



Community

Fair Trade

Organic

co-op news

Spring 2011

newsletter of the Dublin Food Co-op

Okay...Its here at last, you can come out now!

I hope you are all blossoming forth like the buds on the trees and are enjoying the warmer longer days. Here in the Dublin Food Co-op another year of activity is well under way - buying and selling, growing and planning, work and ideas, vision and trying to put that vision into reality, meeting and talking and all the spin-off activities that are happening in the Co-op from week to week. This newsletter comes packed with articles which will hopefully give a sense of some of what is happening and developing. One may realise that the DFC is a dynamic place that is changing and developing but hopefully is not losing any of its core values or mission in the process.

There are a lot of people, too many to mention here, who are putting energy, ideas and hard work into our Co-op to make it live up to its vision and the rest of us are very grateful to them. But likewise every member and visitor to the Co-op can play a role in promoting those values, whether its spreading the message of environmentally-friendly, fair trade and sustainable lifestyles, or just by being part of our community by shopping here or stopping by. There are opportunities also to get more involved if you so wish and this newsletter will give you some ideas on that. I am confident you will find the newsletter interesting and that it will help us all to value some of the important things in life, recession or no recession, such as nature, community and each other.

As usual if you have any suggestions, complaints, ideas or a really bad joke you've heard lately, please send to news@dublinfood.coop

Larry Gordon



Co-op News Team

Larry Gordon, Anthony Dillon (Layout).
Contact: news@dublinfood.coop

Dublin Food Co-op, 12 Newmarket, Dublin 8.
www.dublinfood.coop

Toward 2013 – Premises Update

Dublin Food Co-op is a unique institution - a pioneer for organic and fairtrade produce in Ireland – and we're fast closing in on our 30th birthday.

In the next few months we'll be inviting all members to be part of shaping our vision into our fourth decade (come to the AGM, details on page 3!).

The review of our current arrangements for the Newmarket premises in December will mean the Co-op opening discussions and investigating suitable options.

So, expect surveys, consultations, forums and other mechanisms to allow the whole membership to chart our path forward.

We're actively looking for volunteers with experience in all areas of planning, property and sustainable building to strengthen the Premises Working Group at this time. For more information, contact Owenroe – owenroe@dublinfood.coop

And look out for more on a special 'Toward 2013' Co-op Fair on Sunday 22nd May – a day for all members to contribute their ideas in a fun, social setting.

Membership News

From now on membership is paid according to the calendar year, which is how it used to run years ago and makes it much simpler for everyone. If your subscription was due in January then you'll have been asked to pay for the full year as normal. Members due to renew their membership later in 2011 – and any new joiners - will be asked to pay till the end of the year at an adjusted part-year rate. After this transition period during 2011, we'll have with everyone renewing together as one big happy family in January 2012.



Gathering Momentum: Stop GM
Sunday 10th April, Dublin Food Co-op
see p5 for more details

Core Product Offers and Updates

The start of 2011 has been an exciting time for new core product additions. Extra Irish organic lines have been added, like Kilbeggan Porridge Oats and Drumeen Farm Happy Heart Oil, along with improved ethical options, such as fair-trade peanut butters and palm oil-free oatcakes. We'll also be offering great long-term pricing on Sojade soy milk, which is produced using organic soy beans grown in south-west France - not former stretches of Brazilian rainforest. Why not give it a try or pick up a case? Natural / Calcium €1.59 each, €8.66 case of 6. Vanilla €1.71 each, €9.37 case of 6. This is no short-term deal but the kind of pricing level we hope to maintain.

Last but not least, and with thanks to Lino Olivieri's fairtrade and co-operative links, we're now stocking a new range of organic fairtrade Chocolate from a cooperative in Florence, Italy, who buy the cocoa paste and butter from a cooperative in Ecuador (see www.salinerito.com). Lino will be offering taste testing!

DFC Products Group

Producer Members' Offers & Updates

Olivieri Olive Oil, which by the way comes from the amazing Gargano National Park in Puglia, Italy, wishes to raise some money for the Irish Cancer Society, so 50 cent for every bottle of olive oil during March will be donated.

Morthy's Fabulous Food has a Special Spring Veggie Salad box for €5 (down from €7) for March and April.

Naturamatics natural cosmetics is offering a 50% off all stock for the next few months.

Jordan Juice Co. is giving 25% off all products for month of March for all members who are able to produce their membership card.

Siraj Zaidi's 'North Indian Gourmet Delight' offers tastes of India at reduced rates after 2.30pm, like samosas (€2.50) and onion bhaji (€2).

Anna Felton's handmade beads and jewellery (lots crafted from glass) offers 20% off everything in March and April.

Nice one everyone for all your specials, and thank you to all the producer members for the variety of always interesting, quality produce.

Free Spring Makeover!

Generously Sponsored By Nature's Bounty

- NETTLES -

This issue we introduce a herbal tonic you can try that is as simple as its powerful and comes to you from one of the pioneers of recording worldwide herbal remedies passed down through folklore and ancient practise – Juliette de Baracli Levy and her book, *The Illustrated Herbal Handbook*. The humble nettle is reputed to be one of the most powerful cleansers and toners of the body in the world and was traditionally made into teas and added to soups and stews in Springtime and again in Autumn. No other green vegetable is said to excel the nettle in mineral and vitamin content. It is one of the worlds most chlorophyll-rich plants. All it requires is that you grab a pair of gloves and go to nearest hedge or rough ground. They were planted extensively by the Romans as a rheumatism remedy, where they flogged the human skin with them, stimulating the blood flow by this treatment. European gypsies still advocate this remedy. Well, good for them but I think I'll just go for the cup of nettle tea myself.

Uses in the past: The leaves – to cleanse the blood, tone up the whole system, as cure for anaemia, rheumatism, sciatica, arthritis, obesity, infertility, to expel excess mucus from all parts of the body. Externally was used as a hair rinse and scalp massage to improve colour, texture and remove dandruff, as a nerve and tissue excitant in cases of chronic rheumatism, paralysis, stiffness of joints, failing muscular strength.



Dose: Eat the boiled/steamed leaves in stews (add them to Pat's recipe at the back, sure she won't mind)

/pastas/soups etc as freely as you would add/eat spinach or other greens. Fresh nettle juice can be made in a juicer. A handful of leaves chopped up finely and brewed in a teapot will last you through the day if you top half-cupfuls up with boiling water as and when you like. Feel free to add honey etc to taste. Pick the top 3 pairs of freshest leaves from the plant, taking care not to over-pick so the plant can stay healthy. Enjoy!

What is the WoRMs group?

The WoRMs (Work Rota Monitoring Group) are a relatively new Working Group on the Co-op 'scene' - despite being approved and Mandated at the 2009 AGM, the group wasn't populated until November 2010 as a result of needs identified by new and old members alike during a sequence of Talkin' Co-ops.

The aims and responsibilities of the WoRM (full Mandate can be found on the "Membership" page of the website under "Working Groups") is to identify all the work needed for the smooth operation of the Co-op, to encourage and match as many of our members as best we can to the tasks and to make sure they're properly rewarded for their efforts/talents/expertise.

All members are welcome to attend all WoRM meetings, (see website for details) and if you can't make the meetings, all minutes are available to members, just ask (see email address below).

So what have you been up to lately?

With open and easy accessibility in mind, our most recent, and already successful initiative has come about - the Joint Working Groups' Point of Contact Desk on Saturdays (11am-3pm). The desk is a space for Members and Visitors to communicate with the Working Groups and vice versa. Rather than being a fount of all knowledge we act as a clearing house for enquiries and suggestions of all kinds, and pass things on or point people in the right direction. We're located prominently in the main hall in order to develop awareness that this is a volunteer-run Co-op that needs all of our input, to enable people to easily stop and chat, and also to act as a support for events that take place in the adjacent side room. The reaction to the stall from all quarters has been very encouraging and the feedback received is helping us to further develop its potential, so come see us!

What needs to be done?

There is much to be done right now in the Co-op, and the system as it stands doesn't cover everything, so the potential is really massive. The Co-op has aspirations with regard to improving Members Services - for example, under the Principles of Co-operatives we should be providing training and



DUBLIN FOOD CO-OP NOTICE

The
Annual General Meeting
of
Dublin Food Co-operative Society Ltd
will be held at
The Co-op Main Hall, 12 Newmarket, Dublin 8
on
Saturday the 9th April from 6.30pm

Please note that the aim, under the constitution, is for all decisions to be by consensus. There is provision for voting where consensus cannot be achieved but there is no provision for proxy voting, only for those members attending the meeting to participate in a vote.

What is the WoRMs group? cont.

educational opportunities to our Members. The Co-ops' biggest and best asset is its Members and the skills and knowledge that they possess, and the main reason that Members and Non-Members alike give for coming to the Co-op is the sense of community. So WoRMs want to try and create a space for all of our Members to feel at home and welcome to contribute something, no matter whether it is ideas, expertise, manual labour or just a warm atmosphere, while getting something in return.

Meanwhile, the current initiatives are –

- Setting up a cross Working Group “Task Force” to devise an open and fair, Co-op wide system for scheduling volunteers, and allocation and recording of appropriate rates of discount,
- We have re-started the Thursday night Meitheal, so that we can start getting specific jobs done (and also have a bit of Craic), starting with building some more large, communal tables for the Co-op out of our delivery pallets, both to increase capacity but to also encourage people to mingle and get to know each other, so please feel free to join us in a spot of woodwork,
- We are researching various ways to enhance accessibility, communication and transparency at all levels of the Co-op, both outwardly and inwardly, and also,
- We are actively seeking people to set up a few further Groups and Sub Groups to cover things like IT, Media (including Newsletter and e-Newsletter) and Promotions.

So how do you get involved?

If you'd like to help set up these groups or can see yourself contributing your skills and expertise elsewhere in the Co-op, have questions or indeed would like to become an active part of the WoRM, please contact WoRMs@dublinfood.coop, we'd love to hear from you.

Indeed thanks to all the volunteers in the Co-op who give so generously of their time and energy (even a smile) to making it a better community.

What is the Products Group?

The Products Group was one of three working groups mandated out of the 2009 AGM as a way to extend and deepen the involvement of members in the running of the Co-op. It brings together a diverse group of volunteers with a range of knowledge, skills and interests.

The group's brief is to seek out new core products to serve the needs of members and review existing lines for necessity, quality and value, as well as their fit with Co-op principles. We also review the products and services provided by Producer Members and consider new applications.

What has the Products Group been working on?

Initially there was a lot of work to get new systems in place – like clear criteria for reviewing new products and a thorough application form for Producer Membership. Lately that's turned into the introduction of new products and the appearance of new Producer Members on Saturdays, with more in process.

We've been operating a system for inviting product suggestions from members in the Core Area - slips are available from the noticeboard beside the coffee and tea – and we'll be bringing many more of these through in the weeks ahead.

Recently, we organised activities for Fairtrade Fortnight and brought in a number of new fairtrade products to coincide.



What has been the biggest challenge?

Chocolate! Before we could even get moving with bringing in new products, Green and Blacks was taken over by the pro-GM multinational Kraft Foods – the world's second largest food corporation. As a group we felt that the Co-op needed to move to alternatives. At that time, we were able to revamp our selection centred on three Irish brands. Sadly, two of them folded within months, causing further disruption and some interim replacements. Now we've brought in new Ecuadorian chocolate options (see p2) that are both fairtrade and organic so hopefully things can finally settle down!

What's ahead for the group?

Over the next year, we'll be promoting various steps to strengthen the Co-op's credentials on organic food, ethical and sustainable sourcing and, particularly, buying Irish wherever possible. We'll also be drafting a new buying policy for the Co-op after consultation with the membership.

How can I get involved?

It's possible to get involved at many levels. We encourage everyone to make product suggestions and we'll also be doing more survey work and talking to members about products. There's an ongoing need for product research and any member interested in this aspect is invited to link in with the group. We also have room for two additional ordinary members to join – we meet on the third Thursday of every month - so we'd encourage anyone interested in taking up one of these vacancies to get in touch. Minutes of Products Group meetings are also available to all members on request.

For more information on the Products Group contact products_group@dublinfood.coop

Events

It's Spring, Dig In!

As Joni Mitchell sang, 'Its time to get back to the garden', so, whether it's in a window box or an allotment, here's to possibly one of the most soul inspiring activities ever?! Are you completely 'green' about gardening, want to share tips and/or share seeds to save costs? Let's hear it from Co-op member Tricia Sheehy Skeffington who has brought GIY (Grow It Yourself) to the Co-op:



"Following its extremely well attended launch, the GIY in the 'Co-op has settled down to a once-monthly meeting on every second Saturday at 12pm. The normal set-up is twenty-minute talk by a seasoned fruit and vegetable gardener followed by questions and smaller group chats, where tips and advice are shared and seed and seedling swaps are nurtured.

There's a good mix of back garden growers, old hands, newbies, community gardeners and balcony producers in the mix, bringing together community-level sustainability among the gardeners and wannabe gardeners in the Co-op.

Check out the giyireland.com website or email triciagi@ gmail.com if you'd like more information or would like to help organise some of the meetings. Otherwise, turn up on a second Saturday when we're plotting our veg..."

Thanks Tricia!



Michael Kelly, founder of GIY at the Co-ops first meet (Tricia on the right)

Fáilte

Fáilte meetings are held on the last Saturday of every month, 12 noon to 1.30pm. Are you a member and haven't been to one yet? Well, fáilte, come on in! Its actually a condition of membership in a Co-operative to attend one (apart from that we're all unconditional around here), but its also a great introduction to all that's on offer at the Co-op and how to get stuck in and make the most of it, and you might even get a cup of tea!

Check www.dublinfood.coop for more events as they come on stream!



Photo by Mike McGovern of a 2010 Co-op walk in Brockagh

Co-op Walks

March Walk

WHERE: Church mountain and Corriebracks. These two mountains are in west Wicklow and contain ruins of an ancient church and probably older pre-christian worship sites.

WHEN: Sunday 27th March

MEET: At petrol service station at Hollywood village on the corner 8Km beyond Blessington on the Baltinglass road at 10am.

April Walk

WHERE: Black Hill, Moanbane and Silsean to Glenbride.

These are 3 small mountains overlooking the Blessington Lakes and we end up in Glenbride, a remote valley in the heart of Wicklow with a small rural community.

WHEN: Sunday 24th April.

MEET: Outside the Garda Station in Blessington Town at 10am

May Walk

WHERE: Mount Leinster and the Blackstairs. This mountain range is located mainly in County Carlow about 100km from Dublin. They reach a height of 2500 feet approx. and have commanding views of the whole of the south-east of the country including several mountain ranges such as the Comeraghs and the Knockmealdowns.

WHEN: Sunday 29th May.

MEET: In the Lord Bagenal Inn in the village of Leighlinbridge off the main motorway to Kilkenny City, about one hours drive from Dublin, at 10am.

For all walks bring comfortable footwear, warm clothing, raingear and food. For more info or if you need a lift contact Larry Gordon at 087-6832827

Dublin Food Co-op Walking Trip to County Clare

We are having our annual Walking week from the 22nd April to the 30th April to the Ballyvaughan area. We intend walking in the Burren and Connamara amongst other things. There are a few places left in the holiday home where some of us are staying but you need to let me know soon to book your place. Otherwise you can find your own accomodation in the Ballyvaughan area and come for some or all of the week. Larry Gordon Mobile: 087-6832827



Gathering Momentum: Stop GM

Sunday 10th April | 10.00 - 17.00

Dublin Food Co-op will be hosting 'Gathering Momentum', an all Ireland gathering to renew the campaign against Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) on the island.

This independently organised event will run 10am-5pm and a vegan wholefood lunch will be provided by donation.

Further details to follow and from stopgm@riseup.net or 087 7296088. Also see: <http://stopgmevent.wordpress.com/>

One person's rubbish...

Reduce, Recycle and Reuse Co-op Waste

For all you alchemists out there, these ideas have kindly been submitted by nifty thrifty creative-minded members:

1. The large clear plastic sacks made available for members in the Core Produce Area/Front Space have another, clever use. A member uses them for rolling wholemeal pastry thin - normally wholemeal pastry is too crumbly to roll thin easily but this member cuts the bag's sides, places the ball of pastry between the plastic sheets and rolls the pastry thin. Then it is easy to peel it onto baking trays.
2. Spare price and label stickers on a roll: We normally get a few in boxes (similarly, you can use charity collectors stickers that come through the door) and these are great for removing lint and pet hairs!
3. We also have for anyone who wants them - clear and shiny black clingfilm from the deliveries pallets on Thursdays. Also, usually a clear piece of thick plastic, approx. 6 x 6 feet. Possibly handy for make-and-do or gardening uses, we just put it in the recycle bin at the moment but if you have a use - just ask!

New Community Garden Plan About to Bloom?

A stone's throw from the Dublin Food Co-op, local people have been busy trying to establish a community garden on a derelict site off Cork Street.

RECLAIM (Community Garden Action Group) is at an advanced stage in talks with Dublin City Council and are hoping to get something underway in the Spring or early Summer. Proposals were recently received from the council and the group held a consultation meeting on 23rd February. Several DFC members attended and are keen to play a strong supporting role in this initiative. Further input from Co-op members would be warmly welcomed.

For more information, contact news@dublinfood.coop

Stop GM 'Gathering Momentum' Event Diary *by Péars*

Over 100 people filled the hall of Friends Meeting House, Hampstead, London on Saturday the 22nd January to participate in the UK's Stop GM 'Gathering Momentum' event to connect and energise the campaign to make the UK GMO free.

Many achievements in the last ten years for people determined to keep life GM free had perhaps made us think the threat had gone away. It hasn't and if anything the EU and Biotech industries are primed for a stronger pushing of this useless technology on all life without our consent. So we came from Scotland, Wales England and Ireland, to remind ourselves of this fact, make strong links and support the work to protect life from being patented and sold as a commodity. As Laurence Woodward from Elm Farm Organic Research Trust said on the day, "We are a diverse bunch, united in spirit".

I participated in the 'Animal, Biofuels and GM Trees' session in the morning. The key speaker was Helena Paul from Econexus, who shared much about their experience of soy production in Latin America, particularly Argentina. Helena's descriptions of a banal landscape devoid of any real landmarks, due to the miles upon miles of monoculture soya plantations was shocking: traditional farming and local food grown by local people to be eaten has gone, "Where even the rats can't find enough to eat" was an image in my mind that remains.

Many in the workshop were surprised and angry to find out, thanks to Helena, that all petrol and diesel now has at least 3.5% GM biofuel added to it. So if you drive you are using GM. How do you feel about that? The biofuel is added at the refinery stage. The EU has given the GM Biofuel industry a long-term promise of profits by stating in law that by 2020 all petrol and diesel will be supplemented with 10% minimum biofuel. Helena's point, that no one asked us before doing this is one of the ethical problems embedded in how the Biotech industry works and how Governments support it with lack of consent and complete disregard for what individuals want, which was a clear "No to GM" given by people the last time the corporations and government tried to impose it on them. Helena maintains consuming soy products and now using a car gives an added impulse to the industrial GM soy production because of extra market opportunities.

The problem of industrial animal farming and GM was highlighted when we learned of huge pushes by U.S based meat production corporation Smithfield into Asia, China and India, traditionally places of little meat eating, with beef and dairy herds already being fed GM soy being the obvious concern. What will happen if more people choose to eat meat and animal products as the perfect compliment to a new found western lifestyle and how will we in the west with the highest consumption of animal products, beef and dairy especially respond?

After we broke for lunch, almost everyone participated in an open space workshop sharing ways to educate people, expose GM and to stop GM. By the end, around 19.00, many had to run for trains and buses though they were exhausted after an active, heady day packed with open space planning and group idea storming, meeting fellow community growers, campaigners, activists and farmers all who had arrived to participate in the all U.K Stop GMO.

If you want more info or to see how you can get involved check these websites: www.stopgm.org.uk www.gmfreeireland.org www.genewatch.org/ www.gmfreeze.org www.econexus.info

Sunday Markets Feature

This issue features two of our very excellent Sunday markets which take place in the Co-op hall on several Sundays every month - the first and longest existing (the Flea Market) and the newest (Peas and Pods)...
(by Anto Dillon)

The Dublin Flea Market

The Dublin Flea market has been going strong since November 2008. Set up by Aisling, Sharon and Luca; it has been a stunning success and is hugely popular. Every last Sunday of the month the Co-op hall is thronged with folks buzzing and bantering as they search for all matters of treasures. Aisling answered the following questions.

The Dublin Flea Market has gone from strength to strength since its inception in November 2008 and is now an event of lore in the Dubliners monthly calendar. Tell us about setting up the market and its progress?

We started out with just 25 stalls and it has grown nicely up to 60 stalls bit by bit. The most significant turning point was the extension of the market outside. We had to jump through a good few hoops with Dublin City Council before it got the go-ahead but it was worth it, we now have roughly 40 stalls inside and 20 outside. The growth has been quite organic, adding extra stalls as demand grew and space got tighter. We used to have live music down in the cafe area but just don't have the space any more.

The market is a non profit driven social enterprise, its about doing something for the community, offering people an opportunity to earn an extra income when it's really needed. There's a multitude of social benefits that have come out of it, most importantly the promotion of a re-use and recycle mentality and the platform it has offered many start up businesses to test out an idea, risk free, before making an investment.

There's definitely something special about the market, we get a lot of positive feedback from people who come down and the stallholders themselves. Over the two and a half years that it's been running a great community of flea market goers has formed. It's like the Co-op in that there are a lot of regulars and everyone is pretty like minded - looking for a bargain, wanting an alternative to the high street and enjoying the buzz of a market.

At the Flea Market there is a great atmosphere and buzz among the stall holders and attendees - how has this been created and let prosper?

A lot of it comes down to the people themselves, there's just a great bunch of people who come to the market every month. The stallholders are delighted to be making a bit of extra cash in a nice environment and it seems that the punters are delighted to have somewhere that they can shop and hang out for the day without



photo by Sarah McGregor (see dublinflea.blogspot.com)

spending a fortune. We always try and have good music playing in the background and encourage buskers outside in the summer months so that helps with the atmosphere too.

Also the fact that its only on once a month adds to the buzz. It's something people look forward to. We put a lot of energy into it each month and we hope that that shines through.

One of the features of the Flea Market is that each month there is a new beautiful poster created by a different Dublin artist. How did you establish this tradition? Altogether the posters are an impressive portfolio, has there been much uptake in selling them off as individual prints?

We're really proud of the posters. It wasn't something that we planned but has become an integral part of the market. We started the market on an absolute zero budget so we asked a friend to do the first two posters for free. Thank god he said yes, because they were great and sparked off more offers from friends to do subsequent posters. A lot of people were commenting on them so we decided to see if we could sell them to be able to give some money back to the artists. It worked.

We now sell the posters in a limited print run of 60 per month for € each and all the money after printing costs goes back to the artist. 7 posters out of 30 are now sold out.



One of the fabulous Flea posters, Sept 2010 by Laura Callaghan

In December we chose three of our poster artists to design a canvas bag for the market so we now have our very own Fleabags!! They're great. I use them for my shopping all the time.

On a number of occasions the Flea Market has cropped up in Style/ Fashion pages in newspapers and magazines; it's obviously the place to be for cutting edge trendsetters would you think?

We wouldn't really say that. But yeah, we have featured a good bit in different magazines and newspapers. The market will always be there and will always be good, with or without the 'trendsetters'.

Tell us again what to expect at Dublin Flea and why we should be there or be square?

Anything and everything....Bargains galore and hidden treasures at every stall. And if rummaging and haggling aren't your thing you'll still have a great day soaking up the atmosphere and enjoying a coffee and a bite to eat.

More info see: dublinflea.blogspot.com

Next Flea 27th March

Peas & Pods Market

Peas & Pods is the newest of the Co-op's Sunday Markets - with three outings so far - and is really starting to establish itself. I got in touch with one of the organizers, Aifric, to get the low down.

The Peas & Pods is quite a unique market for Dublin, differing from other second hand and craft markets that are more common. Directed at families and for children it is a niche area, what was the motivations behind setting it up and how has it gone so far?

The motivations behind this idea were to create a space where families can shop for ethical, creative and reasonably priced goods. A space that creates an atmosphere around the children's energy instead of the stressed parent retail experience - Where it's okay to run around and it's okay to draw on the walls!

So far, the feedback has been fabulous and really encouraging. The stallholders love that the market is so targeted and they get to showcase their products in a unique way. The parents love that they can source a variety of products, which are generally only available online or after a lengthy search, all under one roof. They are meeting like-minded people and have somewhere to go where they can shop and relax! And most importantly the children - they love the social outing to an open space that is both warm and welcoming not only to their parents but to them.



A creative looking stall at Peas & Pods, while the young ones enjoy a puppet show

What types of stalls, products, buzz and people should be expected at the Peas & Pods market?

Each market day is unique. The stallholders change around and with new faces come new products and a fresh atmosphere. We like to give the opportunity to small businesses to meet their potential customers and put their personality behind their products - a lot of these have online businesses and have limited chance to do this. The products range from wooden children's toys and unique children's clothes to bedroom interiors and hand crafted baby accessories. We try to keep the range of stalls varied and interesting for our visitors. The stallholder page of our website is updated for each market so you can check in and get an idea of the products available before you arrive.

As a visitor you can expect to meet plenty of people who know what broken nights sleep feel like and can give you supportive smiles if your toddler has a melt down! From baby wearers to breast-feeders, buggy pushers to bumps, the market is inclusive and welcoming for families and expectant families, people buying for families or just curious market browsers!

One of the features of Peas & Pods is that you will have changing entertainments at each monthly market to keep all the family entertained

Our audience are one whose lives change by the month too. The relevance of the stallholders stock to you, will vary with the age

and stage of your children. If you don't need teething beads this month you could be on the hunt by next month! Your crawler quickly becomes a wobbler and your toddler soon wants a mode of transport! We have tried to cater for these changes and create a place that is interesting and relaxed.

In terms of entertainment, there are so many things that are of interest to children and their parents, arts & crafts, music & movement, storytelling & imagination... the list goes on! At Peas & Pods we like to offer a changing menu of interactive elements to engage children and inform parents. We also want our visitors to look forward to the first Sunday of the next month - everyone likes a bit of surprise!

Some of your stall-holders offer eco-friendly alternatives to baby/ childcare products that are generally not easily available yet these products are essential for many young families, leaving most with the only option to buy the more disposable and less ethically sourced alternatives would this be right?

Yes! Doing a weekly shop in most of the major supermarkets does not give parents many options in terms of organic, bio-degradable or ethically sourced products. Buying online can sometimes leave you uncertain as to what you will be receiving. Having the chance to see the products first hand, and discuss with the stallholder the finer details of the products, allows the customer to then confidently make their choices. As most stallholders have an online presence, they hopefully gain a wider customer base as a result of a stall at Peas & Pods.



A Family Market at The Dublin Food Co-Op

Many parents of young children must buy a huge amount of new clothes and items for their offspring yet these items are of use to them for only a limited period of time. Often these items are disposed of or passed onto relations/ friends, Peas & Pods now offers an alternative avenue for distributing and sourcing these things, what is your policy on second hand stalls and goods?

We welcome anyone to take a stall to pass on their pre-loved items. There is a great market in trading or selling larger items like cots, prams, buggies and slings. We give a platform to a number of companies and organisations who specialise in just that concept. The Stork Exchange and Baby Wearing Ireland were both invited to attend the March 6th market, so that customers become aware that these options are out there for them to avail of. Having a baby doesn't have to mean spending a fortune!

As a first-time parent-to-be the thought of all the baby products can be daunting; as well as differing from my usual (low maintenance) shopping habits, what advice might you give and how might the Peas & Pods markets offer an alternative for me?

Shopping ethically for baby products is getting easier and easier. The growing demand for this has provided so many options, it is choosing between them that is now the hard part! Seeing the products first hand, and discussing with the stallholder the origins and ingredients, can really help with deciding which products are right for you.

We are regularly approached by parents inquiring about where we sourced slings, clothes, etc, and in turn have done the same ourselves. Peas & Pods brings together in one venue a group of people who are at similar stages in life and have similar concerns. We hope that stallholders and visitors alike learn from and inform each other.

More info see www.peasandpods.ie.

7 Next market 3rd April and 8th May



Oak Tree on Hill of Tara

Poetry Corner

This season we most gratefully received a poem from Co-op Member Kevin Gallagher. Enjoy...

'Hello, Spring is a lovely time to be a tree, waking from slumber and stretching out your roots into the soft earth. Here is a poem you might like. Best wishes, Kevin'

Be like a Tree by Kevin Gallagher

I wish that I could be like a tree:
 always relaxed where I stand,
 nourished by
 and nourishing the earth,
 and taking my food from the light

Basking in the warmth of the sun
 on my skin in the day,
 mingling in the night
 with moonlight shadows,
 the wind playing in my hair,
 outside in all sorts of weather.

I would keep the company of birds
 and have the sweetest choir singing in my ears
 as my alarm clock each morning
 to tell me a new day had come.
 Stretching out in the morning light,
 I would smile at passers by
 and whisper in their ears
 'tis a lovely day isn't it !

Spring Recipe

Bounce into Spring with this issue's both hearty and good value recipe from the lovely Pat Tobin, our regular recipe Queen, thank you Pat!

Vegetarian Irish Stew

Irish Stew was always a favourite dish of mine, mostly for its comfort value and family memories of my Mothers big comforting pot of stew that went on forever to warm us when we came in from school. This is a vegetarian version that I have developed and that I now actually prefer. This sort of food is also great in these times when we need to stretch our pennies.

Ingredients (Serves 4 to 6)

A good glug of oil – I have been using rapeseed recently and I like it

- 1 large onion, peeled and chopped
- 2 leeks, chopped into 2cm pieces
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 2 sticks of celery
- ½ small turnip, peeled and chopped into inch size dice
- 2 parsnips, peeled and chopped
- 4 potatoes – cut in half

Big bunch of thyme or other herbs of your choice (sage and/or rosemary will work best)

- 1 good tablespoon of vegetable stock or 2 cubes
- 110g of soup mix – lentils, barley, split peas – available at the Co-op.
- 800ml water
- Black pepper

Preparation

Begin by soaking the soup mix for about an hour as it will take less time to cook if soaked ahead of time.

Heat up the olive oil in a big saucepan and sauté the onion until golden-brown. Add the leeks, carrots, turnips. Cover and cook for a few minutes until they are starting to soften ever so slightly.

Covering the pot will help to extract the juices. Drain and add the soup mix.

Mix the stock in a cup with a small amount of boiling water to get all the lumps out and then add to the saucepan. Add in 800mls of water.

Stir well, bring up to the boil then cover and simmer gently for 30 minutes. Add the potatoes and parsnips and cook for a further 30 minutes. Remove the woody remains of the herbs.

Check the seasoning and then serve in big bowls.

Help Rota Dates 2011

Help Rota News

There are plenty of vacancies right through from Thurs, Fri and Sat. We are also looking for volunteers for the new Café team on Thursday, Hygiene team on Friday and teams for the monthly Sunday markets. Interested members should email helprota@dublinfood.coop or ask Anto (ask for him at the tills) on Thurs or Sat.

A		31 Mar- 2 April	5-7 May	9-11 June	14-16 July	18-20 Aug	22-24 Sep	27-29 Oct	1-3 Dec
B	3-5 Mar	7-9 April	12-14 May	16-18 June	21-23 July	25-27 Aug	29 Sep - 1 Oct	3-5 Nov	8-10 Dec
C	10-12 Mar	14-16 April	19-21 May	23-25 June	28-30 July	1-3 Sep	6-8 Oct	10-12 Nov	15-17 Dec
D	18*-19 Mar	21-23 April	26-28 May	30 June- 2 July	4-6 Aug	8-10 Sep	13-15 Oct	17-19 Nov	22-24* Dec
E	24-26 Mar	28 -30 April	2-4 June	7-9 July	11-13 Aug	15-17 Sep	20-22 Oct	24-26 Nov	

Dates marked* TBC