



AUGUST 2005

Everyone can Shop! Anyone can Join!

Bluff Country Co-op

Monthly Newsletter

Mission Statement

We strive to offer high quality natural foods at affordable prices to members and customers in the Winona area and work to provide a sense of community for citizens committed to building a stronger, and more sustainable, local culture.

Co-op Principles

We operate according to the Internationally Accepted Cooperative Principles: open membership; one member, one vote; limited return on investment; earnings distributed according to patronage; continuous education about cooperatives; cooperation among cooperatives, and concern for community.

We serve our members and the Winona Community by offering the best available natural and high quality foods at affordable prices. We support sustainable, organic and local agriculture.

We cultivate member, board and worker participation and cooperation in all endeavors of our cooperative. We maintain and aim at a high level of member sales and member ownership to ensure the social and economic well-being of our organization. We educate members and our community about cooperative principles and effective cooperative citizenship.

acing the season

Bob Copeland general manager

True summer weather finally graced us, with periods of high heat and humidity and little rain relief settling in long before the season's official Dog Days. Such tropical conditions usually affect the rhythm and flow of business at the co-op. Vacation schedules, extreme temperatures and changing eating patterns cyclically slow our sales tempo, but we see nothing like the dead-calm doldrums that signaled summer in our old store.

June sales were respectable at \$110,500, a 4.9% increase over that month's volume last year. Our pace by mid-July was just 1.4% ahead of last year. A member suggested to me recently that misperceptions about the co-op's financial health were related to my emphasis on sales growth in newsletter reports. "You need to find a better measure of success," he said. The good news is that in our third fiscal quarter, ending in May, our business was successful by any measure. We achieved an excellent gross margin, held expenses down and earned our healthiest profit in years, bring our year-to-date net profit to two per cent of sales. This resulted in a stable cash flow and has helped us to stay on schedule with repayment of member loans.

We will pay back more than \$13,500 to member lenders in the next five months. Thanks to the members who donated their \$2,000 loan that had been scheduled for payment in July, and to the member who postponed her \$1,400 payoff from this month to August 2006.

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The depth of BCC members' identification with their co-op was evident

in the many expressions of concern, outrage and violation that we heard in the wake of June's theft from the store. On June 18, the day after our successful Summer Samples Day, \$1,806 in cash was stolen from the co-op's safe. An internal and a police investigation have not solved the crime.

The co-op has put in place more extensive security measures and has arranged for preventive training. Although our insurance company replaced all of the funds minus a \$100 deductible, the pain and uncertainty caused by the unprecedented incident linger.

We apologize to our members for our security lapse and we pledge to be more professional and vigilant with their resources, while maintaining a comfortable and friendly shopping environment.

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The second season of the Great River Shakespeare Festival was a delightful triumph and BCC and its members were happy to be a part of its success. Festival directors invested in a co-op membership during the first season and many GRSF personnel have been regular and appreciative shoppers in our store.

The co-op is a business sponsor of the festival and we worked with organizers to provide healthy snacks for their concession stand. Thanks to member organizer Debi Niebuhr and to all members who contributed to the feast that BCC provided for the GRSF company on July 23. We look forward to more cooperation and more great theater in 2006.

What we play is life.

Louis Armstrong
(1900-1971)

Membership Benefits

Ownership

Participate in building a business that meets your needs.

Save Money

Get special discounts and ordering privileges.

Information

Receive the Co-op newsletter filled with nutrition and health tips, recipes, and information about sales, services and new products.

Voting Power

Vote on all major decisions at annual membership meetings and elect the new board of directors

Seasonal Potlucks

Meet fellow members, share tasty food, and become part of a diverse community

Support Local Farmers, Growers and Suppliers

We sell locally grown vegetables and meat and offer the largest selection of organic produce in Winona

Membership investment is \$125 per household. Your stock will be refunded should you move or wish to discontinue your membership.

Ask any one of our staff members for a membership application and join today!

Board of Directors

President **Mike McMullin**

mocmyc@hbci.com

Vice-President **Ramona Redig**

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Secretary **Emilie Falc**

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Treasurer **Scott Miller**

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Assistant Secretary **Heather Secrist Smith**

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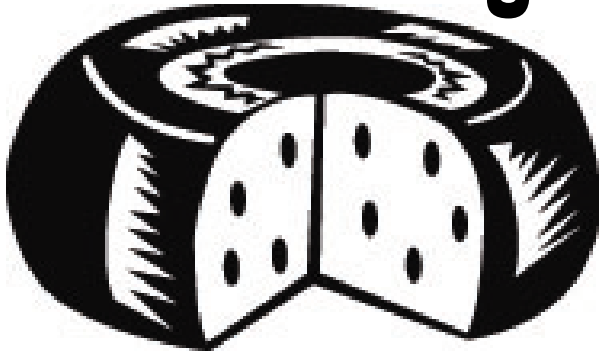
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Big Cheese



Golden Ridge Cheese Cooperative

Samuel Pixley refrigerated/frozen/bakery manager

Golden Ridge Cheese Cooperative is a new company owned by a group of Amish farmers from NE Iowa and SE Minnesota, with the cheese plant located in Cresco, IA. The farmers involved with the cooperative have a long tradition of producing high quality milk on small family farms and are known for their land stewardship and utilization of sustainable agriculture methods. They milk their cows by hand the old-fashioned way and ship the milk in traditional milk cans to the cheese plant. There, non-Amish workers process it into fantastic Schwarz und Weifs blue cheese. Such an enterprise represents a convergence of cultures coming together for the good of all, as 40 invested Amish farmers provide employment for 20 non-Amish workers.

The natural rind blue cheese that we offer here at Bluff Country Co-op from Golden Ridge is an excellent example of what is good about the emerging local Slow Food movement. To make a cheese of this quality requires dedication from the farmers and the cheesemakers and is counter to the modern philosophy of maximum yield and rapid aging techniques employed in many large cheese-making facilities. If you have not yet tried this cheese, I cannot recommend it enough!

Even those with non-blue cheese palates agree that Schwarz und Weifs blues are something special. **Enjoy!**

A GMO PRIMER: HOW TO SAVE A MONARCH BUTTERFLY

Genetically engineered food is food containing genetically modified organisms (GMO) and is often referred to as gene-spliced or "Frankenfood." It results from the manipulation or transfer of genetic material from one life form to another.

For example, one company has gene-spliced a bacterium to potatoes, cotton and corn in order to kill insect pests. (It is this GMO corn pollen that is killing harmless Monarch Butterflies.) In another case a gene has been inserted into corn and soybeans so they will not die when sprayed with a certain weed killer. The most notorious example to date is that of the "Terminator" gene which scientists have invented and which will render a farmer's crop sterile at harvest so that the farmer will have to purchase new seed every year thereby destroying the centuries old tradition of farmers saving their own seed. This is a particular threat to the one-quarter of the world's population that are unable to afford to purchase new seed.

GMOs represent unprecedented threats to world food security, ecological catastrophe from the unrecallable release into the environment of genetic pollution from

GMO pollen, and uncertain health effects for people and animals that consume GMO food and feed.

The labeling of genetically engineered food is required in grocery stores and restaurants in Europe. Bowing to biotech industry pressure, the US government does not require GMO food to be labeled as genetically engineered. Americans have been kept in the dark about the fact that GMO food has been in the food pipeline for the past several years. It is a fact that GMOs and their derivatives today are ingredients in two-thirds to three-quarters of all items on the grocery store shelves in the United States.

Fortunately, there is the Organic alternative. GMOs are specifically and completely prohibited from all organic production. By purchasing Certified Organic food you will be providing your family with GMO-free food you can trust while at the same time supporting with your food dollar the bright future of thriving organic farming. Contrast this to the Orwellian future of a GMO food supply controlled by a handful of multinational corporations. The future is yours to choose.



Wellness

	Size	Regular Price	Save	Sale
BCC				
Glucosamine Chondroitin 500/400 mg.	90 caps	\$22.25	20%	\$17.79
L-Lysine 500 mg.	50 caps	\$6.45	20%	\$5.15
	100 caps	\$10.99	20%	\$8.79
Nature's Finest Elk Antler (velvet stage) 250 mg.	60 caps	\$25.45	20%	\$19.99
RenewLife Fish Smart Ultra molecularly distilled enteric coated w/ lipase enzyme	45 gels	\$19.99	15%	\$16.99
Organic Triple Fiber oat bran (gluten free), acacia gum, flax seed	12 oz.	\$12.99	15%	\$10.99
Pure Essence Labs Aller Free enzymes to minimize allergic response	45 v-caps	\$14.99	15%	\$12.75
Green Pharmaceuticals Snore Stop	80 tabs	\$16.99	20%	\$13.59
	40 tabs	\$10.99	30%	\$7.69

Frozen

	Size	Regular Price	Save	Sale
 Applegate Farms Organic Turkey Hot Dogs	12 oz.	\$4.39	20%	\$3.49
Boca Foods Garden Veggie Burger	10 oz.	\$4.59	15%	\$3.89
Chik'n Pattie	10 oz.	\$4.59	15%	\$3.89
 Eco Fish Wild Alaskan Halibut		\$21.99/lb.	25%	\$16.49/lb.
 Organic Valley Uncured Beef Hot Dogs	10 oz.	\$6.99	20%	\$5.59
 Nature's Bakery Veggie Burgers	12 oz.	\$5.19	20%	\$4.15
Purely Decadent Frozen Desserts	pint	\$3.75	15%	\$3.19
Rudi's Organic Whole Spelt Tortillas	12 oz.	\$3.49	15%	\$2.95



Bakery



	Size	Regular Price	Save	Sale
French Meadow Organic Bagels sprouted ezeziel	17 oz.	\$3.95	15%	\$3.35
sprouted cinnamon raisin	17 oz.	\$4.49	15%	\$3.79
Rudi's Artisan Breads multi-grain, country french, rosemary	16 oz.	\$4.39	15%	\$3.69

Household

	Size	Regular Price	Save	Sale
Earth Friendly Products Dishmate Dish Detergent almond, grapefruit, lavender, pear	25 oz.	\$4.09	20%	\$3.25
Country Save Laundry Detergent	100 oz. 50 loads	\$13.45	20%	\$10.75
7th Generation Auto Dishwasher Liquid lemon, apple	45 oz.	\$5.79	20%	\$4.59
Earth Friendly Products Stain & Odor Remover biodegradable	22 oz.	\$6.75	20%	\$5.39

Refrigerated

	Size	Regular Price	Save	Sale
Brown Cow Whole Milk Yogurt maple	32 oz.	\$4.19	15%	\$3.55
vanilla	32 oz.	\$4.19	15%	\$3.55
plain	32 oz.	\$3.19	15%	\$2.69
 Cascade Fresh Fat Free Yogurt vanilla	32 oz.	\$2.99	20%	\$2.39
strawberry	32 oz.	\$2.99	20%	\$2.39
plain	32 oz.	\$2.59	20%	\$1.99
Earth Balance Buttery Spread	16 oz.	\$3.29	15%	\$2.79
 Organic Valley Cow's Milk Feta Cheese	8 oz.	\$4.49	20%	\$3.59
Soy Garden Buttery Spread	16 oz.	\$3.29	15%	\$2.79
Stonyfield Farm Lowfat Yogurt Smoothies peach, raspberry, strawberry, wild berry	10 oz.	\$1.69	15%	\$1.39

Tofutti Better Than Cream Cheese	8 oz.	\$3.19	20%	\$2.55
 Sour Supreme	12 oz.	\$2.69	20%	\$2.15
 Silk Soy milk plain, chocolate, vanilla	32 oz.	\$2.09	15%	\$1.75
Silk Cultured Soy Yogurt	6 oz.	99¢	15%	85¢

Bulk Foods

	Size	Regular Price	Save	Sale
Neptune's Dream Pasta		\$3.49/lb.	10%	\$3.09/lb.
Oriental Rice Snack Mix Breadshop		\$3.19/lb.	10%	\$2.85/lb.
Animal Cookies vanilla		\$3.49/lb.	15%	\$2.95/lb.
Honey Gone Nuts Granola		\$2.65/lb.	15%	\$2.25/lb.
Raspberry Granola		\$2.89/lb.	15%	\$2.45/lb.
New England Natural Bakers Maple Pecan Granola		\$2.99/lb.	15%	\$2.49/lb.
Nature's Path Soy Plus Granola		\$3.55/lb.	15%	\$2.99/lb.
Equal Exchange Organic Midnight Sun Coffee		\$9.15/lb.	\$1/lb.	\$8.15/lb.

Grocery

	Size	Regular Price	Save	Sale
Organic Baby Entire Stock Baby Food Jars	4 oz.	85¢	15%	72¢
Annie's Homegrown Totally Natural Mac & Cheese alfredo, arthur, white cheddar bunny w/ yummy cheese, wisconsin aged cheddar	6 oz. & 7 oz.	1.99	25%	\$1.49
Westsoy Low Fat Soymilk plain, vanilla	32 oz.	\$1.89	15%	\$1.59
Rice Beverage plain, vanilla	32 oz.	\$1.89	15%	\$1.59
CLOSE OUT				
Celebration Herbals All Celebration Teas				35% off

Body Care

	Size	Regular Price	Save	Sale
Alba Suncare Products	4 oz.	\$7.95-\$8.95	25%	\$5.95-\$6.69
Jason Temptations Lip Gloss		\$5.75	25%	\$4.29
Lavender Shampoo & Conditioner	16 oz.	\$6.99	20%	\$5.59
Kiss My Face Olive Bar Soaps	4 oz.-8 oz.	\$1.99-\$2.99	15%	\$1.69-\$2.49
Weleda New! Birch Cellulite oil	3.4 oz.	\$18.99	20%	\$15.19

board election time!

Bob Copeland general manager

Every late summer the discussion at meetings of BCC's board of directors turns to planning the fall general membership meeting ("How can we get a quorum?") and recruiting members to fill the positions of outgoing directors ("Who will volunteer?"). So, what does the board of directors do, anyway?

Democratic governance is one of the hallmarks, the fundamental principles, of a cooperative. Any co-op member has the right to stand for election by his/her peers as a policy maker to help define the co-op's vision and direction, and to represent the general membership in fulfilling those functions.

The power of cooperation often is demonstrated in impressive ways by the synergy of the varied talents and perspectives pooled in common cause by board members, co-op staff and members. Witness our successful relocation nearly five years ago.

Those ideals sound great, you may say, but if I'm elected to the board, what would I actually have to do? Good question. Bluff Country's board has adopted the Policy Governance framework, which explicitly defines expectations and limitations on co-op management. The board charges management to oversee and report on store operations while the directors take up the larger questions of policy, vision, planning for the future. In other words, the members choose directors to represent them; the directors set policy and hire a general manager to run the store, and the general manager hires a staff to help operate the business to meet the members' needs.

In an egalitarian power cycle, co-op workers deal with the day-to-day details of running the members' business while the board, with ears always attuned to member input, make certain that policies are followed and chart the course for the whole enterprise.

Cooperative law expert Kathryn Sedo has observed that directors of co-ops have the same legal responsibilities as board members of any other business, but that they also have a few unique duties. She writes, "Cooperatives are member organizations, unlike most other businesses. This places a unique responsibility on cooperative directors to be sensitive to the needs of members and balance their conflicting interests. Therefore, director decisions are based not only on what is most profitable, but also on what the needs of the members are. One important function of the cooperative board is to educate members about their organization. Effective member control is impossible without information. It is the duty of the directors to provide the membership with that information."

The cooperative model is powerful in times of harmony, but it also provides safeguards and checks and balances when conflicts arise. In a recent issue of *Cooperative Grocer* magazine, the general manager of a British Columbia co-op described a harrowing nine-month period that culminated in the removal of the board president for abuse of power. Aside from the legal lesson of how to remove a director, wrote Deirdre Lang, "we also learned a lot about how much we all—members, board and staff—depend on each other. The membership depends on the board to ensure the members' best interest, the management and staff depend on the membership for their livelihoods, and the board depends on the management and staff to carry out the operations of the store. We are all here to serve each other and to keep our co-op moving forward."

If you'd like to help keep BCC moving forward by serving on the board, please get in touch. The entire board meets once a month. Two committees, short-range and long-range, currently are functioning, so you could count on two meetings monthly.

Can you think of ways our co-op could improve? Join the discussion! We'd love to get your ideas into the mix.

Local supplement: elk velvet antler benefits and evidence

Emily Copeland wellness manager

At this active and warm time of year, we probably wouldn't want to wear velvet, but we might want to consume a particularly beneficial type of "velvet" in the form of a nutritional supplement. The BCC Wellness Department features local producer Jay Pronschinske's Elk Velvet Antler in capsule form.

"Velvet antler" is a nutritional food supplement made from the inner core of an elk's antler in the velvet stage of growth. Velvet antler is harvested annually from naturally farmed elk livestock. Male elk grow and naturally shed a set of antlers every year. When elk antlers are "in velvet", it is the most "nutrient abundant" phase of the antlers incredibly prolific growth cycle. It is at this time every spring that breeders of elk collect the velvet antler under humane and hygienic supervision. This process is not harmful to the elk, and the velvet antler is an annually regenerative, sustainable resource. Once the antler is removed, it is then processed, analyzed at a laboratory and encapsulated for consumer use.

Elk have the unique ability to *rapidly* heal their broken bones, torn muscles and severed tendons. It is these properties that, in fact, produce the antlers annually. Active ingredients found in velvet antler include these minerals: calcium, copper, iron, manganese, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, sulfur and zinc; as well as these glycosaminoglycans (GAGs): hyaluronic acid, chondroitin, sulfate, glucosamine sulfate, prostaglandins, erythropoietin, phospholipids and glycosphingolipids; the growth hormones and growth factors: IGF-1 and EGF; all essential fatty acids including omega 3 and 6; and collagen, a major structural component of bones, tendons, ligaments and cartilage; and protein including fourteen essential and non-essential amino acids. This combination of highly beneficial nutrients available in velvet antler provides a synergistic effect. The result of combining efforts of many nutrients shows a much greater gain than the effort of a single nutrient alone.

Anecdotal evidence and research both suggest that velvet antler is an effective anti-inflammatory agent in the treatment of arthritis symptoms and other inflammatory disorders. People taken velvet antler also reported increased energy and stamina, mental alertness, sex drive, and a decrease in blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Other common reports include an increase in heart

strength and volume of blood pumped, a stronger immune system and accelerated healing.

Clinical studies on velvet antler come from many parts of the world. For example, research was done in Russia on athletes in training using various anabolic agents known to produce performance enhancing effects. The studies using velvet antler showed that kayakers, weight-lifters, body builders and power-lifters all increased both muscular and nerve strength and improved overall performance. They also accelerated the restorative process (quicker recovery) of their bodies after intensive activity.

Many of the nutrients found in velvet antler are important for rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis and osteoporosis sufferers, as is demonstrated by the following study by researcher Dr. Craig Broeder:

A recent study of American weight-lifters taking velvet antler supplements showed positive results. The subjects in the Benedictine University were 34 men from 18 to 35 years of age. Each had at least four years of weight lifting experience.

In this double-blind study, the experimental group was given 1,350 mg of velvet antler powder twice a day while the placebo group was given an inert substance. Before and immediately after the ten-week experiment, the subjects were put through a series of tests and measurements.

At the end of the research trial, the weight lifters that had been taking the velvet antler had:

- less fat on their torsos
- lower LDL cholesterol levels
- greater aerobic capacity
- less muscle damage
- greater strength
- greater stamina

The researchers found that by the end of the trial, the athletes on velvet antler had reduced the trunk to limb fat ratio from 104.7 to 101.0. There was no measured effect on weight or body mass indices. The significance of this, according to Dr. Craig Broeder, the lead researcher, lies in the influence of fat deposition patterns on the risk of heart disease. Increased fat around the trunk is a major cardiovascular risk factor.

The group taking velvet antler also showed a significant decline in LDL cholesterol

concentrations by 12.2 percent. As a result, the LDL/HDL (good/bad cholesterol) ratio also declined 8.4 percent. This would reduce the group's risk of cardiovascular disease. There was also some evidence that the velvet antler was effective in lowering blood pressure. There were no negative effects observed for the liver and kidney enzyme markers.

In terms of muscle strength, the group taking the velvet antler showed a significant improvement in bench press (4.2 percent) and squat exercise (9.9 percent) performance. The placebo group showed no change.

The peak power of the velvet antler group reduced only 0.5 percent during the anaerobic trials, compared with 3.2 percent reduction in the placebos. Their average power reduced by 2.1 percent compared with 5 percent. They were also about 60 percent quicker in reaching peak power.

A particularly interesting result was the effect of velvet antler on aerobic capacity. In absolute terms and relative to body weight, it increased significantly—9.8 percent and 9.4 percent respectively. There was no change in the placebo group. Additionally, during a maximal treadmill test, most subjects in the velvet antler group had a reduced heart response of 5 to 8 beats per minute.

Other benefits of velvet antler were reduced muscle damage and a dramatic improvement in the rate of repair of any muscle damage that did occur. Muscle damage was measured by blood levels of creatine kinase (CK). CK is an enzyme

found in cells which helps them source energy during exercise. During an aerobic exercise, some muscle cells break open and their contents find their way into the bloodstream. A rise in CK levels in the blood indicates that muscle damage has occurred, or is occurring. In the velvet antler group, CK levels were 25 percent lower than the baseline, compared with 11 percent below the baseline.

A side finding of this study was that velvet antler may have a potential for the prevention of osteoporosis. The placebo group appeared to lose bone density during the study, which indicated they were over-training. The experimental group retained bone density.

Dr. Broeder says that all the results are very significant differences, especially for athletes who were already extremely fit and training at a high level. Although it was a double-blind study, the ones taking velvet antler knew within two or three weeks that they were taking something really different.

According to Dr. Broeder, more studies are needed to confirm these benefits in athletes and average adults. He is particularly interested in seeing whether velvet antler could help reduce weight and risks of cardiovascular diseases among middle-aged “couch potatoes” and non-athletes. (Source: NZ The Deer Farmer—April 2004)

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Address service Requested

H o u r s o f B u s i n e s s

Monday - Wednesday 8:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Thursday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Saturday 8:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Sunday 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.