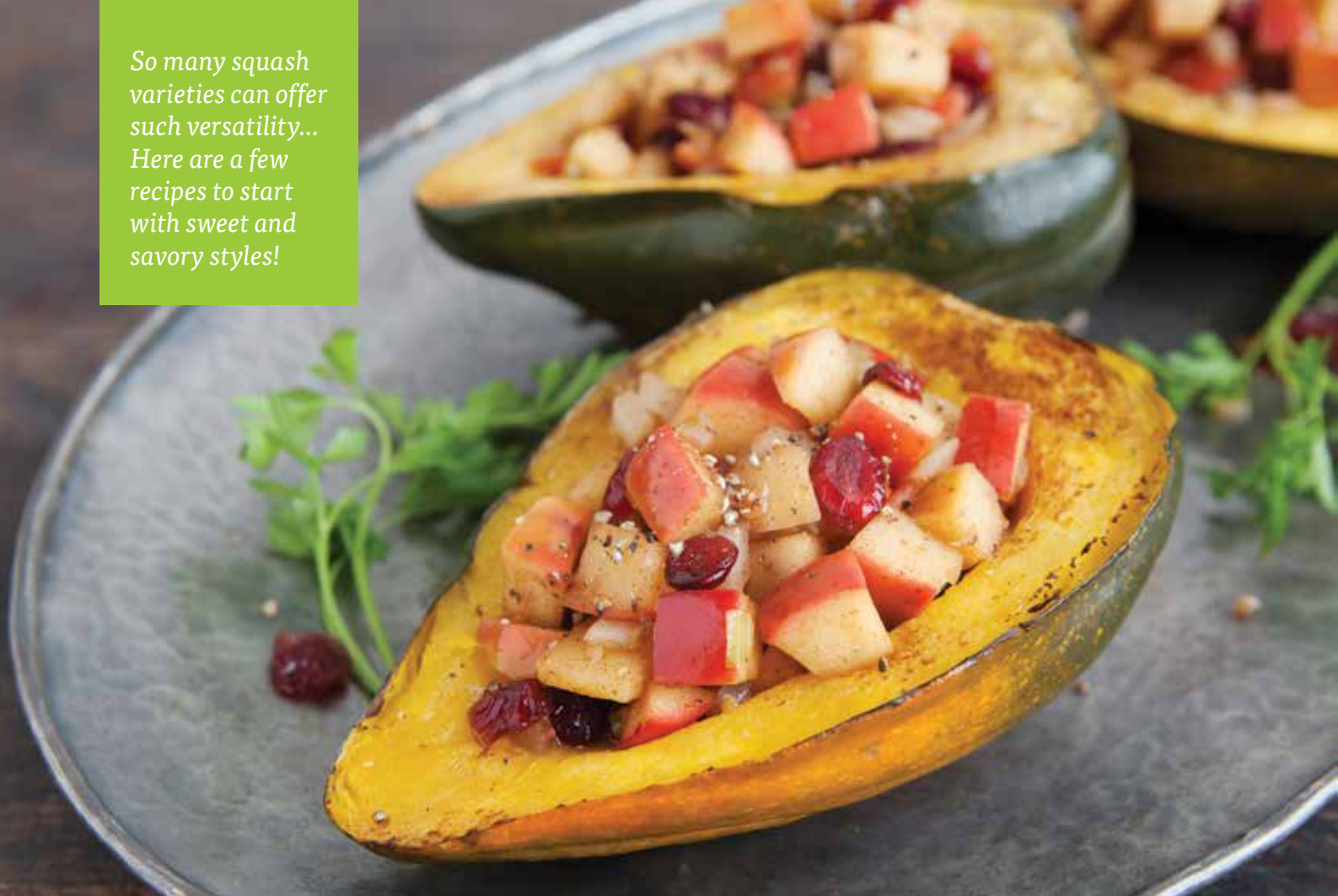
There are also annual conferences where co-op leaders from all across the US gather for training and to share best practices in person: HR Conference (human resources), Co+nnect (finance), Focus on Fresh (produce & deli), Convergence (grocery & wellness), and Marketing Matters (marketing & outreach).

"NCG provides excellent trainings that are department-specific to help our team be more successful," said Deli Manager Andrew Anderson. "Most importantly, they connect us with our peers so that we can share our successes and challenges in order to help each other. NCG is there to give us suggestions and insights, while we still make the final decision that works best for our teams."

We've just scratched the surface of what NCG means to our Co-op, our staff and shoppers. In future articles, we'll explore these additional benefits:

- Sharing operational best practices – including financial statements
- A powerful advocacy voice for food co-op issues
- A development mechanism for new and expanding co-ops
- National brand and supporting marketing materials

So many squash varieties can offer such versatility... Here are a few recipes to start with sweet and savory styles!



# Winter Squash

## Cinnamon Apple Stuffed Squash

Serves: 4-6

Total Time: 60 minutes

- 2 acorn squash, cut in half, seeds removed
  - 3 Tbsp unsalted butter
  - 3 cups diced yellow onion
  - 2 celery stalks, diced
  - 3 cups diced apple, cored and seeds removed (~2 large apples)
  - ½ cup dried cranberries
  - 2 Tbsp maple syrup
  - ⅓ cup water
  - ½ tsp cinnamon
  - Pinch each of salt and black pepper
1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Place acorn squash halves face down on rimmed sheet pan or baking dish and add ½" of water to pan. Bake squash for 40 minutes.
  2. While squash is baking, heat butter in saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and celery, then sauté for 5-10 minutes until soft. Add apples, cranberries, maple syrup, water and cinnamon. Stir well and cook another 5-10 minutes until apples begin to soften. Season with salt and pepper. Remove from heat.
  3. After squash baked 40 minutes, remove from oven, turn them cut side up and fill each with apple stuffing. Place back into oven and bake another 15-20 minutes until squash is tender. Serve warm.

*Slice the stuffed squash halves into wedges to serve as a side with ham, turkey or chicken, or serve each half as a vegetarian entrée.*



## Winter Squash and Apple Bake

Serves: 8      Prep time: 1 hour 20 minutes; 20 minutes active

- 2 pounds winter squash, peeled, seeded and cut into 1/4-inch thick slices
  - 2 Granny Smith apples, cored and cut into 1/4- to 1/2-inch thick slices
  - 3 tablespoons maple syrup
  - 3 tablespoons brown sugar
  - 2 tablespoons flour
  - 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
  - 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
  - 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
  - Pinch of salt and black pepper
  - 1/4 cup cold butter, cut into small pieces
  - 1 tablespoon butter, melted
1. Preheat oven to 375° F. Grease 9"x13" casserole dish with melted butter. Evenly layer squash and apple slices in casserole dish, alternating and slightly overlapping squash slices with apple slices, until all slices are gone. Drizzle maple syrup over squash and apples.
  2. In small bowl, mix together brown sugar, flour, spices, salt and pepper. Mix butter into flour/sugar combo with fingers to make crumbly mixture. Sprinkle mixture evenly over top of squash and apples. Cover dish with foil and bake for ~40 minutes or until squash and apples start to become tender. Remove foil, and let casserole brown for another 15 minutes. Serve warm.

*Use your choice of local apples and winter squash in this recipe*



## Squash, Cabbage and Kale Kimchi

Makes: 4 cups      Prep time: 30 minutes active; 1.5 days total

- 1 1/2 pounds butternut or other squash, peeled
  - 4 cups water
  - 2 Tbsp kosher salt
  - 2 cups slivered cabbage
  - 2 cups slivered kale
  - 1 1/2 tsp kosher salt
  - 1 Tbsp fish sauce or tamari
  - 3 cloves garlic, chopped
  - 2 Tbsp red pepper flakes
  - 1 tsp sugar
1. Peel and thinly slice squash no thicker than 1/8". In large bowl, mix water and 2 Tbsp kosher salt until salt is dissolved. Add squash slices and stir, then let stand for 2 hours to soften.
  2. Drain squash, reserving the brine. In medium bowl, toss cabbage and kale with 1 1/2 tsp salt and massage, squeezing, for 1 minute. Let stand for at least 15 minutes, then massage and squeeze again (leaves give off liquids when squeezed). Rinse with cool water, wring out shreds, then put in clean bowl with drained squash slices.
  3. In cup, stir fish sauce or tamari, garlic, red pepper flakes and sugar, then pour over squash mixture. Toss to mix well. Transfer to large jar or glass storage tub and pour reserved brine over just to cover lower half of vegetables. Cover and let stand for 1 day at room temperature, then refrigerate and serve for up to 1 week.

*Check out even more winter squash recipes and articles at [www.strongertogether.coop/winter-squash](http://www.strongertogether.coop/winter-squash)*



# Local Apples 101



Jamie Bjornsen of Countryside Orchard



There's good reason to believe that an apple a day will help you avoid doctor's visits. According to the USDA, they're a rich source of pectin, an antioxidant, and they contain vitamin A, vitamin C, and dietary fiber. They also provide potassium, flavonoids, phytochemicals, and quercetin. To maximize all that good nutrition, save yourself some time and leave the skin on; two-thirds of the fiber and many antioxidants are

found in the skin of the apple.

Cheese and apples are a match made in heaven! The sweetness of apples is a perfect contrast to the creamy richness of any cheese. Not a fan of eating fresh apples? Drink them! We carry Hoch Organic Fresh Apple Cider when seasonally available. We also carry a rotating variety of hard apple ciders of varying flavors in our beer/wine cooler.

**Types and tastes:** Orchardists and researchers have identified over 17,000 varieties of apples in North America. They range in color from red, yellow, green, brown and a mixture of all four. They come in all shapes and sizes, from no bigger than a marble, to the size of a grapefruit. Similarly apples come in all types of flavors and textures. Some are pucker-your-mouth tart while others are satisfyingly sweet. Some are tender and soft while others are refreshingly crisp.

During the local/regional apple season, the VFC carries a combination of the following apples: *Cortland, Dayton, Enterprise, Fuji, Gala, Gingergold, Gold Rush, Haralson, Honeycrisp, Jonagold, Liberty* (pink applesauce), *Mutzu, Pricilla, Sweet Sonya, Williams Pride, Zestar.*

## Who grows these around here:

Lucky for us, we have many local and regional orchards that supply us with amazing apples throughout the midwest growing season!

### Suppliers:

- **Two Brothers Orchard, Westby**
- **Chicken Ridge Orchard, La Crescent, MN**
- **Countryside Orchard, Lansing, IA**
- **Appley Ever After, Viroqua**
- **Eve's Orchard, Gays Mills**
- **Partner Farms, Michigan**

## Where and when to find them:

Typically, local/regional apple season begins early-August and extends through December. Early local apple reports are calling for a big apple crop, so be prepared to enjoy the harvest this Autumn and Winter!

## Which apple should I pick for... Fresh Eating:

For those that like sweet/crisp apples, Honeycrisp or Gala are sure to please. For those that enjoy tart/sweet apples, go for a Cortland or Jonagold.

### Applesauce:

Liberty is a customer favorite for making applesauce. The pink skin turns the applesauce pink!

### Pie:

The best pies are made with a mixture of firm, crispy apples that hold their shape when baked. Some of our favorite local apples for pies include sweet and firm apples like Honeycrisp, Gala and Gold Rush and sweet, tart and firm apples like Jonagold, Cortland, Enterprise, Fuji and Zestar.

Source: [strongertogether.coop/fresh-from-the-source/apples/](http://strongertogether.coop/fresh-from-the-source/apples/)

# Turkey Talk

VFC to offer fresh turkeys, frozen turkeys, and now pre-cooked turkeys!

For Thanksgiving, we have local organic frozen turkeys from Organic Prairie. They are raised by cooperative family farmers who are serious about the health of the land and their animals. The birds roam freely, have access to plenty of fresh sunshine and air, and are fed 100% certified organic feeds! They are priced at \$3.69/lb.

We also have Ferndale Market turkeys. They are free-range, antibiotic-free, and raised in Cannon Falls, MN. They are frozen

and priced at \$2.29/lb or you can purchase them fresh at \$2.79/lb.

Frozen turkeys arrive the first week of November and fresh turkeys come the week of Thanksgiving.

**Call ahead if you would like to reserve a specific size of turkey.** Closer to Thanksgiving Day, certain sizes and varieties may only be available in limited sizes and quantities.

This year we are also offering 12-14 lb. turkeys from Plainville

Farms. Additionally, we are carrying fully-cooked Diestel Turkeys and include the following varieties: Smoked, Oven Roasted and Organic Oven Roasted.

Owners can **SAVE 15% on the entire meat department (including frozen) November 14-16** due to OWNER DISCOUNT DAYS. Discounts are redeemed automatically at cash registers when the Front End Staff enters your owner number.

## Did you vote?

Ballots close on September 6, 2017, at 6:30pm

Vote for 2 open seats on the VFC Board; vote Yes or No on Article V change



**Aurora Boyd**  
NEW CANDIDATE



**KJ Jakobson**  
NEW CANDIDATE



**Michael Link**  
INCUMBENT

Please RSVP if you plan to join us for the Annual Owners Meeting meal at: <http://s.coop/25w2b>

Each owner needs to RSVP separately.

Although, there is no need to RSVP if you only plan to attend the business portion of the meeting!

Find a link to the voting site, Board Candidate profiles, info. about Article V change, along with the Annual Owners Meeting agenda, online at: [www.viroquafood.coop/board-of-directors/2017-board-election/](http://www.viroquafood.coop/board-of-directors/2017-board-election/)

# Calendar of Events

For details, visit our event calendar at: [www.viroquafood.coop/about/events](http://www.viroquafood.coop/about/events)

## September 2017

### Driftless Folk School Class **Chick to Chopping Block 2**

\$10 off for VFC owners

Saturday, September 2, 9am-4:30pm

Location: Viroqua

[driftlessfolkschool.org](http://driftlessfolkschool.org)

### Driftless Folk School Class **Fermented Vegetables 101: Sauerkraut, Pickles, and More**

\$10 off for VFC owners

Sunday, September 3, 9am-12:30pm

Location: Viroqua

[driftlessfolkschool.org](http://driftlessfolkschool.org)

### Savings for Owners

#### **Owner Discount Days**

15% off Frozen Dept. (including meat)  
September 5-7

### Owner Event

#### **Annual Owner Meeting/ Board Election Closes**

Wednesday, September 6, 5:30pm-8pm

### One Percent Wednesday

#### **Vernon Co. Farm2School**

1% of sales are donated to VCF2C

Wednesday, September 13

[viroquafood.coop/community-outreach](http://viroquafood.coop/community-outreach)

### Driftless Folk School Class

#### **Rabbit Butchering and Sausage Making**

\$10 off for VFC owners

Saturday, September 16, 9am-12:30pm

Location: Viroqua

[driftlessfolkschool.org](http://driftlessfolkschool.org)

### In-store Savings

#### **Wellness Wednesday**

10% off all supplements, homeopathic & herbal formulas from the wellness aisles

Wednesday, September 20



### Driftless Folk School Class

#### **Fall Essentials:**

**Preparing your hives for the Wisconsin Winter**

\$10 off for VFC owners

Saturday, September 23, 9am-12:30pm

Location: Westby

[driftlessfolkschool.org](http://driftlessfolkschool.org)

### Driftless Folk School Class

#### **Making Mead**

\$10 off for VFC owners

Saturday, September 23, 1pm-4:30pm

Location: La Farge

[driftlessfolkschool.org](http://driftlessfolkschool.org)

## October 2017

### Driftless Folk School Class **Making Hard Cider**

\$10 off for VFC owners

Saturday, October 7, 1pm-4:30pm

Location: Viroqua

[driftlessfolkschool.org](http://driftlessfolkschool.org)



### Savings for Owners

#### **Owner Discount Days**

15% off Wine & Spirits (excluding beer)  
October 10-12

### One Percent Wednesday

#### **Cooperative Community Fund**

1% of sales are donated to CCF

Wednesday, October 11

[viroquafood.coop/community-outreach](http://viroquafood.coop/community-outreach)

### In-store Savings

#### **Wellness Wednesday**

10% off all supplements, homeopathic & herbal formulas from the wellness aisles

Wednesday, October 18



November 2017

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**Driftless Folk School Class**  
**Grain-Free Holiday Baking**

\$10 off for VFC Owners

**Saturday, November 5, 9am-12:30pm**

**Location: Viroqua**

[driftlessfolkschool.org](http://driftlessfolkschool.org)

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**One Percent Wednesday**  
**Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School**

1% of sales are donated to PRWS

**Wednesday, November 8**

[viroquafood.coop/community-outreach](http://viroquafood.coop/community-outreach)

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**Driftless Folk School Class**  
**Beyond Cabbage: Fermentation for the Season**

\$10 off for VFC Owners

**Saturday, November 11, 1pm-4:30pm**

**Location: Viroqua**

[driftlessfolkschool.org](http://driftlessfolkschool.org)

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**Driftless Folk School Class**  
**Sourdough Bread Baking**

\$10 off for VFC Owners

**Saturday, November 11, 1pm-4:30pm**

**Location: Gays Mills**

[driftlessfolkschool.org](http://driftlessfolkschool.org)



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**Savings for Owners**

**Owner Discount Days**

15% off all Fresh & Frozen Meat

**November 14-16**

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**In-store Savings**

**Wellness Wednesday**

10% off all supplements, homeopathic &

herbal formulas from the wellness aisles

**Wednesday, November 15**

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**Driftless Folk School Class**

**Goat Milk and Herbal Soap Making**

\$10 off for VFC Owners

**Friday, November 24, 9am-4:30pm**

**Location: Gays Mills**

[driftlessfolkschool.org](http://driftlessfolkschool.org)

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**Driftless Folk School Class**

**Home Creamery: Cultured Milk, Mozzarella, and Feta**

\$10 off for VFC Owners

**Saturday, November 25, 9am-4:30pm**

**Location: Gays Mills**

[driftlessfolkschool.org](http://driftlessfolkschool.org)

---

**Driftless Folk School Class**

**Home Creamery: Cheese Curds, Gouda, and Cheddar**

\$10 off for VFC Owners

**Sunday, November 26, 1pm-4:30pm**

**Location: Gays Mills**

[driftlessfolkschool.org](http://driftlessfolkschool.org)

## 2017 Annual Owners Meeting

**Wednesday, September 6**

**NEW LOCATION:**

VMH Expo Center

Vernon Co. Fairgrounds

210 Fairgrounds Rd.

Viroqua, WI

The Viroqua Food Co+op is hosting the 2017 Annual Owners Meeting at a new location this year (address listed above) and all VFC Owners are invited!

**Please RSVP if you plan to join us for the meal at:**

<http://s.coop/25w2b>

Each owner needs to RSVP separately. Although, there is no need to RSVP if you only plan to attend the business portion of the meeting!

**Schedule:**

5:30-6:30pm: Light meal prepared by Rooted Spoon Culinary

6:30pm: Voting ballots close

6:30-8:00pm: VFC Business Meeting

**Agenda:**

- Board Report on Fiscal Year 2016-2017
- Expansion Report
- Microlending Report
- Ballot Results
- Member Requested Agenda Item
- Other Business
- Question and Answer

# 1% Wednesday

We donate 1% of the store's total sales to the top owner-selected nonprofit community organizations on the 2nd Wednesday of every month!

You can now "round-up" your grocery bill to the nearest dollar at the register to donate to the owner-selected 1% Wednesday nonprofit of each month.



**JUNE 2017**

## **Passages**

Marketing Manager  
Charlene Elderkin presents  
a donation of \$425 to  
Becky Salmon of Passages



**JULY 2017**

## **Driftless Humane Society**

Lead Cashier Deborah Ecklund  
presents a donation of \$389 to  
DHS Administrative Assistant  
Fawn Eno



**AUGUST 2017**

## **Kickapoo Valley Reserve**

Charlene Elderkin presents  
a donation of \$394 to  
KVR Events Coordinator  
Alexa Dickson

See the 2017-2018 schedule for the 1% Wednesday donation program by visiting our website:

[www.viroquafood.coop/community-outreach](http://www.viroquafood.coop/community-outreach)

expanding....continued from page 3

Twelve years later, we have an excellent track record of continuous growth in sales, modest profitability, and owners totaling more than 3,600. The Driftless area is now a tourist destination for water ways, bicycling, fishing, recreation at parks and reserves – plus many people travel here (and even move here!) because of this Co-op.

I want to recognize that some questions and criticisms we've received are coming from a place of genuine concern for the Co-op. Rest assured that the VFC Board of Directors have done their due diligence to make our expansion a success. We value transparency, and along with that comes more questions and complexity! Many of these questions (and more), along with VFC's answers, are posted on our Expansion FAQ's webpage at:

[www.viroquafood.coop/expansion\\_faqs](http://www.viroquafood.coop/expansion_faqs)

The VFC Board of Directors bring a diverse spectrum of life and work experience that directly relates to

our Cooperative and the project. They represent a wide range of the owner-membership through multiple generations (ages 29-69) and include: two engineers, a finance professor, small and large business owners, an organic certifier, both an Organic Valley executive and a brand manager.

But we rely on other professional opinions as well. Many independent organizations have looked at the project numbers; each has independently analyzed the project and decided to partner with us, recognizing and affirming the expansion project's viability. This includes:

- City of Viroqua (CDI grant application, Tax Incremental District-TID, Center Avenue street variance)
- Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (CDI grant)
- US Dept. of Treasury Community Development Fund (NMTC)
- USDA Rural Development - Loan Guarantee, 90% of primary loan

- Bank of Cashton - Local Primary Lender
- National Cooperative Grocers Development Cooperative
- Wegner CPAs

With the CDI grant, the NMTC, and your Class C investment – we can stretch our expansion project farther than what we could finance on our own and fulfill the highest potential as suggested by the Market Study. This allows us to expand our building in a way that will last at least 10 more years, similar to our relocation and expansion project of 2005. This is the best way to spend our collective commonwealth and keep those dollars right here supporting our local food economy!

We still need your investment to accomplish our goals! If you're ready to support Viroqua's only community-owned grocery cooperative, email Christina Dollhausen, our Capital Campaign Coordinator at:

[christina.dollhausen@viroquafood.coop](mailto:christina.dollhausen@viroquafood.coop) or call her at: 608.637.7511 x32

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**Week-end Class**  
**October 13-15, 2017**

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**September 7 : Diane Brown, Potter**  
**October 5: Scott Keith, Clay Sculptor**  
**November 2: Artisan Market Opening**

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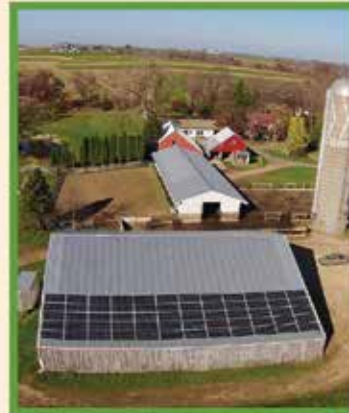


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## owner discount days

**SEPTEMBER 5-7**  
**TUESDAY-THURSDAY**

# 15% off

**All Frozen Food**

From frozen berries to ice cream to prepared meals to frozen meat, time to stock up and save!

**OCTOBER 10-12**  
**TUESDAY-THURSDAY**

# 15% off

**Wine & Spirits (no beer)**

The days are getting shorter. And colder. The nights are getting longer. And colder. Need we say more?

**NOVEMBER 14-16**  
**TUESDAY-THURSDAY**

# 15% off

**All Meat (fresh & frozen)**

Pick up your Thanksgiving turkey, and all your other holiday meats, ahead of time and save!

