

Just Local News

News and views from the Just Local Food Cooperative – August 26, 2005

Fuel prices affect local food, too

It's an often quoted factoid that the average food item travels well over 1000 miles to get to your plate. In that scenario, it's easy to see how fuel costs would affect the food price. It's less obvious how fuel prices affect local food. Our current agricultural system relies upon fossil fuels for a large part of it's production, not just the transportation once it's produced.

Let's take beef for an example. While the cows roam open pastures year-round, the pastures are grown with the help of tractors. The cows are also fed hay, oats and other grains that are grown with the help of fuel. The grains are cut, raked and collected using tractors, and eventually brought to the cows using tractors. When it's time, the cows are brought to the butcher in a truck. So that's a lot fuel used before the meat is even brought to the store, or in our case, to your door.

On July 7, 2003 our organic beef supplier, Wheatfield Hill, paid \$1.09 per gallon for off-road diesel fuel. The last fillup came in at \$2.17 per gallon, and that was before the recent price rise. That's just about double the cost. So each step of the process had a doubling of cost in fuel in just two years.

The farmers, then, are faced with a tough decision – make less money or charge more for the product. Here at Just Local Food Cooperative we're committed to sustainable agriculture. That means we want the farmers we work with to be around five, ten, twenty years from now. And that means they need to make a living at what they do. We've worked hard at making the prices you pay as low as they can possibly be by working directly with the farms. So when the cost of goods increases, our only sustainable option is to share that cost.

For our delivery service, we deliberately chose vehicles that have fueling options beyond the typical fuel found at the corner store. I've written about it before, explaining how **our old Ford Escort runs on waste grease** from a local restaurant. And our **big truck often runs on biodiesel**, made from soybeans grown right here in the US. A year ago, biodiesel was more expensive than regular diesel. In the past month, though, the tables have turned. We can say with confidence that the increase in fuel prices does not affect our costs of delivery. We're doing our best to share this knowledge and experience with our farm partners so that they, too, can decrease fuel costs and make their operations even more sustainable. I've been called by both TV stations in town and appeared last week with our old Ford. On September 20 I'll be a guest on "the West Side" of Wisconsin Public Radio (88.3FM, 5pm) discussing our use of alternative fuels and the connection to our commitment to sustainable agriculture. If you or someone you know is interested in grease cars and biodiesel, this should be a good program to catch.

Expanded delivery area

That said, we have been taking a long hard look at the costs of delivery, and we've found that the main cost for us is in the labor of driving around. When we have a lot of customers in one spot, like the Third Ward or the East Hill, we're delivering more than driving. That's great! But when we get on the outskirts of town we end up behind the wheel more. It has helped that most of our customers out there order as much as possible, making it worth our while to drive out there. We have decided to turn this into a policy with our

Fresh Seasonal Certified Organic Produce:

Herbs from Sunbow : sweet basil, thyme, sage, parsley, rosemary & marjoram, bag	\$ 2.39
Peppers, Sunbow, choose jalapeno, green bell, carrot chile, pimiento lipstick, antohi romanian	\$ 3.19/#
Ping Tung Eggplant, Sunbow, per pound	\$ 3.19
Tomatoes from Sunbow, slicing, per #	\$ 3.00
Garlic from Sunbow, mixed varieties, per pound	\$ 7.50
Kale, from Sunbow, big bag	\$ 3.25
Chard from Sunbow, big bag	\$ 3.25
Chives from Coon Creek, bunch	\$ 3.00
Bunching Onions from Coon Creek, bunch	\$ 2.00
Cucumbers, slicing or pickling, CC, per #	\$ 3.19
Patty Pan Squash, Coon Creek, per #	\$ 3.19
Green Beans, burgundy or french maxibel, per #	\$ 2.79
Zucchini, organic from Coon Creek, per #	\$ 3.00
Walla Walla onions, per pound	\$ 1.99

delivery service, and thankfully the new policy won't affect many people at all. We have drawn a line around the city of Eau Claire (like just about every other delivery business in the city) and within that area **all deliveries will remain free of charge**, no matter the size. Outside of that line, we are asking our customers to make their order above \$25 – this ensures we're making money on the stop and can continue to serve you into the future. For orders under \$25 we will be charging a five dollar delivery fee. By instituting this policy, we are able to extend our reach a little further out of town and expanding our delivery area by ensuring it is worth the drive. If you have questions or concerns about this new policy, please let us know. And remember, if you live in town there is no change and no charge – it's just for folks living outside the central city, and **most customers will not be affected at all by this change!**

Another Bison Sale

I received this note & recipe from Noel Filla down at Golden Hills Buffalo Farm. They raise certified organic bison on their land near Osseo. I hope you'll give their excellent stuff a try... ~aaron

Hello, I would like to run a special for September. It's a great time, with football games and kids back to school, to bring out the crock pot for Pulled-Bison BarBQ sandwiches. For September, while supplies last, All roasts are \$8.00/lb and will include a **free 1 pound package of bison burger with each order of a roast**. Roasts average 2-4 pounds each and we have chuck, round, arm and sirloin to choose from.

Local Bounty Update

Last week I let you all know about the upcoming dinner we're sponsoring with Native Bay up on Lake Wissota. We're both happy and sorry to report that the dinner has been **sold out**. You can look forward to more of these special dinners in the future. Until then, you can **always** stop in at Native Bay and **have your own local food dinner** – Nathan features local food on all of his menus and uses as many local ingredients as possible.

School is back in session

It was a pleasant surprise this week when our home delivery orders increased by over 20%. Indeed, school is back in session, folks are back from vacation, and parents & teachers are settling back into their routines. We're also hoping to enter some classrooms with our mission of local and fair trade foods. Just this Wednesday a third grader pulled her mom aside at our booth and said "mom, this is the coffee you should buy, it's shade grown and fair trade – it saves the rainforest and helps the community". I was impressed! What an impact education makes. If you are a teacher, parent or student and you know of an opportunity for a local farmer or fair trade enthusiast to come and talk to students here in town just let us know. We might even bring some chocolate milk samples!

Referrals

We'd love to have your friends, coworkers and neighbors on our route. If you would like a few extra flyers or some coupons to give out just let us know, we'll drop some off for you, whether its 5 or 1500. You can always send people to our updated website for information as well. Now is a great time to get someone started with all of the fresh seasonal produce available!

Farmers Market Update

The farmers market will be making a temporary move near the new site in conjunction with the International Fall Festival on Saturday September 17th. Look for us on the other side of the RCU building. We'll continue to be at the Saturday markets all the way to the end of October, and Wednesdays for just a few more weeks. Thanks for your support, and if you haven't made it yet, come down and say hi!

Articles within written mostly by Aaron, worker at Just Local Food, contact me at 225-0036 or aaron@justlocalfood.com

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PULLED-BISON BARBQ sandwiches

1-- 3lb bison roast

1 1/2 cups ketchup

1/4 cup brown sugar

1/4 cup red wine vinegar

2 Tbsp Dijon-style mustard

2 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce

1 tsp liquid smoke flavoring

1/2 tsp salt

1/4 tsp black pepper

1/4 tsp garlic powder

1/2 large onion, sliced in thin rings

In large bowl, combine all the above ingredients and mix well. In a Crock Pot, place roast and pour above mixture over roast. Cover, cook on LOW for 8-10 hours. Roast is done when it easily shreds with two forks. Shred roast with forks and then return to crock pot to evenly coat meat with sauce. SERVE with your favorite buns.