

the Coop

something to chew on...

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DIXON CO-OPERATIVE MARKET

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The Co-Op Meat and Greet

by Susan P. Lewis

When you walk into the Coop and turn right, circling around the cash register, you'll find yourself in the coffee area. And when standing in front of the coffee machine, you are also standing in front of the meat freezer. Have you ever noticed that there's a world of offerings in that freezer? Take a closer look next time to see what's really there.

When we realize that there is so much being offered right here in our Valley, it is no surprise that we also are able to get much of our meat locally. And by such caring individuals and companies who

put their heart and soul into what they do. It makes a difference knowing this and when we chew on these steaks and burgers and pork chops, we know that it is wholesome food we are putting into our bodies. Here, then, is a bit of who we get our food from.

Vaquero Beef (Velarde). It all started back in the 1970's when Joe Romero was faithfully carrying on the tradition as a 4th generation Rancher for his family. Growing up on the Ranch, he knew first-hand the relationship with animals was strong. How you cared for them resulted in how the meat was. At one point during this decade, his family had a total of 175 cows at one time or another. Now down to about 60, he tends this flock with the personal care of a sheepherder. These animals are part of his family and how they eat, what they eat, where they chew their cud and how they are watched over is all part of his motto of doing the best he can on behalf of these animals. Moving from his family tradition of raising beef in a conventional way as he was ranching with his father, he made the move in the early 1990's to raise them more humanely and naturally. This, Joe felt, was very important to the quality of the meat. In 1996-97, he moved from the traditional methods of raising these animals to becoming

certified in natural beef. This means no hormones, and no antibiotics are injected into these precious cows. They are raised on good grass and he has made sure of that as they roam 26,000 acres in Velarde and the surrounding areas. They are there on BLM land that he has secured permits for and they take advantage of the luscious green land in Las Truchas when the weather is good for that. They are also fed alfalfa when they cannot graze as easily. And there are no additives when the meat is processed. So you know that what you are eating is pure and good and raised wholesomely and naturally. In addition to taking care of his animals in such a personal way, he mutually takes care of the land. This is in the same way as a farmer who tends his soil to prepare for his crops. For it is in the soil where it all starts. The same is true for the cows. It is equally as important what they eat that translates into the meat that is created within. As Joe Romero says "I take care of the lands as if they were my private property. I don't overgraze, I rotate the pastures, and look at droughts. I treat these lands as if they were my own." With that kind of awareness, we can be assured that the quality of this food that is coming to us from Velarde is of the best caliber that we can imagine. Thank you, Joe, for sharing your wisdom of the land, the care of the animals and bringing that to our local Coop.

Picuris Bison - Did you ever wonder what's going on up the road on the Picuris Pueblo? Here's part of their story. They are one of many sources from where we get our meat from. But the story is much more detailed and in depth than that. It goes way back to their original connection with the land



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Recipes >>>

CAN YOU LEND A HAND?

Would you like to be meeting and greeting our customers? One way is by being a Coop Cashier. You get to meet and connect with so many wonderful people in our community. The Coop is seeking a Cashier for the Saturday morning shift which goes into the early afternoon. Do you have the time? Would you like to pitch in and lend a hand? This is a perfect opportunity to raise your hand high (OK. It doesn't have to be "high"), and be part of the team. We'd appreciate it so much. And so would the rest of the Dixon community. This keeps our Coop running smoothly. With each of us lending a hand, doing what we can to make sure the store opens each and every day, the Dixon Coop continues and thrives. Thanks so much for considering it.

Got questions about the newsletter, or suggestions for articles? Contact the Newsletter Maven, Susan Lewis at susanp@dixonmarket.com

The Board of Directors

Shelby Leonard ~ President
shelby@dixonmarket.com
 579-0048

Steve Jenison ~ Vice President
steve@dixonmarket.com
 579-9679

**Kiva Duckworth-Moulton
 Treasurer**
kiva@dixonmarket.com
 579-9102

Elena Arellano ~ Secretary
elena@dixonmarket.com
 579-4027

Susan P. Lewis ~ Director
susanp@dixonmarket.com
 (575) 751-7015

**The Co-Op is open
 Monday-Friday
 10am - 6:30pm
 Saturday and Sunday
 10am - 6pm
 505.579.9625**

BIZCOCHITOS (ANISE SEED COOKIES) by Elena Arellano



- 3 cups flour
- 1 ½ tsp. baking powder
- 12 tsp. salt
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1-cup lard
- 1-¼ tsp. anise seeds
- 1 egg

Preheat oven to 400°. Sift together flour, baking powder and salt into a medium bowl and set aside. Combine ¼ cup of the sugar with cinnamon in a small bowl and set aside.

Put lard and the remaining ½ cup of sugar into the bowl of a standing mixer fitted with a paddle and beat on medium speed until fluffy, about one minute. Add anise seeds, egg and beat, stopping mixer once or twice to scrape the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula, until well mixed, about one minute. Reduce speed to low, then gradually add flour mixture, scraping sides of bowl as needed, and beat until dough begins to gather into a ball and comes cleanly away from sides of bowl, about two minutes. Transfer dough to a lightly floured surface and divide in half, then shape each half into a small ball. Cover with a clean dishtowel and set aside to let rest for 15-20 minutes.

Roll out half of the dough on a lightly floured surface to a thickness of about 1/8". Cut into desired shapes with cookie cutters (I use very small ones, bite size) and arrange 1" apart on ungreased cookie sheets. Bake until golden brown, about ten minutes.

Transfer cookies to a wire rack and sprinkle with reserved sugar-cinnamon mixture while still warm. Repeat process with remaining half of the dough.

December Casserole by Lyn Kirmse

In a deep, lidded casserole dish, combine:
 -1 cup brown rice or wild rice blend
 -2- 1/4 cups chicken stock
 In a cast iron pan, brown:
 -4 chicken breasts (or any cut you like) in
 -1 tablespoon bacon fat, butter, or olive oil

Once browned (but not cooked through), remove them and sprinkle each one generously with herbs such as:

- paprika
- thyme
- oregano
- salt

Cut into cubes (no need to peel):

- a small squash or pumpkin

Layer some squash over the rice and stock, then the chicken. Top or wrap each piece with:

- a slice or two of bacon (uncooked)
- And sprinkle with some:
 -red wine, white wine, or sherry

Bake at 350° F for 2 hours with a lid on. Serve with salad dressed with a light vinaigrette. Serves 2-4

Sweet Tamales by Elena Arellano

- 4 oz. dried cornhusks
- 1 ½ cups masa harina
- 2 golden apples, peeled, cored and coarsely chopped
- 1/3-cup raisins
- 1 cup plus 1 tbsp. sugar
- 2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 tsp. cup vegetable oil or shortening
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- ¼ tsp. salt.

Separate husks, then soak in a large bowl of hot water until pliable, at least one hour. Put masa harina into a medium bowl, add 1-¼ cups warm water and mix with a spoon until smooth and spreadable. Cover masa and wrap with plastic wrap and set aside to let cool to room temperature, about one hour.

Put apples, raisins, 5 tbsp. sugar, 1 tsp. of the cinnamon and cups water into medium pot. Simmer over me-
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and their relationship with the buffalo. Their relationship to these animals, as well as all animals, is very sacred to these people. In 1991 there was a movement to reintroduce the buffalo to Native people across the country and the Picuris Pueblo was one of the first to be included in that program. It is called the Inner Tribal Buffalo Corporation and was created to bring the Buffalo back to Native country. There are now 57 recognized tribes throughout America that take part in this sacred program.

To know Native peoples is to know what matters and means the most to them. They care for these animals in a very sacred way and use all parts so that nothing goes to waste. Picuris Pueblo has about 63 buffalo now and we are blessed to have them share this bounty with us at the Coop. These animals are raised on their own pastures and can be found grazing along the Rio Pueblo River on any given day. And when pastureland is not fully available due to winters, they feed them their own alfalfa, Bermuda and Timothy grass.

Are you interested in purchasing a bison? They actually have a few for sale. For more information on this, please contact Celestino Yazza up at the Pueblo. He's the Bison Director and his phone number is: (575) 779-1543. Thank you, Picuris, for sharing your bounty with us down here in Dixon.

Taos Mountain Yak – Here are some interesting highlights about Yak taken from their website. It seems that Taos Mountain Yak is in the process of moving to another locale. Joy Robertshaw was a bit busy during this holiday season for an interview but here are some interesting facts to share: Yak is high in Omega 3 and low in cholesterol. They are 95% fat free and lower in cholesterol than traditional beef. Their taste is sweet and delicately flavored and their texture is tender and juicy. Taos Yaks are all natural, grass fed, have no hormones, no steroids, no additives and no feedlots. In 2005, the foundation herd for Taos Mountain Yak came from Latir Ranch, the only Organically Certified Yak Ranch in the country at that time. Taos Mountain Yak owner, Joy Robertshaw, is a life member of IYAK, the International Yak Association. Until

DECEMBER CALENDAR:

Sunday, December 4th – Members 10% Off Day. Take 10% off anything in the store as our thanks for being a Member of the Dixon Market. If you'd like to become a member and take advantage of this and other offerings, please ask anyone in the Coop for a Member Application.

Thursday, December 15th ~ Holiday Treats at the Coop. 3:30-6:00pm – Stop by the Dixon Market and sample some delicious holiday goodies, sip some holiday drinks, and share some holiday cheer!! This event is co-sponsored by the Dixon Food Initiative.

Sunday, December 25th (Christmas Day) and Sunday, January 1st (New Year's Day) – The store will be CLOSED. Wishing you all a bright and joyous holiday with family and friends!

Sunday, January 29th – SAVE THE DATE!!! CO-OP MEMBERS ANNUAL MEETING. Some time in the mid/late afternoon. Come and hear the latest news and vote on new Board Members for the upcoming year. Keep an eye out for the exact time and place. We're working on it!!

March 2011, Taos Mountain Yak, LLC raised exclusively grass fed yak livestock at approximately 7800 ft at several locations in Taos County, New Mexico. According to the website, the yaks are now in the lush San Luis Valley, Colorado until such time as she sells her Arroyo Seco property and moves elsewhere (with her yaks) in northern NM. According to Scientists at the National Research Center on Yak, (established in 1989, under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research), between altitudes of 7,000 ft and 14,500 ft, the high Omega-3 content in the yak's meat is attributed to higher concentration of red blood corpuscles that are much bigger than other ruminants. The high RBC count increases oxygen retention at altitudes where air is rarified. Cardiac problems are scarce among high altitude dwellers who consume yak meat which has higher nutritional value and health benefits compared to low altitude ruminants.

We will continue with our other wonderful meat providers in a future issue – Pinnacle Meats (from Santa Fe) and Keller's Meats (from Albuquerque).

Tamales, continued

dium heat until soft, 20-30 minutes. Strain reserving 1 cup of the liquid. Transfer fruit to a bowl, mash with a fork, and then add vanilla. Set aside fruit and cooking liquid separately to cool completely.

Beat shortening (or mix in oil if using oil) with an electric mixer on medium speed until fluffy, about two minutes. Add masa and remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar and 1 tsp. cinnamon and beat until smooth, about one minute. Gradually add $\frac{3}{4}$ - 1 cup of the reserved cooking liquid while continuing to beat until mixture is the consistency of thick cake batter. Add baking powder and salt and beat masa about one minute more.

Drain husks. Tear 8 husks lengthwise into 48 thin strips and set aside. Place 24 of the husks concave side up, on a work surface. Put 2 tbsp. of the masa into the center of the husk and spoon 1 heaping Tbs. of the filling, then tie ends of the tamales shut with husk strips. Repeat process to make 24 tamales. Place upright, leaning them against one another in the top of the steamer. Place steamer over a pot of simmering water over medium heat, cover and steam until husks separate from filling easily, about one hour. Allow 15 minutes before serving. Makes 2 doz.

Kahuna Korner by Nelson Rhodes

I must admit, somewhat reluctantly, that as the holiday season draws near, I am prone to slip into waves of rose-colored nostalgia. It starts with memories of childhood Christmases, evolves into remembrances of family and friends, and it can result in a longing for certain old movies, songs, even smells and old cold remedies.

I've been involved with the Co-op long enough now that its beginnings are starting to be filed under "long-term memory," and as such are starting to be viewed with those rose-colored lenses. Everybody pitching in to do what was needed to get our own store open and running. Painting, carpentry, cleaning, shelving, hauling and arranging. It was all exciting, fun to be a part of, and a

real feeling of everyone pitching in to accomplish something worthwhile for the community permeated everything. It was a lot of hard work, but in hindsight the things that stand out in the memory are the positives.

Starting next month, we'll be embarking on a new phase at the Co-op, with the beginning of the expansion. More coolers, freezers, shelf space, and a chance to spruce up the joint make this a very exciting event for the members, and hopefully, for the community at large. Consider becoming a part of this experience, so that in your dotage you can tell your grandkids, "Ah, those were the days!"

Also a reminder that this is the time to give your input as to what items you would like to see in an expanded store. With the additional

overhead, we will have to boost sales to a degree to cover the cost, and if we know of items that you would buy from the Co-op if we carried them it would help immensely. Give your suggestions to any of the people at the Co-op, and it will be greatly appreciated.

Speaking of the holiday season, and nostalgia, we've just received some great old-time toys that you're not going to find at Wal-Mart, like wind-up tin toys and the original Etch-A-Sketch! We've got little stocking stuffers, too, so remember the Co-op when checking off your gift list.

Everyone here wishes all of you a wonderful, magical holiday season, and a personal thanks once again to all of you members (you are my boss, after all) who have shown the confidence in me to allow me to oversee your store for all these years.

Feliz Navidad!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS OPENINGS

Time is running out to throw your hat into the ring and run for a seat on the Co-op Board. The Annual meeting and Board elections will be held on Sunday, January 29th, 2012. There are 3 openings and we need a slate of candidates by December 1st.

The Co-op is entering into an exciting phase of its existence—the upcoming expansion of the store and the eventual addition of a certified kitchen. The Co-op needs energetic, enthusiastic, problem-solving individuals to throw their hats into the ring and contribute to the Co-op's continued success.

The idea may sound daunting to some, you may feel that you don't know enough about business or governance, but the nature of the Co-op is such that we can use any talents or skills that the members of our community can bring to the table. Board meetings are held once a month, sometimes supplemented with an occasional strategy or planning session. Board members receive a 15% discount on all purchases as a way of saying thanks. So seriously consider joining the team - being a member of the Co-op for at least one month is the only requirement.

If you are interested, please stop by or call the Co-op or a current Board member for more information. We'll need a paragraph telling us a little bit about yourself, why you are interested, your background (if relevant) and any pertinent history that you feel would serve the Board. Thank you.

It's Really Going to Happen!

Have you found yourself frustrated trying to shop at the Market? The aisle are congested, you have to move items in the cooler to find what you want. Not much longer. The lease negotiated with the Embudo Valley Library allows for renovations to start in January 2012.

What can you expect?

There will probably be a lot of mess before it gets better. Please don't give up shopping. We will need the sales.

The store will close for a few days. Watch for the announcements. We will need volunteer help cleaning, painting, setting up shelves, moving inventory, and so much more. Many of you have said, I can't do a regular weekly shift but I would be glad to help for a day or two. Watch for the

sign up sheets and consider giving a few hours of your time.

At the end, the store will be much more efficient, easier to shop in and a happier place for all of us.

In phase 2, there will also be a deli kitchen installed. This will not happen, for a few months but something else to anticipate.

Who is paying for this? You may remember we announced that the Coop was awarded a Healthy Urban Food Enterprise Development Grant. This is the source of financing.

Other parts of this grant include the activities of the Food Initiative which is a resource for encouraging healthy eating habits and the Farm Liaison whose goal is to sell as much local produce as is possible. This 2011 growing season sales of local produce was up 78% over the previous year!

Join in, help your store become even better.

