THE FRESH FEED

The Marquette Food Co-op Newsletter -

March 2024



A WORD ON FOOD INFLATION



Matt Gougeon General Manager

I often see media reports about how food inflation, while slowed, continues climbing. Even during last month's Super Bowl I heard the President did a spot on how he was fed up with inflation causing shrinkflation (smaller packaged quantities of food and other products being sold at the same price as previous larger packaged amounts). I say I "heard" he had a commercial because I didn't watch the Super Bowl because I'm a Lions fan and..., well...

I'm not going to downplay or deny food inflation, but I wonder why it is such a focus in the media? No doubt that in this election year the price of food will be wielded like a sword in order cast aspersions and gather votes. Also, there's no doubt that food prices are something we see often. Heck, here at the store, pricing is a large part of what we do and is central to everything at the Co-op. But as shoppers, we likely compare food prices as often as we do gasoline prices which are prominent on signage all over town- and so it is on our minds. This is a stark difference to how economists view economic indicators when judging the state of the economy. Food prices are just a component of the consumer price index. In fact, on average, the cost of food is less than 10% of an American household budget. However, the Wall Street Journal recently reported (see sword wielding above) that food spending jumped to 11% of household spending in 2022. Still the lowest in the world even when compared to European Union countries that spend closer to 15% on food. So, there may be an outsized focus on the cost of food compared to other household costs. But I get it. The price of food can make it hard to swallow.

Here at the store, we receive hundreds of price changes on hundreds of items each week as they roll into the receiving bay. IF we're notified of those changes, it's not soon enough to do anything about it. And by "do anything about it", I mean change the shelf price. There is typically a lag time between when we receive a price change and when we can change the shelf label. This is an activity accomplished by people. It is not automatic. It is necessary yet unproductive. Two years ago, when inflation was rampant, we received thousands of price changes per week, and it was not possible to keep up. Ultimately it impacted on the financial condition of the store for several quarters in a row as it reduced our gross margin. Fewer dollars to pay for the costs of operating. In the end, we look for ways to automate the price changing process through technology. Make it less person dependent and a little more automated and far more productive, freeing up staff time to focus on other things.

For the third time, I understand food inflation is a problem. I'm not downplaying it considering that unlike gasoline prices, the price of food is not going to come down. Especially in this society where there is inequality. There's inequality in the market in which the Co-op exists, too. Consider that our large grocery competitors have contracts with giant Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) companies to stock their products. Those contracts require the CPG to pay slotting fees, pay- to- stay fees, and display placement fees to the grocer. Meaning essentially, rented shelf space, protection, and promotional costs. These fees can be upwards of \$2,000.00 per stock keeping unit (SKU, the number that identifies each product from one another). Yes, per SKU. Per store. On top of that, these CPGs often provide the labor to stock all this product. Think of the frozen pizza and potato chip truck drivers. I did this, fresh out of high school, delivering McDonald's Ice Cream in half gallons to grocery stores and 3-gallon cans to scoop ice cream shops and gas stations. The price of food bakes all these costs into the shelf price at a large grocer. Think of the potential for inequity at the point of origin in this system.

We don't do this at the Co-op. We get a volume discount on products through a couple of distributors negotiated by the National Cooperative Grocers, to which we belong. But otherwise, we have a far more direct relationship with the food and products we purchase on your behalf. We do what we can to combat inflation through promotional pricing, coupons, and through our everyday low-price brand, Field Day, to help ease your food budget. But we also purchase from MANY independent food companies who don't enjoy the benefits of scale. We purchase from underrepresented communities of people seeking a shot at shelf space. We give a leg up to the small manufacturer who doesn't have a large Consumer Packaged Goods company as support. We purchase more local food than anywhere else in the UP. We're proud of this and the adage "you get what you pay for" applies.

The cooperative business model is a beautiful thing. It considers, contains, and compels all of us.

Feel good. Shop the Co-op.

Board of Directors Election Results

Congratulations to our elected Board Members!



THANK YOU TO ALL THE CANDIDATES WHO PARTICIPATED!



of Owners

FRIDAY, MARCH 8 5:00-8:30PM

NORTHERN CENTER AT NMU

Join us for an evening of food, music, and camaraderie to celebrate another year of the Marquette Food Co-op.

All are welcome from long-time owners to shoppers who would like to learn more.

\$5 FOR OWNERS KIDS 12 & UNDER FREE

Free childcare during the business meeting provided by Discovery Central Forest School

Live Music by Cold Springs

Cash Bar

Raffle Grand Prize: \$500 gift certificate for the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge

MARQUETTE FOOD CO-OP FINANCES 2023



Tom Rulseh Board Treasurer

Nobody said it would be easy. Bringing a varied supply of quality groceries to the central U.P. certainly has its challenges. And yet, your Marquette Food Co-op has continued to make it happen. This remarkable feat is made possible through following the cooperative model with the support of committed owners, dedicated staff, reliable suppliers, and a management team that is creative, multi-talented, and conservatively progressive. The entire process also benefits from oversight by your Board of Directors. Included in our responsibility is keeping an eye on finances. So let's look at the numbers for 2023.

Keeping it simple we will focus here on some key metrics which are subject to regular review by the Board Finance Committee.

Total Sales in 2023 = \$13,609,949

This is a 7% increase over 2022. The growth is partially due to price inflation but also to an increase in the number of customers shopping at the Co-op.

Net Income in 2023 = \$102,653

This represents the amount remaining after deducting all expenses including the cost of goods sold, wages and benefits, maintenance, utilities, rent, insurance, debt reduction, professional services, advertising and taxes. Also, the Co-op board approved and disbursed a patronage dividend in the amount of \$110,946 based on purchases made in 2009 and 2010. While a 0.7% net income may seem small in comparison to more than \$13 million in total sales it is nevertheless a positive number earned in what many economists agree was a challenging business climate.

Ownership Growth!

Another positive statistic from 2023 is the addition of 308 new owners. While the Co-op remains open and available to everyone, owners help to provide ongoing financial stability through their ownership shares. Of course, owners are also eligible for Owner Rewards, Owner Coupons, discounted attendance at Co-op cooking classes, and voting privileges in guiding the Co-op's future. In short, owners are the backbone of the Co-op.

As any accountant will tell you, there is a lot more detail behind this quick look at finances. And, in addition to annual outside audits, your Board Finance Committee reviews all of that data monthly. Plus, their review includes numerous moving targets such as the ongoing challenge of providing competitive pricing along with competitive wages and benefits. Putting it all together we find that 2023 was a good year!

Looking ahead, the Marquette Food Co-op will continue to enhance operations through investments in technology, equipment, product mix and store design to improve efficiency and reduce costs. Through all of this we (and this is the collective "we" including owners, staff, management and board) remain committed to providing high quality organic and locally sourced food in a welcoming environment for our entire community. Of course, to accomplish this in a sustainable manner we need to pay attention to finances. And, as referenced above, it is a dynamic process.

Easy? Hardly. Worthwhile? You betcha!

LET'S GET READY TO CRUMBLE!

GHEESE ADDESS ATTHE CO-OP

MARCH 1 – MARCH 31

8 cheeses will go rind-to-rind in the Co-op's bracket challenge!

Find our bracket online or in the store, complete by March 14

GRAND PRIZE: \$75 MFC GIFT CARD!

SAMPLING AND VOTING IN-STORE Thursdays • 11:30am-1:30pm Fridays • 3:30pm-5:30pm

For more information, visit: www.marquettefood.coop/cheese-madness





Cheese Madness FAQ

Directions

- Fill out the Cheese Madness bracket (description of competing cheeses can be found on page 8, at in-store displays and online – URL below).
- Turn in completed bracket to the MFC cheese counter by March 14 for a chance to win.
- One entry per person. No purchase necessary. Free to enter.
- Winner will be announced April 3.

Grand Prize

• \$75 Marquette Food Co-op Gift Card

Sampling & voting schedule:

- Thursday, March 7, 11:30am-1:30pm
- French Cheeses

Saturday, March 8, 3:30-5:30pm Swiss Cheeses

Thursday, March 14, 11:30am-1:30pm Italian Cheeses

Friday, March 15, 3:30-5:30pm Irish Cheeses

Winners from these rounds will face off on

Thursday, March 21 from 11:30am-1:30pm and Friday, March 22 from 3:30-5:30pm.

Final Sampling and voting is **Friday, March 29, 3:30-5:30pm**

For more info, visit www.marquettefood.coop/cheese-madness Each week the featured cheeses will be on sale in the MFC Fresh Deals sales flyer.



CONTENDERS

FRENCH

P'TIT BASQUE

This small cylindrical sheep's milk cheese is made in the Pyrenees Mountains, which straddle France and Spain. The area is known for its cheeses, most notably Ossau Iraty. Think of P'tit Basque as this cheese's little brother. Traditionally, the cheese was made using leftover curd set aside after shepherds milked their ewes. Today, fresh ewe's milk is used, but it's still made by hand. The paste is smooth and creamy with hints of brown butter and caramel. While it's typically eaten with black cherry jam, P'tit Basque is also great for cooking, shaved on top of grilled vegetables, or eaten alongside chorizo and marcona almonds.

MIMOLETTE

With a natural rind that resembles a cantaloupe and a paste the color of a pumpkin, aged Mimolette is made by forming the curd into a ball-shape, resting it in a salt bath for a few days, and then placing it on wooden boards to age in caves. It's subtly fruity and slightly salty with notes of butterscotch and an aroma of hazelnut, with a brittle texture that resembles that of a very aged Gouda. Mimolette improves with age and is a great option for any cheeseboard, it pairs nicely with Chianti, Sangiovese, or brown ale.

ITALY

RACLETTE

Raclette is a semi-hard cow's milk cheese from the Swiss Alps & Savoy region of France. Its name means "to scrape" as it's melted & scraped onto bread or plates. Rich, creamy, & slightly nutty, Raclette pairs well with crusty bread, cured meats, vegetables, & wines like Chardonnay or Pinot Noir. Raclette is traditionally served by melting the cheese over a heat source, such as a fireplace or a special Raclette grill, and then scraping the melted layer onto individual plates or slices of bread. The melted cheese is typically accompanied by a variety of side dishes, such as cured meats, pickles, boiled or grilled vegetables, and potatoes. At home you can melt Raclette in a fondue pot, or in the oven at 200-250 degrees until it bubbles.

BLUMENKAESE

An alpine cheese covered with wildflowers from the meadows of Switzerland, this floral beauty isn't just pretty on the outside, it's packed with flavors of French onion soup and sweet carrots. The long list of flowers and herbs that decorate the rind include winter savory, dill, garlic, caraway, lovage, marjoram, mint, leek, chive, parsley, juniper berries, onion, marigolds, cornflower, roses, strawberry leaves. This unique cheese pairs beautifully with crisp white wines, fresh fruits, and crusty bread, making it an ideal choice for a charcuterie board or light appetizer.

SWISS

QUADRELLO DI BUFALA

Quadrello di Bufala is a water buffalo milk cheese produced in the Lombardy region of Italy. Made from pasteurized milk, this washed-rind cheese is aged for about 40 days. Reminiscent of Taleggio, in both its shape and rind treatment, Quadrello di Bufala commands just as much attention as its cow's milk counterpart. The sticky, semi-soft paste is sweet and grassy with an intriguing yeasty note. It's pleasantly mild but packed with the thick cream flavors typically found in water buffalo cheeses. Pair with Riesling, Malbec, Cider, or a farmhouse ale.

PECORINO ROMANO

the name of the is cheese is literally "sheep cheese of Rome". While perhaps less well known than Parmigiano Reggiano, this cheese is just as much a classic of the Italian repertoire and one of the country's oldest cheese. It's hard, crumbly, nutty, and salty; an excellent grating cheese but good for snacking too. This is the traditional cheese to use for your carbonara and spaghetti alla cacio e pepe but it's also great with potatoes and roasted vegetables or shaved over a salad. Chianti or Prosecco will pair well with this cheese but if you prefer beer try a light lager.

IRISH

TIPPERARY VINTAGE IRISH CHEDDAR

The history of this cheddar can be traced back to the early 19th century, when Irish cheesemakers began to experiment with cheddar production techniques. The county of Tipperary has a long tradition of dairy farming and cheese production, with the region's lush, green pastures providing ideal conditions for raising dairy cattle. Over time, the cheesemakers in Tipperary developed their own unique style of cheddar, which has become renowned for its depth of flavor and quality. This aged cheddar is a crowd-pleasing favorite; it pairs well with various foods and beverages, such as fruits, crackers or bread, charcuterie, Irish stouts or porters, and full-bodied red wines like Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, or Syrah. Try adding this cheddar to mashed potatoes or to top a shepherd's pie.

KERRYGOLD DUBLINER CHEDDAR

Kerrygold is an Irish company with a long history of producing high-quality dairy products. The cheese is made from the milk of grass-fed cows, which contributes to its rich, creamy flavor. The use of traditional Irish cheesemaking techniques adds to the charm and appeal of the cheese. A mature, full-flavored cheese with a natural hint of sweetness, it has elements of a cheddar, the sweet nutty tones of a Swiss, and the piquant bite of an aged parmesan. Suitable for vegetarians, Dubliner can be used on a cheese board, in sandwiches, and in a range of recipes. Particularly delicious simply cut into cubes or sliced.



LOCAL SPOTLIGHT

Learn more about the businesses that supply your favorite local products to the MFC

DEAD RIVER COFFEE ROASTERS SLOAN DORR



At Dead River Coffee, we love everything coffee! We were the first coffee roaster in the UP and roast everything in-house.

We have a variety of beans from all over the world so we are confident that we can find you a bean you're going to enjoy.



At our shop, we have created a safe space for people to come and enjoy a cup of coffee, tea, or baked goods.

It's a place to connect with your fellow artist or coffee lover.

15% OFF ALL DEAD RIVER COFFEE ROASTERS PRODUCTS AT THE MFC FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH.

Learn more about this business and their products at deadrivercoffee.com, give the staff a call at 906-226-2112, or stop by the shop located at 119 W. Baraga Ave, Marquette. Dead River would love to hear from you!

COUPONS THE MARQUETTE FOOD CO-OP OWNER COUPON PROGRAM

Every month, the Marquette Food Co-op will be offering digital coupons for owners. These coupons are automatically added to your account – no need to bring in a coupon or try to scan something from your phone. All you need to do is ask to use your coupon when purchasing your groceries in-store or online.

MARCH OWNER COUPONS Valid until March 31, 2024

owner

50¢ Off Field Day Organic Classic Unsweetened Coconut Milk

13.5 fl oz Limit three packages per coupon. One coupon per owner account. While supplies last.



25¢ Off Field Day Organic **Garbanzo Beans**

15 oz Limit three packages per coupon. One coupon per owner account. While supplies last.



50¢ Off Field Day Organic **Chicken Broth**

32 fl oz Limit three per coupon. One coupon per owner account. While supplies last.





GOAN CHICKEN & POTATO SOUP

Serves 6-8 | recipe from Jeanette Turner

If you're looking for an easy dinner, this recipe is for you. For a really affordable meal, or to make this vegan, you can replace the chicken with one 15oz. can of garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained. Bonus – this month all owners have coupons for canned chickpeas and coconut milk available on their accounts. If you don't have black mustard seeds, sub with yellow mustard seeds. You can also add a second chili pepper if you prefer a hotter soup.

- 2 T coconut oil
- 2 t black mustard seeds
- 1 onion, diced
- 1-2 red chili peppers, seeded and finely chopped
- 1 lb boneless skinless chicken breast or thigh, cut into bite size pieces
- 3 C water
- 1 lb potatoes, peeled and cubed

- ¹⁄₂ t turmeric
- 1 t curry powder
- 1 t salt
- 1 14-oz can coconut milk
- 1 5-oz bag baby spinach
- 1 t lemon juice
- cilantro leaves

Add the mustard seeds, cover, and cook over medium heat until they pop, around 1 minute.

Add the onion and chili peppers, and sauté about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add the chicken and continue cooking for 5 more minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add the water, potatoes, turmeric, curry powder, and salt. Bring the soup to boil. Simmer 15 minutes. When the potatoes are soft, mash some of them against the side of the pot to thicken the soup.

Add the coconut milk, spinach, lemon juice, and chickpeas if using those. Bring to boil and cook 1 minute, until the spinach wilts. Adjust for salt. Serve garnished with cilantro leaves.

St Patrick's Day Lunch Special

SUNDAY, MARCH 17^{TH}

CABBAGE ROLLSVSCALLOPED POTATOESVPOTATO LEEK STEWVBANGERS & MASH SKILLETVCORNED BEEFEER CHEESE CASSEROLETURKEY REUBENSV

V = Vegan

marquette food co-op

NEWITENS March 2024

Mozzarella Shreds & Mild Cheddar Slices

Green Valley Creamery

There are an estimated 120 million people with lactose sensitivity, and Green Valley Creamery wants to make sure that they can enjoy high quality dairy products without discomfort. The entire line of 30 Green Valley products is lactose-free, delicious, minimally processed and FODMAP Friendly certified. The majority of their products are produced at the creamery located in Sebastopol, California. The creamery is powered by 92% renewable energy from solar, wind, and geothermal sources. They also operate an extensive water-saving program that uses grey water to irrigate neighboring fields.



Wunder Eggs

Crafty Counter

The first ever fully vegan, plantbased hard boiled "egg" is new to the MFC shelves. It's hard to believe, but the product list is simple, straight-forward and all real food. This a great new option for vegans who have missed hard boiled eggs.



Taqueria Mix Pickled Planet

Crunchy, spicy, and tangy, taqueria pickles are hard to find in the U.P. but are amazing with any taco, enchilada or frankly, just about any food! They are a great snack with an ice cold lager. Now, not only does the Co-op carry a taqueria pickle, but it's a fermented pickle full of probiotics from a company dedicated to health. Pickled Planet uses 100% organic ingredients bought directly from farms, works to divert waste from landfills in their processes, and strives to provide a living wage to employees.



Sencha Shot

Ito En is company dedicated to preserving the health benefits and flavor integrity of the tea harvest, whether sold in a local specialty shop or packaged for sale far away. Brewed from premium Japanese loose tea leaves, Sencha Shot uses an advanced, deeper brewing method that yields both a high content of natural catechins and a more fullbodied green tea taste. It is unsweetened with no calories.



Chocolate Sauce Sunday Night Classic

This is the real deal chocolate ganache in a jar. Sunday night doesn't use fillers like corn syrup or palm oil. There's also no artificial flavors, preservatives, or nuts used in the process. Rich and decadent, this can be used as a topping for ice cream or cake, a dip, or in recipes. You can check out some fun ideas at https://sundaynightfoods.com/pages/recipes.



New Cards

from Cécile Berrubé

Cécile Berrubé is a French illustrator and painter based in Scotland. She is greatly inspired by animals, nature and cozy little homes. When she is not making art in her studio, she enjoys going on small adventures to observe the natural world around. Cécile's work is driven by the desire to capture little moments of joy. Through her stationery, she hopes to bring a bit of magic and tenderness into this world. All products are printed locally in the UK and are as eco friendly as possible, using recycled paper, envelopes and biodegradable sleeves.

All your favorite brands Spring into great savings!

Look for over 65 coupons throughout the store.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Cheese Madness begins! March 1

Soups, Stocks, & Winter Salads from the Northwoods Test Kitchen March 5 FULL – Join the waitlist

Cheese Madness French Cheese Sampling & Voting March 7 • 11:30am-1:30pm

Cheese Madness Swiss Cheese Sampling & Voting March 8 • 3:30-5:30pm

Annual Meeting of Owners March 8 • 5:00-8:30pm

Spread Goodness Day March 8 Soups, Stocks, & Winter Salads from the Northwoods Test Kitchen March 12 FULL – Join the waitlist

> St. Patrick's Day Fresh Deals Sale March 13-19

St. Patrick's Day Hot Bar March 17 • 11am until sold out

Cheese Madness Italian Cheese Sampling & Voting March 14 • 11:30am-1:30pm

Cheese Madness Irish Cheese Sampling & Voting March 15 • 3:30-5:30pm

MARCH 2024

MFC Board of Directors Meeting March 19 • 6-8pm

Cheese Madness First Round Winning Cheese Sampling & Voting March 21 • 11:30am-1:30pm

Cheese Madness Second Round Winning Cheese Sampling & Voting March 22 • 3:30-5:30pm

Easter Fresh Deals Sale March 27-April 2

Cheese Madness Championship Match Sampling & Voting March 29 • 3:30-5:30pm

FRESH FEED

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

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Board of Directors

Michelle Augustyn PRESIDENT Nathan Frischkorn VICE PRESIDENT Tom Rulseh SECRETARY Richard Kochis TREASURER Mary Pat Linck Michael Dewar Emmanuel Sally Mary Kramer-Rabine

Matt Gougeon General MANAGER

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.



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502 W. Washington St. Marquette, MI 49855 In-store Hours 8am - 9pm Grocery Pickup 11am - 6pm www.marquettefood.coop Marquette, MI 49855