Dedicated to informing and educating members and the public about food and agriculture, consumer food concerns, and the cooperative business model.

No. 509 • November 2015



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S O U N D C O N S U M E R



HOW FLAVOR DRIVES NUTRITION

WE'RE PROGRAMMED TO SEEK DELICIOUSNESS. FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, FLAVOR GAVE OUR BODIES CRUCIAL INFORMATION ABOUT NUTRIENTS. LATELY WE'VE TURNED THAT SYSTEM AGAINST ITSELF — JUST AS WHOLE FOODS ARE GETTING BLANDER, WE'RE SIMULTANEOUSLY ADDING FLAVORINGS TO FOODS WE SHOULDN'T BE EATING. THE RESULT: WE'VE SHORT-CIRCUITED OUR BODIES' ABILITY TO CHOOSE GOOD FOOD.

by Mark Schatzker

IF THERE'S ONE ISSUE UNIVERSALLY VEXING TO PARENTS, IT'S THEIR CHILDREN'S EATING HABITS.

A 6-year-old sitting at the table — arms crossed, mouth resolutely shut — isn't just a cliché, it's a daily occurrence at dinner tables from Cape Cod to San Diego. The family dinner is trench warfare at its worst. On one side, the parents, who think broccoli, lettuce and cauliflower are healthy. On the other, the children, who think it's gross.

This brings up a question: Why would something taste unpleasant if it's healthy? How did we, as a species, survive if the food we are supposed to eat tastes bad? You don't see baby goats gagging on the flavor of leaves, do you?

Guided by taste buds

In 1926, a Chicago pediatrician named Clara Davis asked the very same question. At the time, the leading scientists of the day were discovering the wonders of vitamins. No sooner did we discover vitamins than we became very concerned that our children weren't getting enough of them. Mothers were instructed to starve their children until they ate their vegetables. Their children refused. Sound familiar?

So Dr. Davis did the unthinkable. She took 15 babies and left the eating all up to them. Each child decided what he or she wanted to eat, based on a list of 34 foods that included potatoes, cornmeal, barley, beef, lamb, bone jelly, carrots, turnips, haddock, peaches and apples.

As you might expect, those kids ate meals that only a kid could dream up. One had eggs, bananas and milk for dinner. Another had liver and orange juice ... for breakfast.

Did these kids hurl bone jelly at the wall? Did they binge eat into an acute state of scurvy? Nope. They ate superbly well. One child with a severe case of rickets drank cod liver oil of his own volition until his disease went away. By the end of the experiment, another doctor referred to them as "the finest group of specimens from the physical and behavior standpoint that I have ever seen in children that age."

So how did these little master nutritionists figure it all out? The same way goats, monkeys and insects figure it all out. The answer, in fact, tells us everything we need to know about where our food went wrong. In short, it provides the missing piece of today's food puzzle: flavor. These children, as strange as it might sound, were guided by their taste buds. The children ate the food that tasted the most delicious, and the nutrition took care of itself.

Delicious is not the enemy

It sounds ridiculous. Isn't deliciousness precisely the problem? After all, if food weren't so appetizing, we wouldn't eat so much of it.

Not so fast. The human body, it turns out, takes flavor very seriously. Our flavor-sensing equipment occupies more DNA than any other bodily system. So perhaps it's worth asking this question: If deliciousness is our enemy, why are we programmed to seek it out?

Every other animal depends on taste and smell to identify nutrients essential for life. Insects use flavor chemicals to distinguish

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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Organic, heirloom and non-GMO turkeys

PCC is delighted to offer a full range of turkeys to choose from this holiday season. Of course, we'll offer Diestel's premier certified organic turkeys, raised on an all-organic diet without GMOs or synthetic pesticides, and free to roam outdoors.

We also will have certified organic American Heirloom turkeys, a special legacy breed that enjoys foraging for its food, a diet supplemented with organic grain. These heirloom birds have a more succulent skin that renders down for a richer flavor.

Also, for the first time, we're offering free-range, Non-GMO Project Verified turkeys. These birds are raised on a Non-GMO Project Verified vegetarian diet.

All these birds are from the family-owned Diestel ranch, known for birds raised sustainably with high animal welfare standards and without artificial growth stimulants. They're raised almost twice as long and with four times as much space to roam as conventional birds.

If you would rather leave the cooking to us, we'll offer organic turkey or smoked non-GMO turkeys fully cooked, so you can spend your time relaxing or baking the perfect dessert. To reserve your holiday turkey, visit pccnaturalmarkets.com/holiday.

PCC policy actions

PCC's public affairs team recently has:

- Submitted comments to the National Organic Standards
 Board (NOSB) on use of fracking waste water in organic crop systems; celery powder; potassium phosphate; sodium phosphate; magnesium carbonate; and National Organic Program/NOSB relations.
- Sent a letter to all PCC vendors reminding them of our pledge and criteria for identifying GMO foods in our stores by 2018.
- Sent a letter to PCC beer, wine and hard cider vendors asking them to sign affidavits confirming their products do not contain ingredients prohibited by PCC. Alcoholic beverages are not required by law to label or disclose ingredients so we must ask!
- Participated in an "industry lab" on sustainability and traceability in the seafood industry.

PCC Natural Markets 4201 Roosevelt Way NE Seattle, WA 98105

YOUR CO-OP COMMUNITY

Find out more about community events at pccnatural markets.com/events

Food Bank Packaging Parties

Help package bulk foods into familysized portions at our partnering food bank locations. Join us on:

Monday, November 9 at 6:30 p.m., Kirkland Hopelink Food Bank

Tuesday, November 10 at 7 p.m.,

North Helpline Food Bank

Monday, November 16 at 7 p.m., Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank

Monday, November 16 at 7 p.m.,

Westgate Chapel Food Bank

Tuesday, November 17 at 7 p.m.,

Rainier Valley Food Bank Wednesday, November 18 at 7 p.m.,

FamilyWorks Food Bank Wednesday, November 18 at 7 p.m.,

University District Food Bank

Pre-registration not required. Due to space restrains, for groups larger than five people, please contact the food banks directly to set up group volunteering activities. To learn

more visit pccnaturalmarkets.com/foodbank.

Purple Stride 5K

Sunday, November 1, 8 a.m. to noon Magnuson Park – Hangar 30 7400 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

Join in this 5K run or family-friendly walk that supports the efforts of the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network. You can find us inside Hangar 30 in the Kid's Area where we'll be making custom soup mix with kiddos 12 and younger.

To learn more about the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network and to register for the run visit pancan.org.



Greenlake Gobble

Sunday, November 22, 8 a.m. Green Lake Park 5900 West Green Lake Way N., Seattle

Join us the Sunday before Thanksgiving, for a fun and festive 10K run/walk and a 5K run/walk. Kids 12 and younger can compete in the free PCC Healthy Kids Tiny Turkey Trot at 9:10 a.m. PCC is the official fruit sponsor of the run so swing by the PCC TasteMobile to refuel.

Make sure to stick around for a post-race celebration that includes the crowd-pleasing Mashed Potato Munch Off competitive eating contest and an onsite beer garden.

Canned food donations will be accepted for Seattle's Union Gospel Mission. Funds raised will support Seattle's Union Gospel Mission goal of providing 300,000 meals to fight hunger with hope this holiday season!

Sign up for the run at promotion events. com/thanksgiving/home.html.

2016 Chinook Book sale

The 2016 Chinook Book sale will be from November 16 through December 27! Celebrate the holidays with \$5 off the retail price of the print book, mobile pack and combo pack, on sale for \$17, \$10 and \$25. Save hundreds of dollars while supporting local, sustainable businesses. Inside, you'll find three PCC coupons redeemable at our stores. PCC will donate all proceeds to the PCC Farmland Trust. See Chinookbook.net for more info.

Seattle Kids Marathon – Race Day

Saturday, November 28, 10 a.m. Seattle Center, Fifth and Harrison

The Seattle Children's Kids Marathon is structured to allow kids - kindergarten through eighth grade — to complete a full 26.2 mile marathon at a rate that's fun and safe for their growing bodies "one mile at a time." It also encourages them to eat 20 healthy foods, read 13 books and perform 13 good deeds.

PCC is sponsoring the "Eat Righto-meter." Try 20 of the 26 items, check them off the list and bring your list to the TasteMobile while at the Kids Marathon and the first 100 kids will receive a \$20 gift card. Register soon so kids have time to complete their miles, meals, reading and good deeds before race day.

To learn more and to sign up, visit: seattlemarathon.org/seattle-childrenskids-marathon.

Woodland Park Zoo Wildlights

November 27 through January 3 Woodland Park Zoo

The zoo's winter holiday lights festival is here! WildLights features wild animals and wild places recreated in hundreds of thousands of sparkling LED lights. Experience amazing indoor and outdoor light displays, see a few of our animal friends (including visiting reindeer), have a fauxsnowball fight with your family, and enjoy carolers singing. On December 19 the PCC TasteMobile will be there from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. handing out hot cider and a sweet treat. See zoo.org/wildlights for more info.



The holidays are just around the corner, and PCC Cooks is here to help you prepare! If meat is on your mind — or your menu join us for Roasting Poultry and Meat, where Chef Darin Gagner will share reliable recipes for success as well as his extensive culinary knowledge. He'll discuss brining, searing and carry-over cooking in a demonstration format perfect for ample note-taking and questionasking. Cultured Foods (with a Holiday Twist!) offers an inventive non-traditional array of cultured dishes with flavors perfect for a holiday table. Added bonus: cultured foods can help aid digestion and keep your body healthy during the season of overindulgence.

This November, you also can experience some heart-warming home cooking the Portuguese way, as you sit down to a Portuguese Table, learning about the culture and cuisine along the way. Many other hearty options abound from Yeasted Whole Wheat Bread to Easy Italian Dinner and Knife Skills. Visit PccCooks.com to browse the tasty choices!

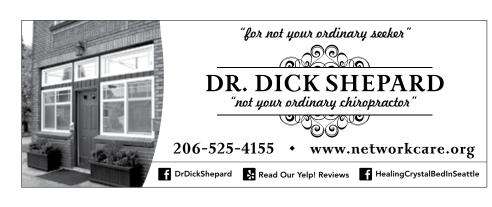
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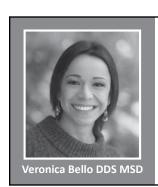


John White — First at Redmond, now at Edmonds, his friendly service and knowledge in beer and wine are quite impressive!



Farms for Life Farms for Life increases access to nourishing farm-fresh produce for agencies serving our local community. Women's shelters, youth homes and community kitchens receive organically grown produce purchased from local farmers. Support the cycle of nourishment local farmers and people in need of healthy food — and be a part of change. Board member and volunteer positions available starting this month. For more information: info@farms4life.org.





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at www.pccnaturalmarkets.com.



CONSUMER SOUND

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pccnaturalmarkets.com

[**LETTERS** to the editor]

Letters must be 250 words or fewer and include a name, address and daytime phone number. We reserve the right to edit. Please email letters to editor@pccsea.com.

INSTACART HOME DELIVERY

We've been a car-free family since October 2014 and really have missed being able to do a full grocery shop at PCC. We just wanted to take a moment to say thank you for partnering with Instacart to make home delivery possible.

We used the service last week and we were extremely pleased with the quality of produce our personal shopper chose, as well as the text messages to let us know when something wasn't available and to get the okay for a substitution.

Your website ordering system was impressive (especially over Safeway.com!) and we are excited to be able to get the great products we've come to know and love from PCC delivered to our door. Also, thank you for pricing your goods online the same as in store. It's really wonderful.

HEIRLOOM APPLES

- Krista S.

I am writing for the third year in a row to thank you for having heirloom apples. My favorite this year is Ashmead's Kernal. Tied for second are Orleans Reinette and King David.

These apples are so indescribably beautiful, special and delicious that my heart aches a bit when I eat them.

- Ann

VEGETABLES ON A BUDGET

I've been a member for 20+ years and still am trying to get a handle on eating more vegetables. Can you please point me toward some general information about how to get organized with vegetable prep and storage?

I can't seem to find the time every day and think I'd like to prep vegetables for a

week at a time but then I worry about them losing nutrition if they are stored after being washed and cut. Also I'm not clear on how many nutrients are lost when I cook them but drink the cooking water.

I'm a huge fan of PCC although I can't afford most of your products other than bulk products and fruits and vegetables when they are on sale. I live on about \$500 a month and must go for low prices where I can find them. I do buy most of my meat at PCC because I know that you check out the living conditions of animals raised for meat. Can't express how much I appreciate the integrity of PCC. Your deli food is the best in town as far as I'm concerned (I buy mini portions from time to time).

PCC replies: A great resource for bow to prep and store vegetables to extend their shelf lives is here: pccnaturalmarkets.com/r/3590. For tips to reduce food waste, including innovative ways to use vegetable scraps, see pccnaturalmarkets.com/r/3591. For more info on shopping on a budget at PCC, see pccnaturalmarkets.com/r/3592.

Regarding the loss of nutrients associated with cooking, yes, it's true there is some loss of vitamin C and water-soluble B vitamins with cooking. These losses are not huge and you can minimize nutrient losses by steaming, oven roasting and baking rather than boiling. These methods reduce the leaching of vitamins into the cooking water. You won't recover 100 percent of the nutrients by drinking the cooking water because cooking also degrades (breaks down) some nutrients.

FRACKING WASTEWATER ON CROPS?

With what I've been hearing about California farmers, even organic ones using the water left over from fracking for irrigation, I'm wondering if PCC inquires or investigates as to whether any of its produce and/or meats are grown using this water.

I'm buying organic to avoid toxic chemicals. It sounds like the water doesn't have to be tested to comply with organic standards — there is nothing in place for that — so I'm quite concerned.

— Diana Law

It recently came to my attention that some California-grown organic produce might be irrigated with fracking wastewater despite being organic.

Can PCC look into this and like with Horizon dairy from a few years ago, give those products the boot if true? Looks like Sunview Raisins, which I regularly buy, might be one of the key culprits?

- Kevin Orme

PCC replies: We also are very worried about this emerging issue and have been asking Sunview — and its organic certifier, CCOF (California Certified Organic Farmers) — some aggressive questions, but we don't vet have the information we need to address the obvious concerns.

To comply with existing organic rules, growers must "manage plant and animal materials to maintain or improve soil organic matter content in a manner that does not contribute to contamination of crops, soil or water by plant nutrients, pathogenic organisms, heavy metals, or residues of probibited substances.'

The Residue Testing Rule in organic standards authorizes organic certifiers to test the finished product, specifically for heavy metals, which independent lab tests found in the irrigation water for Sunview. CCOF did not give a straight yes or no answer when we asked directly if it had tested the raisins, as authorized.

We encourage you to read PCC's

LETTERS CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



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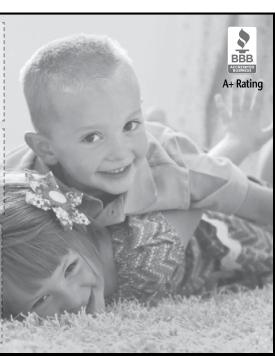
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HOW FLAVOR DRIVES NUTRITION CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

between food and poison. Sheep deficient in essential minerals, such as calcium or phosphorus, will crave flavors associated with them. Monkeys infected with gut parasites will seek out and eat specific leaves that alleviate their condition.

According to Fred Provenza, a behavioral ecologist and professor emeritus at Utah State University, "Flavor is the body's way of identifying important nutrients and remembering what foods they come from."

We humans are exactly the same. In the 18th century, sailors ravaged by scurvy were gripped by intense longings for fruits and vegetables. Pregnant women are nauseated by foods their bodies perceive as toxic.

A 2006 paper in the prestigious journal Science shed light on the chemistry underlying those flavor cravings. Scientists Stephen Goff and Harry Klee discovered that the 20 most important flavor compounds in tomatoes all are synthesized from important nutrients, such as omega-3 fats and essential amino acids. What makes a tomato nutritious, very simply, also makes it delicious. Flavor compounds, the scientists wrote, "provide important information about the nutritional makeup of foods."

What went wrong?

All of which raises an important and obvious question: What happened? If toddlers in the 1930s were so good at meeting their own nutritional needs, how is it that children today now grapple with obesity and metabolic disease?

The answer is that flavor changed. Food does not taste the way it used to. And it's affecting the way all of us, our children included, eat.

For more than half a century, the whole foods in the modern American food system have been getting blander.



As crops and livestock are bred to be more productive, affordable and have a longer shelf life, they keep losing flavor. Tomatoes, strawberries, chicken — it can all taste like cardboard these days, as you have probably heard your grandmother say. And as flavor diminishes, so does nutrition. An average non-organic tomato today has half as much calcium and vitamin A as a tomato had in the 1950s.

But that's only one side of the flavor problem. Because just as whole foods are being bleached of flavor, we're simultaneously adding flavorings to the foods we shouldn't be eating. We add chemical flavorings to soft drinks, potato chips and frozen pizzas. We're even adding them to yogurt and soy milk — and herbal tea. When you walk into a mainstream supermarket today in the mood for blueberries or strawberries, you'll find a better version in the sugary drinks aisle than in the produce aisle. All told, Americans are consuming more than 600 million pounds of synthetic flavorings a year.

If you consider flavor the incentive to eat, we have utterly perverted that incentive. All that flavoring is telling us a thrilling but ultimately deceptive nutritional lie. And it's getting us to eat food — a lot more food than we ordinarily would. Consider that a

berry-flavored yogurt tube tastes wonderful to a two-year-old, but it doesn't carry the same payload of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants as a real strawberry.

We still have the same genes and the same amazing flavor sensing system as our ancestors. But we've short-circuited it. For thousands of years, flavor gave our bodies crucial information about nutrients. In the last few decades, we've turned that system against itself.

As grim as it all might look, the solution is actually quite simple. Stop worrying about fat, carbs and other nutrients and start caring about flavor. When you shop for food, ask yourself a simple question: Where did the flavor come from? If you see "artificial flavors" or "natural flavors" on the ingredients, you know it was designed by someone with a PhD to be ultra-delicious.

Instead, buy whole foods whose flavor tells the thrilling story of their nutrition. Look for the best tomatoes, the sweetest strawberries and chicken that tastes like chicken. You'll be healthier, and a whole lot happier.

Mark Schatzker is the author of "The Dorito Effect: The surprising new truth about food and flavor" (Simon & Schuster). Available for sale at PCC.

"Natural" flavors

Natural and artificial flavors aren't that different. Flavors are complex mixtures that sometimes comprise more than 100 chemicals. In addition to flavors themselves, these mixtures contain chemicals that have other functions. Solvents, emulsifiers, flavor modifiers and preservatives often make up 80 to 90 percent of the mixture.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) defines natural flavors as substances derived from animals or plants and artificial flavors are those that are not. The actual chemicals in these two kinds of flavors may be exactly the same. The chemical structures of the individual molecules may be indistinguishable.

An artificial flavor must be comprised of one of the nearly 700 FDA-allowed flavoring chemicals or food additives categorized as "generally recognized as safe," (GRAS) or any of 2,000 other chemicals not directly regulated by the FDA but sanctioned for use by an industry group, the Flavor and Extract Manufacturers Association of the United States. Most of these chemicals exist as natural flavors or can be extracted from them.

Interestingly, the chemical mixtures that comprise artificial flavors often are simpler than "natural" flavors. The reason: artificial flavors contain fewer chemicals than natural ones, which can be mixtures of several hundred chemicals.

For certified organic foods, the natural flavor must have been produced without synthetic solvents, carriers and artificial preservatives. The additives not allowed in natural flavor in organic foods include propylene glycol, polyglycerol esters of fatty acids, mono- and di-glycerides, benzoic acid, polysorbate 80, medium chain triglycerides, BHT, BHA and triacetin.

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[**LETTERS** to the editor]

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

comments to the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) and National Organic Program on our website at pccnaturalmarkets.com/r/3595. We have asked NOSB to consider a moratorium on use of recycled fracking wastewater within the context of its work on contamination in farm inputs. We also asked the NOSB Crops Committee to prepare an updated document on use of this recycled water for the public to review, since the concern involves not just Sunview but also nearby table grape, citrus and pistachio growers — and every region with sustained drought and fracking. A report from Beyond Pesticides indicates ordinary irrigated water also is contaminated from intensive conventional agriculture. This is a complicated issue requiring short- and long-term solutions.

IS KERRYGOLD REALLY GRASS-FED?

Can you please address this blog regarding Kerrygold? (See: hopecentric.com/ why-i-stopped-buying-kerrygold-butter/) She says her research shows Kerrygold is 90-percent grass-fed and can be 97 percent non-GMO with 3 percent (or more) GMO soy and corn feed.

Most consumers of Kerrygold, I believe, think they're eating 100-percent grass-fed and non-GMO. Although the label doesn't say it's organic, many of us have a mistaken belief that GMOs aren't

in Europe and we also have a fantasy that the fields of Ireland aren't drenched with the herbicide Roundup.

If it's really not 100-percent grass-fed, I think there should be an indication on the shelf that it contains GMO soy and corn, which would be pesticide-drenched.

- Garth Lien

PCC replies: Kerrygold told us, "Our cows enjoy a healthy grass-based diet all year. During peak milk production in the summer months, cows graze outdoors on green pastures all day. In the winter months Irish cows enjoy a predominantly grass-based diet. They eat silage, which is fermented high-moisture fodder cut from summer grass and stored for winter feeding. To maintain health and well-being, the cow's grass-based diet includes supplementary feed. The majority of this feed is grown locally with a small percentage imported. Some of this imported feed may be from genetically engineered sources so we cannot say our products are non-GMO." EU rules allow animals to eat GMO feed without labeling the products.

At PCC we recognize that "grass-fed" label claims on dairy can be misleading. There is no federal definition for "grassfed" dairy, which is regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). There is a definition for grass-fed meat, which is regulated by a different agency,

the Department of Agriculture (USDA). PCC sent a formal complaint to the FDA in late September, asking it to recognize USDA's definition. We believe the market needs one uniform definition.

ANIMAL WELFARE

With all the recent discussion of whether PCC eggs are from cage-free or free-ranging hens, no one is talking about hatchery practices. Last I checked, I was unable to find a single small-farm or commercially produced egg that did not come from a hen purchased through a large-scale hatchery, where the routine practice is to gas male chicks.

I'd like to know if PCC has more recent info about this, or investigates USDA research into alternative methods for sexing embryos, which would eliminate the current methods of male chick euthanasia. Thank you,

- Erika Enright

PCC replies: All egg producers we know of, including the small and large farms that supply PCC, buy chicks from hatcheries. This means yes, male chicks are killed routinely in various ways, depending on the hatchery. Unfortunately, the only way to avoid this practice is to raise your own hens or to avoid eggs altogether. We're sorry there isn't a better alternative to this industry-wide practice.

PRODUCTS FOR TEXTURED HAIR

My wife and I appreciate and truly enjoy the opportunity to shop for our health and beauty products at PCC. We feel safe using the products at your store for ourselves and our young children. With that in mind, we would be so grateful if your stores would carry more products for black/textured hair. We like the Alaffia line, but we would be so happy to have a few other options.

Thank you for considering.

— Jennifer

PCC replies: We would love to carry more products for textured bair, but almost everything we've come across has had ingredients we don't allow at PCC because of their health or environmental impacts. We do carry Aubrey Chia Mousse for curly/ coarse hair. We'll keep looking for more!

QUALITY AT PCC

This is just a quick note of appreciation and thanks! I recently moved away from West Seattle, and I really miss PCC. All the stores are so welcoming and have such high-quality products! My family and I appreciated the kindness and hospitality of the staff. We've also eaten more than our fair share of free fruit for kids! I only wish there was a market so good in the Washington, DC area ... So far nothing measures up! Keep up the good work.

- Elizabeth Brandt





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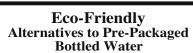


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GET CULTURED ABOUT DAIRY



Take heart, cheese lovers! There are plenty of reasons to choose fermented dairy (even cheese!) for good health — see PCC nutrition educator Nick Rose's article, "Quel fromage!" on page 12 for the latest research. But that's beside the point. Cheese, yogurt and other cultured dairy foods are a luxurious pleasure to eat. Creaminess offset with a subtle tang is the trademark flavor of cultured dairy and is why we love using it in so many recipes. Here we extoll the virtues of a selection of cultured dairy you'll find at PCC, from farmstead cultured butter to the best buttermilk you'll ever taste.

Maple Hill Creamery yogurt

Certified organic, 100-percent grassfed, whole-milk yogurt from family farms in upstate New York. Maple Hill is the first creamery to receive PCO 100-percent grass-fed certification, considered the gold standard. Milk from grass-fed cows is higher in heart-healthy omega-3 fats and conjugated linoleic acid (CLA). We love the creaminess and also that the flavored yogurts contain much less sugar than other brands.

Jacobs Creamery cultured butter

Jacobs Creamery in Chehalis, Washington starts with fresh cream from pastured cows and adds its own unique culture blend, enhancing the natural flavors of the cream. The result is a butter that's silky smooth with a rich, nutty flavor. Each batch is hand-churned. Spread this on crusty bread, such as The Essential Baking Company's Pain du George. Also not to miss: Jacobs Creamery gouda. You'll only find Jacobs Creamery cheese and butter at PCC.

Grace Harbor buttermilk

PCC shoppers have long loved Grace Harbor's cream-top, non-homogenized, whole-milk yogurt from a herd of Guernsey cows raised in Northwest Washington. Now, Grace Harbor's Tim and Grace Lukens are churning out a creamy buttermilk that's secondto-none. Other brands may taste bitter, but Grace Harbor's buttermilk is smooth and mild, with a pleasant tang. Use it in a range of recipes, from Good Ol' Southern Fried Chicken to a decadent Buttermilk Orange Cake with Chocolate Ganache (find the recipes at pccnaturalmarkets.com).

Redwood Hills Farm goat kefir

Kefir is similar to yogurt but consumed in a drinkable form instead of with a spoon. It's fermented for a longer time than yogurt and with a greater variety of bacterial species, so it has more gut-healthy probiotics. We love Redwood Hills Farm's goat kefir — especially the Blueberry Pomegranate Açaí flavor — because it has no added sugar or preservatives. If you prefer a milder flavor, try Wallaby's organic kefir, made with cow's milk.

Ancient Heritage Dairy Isabella cheese

Isabella is a washed rind cheese aged at least 60 days and named for the young granddaughter of one of the dairy's owners. It's made with raw cow and sheep's milk, with a taste that has been compared with Belgian ales because of its sweet, briny flavors and yeast notes. A light, bloomy rind reveals a thick and creamy interior.

Le Gruyère AOP cheese

Le Gruyère AOP cheese has been produced in the region of Gruyère, Western Switzerland, since the 12th century. It's a full-bodied cheese made from raw milk from cows fed grass (summer) and hay (winter). The character of the cheese lies in its specific production methods, which remain true to the original recipe and follow time-honored techniques, including aging for at least 11 months in sandstone caves. Famously used in fondue, this cheese melts beautifully and is a sharp addition to grilled cheese sandwiches, gratins, sauces or just for snacking. Pair it with a chardonnay.

Willapa Hills cream cheese

On the banks of the Chehalis River in Doty, Washington, Stephen Hueffed and Amy Turnbull are making a cultured cream cheese with no fillers and no stabilizers; just milk, cream, cultures and salt. Vat culturing and bag draining produces an unparalleled creamy texture and sweet flavor. If you're a transplanted New Yorker, you'll want to spread this on the best bagel you can find.

Bio-K+ fermented dairy probiotic

If you want even more probiotics to boost your intestinal health than yogurt or kefir offer, this tangy dairy-based supplement will do the trick. Each small bottle contains 50 billion probiotic bacteria, and you can drink as little as 1/4 a bottle a day and still benefit.

Is dairy not your style?

See pccnaturalmarkets.com/r/3593 for other cultured foods at PCC, such as miso and fermented vegetables.

[STAFF picks]



THE GINGER PEOPLE ORIGINAL GIN GINS

Zippy, strong flavor that's a pick-me-up or relieves nausea. I never leave home without them.

- Sue R., View Ridge

GRACE HARBOR BUTTERMILK

The best buttermilk to come along in years: clean and sweet, full-fat and oh-so-smooth with no aftertaste like some brands.

- Trudy B., Director of Public Affairs

SALSA DE ROSA FRESH SALSA

The Medium has perfect heat, flavor and texture for chips by themselves or with nachos.

— Suzanne P., Redmond

WILLIPA HILLS CREAM CHEESE

It's wonderful, local and cheaper than Organic Valley cream cheese! - Nicole W., Greenlake Aurora



PCC DELI PERFECT PROTEIN SALAD

This salad made with organic spelt berries, garbanzo beans and vegetables is always one of my go-to salads when someone is new to our deli.

— Cinda S., Edmonds Deli

PCC BAKERY HARVEST FRUIT AND NUT BAR

Full of fruit and nuts, it's chewy, not too sweet, and great to take on a hike. — Suzanne P., Redmond

CULTURED FOOD STATIONS

A lively, spicy kim chi or kraut can raise a very basic meal to exotic and sublime. You'll find all kinds of fermented foods at stations in the Columbia City, Issaquah, Fremont, Edmonds, Redmond and West Seattle stores.

- PCC Chef Lynne Vea



ACURE ULTRA-HYDRATING BODY WASH

This is the most hydrating body wash I've ever tried. Helps with itchiness. - Mary B., IT

GAIA TURMERIC BOOST

Mix with coconut, rice, almond or dairy milk, pour over ice, and enjoy like an iced chai latte! - Katherine B., Redmond

HERB PHARM ELEUTHERO

This herb helps my body adapt to stress and provides me with sustained energy and a sense of vigorous vitality!

- Brandy L., Columbia City

BIG DIPPER BEESWAX CANDLES

I LOVE this local company! Not only do they make incredible handcrafted beeswax candles, but they also are committed to giving back to the community and protecting the environment.

- Kibby B., PCC health and body care



QUADY NORTH ROSÉ

This rosé is my favorite to bring to Thanksgiving dinner, it's such a great compliment to savory fare. Layers of dense cherries wrapped in rosehip and raspberries. Refreshing and lovely. - Seri S., Columbia City

COOPER MOUNTAIN RESERVE CHARDONNAY

Briny and earthy, which makes it a white wine suitable for all seasons. Amazingly flavorful and a must-try for people who think they do not like any chardonnays!

- Alex G., Greenlake Village

BAGLIO DEL SOLE NERO D'AVOLA

Dark, briary fruit with a little brininess and a hint of ash/smoke.

- Judy R., Greenlake Village

COOKING WITH CULTURE

Get your ovens preheating! This month, we're baking up biscuits, casseroles and soufflés — all with cultured dairy. This is hearty comfort food at its best, using creamy-tangy buttermilk, cream cheese and Swiss. Craving something lighter? Try roasting carrots to bring out their flavor, then serve them with a dollop of cumin-laced Greek yogurt.

RUSTIC POTATO CRÈME FRAÎCHE SOUFFLÉ

Loaded with garlic and sweet-tangy crème fraîche, this is a great side dish for the holidays, weeknight meals or brunch.

Serves 6 to 8

1 head garlic

Drizzle of olive oil

1/4 cup butter, plus additional for baking dish 2 pounds red or white potatoes, scrubbed

and cut into chunks ½ cup crème fraîche

½ cup vegetable, chicken or turkey stock

1 teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon pepper

2 eggs

Preheat oven to 325° F. Cut the top off the garlic and place in an ovenproof ramekin. Drizzle with a little olive oil and bake for 1 hour. You may do this in advance, if you like.

Preheat oven to 400° F. Butter a 9-by 13-inch casserole dish and set aside.

Place potatoes in a pot of boiling, salted water to cover and cook until tender, about 20 minutes. Drain and transfer to a bowl and squeeze in roasted garlic. Add butter, crème fraîche, stock, salt and pepper. Mash potatoes, skins and all, until fairly smooth. Beat eggs until light and fluffy and gently fold into potato mixture.



Spoon batter into prepared casserole dish. Bake for 30 minutes, until golden and slightly puffy.

- Recipe by Lynne Vea, PCC Chef

EACH SERVING: 200 cal, 11g fat (6g sat), 85mg chol, 380mg sodium, 23g carb, 2g fiber, 2g sugars, 5g protein

BUTTERMILK SAGE BISCUITS

Makes 8 biscuits

2 cups all-purpose flour 2 teaspoons baking soda

½ teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon sugar Pinch of salt

2 tablespoons chopped fresh sage

¼ cup butter

4 ounces cold Neufchâtel or cream cheese 1 cup buttermilk

Preheat oven to 425° F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Mix together flour, baking soda, baking powder, sugar, a generous pinch of salt and sage in a bowl.

Cut in butter and Neufchâtel with a

pastry blender or fingertips, until mixture is crumbly. Stir in buttermilk and gently mix to form dough.

Form dough into a circle. Cut into triangles (as if you were slicing a pie) and place dough on the prepared baking sheet. Bake until biscuits are golden, 15 to 20 minutes.

EACH BISCUIT: 220 cal, 10g fat (6g sat), 24mg chol, 430mg sodium, 27g carb, 1g fiber, 3g sugars, 6g protein

ROASTED CUMIN CARROTS

The depth of toasted cumin provides the perfect bass note to sweet roasted carrots and tangy Greek yogurt. This is a delicious side dish all year round.

Serves 8

1 ½ teaspoons cumin seeds

2 pounds carrots, peeled and sliced on the diagonal, 1/2-inch thick

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoons orange juice

Salt and pepper, to taste

2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

34 cup plain Greek yogurt

Toast cumin seeds in a small skillet over medium heat until fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes. Cool. In a spice mill or mortar, grind half the seeds to a fine powder. Combine with whole seeds and set aside.

Preheat oven to 425° F. Toss carrots with oil, orange juice, salt and pepper on a rimmed baking sheet. Roast until golden brown and tender, stirring occasionally, 25 to 35 minutes. Remove from the oven and toss with parsley and half of the toasted cumin.

Combine yogurt and remaining cumin in a small bowl; season to taste with salt and pepper.

Serve warm carrots topped with cumin yogurt.

Note: If you have a shorter variety of carrot, try cutting them lengthwise for a pretty presentation.

EACH SERVING: 90 cal, 4g fat (1g sat), 0mg chol, 240mg sodium, 12g carb, 3g fiber, 7g sugars, 3g protein

BAKED SPINACH AND SWISS CASSEROLE

1 tablespoon butter, plus extra for baking dish

1 large leek - halved, washed and thinly sliced

Salt and pepper, to taste

3 (10-ounce) packages frozen spinach thawed, squeezed dry and chopped

1 cup whole milk

½ cup heavy cream

3 eggs, beaten

1 ½ cups grated Swiss or Gruyère cheese, divided

Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg

Preheat oven to 350° F. Butter a shallow 1-quart baking dish.

Melt butter over medium heat in a skillet. Add leeks and cook until soft and translucent, stirring often, about 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

In a large bowl, combine leeks, spinach, milk, cream, eggs, 1 cup cheese, nutmeg, salt and pepper. Transfer to the prepared baking dish and top with remaining cheese.

Bake until set and the top is golden, 30 to 35 minutes.

EACH SERVING: 180 cal, 11g fat (6g sat), 115mg chol, 330mg sodium, 8g carb, 3g fiber, 3g sugars, 13g protein



SOIL & SEA: reports from our producers

CALIFORNIA PISTACHIO GROWERS ARE FINDING AN UNUSUALLY HIGH INSTANCE

OF SHELLS that haven't filled out with nuts — what growers call "blanks." Usually the blanking rate runs about 10 percent. This year, as much as 50 percent of the harvested nuts could be hollow. Behind the blanks are the same culprits as in many other ongoing agricultural crises: drought, heat and abnormal West Coast weather. Pistachios need plenty of cold during the winter — what farmers call chilling hours.

THE GIANT POULTRY PRODUCER PERDUE HAS PURCHASED NIMAN RANCH, a purveyor of sustainable meats. Perdue recently announced it had succeeded in eliminating all

antibiotics in raising more than half its chickens, an achievement made easier by its acquisition of Coleman Natural Foods in 2011.

CALIFORNIA AGRICULTURE AS A WHOLE

POSTED RECORD REVENUES in the midst of drought, according to a new report. The industry maintained high revenues in part because of a shift to higher-value crops, such as nuts and fruits. Farmers also kept

revenues up by pumping more groundwater.

SALMON AND STEELHEAD IN OREGON, **CALIFORNIA AND WASHINGTON ARE IN** DANGER OF GOING AWAY FOREVER due to drought. It's not just that the water is low. The shallower water warms sooner. Warm

water carries more diseases that attack fish. An estimated quarter-million salmon, more than half of the spring spawning run up the Columbia River, perished, probably because of a disease that thrives in warm water and causes gill rot.

ESTABLISHED FOOD COMPANIES HAVE LOST MORE THAN 5 PERCENT OF THEIR SHARE OF REVENUE GENERATED BY FRO-**ZEN ENTREES**, while smaller private label brands increased their share, according to a report from Jeffries, an investment bank. Established brands such as Lean Cuisine and Marie Callender are facing stiff competition from competitors Luvo, Amy's Kitchen and Simple Truth.

CREATIVE APPROACHES TO HUNGER RELIEF

by Katherine Pryor, M.A.

ith 49.1 million Americans going hungry at some point in the last year, there's little question our wealthy nation has a moral and social obligation to help those in need. According to Northwest Harvest, one in five children in Washington is food insecure. Finite resources and increasing demand mean organizations around the Northwest are seeking creative solutions to get healthful food to people in need.

Gardeners help

Produce and protein are often the most difficult items for emergency food agencies to acquire and store. Seattle's Giving Garden Network helps home and community gardeners donate fresh produce to food banks, shelters and meal programs.

"We bring in bins of fresh organic lettuces, and huge bags of sugar snap peas. We're donating healthy organic produce to people who normally would be getting peanut butter and mac 'n' cheese," says Jude Berman, who co-founded Seattle's Giving Garden Network. The organization is entirely volunteer-run and started as a way to coordinate the gleaning programs at Seattle's P-Patch gardens.

"Community gardening is as much about the community as it is about the gardening," Berman says. "People come together around a common cause and the whole becomes much greater than the sum of its parts."

Lettuce Link reports that these efforts, combined with donations from Marra Farm and the Seattle Community Farm, delivered 55,198 pounds of fruits and vegetables to more than two dozen food access organizations in the Seattle area last year. Berman says, "The whole idea is not to let any good produce go to waste."

It takes a community

The Natural Resources Defense Council estimates about 40 percent of food in the United States is wasted. Last year, Food Lifeline was able to recover almost 40 million pounds of food from local restaurants, grocery stores, food manufacturers, hotels, hospitals and corporate campuses that otherwise would have gone to compost or landfill.

"Our work at Food Lifeline is not just about recovering food, it's about educating and advocating," says Dani Turk, director of community programs. "Often the people who are benefiting from the emergency food network have jobs, but they're in a hard place where maybe they're deciding between buying food or medication. We

know that within the food industry, a lot of folks want to advance their zero-waste initiatives, and we want to help them do that while helping their neighbors in need."

Through its Seattle's Table program, Food Lifeline recovers unused prepared food for nearby hot meal programs at partner locations. "We also are trying to build community. We want people to know there are hungry people right down the road, and they can help," Turk says.

Community involvement is the most important sustainability strategy at the Good Cheer Food Bank on Whidbey Island. In addition to food it receives through Food Lifeline and Northwest Harvest, it also utilizes donations from island farmers, runs a fruit tree gleaning program, maintains an onsite farm, and hosts a couponing team that sifts through 100 local newspapers each week to maximize the amount of healthful foods the food bank is able to offer.

The couponing was started by a food bank client who wanted to give back. Executive director Kathy McLaughlin-McCabe says, "She said my favorite thing, which is: 'I have a great idea, and I'll do all the work.' Most people offer up a great idea and walk out the door."

As cities and towns around Puget Sound grow and change, the creativity and commitment of hunger relief efforts are more important than ever. In a perfect world, no one would go hungry. In our messy, imperfect world, creative and compassionate communities must work together to make sure hunger is a temporary state.



You can help

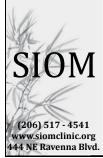
PCC's Food Bank Program has been making a difference in our community for more than 25 years. With your donation, we purchase nutritious bulk foods that are most needed at our 12 partner food banks — grains, beans, soup mix and more. For example, one dollar donated can purchase 19 servings of pinto beans for families in our community.

Donate online: pccnaturalmarkets. com/r/3594.

Leftover PCC deli foods also are donated to 26 local food banks so they don't go to waste.

"The deli items from PCC are some of the most popular items at the food bank," says John Rittenhouse, the Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank manager. "It's wonderful being able to have delicious, healthy food from PCC to offer to our clients."

PCC further avoids food waste by donating foods from other departments, including dairy and organic produce.



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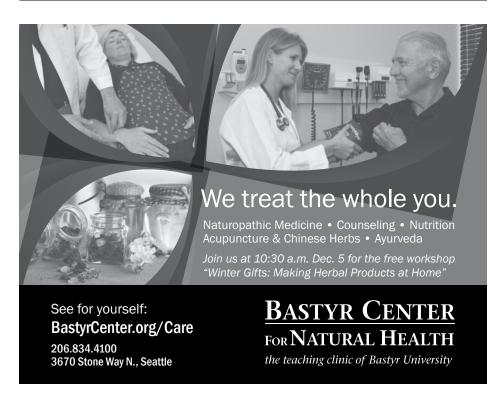
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Get to know your trustees

This is the first in a series of occasional articles on our current board trustees.

"I am passionate about businesses that combine profitability with a broader social purpose or mission and I want to help PCC become the model sustainable business. I believe PCC has the opportunity to capitalize on its mission-



MICHAEL HUTCHINGS First term, first year; term ends in 2018

driven purpose, its cooperative structure, and the increasing public awareness of the benefits of healthy food and sustainable agriculture. I want to help PCC and its members be in a position to influence the nation's discourse on these ideals, including through a greater ability to donate to sustainability causes and by projecting its mission and ideals to a broader audience. I also want to ensure that as PCC grows it keeps its roots firmly planted in the values and tradition that have made PCC what it is now."

Michael is a business and social purpose attorney who is a partner at DLA Piper. "My legal practice consists of advising boards of directors and management of companies. I work with consumer cooperatives on governance and business issues."

On our board, Michael serves on the Board Development and Member Relations committees, as well as the Bylaws Task Force.

Board report

At the September 29 board meeting, the nominating committee reported on its work to date. Mary Simon has been selected to serve as the 2015-2016 chair. The deadline for board and nominating committee applications is December 7. Interviews will take place in early January.

The Bylaws Task Force updated the board. Lucas reported that the committee has developed a project timeline and is nearly ready to present a draft bylaws document to the board for discussion. They are trying to set a retreat date for some time in the next few months to review and discuss the proposed changes. (See "Bylaws update — Questions?" on this page).

Each of the four standing committees Board Development, CEO Evaluation, Finance, and Member Relations — presented their 2015-2016 work plans, which were approved by the board.

The Board Development committee is working to refine the board job description and is generating a document that outlines desired trustee attributes, which will be shared with the nominating committee and with potential applicants.

One element of the Member Relations Committee's work plan is setting the agenda for the annual meeting. The committee proposed a new format for the meeting that will give many more members and staff access to the meeting and opportunities to meet the board candidates. The board approved the new format idea and asked staff to proceed with planning. At the November board meeting, the board will consider a proposal with more details and will vote to set the governance dates.

Bylaws update - Questions?

The board's Bylaws Task Force continues work on a thorough review and rejuvenation of PCC's bylaws, which last underwent a comprehensive update in 2003. We're reviewing best bylaws practices, examples from many sources, consulting with experts at Cooperative Development Services, checking compliance with current law, and building in future compliance with applicable statutes. Draft bylaws will be evaluated by the board, staff and appropriate consulting experts. We will post updates on our progress on this page and on the board page of our website.

We would like to have an opportunity to answer questions you may have about this work. Any questions should be directed to board@pccnaturalmarkets.com.

Apply for PCC's board of trustees

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We're looking for qualified applicants for board service. Business and board experience helpful.

Board members serve a three-year term. Application deadline for the May 2016 election is December 7, 2015.

Next board meeting

The next regularly scheduled board meeting will be Tuesday, November 17 at 4:30 p.m. at the co-op office. Member comment period is at 6 p.m. Comments are limited to three minutes unless a longer presentation is approved by the chair. For planning purposes please email us at board@pccnaturalmarkets.com if you plan to make comments.

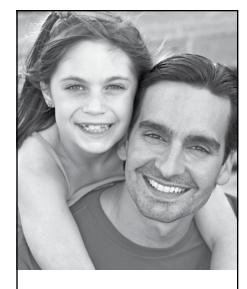
PCC Community Grants

PCC strives to support organizations and schools located throughout the regions served by our stores.

Four times each year, PCC awards a \$1,000 grant to a school or nonprofit that exemplifies the spirit of our local community.

We have a particular fondness for projects and programs that involve food, especially those relating to food education, nutrition and/or food sustainability.

Grant recipients will receive recognition — loudly and proudly - via our print publications, social media platforms and on our website. Visit pccnaturalmarkets.com/ community/grants to learn more and apply.



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Forced labor in fishing

Efforts to end forced labor in the fishing industry are gaining traction. Class-action lawsuits recently were filed against Mars and Nestlé, producers of seafood-based pet food brands including Iams and Fancy Feast, accusing them of failing to disclose their dependence on forced labor. Several lawmakers have introduced legislation to increase transparency and accountability, and the Senate Caucus to End Human Trafficking plans to discuss ways to reward companies with better policies to prevent labor abuses. (The New York Times)

Paleo flour?

The modern paleo diet excludes grains, but the original paleo eaters definitely were grinding oats and other grains for dinner, according to investigations of an ancient stone recovered in a cave in Puglia, Italy. The Gravettian culture used a hand-sized stone as a pestle and grinder dating back some 32,000 years, providing the earliest evidence of food processing in Europe. The flat surface of the stone shows the kind of wear that would be produced by grinding broken seeds into flour. (NPR's The Salt)

Court: No to bee-killing pesticide

A federal appeals court has struck down the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) approval of sulfoxaflor, a neonicotinoid pesticide implicated in bee colony collapse. The court cited the "precariousness of bee populations" and "flawed and limited data"

submitted by Dow on sulfoxaflor's effects. The ruling followed a lawsuit by beekeepers who argued EPA itself had found sulfoxaflor to be "highly toxic to honey bees and other insect pollinators." (Mother Jones)

Sustainable cocoa KitKat?

After facing allegations of child labor in their supply chain, Nestlé said KitKat will make all its products with sustainably sourced cocoa. The company plans to source 150,000 tons of sustainably produced cocoa annually by 2017. KitKat bars will be made with cocoa accredited by independent third parties by the first quarter of 2016. (Bloomberg.com)

Drastic tuna decline

New research from the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the Zoological Society of London shows tuna and mackerel populations have suffered a "catastrophic" 74 percent decline over the last 40 years. WWF warns that unless drastic action is taken to stop overfishing and other threats to marine life, we will lose species critical to human food security. (The Guardian)

Kashi GMO lawsuit

A federal judge has approved a \$3.99 million deal to settle a class-action lawsuit accusing Kashi of false advertising in labeling foods with genetically modified organisms (GMOs) as "all natural." The judge ruled "that a reasonable consumer would expect a product labeled 'all natural' to be free of GMOs."

Kashi has agreed to reimburse customers and to change its labels, as well as provide "compliance information" on products it claims are non-GMO. (The Daily Meal)

Chipotle lawsuit

A class-action lawsuit claims Chipotle has misled consumers in declaring it switched "to serving food made only with non-GMO ingredients." Plaintiffs say Chipotle's non-GMO food labeling is false and misleading because it serves beverages such as soft drinks made with GMOs, and meat, sour cream and cheese from animals that eat GMOs. Chipotle says its website carries disclaimers about the GMO content in animal products. (Reuters)

EU bans animal cloning

The European Parliament voted to ban the cloning of all farm animals and the sale of cloned livestock, their offspring and derivative products. The measure passed by a large margin and goes beyond a 2013 proposed directive that would have banned just five species: cattle, sheep, pigs, goats and horses. The EU Parliament cited animal welfare concerns in supporting the ban, claiming only a small percentage of cloned offspring survive to term and many die shortly after birth. (sciencemag.org)

Ocean acidification and shellfish

A study from Oregon State University finds shellfish industry workers are four times more likely to agree that ocean acidification

pande-cameron.com

is having an impact on the world's aquatic animals. The oceans are absorbing so much carbon dioxide, turning the oceans acidic, that larval shellfish have a more difficult time building their shells. Northwest shellfish growers have experienced repeated die-offs, causing economic havoc. (Oregonlive.com)

Plot against eggless mayo

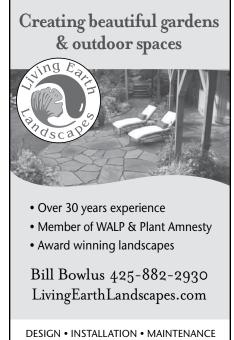
Hundreds of pages of documents provided to the Associated Press reveal a two-year campaign waged by the American Egg Board — a "quasi-governmental body" overseen by the U.S. Department of Agriculture — to counter the emergence of Hampton Creek's eggless Just Mayo spread. The board tried to prevent the sale of Just Mayo and paid bloggers to tout the benefits of real eggs. The campaign may be illegal as checkoff programs, such as the Egg Board, are required legally to stay within the boundaries of advertising, promotion, consumer education and research. (eatdrinkpolitics.com)

Half U.S. seafood wasted

Nearly half the U.S. seafood supply winds up uneaten, according to researchers from the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future. About a quarter of the waste occurs at sea, where fish are frequently caught by accident, then thrown back, and an additional 15 percent or so is lost en route to consumers, often because it spoils or is discarded as scraps at processing plants. Each year U.S. eaters buy but never eat 1.3 billion pounds of fish and shellfish. (NPR's The Salt)





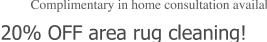


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QUEL FROMAGE! A surprising twist in the "French Paradox?"

by Nick Rose, M.S.

or decades, we've watched the French eat twice as much cheese as us Americans, while enjoying much lower rates of heart disease. This "French Paradox" led researchers on a quest to explain why French people's extraordinarily high saturated fat intake doesn't lead to more heart attacks.

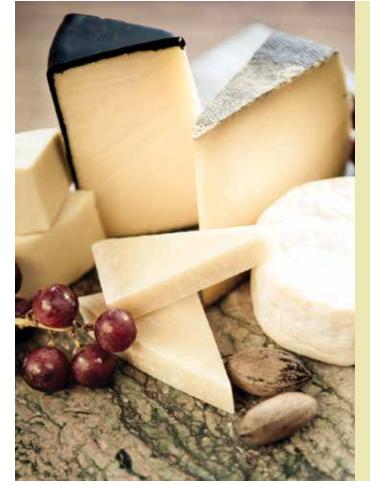
The latest research on cheese and other fermented dairy foods, such as yogurt and kefir, suggests it might not be a "paradox" at all. Instead, we just now may be starting to understand the health benefits of cheese and other fermented dairy.

Dairy fat: not bad

"Contrary to prevailing dietary advice ... there is no excess cardiovascular risk associated with intake of saturated fat." This statement, published in the British Medical Journal this year, represents the changing view of dietary fat and health.

A growing body of research finds eating about 2 to 3 ounces per day of cheese doesn't harm blood cholesterol levels. The saturated fat in dairy comes mostly from short- and medium-chain fatty acids, which have beneficial (or at least neutral) impacts on blood cholesterol levels. The saturated fat in cheese also is offset by other beneficial nutrients in fermented dairy foods.

Milkfat is the best source of naturally occurring trans fatty acids, such as conjugated linoleic acid (CLA). Unlike the synthetic trans fatty acids in margarine, trans fatty acids in dairy from ruminants, such as cows, goats or yaks, appear to provide health benefits including a reduced risk of diabetes, cancer and heart disease. These ruminant trans fats are produced in the digestive tract of the animals and are found in greatest quantity in 100-percent grassfed, whole-milk dairy products.



What dairy products are fermented?

Always: cheese, crème fraîche, yogurt, kefir, sour cream

Sometimes: butter, buttermilk, cottage cheese, cream cheese

Not fermented: milk, cream, ice cream, butter

Lower lactose: better for everyone

Cultured dairy products, such as cheese, sour cream and plain yogurt, taste less sweet and more tangy because of their reduced lactose (milk sugar) content. Many people with lactose intolerance can eat cheese and yogurt safely because most of the lactose is pre-digested by the "good bacteria" in these cultured foods.

This lower lactose benefits everyone, not just those with lactose intolerance. Lactose is broken down in our digestive tract and becomes galactose, a potentially pro-inflammatory sugar. The reduced lactose content of fermented dairy could result in less milk-induced inflammation, and might also explain why

researchers are finding different health impacts between consumption of fermented dairy and nonfermented dairy.

Fermentation benefits

Fermented foods are popular because of the health benefits of probiotic bacteria, but fermentation enhances the nutritional profile of milk beyond just the probiotic benefits. Fermentation boosts milk's vitamin content (K, folate, B-12 and biotin), CLA content, and supports gut health with unique prebiotics and probiotics.

Cow's milk contains only traces of vitamin K, but menaquinone, a far superior form of this nutrient (also called K2), is produced by bacteria during

fermentation. The highest food sources of vitamin K2 are hard cheeses, such as Gouda, Swiss and Gruyere. The unique benefits of K2 were identified only recently, but research is mounting confirming K2's benefits for bone health and disease prevention.

During fermentation the proteins in milk are broken into smaller peptides, and these peptides may improve blood pressure and immune function. Molded cheeses produce additional nutrients that early research finds provide a beneficial impact on inflammation and heart health. The longer cheese ripens, the more nutritious it becomes.

French lessons

A growing body of research is questioning the common assumption that low-fat dairy foods are the healthiest choices in the dairy aisle. Evidence is accumulating that full-fat, fermented dairy may be the best option for supporting heart health, reducing inflammation, and even preventing obesity and diabetes. The Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee recently suggested we stop stressing about dietary cholesterol and total dietary fat — but it has not yet changed its opinion on saturated fat.

Most of the published research on dairy in the past five years is from Denmark and Sweden, two countries with the highest dairy consumption. There's cause to be skeptical about some of these studies since researchers often are funded by the dairy industry.

Early nutrition studies lumped all dairy products together for statistical analysis, so it's encouraging to see researchers dissecting the health impacts of fermented, whole-milk and grass-fed dairy. It's very likely that the difference between "drinking milk" and "eating dairy" is a significant and important distinction.



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