

Terre Foods Cooperative Market - Newsletter

December 2012

Volume 1 – Issue 6



TFCM Membership Drive is Coming – February 1

Terre Foods will launch a membership drive starting on February 1, 2013. The drive will last for three months and has a goal of pushing our membership list to 600 members. Our current total is 472 members. A successful drive will depend on the efforts of you, our fellow member-owners, to get involved. You can expect a letter from our Membership Committee in the coming weeks that explains in detail how you can help. Remember, this is *your* co-op. Help us make it a reality by enlarging our ranks!

Local Foods & Community: Panel Discussion and Film

Terre Foods Community Market and Indiana State University are pleased to collaborate in offering to the public a panel discussion on “**Local foods and the Community.**” The discussion will explore the ways local foods producers interact with the community-at-large in promoting economic development and quality of life. The public will have the opportunity to hear what local food growers have to offer and how the community can support their growth. Panelists include Robyn Morton of Terre Foods Community Market, Kris Kraut of ISU Residential Dining, local grower Aaron Warner, and Jason Saavedra of the Food Hub. Panel presentations will be followed by breakout sessions that will allow attendees to explore particular issues of interest. This Community Semester event will conclude with a screening of the film **Fresh**. The public is encouraged to attend and participate in any or all of these free events which will be held in Federal Hall on the ISU campus starting at 1 p.m. on Saturday, February 2, 2013. Local food refreshments will be served.

Downtown Farmer’s Winter Market 1st Saturday of Month

The days are cool, cloudy, and maybe snowy. But, the indoors winter Farmers Market is now open!. The **Winter Farmer’s Market** is held at the **Clabber Girl Museum** on the **First Saturday of the month 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.** The produce is limited to winter and early spring crops that can be grown in a green house or cold frame, but many other vendors are there with a variety of local products -- local meats and cheeses, local artisans, honey, and, as always, fresh baked goods. And yes, Terre Foods Cooperative Market has a booth there.



A Visit to River Valley Market

By Don Richards, Member-Owner, TFCM

Recently I had the opportunity to visit River Valley Market (RVM) in Northampton, MA. RVM is a natural and local foods cooperative of the type we are earnestly attempting to establish here in our own community. It has all the elements we hope to replicate in TFCM; a full service grocery store with a strong emphasis on local, natural and organic foods; a commitment to community; a great deli; financial success. As far as the last of these is concerned, consider that in the fiscal year ending in 2011, after just its third year of operation, RVM realized annual sales of \$13 million dollars. This represents a level that had not originally been anticipated until its tenth year of operations. This same year also saw the successful completion of a \$300,000 member loan drive based on loans from 75 of its 4,704 members. Finally, 2011 was significant inasmuch as its operations resulted its first profit, a strong signal of financial sustainability.

Now, before we catch another case of “co-op envy,” a condition we are all too familiar with at TFCM, it is well to consider RVM’s longer history. RVM started as an organization in 1998. By 2002 they numbered 1,300 members! This figure prompted one potential landlord to exclaim, “This isn’t a grocery store, it’s a cultural phenomenon!” And yet a reading of their early annual reports reveals many of the same sorts of aspirations and frustrations that we can all recognize. How to choose a site? How to raise finance? How to spread our message? How to engage local government and community leaders?

The route RVM traveled was not an easy one. By mid-July 2004, despite having grown its membership to 1,700, the co-op had accumulated \$241,913 in losses. This same year, however, saw the completion of a member loan drive that totaled over \$800,000 (of a \$1 million goal.) Critically, this tremendous accomplishment was the result of the collected and coordinated efforts of a 14-member loan committee. Not surprisingly, their efforts also relied heavily on the cooperative hand they received from five other local area cooperatives.

As they entered the 2005 fiscal year they promised an open store by 2006. It didn’t happen. What did occur in that year, however, was the completion of their \$1 million member loan drive. With this accomplishment in hand they could leverage major debt financing in the amount of \$3.5 million. This enabled them to enter the preconstruction phase of their project. During this phase they spent \$432,727, with three-quarters of this amount dedicated to development stage construction. They added another 200 members and another \$600,000 in member loans. Today RVM is the proud collective owner of a 15,000 square foot (retail space)store, and it is a beauty!

What is the take-away message for TFCM? There are probably too many of them to cite in this space. But the major ones are that: (1) the process is a long one; (2) many hands and hours are required; (3) success has a momentum; (4) anything is possible. I want to emphasize (3). Success gives birth to more success. When your friends and neighbors see growth, they are less reluctant to get on board. What we need at this still early stage are success catalysts.

There is nothing in the Northampton, MA experience that makes them exceptional. The metro area is not a large one. It is smaller than our own. Northampton is home to a single (small) college, but resides in an area where higher education overall has a high profile. The coop itself is not located in the downtown area, but it is clearly a destination for its members and for many non-member shoppers. What is perhaps quite exceptional about RVM is that its membership from the beginning had a sense of ownership of the enterprise. Going forward there is nothing that would please us more than to see a similar sense emerge within our own member-owners.

For more information of River Valley Market see their website at <http://rivervalleymarket.coop/>

TFCM Member Discount @ Bloomingfoods!!

Are you eager to get a TFCM member discount? Our store isn't open yet, but you can use your TFCM membership card for a discount on purchases at any of the Bloomingfoods stores in in Bloomington. But, you must have your membership card with you! If you have misplaced your TFCM membership card, you may contact voltmer@rose-hulman.edu to get a replacement.

Recipe of the Month

Good food is even tastier when prepared in proven recipes. Each month the TFCM Newsletter will feature a recipe from one of our members. This recipe is from TFCM member, Dave Voltmer. Send your favorite recipe to <http://www.terrefoods.org/Contact.aspx>

Orange Slice Cookies

Ingredients for 8 dozen yummy, chewy cookies

1 ½ C brown sugar	1 ½ C flour
½ C shortening	1 tsp soda
2 eggs	½ tsp salt
½ C flaked coconut	½ C quick oatmeal
1 lb orange slice candy	½ C flour (for orange slices)

Cut orange slices into small pieces (about twice the size of a chocolate chip) using kitchen shears; the shears are sticky, but can dipping in water helps. Mix the candy pieces in ½ C flour so they do not stick together.

Cream sugar and shortening. Beat in eggs. Sift 1 ½ C flour, soda, and salt. Blend into the creamed mixture. Add candy pieces, coconut flakes, and oatmeal to creamed mixture.

Drop by teaspoon onto greased cookie sheet. Bake @ 325° F for 10 – 12 minutes or until light brown. After cookies cool, store in covered container. Enjoy with a fresh cup of tea or coffee!