

Roots & Sprouts

News and Ideas from the Belmont Farmers' Market

midsummer 2007

www.belmontfarmersmarket.org



Grass or Corn: Where's the Omega-3?

*The Belmont Farmers' Market welcomes many new vendors in 2007, including three offering pasture-raised poultry, lamb and beef. In this issue of **Roots and Sprouts**, we find out how foods from grass-fed animals differ from food from corn-fed animals, and why the difference is more significant than we might assume.*

Now open!

June through October
Thursday afternoons
2:00 to 6:30 pm

BELMONT CENTER
In the municipal parking lot
behind the Leonard St. stores
off Cross St. & Channing Rd.

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Cattle on the range, grazing as far the eye can see: the image is as American as apple pie. Reality, however, is far different. The vast majority of steaks and hamburgers we find at the supermarket are products of Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), where cattle are fattened on corn rather than grass, and range not at all.

The difference between the quality of the lives of beef cattle and other mass-produced animals for meat, milk or eggs today and those in the past correlates to the difference in the quality of the nutritional value they provide and the huge environmental costs associated with mass-produced operations.

The building blocks of nutrition are protein, vitamins and minerals, carbohydrates and fats—including essential fatty acids. The essential fatty acids are of two kinds: omega-6 and omega-3. For optimal nutrition, humans must consume roughly equal parts of each, as both are critical parts of an intricate set of biochemical reactions. Omega-3, in particular, has been shown to play an important role in reducing inflammation and the risk of blood clots as well as the amount of lipids (fats) in the blood, thus lowering the risk of obesity and promoting healthy cells throughout life.

Corn-fed animals have higher levels of omega-6; grass-fed animals have higher levels of omega-3. Why? Because the former eat seeds (corn) and the latter eat green leaves (grass).

Omega-6 is usually produced in the seeds of plants and omega-3 in their leaves. Large quantities of many beneficial substances found in leaves of green grass, algae and other plants find their way into meats, milk and eggs of animals that eat those plants. Animals that do not eat leaves, but are instead fed seeds (corn and other grains), have very limited amounts of many beneficial nutrients.

Cows eating 100% pasture are healthier animals that normally do not require antibiotics and will thus produce meat and milk with higher levels of healthy substances. For example, meat from pastured animals contains up to 500% more conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), a fatty acid that helps prevent cancer and reduce weight. More importantly, pastured animals provide higher levels of omega-3 from the green plants they eat. Omega-3 is a substance that is critical for brain development and function.

Before the introduction of CAFOs, people eating a balanced diet of meats and plants were ensured a better balance of both kinds of fatty acids. However, the sources and balance of the American diet have changed so drastically that today most of us tend to eat 10 times more omega-6 than we do omega-3. This imbalance may be one cause of soaring rates of heart disease, diabetes, cancer and obesity over the last 50 years. Unless we pay attention to the source of our

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Meet Sustainable Belmont

A Local Conservation Update

An important committee of which the readers of *Roots & Sprouts* should be aware is Sustainable Belmont (SB). This subgroup of the Vision 21 Implementation Committee was formed in 2005 to “develop and implement a variety of activities and initiatives to assist Belmont’s government, residents, and businesses in becoming a more environmentally responsible community.”

SB’s activities and initiatives include:

- 1 Climate action plan.** Last year, a group of five interns from Tufts University created a draft inventory of the town’s global warming emissions. Currently, the inventory is in the process of being finalized. Once this is done, targets will be developed for reducing emissions across a range of sectors, and a plan created to achieve these targets.
- 2 Green buildings.** As the result of hard work by several SB members, the Belmont Board of Selectmen passed a sustainable building design policy in March.
- 3 Cleaning the Air Campaign.** Members secured grant funding from the state for Idle Free Zone signs that are now posted throughout the town. (It is against Massachusetts law to idle for more than five minutes, with a few exceptions.) The anti-idling campaign started with the schools, and is now working with the faith-based community. Other initiatives of the Cleaning the Air Campaign include making sure our diesel buses are as clean as possible, and creating a more pedestrian-friendly town.

4 Sustainable food. This is a recently formed group with the aim of linking local farmers and food artisans with local institutions such as schools, hospitals and nursing homes. A pilot project at Belmont High School focuses on composting food waste, and a seminar titled “Backyard Chicken Keeping in Belmont” is being planned.

5 Public education and outreach. SB organized public programs on phantom energy loss and winterizing homes, along with forums on green buildings and pesticides.

Currently, SB publishes monthly articles in the *Belmont Citizen-Herald*.

These efforts are not accomplished alone. SB works not only with many Belmont departments, including the Municipal Light Department, Health Department, Public Works Department, Public Schools and Permanent Building Committee, but also with regional organizations such as the Massachusetts Climate Action Network (MCAN), ICLEI—Local Governments for Sustainability and Greater Boston Breathes Better (GB3).

Please come join us at one of our meetings and see us in action. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of every month from 7 to 9 pm in the Assembly Room of the Belmont Public Library and are open to the public. You may also contact Sustainable Belmont at sustainablebelmont@gmail.com for more information.

—Jennifer Dewey
Member, Sustainable Belmont



www.belmontfarmersmarket.org

Belmont Farmers' Market Committee

Heli Tomford, Coordinator

Andres Aguirre	Cate McGrail
Ann Celi	Evie Malliris
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Christina Kimball	Anne Stuart
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Laurie Levy	Carla Vickers
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Sumner Brown	Amrita Ray
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Liz Gourley	Phyl Solomon
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Joanne Landers	Pierre Tong
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Matt Loreti	Jasper Wolf
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Leah Meyer	Rose Wu
Sal Pergoli	Ed Yee
Lisa Pullman	Marilyn Yee

Contact us at

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Tuesday Night at the Movies

Assembly Room, Belmont Public Library

Please join us on August 14 when BFM’s summer movie series presents *Babette’s Feast*, Academy Award winner for Best Foreign Language Film (1988). Directed by Gabriel Axel, the story is about a woman who flees the French civil war and lands in a small seacoast village in Denmark where she works for two devout spinsters. Babette unexpectedly wins a lottery and decides to create a real French dinner, leading the sisters to fear for their souls. All are welcome and admission is free – 6:30 pm coffee, 7:00 pm film.

2007 Vendors

- **Busa Farm** produce
- **ButterBrook Organic Farm** herbs, vegetables, honey, flowers, eggs
- **Coutts Specialty Foods** jams, jellies, applesauce, relishes
- **Dick's Market Garden Farm** produce
- **The Farm School/Maggie's Farm** certified organic vegetables, fruits, flowers, soap, grass-fed meat
- **Fiore di Nonno Cheese** handcrafted fresh mozzarella
- **Gretta Anderson - Belmont CSA** produce grown in Belmont
- **Janique's Madeleines** fresh French cookies made in Belmont
- **Kimball Fruit Farm** vegetables, fruit, pies, honey
- **Leslie Wolf Baking** baked goods from a Belmont kitchen
- **Merrimack Valley Apiary** many varieties of honey
- **Nashoba Brook Bakery** bread
- **Nicewicz Family Farm** apples, peaches, plums, berries, vegetables, flowers
- **NorthStar Farm** perennial plants and cheeses made in Westport, MA
- **Not Your Ordinary Farm** grass-fed meat
- **Shootflying Hill Sauce Co.** dessert sauces
- **Stillman's at the Turkey Farm** grass-fed meat
- **Taza Chocolates** chocolate ground locally from direct-purchased beans
- **The Biscuit** bread and baked goods
- **Thoreau Foods** organic cereals, toppings, smoothie boosters
- **Underwood Greenhouse** potted plants grown in Belmont
- **Waverley Place** flowers, herbs and perennials grown in Waltham



Food For Thought

Residents share their passion for fresh food, farmers' markets, and good living

I find great satisfaction growing my own food and enjoy serving meals from food I raise. What I don't grow, I enjoy buying from farmers' markets or local farms. My typical Belmont-sized, shaded lot won't accommodate much of a vegetable garden even though I am able to keep a few chickens for fresh eggs. Some years ago I went searching for an organic community garden plot for a suitable garden space. I found what I wanted at Codman Community Farms (a/k/a/Codman Farm) in Lincoln, became a member, rented a plot and happily started gardening.

Codman Farm is not just for show. It is a decades-old working farm. They harvest, bale and sell hay from many fields in Lincoln. They raise and sell pork, beef, lamb and eggs and host a farmers' market on Saturday morning. They offer a pick-and-pay flower garden, rent out community garden plots as well as provide educational programs. At the farm you can visit pigs, cows, goats, ducks, geese, chickens, turkeys and rabbits. This spring I was fortunate enough to see both a lamb and a piglet being born. Many of the animals that they raise are heritage breeds, and their work with these heritage breeds helps to insure that the genetic variation in livestock will not be lost. Large commercial livestock producers use fewer and fewer different breeds.

I am able to cultivate enough vegetables to enjoy all summer, with more to freeze and

store for the winter months. If the bounty from my rented garden plot were all that Codman Farm provided me with, it would be enough. However, during the depths of the winter, vegetables and meat from the freezer provide me with more than dinner. They bring back pleasant memories of summer, the calm of my garden and time spent at the farm. In the community garden and at the adjoining farm are where I find peace and community.

Since starting to garden at Codman Community Farms, I have also become a frequent visitor and a farm volunteer. Last year I worked on a meat chicken-raising project using a heritage breed chicken. It started with day-old chicks and ended three months later with a supply of chicken in my freezer. This year I'm helping to teach a class in raising backyard chickens, writing a grant proposal and analyzing poultry costs and income. I have even started learning to drive a tractor! All this is great fun, very satisfying and helps keep my "farmy" and "foodie" interests fulfilled despite not living on a farm.

Consider visiting or becoming a member to support the mission of the Farm and to help support local agriculture. More information about Codman Community Farms can be found at www.codmanfarm.org. The Farm is located at the corner of Codman and Lincoln Roads, Lincoln. The price of \$1 for admission is certainly a bargain.

—Joan Teebagy

Getting involved at a farm near you

Music at the Market



There's music in the air most market Thursdays. Among the young musicians expected to perform in the coming weeks are: the violin duo of Pilar and Devon Hincapie; a clarinet and flute duo, the Lockett brothers, from Chenery Middle School; violinists Julia M. and Mirella B, from Shady Hill School; and a student ensemble from the "Music on the Hill" summer program at the Powers Music School.

Check the BFMC website for performance dates and times.

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nutrients and what the animals or fish were eating, a balanced diet today does not ensure a balance of nutrients.

In addition to meat, milk and eggs from grass-fed animals, omega-3 is found in cold-water oily fish, including mackerel, herring and wild salmon. It is also found in flax seeds, walnuts, wild shrimp, scallops and some dark green leafy vegetables—many foods that are rare in the grain-based Standard American Diet (SAD). The many forms of corn and wheat we eat, including cooking oils

(soybean, canola and corn oils), are a rich source of omega-6. However, because grains are also the staple of the diet of our protein sources, our diets are unavoidably lopsided.

How can we restore the necessary blend and balance of fatty acids and other essential nutrients to our meals for our own good health, and how does that relate to our environment? Eating a lot more leafy green salads is an easy start to improving our diet. Adding other sources of omega-3 from fish to walnuts to replace the over-abundance of

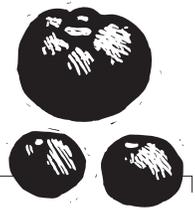
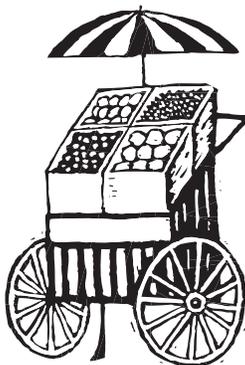
meat we tend to eat is another good step. Consequently, not only does selecting grass-fed (or “pastured raised”) meat or poultry maintain our health, but it also helps to preserve open green spaces and the environmental benefits that they provide.

In summary, if we feed our animals their natural diet and allow them to live in the most natural way possible, they will return the favor and give us the nutritious food we, too, are intended to eat.

—Andres Aguirre

What's Fresh in... July and August

apples	hot peppers
arugula	melons
beets	okra
bell peppers	onions
blueberries	peaches
bok choy	snap peas
broccoli	peppers
cabbage	plums
carrots	potatoes
cauliflower	radishes
chard	raspberries
corn	salad greens
cucumbers	scallions
eggplant	shelling beans
garlic	spinach
grapes	summer squash
green beans	tomatillos
green peas	tomatoes
herbs	zucchini



A Simple Tomato Sauce

Ah, tomatoes. They're here at last, ripe, tangy, bursting with the essential taste of summer. Now that tomatoes taste the way tomatoes are intended to taste, Marcella Hazan's simple fresh sauce for pasta is among the best ways to celebrate their all-too-brief season. Your farmers' market vendor will be delighted to supply you with several pounds of gorgeous tomatoes.

2 pounds of ripe tomatoes (or more, if you plan to freeze portions for winter meals)
1-2 onions, peeled and cut in half
Salt
5 tablespoons butter

Blanch tomatoes: plunge in boiling water for one minute. Remove and drain. When cool enough to handle, skin them and cut up in coarse pieces.

Put prepared tomatoes in saucepan. Add butter, onions and salt. Cook uncovered at a slow simmer for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally and mashing large pieces of tomato with the back of your spoon. Taste for salt.

Discard onion before serving. Toss with pasta.

Adapted from *Essentials of Classic Italian Cooking*, by Marcella Hazan.