

The Kansas City Food Circle

UPDATE

Spring, 2007

Hot Topics at the March 24th Workshop, Expo 2007

Buying local is "in" and the KCFC has arranged a workshop at the March 24 Farmers Exhibition that will fill you in on the "why" and "how". The workshop is entitled "**Becoming a Localvore: Healthy Food Grows Close to Home.**" Lisa Markley, Registered Dietitian, and Jill McLaughlin, Certified Holistic Health Counselor, will present the nutritional advantages to buying local. Then the 100 Mile Diet team will present their experiences in sourcing as much of their diet as possible from within 100 miles or so of Kansas City. This group has been meeting regularly for about a year to share experiences. They have written a number of articles that were published in beautiful color in Present Magazine on the web. (www.PresentMagazine.com)

The first 75 workshop attendees will receive a free CD which holds all the 100 Mile Diet articles and the 2007 Food Circle Directory of Organic and Free Range Food Producers.

The KC Food Circle's 9th Annual Farmers Exhibition is **March 24** at the **Shawnee Civic Center, 13817 Johnson Drive**. The Expo opens at **9 AM** and runs to **2 PM** and the workshop starts at **9:30 AM** and runs to **11:30 AM**.

How Much We Can Do Depends On You

Since 1988, the Kansas City Food Circle has been seeking out and supporting small organic and free-range farmers in the KC area. We were doing this work before the idea of eating local and organic became popular, and we're very pleased by the wonderful changes that have happened in KC over the last twenty years.

Think about it: we now have four farmers markets in the metro area that only sell fruits and vegetables from producers who agree to grow using organic methods, and meat, dairy foods, and eggs from producers who agree to avoid using growth hormones and sub-therapeutic antibiotics. Moreover, there are now four other organizations working in different ways to enhance our community food system:

the **KC Center for Urban Agriculture** (www.KCCUA.org), **Growing Growers of Kansas City** (www.GrowingGrowers.org), **Bridging the Gap's Buy Fresh, Buy Local-KC program** (www.BridgingTheGap.org), and **Kansas City Community Gardens** (www.KCCG.org).

There's still much to be done, of course, and we have the opportunity to make even greater strides in the future toward a community food system with these exciting new projects:

- 100 Mile Diet
- KC CSA Coalition
- Community Buying Clubs for locally-grown and processed food products
- Promotion of Organic and Free Range Farmers Markets
- Directory of Restaurants using locally grown foods
- Farmer-friendly website features like **Know Your Grower** and the **Harvest Hotline**

With the petroleum depletion, global warming and climate disruption crises at hand, our mission to re-localize our food system is more urgent than ever. What once might have just seemed like a good idea has become essential. We need to use the modern technology of the Web to make our efforts more effective and energy-efficient. We also need to hire at least a part-time staffer and recruit many more volunteers. Since the KC Food Circle is entirely dependent on donations and grants, *we really need your help.*

Here are some ways you can get more involved:

- Make a donation in addition to your membership
- Recruit new members
- Become involved in one of the projects listed above
- If you have accounting expertise, become our treasurer
- If you have computer expertise, help maintain our database
- Staff a table at an event with an experienced member
- Join the coordinating committee, our decision-making body

Please send an email to KCFoodCircle@gmail.com or call **816-452-6707** if you're interested in helping out or have other ideas as to how you can take part in our work.

Our new brochure...

There's still one more very easy way you can help us. Our new brochure (see enclosed) focuses on the health benefits of eating food grown close to home. It's intended to reach a new audience through distribution in the offices of health care practitioners (MDs, naturopaths and osteopaths, chiropractors, herbalists, doctors of Traditional Chinese Medicine, massage therapists, etc.), libraries, coffeehouses, healthier foods stores, workplaces, and so on. If you know of a suitable location near you, and you're willing to secure

permission and keep it stocked with brochures, please send an email to willowjohn@gmail.com and let us know how many to send you.

The Best-tasting Way to Address Global Warming

You may have never thought about it, but eating locally grown organic and free range foods is a powerful way to help reduce your own contribution to global warming and climate disruption--every single day. The large-scale, industrial agriculture system is incredibly fossil fuel-intensive, from farm machinery through processing and the transportation system that carries food an average of 1,300 miles from farm-to-plate.

In contrast, small-scale farmers typically use machinery less, and fresh, whole foods are minimally processed. Food eaten close to where it was grown doesn't need as much fuel for transport, which results in fewer emissions of heat trapping carbon dioxide.

Even so, at the Food Circle we understand that much broader and more fundamental change needs to happen if we're going to avoid catastrophic effects from global warming. That's why we've endorsed the **Step It Up 2007: National Day of Climate Action on April 14th**. This event will send one simple message to Congress: **Cut carbon emissions 80% by 2050**. For an explanation of why the organizers chose this particular goal, go to www.StepItUp2007.org/article.php?id=29

People around the nation are organizing local rallies to bring as many people as possible out on April 14th in support of that goal. More than 700 have been scheduled in 48 states as of this writing. Photos of the rallies will be taken and linked electronically through StepItUp2007.org to create a sort of virtual march on Washington, avoiding the carbon emissions that would result from an actual march on Washington.

KC-area groups and individuals have formed the Climate Action KC Network to organize a local rally. While planning is still in its early stages, the main event has been set for 1 P.M. on April 14th in Southmoreland Park, 45th & Oak in Kansas City, MO (just west of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art). Check www.ClimateActionKC.org for details as we get closer to the 14th.

We strongly urge all our members to take part in this National Day of Climate Action. Hope to see you there!

More Information. *Not yet convinced global warming and climate disruption need to be addressed?* On February 18th, 2007, the board of the **American Association for the Advancement of Science** released a statement which asserted the following:

"The scientific evidence is clear: global climate change caused by human activities is occurring now, and it is a growing threat to society... [t]he time to control greenhouse gas emissions is now" (full statement at www.AAAS.org).

Two summers ago, eleven national scientific academies from around the world, including the **U.S. National Academy of Sciences**, released a consensus statement which advised:

"The scientific understanding of climate change is now sufficiently clear to justify nations taking prompt action. It is vital that all nations identify cost-effective steps that they can take now, to contribute to substantial and long-term reduction in net global greenhouse gas emissions."

(a full-text version of this statement is available at: www.NationalAcademies.org/onpi/06072005.pdf)

Those are just the two most prominent such statements from relevant scientific organizations; links to more can be found at gristmill.grist.org/skeptics.

KCFC to Explore Local Buying Clubs

The coordinating committee of the Kansas City Food Circle has decided to draft a model for buying clubs comprised of individuals and focused on group purchases of local and regional foods produced by our farmers and other producers who meet our standards. Buying clubs have been around for a long time but were originally formed to purchase in bulk from natural food coops. The last of these, Ozark Cooperative Warehouse, ceased business last year.

KCFC has no interest in facilitating bulk purchase of processed food shipped in at great energy cost from, say, California. A need still exists, we think, where eaters can pool their resources for bulk purchases from local producers. For example a club could buy a whole beef and divide it up among its members. Producers benefit because it would be easier to sell and distribute their product. It's more energy efficient for one member of a club to drive to a farm or meat locker or easier for a producer to drop off at one location.

Our producers also face problems selling preserved products, like salsa and bakery products, after farmers markets close for the season. Some grain products are hard to obtain in small quantities. Buying clubs could put together large orders that would help local producers do business year around. Some grains like organic rice (from Arkansas) and organic oats (from Nebraska) are not available locally but are still fairly close and are important everyday food items.

The downside is that it takes more time for people to operate a buying club instead of just dropping by Whole Foods. KCFC is not staffed to actually manage buying clubs and handle funds. Someone has to do the pickups or host a drop off site, and someone has to keep the books. So it has to be fun and socially and philosophically rewarding to succeed. If you are interested in helping form a buying club in your area contact Craig Volland at Ph. (913)334-0556 or email KCFoodCircle@GMail.COM

New Natural Food Store Opens on North Side

Green Acres Market, expanding from its store in Wichita and advertising itself as natural, local and organic, has opened a **new store in KCMO**. It is located in Briarcliff Village about two blocks northwest of the intersection of US 169 and Missouri Highway 9, just north of the Missouri River. It carries the products of several KCFC farmers, so check it out.

Contacts: www.GreenAcres.com & Ph.(816)746-0010

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