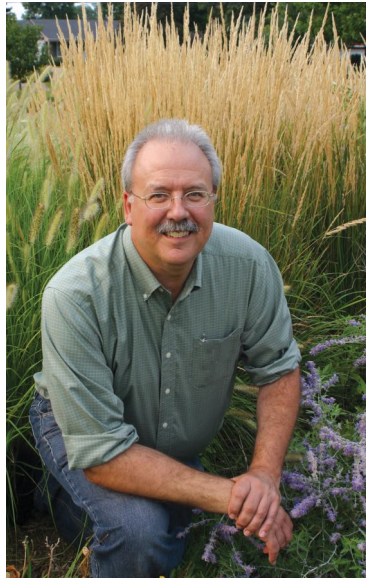


March 2015



Building our Local Economy with Montana Food

Remember Ken Meter from his presentation in Red Lodge back in 2013? Here's your chance to hear him again or if you missed him in 2013, for the first time. Ken, a food system analyst and economics professor, will speak about using Montana food as a tool for economic development in Eastern Montana on **Tuesday, March 31st at 6:30 pm at the Billings Public Library Community Room**. Light refreshments will be served.

Ken Meter is president of Crossroads Resource Center in Minneapolis, which offers research and training tools for neighborhoods, communities, and others working toward keeping our food dollars in our communities, and our diverse agricultural operations viable.

Meter will present a picture of the food system around Yellowstone County and highlight the possibilities for building vibrant local food economies. From food security to business development opportunities, Meter shows how supporting our regional food system can help us all grow.

The event will be hosted by Northern Plains Resource Council and its Billings affiliate, Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council. If you have any questions please contact Maggie Zaback at maggie@northernplains.org or call (406) 248-1154.

FoodCorps Applicants

Red Lodge Area Food Partnership Council and Red Lodge School District are recruiting enthusiastic applicants for our 2015-2016 FoodCorps service member. FoodCorps is a nationwide team of AmeriCorps leaders who connect kids to real food and help them grow up healthy. This will be our fifth year of hosting a FoodCorps member in Red Lodge, working in the schools, youth garden and community.

If you are interested in applying (deadline March 31st), please **call Margie Adams at (406) 425-0433**, to talk about the process of applying as a local candidate. Go to FoodCorps.org to learn more about the organization and apply. Please share this information with any potential candidates you might know.

MSU-B Strategic Marketing Management

FPC is excited to announce we have two seniors in the MSU-B Strategic Marketing Management class working with FPC's marketing team. They will "develop creative strategies to market local food and urge consumers to dedicate a percentage of the dollars they spend on food to purchasing local food for any combination of reasons, most likely including the health and taste advantages of eating locally, as well as the importance to our local economy of supporting local producers."

They recently provided us a brief Description of Work to date.

We have completed a brief analysis of the Food Partnership Council's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. From this analysis and our previous discussion with the Food Partnership Council Marketing Team, we have been able to better understand the competition in opportunistic areas. We plan to go more in depth and research opportunities with potential target markets. Finally, we have researched demographic information relevant to our target markets in order to find the most viable opportunities available to the Food Partnership Council. We look forward to continuing our work with the Food Partnership Council and we hope our final analysis will identify some new and exciting opportunities for the Food Partnership Council, local food consumers, and local food suppliers.

FoodCorps Update

By Emma Fernandez

The new school Food and Wellness Committee has been hard at work expanding the Harvest of the Month program, bringing new learning opportunities to students. Our next meeting is Monday, March 16th, at 5:15 pm at the high school, and we'd love to have you join us!

This month we'll be talking about ways to promote Harvest of the Month, nutrition education in the classroom, school breakfast, and other exciting topics! We'll also be discussing cafeteria and classroom activities for March, when students will get to taste local beef and learn about ranching from a local producer! Email emma.fernandez@foodcorps.org if you're interested in being on the school wellness mailing list.

Harvest of the Month: Beef

By Emma Fernandez

Keep it moooving! Beef packs a powerful nutritional punch. It is an excellent source of protein for building strong muscles and contains important nutrients like iron and B vitamins. There are many ways to cook up a healthy meal with beef – select lean cuts of beef, trim the fat, and drain cooked ground beef to lower the fat content.

Montana is home to more cattle than people and ranks 6th in the nation for the number of beef cattle. These bovines have been grazing in our nation's fields since the 1500s!





Connecting through Food and Film

FPC had a very successful celebration and showing of their film “Connecting to the Land” on Monday, March 9. Thank you to all who celebrated with us and especially to those that helped to make this evening possible; Café Regis, Laurel Farmers Market, Healthy Meadows, Hope's Artisan Foods, Mas Taco, Melissa's Magic, White Deer Ranch, and Wholesome Foods.

This amazing locally made video is now available for viewing at foodpartnership.org. You can find it now on the home page and later, under Areas of Focus. If you want a copy, contact Mark Edwards, videographer, at audiobiography@gmail.com. Thank you to our local food community for making this event such a success.



Annual Report Available Online

If you missed the film event and are still interested in reading the FPC annual report, go to foodpartnership.org/about-us.html to view our most recent statement to the community. If you have any questions, contact Janet Peterson at foodpartnership@gmail.com or (406) 425-3806.

On-Farm Food Safety Workshops

As demand grows for locally and regionally grown fresh fruits and vegetables, buyers are increasingly asking Montana's produce farmers for assurance that they are using food-safety practices on the farm. Farmers need to be aware that even if they are exempt under the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act – if a buyer requires a food safety plan; farmers will need to comply, in order to sell to that buyer.

Buyers likely to require farmers to have an on-farm food safety (GAP) plan include grocers, restaurants, farmers markets, CSAs, schools, hospitals and other fresh produce buyers.

To help farmers provide needed assurance, the International Organic Inspectors Association is hosting three workshops in Montana that will provide training on Good Agricultural Practices for food safety, in Chico Hot Springs (March 26), Great Falls (March 30), and Helena (April 1).

The workshops are designed for but not limited to: produce farmers, county sanitarians, Cooperative Extension agents and other agricultural educators, farmers market managers, food safety auditors, organic inspectors, food retailers, restaurant owners, farm workers and interns, farm-to-institution staff and agricultural service providers.

The workshops trainings will teach participants about on farm fresh fruit and vegetable food safety rules and regulations, how to assess the factors affecting food safety, how risk is managed on farms and how food safety audits are conducted and scored. Each of the trainings is a six-hour course, limited to 20 participants per course.

This training is free to all fruit and vegetable growers and any participant who is directly connected to fresh fruit and vegetable producers. Residents of Montana, Idaho, North and South Dakota or

Wyoming, are eligible for the free registration. For those who do not fit into one of the categories or states listed above, the cost of the training is \$450.00

For those participants pursuing a certificate for on farm food safety training or for a Regional Independent Verifier, the course will also include a pre-course assignment and post-course exam. The workshops are funded in part by a Montana Department of Agriculture USDA Specialty Crop grant in partnership with the Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center, based in Ronan.

For More information about the workshop and to register go to:
http://www.ioia.net/schedule_onsite.html. For more information about the course contact Jonda Crosby at (406) 227-9161 or jcrosby@mt.net.

Want to get More Involved?

FPC has several projects or initiatives in the works at the same time. You can get involved in whatever interests you. Contact Martha Brown at mbrown.mt@gmail.com or call (406) 445-7214.