



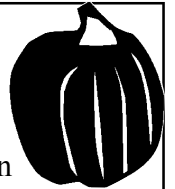
Bottom Land News



Pumpkin Day!

Saturday, October 6, 10 am-2 pm

Mark your calendars, and don't miss the fun! ICF is hosting our annual pick-your-own pumpkin day on Saturday, October 6 from 10 am to 2 pm. Join us for a wagon ride out to our main production fields and a chance to wander the pumpkin patch until you find the perfect pumpkin! All members who do not attend pumpkin day will receive pumpkins with their share in the following weeks.



Tomato Time!

September means bounty in Vermont, and no other vegetable epitomizes this bounty quite like tomatoes do. We crave them all winter, and then suddenly there are too many, and then they are gone again. ICF's tomato crop relies heavily upon hoopouses, which allow us an earlier harvest, and a relatively disease free crop. This year, the atypical dry conditions have made our field tomato harvest unusually bountiful. In the photo, farmers sort tomatoes before pickup.

(photo courtesy of Caleb Kenna)

Steering Committee Elections in November

ICF is seeking thoughtful, committed candidates interested in guiding the ICF farmers and members through the coming years as a thriving CSA farm. Steering Committee members serve two-year terms, during which they meet with the farmers one evening a month for provocative and meaningful discussions of current and future farm operations. Elections will take place at the Annual Meeting and Potluck (see right). If you think you may be interested, please speak to Andy or Becky at the farm, leave a message at 658-2919, or email andy@intervalecommunityfarm.com.

Annual Meeting and Potluck Sunday, November 4, 4:30 pm

Join fellow members and ICF farmers for our annual meeting and potluck, held at H.O. Wheeler School, Sunday November 4 at 4:30 pm. This year's meeting promises to include a lively discussion about the possible future of ICF as a co-op organization. **Your input is important in this discussion—so please share your thoughts!** Steering Committee elections will be held (see left). Following the meeting and elections is a scrumptious potluck—a true celebration of the ICF community! Childcare will be provided during the meeting. Please join us for any portion of the evening—bring your thoughts and your appetites!



Considering Change: ICF Continues to Explore a Cooperative Structure

by Andy Jones



As many of you are aware, ICF is currently exploring whether to change our corporate structure to that of some sort of cooperative. This year we've had the opportunity to examine the business side of ICF as a result of business development funding received through the Intervale Center's Success on Farms program and the Vermont Housing Conservation Board's Farm Viability Project.

To briefly recap, we have identified a lack of equity capital as one limiting factor for ICF. Looking forward, ICF will continue to require investment for us to grow and prosper. New farm equipment, additional greenhouses, alternative power systems, and other unforeseen needs are all going to be necessary investments down the line. Up to now, all of our business equity has come from reinvestment of net income and short to medium-term debt.

Reinvestment will always be a portion of our total equity, but practically it is limited to raising several thousand dollars annually. While debt financing will continue to be a part of our capital investment strategy, as our projects and needs expand, so does the real cost of that debt. Increasing the proportion of farm-generated equity relative to debt financing is a much more appealing option, and that has largely driven our reorganization conversation. With several strategies to increase equity capital on the table, converting the ICF to some kind of cooperative is getting the most attention.

The ICF Steering Committee, our governing body, has generally endorsed the concept of converting to some kind of cooperative structure. That said, no firm decision have been made and any actual change would be put to a vote of the membership in that it would require a change in the by-laws. We had a great member discussion at a summer potluck, and I look forward to another at our November 4th Annual Meeting (see p.1 for details.)

As I've heard comments and questions from some of you on this matter, it's become clear to me that a few common questions and concerns I'd like to speak to directly. The bulk of your collective comments and queries can be grouped into cost, fairness, and unintended consequences.

Cost. In a typical consumer co-op, members join the co-op by purchasing a one-time 'share' in the co-op. In the event that they later relinquish their membership, this equity share is repaid to them by the co-op. The cost of the share is set by the Board of the co-op. While we are a long way from setting the price of a co-op equity share, it is fair to say that the thinking of the Steering Committee

and me is that we would price the co-op equity share at a level that would raise a significant amount of equity for ICF, and would not be unreasonably burdensome for the co-op members. The range I am working with at present is a co-op equity share between \$100-250.

Fairness. The Steering Committee, the wider membership, and the staff all are committed to insuring that the ICF continues to be an accessible and affordable option for all, even if we add the cost of a co-op equity share. It is probable that ICF would allow co-op equity share payments to be spaced out over several years, and we are looking into the possibility of having some kind of co-op equity share equalization fund, where co-op shares for qualifying households with low-incomes could be paid for out of an equalization pool, member donations, and other funding sources. This is similar to how the ICF Supported Shares are funded now, with 50% of the cost of a qualifying member's vegetable share price paid for by a variety of other sources.

The other aspect of fairness under discussion is whether all ICF members would be required to purchase a co-op equity share in order to buy vegetables through ICF. The current thinking of the Steering Committee is that we would not require co-op equity membership to buy a summer or winter share at ICF, recognizing that over several years co-op equity membership may evolve to a de facto requirement if co-op equity shareholders are given first priority for available summer and winter shares, as would be likely our practice.

Unintended consequences. Members have raised several points wondering whether we would be reducing our potential membership base by adding another 'fee' for membership, whether changing to a co-op would make farm administration more challenging, and whether we might close off funding, investment, or participation opportunities now open to ICF. At this point I don't have concrete answers to all of these questions, but we are seriously considering these points in the overall discussion. By their very nature, these collateral effects are harder to foresee, so your thoughts and ideas are especially useful in helping to identify potential pitfalls.

I look forward to having more opportunities to discuss these ideas and concepts with you over the next several months and hope that you take a minute to talk to staff or Steering Committee members at the farm, via email, or join us at the upcoming Annual Meeting. It's already your farm, so join in the conversation!

A Case Against Eating Locally?

by Becky Maden

This winter I came upon an article in the *Economist* which argued that the reasons many of us choose to eat “ethically” (meaning fairtrade, organic, and local foods) are based upon false claims. The article (see *The Economist*, December 9, 2006) argues that organic food demands a much larger land base than its conventional counterpart, and that if all food were produced organically, no forests would be left. The article went on to argue that fairtrade foods create a falsely high price for crops that are already overproduced, and that little of this actual price increase is passed on to the farmers. Finally, the article argues that local foods are less efficient in terms of energy consumption than transported foods, and that buying local food takes trade away from farmers in poorer countries.

The most pertinent point of the article is that “real” change in the food system requires a more political approach, through voting and lobbying, with the ultimate hope of creating a global carbon tax and reforming the world’s trade system. The article argues that “the best thing about the spread of the ethical-food movement is that it offers grounds for hope” and that “all the organic asparagus in the world will not save the planet.” I would agree that the movement does offer hope, but isn’t what takes place at ICF, in the Intervale, and in the Vermont food community so much more than hope? What we have created is a form of “real” change—a tangible web of relationships between producers and consumers, one that is vital and innovative, and not merely based on “hope”.

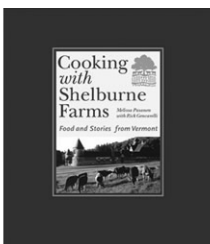
The “localvore” movement has become a catch phrase in recent years, and several books have been recently published that embrace the idea (check out *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* by Barbara Kingsolver). In Burlington, we have a dedicated localvore community (www.eatlocalvt.org), a group that has sourced many hard to find local ingredients and has created an increased demand for local products. In economic terms, it is difficult to quantify the value the relationships the localvore network has fostered, much as it is difficult to quantify the value of the flavor of a local strawberry over one shipped from California. And as food safety becomes more and more of a concern, it is not hard to put a high value on knowing the source of your food over the unknown hazards of food from California or China.

As responsible and proactive citizens of both our local and global communities, it is important to live our lives with an awareness of the impact our decisions will have on a micro and macro level. The power of what we have created in our local food community does not pass unnoticed by the outside world, but we should maintain an awareness of what we can do politically to improve global food sustainability. The article is right—we *do* need to be more active as voters and citizens, but I would argue that our decisions as individual food consumers are powerful ones, not to be understated. There is a powerful joy that exists within this local food world—in the production of it, in the preparation of it, in the experience of seeing it, and in the consumption of it. And so, as I consider ways to act as a more proactive citizen of the global community, I continue to feel blessed by the localness of ICF, of Burlington, and of Vermont.

Tasting and Booksigning at ICF

Thursday, September 27, 3 pm-6 pm

Join two Intervale Community Farm members and cookbook authors, freelance food writer Melissa Pasanen and Chef Rick Gencarelli, to celebrate their brand new **Cooking with Shelburne Farms: Food and Stories from Vermont** (Viking Studio, \$34.95). The book is a celebration of food from the land with more than 100 recipes featuring nine basic Vermont ingredients, many of which you get right here at the farm! In addition to recipes like maple-black pepper roast chicken, smoke-grilled leg of lamb with eggplant salad, and cider-glazed squash and arugula salad (of which they will offer tastes), the book features profiles of farmers, foragers, cheesemakers, and sugarmakers as well as stories about Shelburne Farms, the 1,400-acre nonprofit environmental education center whose mission is to cultivate a conservation ethic. We hope this cookbook helps people feel connected to the land and their community through food--it doesn't get more delicious than that.

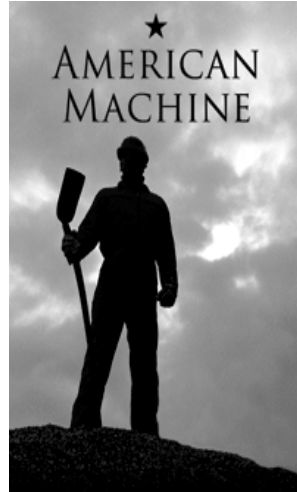


Cover Cropping Time

Each autumn, as the crops are harvested, cover crops are planted. Cover cropping serves many functions—it covers the soil during the harsh winter months, it adds “green manure” or biomass into the soil, and some cover crops (legumes) have symbiotic relationships with soil microorganisms which enable them to fix atmospheric nitrogen. Furthermore, it looks beautiful—it is usually the last green of fall and the first green of spring! In the photo, farmer Becky Maden seeds an oat-vetch mixture just before a September rainstorm.

Support Local Theater and Local Food! Benefit Performance of 'The Machine' for the Burlington School Foods Project

See a play and support a great cause! On Tuesday evening, September 25th, the opening night performance of 'American Machine' will benefit The Burlington Schools Food Project. 100% of all proceeds from this show will go to the project to support healthy fruits and vegetables for students at Burlington schools and to support CSA farm shares for food service employees at Burlington school cafeterias. Want to know more about the Burlington Schools Food Project? www.bsdtv.org/Schools/EdmundsEl/goodfood.htm



A co-commissioned project of The Flynn Center for the Performing Arts September 25 - October 7, Flynn-Space www.AmericanMachineThePlay.com. Part parable on the American dream, part cautionary tale taken from the headlines, 'American Machine' tells the story of a great factory that once made parts for classic American cars. As a makeshift family of six friends come together each night to work, they're soon faced with rumors that their employer will be downsizing - or even closing altogether. As they begin working on a new order mops for Wal-Mart their dedication to the once-proud factory is put to the test. **'The Machine' is written and directed by ICF farm member, Jim Lantz, writer and producer of 'The Bus'.**

Recipe Search!

We are currently compiling a database of favorite vegetable tips and recipes for our website. We'd love your input to make this a true ICF recipe collection. Please send your recipes and suggestions to [keri@intervalecommunity](mailto:keri@intervalecommunityfarm.com)



farm.com, or pass a paper copy of your recipe to a farmer at pickup. And keep an eye on our slowly

growing recipe collection at intervalecommunity-farm.com.



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Bottom Land News is published periodically. We are always grateful for your feedback, favorite Farm photos, poems, letters, and ideas for articles. Please let us know if there is anything you would like to reprint. Contact the Intervale Community Farm for information on subscriptions.

The Intervale Community Farm is a not-for-profit, member-run, community farm growing organic produce for 500 households in the greater Burlington area. Our land is located in the Intervale, a place "between the hills" where people have farmed for many years. We are part of the global Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) movement, linking farmers and consumers together to build a sustainable food system. We are now in our 18th season.



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