



Views from Bluff Country

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Board Meeting

May 4th

6:30 p.m. at BCC

"Why not go out on a limb? That's where the fruit is."

Will Rogers

Season of Seeds

Have you planted anything yet? Spring's early teases can keep us guessing, but the air is sweet with blossoms and we've reached the final month of home heating, so why not answer the ripe earth's call and put some seeds in the ground. Such investment outweighs the risk, yielding perhaps an early harvest or, at worst, an unrequited show of hope and faith.

Since the co-op's relocation in the fall of 2000, the spring fiscal quarter of March-May has been our busiest, a status that in our old store always was claimed by the quarter that included the winter holidays. Spring sales seem to be maintaining that pace, surpassing last year's volume by 17.3% at this writing.

Thanks to the crew of cooperative directors, members and staff who helped with our successful exhibit and food vending at last month's Earth Day Festival.

Check out our display featuring shade-grown coffee at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department's Migratory Bird Day May 15th at the Trempealeau Wildlife Refuge. This family event includes nature walks and educational demonstrations. We'll furnish information about how shade-grown coffee helps to preserve migratory bird habitat.

Another, earlier, date to mark on your calendar is our Spring Samples Day, Friday, May 7th. We'll express our appreciation of our customers with tasty free food, live

music and door prizes. Please join us for the fun.

Our newsletter discussions of contemplated changes of our member discount policy have drawn responses from a few members. All respondents support eliminating the current gratuitous discount of 2% that is given to all members for all purchases. During our quarter that concluded in February, those discounts totaled \$3,738, or 1.2% of our gross sales.

Some members have expressed support for a system (common among co-ops in our region) that extends a higher discount to be used for a member's choice of one shopping trip each month.

One member proposed a once-a-month discount of 7% and theorized that such a system would be a net money-maker for the co-op. What do you think? Are you willing to reduce your discount so that the co-op can move more quickly toward consistent profitability?

BCC needs to be profitable to keep meeting its members' needs, to retire its debts, especially member loans, and to save for future contingencies.

Member economic participation is one of the fundamental principles of cooperatives. Please join the discussion so that your voice can help craft our economic policies.

Bob Copeland, General Manager

World Fair Trade Day - May 8th

The news media remind us steadily of what's wrong with the global economy. We hear about sweatshops, the ubiquity of child labor, the imprisonment, and even murder, of union leaders in foreign countries, etc. But I don't want to get into that here. I want to tell you about something that's right in the global economy - Fair Trade - and why Bluff Country Co-op and Equal Exchange are celebrating World Fair Trade Day on May 8th.

As one would expect from its name, Fair Trade is an alternative form of international trade that has fairness, not profits, as its guide, and that seeks to create greater opportunities for the small-scale producers in poor countries who have historically benefited the least, if at all, from conventional forms of commerce. Whereas normal trade is directed by the question "how can I maximize my profit?" Fair Trade asks "where can I direct my purchasing power to maximize the benefit to society?" It's a very different question that leads to some surprising and encouraging answers.

For example, some people are surprised to learn that positive alternatives exist, or that Fair Trade allows you to buy common items like coffee, cocoa, or house wares through a system that delivers more of your shopping dollar back to the farmers and artisans. Some people are surprised that a system like Fair Trade can not only be viable, but can actually thrive. Yet, in fact consumers have already proven this. Equal Exchange's own Fair Trade business has grown about 30% a year for 18 years, and other organizations dedicated to Fair Trade, such

as Ten Thousand Villages and SERRV, both of whom specialize in lovely house wares and gifts, continue to grow even after 40 years of service.

While many people, especially in consumer co-ops, already know about Fair Trade coffee, they may not know that Fair Trade continues to expand into new categories like tea, cocoa products, and most recently fresh fruit, including bananas, mangoes, pineapple and grapes. There's even talk of Fair

The key role of Co-ops

America's consumer co-ops can take a lot of pride in the success of Fair Trade, because co-ops have been supporting Fair Trade from day one and to this day still sell a substantial percentage of all the Fair Trade foods and beverages sold nationwide.

When Equal Exchange first made Fair Trade coffee available in the late '80's, it was co-ops like Bluff Country that bought and sold most of what we imported. Some consumer co-ops would sell nothing but Fair Trade coffee. In fact, for years consumer co-ops would continue to sell half or more of all the Fair Trade coffee in the U. S., and in this way acted as the mid-wife for this nascent category, just as they had earlier for bulk, natural and organic foods.

More recently consumer co-ops have continued in this role by providing the critical early markets for new Fair Trade items such as tea, hot cocoa mix, baking cocoa, and Fair Trade fruit. Since 1986 Fair Trade food sales (measured in wholesale dollars) have grown from about \$100,000 annually to well over \$30,000,000. In this way consumer food co-ops continue to spur reforms in the broader U.S. food system by helping to give birth to new Fair Trade categories. Similarly, they have been crucial in educating their members, and indirectly the broader American public, as their members in turn educate their friends and family, and take their knowledge and new shopping habits with them wherever they go.

Equal Exchange

Trade soccer balls being available soon. A very similar effort to root out the child labor rampant in the weaving of carpets and rugs, called Rugmark, is already generating great results.

Another encouraging revelation is that Fair Trade can offer us the chance to participate in a kind of grassroots, bottom up version of globalization. For example, when you purchase a can of our organic hot cocoa mix, no less than 7 democratically organized cooperatives, working in 4 countries, help to bring it to you, including: 2 Paraguayan small farmer sugar co-ops, 1 Dominican small farmer cocoa co-op, 1 U.S. organic dairy co-op (Organic Valley), 1 Canadian worker co-op (La Siembra), 1 U.S. worker co-op (Equal Exchange), and your own consumer co-op, Bluff Country Co-op. Nothing gives greater proof that even complex forms of international trade can be executed in a collaborative manner that furthers the human development of all, and at the expense of none.

So on May 8th, Fair Trade Day, we, Bluff Country Co-op and other supporters of Fair Trade around the world are getting the word out about this alternative and great potential it represents. Visit www.equalexchange.com/fairtradeday for more information.

by Rodney North, The Equal Exchange Answer Man

The Grass is Always Greener - At What Cost?

Brenda Jones thought she was helping her lawn when she hired a service to treat chinch bugs. After the fourth treatment, though, the Bradenton, Florida nurse felt sick. Her chest, throat, and eyes burned. Her dog couldn't stop vomiting. And her seven-year-old son and three-year-old daughter complained of dizziness and aches. A doctor diagnosed Jones with pesticide poisoning so severe that her symptoms return whenever she is exposed to chemicals, even on a recent trip to the ice cream store.

Each year we use 67 million pounds of herbicides, insecticides, and fungicides to keep our lawns green. Most people who scatter fertilizer and weed-killer on their lawns won't face acute poisoning like Jones (although in 2002, more than 900 people were treated for exposure to glyphosate (Roundup) and 2,4-D, the two most common pesticides used in home gardens). But scientists are concerned about long-term exposure. According to the nonprofit Beyond Pesticides, of the 36 most commonly used lawn pesticides, 14 are probable or possible carcinogens, 15 are linked with birth defects, 21 with reproductive effects, 24 with neurotoxicity,

22 with liver or kidney damage, and 34 can cause skin, eye, and other reactions.

Children whose families used pesticides in their gardens have higher concentrations of the chemicals in their urine, according to a recent study. Another team of researchers found that dog owners who use 2,4-D four or more times per season significantly increase their dog's chances of contracting lymphoma. If you are exposed, wash off immediately and stop pesticides at the door by removing your shoes whenever you go inside.

*by Dana Hudepohl,
Organic Style Magazine, April 2004
available at BCC*

Editor's note: If you have a dog that walks across treated lawns, it would probably be a good idea to wash paws when you get home.

Looking for alternatives to the green lawn that does so poorly in Winona's sandy soils? Winona County Environmental Services Building, 225 W 2nd St., is establishing an "Ecoyard Demonstration" site this summer. In the planning stages currently, the planting of the landscape will be done by volunteers. If you'd like to get involved, contact Pat Bailey at 457-6500.

May Specials

GROCERY

	Size	Regular Price	Save	Sale
Nature's Path Toaster Pastry Frosted or Unfrosted in 3 Flavors - Apple Cinnamon, Blueberry, Strawberry	11 oz. 10 oz.	3.39	20%	\$2.69
Nature's Path Envirokidz Cereal & Bars 5 Cereal Flavors & 3 Bar Flavors	varies	4.19 4.09	15%	\$3.55 \$3.45
Amy's Kitchen Organic Refried Beans Regular, Black Bean, Green Chili	15 oz.	2.15	20%	\$1.69
Amy's Kitchen Organic Salsa Medium, Mild, Black Bean/Corn	17.5 oz.	4.09	20%	\$3.25
Knudsen Carbonated Spritzers 8 Flavors	6 pack 12 oz.	6.95 1.15	20%	\$5.52 \$.92

HOUSEHOLD

Newman's Own Organics Canned Organic Cat Food Chicken Rice, Chicken Salmon, Turkey	5.5 oz.	1.45	10%	\$1.29
Citra-Solv Citrus Cleaner/Degreaser Spray Bottle - Ready to Use	22 oz.	3.69	15%	\$3.09
EFP Orange Plus Complete Cleaner-Solvent Concentrate	16 oz.	8.49	10%	\$7.59
EFP Stain & Odor Remover Spray	32 oz.	6.75	10%	\$6.05
Green Forest Napkins Recycled Fiber, White 2-Ply	250 ct.	3.55	10%	\$3.19
7th Generation Paper Plates 100% Recycled Fiber, Non-Chlorine Bleached White	40 ct.	4.35	10%	\$3.89

BAKERY

Food For Life Ezekial 4:9 Burger Buns or Sprouted Wheat Hot Dog Buns	16 oz. 13 oz.	2.99 2.65	10%	\$2.69 \$2.39
Rudi's Organic Bakery Sliced Sandwich Bread Cinnamon Raisin, Multigrain Oat, Cracked Wheat, Jewish Rye, Sourdough	22 oz.	3.69	15%	\$3.15

DELI WEEKLY

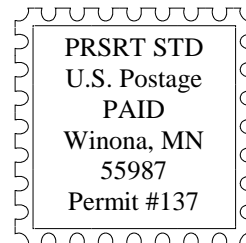
	Regular Price	Save	Sale
May 4-10 Chef Salad	4.29	10%	\$3.85
May 11-17 Apple Almond Butter Sandwich	4.99/#	10%	\$4.49/#
May 18-24 Minnesota Fiesta Wrap	3.49	10%	\$3.09
May 25-31 Pequeno Pesto Wrap	5.39/#	10%	\$4.85/#

BODY CARE

Druide Conditioners & Shampoo	10.39	25%	\$7.79
Giovanni Herbal Mineral Mousse	6.65	20%	\$5.29
Jason Deodorants	4.99	20%	\$3.99
Jason Liquid Satin Soap Chamomile & Comfrey	5.95	30%	\$4.15
Sudz Bar Soap Sports Bar, Honey Pot, Rough Seas	5.69	15%	\$4.79

BULK

Great River Organic 7-Grain Organic Flour	.85/#	10%	\$.75/#
Unbleached Org. Flour	.49/#		\$.39/#
Buckwheat Buttermilk Pancake Mix	3.89/ 2# bag		\$3.49/ 2# bag
Ancient Harvest Quinoa	2.15/#	15%	\$1.79/#
Midwest Gorp Trail Mix	2.99/#	15%	\$2.49/#
Midwest Raw Trail Mix	3.45/#	10%	\$3.09/#
Equal Exchange Organic French Roast Coffee	8.55/#	\$1	\$7.55/#
Cafe Fair Organic Nica Sol Coffee	7.39/#	\$1	\$6.39/#



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

1% Sunday for Mississippi River Revival

Mississippi River Revival (MRR) would like to thank Bluff Country Co-op for your continued support over the years. Working in Winona since 1982 to support a clean river for all, MRR activities include litigation under the Clean Water Act, training for stream monitoring,

environmental education programs, and hands-on citizen activities such as the annual Mississippi River Cleanup. Look for the MRR house boat during Winona's Grand Excursion. And of course, we look forward to seeing many BCC members in July at the River clean-up on Latsch Island.

 * **Spring Samples** *
 * **Day** *
 * **Friday, May 7th** *
 * **Join us for tasty treats** *
 * **throughout the store, live** *

Investment Offer Bonus Savings

With a cash investment of only \$1.85 at BCC you can increase your future wealth and have something to pass on to your descendants. You may be thinking, "What kind of scam is the co-op involved with?" Well, it's totally legit - it's called a garden. For \$1.85 you can buy a package of Seed Savers Exchange seeds which will provide you with sustenance and produce seeds that you can pass on to future generations. Normally priced at \$2.50 per pack, for a limited time (the month of May) you can take part in this incredible offer for only \$1.85! So get your hands dirty and rake in the profits. It's a deal that only comes along once (per year).