

“CHOICES, CHOICES” PRODUCT FORUM
SEPTEMBER 20, 2006
COMMUNITY CENTER, 7:00-9:00 PM

Following are some of the comments recorded by some of our members who attended the Product Forum. Please feel free to join the conversation by contacting the Board of Directors at coopboard@olympus.net or contact our Member Outreach Administrator at memberservices@ptfoodcoop.coop.

White Wave Soy, if China is growing, is it USDA organic? Would like Surata tofu in bulk, if possible. (*Food Co-op: you can special order it.*)

Canned foods – in cans with white liners, the liner is plastic and is toxic. Question: Does it affect organic standard of food inside? (*FC: Years ago Laura raised the question to the Muir Glen, but they didn't respond and didn't seem to care. If the liner is plastic and not enamel, then yes.*)

Can we get organic pet food? (*FC: we have Newman's on promotion in September & Pet Guard is available by special order. You can always special order.*)

Like the “Market Basket Program” at co-op. Would like to see it expanded and with more exposure.

Provide lessons for how to stock a pantry, how to buy in bulk, low cost, cook at home (the basics).

Like the (L) signs at co-op and promoting Local. Please keep up the signs.

Grower grateful for long-term relationship with co-op. 1/3 income from selling flowers on consignment at co-op.

Please pare down choices, can go crazy. Member told story of hikers returning from expedition sitting in supermarket aisle laughing hysterically because of too many choices.

Believe we will be forced to be all local, 75 years from now, with fuel etc.

Concern about multinational corporation products, can we pressure them? For example, stop carrying Odwalla, whose parent company is Coca-Cola and I've heard they have very nasty practices elsewhere.

How is produce priced? Used to have price variations for a category, like melons or onions, etc. Please give a lower price option.

Long ago used to have \$0.25 heads of lettuce in special peak season deals. Now can't afford to buy at co-op anymore. Please buy more deals on end of season, peak and/or

seconds, would like to see those low prices passed on. (FC: Briar described use of website and email list to notify people of such “ripe” specials.)

Strong support for building website & email list to notify people of special deals to move ripe produce quickly.

UNFI Buyers Club prices sometimes higher when special ordered than sale items on the shelf, so stopped using the Buyers Club.

Now that sugar is organic, it is in lots of products (particularly white sugar), think it’s a problem.

Why so many Thai Kitchen coconut milk, including non-organic? Annie’s Macaroni boxes has both natural and organic –why not just organic if limited shelf space? Confused by too many choices. (FC: note, the natural is considerably lower in price.)

Reviewed Joe Breskin’s concept of “footprint” of product, suggesting we do as shelf labels. Label with true footprint even if plastic wrap was removed in back room.

Support for having co-op narrow the choices, trusting the research has already been done. For example, olive oils.

One person thinks we should not carry products from China.

Don’t carry items we can find in conventional grocery stores.

On subject of defining bio-region, support for identifying:

- “Ish River Country,” from poet Robert Sun
- “Salmon Nation”, ethnobotanist
- Salish area
- Cascadia bioregional map, extends from lower Alaska to California

Would like year-round Valencia oranges for juicing, but off season finding them bruised and poor quality – probably an “upstream” storage or handling problem – can we get that quality improved?

Can we develop direct relationship with citrus grower in CA? (FC: Brendon sees a road trip to California in his future!)

Do we have a boycott policy? (FC: no - never has been one, would like one.)

Ethics, pressuring companies to do right thing.

Would like to see mercury advisory warnings for seafood.

Would like to see more parent company information.

Pears in March, do we need to bring from Argentina? Example - eat seasonally.

Board might want to form committee on food policy. If you want to be involved, email the board at coopboard@olympus.net

Jams, jellies, honey, what if we try not carrying the long distance ones? Local only as an experiment. (FC: not currently enough local production to be feasible.) Note, in addition the imports from France are the fruit sweetened non-sugar ones.

Suggest giving local producers 6 months notice that you want to grow their shelf space, might allow the local producer to ramp up production. One local herb vendor says she produces more than co-op currently sells, and would like to sell more to co-op.

Suggest Board let people who gave emails on sign up sheet know if another product forum is happening.