



# GOOD THYMES

## DNF CO-OP'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

June 2023





Have you noticed that food prices have gone up over the past year and a half? I'm sure most of you have. Gosh. What can you do? Covid and supply chain issues have played havoc with prices. Right?

Well, yes, that is correct but it is only a small part of the story. The all encompassing reason though is.... greed. No, no – not me (although sometimes I want all the chocolate cake and not want to share – I'm sure it's just a stage I'm going through and I'll grow out of it).

I'm talking about corporate greed. As someone who has been in this business since the '70s, I can easily tell you that our food distribution system is corrupt and it has been so for over a hundred and fifty years.

Lot's of folks don't want to hear this and project that all our food is grown by dedicated family farmers and made into wonderful treats by dedicated chefs and foodies. Yeah - that accounts for a small – a very, very small – percentage of what is available to us.

A&P was the first major grocery store. Have you heard of them? I'm actually stunned by how many people never have. They started in 1859 and between 1915 and 1975 – they were the largest grocery store company in this country. As a matter of fact, until the mid-1960's, they were the largest US retail company. They were Walmart before Walmart came about.

Times were different 100 years ago. Manufacturers legally set the price of products not stores. A&P challenged that because they wanted to sell things less than anyone else to become known as the "economy store". They took the manufacturers to court to allow them to sell items at whatever they wanted to. They lost. So they started their own brands where they could set the price and private labeling took off.

But what they were doing was good. Right? I mean who doesn't want lower prices? Because A&P was becoming so large, even with charging less, they still made millions because of how many stores they had. That would be 13,961 stores in 1925.

Hot on their heels was a grocery store company called Kroger's. This retailer was unique in that they combined different food businesses under one roof such as having a bakery, produce and a butcher. They were growing fast. Another player that entered the fray in 1916 was Piggly Wiggly (really). They transformed the food market. Previously, when you went to the store, you stood at a counter and ordered what you want and the clerk went to procure it for you. The Piggy introduced self-service and soon all the others became self-service too.

There is so much that happened over the decades, there is no way to fit it all in this little column. So let's fast forward to the present. Kroger's grew by acquiring other chains such as City Market, King Soopers, Smiths, Fry's, Fred Myers and many others. They are now trying to merge with Albertsons (they're actually trying to buy them but since Albertsons says "it's cool" it's a merger not a buy-out --- whatever...).

In 1999, a new grocery retailer appeared. Walmart decided to become a grocery and within 12 years was the dominant grocery retailer. Today Walmart has at least 25% of the grocery market. Number two is... surprise!.... Costco, but they only have 7% of the market. Kroger comes in third with 5.6%. Albertsons/Safeway has around 4%. Whole Foods by Amazon – barely registers.

These 4 companies dominate the grocery industry and have an outsized influence on the manufactures. Through Covid and the supply chain issues, they demanded first dibs on products before other stores may buy them. And then they raised their prices bringing in record profits. Tied to the system, the manufactures were contractually unable to offer all the other markets the same prices so prices rose in other grocery stores as well but the same profit was not available.

Wow! It's called "cornering the market" and the driving force is profits... powered by greed.

There have been congressional hearings about all this over the last couple of years. Do you think it's going to change? Yeah... right.

It's actually a lot bigger than what I'm relaying because the major manufacturers are in "collusion" with these 4 grocery retailers and also reaping record profits.

None of the grocery stores not named Walmart, Krogers (under many names), Costco or Albertsons have any real say in the marketplace or are able to change the system. That includes us.

So what can we do? We don't have a lot of choices. Most independent grocers and Co-ops associate with each other to try to get leverage with the manufacturers and distributors. We belong to the National Cooperative Grocers (NCG) but we only have 155 stores. Walmart has 4,717. Kroger has 3,242.

However, although it's playing the game set up by the dominating corporations, you can save money by shopping the sales. Our Co-op Deals (Green signs) rotate twice a month and there are always Member Specials (Reddish/Orange signs. This month of June, we have Member Appreciation Days (MAD!) where an extra 10% is taken off your purchases for one shopping trip of your choosing! By combining your MAD discount with Co-op Deals and Member Sales, you can be saving 20% to 40%.

As a Co-op, we don't have any special powers to get super deals not available to other grocery stores at our level. But we do go out-of-our-way to procure the deals that are available. We highlight local, which actually is sometimes higher in cost because the small farmer/manufacturer doesn't have the resources available to the mega-corporations. The dollars though stay within the community creating jobs and local empowerment.

We also have our cost saving Great Big Bonanza Equity Drive where you can get additional discounts as well as a 5% off bonus on every shopping trip when you reach full equity investment! More and more folks are taking advantage of that. The best quality foods at fare prices. That's what we're about!

-Joe Z



# WE'RE BACK AT THE FARMERS MARKET

Here's what to know before you go this season:

## **1 WE OPEN AT 8:00 AM SHARP**

When the market is open, so are we. **Pro tip: This is the best time to stop in for a bite - prior to the mid-morning rush.**

## **2 AND WE'RE STOCKED**

**Our booth serves: breakfast burritos, grab-n-go sandwiches, plus cold pressed juices.**

## **3 WITH A TRULY LOCAL FOCUS**

**Many of our products are made with ingredients grown right here in Durango, or just beyond. Ask the staff!**

## **4 BUT THINGS MOVE FAST**

**While we wish we could, we cannot pump out burritos indefinitely - we've been known to sell out of our goodies by the end of the market.**

**"We accept farmers market bucks!"**

**"Juices go fast, stop in early and often"**

**"Our burritos are made-to-order, ask about GF/VG options"**



Courtesy of the team behind the booth, they know their stuff

# Pro Tips



# MEET NAOMI

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**SAY HELLO TO ONE  
OF OUR BELOVED  
FRONT-END TEAM  
LEADS + A FRIEND  
TO ALL AT OUR  
COOPERATIVE**

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# Lets Chat!



Check in every month for a DNFC feature celebrating the people who make our Co-op run

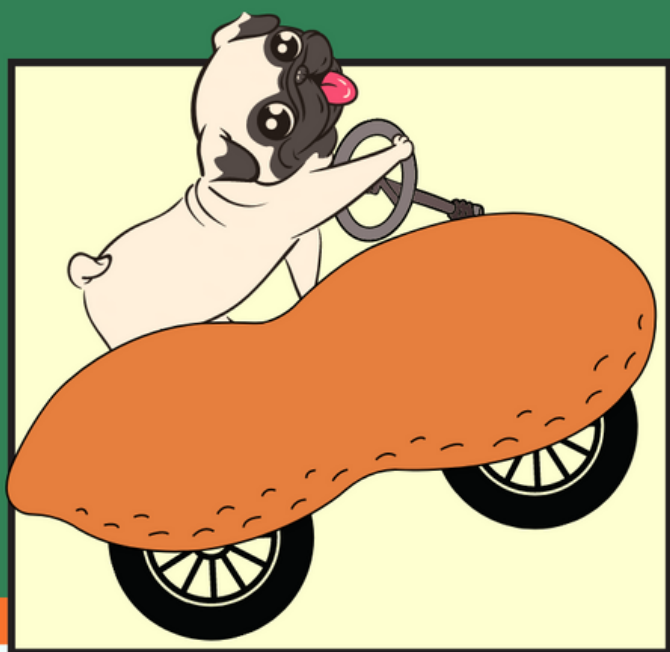
1. So, where are you from?
  - a. Tulsa, Oklahoma
2. And how did you end up in Durango?
  - a. I visited twice during family vacations growing up, then toured the college in 2019 because tuition is omitted for Native Americans -- been here ever since.
3. When you're not at DNFC, what are you getting up to?
  - a. Other than being a student, I bead, knit, and write poetry. I also have a bunny I tend to -- Joon.
4. Anything that might surprise shoppers about you?
  - a. I do comedy! See my dry sense of humor in action Monday's at 8p.
5. Favorite things about working at the co-op?
  - a. That we accept EBT + we're one of only two locations in Durango that give back Double Up Food Bucks. Plus, I've never been in a work environment that feels this healthy.
6. What is something you are excited to bring to the store?
  - a. Having Native representation, especially as we're situated on ancestral land and territory of the Ute people, is important as a Co-op that represents its community.
7. In preparation for an outdoor adventure, which three DNFC products would you bring?
  - a. Farm to Summit, Patagonia Provisions, any trail mix.
8. In ten words or less, how would you describe our Co-op to an extraterrestrial?
  - a. Super cool, goofy goobers running a community sourced grocery store.

HELP US GROW OUR CO-OP!

# DRIVE EQUITY

----- DURING... -----

# THE GREAT BIG BONANZA EQUITY DRIVE



INVEST \$100 TO  
YOUR EQUITY  
ACCOUNT +  
RECEIVE MAJOR  
SAVINGS

TALK TO A CASHIER OR ANY STAFF  
MEMBER TO LEARN MORE + SAVE

# ORGANIC VS. LOCAL



## What does the Co-op sell, and why does it matter?

*Let's dig into the situation. Written by Jack Leggett*

Several years back I got a call from a Washington D.C. number, and the times being what they are I didn't answer. The ensuing voicemail, left by an employee of the USDA, informed me that the farm I was managing was in violation for using a variation of the word "organic" in advertising. The phrase in question stated that our produce was "organically grown", an often-used side-step by small farms to convey that they don't use pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, or other means of conventional agriculture not allowed under the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) Certificate, without also jumping through the hoops and paying the fees required to obtain said certification. Hence, using any variation of the word "organic", or by altering its appearance in statement i.e., "beyond organic", "grown organically", "produced with organic inputs", is inherently a violation of a copywrite entity owned by the United States Department of Agriculture. Much like any farmer eschewing glyphosates (industrial herbicides), I'm getting into the weeds.

In this region there are quite a few small farms going about their business, growing great food for their customers, without using herbicides or synthetic pesticides, who do not have an (let's use the big OC for this) Organic Certification. On the other hand, there are quite a few small farms in our region that grow great food for their customers, while adhering to the NOP requirements and paying for its label.

At DNF we know our farmers. Several of them are USDA Certified Organic, a title they have earned through dedicated environmentally beneficial practices and documentation. Several are not "Organic", but we know them (as do their customers, employees, volunteers etc.), and we trust them, to also bring us quality produce that was grown with the benefit of the environment and its inhabitants as an ultimate goal.

The Organic label has its greatest benefit in larger markets. Were we in a metro area with many hundreds of farms within a day's drive, who's to say whether or not a dab of ammonia nitrate or 2-4D is apparent in the produce? Our local Organic farms can sell their vegetables without question to national grocery chains and processors that also wear the USDA Organic label. All Seasons Farm in Bayfield is qualified to supply Natural Grocers with eggplant, kale, squash and more. Fields to Plate Farm north of Durango is able to sell thousands of pounds of cabbage, and root vegetables to Farmhand Organics so they can make all-Organic vegetable ferments for sale nationally. White Rock Farm, in the San Luis Valley sells us (DNF) USDA certified potatoes and quinoa, and Pueblo, CO based Millberger Farms provides us organic radishes and more, items we wouldn't carry without an Organic label given the distance from us.

In our 100 mile back-yard agricultural resources are scarcer than other parts of the country, and the few that have committed to providing fresh, responsible food for all are worthy of our dollars, no matter the size, label or not. As the local growing season warms and flourishes, we will continue to source and provide the best quality produce to our customers that we know how.

Local veggies to look forward to in June:

- Baby Bok Choi
- Snap Peas
- Beets
- Hakurei Turnips
- Green Garlic bunches
- CHERRY TOMATOES!?!?!?
- Colorado stone fruit



**Tune in next month for an in-depth look at The Old Fort, a local agriculture powerhouse producing food AND farmers**

**Say hi to Jack!**

Our Produce Manager and resident expert on all things that grow from the Earth



# A FUN GUIDE TO FUNGI

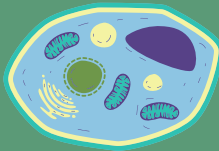
## But more specifically, mushrooms



### WHAT IS FUNGI?



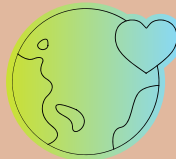
Fungi are spore-producing organisms that get their food from decaying material or other living things



### SO THEN WHAT'S A MUSHROOM?

Mushrooms are what's called the "fruiting body" of fungi. They come in 14,000+ varieties, but only a few percent of them are edible

### HERE'S WHY WE CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF THEM



Aside from being rich with with flavor, they're a wonderful meat substitute + are extremely eco-friendly. Did we mention the massive health benefits?

### MUSHROOMS ARE A "SUPERFOOD"



They're packed with health-boosting vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants + linked to lower blood pressure, boosted immune system, weight loss, and more

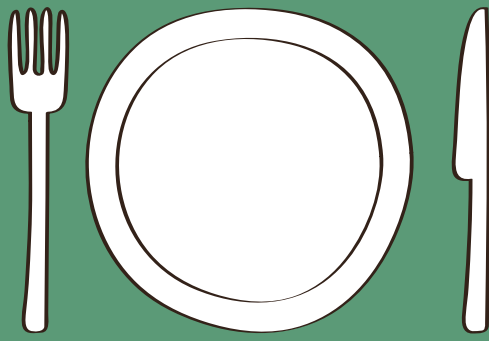
### AND YOU CAN FIND THEM AT OUR CO-OP



### LOOK FOR LOCAL GROWERS LIKE:

- Humble Fungi
- Leafcutter Farms





Here's what's cooking in the kitchens of the DNFC staff and community

## MARINATED + GRILLED FARM FRESH MUSHROOMS

Inspired by our dear friends at Leafcutter Farms



### MARINADE INGREDIENTS (ENOUGH FOR ~2LBS)

- 1 cup soy sauce
- 1 cup water
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 Tbsp onion powder
- 3 Tbsp distilled white vinegar
- 3 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 3 Tsp garlic powder
- 1/2 Tbsp minced fresh ginger

### MUSHROOM RECS

Anything from our local friends! Look for: Lions Mane, Chestnuts, Trumpets, Oysters, Creminis

### PREPARATION

1. In a shallow baking dish, whisk together marinade ingredients. Taste and adjust seasonings if you like. Add the mushrooms and turn to coat. Pro-tip: The longer they sit, the more intense the flavor will be. (Let them go for hours, if you dare.)
2. Heat a grill or a large skillet over medium heat (about 350 to 400 degrees F). Brush the grill with oil to prevent sticking. Remove the mushrooms from the bowl, shaking off any excess marinade and reserving the marinade for basting. Cook on each side for 3-4 minutes, or until caramelized and deep golden brown. Brush the remaining marinade over the mushrooms several times as they cook.

WELCOME  
TO OUR  
TABLE

OUR FAVORITE  
SPACE TO SHARE  
PRODUCTS +  
RECIPES OUR  
TEAM SIMPLY  
CAN'T GET  
ENOUGH OF

Lets  
Cook!

Check out our  
inspiration



REEL SHARED ON MAY 28  
BY LEAF CUTTER FARMS



# A MESSAGE FROM THE DNF BOARD

Hello Community!

What is palpable to both observe and feel are people's spirits lifted with the slow onset of spring, surrounded by particularly green and fresh life soaking up surprise May showers. Why do we love to see new life, from sprouts to babies? Because it elicits generative thinking and feeling. It is why I find myself pausing at DNF's produce area, breathing in beauty, color, smells and textures.

Spring at DNF means that our produce section will start filling with more of our local farmer's produce. Choosing local produce acknowledges the story behind the food: the hands, the labor, the admirable vision and dedication. When you shop at the co-op, consider picking up a few extra local items in produce. Take it a step further and do a little research into a farm, see the faces behind our food, it can make an important connection that we don't often experience.

Spring at DNF means the start of our presence at the Farmer's Market. DNF provides delicious food and fresh pressed juices for market shoppers. Please take a moment to visit us at our booth, alongside many of the farmers whose produce is stocked in our store!

The Board would like to extend a big gratitude for all those who voted in our Board of Directors election. There were many community members who put their hat in the ring so to speak, which indicates to us that people care, want to serve and believe in the democratic and independent mission of cooperatives. Thank you for running in the election, we'd love to have all of you but then it might start to feel like a congressional body versus a board :)



**Sheryl McGourty**

We are pleased to welcome Ryan and Ryan, yep, Ryan Erickson and Ryan Lazo. They come to the board with important skills that will complement the current board. Ryan Erickson brings to the table financial expertise and Ryan Lazo, brings experience and passion with community engagement. Wes Medlock was the elected incumbent and we are fortunate to have him for a third term. We recognize the benefit of consistency on the board: those who have seen the ups and downs, know the history, can give perspective while inviting new people with fresh perspectives and ideas.

There is much on the horizon at DNF. While shopping, keep in mind the staying power behind the store, the investment of hearts and values, the hard-working team that keeps it all functioning. This season, consider offering some positive feedback to an employee or manager. As a board member, I have gained a new appreciation for what it takes to sustain our cooperative and a little acknowledgment can go a long way. Thank you for your membership, equity contribution, continued patronage, friendly face in the aisles, input and support...after all, a co-op is the membership.

I hope to see you pausing at the produce section and taking it all in.

Sheryl McGourty | Co-President

# MEMBER APPRECIATION DAYS

10% OFF ONE ENTIRE SHOP FOR  
MEMBER OWNERS THIS MONTH



MAD

MYR

# coop deals

MAY 31 - JUN 20, 2023

*cookout fixings*

## EXTRA YUMMY

With all the summer gatherings and outdoor meals coming up, head to the co-op for great deals on your favorite items — like Applegate hot dogs. Find your family's favorite toppings to make your hot dogs extra delicious.



**4.99**

Applegate Hotdogs  
10 oz., selected varieties



**2/\$6**

Organicville Organic Dressing or Vinaigrette  
8 fl. oz., selected varieties



**4.79**

Lifeway Organic Kefir  
32 fl. oz., selected varieties



**2/\$10**

So Delicious Dairy-free Frozen Novelties  
1 pt., selected varieties



Buy One, Get One

**FREE**

*special offers inside!*





Buy One, Get One

**FREE**

Riojana  
Organic Fair Trade Extra  
Virgin Olive Oil  
25.5 fl. oz, selected varieties

up your snack game



Buy One, Get One

**FREE**

From The Ground Up  
Cauliflower Snacks  
3.5-4.5 oz., selected varieties



Buy One, Get One

**FREE**

Annie's  
Organic Ketchup  
24 oz.



Buy One, Get One

**FREE**

Just Ice Tea  
Tea  
16 fl. oz., selected varieties



Buy One, Get One

**FREE**

Beyond Meat  
Beyond Burger Patties  
8 oz.

Check out the DNF website for more BOGO deals + sales going through the end of the month



SCAN ME