



August 2, 2012

P.O. Box 1146  
Marblehead, Mass. 01945  
877-FDC-FARM  
[www.farmdirectcoop.org](http://www.farmdirectcoop.org)  
[newsletter@farmdirectcoop.org](mailto:newsletter@farmdirectcoop.org)

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## Food for Thought

### Honey is Sweet for the Skin

We all know honey tastes sweet but did you know honey is also beneficial to the skin? According to the National Honey Board "Manufacturers have used honey in everything from hand lotions and moisturizers to bar soaps and bubble baths. One reason they use honey is for its wholesome, all-natural image; more and more consumers are demanding cosmetics and personal care products made from natural ingredients. In the case of honey, however, image is just the beginning. First, honey is a humectant, which means it attracts and retains moisture. This makes honey a natural fit in a variety of moisturizing products including cleansers, creams, shampoos and conditioners. Look for honey in store-bought beauty products or simply add a squeeze of honey to your moisturizer, shampoo or soap at home. For some extra pampering, try whipping up a simple beauty recipe yourself." For more information about honey and how to make your own honey beauty products at home visit the National Honey Board website at <http://bit.ly/pzRgQH>

### Veggie Blog Has A New Look!

Have you visited the FDC Veggie Blog lately? Salem member Marykate Smith Despres, has been working hard to revamp it. Stop on by to check out the member stories, recipes and pictures. Then leave a comment to let her know what you think. You can visit the Veggie blog anytime by going to <http://blog.farmdirectcoop.org/>

### Celebrate World Breastfeeding Week in Beverly!

La Leche League International of Salem is sponsoring an event to celebrate World Breastfeeding Week on August 7th. "Breastmilk: The Original Whole Food" talk will begin at 10:30 AM at the UU Church, 225 Cabot Street in Beverly. The suggested donation amount is \$5. The talk will be followed by lunch at the Organic Garden Cafe, 294 Cabot Street, from 12-3 PM. 10% of the lunch proceeds go to benefit La Leche League and door prizes will be given out.

### Vacation Swaps

Anne-Marie Hakstian, a Marblehead member, wants to swap, Tuesday August 14th. She has a Small Veggie and Small Fruit share. Call (978) 804-7034 or email [ahakstian@yahoo.com](mailto:ahakstian@yahoo.com)

## FDC Fresh Ideas

By Julie Pottier-Brown, Operations Manager

The request this week from Rob at Riverland Farm was "Please order watermelons." So we did. He says they are red fleshed, a variety called Starlight, and average 6-8 pounds each. Local and certified organic, these watermelons cost \$6 each - what a deal! I expect these are the old fashioned melons WITH seeds. It actually takes two fields to grow seedless watermelons.

Since they cannot pollinate themselves, a field of seeded melons has to be grown next to them. Most of the melons in stores these days are seedless, so I wonder where all the seeded melons go?

Tomatoes will also be included in the shares today, with some extras available for those wanting to purchase more. The other request was to please order heavy on cucumbers so there will be some for all in the shares. I enjoyed reading the list of cucumber uses in the July 17th newsletter. My favorite use, taught to me by the first FDC manager Jen Mix, is as an instant deodorant. Just as the article mentioned cucumbers take care of bacteria in the mouth, this also works under the arms. Working up a sweat lifting heavy boxes off a truck in August? Snap open a cucumber and it neutralizes any odor! My recent favorite run-ins with cucumbers involved a seaweed cucumber soup (served chilled) in a Korean eatery in NYC a few weeks ago, and more recently a gin and tonic with muddled cucumber and mint. Please let us know what you do with your cucurbits and all your share!



Cucumbers at the Salem Depot

*Julie*

## Veggie Casseroles

By Susan DameGreene, Salem Depot

Here is a **Vegetable Casserole** I have been making for about 35 years. I remember making it when my son was very young and he is now 39 years old. Slice 2 or 3 small potatoes into the bottom of your favorite casserole dish. Slice 2 small zucchini or one zucchini and one summer squash into rounds and put on top of the potatoes. Slice one good sized onion and add that. Optional - add a sliced green or purple pepper to the top. I season each layer with herb salt (a perfect use for the Herb Farmacy sea salt) or some fresh ones if I have them. If you don't have herbs, plain salt and pepper will do nicely. Dot with butter, if desired. Bake, covered, for about one hour at 350 degrees or until vegetables are tender. Take lid off and top casserole with one cup sour cream or Greek yogurt with 1/3 cup Parmesan cheese added to it. Bake until the topping is hot and slightly browned, about 10-15 minutes. Serve hot. Reheats well. Can be a vegetable side dish or main meal. You can make more or less depending on how many you are feeding.

Here is a **Zucchini Casserole** I have been making for years. Use 2 or 3 small zucchini and one medium onion. Grate these with a box grater or food processor. Put them all in a large cast iron skillet and cook on medium to get most of the water out. Meanwhile, to the blender, add 2 or 3 eggs and 1/4 to 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese, a dab of hot sauce if you like, or salt and pepper to taste, then blend. When the zucchini and onion are mostly dry, dump in the eggs and cheese, stirring constantly. Cook briefly until it is no longer runny. Turn the whole thing into a casserole dish and either refrigerate till needed or bake until golden in a 350 degree oven, about 20-30 minutes. It puffs up as it bakes. Can be used as a main course or a side dish. You can also add cheddar or any other cheese you have.

## Barley Risotto

*Recipe & photo by Sarah J. Frankel, Salem Depot*



**You will need:** 3 Tbsp olive oil; 1 small onion; 1 cup pearled barley; 4-6 cups broth (I use the organic Pacific vegetable broth because it is thick and has a lot of flavor); 1/3 cup grated parmesan; your choice of pre-cooked vegetable (green bean chunks, mushrooms, something else yummy) or cleaned and cut fresh greens.

**Directions:** In a medium saucepan boil broth and then simmer for use. In a large saucepan sauté half of a chopped up onion in a drizzle of olive oil. Add one cup of barley and stir until the barley is coated in the oil. Sauté barley for about 2-3 minutes, or until it is lightly browned. Begin to add warm broth one cup at a time, stirring constantly, until each cup is almost completely absorbed. Repeat until you have used about 4-5 cups of broth. Test the barley to see if it is cooked to your liking – I usually prepare my risotto a little al dente so that I can reheat the leftovers without it being soggy. Then add a pre-cooked vegetable of your choosing (green beans, mushrooms, something else yummy) or some fresh spinach. Add directly to the barley. Stir in and cook for about 5 minutes on low. Add in about 1/3 cup parmesan and stir in completely. ENJOY!

## Let's Celebrate the Watermelon!

*By Danielle Shea Tan, health counselor at Crazy Simple Wellness, Marblehead Depot*

Did you know that July is National Watermelon Month? Though this designation may sound like the agricultural industry's version of a Hallmark Holiday (a made up holiday to increase consumer sales), it was actually a resolution passed unanimously in 2007 by the U.S. House of Representatives. No kidding! The health benefits of watermelon are why I have been embracing this national celebration and doing watermelon proud in July! With only 45 calories, 1 cup of watermelon promotes healthy eyes (~17% of RDI for Vitamin A), boosts immunity (~21% of RDI for Vitamin C) and supports overall health by also providing fiber, potassium and vitamin B6. Eat watermelon by the slice, or try an adult version of enjoying this delicious summer fruit.

### Refreshing Watermelon Salad

(courtesy of Crazy Simple Wellness)

In a bowl, combine the following: 2 c chopped watermelon; 3-4 c baby spinach; 2-3 handfuls of cherry tomatoes, halved; handful of torn basil leaves. Drizzle with 1-2 TBS balsamic vinegar, olive oil, salt and pepper. Toss well. For some extra crunch and protein, add 2 TBS of sunflower seeds. Adjust seasoning as desired.

If you are concerned about the sugar in watermelon, have no fear! Though watermelon derives most of its calories from natural sugar, it has a low glycemic load and therefore when consumed it has very little impact on a person's blood sugar. With only a small amount of carbohydrates per serving, a huge dose of water and some fiber, watermelon makes for a healthy snack for everyone.

## Messing Around With The Apple

*by Lynda Morgenroth, Melrose Depot*

An apple a day keeps the doctor away, and research supports the adage. A Dutch study published in the American Heart Association journal, Stroke, and reported in the New York Times (<http://nyti.ms/o3RJws>) indicates a 52 percent lower risk of stroke among those who ate a medium to large apple every day.

But as with much in today's food realm, marketing trumps nutrition. Beauty is skin deep. The apple of the future may become the stuff of magazine layouts and cooking show set pieces, never to brown. The tendency of peeled or cut or munched upon apples to brown is a turnoff to consumers, say food estheticians, especially now that pre-cut apple slices are sold in supermarkets and featured in McDonalds Happy Meals.

Make way for The Arctic Apple, a genetically engineered fruit developed by Okanagan Specialty Fruits in British Columbia. It will not turn brown. The company wants to introduce its genetically modified apple trees to American growers and has applied to the Agriculture Department. The U.S. Apple Association, an industry group, is opposed to the introduction, not so much for reasons of nutrition--the impact on human health of the genetic engineering of apples and much else is unknown--but because of concerns that a genetically engineered apple might scare away consumers, not just from the apples-of-the future, but from all apples, as consumers opposed to genetically engineered foods would not be able to tell the difference.

Americans have been eating genetically engineered foods for about 25 years, mainly in processed foods. The Arctic Apple is one of the first genetically engineered fruits that people would "directly bite into," notes New York Times reporter Andrew Pollack ("That Fresh Look, Genetically Buffed," <http://nyti.ms/MtSLIx>)

The genetically engineered fruit is made by inserting an extra copy of an apple gene into a plant, which causes a "self-defense mechanism," an RNA interference that results in reduced production of the enzyme responsible for the fruit's browning. The company's application to the Agriculture Department claims the genetic changes do not hurt the apples or trees, or alter nutritional value. A 60-day period for public comment on the application is part of the process.

Browning, some might say, is too strong a term for the color apples turn. The effect looks more like apples dusted with cinnamon-sugar when being prepared for pie. A spritz of lemon juice retards the process. Still, there may be other deeper fears.

Issues about commitment are not limited to relationships. Such fears may strike during picnics, meetings, and buffets. Neal Carter, president of Okanagan Specialty Fruits, originators of The Arctic Apple, says the improved fruit would increase sales as a whole apple is "for many people too big a commitment." Quoted in the NYT article, he explains, "If you had a bowl of apples at a meeting, people wouldn't take an apple out of the bowl. But if you had a plate of [white only] apple slices, everyone would take a slice."

**Correction:** The article "Amazing Things About Cucumbers" printed on July 17th and July 19th was mistakenly credited as authored by Susan DameGreene. This article was in fact authored by an unknown source. For more information about cucumbers please visit <http://bit.ly/Jmeej>.