



December 8, 2009

## FARM DIRECT CO-OP

P.O. Box 1146 Marblehead, MA 01945  
1-877-FDC-FARM  
www.farmdirectcoop.org

### Food for Thought

#### Buy a Local Christmas Tree

Did you know there are close to 30 million Christmas trees sold every year? They are renewable and recyclable – for every tree cut down, one to three seedlings are planted each year. Most of the trees you see at big box retailers and even those ubiquitous Christmas tree stands that pop up in parking lots all over are likely trucked from out of state, or possibly even from Canada. But our area boasts a number of Christmas tree farms, where you can either cut one yourself, or have someone else do the heavy lifting. Not only will you know that your tree is fresher, you'll be supporting local businesses and adding a fun tradition to your holiday season. To find a local tree grower, visit <http://pickyourownchristmastree.org/MAXmaseast.php>

#### Final Bills Are Due!

If you've already settled your tab with FDC, thanks! If you haven't, please do so as soon as you can. Contact Tamara if you're not sure what you owe, or if you're paid up. And if, in these tough times, you are having trouble paying your invoice, please email Tamara, [tamara@farmdirectcoop.org](mailto:tamara@farmdirectcoop.org), to set up a payment plan. Thanks!

#### Register Now for 2010

We're already thinking about those first local strawberries! If you're ready to sign on to the FDC for 2010, visit [www.farmdirectcoop.org/preregistration\\_form](http://www.farmdirectcoop.org/preregistration_form) and fill in your details. In January, we'll bill you a \$100 deposit to ensure your space, and you can start counting on all those fresh, flavorful goodies.

#### More Recipes, Year-Round!

Looking for a new way to serve beets? Clever uses for kale? Soups, side dishes, desserts and more: even in the off-season, FDC members are sharing favorite recipes on our new blog, accessed through the Recipes link on our Web site, or directly via <http://blog.farmdirectcoop.org/>. If you've tried a recipe from the blog, share your experience by posting a comment on the site. And if you have a recipe you want to share with members, email it to [newsletter@farmdirectcoop.org](mailto:newsletter@farmdirectcoop.org).

### FDC Fresh Ideas

By Manager Julie Pottier-Brown

We have lots of goodies for you today. Soon-to-be soups and stews, baked meals-to-be, made-today mozzarella, and just-pressed cider. The mozzarella is from highly praised Somerville producer Fiore de Nonno from an old family recipe, and the cider is the delicious non-pasteurized Cider Hill variety that has been so popular. Many members will be excited to see the Silferleaf raspberry infusion organic vinegar making an appearance, as well as locally grown heirloom dried beans from Baer's Best Beans. Lots of roots and greens come from Picadilly, Riverland and several other providers. The list goes on. New England farmers have really latched on the old ways, keeping crops in cellars, and coolers to distribute later and later, after the "season" is over.



I feel privileged to work with our ever-widening circle of growers, my FDC co-workers, the volunteer Board of Directors, and our dedicated members. We are a community of individuals standing on the side of health for ourselves, our farm-workers, and our planet. You may not consider yourself "green", or an "activist", but we all vote with our dollars. You are voting for local and for organic. That is a powerful statement. Thank you.

See you in the spring!

*Julie*

### Craving Local Eats?

Feeling a little bereft now that the FDC season has come to a close? There are lots of ways to continue to eat locally, from a meat CSA to a wine CSA! Maybe even a winter share. Read on for details.

**Houde Family Farm Meat CSA:** Houde Family Farm, which operates a meat CSA that services the Melrose area (as well as other towns) is now expanding to Salem and Marblehead. They provide home delivery of their pork, beef and veal (a no-veal option is available). While they are not certified organic (due to the large expense of being certified), they are committed to ethical, humane and low-antibiotic farming methods on their family-operated farm. Monthly shares in 10-, 15- and 20-pound sizes are available. We've been members for about two years now and besides the intangible benefits of buying meat from a small New England farm, the flavor of the meat is absolutely heads and shoulders above what I've bought at grocery stores. The pork is a heritage breed (Tamworth), the beef is primarily grass fed and the veal is from calves that are allowed to roam freely. Visit [www.houdefamilyfarm.com](http://www.houdefamilyfarm.com) for more info. — Chris Vander Rhodes

**How about a Winter CSA?** Dave Jackson of Enterprise Farm, one of our growers, distributes a winter share to several locations throughout the Boston area, using a combination of what is available locally supplemented by items from organic growers further south on the East Coast, to provide a reasonable variety even in the dead of winter. He is wondering if the Salem/Marblehead area would garner enough interest to support a drop off location around here. If you're interested, visit <http://enterpriseproduce.com/farmshare/index.htm> or drop them a note at [info@enterpriseproduce.com](mailto:info@enterpriseproduce.com).

**Charlton Orchards Wine CSA:** What goes best with local meat and produce? Local wine! Obadiah McIntyre Farm Winery in Charlton, Mass., grows chambourcin, vidal, and chardonnay (and purchases merlot, cabernet sauvignon, and riesling from New York). CSA members get a wine shipment every month or quarterly. The winery offers seven table wines, 3 hard cider varieties, four sparkling wines, and 10 fruit wine varieties, all pressed, fermented and bottled on site. For more info, visit [charltonorchard.com](http://charltonorchard.com).

## **Saving Energy in the Kitchen** *Adapted from the 7Gen Blog* [www.seventhgeneration.com/blog](http://www.seventhgeneration.com/blog)

The Department of Energy reports that 15% of the energy we use in our homes flows through our kitchens. To help you make a dent in your energy consumption there, here are some kitchen conservation tips:

When making a multi-dish meal, try to cook as much as you can at the same time, then reheat individual dishes as needed in the more efficient microwave or toaster oven (or in the regular oven if you happen to be cooking something else).

Resist the temptation to open the oven door to check your food. That can lower temperatures inside by 25°-50°. Turn the oven off a few minutes before the timer sounds and let residual heat finish the job.

Use the microwave whenever possible. Cooking a typical casserole in an electric oven uses about two kWh worth of electricity. The same dish in a microwave oven uses just 0.36 kWh. Toaster ovens are another efficient option.

Cover stove-top pots to stop heat from escaping. This can reduce energy for cooking by up to two-thirds.

Unplug your refrigerator and vacuum or dust its condenser coils. Dirty coils can reduce a fridge's efficiency by up to 30%! Make sure there are a couple of inches of air space between the coils and the wall so air can efficiently carry heat away.

Clean the rubber gaskets around your refrigerator's doors and their contact points on the unit itself to make sure your fridge seals tightly when it's closed. If your gaskets are worn or ripped, get new ones.

Don't put leftovers in the refrigerator while they're still warm. Your fridge will work a lot harder and warm newcomers might increase the temperature to levels that aren't safe for the foods already there.

Run your dishwasher only when it's full. Use the energy-saving setting to dry the dishes or let them air dry. And avoid the water heating option if your dishwasher has one.

## **Dreaming of Fresh Mutz**

*By Jeanne Coffey, newsletter editor*

When my husband and I moved from New Jersey a little over two years ago, I didn't realize how difficult it would be to locate a food that has been a staple of pretty much my entire adult life: fresh mozzarella. Living in Hoboken, I was unknowingly spoiled when it came to "mutz." There are at least three Italian delis in that mile-square city that still hand make mozzarella. Walk into any of those spots and ask when the mutz was made, they will tell you it's being made all day long. It is so fresh and moves so quickly that it is never even refrigerated. Because it is a fresh cheese, it does not need to be refrigerated the day it is made, if it will be eaten that day. In fact, it's best eaten as soon as possible – the fridge will harm that delicate creamy texture.

Upon arriving in Nahant, I quickly realized that it is very difficult to find mozzarella that hasn't been refrigerated, much less mozzarella that was made an hour ago. I've tried several different brands, but the one I've read about and longed to try has escaped my grasp – until now! The mozzarella in our Winter Share is from Fiore di Nonno in Somerville. Lourdes Fiore Smith, the owner of Fiore di Nonno, follows a recipe from her grandfather, whose store, Fiore's of Hoboken, is one of the contenders for best mutz in my old hometown. In fact, Lourdes travelled there to apprentice under current owner John Amato.

Fiore di Nonno mozzarella is made by hand fresh every day, one batch at a time. Try it with crusty bread and sundried tomatoes, or melted on a sandwich with roasted garlic and onion jam or any fresh Italian ham. If you want to save it, the cheese can be refrigerated for up to two weeks. They suggest you bring it to room temperature for 30-60 minutes if enjoying "as is." I am hopeful that Lourdes' cheese will finally satisfy my longing – and breed a whole bunch of new fresh mutz fanatics.

## **Jota Ricca** **(Bean and Saurkraut Soup)**

Jim Botsacos, the much-lauded executive chef at Italian eatery Abbocatto in New York, shared this recipe with me for an article about cured meats in Wine Country International magazine. He developed it with his chef de cuisine Jake Addeo after sampling the traditional Northern Italian dish near Trieste. I thought it was the perfect use for our local dried beans. Top this thick, peasant style soup (pronounced *yota*) with caraway seeds, extra virgin olive oil and a couple grinds of black pepper for a hearty winter dish. -J.C.

Serves four to six

1 lb. cranberry beans (soak overnight in enough water to cover beans by 4 inches, drain)

1 (14oz.) can chicken stock

6oz. Pancetta: 2oz. finely chopped, 4oz. split into two equal pieces

1 bay leaf

1 T extra virgin olive oil (plus extra for garnish)

1 clove garlic, peeled and sliced

1 large tomato, peeled, seeded and chopped

1 lb. sauerkraut

1 tsp. all purpose flour

1 tsp. caraway seeds (plus extra for garnish)

12 oz. Idaho potatoes, peeled and medium diced  
salt and pepper to taste

1. Place the beans in a pot with enough water to cover by 2". Add the chicken stock and stir to incorporate. Add the 2 equal-sized pieces of pancetta with the bay leaf and place over high heat to boil. Lower heat to simmer, cook until beans are tender, 45-60 minutes.

2. Place 1 tablespoon of olive oil with the 2oz. of chopped pancetta in a large pot over medium heat to render the fat. Add the garlic, tomato, and sauerkraut one at a time,

cooking each for 1-2 minutes before adding the next. Add the flour and cook for 2 minutes until the flavors meld. Add the caraway seeds and stir to combine. Remove pot from heat and reserve.

3. Place the diced potatoes in a clean pot with enough cold water (heavily salted) to cover by 2". Cook over high heat until tender. Drain and reserve half of the potatoes diced. Transfer the remaining potatoes to a large bowl and mash, using the back of a spoon. Reserve potatoes separately.

4. When the beans are tender, transfer half of them (with 8oz. of their liquid) to a clean bowl and mash using the back of a spoon (reserve whole beans separately).

5. Place the pot with the sauerkraut over low heat and add the mashed beans, cook 1-2 minutes. Add the mashed potatoes with 8oz. of the bean liquid and cook 1-2 minutes. Transfer the contents of this pot to the pot with the reserved beans. Add the reserved potatoes into the soup and simmer for 10-15 minutes until the flavors incorporate. If the soup is too thick, add water to adjust consistency.

6. When ready to serve, remove and discard the two large pieces of pancetta and the bay leaf. Turn off heat and let soup sit 5 minutes. Ladle into serving bowls, garnish with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil, freshly ground pepper and a sprinkle of caraway seeds. Serve immediately.