



# WELL FED

**Newsletter for Wellspring Farm CSA**

[www.wellspringcsa.com](http://www.wellspringcsa.com)

**August 28, 2006**

## **Announcement:**

Labor Day the farm is closed. The **regular Monday CSA pick-up is changed to Tuesday, September 5.** Please let us know if you need to make alternative pick-up arrangements.



**Josh Pitts** picks up his produce by bike and takes it back home to Montpelier.

## **Eating Local**

### **One family's adventure with the August localvore challenge**

*by CSA member Dana Dwinell Yardley*

August in Vermont is a great time for food. Farmer's markets are bustling and CSAs (including our own Wellspring) are in full swing. Most of us are enjoying fresh berries and finding ourselves overloaded with zucchinis and tomatoes.

Some Vermonters are paying more attention than usual to their food this August, though. Those of us who are taking the localvore challenge are learning what it really means to eat locally—for a day, a week, or a month. "Local" is defined as foods grown within a 100-mile radius of where you live, which, for us, includes all of Vermont, and some of New Hampshire, New York, and Quebec.

My family and I have taken the challenge for the entire month of August. We are finding new ways to cook creatively, and discovering how delicious local food is (amazing... a local carrot tastes like a carrot ought to taste!). We are also challenged, true to the name of what we're doing—challenged by missing favorite dishes, challenged by what to eat away from home, challenged by finding local sources for staple foods.

You may say, "That's cool, but I already eat locally. I don't need to do that." That's what I thought—I ate pretty local before I took the challenge, myself. It's something else to eat *entirely* local, though. It's definitely a learning experience, as well as a lot of fun.

Certain foods are proving easier to come by than others. Vegetables are no problem—I come home from working at Wellspring on Thursdays with a happily heaping basket of whatever's ripe—and there are plenty of local sources for meat, eggs, and dairy products, as well as maple syrup and honey. Other foodstuffs are trickier, but possible. From our family's experiences, some suggestions...

**To start, wildcards:** We have chosen to have "wildcards" for the month, foods that are not local, but are indispensable for us. We all get the Marco Polo card—salt, pepper, spices, baking powder, and baking soda. My mother, Jane, and I have also chosen to have olive oil and almond flour—finely ground almonds that can be used for baking, a staple for both of us who can't eat wheat. Jane has chosen to have coffee as well. Sky, my father, has no other wildcards, although he is flexible about olive oil.

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**Fruit:** We have been eagerly anticipating the first apples of the season, and have only recently found Champlain Valley Orchard's tart Paula Reds—at Shaw's in Montpelier (who knew they were purveyors of local food?!). In early August, we made a trip to Fruitlands in Marshfield to pick blueberries and raspberries, which we then froze. More berries can be found in wild patches (if you know where to look), and Ellie's Farm Market in Northfield promises to have apples soon.

**Condiments:** This is one of those grocery categories that often leaves people scratching their heads when it comes to eating locally—that jam may be made in Vermont, but you can bet the sugar wasn't grown here. The answer is to make your own condiments. We have made sweet mustard, fresh tomato ketchup, salad dressing, salsa, and spicy hot sauce from Wellspring's hot peppers! Many condiment recipes use vinegar, which you can get locally—Hunger Mountain Coop carries Honest-to-Goodness cider vinegar, made in Washington, VT from Vermont apples.

**Sweet treats:** Again, the trick is to make it from scratch. It's easy to bake with maple syrup and honey. We also make our own yogurt in a yogurt maker from local milk, and then make berry-honey frozen yogurt!

**Beverages:** I don't drink caffeinated beverages or alcohol, so this one is easy for me! There is a selection of Vermont wines available, which my parents have been trying. As for other beverages, we have been making mint tea from our own mint, and I've enjoyed some local cider as well.

**Grains and Beans:** This one is the trickiest of all, in my opinion. You don't need grains at every meal, though—we have been eating less of a grain-based diet and more vegetables, eggs, cheese, and meat, which works well for us. When the need for starch presents itself, we bake with potatoes, cornmeal and Jacob Cattle beans from Butterworks Farm in Westfield, VT, and spelt flour grown and milled by Champlain Valley Milling in New York State. The spelt comes from a little farther away than 100 miles, but it's local enough for me (since I'm wheat-intolerant). Randy George at Red Hen is making a special Localvore Loaf during the month of August for folks taking the challenge, which you special-order from him. Sky got a loaf and pronounced it delicious.

Perhaps the best part of the localvore challenge is trying new things in community with other local eaters. On Tuesday, August 15, 10-15 people gathered at Cate Farm in a field of wheat and oats as dusk fell. Richard Wiswall explained how to gather and bundle the grains, and we all started enthusiastically harvesting. It was a delightful sight—people with huge smiles on their faces, carrying armloads of wheat to their cars to thresh at home, laughing and chatting with fellow harvesters in the field in the evening light. We were learning new things about where our food comes from, but also engaging in an activity that is millennia old. I felt a great sense of connection—to my neighbors, to the land, and to farmers and homesteaders throughout history.

I highly recommend becoming a localvore sometime this August or September (when the Mad River Valley localvores hold their challenge). You will learn new things, forge new connections, and change your outlook on food for a lifetime.

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### **Homemade Tabasco Sauce**

1 pint Wellspring hot peppers (use your favorite variety, or a mix)  
salt  
about 1 cup vinegar (we used white and called it a wildcard, but you can use cider, too)

Lay peppers on a cookie sheet and bake in a 425 degree oven until peppers are blistered (this will be a different amount of time depending on the size of the pepper). Remove stems and seeds. Puree peppers in blender with salt and vinegar to taste. More vinegar will make a traditional watery Tabasco, less vinegar will make a thicker salsa-like sauce. Refrigerate (will keep for a long while in the fridge).

For more local recipes, feel free to contact Dana Dwinell-Yardley at [mountaingirl@vtlink.net](mailto:mountaingirl@vtlink.net).