

The Kansas City Food Circle

UPDATE

Spring, 2000

April Foods Day a Success

The Food Circle's April 1 Farmers Exhibition at Penn Valley Community College was a success, though attendance in the afternoon trickled off more than we would have liked. We estimate that from 350 to 400 people came through the event mostly in the morning, and farmers were busy talking to customers most of the time. Some 200 Producers' Directories were handed out at the reception table by Food Circle volunteers. The event went off with no serious technical glitches and the Penn Valley Gymnasium turned out to be a spacious, well lit and inviting space. According to an informal survey at the door, our ads for the event in the Food Section of the Kansas City Star attracted a significant number of people.

The turnout of 21 producers was excellent. We scheduled the event 4 weeks later than last year to allow farmers to bring more early produce and plants. This really worked well as the greenery added to the festive atmosphere. New this, year were organic flour offered by Lee Quaintance of Soaring Eagle Farms, who sold out, and dairy products including the Buchmayers' Green Hills Harvest selling organic cow's milk on site (including yummy chocolate), and Doug Schroeder promoting goat's milk. David Schafer and Alice Dobbs sold so many gourmet pizzas that they figure they lost some regular sales because they were so busy serving them up. We never worry about David, the master marketer, though. We plan to send out a survey to the producers this summer to get opinions about next year's event. We'll probably shorten the hours in the afternoon.

In addition to the farmers and eaters, eight non-profit groups staffed tables, and the KC Food Circle gave away a lot of literature about the food system. At one end of the gym Dr. Carol Giesecke, Nutrition Specialist from Lincoln University, lectured on the pleasures of eating locally grown food, and Fred Messner, of Nature's Choice talked to people; about 'the risks of genetically engineered food. The Food Circle's Networking Project was instrumental in arranging for Carol's important contribution to the event.

We want to express special appreciation to our co-sponsoring organizations: the Food Circles Networking Project, both the Ozark and Kansas Chapters of the Sierra Club, The Kansas City Greens, The Gaia Community of the Unitarian-Universalist Church, and the Peace and Justice Office of the St. Joseph Diocese. Also many

thanks to our individual contributors: George and Vicki Baggett, Patricia Houghton, Eugene Messel and Bob and Doris Sherrick. In addition to the farmers, we also want to thank our volunteers who helped with the event including, Rich and Linda Heffern, Anne Mary Vogelweid, Leah Wilder, Toni Gunther, Dirk and Naomi Durant, Lee Alexander, Kurt Kiebler, Margie Eucalyptus, Craig Volland, Ann Allegre, George and Vicki Baggett, Ben Kjelskus and especially Carol Lawrence who brought food for the volunteers. Altogether it was a great event.

Next General Membership Meeting: July 23

Our next general membership meeting will be Sunday, July 23, 1-5 PM at shelter # 4 at beautiful Wyandotte County Lake. It's easy to find. Take 1-435 to Leavenworth Rd. in western Kansas City, Ks and go east to 91st St. After entering the park, go left at the fork, past the admin building and look for the sign for shelter #4. Since tomato picking will be in full swing at that time, we are planning a tomato and salsa tasting picnic, bring your own, that is. If you have a special heirloom variety of tomato or salsa you are proud of, please bring it along. The kids will have plenty of space to run around. Any questions? Call the Food Circle Hotline, 816-374-5899. Since the Food Circle is a registered not-for-profit-organization, producers who are members of our organization can bring produce for sale, if they'd like.

How I Use my KC Food Circle Directory

by Lee Alexander

I moved back to Kansas City in 1983 and started visiting Farmers' Markets. I've been to lots of Farmers' Markets. I identified farmers I did business with at Farmers' Markets as "the third stall from the left" or the "guy with the sign that said 'grown organically.'" It was

'Free Greenhouse'

Margie Eucalyptus will give away a metal frame and glass greenhouse to someone who will remove it from her basement. Assembled; it will measure about 7.5 feet wide by 10 feet long. The catch is that the assembly manual is lost and the manufacturer is out of business. However, she does have a booklet that pictures the unit assembled and gives other instructions.

If interested call Margie at 1 816-523-0989.

generally an anonymous venture. They sold. I bought. I didn't question how they did business. They didn't question why I bought.

Then last year I got my first KC Food Circle Directory. I took the guide with me to the Farmers Markets. All stalls at Farmers Markets have signage indicating which farm they are from. suddenly, I had a name to go with the farm. I'd look at my guide, then at the sign and say to the person staffing the booth: "Are you Bob Jones? or Bill Smith or Susan Jones? They would indicate that they were the person I'd named and ask me my name. I was no longer a "customer"; but now I was a particular customer. I now had a name to go with a face. As the season went on, I'd find myself asking questions about how they raised their crop; they'd ask about my food preferences. We had developed a relationship.

By the end of the 1999 season, I found I had several farmers I could truthfully say were my friends. You have a tendency to buy more from a person you know. It's why so many stores have name badges for their employees. Many consumers' guides recommend that you question a business on its practices. But until I was on a first name basis with my farmer at the farmers market, I wasn't really comfortable with asking questions. After working with my directory, questions on farming practices were no longer questions - they were now conversation.

Get to know a farmer. Use your KC Food Circle Directory.

Genetically Engineered Food

Right to Know Act

Please contact your Congressional Representative and ask them to co-sponsor HR 3377, the Genetically Engineered Food Right to Know Act. We are eating genetically engineered foods without knowing it. This legislation will ensure the right of Americans to know whether the foods we purchase have been genetically altered in any way. Public opinion polls show that the vast majority of Americans want these foods labeled. It's not just a matter of whether these foods are safe to eat. It's also an issue of whether the long term ecological consequences are known and how it impacts the integrity of organic production. Many people just don't want to support this kind of tinkering with nature.

Fibromyalgia/Chronic Fatigue Survivor

By Yvonne Keeny

I had fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue syndrome and suffered with varying degrees of pain, anxiety, depression, etc., for more than 11 years. Every evening after work I was exhausted. Some days I wasn't able to go to work. Now I have been mostly symptom free for over 2 years and have lots of energy!

After trying the drug route, I researched non-drug solutions and found out many existed. My niece, who

had recovered from fibromyalgia, recommended I walk every day, eat more fresh fruits and vegetables, drink more water, avoid refined sugars and take natural sleep and pain aids. That helped. Then, in October 1997, I attended a seminar on fibromyalgia. At the seminar I learned about the yeast connection. I found a physician who tested me for this and discovered that I did have a yeast overgrowth plus a bacterial infection in my gastrointestinal tract. I also discovered that I was sensitive to house dust and certain foods, molds, and chemicals.

Within a few weeks after starting treatment for the yeast and bacteria problems (and avoiding foods with chemicals) I started feeling better than I had felt in years. I found out that eating organically grown foods and meats free of growth hormones and antibiotics is extremely important. Vitamins, minerals and herbal supplements also played a role in my recovery. This is an environmental illness and if we ever hope to recover we must do everything we can to rebuild our immune system.

Another good out come of the seminar: Getting Well Support Groups and the nonprofit organization Fibromyalgia Coalition International, which includes people with fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome. There are now Getting Well Support Groups in thirteen states and one in Canada.

Support group discussions do not focus on the illness or the symptoms. Instead we talk about tasty organic foods, drinking adequate water, decreasing caffeine intake, exercising, natural sleep and pain aids, etc. It isn't the diagnosis we should be concerned about but rather the things we can change. Our bodies have been bombarded with toxins from the things we eat, drink, breath, wear, and rub on. Foods grown with pesticides/herbicides and meats and dairy products from animals treated with growth hormones and antibiotics add to our toxic load.

A recent study at the University of Missouri in Columbia determined that a healthy diet, exercise and talk therapy works better than drugs for treating fibromyalgia. Fox-4 News in Kansas City recently did a news report regarding the University of Missouri study and the positive results our support groups members have experienced.

Fibromyalgia Coalition International is dedicated to imparting hope to people who are suffering from fibromyalgia and/or chronic fatigue syndrome. In addition to support groups, memberships are available and include a subscription to our quarterly newsletter Conquering the Challenge, a list of physicians who are experienced in treating fibromyalgia/chronic fatigue syndrome, a packet full of helpful information, and a 10% discount on educational books and tapes. If you or your loved ones are suffering from fibromyalgia or chronic fatigue syndrome we would love to hear from you.

Yvonne Keeny, Founder and Director
Fibromyalgia Coalition International
913-384-1991 KeenyCo@AOL.Com