

UNICORN

manchester's co-operative grocery

Foodzine, Spring 2011

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Voice from the fields

Moss Brook Growers

Since late 2007 we've owned 21 acres of agricultural land at a place called Glazebury, 14 miles west of the city, near Leigh. It's being farmed organically by new growing co-op Moss Brook Growers, the aim in buying land was of course to increase our local veg supply. More broadly, it can be seen as part of a growing movement to make cities more self-supporting in terms of food, energy and waste. Here's their update from the fields....

This is a big year for us, as we make the transition from trial crops to growing on a commercial scale. We've spent winter preparing for the growing season ahead – firstly planning in detail the rotation and successional cropping areas for our different crops and secondly getting the right machinery together.



Stuart gets to grips with the plough

The latest piece of machinery is a beautiful 50 year-old plough, kindly lent to us by our neighbours (their grandfather used it in ploughing competitions!). It's a wonderful piece of kit that will make a big difference to us this year – because we'll be able to prepare small areas of land successionaly at the right time, in the right conditions, rather than relying on contractors who always seem to be too busy when the weather's good. Timing, we keep being told, is everything!

So far, Spring has been great – dry and relatively warm – perfect for preparing the soil for our earliest sowings and plantings. Leeks, celery, spring onions and savoy cabbages will be our main crops this year, but we'll also be trying other crops like lettuce and spinach. Like last year, many of our transplants are being raised by Glebelands in Sale – as any of you who buy their plants for your own growing will know, their quality is fantastic. We hope we can match that quality with our finished crops...

Finally, a big thanks to everyone who's helped with our hedge-planting this winter – just one more year to go before all our boundaries are planted up. More open days will come in the summer.

Just Change Tea Party!

A few words from one of our greatly recommended suppliers.

Just Change directly links consumers and producers so that both benefit from the solidarity of ethical trading. Unicorn have been supporting Just Change over a number of years through selling our tea.

The tea is grown in the Nilgiri hills of South India by Adivasi communities – the native people of India – who began planting tea to reclaim their land which had been nationalised. When the Adivasi started trading they



quickly realised that conventional trade could not offer a steady or sufficient income and began exploring other models which would be fair for producers and affordable for consumers. In India communities are using the Just Change model to trade a variety of products and ensure that wealth is kept where it's needed, within the communities themselves.

We're gradually introducing more products to the UK, and have started to trial Just Change spices (coming soon to Unicorn) and hope to make the soap more widely available too (currently selling via New Internationalist and Amnesty International magazines).

To find out more about Just Change, including volunteering opportunities, come to our tea party – Saturday 14 May, 1-3pm in the upstairs room at Unicorn. Or visit www.justchangeuk.org.

Seasonal Update

While the *hungry gap* (the period between winter crops finishing & summer crops beginning) will last for a while, a warm March means that we are starting to see some UK spring crops. The first herbs are now filtering through from Glebelands, along with some UK rhubarb & sorrel. Asparagus, broad beans & lettuce will not be far behind. In the meantime, expect roots to dominate the UK range, supplemented with lovely Cornish cauliflowers & purple sprouting broccoli.

As always, Spain is a few months ahead. Peas & broad beans are both in full swing, early season strawberries have been fantastic and asparagus is abundant. All these will work their way north through France and eventually to the UK. April will see what has been another fantastic season for Sicilian blood oranges come to an end, so get them while you can...



Unicorn Grocery, 89 Albany Road, Chorlton, Manchester, M21 0BN.
www.unicorn-grocery.co.uk



Foodcycle is the national movement that brings together volunteers, surplus food and a free kitchen space to create nutritious meals for people affected by food poverty in the community.

“Foodcycle is currently trying to establish itself within Manchester using a team of enthusiastic individuals to tackle food poverty within the city. Our volunteers are presently setting up contracts with local food retailers, community support centres and idle kitchens to help reduce food waste while providing food to the needy.

Although progress is being made we still need more people who love food and their community to help set up and organise our weekly cooking events, raise money and increase public awareness of the issues Foodcycle is centred around.”



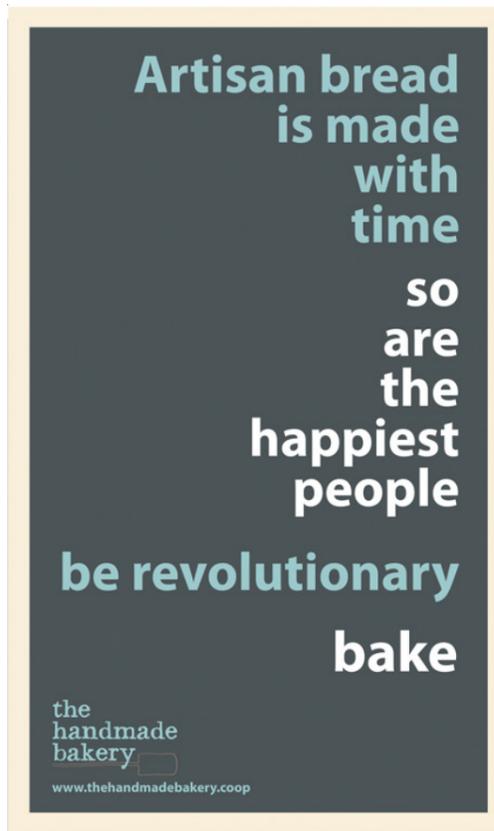
If you have any queries or want to get involved please contact me, Merlyn Taylor either by e-mail (merlyn490@yahoo.co.uk) or on my mobile (07984172206).

The Handmade Bakery's customers are getting a slice of the action.

An update from the excellent Handmade Bakery. We are a small not-for-profit artisan bakery and education project in Slaithwaite, West Yorkshire. We make traditionally crafted and slowly fermented bread for our local community and run courses both in home baking and how to start a community bakery along with mentoring and consultancy. Built around the politics and ethics of cooperative working, organic agriculture and community scale business, The Handmade Bakery has been an inspiration to many other groups of people trying to bring real bread back to their communities in the UK.

Having outgrown our current premises we have successfully raised £30k of funds to renovate an old canal-side weaver's mill as the new location of The Handmade Bakery. This will enable us to bake more nutritious bread for our community and teach more people to bake at home and how to start similar projects where they live.

Using Unicorns exceptionally successful loanstock issue as a template, we have added a twist and raised the money through 'Bread Bonds' and 'Course Bonds'.



thehandmadebakery.coop

For those who live locally to us and would like a loaf of bread a week in return for their investment there is the 'Bread Bond' which pays a very healthy 6.25% interest on a £2000 investment in produce.

For those not so local to us but able to pay at least one visit to us over a 3 year period there is can invest in a 'Course Bond' which entitles the investor to a free artisan bread making course run by us and is the equivalent to a 4% return on a £1000 investment.

And finally, we get correspondence from people all over the world that have been inspired by our work and wish that we were a little closer to them. For those that believe in our work and would like to support us from afar you can become a 'Bread Revolution Sponsor' through a £50 minimum donation. Your name will be added to our roll call of bread revolutionaries which will be displayed on our website and you will receive a Handmade Bakery 'slow revolution' tea towel as a thank you for your sponsorship of the work we are doing bringing real bread back to the heart of communities.



Unicorn is one of the many organisations listed on the brand new Feeding Manchester website, going live this month.

Feeding Manchester is a growing network of progressive food projects in and around

Greater Manchester, comprising everything from community allotments to local retailers and market gardens & farms to cafes serving local organic food. The website brings all these projects together in one place and acts as a hub for all the good food things happening in and around the city. This is a website for all those that love food and want to eat sustainably, providing extensive information about buying, growing, cooking, eating and loving local

fresh produce. It connects buyers with growers, customers with farmers, and cooks with ingredients. For sustainable urban foodies, we think this site will definitely become a favourite.

The site also allows food projects to connect and work more closely with one another, building on the work of the Feeding Manchester conferences which are held several times each year. The site has been developed by Manchester's pioneering Kindling Trust, but is owned and managed by the network of food projects it represents. If you're involved in a sustainable food project and aren't on the site yet – do it now! Get your details listed, share ideas on the forum, and become part of the growing movement that is Feeding Manchester.

feedingmanchester.org.uk

UNICORN PRICE CHECKINGREDIENTS (23/3/11)*

We sell organic fresh produce at similar prices to our non-organic competitors. We are able to do this because; we buy direct cutting out wholesalers & packers wherever possible, we minimise wastage (ever looked in the bins outside a supermarket?), and we choose an affordable mark-up - most supermarkets choose to make organic produce a premium brand when it doesn't need to be. As a workers' co-operative with no external shareholders we are not driven exclusively by profit.

Providing decent food at affordable prices is at the heart of Unicorn. Everyone should be able to have good food.

Price per kg	Unicorn	Tesco	Asda	Sainsburys	Ocado
Blackeye Beans	£1.49 n/o	£1.68 n/o	£1.56 n/o	£1.68 n/o	£2.38 n/o
Red Lentils	£1.69	£1.76 n/o	£1.84 n/o	£1.76 n/o	£2.18
Quinoa	£4.09	£5.63 n/o	£5.60 n/o	£7.58 n/o	£5.98
Basmati Rice	£2.49	£3.20	£3.20	£3.58	£3.19
Sesame Seeds	£2.69	£4.30 n/o	£6.60 n/o	£37.00	£5.93 n/o
Dates Chopped	£2.29 n/o	£5.31 n/o	£5.00 n/o	£5.31 n/o	£0.00

***ALL ORGANIC UNLESS MARKED N/O (NON-ORGANIC)**

TO SEE OUR WEEKLY PRICE COMPARISONS ON FRESH PRODUCE COME INTO UNICORN OR CHECK OUT UNICORN'S WEBSITE. UP TO DATE PRICE LISTS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE FOR MOST PRODUCTS ON THE WEBSITE.