

The Kansas City Food Circle

UPDATE

Spring, 2004

Two Farmers' Exhibitions This Year

To better serve people north of the river, and to provide more opportunities for our producers in northwest Missouri, the Kansas City Food Circle has expanded its 6th annual Farmers Exhibition this year to two sites. The events will be held on successive weekends. The south side event will be Saturday, March 27, 2004, in the gymnasium of the Barstow School 11511 State Line Road in Kansas City, Missouri, about one mile south of 1-435, from 9:00 am to 3:00, same as last year. The north side event will be Saturday, April 3, 2004 at St. Pius X High School, 1500 NE 42nd Terrace in Kansas City, one block west of where 1-29 and 1-35 intersect (exit 1-29 on Davidson).

Both events are free and open to the public. Cosponsors so far include the Sierra Club, The Food Circles Networking Project-Missouri Extension, Kansas City Greens, People for Animal Rights, Kansas City Wellness Magazine, Peace & Justice Office of the St. Joseph/KC Diocese, Catholics for Justice, St. Patrick's Parish, Society of the Precious Blood, Mother Nature's Market (Liberty), Bridging the Gap, Slow Food of Kansas City, the Humane Society of the US, The Village (Presbyterian) Church and the Growing Growers Project.

The public will meet local farmers who can supply high quality organic fruits and vegetables and free range, humanely raised, natural meats. Also available will be veggie seedlings for spring gardens.

Eco-Troubadour, **Stan Slaughter**, will again entertain us with his original music.

You can pick up your copy of the 2004 *Food Circle Producers' Directory*.

We will be having chef's demonstrations at each event. A chef from Lidia's will be at Barstow School immediately after the workshop (about noon), and Liz Huffman of the Blue Bird Bistro will be doing the honors at St. Pius X High School at 11 AM.

Also a workshop: **Fast food kills ... the real cost of fast food:** 9:00am to 12 noon at the Barstow - south side event only. The lead-off speaker will be progressive rancher and family farm advocate, **Mike Callierate**, who took on Tyson Foods and Big Beef in court and won. He will talk about the decline of rural life as a result of the industrialization of agriculture and concentration of economic power.

Following will be **Kathy Hale**, former chef at Daily Bread, and **David Alvarado** of Kid Power, K.C., talking on children's obesity, **Emily Libla**, Food and Farming Coordinator for People-for-Animal Rights, speaking on animal cruelty, and **Heather Hands**, co-owner of Local Harvest, will point the way out of this mess. Admission is free.

Arsenic in Chicken - What next?

People who eat factory raised chicken may be taking in larger amounts of arsenic than previously thought, according to a study recently published in the Journal, *Environmental Health Perspectives*. Arsenic concentrations in young chickens (broilers) are three times greater than in other meat and poultry products. Arsenic is fed to chickens to control intestinal parasites so they grow faster.

At the average daily chicken consumption rate roughly equivalent to a half a chicken breast, people take in 3.6 to 5.2 micrograms of inorganic arsenic, the most toxic form of the chemical.

About one percent of the U.S. population eats ten times that much. Bladder, respiratory and skin cancers may result from a daily intake of 10 to 40 micrograms. However, the World Health Organization has set a tolerable intake limit of 0.9 micrograms per pound of body weight per day.

But one then has to factor in arsenic intake from other sources such as drinking water, polluted air and exposure to treated wood. Source: *Environmental News Service*.

European Union - U.S. Food Fight, Round 65

Successive US Administrations have blamed Europe for the need to maintain massive farm subsidies in the United States. Not anymore, says Franz Fischler, agricultural minister for the European Union, who soon will be leaving his job. He says the E.U. has spent the last nine years fighting to trim Europe's farm subsidies and working to increase spending for food safety and environment. "American farmers now receive 10 times more than European farmers," he said in a recent interview in the US.

Of course the U.S. Trade Representative, Robert Zoellick disagreed, saying that E.U. export subsidies were a major problem.

Some of the changes Mr. Fischler cited are a system of labeling and tracing food to ensure its safety, increases in financing for programs to protect the environment and preserve the beauty of the continent's rural landscapes, and tightening of laws for animal welfare, which would rule out many of the practices followed in the U.S. He noted, "I'm really convinced you'll see the same here ... Americans will ask how this was produced, where did it come from, how were the animals treated? American society won't accept what they have now."

(While we aren't sure about the subsidy part of the dispute, we know for a fact that the E.U. has created a much safer and more humane system of food production than we have. Maybe if we get a new president, Mr. Fischler can come over and help clean up our mess. Source: *The New York Times* -- the editor)

False Economy of Pork Production

A recent study in the *Journal of Agricultural & Applied Economics* found that pork producers saved 59 cents per head by utilizing antibiotics for the purpose of making pigs grow faster. An author of the study said the use of antibiotics for this purpose had a positive impact on production efficiency. He add that when production is more efficient there are more products for consumers at lower prices.

Scientists have found that such practices are enhancing the development of antibiotic resistant bacteria. The use of antibiotics for animal growth promotion has been banned in Europe. Mature pigs are typically sold for \$100 on the open market.

The K.C. Food Circle did some quick math. By reducing American's access to economical antibiotics for treatment of disease, American pork producers get less than 1 % more money for their pigs. You be the judge.

Genetically Engineered Crops Increase Pesticide Use

One of industry's main selling points for their genetically engineered (GE) crops has been that they require the use of less chemicals. However, a new study shows that after eight years of growing genetically engineered crops in the United States, the use of pesticides has actually increased significantly. The report was commissioned by Iowa State University, the Consumers' Union and others. The author is Dr. Charles Benbrook, head of the Northwest Science and Environmental Policy Centre at Sandpoint, Idaho.

When GE crops were first introduced they needed 25 percent fewer chemicals. But in 2001, 5 percent more

pesticides were sprayed compared with non-GE crops. In 2002 it was 7.9 percent more and in 2003, 11.5 percent more. The report suggests that farmers are having to spray more to keep up with shifts toward harder to control types of weeds and the emergence of genetic resistance in some weed populations. But the industry suggested it was because of the recent expiration of Monsanto's patent on Roundup herbicide, that lower prices were encouraging farmers to spray more.

Source. *The Guardian*, UK.

Gardeners: Check Out These Workshops

The Growing Growers project has lined up a stellar schedule of workshops this year. Those coming up in the next few months are; **Saturday, March 6**, 9:30 - 4:00, *Soil Building for the Vegetable and Fruit Grower*, Leavenworth Co. 4H Hall and Paul Conway's farm (\$30 pre-reg, \$33 on site); **Monday, April 12**, 4:00 - 7 PM, *Vegetable Plant Production-getting started*, Bear Creek Farm in Osceola & Osceola Library (\$15/\$18); **Monday, May 10**, 4-6 PM, *Integrating Meat/Dairy into your Vegetable Operation*, Whispering Cedar Farms & Garden, Lawrence (\$10/\$12); **Monday, June 21**, 4-7 PM, *Health & Safety Practices for the Small Farmer*, K-State Research Center, Olathe, (\$15/\$18). For more info contact growers@ksu.edu or 913-5152426 or visit the website at www.growinggrowers.org

Letter to KC Star on Mad Cow

Congrats to coordinating committee member, Kurt Kiebler, for the following letter published recently.

"It is sad for me that Lewis Diuguid, a columnist who is often critical of the president, is uncritical of his policy on beef (Jan. 23, Opinion).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture works hand in hand with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association to "regulate" meat. While I agree with Diuguid that there was some irrational excitement in how the media reported the issue, there are easy ways of solving mad cow.

One is mandatory country of origin labeling, which the Gap has blocked. A second way comes from Japan, which is America's biggest beef importer. Japan insists that each cow be tested for the disease. Third, cattle should not be fed blood meal and should be placed on a vegetarian diet. Finally, the USDA should not have former beef industry members on its board.

In the meantime, instead of buying ground beef, have your butcher grind a roast. Buy grass-fed beef and buy locally. Call the Food Circle (816-374-5899) to find out about local farmers and our March 27 expo."

(This was written before our April 3 Northland Expo was confirmed)

This is a re-mastered copy – you can find the whole KCFC Update archive at www.KCFoodCircle.org