

# Middlebury Co-op Newsletter

Open 7 Days A Week, 8 to 7  
Nine Washington Street  
Middlebury, VT

**November  
2011**

## The Story of Wheat

Wheat dates back thousands of years in Chinese and Egyptian records. There is evidence of wheat cultivation in the Middle East as early as ten thousand years ago. By 4000 BC, it was growing in the Indus and Euphrates valleys, by 2500 BC in China, by 2000 BC in Europe west to England. Of paramount importance to Rome, it has been suggested that many of her initial overseas conquests were undertaken in order to obtain areas most favorable to the cultivation of wheat, in particular Sicily and Sardinia, Carthaginian Africa, and Egypt. The invasion of northern Germanic peoples into Europe largely displaced wheat and replaced it with their preferred rye. As Europe emerged from the Dark Ages, wheaten bread regained its popularity, but was largely restricted to the rich who could afford it; the poor had to make do with various mixtures of grains, leguminous plants, and nuts to make bread flour. Only during the nineteenth century did wheaten bread become commonly accessible for all.



There was no wheat in North America when the white man came, nor was there any rye, oats, barley, or millet. In 1493, Columbus planted wheat

*continued on page 3*

## **MNFC Newsletter**

A Monthly Publication of the  
Middlebury Natural Foods Cooperative  
9 Washington Street, Middlebury, Vermont 05753

Editor - Reiner Winkler  
Printed at *The Little Pressroom*, Middlebury, Vermont.

*The purpose of the MNFC Newsletter is to provide a means of communication between the Co-op and its general membership. Its aim is to provide a forum,*



*which promotes an awareness of social, health-related, political, economic, technological, and environmental issues as they relate to food and other products sold by the Co-op. In addition, the Newsletter provides a medium to introduce the Co-op and its products and services to the general public. The format is intended for educational debate and discussion. Your letters of opinion and article submissions are welcome and encouraged. The views expressed in the MNFC*

*Newsletter do not necessarily reflect the policies or beliefs of the Middlebury Natural Foods Cooperative as a whole.*

*Call us at 802-388-7276, or e-mail us at [mnfc@together.net](mailto:mnfc@together.net)  
Visit our website at [Middleburycoop.com](http://Middleburycoop.com)*

## **Middlebury Co-op Ends Statement**

*MNFC member owners, customers,  
and the community benefit from:*



- ◆ **Healthy Foods**
- ◆ **Vibrant Local Economy**
- ◆ **Environmentally Sustainable and Energy-Efficient Practices**
- ◆ **Cooperative Democratic Ownership**

*The Story of Wheat continued from page 1*

in the West Indies “to prove the soil.” Spanish ships took the grain to Mexico, and by 1687 wheat was widely grown in the vice-royalty of New Spain. Almost all American colonists brought wheat with them from Europe. As the country expanded beyond the Appalachian, wheat went with the pioneers. By the mid-nineteenth century wheat was well established in what would later become America’s grain belt. In 1898 the United States Department of Agriculture sent Mark Caletton to Russia to find a spring wheat to complement the sole crop of winter wheat. The result of this visit was the introduction to the United States of durum wheat, the hardest-kerneled of all wheat, which was rust-resistant and adapted to dry conditions. During our current preference for white bread, wheat is the world’s most widely distributed and cultivated cereal grain, and is grown in nearly every country. For many cultures, wheat has replaced the more traditional (and sometimes more nutritious) grains of buckwheat, rye, barley, quinoa, teff, and millet as the staple grain. More wheat is produced in the United States than almost anywhere else in the world, but the greatest part of that is consumed in highly refined forms.



There are countless varieties of wheat, the six major cultivated varieties being **Hard Red Winter Wheat** (planted in the fall, dormant during the winter months, and harvested in summer), **Hard Red Spring Wheat** (planted in Spring, harvested in summer); **Soft Red Winter Wheat, Durum Wheat, Hard White Wheat** (lacking the red gene in the bran), and **Soft White Wheat**. Hard wheat, containing lots of protein, is excellent for bread baking, pasta and pizza crust preparation. Soft wheat, with less protein, is ideal for making cookies, pastries, crackers, noodles, and steam bread.

Soil enrichment and advances in milling and processing technology have increased wheat production dramatically. By the early 1800s, 175 million bushels were processed. By the end of the same century, production had increased to 655 million bushels.



Wheat is known to stimulate the liver to cleanse itself of toxins. This cleansing may be experienced as an “allergy” if there is an abundance of toxins stored there; once the liver has regained its healthful state, wheat consumption does not generally produce any reaction. This relatively recent phenomenon of wheat allergy is due partly to its being consumed in so highly refined a form. Many people have found that it is the commercial highly-processed wheat they are allergic to, but not organically grown wheat used in its whole grain form. Other heirloom varieties of wheat such as kamut and spelt also seem to cause fewer allergic reactions. As well, those with allergies to wheat or other cereals are almost never allergic to them in their grass or sprouted stage.



Whole wheat is the most nutritious, since the nutritious bran and germ are left intact. Whole wheat also contains traces of barium and vanadium, both essential to the health of the heart. Refined wheat has been stripped of both bran and germ, losing as much as 80 percent of its vitamins and mineral and 93 percent of its fiber. So-called “enriched” white bread, which has had all of its original vitamins and mineral removed, has nothing left but raw starch of such little nutritive value that even most bacteria will not voluntarily eat it. Into this starch synthetic chemical are added, which from only part of the missing vitamin B complex, and are not properly ingestible by humans because they are not properly balanced. Naturally leavened breads are easier to digest, since they contain lactobacillus essential to the proper digestion of complex carbohydrates, and contain no phytic acid, which has been tied to anemia, rickets, and nervous disorders. They are also believed to be cancer inhibitors, whereas yeasted breads explode the starch cells of the bread, creating cell patterns and bioelectrical energy identical to cancer cells.

Unfortunately, wheat is now consumed in such large amounts that most everybody overconsumes it. In many families wheat in some form is served three times a day at meals and then snacked on in between, culminating in a habit of eating bread with almost everything we eat. This excludes other important foods, and wheat can become more of a detriment than a benefit to the body. Consumed in excess, wheat robs calcium from the body. Wheat is also the most acid-forming of the cereals.



The Co-op offers a large variety of wheat flours in the Bulk Foods and Grocery Baking sections of the store:

- ◆ *Gleason Grains* Whole Wheat Bread Flour: locally grown, organic, freshly milled, highly nutritious, excellent for bread baking, pizza crusts, etc. All *Gleason Grains* flours are stone-ground, thus no excessive heat is developed during the grinding process. Heat destroys nutrients and may cause the fat in the wheat’s germ to become rancid. Stone grinding also preserves a sweet and nutty flavor.
- ◆ *Gleason Grains* Sifted “Snake Mountain” flour has some of its bran removed. Many bakers prefer a mix of whole wheat and sifted flours (ratio 80%—20%) for their bread baking to create a somewhat lighter loaf.
- ◆ *Gleason Grain* Pastry Flour is ideal for pastries, pie dough and cookies. Pastry flour (soft wheat) contains less gluten which is the stuff that makes bread and pizza dough chewy. Please note: **Pastry flour** is different from **cake flour**. Cake flour is a finely processed flour, which usually is only available with added chemicals. Look for *King Arthur* Cake Flour without additives.
- ◆ If you are looking for a white flour (all of the bran removed), you may

want to consider *Nitty Gritty* White Flour (locally grown and organic), King Arthur Special Flour (high in gluten producing protein to create a light loaf), or King Arthur Classic Flour (organic and still containing the wheat germ).

**Other flours in the Bulk and Grocery** sections include

- ◆ Brown Rice, Buckwheat, Corn, Chick Pea, Quinoa, Tapioca, and Soy Flour. All of these are **gluten-free**.
- ◆ Spelt, Rye, Barley, Spelt, and Oat flours are excellent choices for creating interesting mixed flour baked goods. None of these are gluten-free.




#### **A word about gluten...**

Wheat and many other grains contain the proteins *glutenin* and *gliadin*. When they are combined with a liquid, they form gluten. Gluten is the stuff that makes dough doughy. Have you seen pizza makers swirl the dough overhead? This would not be possible without the gluten providing the dough with that amazing elasticity.

Bread bakers look for a fair amount of gluten in their flour. Cake bakers want less.

If you seek to avoid gluten altogether, wheat flour is not for you. Gluten free flours providing good amounts of protein and nutrition include quinoa and amaranth flour, among others. Please refer to a gluten free guide to find the flours that suit your baking needs.



**Wheat Kernel**

The wheat kernel is the seed of the wheat plant. More foods are made with wheat than any other cereal grain.

One bushel of wheat contains approximately 1 million individual wheat kernels. Each tiny seed has 3 parts: the endosperm, the bran, and the germ.

The **endosperm** is about 83% of the wheat kernel. It is starch and protein. White flour is entirely made up of the endosperm section of the kernel.

**Bran** is made up of the outer layers of the wheat kernel. It provides fiber and some vitamins.

The **germ** is little more than 2 % of the whole wheat kernel. It is the sprouting portion of the seed. It is often sold as a nutritional supplement.

**Source:** *The Whole Foods Companion*, A Guide for Adventurous Cooks, Curious Shoppers & Lovers of Natural Foods, by Dianne Onstad

## Free Glutamic Acid

by Ross Conrad



How did Free Glutamic Acid, the chemical in Monosodium Glutamate (MSG), find its way onto the shelves of the Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op?

Right from its inception, the MNFC has endeavored to offer healthy foods to its member/owners and customers. Over the years this principle has become encoded in the Co-op's Buying Criteria (BC). The BC seek to help the Co-op staff define healthy food by outlining what is considered *not* healthy, rather than what is healthy.

One of the first items to be added to this list of criteria were artificial flavors, colors and preservatives. Monosodium Glutamate (MSG) has historically been considered an artificial flavor by the Co-op and has been banned from products sold in the store. Thus, you can imagine my surprise when I learned that our Co-op offers numerous items that contain small amounts of free glutamic acid, the chemical that MSG is composed of. How did such a situation come about?

It turns out that as more and more research began being published on the adverse health effects of MSG and consumers began to learn about the questions being raised about MSG's safety, sales of Monosodium Glutamate and products containing MSG began to suffer. This created a problem for businesses that sold these products since labeling laws require MSG to be listed as an ingredient. This made it easy for shoppers who read the labels to avoid their products.

Since MSG is defined by the FDA as *containing approximately 99% or more free glutamic acid*, manufacturers of processed foods containing MSG were able to get around this law by switching to ingredients that still contained free glutamic acid but in much lower concentrations rather than remove the MSG all together. According to the website [truthinlabeling.org](http://truthinlabeling.org), the ingredients found in foods that always contain free glutamic acid include: Glutamate, Glutamic acid, Monopotassium glutamate, Calcium glutamate, Monoammonium glutamate, Magnesium glutamate, Natrium glutamate, Gelatin, Calcium caseinate, Sodium caseinate, Textured protein, anything "hydrolyzed", any "hydrolyzed ... protein", Yeast nutrient, Yeast extract, Yeast food, and Autolyzed yeast.

Over the years approximately 100 items that contain one or more

## ~ FROM THE BOARD ~

The MNFC Board of Directors meets every month to discuss a broad range of subjects related to our Co-op, including possible future directions. Anyone in the community is welcome to attend. Time is set aside at the beginning of each meeting for members to share ideas, express concerns, or make suggestions. Please join us!

The next MNFC Board meeting will be held on **November 16 at 6:30 pm** in the **Co-op Meeting Room**.



of the above free-glutamic-acid containing ingredients have found their way onto the store shelves. These products are found mostly in the soy cooler that contains meat substitutes, as well as some of the store's grocery and frozen food items and a couple items in the bulk department. The presence of free glutamic acid in the store has created a challenge for the Co-op board and staff.

The BC ban the ingredient made up of at least 99% free glutamic acid known as MSG. Products that contain ingredients with lower levels of free glutamic acid are not covered by the current criteria since they are not technically artificial ingredients as defined by the FDA. And yet, to allow products that contain ingredients with a lower concentration of free glutamic acid to be sold when items with a higher level are not, may not seem to be in keeping with the spirit of the Co-op's goal of providing healthy foods.

One's initial impulse might be to update the BC and remove all products from the shelves that contain one or more of the free glutamic acid containing ingredients listed above. Unfortunately, this would impact numerous products some of which the Co-op sells a lot of. Such a move would deprive many MNFC member/owners of their favorite items possibly making them or their family members upset.

Rather than inconvenience customers and potentially threaten the financial health of the Co-op, there is an effort underway to educate MNFC member/owners about the presence and potential health issues that products containing free glutamic acid pose. It is hoped that over time sales of these items will drop to the point that they can then be discontinued and, when possible, be replaced with items that do not contain free glutamic acid. You can help this effort by reducing or eliminating products with the above ingredients from your shopping list. Healthy Food: Your shopping choices have an impact.

Ross Conrad is a member of our Co-op. Ross also serves on the Board of Directors as Vice President and chair person of the Buying Criteria Committee.

## CELEBRATING OUR LOCAL FOOD PRODUCERS



### **Elmer Farm, East Middlebury, Vermont** by Jennifer and Spencer Blackwell

**Please tell us about how you  
got into the farming business.**

Spencer grew up in a rural part of Vermont on an old dairy farm. He loved being outdoors and working on machinery with his father. After college, he began working on vegetable farms before he started his own business, Intervale Bean and Grain, with the Intervale Center's Farm Incubator Program. Spencer's passion for farming comes from his drive for physical work and more importantly, his views about keeping Vermont's agricultural soils productive rather than developed.

Jennifer's roots are in northern Vermont but with little farming history in her mother's family. Her father comes from a farming background and it was on her grandmother's farm where she spent days in the fields and helping with chores. In 1998, during a yearlong AmeriCorps program working with at risk youth, she was reacquainted with her passion for farm work. Jennifer's path in agriculture led her back home to Vermont where she worked at the Intervale Community Farm before she later joined Spencer at Intervale Bean and Grain. In 2006, we purchased the Elmer Farm in East Middlebury through the Vermont Land Trust's Farmland Access Program. We're dedicated to working with school groups, connecting with the community for special events and participating in the Addison County gleaning program.

#### **What crop is your biggest money-maker?**

Rather than one specific crop, our niche in our wholesale market has been to sell crops in the extended season both in early spring and late fall. As new growers, we had to find a way in the market which meant selling crops when other growers weren't offering. In the early spring, we grow zucchini in the hoop house, transplant beets and try to get an early jump on greenhouse tomatoes. In the fall, we plant successions of head lettuce in our hoop houses and grow crops that can be harvested late into the fall such as leeks and carrots. We have also found success in selling varieties of vegetables that are unique in their color and shape such as Chiogga Beets, Boothby Blonde Cucumbers,

## CELEBRATING OUR LOCAL FOOD PRODUCERS

Rosa Bianca Eggplant, French Breakfast Radishes, Red Russian Kale, Turkish Orange Eggplant and Benning's Green Tint Squash. Many of these varieties are heirlooms. This diversity makes for a beautiful farmers market display which draws customers to our stand.

### What is the greatest challenge you have faced, as farmers?

Our biggest challenge has been finding our way in the market. As new growers, it takes a lot of work to build a dedicated customer following, grow new relationships with wholesale accounts and gain the trust of members for a CSA. We appreciate the opportunity to remain in Vermont where our family roots are and make Addison County our home.

The weather is a challenge but it is an inherent part of farming. Even though we accept this, damaging winds, prolonged rainfall and hail can damage a crop or farm structures in a short amount of time. This is always a challenge. We are fortunate that we have some soil that drains well and this is a tremendous help in some situations.

### What do you like to grow best?

#### Can you recommend a recipe?

Carrots are definitely one of our favorite crops to grow. We have great soil for growing carrots and this crop can withstand diseases, pests (except deer) and weather better than others. We love to eat carrots, they are hardy and we have them nearly all season long. Another favorite is garlic for many of the same reasons.



There is a wonderful carrot soup recipe on the *Stonyfield* website that a friend made for me not long ago that we now make quite often.

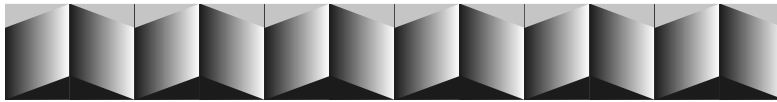
2 tablespoons olive oil	4 cups vegetable stock
2 garlic cloves, chopped	2 tablespoons rice
3/4 cup onion, diced	1 cup <i>Stonyfield</i> Lowfat Plain Yogurt
1 tablespoon ginger, peeled and chopped	2 to 3 tablespoon flour
3 cups carrots, peeled and chopped	Salt and pepper to taste

Using a small stock pot, heat olive oil, over a medium-high flame. Once hot, add garlic, onions, and ginger and sauté until onions begin to soften and



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turn translucent in color. Add carrots, vegetable stock and rice, and simmer for 30 minutes or until carrots break apart easily. Using a blender or food processor, puree the soup until smooth. Return the soup to the pot, and heat over a medium flame. In a small bowl, combine yogurt and flour, and blend until well mixed. Stir this mixture into the soup, being careful not to bring the soup back to a boil. Season with salt and pepper, and garnish with a dollop of plain yogurt.



### **Vermont Moonlight Cookies** **Shaftsbury, Vermont** by Barbara Bacchi

#### **How did you come up with the name for your Cookies?**

I wanted to have "Vermont" in the name of the company and I really was leaning toward "Moonlight in Vermont" but thought I might be sued by the music industry for using the name of the famous song about our state. So I switched it around to "Vermont Moonlight" and then, of course, added "Cookies." However, as you know, there actually is a chocolate by that name. And, actually, some customers don't understand - when I'm at a show or a demo giving out samples, there's always someone that comes up to me and asks, "What's a moonlight cookie?" Oh, well.

#### **What is your best seller, and why do you think so?**

Well, it's kind of a toss-up between two. The maple shortbread is the first cookie recipe I came up with, and it's so Vermont -- it's shortbread made with Vermont ingredients -- Cabot butter, King Arthur flour and local maple syrup from my town of Shaftsbury. There are no artificial maple flavors - just pure maple syrup. And they are hand cut into the shape of maple leaves. These are also the most popular for wedding favors because they are almost a state symbol. However, my lemon-ginger shortbread, also made with local ingredients, is another winner and, I believe, passing the maple for a couple of reasons - the dough consists of crystallized ginger and lemon oil in a shortbread

## CELEBRATING OUR LOCAL FOOD PRODUCERS

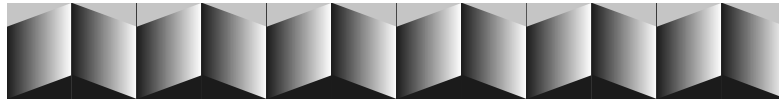
cookie and then coated with Callebaut white chocolate on the bottom. The cookies are stamped with Vermont themes - maple leaves, bears, moose, snowflakes, trout and moons. Obviously, it depends on who you ask, but they are both big sellers.

### **What is the greatest challenge you face in this business?**

Being the only employee is my greatest challenge. My family jumps in when I'm in over my head, but I don't have any "official" employees. I sometimes bite off more than I can chew - or say yes to any request - and then find myself working many hours. I'd also like to be able to turn some of my paperwork over to someone who "loves" accounting work - and that is certainly not me. I just want to bake and market. I don't like bookkeeping.

### **What is the farthest distance you have ever shipped your cookies, and is there a story behind this?**

I've shipped to Hawaii, but there's no interesting story there. But I do remember getting a call from someone in California wanting to order. When I answered the phone and began to speak with her, she hesitated and asked where she was calling. I've lived in Vermont since 1973, but I still have my Brooklyn accent. The customer thought she dialed wrong and wondered she reached Vermont. I guess she expected a New England accent and was confused when I began to speak. Looking back on that, I think I should have just told her that she reached the Brooklyn office.



## **Elmore Mountain Farm Morrisville, Vermont by Peter Merrill**

**You make goat's milk body care products.  
Did you grow up in a goat farming family?**  
Neither of us grew up farming but we both had plenty of exposure to farm life. I grew up on a place that was once a working farm, and we kept lots of animals - goats, rabbits, ducks, horses - but



## CELEBRATING OUR LOCAL FOOD PRODUCERS

they were mainly pets. Bunny spent her weekends and summers on a dairy farm in Strafford, that her great aunt had purchased in the 1930s. We both love animals and working and being outside. It's still the best part about what we do.

### **What are the properties in goat's milk that make it good for human skin?**

Goat's milk has many properties that make it very beneficial for your skin. It has a pH level close to that of human skin which helps to make it non-irritating which is especially helpful for people with very sensitive skin or other skin problems. Alpha hydroxyl acids contained in goat's milk help to remove old skin cells which makes for healthier, younger looking skin, while the fats contained in it help to make for a very moisturizing soap.

### **Do you raise goats for meat, milk, cheese or other uses besides body care?**

We've made a little cheese for ourselves but mostly we just stick to making soap. We breed our goats every year to maintain our milk supply, but we try to ensure that the babies we don't keep end up going to good homes as pets or future dairy stock.



### **What is your most popular product?**

Our Vermont Goat's Milk Soap wrapped in cheesecloth is far and away our best selling product. When we first started making soap, Bunny wanted a product that was high quality but one that also made you smile. We didn't want to take our selves too seriously but we wanted a serious product. Hopefully, we've hit that mark.

## The Big Ear of Corn

You must have noticed our big ear of corn at the entrance to the store during the month of September. As a part of the Eat Local Challenge, the Co-op kept track of the amount of money we pay local businesses for goods that are retailed to our customers. This year we sold \$ 239,000 worth of locally grown or produced food. We did not quite reach our goal of \$ 259,000, but we still outdid last year's \$ 235,000.



Thank you, local food lovers!

## Wendy's Cheese Corner

### Vermont Shepherd

*Vermont Shepherd* is the most well-known sheep's milk cheese in the United States. David Major began producing this cheese in 1993 on the 250 acre farm he grew up on, in Westminster West, near Putney, Vermont. David studied cheese making in the French Pyrenees, in the Basque Region, where he learned how to make an aged sheep's milk cheese. He and his wife Yesenia and their 5 children milk 200 ewes twice a day.

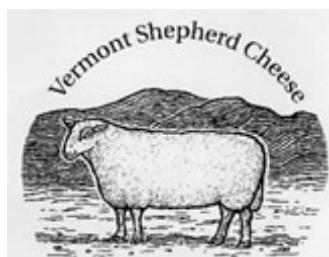
The disc shaped wheels weigh between 5 - 10 pounds, sporting a golden brown rough-ribbed rind. *Vermont Shepherd* has a hearty yet subtle sweet and rich earthy taste. The ivory-colored paste is smooth and creamy, with a soft and dense texture. This raw milk cheese is aged 4-8 months in the cave at the Major's Farm, 4 feet underground, and built into the hillside. Each year 20,000 pounds of this wonderful cheese are produced, available for 7 to 8 months of the year, typically August through April.

*Vermont Shepherd* has won many awards through the years, including **Best of Class** (repeatedly!) in the American Cheese Society Competition, and a medal at the **World Cheese Awards** in London. They have also won two **conservation awards** for the quality of farming and improvements of soil and grassland management.

As an appetizer — all you need is a crusty loaf of bread and a slice of *Vermont Shepherd* cheese. For lunch just sliver this amazing sheep's milk cheese and add sliced tomatoes and black pepper. Traditionally this kind of cheese is served with cherry preserve or glazed roasted figs.

Throughout the year the Majors have helped quite a number of aspiring cheese makers in Vermont to get started, including. For example, *Twig Farm's* Michael Lee.

The Majors offer a mixed milk cheese as well: **Invierno**. It is a semi-hard natural rind cheese, aged 4-5 months. It's a versatile cheese with a rich, butter and mushroom flavor. It melts well and is delicious with cider, beer and rich savory red wines. *Invierno* is now available at your Co-op!



## Massage Therapy for Immune Support

by Gaia Billings, CMT

There are many ways we can help our immune system defend against infections. Staying hydrated, eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly are all beneficial. Massage Therapy is also an excellent way to boost your immune system. We usually think of massage for stress relief and easing muscle tension but often overlook other benefits, many of which boost the immune process:

- ◆ **Increased circulation** of blood and lymph, therefore increased nourishment to cells, cleansing of metabolic wastes and pathogens.
- ◆ **Relaxation** which helps the body shift from the sympathetic to parasympathetic nervous system. Changing from a fight or flight state when many of the body's systems and processes are slowed due to stress, to a state of normal function when the immune system will be at its strongest.
- ◆ **Release of endorphins** (neurotransmitters) many of which assist the immune process.
- ◆ **Improved sleep** which means more healing time for your body. While you sleep, hormonal, metabolic and immune functions are activated.



*Gaia is a member of our Co-op staff. She practices Therapeutic Massage Therapy in Middlebury. For more information you can contact her at 802-377-2507. Co-op Members receive a 10% discount.*

## Thanksgiving Turkey

It's time to order your *Stonewood Farm* fresh, free range, all natural Vermont turkey for the Thanksgiving Feast.



No Antibiotics, Hormones, or Preservatives

The Co-op is taking orders for fresh turkey, ranging from 14 to 30 pounds, at \$ 2.99/lb.

Orders must be received by

**Sunday, November 13**

Pick-up date is:

**Monday, November 21 after 1 pm;  
through Wednesday, November 23 .**

For questions or further information, contact Jennifer at 388-7276.