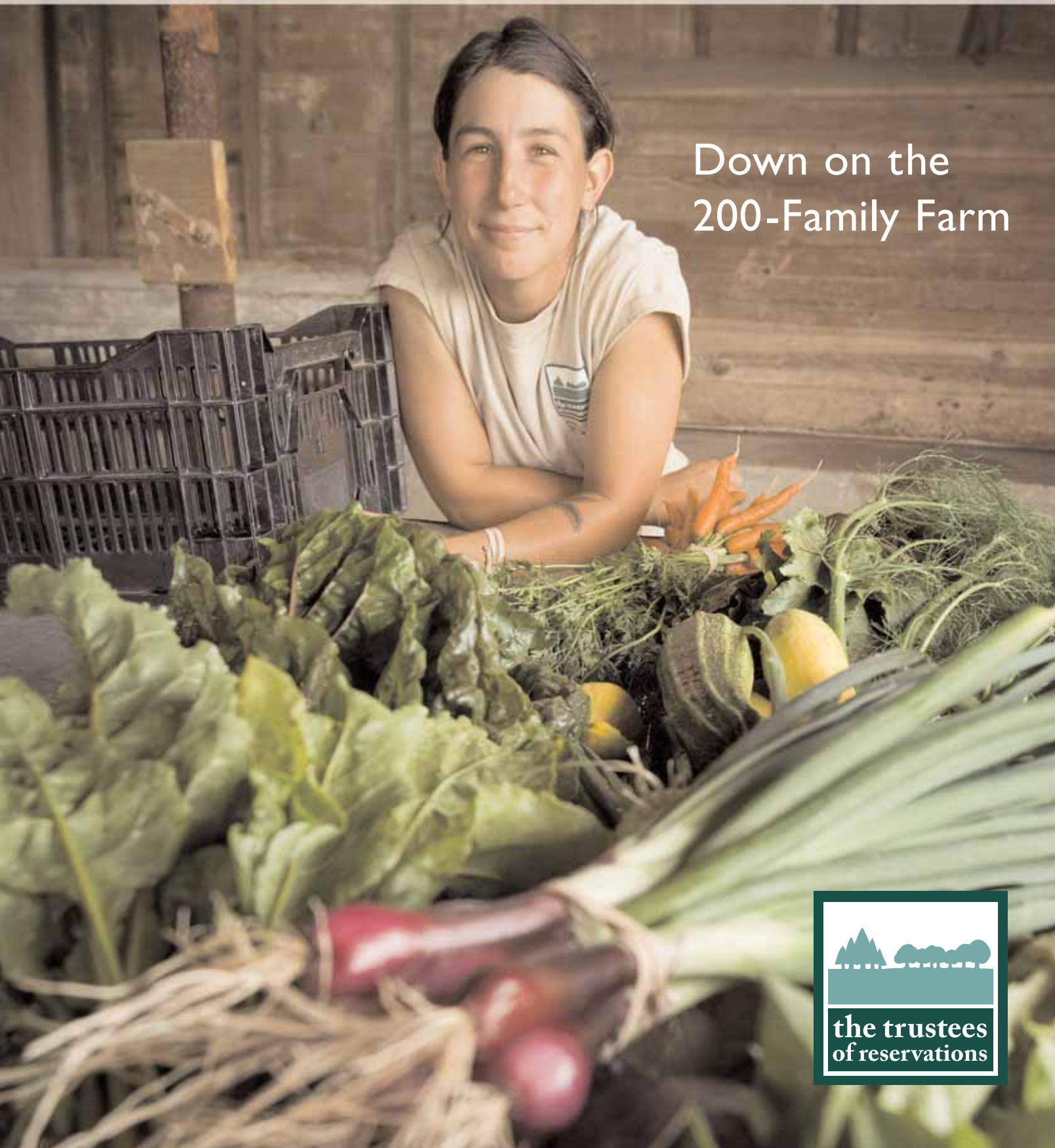


Special PLACES

FOR MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS OF THE TRUSTEES OF RESERVATIONS

SUMMER 2008 VOLUME 16 NO. 2

Down on the
200-Family Farm





KENDALL'S CORNER

Farms, Farmers, and Food

Rolling pastures, weathered barns, white-washed farmhouses – from Boston to the Berkshires, these iconic images connect us to our rural roots. But they're also signs of a landscape – and a way of life – in danger of being lost forever as more and more of the Commonwealth's farmland falls victim to development.

The Trustees are working hard to preserve farm landscapes and the family and community legacies they represent. Keeping farmland in our communities requires working on three fronts simultaneously: preserving the land, raising a new generation of farmers, and developing new markets for local food.

First, preserving the land. We hold conservation restrictions on thousands of acres, keeping land open, undeveloped, and available for farming forever. And we protect working farms by advocating for state support for farmland and facilitating the sale of agricultural preservation restrictions to the state's Department of Food and Agriculture. By helping farmers to structure a deal and find financing, we help keep their land in permanent production.

Second, growing new farmers. At Weir River Farm in Hingham, we're partnering with 4-H to give kids access to farm animals, from chickens to goats to draft horses. At Long Hill in Beverly, we've teamed up with The Food Project to engage urban and suburban youth in sustainable agriculture. At Appleton Farms in Ipswich and Hamilton and at Powisset Farm in Dover, we're providing land for enterprising young farmers to cultivate and have apprentice programs for training the next generation. Several of our 'graduates' have already gone on to manage farms of their own.

Finally, supporting local markets. Farmers markets and new business models, such as Community Supported Agriculture, give farmers direct access to consumers, and consumers a source of really fresh, healthy food. When we buy local eggs, dairy products, meat, and produce, we're helping keep farms, farmers, and farmland in our communities. Bon appetit!

Andy Kendall
PRESIDENT

ON THE COVER: Community Supported Agriculture Manager Meryl LaTronica displays the bounty at Powisset Farm in Dover. © TOM KATES

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Special Places, Summer 2008, Volume 16, Issue Number 2. *Special Places* (ISSN 1087-5026) is published quarterly and distributed to members and donors of The Trustees of Reservations. Copyright © 2008. All rights reserved. Printed on recycled paper.



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Summer Solstice Celebration at World's End, Hingham

© K. MCMAHON

A 28-year-old from the suburbs with a sweet, small voice and a sociology degree, Meryl is one of a new breed of educated, innovative, and culturally plugged-in growers who are changing the way many of us eat. She sports a beautiful tattoo of a vegetable garden on her left arm and found her calling while traveling in Chiapas, Mexico, where she was inspired by a woman who was promoting organic gardening in the community. After returning home, Meryl spent a few years gaining production experience at local organic farms.

Powisset Farm, however, was more than just an irresistible opportunity for her. It was the kind of challenge that might make anybody less energetic or organized quail. Meryl's mission was not just to manage a farm for the first time, but to create one from scratch out of empty fields – a farm that would feed a good-sized, waiting crowd: the more than 100 families that had signed on in advance

for a new Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program.

CSAs are an increasingly popular way for consumers to support small, diversified local farms and opt out of the industrial food chain, whose costs in terms of wasted oil, environmental pollution, and poor nutrition were delineated brilliantly in Michael Pollan's 2006 book, *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. In a CSA, members buy shares in the upcoming season's vegetable harvest before it begins, taking on some of the risks of growing food and giving the farm a more predictable cash flow. In exchange, customers bring home a supply of the freshest possible vegetables every week. Inspired by the success of their 500-member CSA at Appleton Farms in Ipswich, in 2006 The Trustees took a new look at Powisset Farm, which had largely sat fallow for the previous 20 years, and decided to plow up 8 acres for vegetables there.

Within days of starting her job in the dead of winter, Meryl was traveling to

Pennsylvania and shopping for tractors, settling on one for tillage and two more flexible models for cultivation. "While the day-to-day farming is easy," Meryl says, "the challenge for me was in figuring out the larger systems for the blank canvas here and trying to make good decisions for the environment and the members."

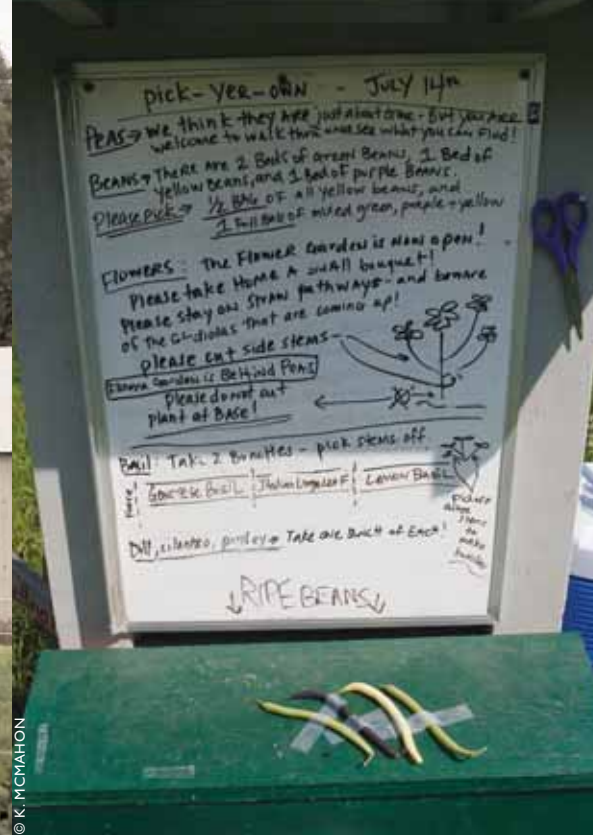
Meryl raves about how neatly the old cow barn on the property fit into the CSA plan. But she also had to figure out a system for managing the relatively short New England growing season. One of her first tasks was ordering a 25- by 72-foot greenhouse to get seedlings started. "My co-workers at The Trustees came out and helped set up the greenhouse," Meryl says. "They couldn't have been more wonderful."

She also had to hire a crew and turned to her contacts at the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) and EMASSCRAFT, the Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training of Eastern

Powisset farmers and volunteers are happy to get their hands dirty in service to the growing season.

RIGHT, COUNTER-CLOCKWISE: Seeding, labeling, and watering all lead up to the ultimate prize: the harvest.





Massachusetts, to find three apprentice farmers, including Tara Bledsoe, who has returned for a second season.

While getting the human and physical infrastructure in place was daunting enough, Meryl's challenges didn't end there. She also had to solve the rather mind-blowing mathematical puzzle called a crop plan. It's difficult enough to map out a vegetable garden for one family. But for 100? With enough left over to donate to food banks and sell to Ten Tables Restaurant in Jamaica Plain? When you've never worked this particular piece of land before?

Meryl patiently explains her method: "I knew I'd have carrots, for example, for 14 weeks. So I decided each CSA share would get a pound of carrots each of those weeks. That meant I needed to be able to harvest a pound a week times 100 members times 14 weeks. I added in a 20-percent margin of error, to cover losses to deer and other pests. And then from that, I determined the number of row feet of carrots that would yield that amount, and calculated how many beds

to plant in carrots – and when to plant them throughout the season."

Tricky enough, but here's where it gets really complicated: she had to do the same calculation for each of the 45 different crops she'd decided to grow. And she had to juggle those 45 crops to make sure that each member would have a nice selection of vegetables every week – and that the total value over the season represented a good return on the \$550 fee each shareholder paid.

Meryl got a lot of help finding the right algorithm for Powisset from the state's tight-knit community of organic farmers, including "gurus" Amanda Cather of Waltham Fields Community Farm and Dan Kaplan of Amherst's Brookfield Farm, whose spreadsheets Meryl was able to adapt. As for which crop varieties to plug into that algorithm, Meryl chose an expansive menu that included 7 varieties of cabbage, 13 varieties of peppers, and 20 different tomatoes, based on what her experience told her would grow well and be popular with the customers. Meryl admits, however, that her biggest

mistake in planning the first year's offerings was in underestimating what adventuresome eaters her members are. "I planted a little celery root as a storage crop," she says. "Well, people loved it, so we're doing more this year. And I wasn't sure how the kohlrabi went over, so I sent out an email saying that I'd do less this year. People emailed me back, 'No, we want the kohlrabi!'"

Powisset Farm's debut season as a CSA went remarkably smoothly. While a terrible drought last summer devastated farms nationwide, Powisset sailed through relatively unscathed, with nothing more than what Meryl calls "low-budge" irrigation from a couple of garden hoses, a system she plans to upgrade this season.

And the measures of last season's success are everywhere. Two more acres have been added to cultivation, and the number of CSA shares will double to 200 this season. Under the heading, "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery," Molly Fogleman, one of Meryl's original crew, was hired away to start another organic farm in Dover. And last

year's members overflow with gratitude for the experience Meryl gave them. Nils Hoernle, who got his first CSA experience at Powisset Farm, declares, "It has changed my life for the better."

Nils, an internist, knows whereof he speaks. "All day long," he says, "I see people with diet-related problems such as obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease. We know these problems can often be reversed by changing our diet. Well, joining a CSA is the best solution I've seen come along."

He explains that even in his own health-conscious household, the steady arrival of Powisset Farm produce changed his family's eating habits. "The vegetables were so good – and not just the usual varieties, but some really exotic ones. They were grown without chemicals in soil by people we knew and picked the same day, so there was no loss of nutrients. And we'd get so much every week that we'd *have* to eat them. We basically stopped eating out

– and the weight just dropped off me."

He adds, "It's the healthiest food on the planet, and it's right down the street, closer than the grocery store." The fact that Powisset Farm is in Dover, a mere 16 miles from Boston, means that it plays another role for its members besides producing beautiful food for them. For many, it is a first introduction to the miracle of the growing season. "We want people to know that a suburban farm does exist," Meryl says. "There's a lot of richness to that. So we try to make the farm accessible." When CSA members come to pick up their week's share, they find a blackboard that lists vegetables and flowers that are ready for them to pick in the fields, if they like.

Not every CSA is so welcoming. Some simply truck the week's produce to a drop-off spot or expect their members to grab their box of vegetables and go. But Powisset Farm is a Trustees property and sharing the landscape with the community is an important part of the

mission. "We want our members to feel like this is their farm," Meryl says firmly. This ideal requires a higher standard of housekeeping from her than most farmers have to maintain.

"We label stuff in the field and keep it weeded," Meryl says. "At first, some of our members were reluctant to go down there. Now, their kids are running to the field to eat cherry tomatoes off the vine."

While she's clearly given something revelatory to her members, Meryl insists that she's the lucky one. "I feel blessed to have this experience, the support of the community, and the support of The Trustees," she says. "It's a really exciting time in the organization. I've been given incredible freedom as a young farmer. Now it's my job here to make good food accessible to everyone."

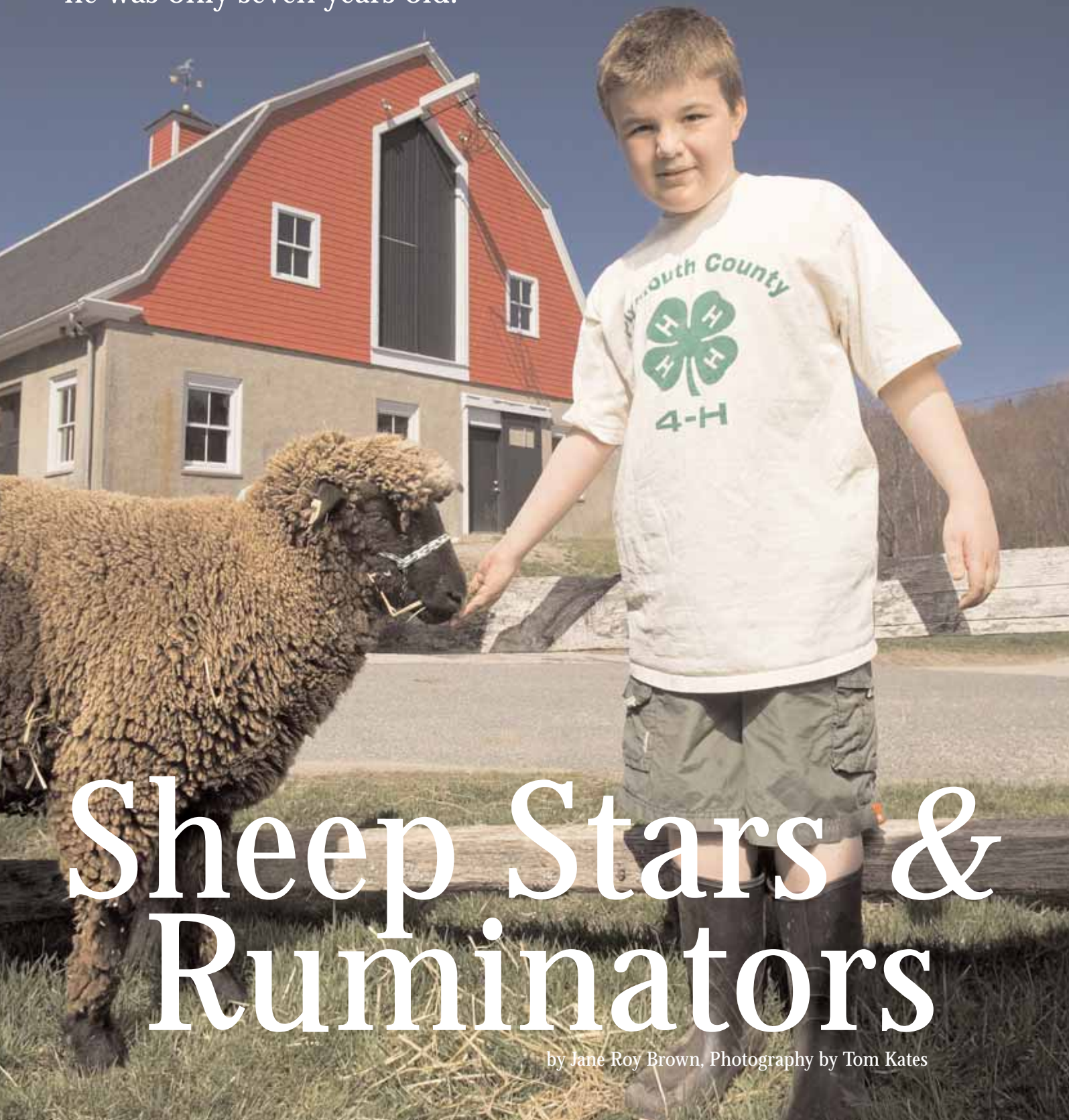
Michele Owens is a Saratoga Springs, NY, writer eager to get her hands and knees dirty in either of her two gardens.

"It's the healthiest food on the planet, and it's right down the street, closer than the grocery store."

– NILS HOERNLE



Three years ago, when Dean Powers joined the 4-H club at Weir River Farm in Hingham, he didn't know where it would take him. "When I started out I was just mucking stalls," he recalls. But then, he was only seven years old.



Sheep Stars & Ruminators

by Jane Roy Brown, Photography by Tom Kates

Last summer, his 4-H foray took Powers and two other members of his club, the Sheep Stars and Ruminators, as far as the Marshfield Fair, where he showed a young Corriedale sheep. To be eligible to show in the fair, Powers, then nine, had to log 20 hours of work at the farm in advance. Then he leased the animal – a ewe he named Half-and-Half for her brown and white fleece – for \$50 and signed an agreement to spend the summer preparing to show her.

"It was work, work, work," he recalls, explaining that he made as many as four trips a week from his home in Scituate to Weir River Farm to feed, water, groom, exercise, and train his charge to be led on a halter.

During the two-week-long fair, his mother drove him daily to the fairgrounds, where Powers took full responsibility for Half-and-Half and participated in a host of events, some competitive, some not. He netted a handful of ribbons over the fair's duration, for contests including sheep knowledge, judging, fitting, and showmanship. He racked up more points by demonstrating how to lead a sheep on a halter. Points carry a dollar value, and at the end of the fair he picked up a check for \$50.

His mother, Marie Carey-Powers, sees other rewards from his 4-H activities. "I've been able to move into the background and allow him to be more independent," says Carey-Powers, who has been an enthusiastic Trustees member for seven years.

LEFT: Dean Powers extends a hand to Half-and-Half, the Corriedale sheep he cares for at Weir River Farm in Hingham.

ABOVE: Members of the Sheep Stars and Ruminators show off their 4-H banner and ribbons at the barn.



"Raising an animal teaches responsibility, time management, how to compete – how to be humble in victory and learn from defeat," says Donna Woolam, who, as director of agriculture and education at the Eastern States Exposition ("The Big E") in West Springfield, oversees 4-H participation. "It gives young people a chance to accomplish something that they are totally responsible for."

The 4-H program at Weir River Farm was launched in 2003 with the arrival of Meghan Connolly, the farm's education and interpretation coordinator. With pigs, horses, sheep, goats, llamas, and chickens, the farm was a magnet for families.

"Here we had the animals and the kids, but not enough staff to connect the two – it was just the farmer and me," says Connolly. A former 4-H'er, she knew that a 4-H club could attract the adult volunteers she needed to create programs that would captivate kids – and adults, too.

4-H and The Trustees may have different goals and missions, but, according to Sherry Guyott, 4-H director for Massachusetts, they share the concern that the loss of farms and farmland will increase the distance – and the knowledge gap – between people and the land. Most 4-H kids are interested in animals, but with the disappearance of small, family farms where kids owned the animals

they cared for, 4-H has had to change its model for animal science programs. "We're dependent on organizations like The Trustees for animals and barns. So it's a great partnership from our perspective." And from The Trustees'.

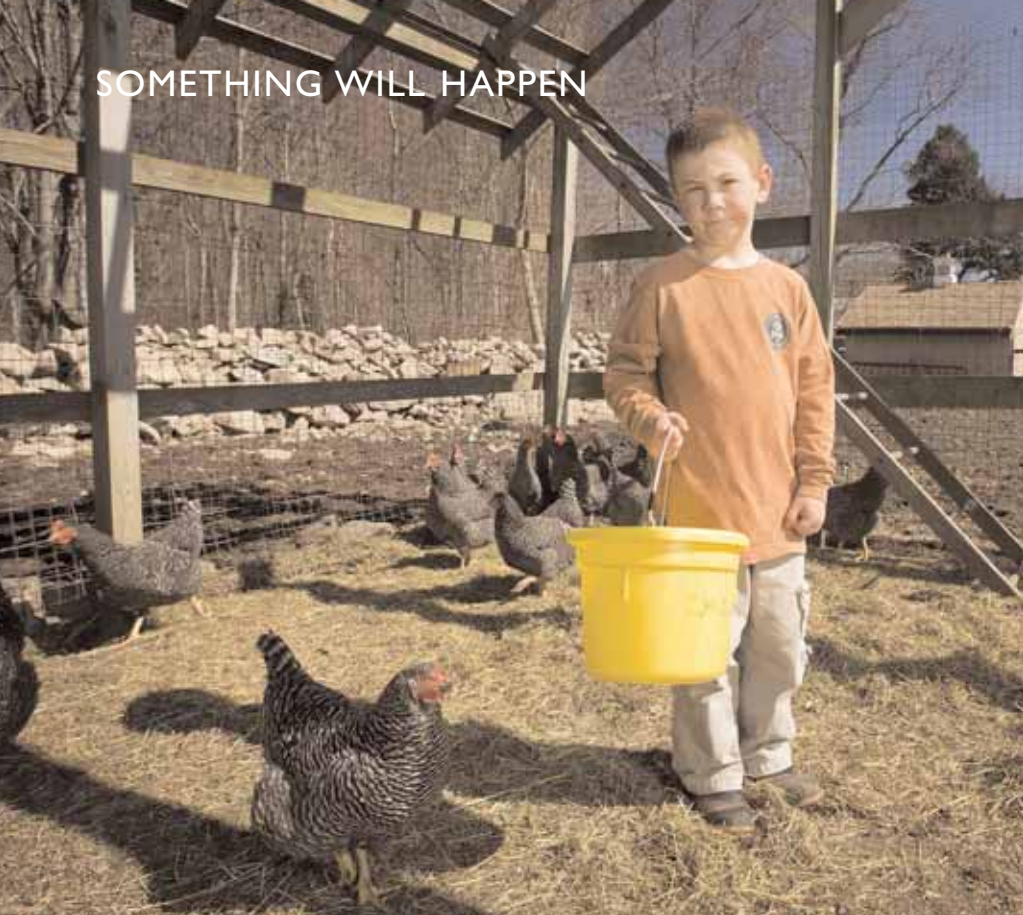
The Roots of 4-H

GUYOTT AND OTHERS DESCRIBE HOW 4-H has branched out since its founding in the early 20th century, when more than half the U.S. population lived and worked on small farms. Today less than a quarter of the population lives in rural areas, and farms have grown larger, more specialized, and highly mechanized.

In Massachusetts, 4-H staffers work for the University of Massachusetts Amherst, one of 106 state universities founded in the 19th century by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and state governments to teach agriculture to rural students. Later, these universities added experiment stations to explore new farming techniques, and an outreach arm, the cooperative extension. 4-H – "Head, Heart, Hands, and Health" – was a way for extension agents to spread knowledge from their institutions.

As small farming began to decline in the mid-20th century, 4-H diversified, expanding its core focus to personal

SOMETHING WILL HAPPEN



Brent Powers (LEFT) feeds Barred Rocks in the chicken pen while (ABOVE) Heather Gaughan and Billy the Pygmy Goat share a quiet moment. BELOW LEFT: Melissa Krusell cradles a baby chick. OPPOSITE PAGE: 4-H participants show off their Holsteins at the Dairy Show held at the Eastern States Exposition in Springfield.



growth. Today only 45 percent of 4-H'ers live in rural areas, and club members can choose from more than 1,000 subjects, or "project areas," from DNA analysis to public speaking.

"The goal is to give kids the resources to grow into well-rounded, confident adults," says Guyott. "We teach life skills, coping skills, communication, decision making, teamwork, and record keeping. These have always been at the core of 4-H."

That said, the organization remains strongly identified with agriculture – Guyott estimates that 70 percent of Massachusetts 4-H'ers have historically focused on animal science – and with the loss of small farms, enrollment is slipping. Massachusetts 4-H club enrollment, now 3,012, is about a quarter of what it was in 1980. While waning agriculture is a factor, funding cuts have affected 4-H more directly, Guyott says. When Massachusetts eliminated most county governments in the late 1990s, 4-H lost a key funding source. State budget cuts have also forced 4-H to trim staffing and

charge a \$50 membership fee. Other contributing trends include a national decline in volunteerism, more mothers entering the workforce, and a burgeoning number of activities for kids.

Farms, Fairs, & 4-H

AGRICULTURAL FAIRS, WHICH ARE AS old as cultivation itself, serve as a primary venue for 4-H, and their fates would appear to be entwined – but not, apparently, in a linear way. Anecdotally, smaller fairs that can't afford to add carnivals and other popular entertainments are vanishing. But those that can, like the Barnstable, Topsfield, and Marshfield fairs, are going strong and helping keep 4-H alive in local communities.

And of course there's The Big E. Founded in 1916, it drew 1.2 million visitors last year and is New England's largest fair. Last year it featured more than 120 agricultural competitions, about

40 of which involved 4-H. "We are holding steady in the agriculture department in some of our competitions," says Woolam, "but numbers have changed within them." In the livestock area they've added llamas and alpacas, and some of the less historical show breeds, such as Belted Galloways and natural fiber sheep.

As for 4-H, she says, "participation is cyclical. We had a large number of 4-H beef kids in the early 2000s, but they've graduated, and we are just starting to see a return to those figures as 12-year-olds become eligible this year."

The real challenge is enticing 4-H'ers to exhibit, which requires money, supportive parents, time, and motivation. "That's why we try to hook 'em while they're young," Woolam says. It also requires access to animals. And that's where The Trustees come in.

At the final 4-H awards assembly at the Marshfield Fair last summer, the three members of Weir River Farm's Sheep Stars and Ruminators Club sat

SOMETHING WILL HAPPEN

patiently while other clubs collected armfuls of ribbons. Then the announcer called their names. The kids flashed each other surprised glances before heading for the stage, where they claimed a special state award. "It was for representing a new place that's increasing education all over the South Shore, encompassing all the great things 4-H does," says Connolly, who now advises a fledgling program at The Trustees' Appleton Farms in Ipswich and has plans for one at Powisset Farm in Dover.

"We got a big purple ribbon – it's on display at the farm," beams Dean Powers. Now a seasoned veteran, Powers feels he's learned a trick or two, and is keen to show Half-and-Half at the fair again this summer. "She tries to distract me," he says, "but I'm not falling for it."

Jane Roy Brown is a writer and Trustees member based in western Massachusetts.

Find a 4-H club near you:
www.4-h.org or www.mass4h.org



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Healthy Food, Healthier Community

By Maureen Costello



Nutritionist and neighborhood activist Vivien Morris is eagerly awaiting the return of a farmers market to Mattapan Square this summer.

AS A NUTRITIONIST AT BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER, Vivien Morris sees the damage poor diets wreak on low-income communities every day.

“People know they should eat fruits and vegetables, but these staples cost more than people can afford,” says Morris from her home in Boston’s Mattapan neighborhood.

Morris’s concerns mirror the findings of a 2005 Boston Medical Center (BMC) study, “The Real Cost of a Healthy Diet,” a response to a litany of nutrition-related diagnoses, such as diabetes and high blood pressure, among the hospital’s low-income patients.

“Sometimes there was a \$150 gap between what people could afford and the cost of healthy food,” Morris says, adding that many of the patients studied receive Food Stamps and other government-issued food vouchers. “And, it’s hard for them to find fresh food in their neighborhood.”

Mattapan, where Morris has lived for 20 years, is a predominantly African-American neighborhood, with a mix of Haitian immigrants and Hispanics. “There’s a medium-sized grocer here and large grocery chains in neighboring communities,” she says, “but no good, healthy choices close to home. It’s a food desert.”

Food deserts are neighborhoods, usually urban, usually low-income, that lack access – whether physical or financial – to food

needed to maintain a healthy diet. But these neighborhoods often have plenty of fast-food options, and Mattapan is no exception. The neighborhood’s center boasts a McDonald’s, a Burger King, and independent fast-food restaurants. Their prices, especially McDonald’s Dollar Menu, tempt residents on tight budgets who seek food quantity over quality. Children and teens are especially vulnerable, and, to add to the problem, they often get little exercise.

“I knew we had to do something,” Morris says. In January 2007, she and BMC colleagues teamed with the Mattapan Community Development Corp., Mattapan Community Health Center, other urban nutrition experts, and Brookwood Community Farm in Milton to form the Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition. The mission of the group – which has grown to more than 20 organizations and neighborhood activists, including Boston Natural Areas Network (BNAN) – is to encourage physical activity and advocate for local and affordable resources of nutritious foods.

The Coalition’s first project? A farmers market in Mattapan Square, co-hosted by the Church of the Holy Spirit and Jubilee Christian Church.

Besides Brookwood – which has two acres in organic vegetable production less than five miles from Mattapan – the Coalition started working with Wil Bullock, Farm Educator with The Trustees of Reservations and a former Mattapan resident. The Trustees, with a deep commitment to preserving agricultural landscapes, find that when land is actively farmed, the fresh, local food produced is a great connector – of people to the land, and to one another.

At the market’s gala opening at the Jubilee Christian Church, drummers beat African rhythms while vendors hawked fresh corn, salad greens, herbs, and flowers. Small crowds gathered to watch as community nutritionists deftly transformed crops into colorful, vitamin-drenched salads and flavorsome sauces. Bundles of fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs, and blooming flowers arrived from gardeners in the community. A long-haul trucker brought corn and melons from his travels in the southern United States. Representatives from the Mattapan Health Center and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts offered tips on healthy lifestyles.

But sales were slow, and it took time for community members to warm up to the idea of buying from a farmers market. “We hadn’t done very much outreach because we started so late and put it all together so quickly,” Brookwood Farm manager Judy Lieberman recalls. She watched as customers who did visit the market cautiously inspected her produce for the “perfect” tomato or melon – basing their ideas of “perfect” on the processed offerings found at traditional grocery stores.

Laying the groundwork: Brookwood Farm also sells its produce during Boston Natural Areas Network’s annual Harvest Festival at City Natives in Mattapan.



“People hear a lot about what they should eat,” comments The Trustees’ Bullock, “but there aren’t a lot of hands-on programs on what a tomato is supposed to look and taste like.” But after a few Saturdays, Lieberman says, “people definitely got more excited about the food.”

The frequent shoppers tended to be older women, but Lieberman remembers one pair, a mother and her teen son, who stood out. “He’d been trying to convince his mom to eat healthy and to buy organic,” Lieberman says, adding that the boy learned about the importance of good food from a book he had read.

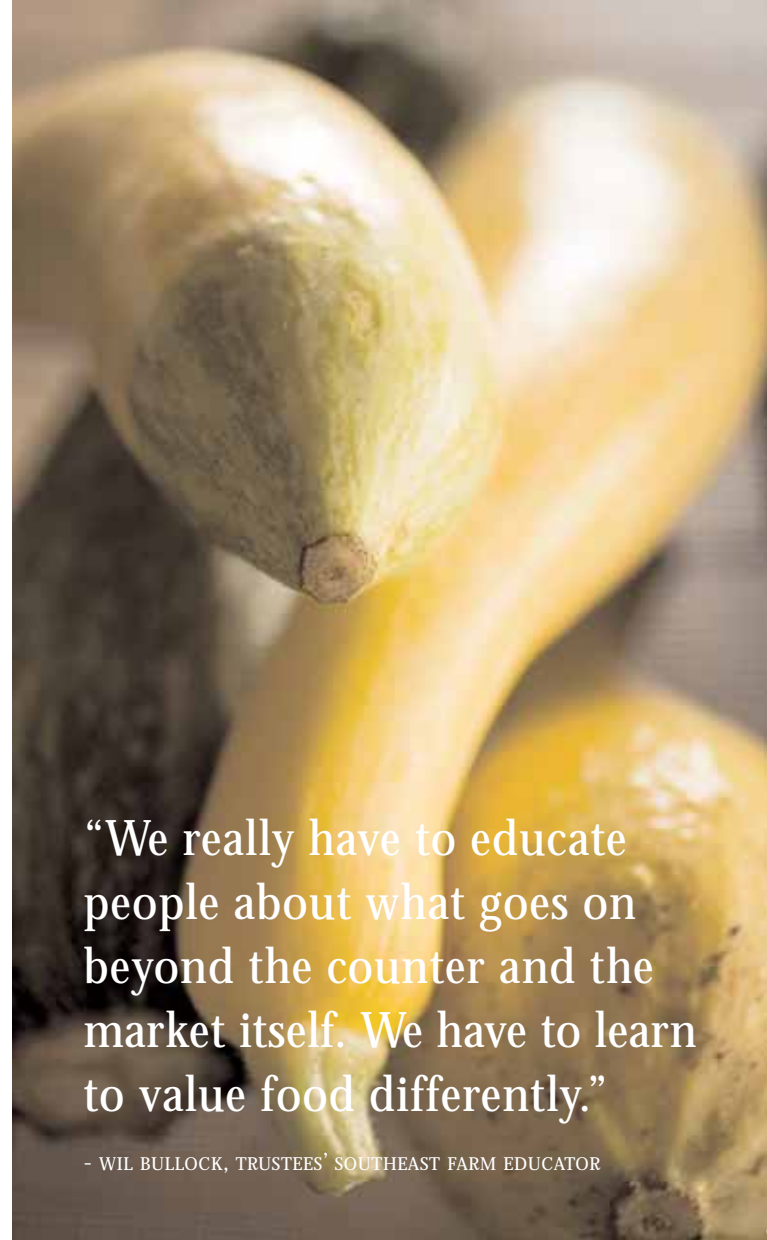
The boy is someone Bullock, now 27, can easily identify with. A Dorchester native, Bullock has been farming since he was 15. As a teen, he spent summers traveling to Lincoln to be part of The Food Project, a nonprofit program that teaches urban and suburban teens how to farm from the ground up, from seed care to business practices to sustaining a wholesome food supply.

His transition from The Food Project to become The Trustees’ Southeast farm educator was an easy one. He’s determined now to bring it back home and help make healthy, fresh food available to his Mattapan neighbors. “Everybody has the right of access to healthy food and to the land,” he says. For The Trustees, access to the land can mean bringing the land to people, through programs such as the Mattapan farmers market. And, thanks to the work of Bullock and others, The Trustees’ Bradley Estate in Canton and Powisset Farm in Dover will also be providing food for the Mattapan market this summer.

But bringing the farm to the city is a big step, and the new farmers market still faces challenges, such as the higher cost of locally grown food. “At least people want the good stuff,” Bullock says. “They no longer think you’re speaking a foreign language when you talk about sustainable, local produce. But the pricing was a problem last year. We really have to educate people about what goes on beyond the counter and the market itself. We have to learn to value food differently.”

Pricing – and familiarity with what food is for sale at the market – are obstacles the Food and Fitness Coalition hopes to overcome this year. A Hmong farm, with whom the Coalition connected through a University of Massachusetts program that helps immigrants get started in farming, sold food native to Southeast Asia last summer. But that farm probably won’t return this year.

“They had very beautiful, wholesome food, but it wasn’t a cultural match,” says Morris. “It would have worked if we were a larger market.” This year, the UMass program is helping the Coalition find an African immigrant farmer whose foods would be more familiar to the customers.



“We really have to educate people about what goes on beyond the counter and the market itself. We have to learn to value food differently.”

- WIL BULLOCK, TRUSTEES’ SOUTHEAST FARM EDUCATOR

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This year’s market will run from mid-July through mid-October at the Church of the Holy Spirit in Mattapan Square. Morris, who is also coordinator of BNaN’s Kennedy Community Garden, and the Coalition are already busy, reaching out and reminding residents of the upcoming market.

They’re also making sure residents know that food stamps and government vouchers are redeemable at the market, including from the federal Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program and from the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. And, because fitness is as important to optimal health as nutrition, the Coalition is planning a large, community-wide day of fitness called “Mattapan Moving for Life.”

Farms and farmers, healthy food and healthier customers. As Wil Bullock says: “We’ve opened up the flood gates.”

Maureen Costello is a freelance writer whose work frequently appears in the City Weekly section of Boston Globe.

Words to eat by

By Katharine Wroth

WHEN YOU DUCK INTO THE GROCERY STORE THIS SUMMER, you’re likely to find something even more refreshing than air-conditioned comfort: you might encounter a whole new focus on local, organic foods. Such eco-offerings – which are cropping up at supermarkets across the country – are almost always better choices for your health, your local economy, and the health of the planet than their conventional counterparts.

But how can you make sense of them all? **Here’s a guide to the basics:**

Organic food is grown and produced without pesticides, antibiotics, synthetic fertilizers, and other nasty chemicals. Organic methods are carefully regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, so look for the green-and-white seal to be sure you’re buying a certified product. While you can find anything from organic crackers to organic liquor these days, the higher costs can add up quickly.

To make the most of your dollar, prioritize your organic purchases by focusing on fruits and vegetables, which tend to carry the heaviest pesticide loads. And shop with care: many terms you might encounter – such as **natural** and **free-range**, which suggest more responsible care for livestock and poultry – aren’t well defined, so don’t assume they’re a healthier choice.

While navigating the aisles, you might also see **local food** – products that come from your state or region. Some people, dubbed **locavores**, aim to eat only local items, often those

grown or raised within a 100-mile radius. But if you’re not quite ready to say goodbye to staples like coffee and bananas, you can still find plenty of both to purchase close by.

Why bother? You’ll cut out the 1,000-plus shipping miles most grub travels from farm to plate, support your local economy, and feast on the season’s best bounty.

If you don’t see local items at your supermarket, it may be time to venture to a farmers market or join a **Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)** program, where you invest in a farm at the beginning of the growing season and reap a weekly supply of just-harvested items.

Getting to know your local farmers could lead to interesting conversations about **slow food** – a movement that fights our society’s fast-food tendencies. You might also find yourself eating **heirloom** varieties (traditional, non-industrial vegetables sustained through the generations) and exploring **arks of taste** that celebrate regional traditions and support endangered food cultures.

Whether or not you dig into such meaty topics, you’re sure to find food for thought. Bon appetit!

Katharine Wroth is a senior editor at Grist.org.



Hungry for more information about eating locally and more responsibly? Visit www.thetrustees.org/words.



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