



REAP Reporter

Newsletter from REAP Food Group • Winter 2013

WITH THE GRAIN

REAP is proud to have Madison Sourdough Company as a Buy Fresh Buy Local partner. We recently interviewed co-owners, Andrew Hutchison and David Lohrentz about the ground-breaking work they are doing with Lonesome Stone Milling to reintroduce heirloom wheat to Wisconsin.



Bryce Stevens, Kansas-based Turkey Red Wheat grower.

Tell us about how your relationship with Lonesome Stone Milling (LSM) came to be.

ANDREW: We have been working with LSM for just under two years now. I met Gilbert Williams (founder of LSM) on a Saturday morning; he was on his way to the Farmer's Market, and I was busy baking for the markets. We talked, I went out to visit the mill, and explained to him what I was looking for in terms of types of flours. So we developed his Artisan Sifted Wheat Flour, which is used in just about every bread we make and represents the foundation of our sourdough culture. It is a red spring wheat that has a portion of the bran sifted out, giving it a smoother eating quality and less bitterness from the bran while still retaining the majority of germ and minerals that both contribute to taste and nutrition.

How did the pilot project with Turkey Red heirloom wheat get started?

DAVID: Turkey Red Wheat came to the US in 1874 when Mennonites immigrated from the Ukraine territory of Czarist Russia. I was aware of this because my great, great grandfather was part of that migration and grew Turkey Red wheat in rural Moundridge Kansas. As a history major, I knew that Turkey Red Wheat had been the predominant wheat grown in the Midwest in the early 20th century, and that it was responsible for turning Kansas into the wheat capital of the US. We thought that it would be awesome to experiment with Turkey Red flour, but the only place that sold it was in Kansas, and shipping cost more than the flour itself. It just didn't make economic sense, nor did it fit with our desire to use local sources.



photo by Paul Sloth
Gilbert Williams, Lonesome Stone Milling, with his 1947 grain cleaner.

The fall planting season for winter wheat is the end of September. I learned via internet research that Bryce Stevens of western Kansas is one of a handful of growers of Turkey Red Wheat seed. I called him to get more information, and he told me that if I were to come down to his home, he would give me enough seed to get a pilot project going. I decided to take him up on the offer, with the stipulation that I would pay him market value for the wheat I was to bring back. I drove a cargo van 13 hours from Madison to Bryce Stevens home. Even though it was late, Bryce, his wife Linda, and I had a fascinating chat about Turkey Red Wheat and the role it could play as an alternative to the agribusiness food system.

The next morning, I climbed up on a truck that was full of organic Turkey Red Wheat seed. I scooped up 5-gallon buckets of the seed, and handed them to Bryce who poured them into a large tote bag in the van. We transferred about 900 pounds of the seed. I drove back and dropped off the wheat seed at Lonesome Stone Milling for Gilbert to clean with his vintage 1947 Clipper seed cleaner. Gilbert then made about 100 pounds of flour for us to try, and the rest was distributed to three Wisconsin farms to try small scale test plots.

What does the future hold for locally grown, organic, heirloom stone ground wheat flour?

ANDREW: There are many localized projects between farmers, millers, and bakers concentrating on local wheat production across the country. I believe Turkey Red, being a winter wheat variety, will be particularly relevant to Wisconsin wheat farmers in our changing climate, particularly, warmer winters. Winter wheat is sowed in the late summer and overwintered in areas that experience mild winters. Currently, spring wheat is grown in Wisconsin, sown in spring, and harvested in summer, because the winters have been too harsh. This is changing, and we will need to adapt as our growing climate does. Growing conditions are probably the largest obstacles currently because they affect flour quality so directly. We aren't even close to growing enough in different areas and blending the different wheat to achieve consistent flour specifications. This makes a baker's job difficult and it is hard to get large bakeries to adapt their systems to changing wheat qualities. So, in terms of expanding the market, we need more small scale artisan bakeries committed to locally-grown and milled wheat despite the challenges associated with it.

It is exciting to be in partnership with those approaching local food in such and innovative and passionate way. We look forward to seeing where this project takes Madison Sourdough Company, and the overall impact it has on the attention paid to heirloom wheat.



Loaf of organic Lonesome Stone Miche at Madison Sourdough.

2012 BUY FRESH BUY LOCAL NUMBERS

In 2012, BFBL partner restaurants purchased over **\$3 million** in local food directly from farmers.

**:: PICTURED CLOCKWISE ::
(FROM TOP LEFT)**

Patrick Stern (Treasurer)

Account Controller, Tri-North Builders

Tracey Solverson

Co-proprietor, Graze and L'Etoile

Dave Lessens, MD, MPH

*Academic Integrative Medicine Fellow,
UW School of Medicine & Public Health*

Peter Robertson (Chair)

Owner, RP's Pasta

Terese Allen

Author, Food Editor, Culinary Historian

Deborah Jackson Still

Consultant, Jackson Consulting/Blue Spark LLC

Julie Sampson

*Director of Nutrition and Hospitality,
Meriter Hospital*

Miriam Grunes

Executive Director, REAP Food Group

Kathryne Auerback (Vice-Chair)

*Director of Program Development,
Edgewood College School of Business*

Susan Troller

Author, Journalist

Mrill Ingram (Secretary)

Researcher, Editor

David Waisman (not pictured)

Finance Director, Willy Street Co-op



REAP's Board of Directors recently met for their annual full-day retreat to discuss strategic direction for the coming year. The Board was energized by the discussions of the impact we're having in the community, and for the new directions we'll be taking this coming year.

Board members serve three-year terms, and can remain on the board for multiple terms. Miriam and Terese have been Board members since REAP's first Board formed in 2003. Tracey Solverson and Julie Sampson are our newest members, having just joined this year.

REAP IS ALWAYS INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT OUR MEMBERS. If you see any of us at the market or out and about, please say hello and share with us how REAP is making a difference in your life.

LOCAL FARMS :: A LIFELINE TO A HEALTHY RECOVERY

In 2009, obesity-related conditions in the US accounted for 9.1 percent of all medical spending, up from 6.5 percent in 1998 - a 40 percent increase. With obesity and preventable diseases on the rise, it's no secret that our current healthcare system needs a serious, long-term change. Enter the American Family Children's Hospital's new Farm to Health Care mission. With support from REAP's Buy Fresh Buy Local program, the hospital will be opening the Farmer's Market Café later this spring. This will be the UW Health System's first venture into a food operation that emphasizes local and organic ingredients.

The impact of this partnership could potentially encourage change across the health care system, as well as create immediate and long-term impacts on the revenue going directly into our local farms.

"Making the connection to local producers provides a 'win-win' for all. It means less travel time for perishables, support for sustaining the local economy and our local farmers, less processed food, and improved taste and nutrition. This could mean a major 'cultural shift' for us, our staff, and the patients and families we serve," says Nan Peterson, Program Director of Child Health Advocacy at American Family Children's Hospital. "We have an obligation to ensure the promotion, accessibility and affordability of healthy food choices to aid in patient recovery, and to model health and wellness for families and staff."

The menu items being created specifically for this location will feature a variety of locally-sourced meats and dairy products, as well as seasonal produce. The menu will also feature UW Health's My Smart Choice label, a hassle-free label that guarantees consumers that the meal meets specific nutrition measurements, including limitations on calories, saturated fat, and trans fat.

BFBL Program Manager, Theresa Feiner, is serving as a consultant to get the cafe off the ground. Her main focuses will be working to acquaint the food service department with a new way of looking at menu planning, assisting with marketing, and playing a key role in facilitating relationships between the hospital and local providers that can accommodate their needs. Keep your eye out in the next newsletter for more updates on this new and exciting endeavor for both REAP and the Children's Hospital!

"REAP is the go-to organization for connecting with farmers and local suppliers, as well as assisting with education and marketing. We have seen their success with restaurants and schools, and we are excited to work collaboratively with them on farm to health care."

- Nan Peterson,
Program Director
Child Health Advocacy at
American Family Children's Hospital

SCHOOL LUNCH PIONEER BETH COLLINS' VISIT TO MADISON INSPIRATIONAL AND CONSTRUCTIVE

REAP was excited to wrap up the first month of the new year with a visit from Beth Collins, co-owner of Lunch Lessons, LLC. Beth, and her business partner, Ann Cooper, have consulted with and helped implement transformations of lunch programs in school districts across the country. For two whirlwind days, Beth offered up insights and inspiration to our Farm to School Coalition and to the Madison Metropolitan School District Food and Nutrition staff on how to improve upon the current lunch program.

Beth answered questions posed by the Farm to School Coalition on topics ranging from the role of city governments in helping schools combat childhood obesity, to how community coalitions can support the slow process of change within the school district's existing food service department, to other school districts' policies on restricting unacceptable ingredients in processed foods.

She commented that many people grow impatient with the pace of change, but she actually recommends slow, gradual change over radical quick movement in order to build community support, educate the kids on the changes and "new" foods, and avoid large dips in program participation.

The time she spent with the school district's food service staff was phenomenal. She met individually with Madison's Food Service Director, Steve Youngbauer, as well as with the individual management and food preparation teams, getting into specifics about how to implement change. She finished her visit with a presentation to the district's food service staff from each school site and the central kitchen. The focus now is clearly on salad bars and how to start moving the district in the fresh food direction.

Thank you, Beth for sharing your time and immense expertise!



WAIT... WHAT JUST HAPPENED TO THE FARM BILL?

Bridget Holcomb, Associate Policy Director at Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, sheds some light on the recent farm bill extension and what we can do to help prevent a "bait-and-switch" situation in the future.

You may remember that the nation's biggest piece of food and farming legislation was making its way through Congress, just the way Schoolhouse Rock describes. The Senate passed its version, including good stuff like reform for our commodity payment system, disaster assistance for farmers ravaged by droughts and floods, and support for a whole range of programs for local food, for farmers to diversify, and for beginning farmers to get started. The bill was then sent to the House, where it went through committee and waited for its turn on the floor. But Schoolhouse Rock doesn't describe what can happen to a bill that, instead of getting voted on, gets swept into a roller coaster ride of a fiscal cliff debate, and included in a hurried package thrown together and passed on New Year's Day.

Instead of a new Farm Bill, we got an extension of the last Farm Bill that was passed in 2008 - but without most of what was good about the 2008 Farm Bill. Programs for beginning farmers, direct marketing, and organic cost share assistance were all zeroed out. Conservation programs took a major hit, and disaster assistance wasn't even included.

Why would this budget-cutting Congress continue support for \$5 billion of direct farm payments even for farmers getting record prices? Why would they fail to reauthorize the very programs that help bring new farmers into agriculture, create new markets, revitalize rural communities, and support the most innovative directions for agriculture? And given the heavy financial costs of last summer's drought, why would they undermine the conservation programs that hold water in the soil, hold soil on our farm fields, and are the basis for the nation's future agricultural resiliency?

The nation does need a Farm Bill, but this bait-and-switch extension was a failure. Congress needs to pass a comprehensive, responsible Farm Bill, and soon. Provisions should include:

- Funding for local foods, beginning farmers, organic agriculture, and rural entrepreneurs
- Reform of farm subsidy programs
- Fully restored funding for conservation programs
- Disaster assistance

The extension that passed in early January lasts through September 2013, but it is important to tell all members of Congress that passing a responsible, comprehensive Farm Bill, addressing the above issues, should be an early priority of *this* Congress. Contact your legislators or call the Congressional Switchboard at (202) 224-1321.



REAP works hard year after year to make sure you have information and opportunities to support your local farmers and strengthen our local food system.



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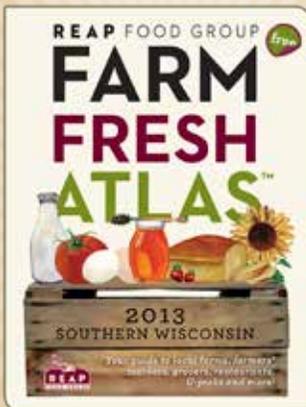
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MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

• UPCOMING REAP EVENTS AND IMPORTANT DATES •

EXTRA, EXTRA!!
2013 Southern Wisconsin
Farm Fresh Atlas

RELEASE DATE: APRIL 20th



:: REAP SPRING GALA ::

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CONCOURSE HOTEL GRAND BALLROOM
ONE WEST DAYTON ST. MADISON, WI



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