



FRESH FEED

The Marquette Food Co-op Newsletter

August 2022



STRANGE DAYS INDEED



Matt Gougeon
General Manager

These are strange economic times. A brief summation of my recent news reading includes the U.S. economy shrank in the 2nd quarter. The Fed raised interest rates by a bunch, again. Inflation is still a major issue for all of us. Gas prices are falling, bit by bit. The housing crisis is real and serious. There is a coming global food crisis. The unemployment rate in the U.S. is quite low. Businesses are still experiencing staffing issues due to Covid-19 impacts. Major retailers have a backlog of goods to unload and yet there remain serious supply chain issues. Major retailers (all retailers?) struggle with profitability due to more equitable wages being paid to workers as well as margin erosion due to inflation. Some large suppliers are having their best years ever. Economists argue whether a recession is coming or not.

One thing for certain is it feels like some sort of dam is going to break. It's an uncomfortable spot to be in. Although we operate a cooperative, it's important to remember that we exist and operate in an environment beset by all these same variables. In short, it is a tough period in which to operate a business. Any business.

But a couple things in my laundry list of news items from above stand out to me: major retailers have a backlog of goods to unload, and some large suppliers are having their best years ever. At first blush, it seems obvious that if retailers have a lot of products on hand it must mean they purchased a lot from suppliers. True enough. However, it also means retailers have so much on hand because inflation has curtailed the spending of consumers. From the supply side, it means that some suppliers have taken advantage of the inflationary environment and padded their pricing at a time when everyone must pay more for goods. In this inflationary environment, retailers struggle to maintain margin while suppliers can pad their margins under the cover of rising costs. Shocking, I know. So, what does this mean? Well, at some point, major retailers are going to dump all their goods on the market for cheap. Consumers will love it. However, it will be bad for independent businesses because they will not be able to compete on price and the market for similar goods will be satiated for some time. It is fair to say that this is exactly how capitalism works. That is a statement of acknowledgement and not condemnation nor praise. It is also a fact that this makes large operators like Walmart and Amazon very dangerous to independent businesses. With all the volatility of these economic times, the market landscape will be soon changed. How could it not be?

Have you ever heard of the Robinson- Patman Act? Whenever I complain about the uneven playing field that favors large retailers over independent retailers, our IT person, Evan, likes to remind me of this act. However, I'm never sure if he intends to help me better understand things or if he intends to rile me up further. Regardless, the Robinson-Patman Act has its roots in legislation from 1914 and then had a major update in 1936. The gist of this law is that no seller may sell a product at a lesser price to a buyer than to any other buyer. In theory, this means the prices of goods (and food) would be standard across channels. Think about that. This is a law that currently exists. It is also ignored. In the beginning, this law was steeped in controlling competition such that large sellers could not create monopolies and drive small independents out of the market by commanding lower costs of goods through their buying power. To be certain, there are MANY variables and challenges to this act that make it largely ignored today and I am no expert. But it remains that large sellers of goods, food, and services routinely run independents out of their markets. I've always understood that in times of economic uncertainty there lie opportunities. In a capitalist system, opportunity is often synonymous with exploitation.

Just so you know I'm not making this stuff up, here are a few links. One is a dense transcript of a talk from the Federal Trade Commission about the Robinson-Patman Act and the other is a link to a video that explains who is taking advantage of inflation.

[The Robinson-Patman Act: General Principles, Commission Proceedings, and Selected Issues | Federal Trade Commission](#) - ftc.gov

[How Corporate Profits are Impacting Inflation](#) - YouTube

In any event, please know that your Co-op continues on our path of service to this community. It's not easy right now, but as I said, things will change. Our business model is just different enough that we tend to weather direct and indirect impacts that could cause a less solid business to falter. After all, we rely on each other to see us through hard times. This time, it's no different.

Feel good. Shop the Co-op.

DOUBLE UP FOOD BUCKS PAUSE ON EARNING IN GROCERY STORES

From August 1 to December 31, you
cannot earn Double Up.

Any Double Up you have earned to
date CAN be spent during this time.

The grocery store pause is over January 1,
and shoppers can both earn and spend again.

This pause helps ensure that Double Up Food Bucks can
continue in their 250+ locations across Michigan
for many years to come.

THANK YOU!

DoubleUpFoodBucks.org | 866.586.2796



THE TOMATOES ARE COMING!

While August's arrival marks the winding down of our sweet fleeting summer months, more importantly, it's tomato time. Peak tomato season is perhaps the only thing that can ease the sting of summer starting to make its exit. Here is a guide to some tomato varieties often grown locally and how we're reveling in the juicy acidic sweetness of the best time of year.



Black Prince

Beautiful dark color throughout with a rich, sweet flavor. An heirloom from Siberia, it does well in climates not usually known for good tomato growing. Excellent to eat fresh or cooked.



Black Cherry

Known as a prolific producer of perfectly round, perfect little cherry tomatoes. Rich, sweet flavor with a hint of smokiness. Lovely black/burgundy color.



Blue Gold

Bred in Napa California, this tomato is sweet and fruity, not to mention pretty, with a gold color and purple/blue striping on the outside with a hint of pink inside. Thanks to Seeds & Spores Family Farm for bringing this one in, which is new to me!



Brandywine

A classic heirloom, known for its balance of sweet and acidic flavor and excellent texture. Has the beefsteak shape with pink or yellow flesh. Even when fully ripe, it can have green shoulders near the stem. Most popular heirloom tomato with home gardeners. Great for eating fresh.



Cherokee Purple

Cherokee Purple is an heirloom possibly over 100 years old that is said to be grown by the Cherokee Indians. It bears up to 12 oz globular to slightly oblate shaped fruits with a dusky rose-brownish coloring, purple undertones, green shoulders and dark red flesh. It can have some concentric cracking. It is sweet, with a rich, somewhat smoky, taste. The fruit must be eaten pretty quickly when mature.



Indigo Kumquat

There was an effort by plant breeders to increase the amount of the antioxidant anthocyanin that resulted in the Indigo Rose, a dark purple/nearly black tomato. It may have been healthy, but flavor reviews were less than enthusiastic. The Indigo Kumquat proves that you can breed for the anthocyanin but still have a flavorful tomato that is both sweet and acidic. Plus, they are a lovely gold with purple shoulders that will make your salads extra beautiful.



Jaune Flamme

Incredible taste! Sweet, low acid tomato with a zing, too. Pretty apricot-like fruit with a unique flavor and fun name. Heirloom French variety.



Juliet Roma

This juicy red paste tomato is rich and flavorful, with a true "tomatoey" flavor. Great for sauces, salsas, and salads.



Pink Berkeley Tie Dye

A fabulously fun name for a tomato that looks the part. It's a lovely deep rose color streaked with otherworldly iridescent green stripes. So beautiful and with rich, sweet flavor.



Striped German

The flat, medium to large, variably ribbed-shoulder tomatoes are shaded brilliant yellow and red. The marbled interior looks beautiful sliced. Complex, fruity flavor and smooth texture. It has been compared to a peach and is amazing in salads and sandwiches. Eat quickly; this is not a long-lasting variety.



Sungold

Gorgeous bright orange-yellow cherry tomatoes grow in clusters like grapes on this hybrid. The taste is out of this world — fresh off the vine, it seems like you can actually taste sunshine. Very sweet and perfect for snacking, though light cooking can be good too. Try heating a little olive oil and garlic in a pan. When the garlic is just warmed add a pint of sungolds and cook until just warm and slightly mashed. Then dollop a soft cheese like Boursin into your bowl and let it melt into your sweet sauce. Serve over pasta.

TOMATO MAYO TOAST

We used stiped german and green german

- **Marquette Baking Company Sourdough**
- **mayonnaise**
- **1 T butter or oil**
- **heirloom tomatoes**
(2 small or 1 medium/large)
- **kosher salt**
- **cracked black pepper**

Slice bread to desired thickness. Use a toaster or melt butter or oil in pan and fry bread until golden on each side. While bread is toasting, slice tomatoes.

Spread mayo over bread and top with tomato slices. Salt liberally and finish with cracked pepper or a drizzle of olive oil.



TOMATO CONFIT WITH ROASTED GARLIC

We used a cherry, black cherry, sungold medley

- **1 pint cherry tomatoes**
- **½ c olive oil**
- **1 bulb garlic**
- **thyme**
- **kosher salt**
- **cracked pepper**

Preheat oven to 350° F.

Cut bulb of garlic in half, widthwise.

In a small baking dish, add tomatoes and nestle in the two halves of the garlic bulb, cut side up. Drizzle oil over tomatoes and garlic and season with thyme, salt, and pepper.

Bake for 45 mins – 1 hour.

Once cool enough to touch, squeeze the roasted garlic from its paper and fold into the tomato and oil. Use the finished garlic tomato mixture to top pasta, rice, or toast.

This recipe is adaptable and can easily be doubled or the amount of oil reduced. Play around with different herbs or swap the garlic for shallots!



TOMATO MANGO SALAD WITH MINT & FISH SAUCE VINAIGRETTE

Recipe by Kari Michelle Young

- **heirloom tomatoes**
(2 small or 1 medium/large)
- **1 mango**
- **1-2 nectarines**
- **4-10 mint leaves**

FISH SAUCE VINAIGRETTE

- **⅓ C fish sauce**
- **2-3 T honey**
- **½ C rice wine vinegar**
- **juice of 1 lime**
- **¼ C vegetable or grapeseed oil**
- **3 T hot water**

First, make the vinaigrette. Combine all ingredients and mix until emulsified.

Slice the nectarine, tomato, and mango. Vary slicing for visual interest and preferred bite size. Arrange mango, nectarine and tomato on a plate or shallow bowl. Spoon over 4-6 T of the vinaigrette and top with mint.

Use as a side to chicken, fish, or pork, or simply devour it on its own right at the kitchen counter.



OUTREACH UPDATE



Sarah Monte
Outreach Director

The Outreach Department of the Marquette Food Co-op is as busy as ever and wants to make sure Co-op owners know about the work that is supported by owning equity and shopping at the store. For the next few newsletters, we'll be sharing overviews of these projects. This month, you'll learn about the Food as Medicine Partnership, a collaborative group that is bringing Prescription for Health programs to communities across the Upper Peninsula.

Over the last couple of years, Feeding America West Michigan (FAWM) has been assessing their mobile pantry distribution work in the U.P. and looking for creative solutions to food insecurity in our communities. At 14%, or 1 in 7 people, the U.P. has a higher food insecurity rate than the national average of 10.5%. Members of the U.P. community whose work is focused on food and health were invited to meet regularly to help direct these efforts. From those meetings, the Food as Medicine Partnership emerged.

This group, which includes 25 organizations, businesses, and individuals, envisions a collaborative food system in the Upper Peninsula that provides nutrition education and equitable access to wholesome, local, fair, and affordable food for all residents. The first project the group took on is a Prescription for Health program, generously funded by the Superior Health Foundation. This Prescription for Health program is unique in that it addresses food access from both the customer and supplier side.

For those unfamiliar, a Prescription for Health program uses a medical referral process for enrollment. Participants receive a referral from a participating healthcare provider with a prescription for adding fresh fruits and vegetables to their diets. To qualify for the program, individuals must

be at risk for or diagnosed with a chronic health condition, face economic barriers to food access and are 18 years of age or older.

All referrals are processed through the 2-1-1 call center at the Upper Peninsula Commission for Area Progress (UPCAP) and, once the referral is received, potential participants are contacted by a trained call specialist to discuss the program and complete an enrollment. Participants enrolled into the program will receive vouchers each month to purchase fruits and vegetables from participating local farms. Each voucher participants receive is worth \$1 and they will receive a total of \$15 per week during the 20-week season. Once participants are enrolled in the program, they will be mailed the vouchers monthly.

The beauty of a Prescription for Health program is that it increases people's food budget so they can better access fresh, affordable local produce and it supports the local farm economy. The Marquette Food Co-op and our partners in the U.P. Food Exchange helped this project in multiple ways. First, the Co-op was able to utilize our marketing experience to help promote this project. We worked with Continuous Tone Design Studio to create marketing handouts and FAQs for consumers and market vendors and are working with Bennett Media Group on digital advertising to increase awareness of the program.

A goal of Food as Medicine and Prescription for Health is to provide these services as widely as possible. The U.P. Food Exchange, with members located across the U.P. and active in local food and farmers markets, was able to help identify and onboard farmers markets that could participate in the program. This is more complicated than it sounds, as many markets in the Upper Peninsula are small and lack



a paid market manager. For Prescription for Health to work, the market must have regular produce vendors who attend every week and a market manager or fiduciary that can be a central contact for the Food as Medicine team to work with. The current list of farmers markets includes:

Bay Mills/Brimley Farmers Market
Main St. Calumet Farmers Market
Depot Park Farmers & Artisans Market (Ironwood)
Houghton Farmers Market
Hancock Tori & Farmers Market
Gladstone Farmers Market
Downtown Marquette Farmers Market
Munising Farmers Market
Newberry Farmers Market
Sault Ste. Marie Farmers Market

We hope that more markets can be added as the program continues.

A second focus of the Prescription for Health Program is to ensure that the farms receive support to help them expand and thus increase the produce available at the farmers markets. But farm debt is a huge problem across the country. Even small-scale farming requires a high debt burden that is difficult to pay back, especially with an income that varies seasonally. UPFE and the Food as Medicine team want to help alleviate the debt barrier that keeps from farms from starting or expanding.

The first ever UPFE mini grant program awarded three farms from each of the U.P.'s three regional planning districts (nine total farms) \$14,000 to increase their cold storage capacity. Funds can be used for the materials and labor to build new or additional facilities, as well as access to technical assistance for construction and HVAC. Grant recipients are also required to work with the U.P. Produce Safety Technician to ensure all the facilities and harvest systems are following best practices.

This funding will support the increase of local food production by ensuring that farms have a place to safely store produce until it can be sold. Cold storage facilities are also essential for extending the agricultural sales season by providing space for keeping storage crops that can be sold well into the winter, directly supporting the growth of the U.P. farm economy and increasing access to local food for all residents.

This year's grant recipients include Boersma Family Roots CSA and Farm, North Harvest CSA Farm, and Minnie Farms from the Western U.P.; Snowy Acres, U.P. Gourmet, and Full Plate Farm in the Central U.P.; and Jere Farms, Gordon's Produce, and Dutcher Farm from the Eastern U.P.



The Marquette Food Co-op and the U.P. Food Exchange team worked together to create the application and rubric, assemble a grant evaluation team, find our technical assistance coordinator, and onboard farms. In particular, the Western Upper Peninsula Planning District Region (WUPPDR), Bay Mills College/Waishkey Bay Farm, Fresh Systems LLC, Renegade Sheep, the Marquette County Conservation District/Michigan On-Farm Produce Safety, Portage Health Foundation, and the North Farm/Upper Peninsula Research & Extension Center have taken leading roles alongside the MFC in the grant development and administration. We also received fantastic advice from the Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) on farm grant programs. UPCAP, as the fiduciary for the grant funds, has been instrumental in processing the purchases for the farms. Many partners were instrumental in spreading the word about the grant opportunity across the Upper Peninsula. And of course, the Superior Health Foundation funding made this possible.

This list, which admittedly is a lot to take in, demonstrates how essential a collaborative network is to make change in our communities. In order to grow our local food system and increase access to healthy food for all residents, we will have to work together. We have plans to offer Prescription for Health and mini-grant programs to farmers in the future, provided we continue to find funding, because we are confident in the strength of these amazing partnerships.

We offer our thanks to all the UPFE, Food as Medicine, and farm market partners for their work.

To learn more about the Food as Medicine Program, which includes both the Prescription for Health and Cold Storage Grant Program, visit upcap.org/program/food-as-medicine or email Sarah at smonte@marquettefood.coop.

WHAT IS THE U.P. FOOD EXCHANGE?

The U.P. Food Exchange (UPFE) is a resource portal for farmers, businesses, and individuals looking to connect with and actively participate in their local food system. Community partners across the Upper Peninsula coordinate and support local food projects of all kinds, including policy work, community education, food safety, business development, farm to school programs, and more. One component of UPFE is the Online Marketplace, which is a virtual food hub.

Food hubs help local, and regional food producers sell products to wholesale, retail and institutional purchasers by providing aggregation, distribution, and marketing services. The marketplace allows farmers and food producers to market their products to multiple customers through a single online platform which maintains a live inventory. Products are aggregated so sellers can deliver orders for multiple buyers with a single invoice. Buyers are then able to pay for products from multiple farms with a single payment and receive a single order.

The UPFE Online Marketplace is managed out of the Co-op by Eli Hopp. In addition to managing the UPFE Online Marketplace

and connecting farms with institutional purchasers, Eli assists with UPFE Farm to School efforts, farm safety visits, and maintains the UPFE website, social media and the Plowshare (UPFE's biweekly newsletter).



Born in Lower Michigan, Eli has spent most of his life in the U.P. (yes, he is a troll). In addition to receiving a bachelor's degree in marketing from NMU, Eli has experience in both sales and local food through working at MFC. When he's not stuck in the Co-op basement buried in local food, he enjoys biking and fishing.

Eli would love to help you connect with UPFE, whether that is helping connect you as a buyer or farmer for purchases, adding you to our newsletter list, or helping you spread the word about something you do regarding local food. Farmers and people working in food systems are welcome to send items for us to promote in the newsletter or social media.

Learn more about UPFE at upfoodexchange.com and sign up for our newsletter at upfoodexchange.com/newsletter.



NEW ITEMS

August 2022



St. Ambrose Cellars Black Madonna

Deep in the magical halls of St. Ambrose Cellars, their mazers tend to the divine sour culture that is used to produce their mystical sour draft mead – Black Madonna! Featuring blackberry and honey, this unique mead is an International Mazer Cup Gold Medalist. For over 40 years, St. Ambrose has been raising bees and making honey products in Michigan and in Florida. When you drink mead, you're supporting the ancient and vital art of beekeeping.



Brown Cow Crème Brûlée

From the makers of cream top yogurt, Brown Cow, comes their delicious French dessert Crème Brûlée. This velvety crème brûlée is made in small batches from a simple, authentic recipe, made the old-fashioned way. Just add the caramelized sugar topping for a rich, creamy, restaurant style treat. Made with real cream, sugar and eggs.



Toby's Family Foods Ranch

At Toby's Family Foods, their mission is to make simple and delicious foods, using the fewest possible ingredients that are of the highest quality and minimally processed. Toby's classic Ranch Dressing is made with wholesome ingredients you can feel good about. Hand crafted in Oregon's Willamette Valley in small batches with local ingredients, creamy and cool Toby's Ranch makes the perfect dipper for all things spicy.



Nordic Naturals Cognition Mushroom Complex

Nordic Naturals Cognition Mushroom Complex blends adaptogenic ingredients that promote attention, memory, and general cognition. Made with U.S. grown mushrooms, it also benefits immune system health and helps regulate the body's response to physical and mental stress. Made with Lion's mane mushroom & bacopa extract.

Festival of Sail
August 12 – 14

Ore to Shore Bike Race
August 13

**Feeding America Food Distribution
Food Demo**
August 10
12 – 2pm
K.I. Sawyer

MFC Board of Directors Meeting
August 16
6– 8pm
MFC classroom

**Feeding America Food Distribution
Food Demo**
August 17
12 – 2pm
NMU Berry Events Center

St. Ambrose Cellars vendor sampling
August 18
4pm – 6pm

House Plant Sale
August 24 – 30

Local Fest
August 26 – 28
Watch for more details!



THE FRESH FEED

*This newsletter is digitally published
monthly for owners and friends of the
Marquette Food Co-op.*

Content & Editing

Andrea Pink
apink@marquettefood.coop

Design & Layout

Chad McKinney
cmckinney@marquettefood.coop

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Everyone is welcome to attend Board Meetings, held the
third Tuesday monthly at 6pm in the Co-op Classroom.
For more info: www.marquettefood.coop

Disclaimer

The views within this publication are as diverse as the 5,000+ households sharing ownership of our Co-op, and thus do not represent the store, its Board of Directors, or staff. The Co-op does not prescribe health treatments or products. We offer the extensive knowledge of our staff, and encourage you to prescribe for yourself—every individual's right.



502 W. Washington St.
Marquette, MI 49855

In-store Hours **8am - 9pm**
Grocery Pickup **11am - 6pm**

www.marquettefood.coop
Marquette, MI 49855

