

April Foods Day...continued from page 1

Club, The Kansas City Greens, The Gaia Community of the Unitarian-Universalist Church, and the Peace and Justice Office of the St. Joseph Diocese. Also many thanks to our individual contributors: George and Vicki Baggett, Patricia Houghton, Eugene Messel and Bob and Doris Sherrick. In addition to the farmers, we also want to thank our volunteers who helped with the event including, Rich and Linda Heffern, Anne Mary Vogelweid, Leah Wilder, Toni Gunther, Dirk and Naomi Durant, Lee Alexander, Kurt Kiebler, Margie Eucalyptus, Craig Volland, Ann Allegre, George and Vicki Baggett, Ben Kjelshus, and especially Carol Lawrence, who brought food for the volunteers. Altogether it was a great event.

The Troost Community Market is open for its second season, every Saturday, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.. Located on the Northeast corner of Linwood Blvd. and Troost Ave., the Market is part of community-led efforts to improve the Troost Corridor. For information on becoming a vendor, or to acquire further details of this exciting project, call (816) 931-8800.

Food Circles Networking Project

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About the Food Circles Networking Project

Funded through a grant from the Missouri Department of Agriculture, the mission of the FCNP is to assist in the development of local, sustainable food systems within the state of Missouri. We do this by working with current and future farmers to help revitalize local markets and by reaching out to consumers to inform them of the benefits of a localized food system.



**Helping Western Missouri Producers
and Consumers Connect Through Food**

Spring 2000

Food Circles Networking Project

FCNP Teams up with The Lek Trek

By: Ruth Anne Parrot

As people will walk and mingle in different communities this summer, the Food Circles Networking Project would like to help raise awareness of our common natural heritage - the prairie grasslands. While together we work to develop local markets, and connect farmers with eaters, we need to remember the land on which we live.

The Lek Trek, a walk across Missouri, is being sponsored by the Missouri Prairie Foundation to raise awareness of the importance of grasslands and to promote the work of the Grasslands Coalition. The Lek Trek is named after the mating grounds of Missouri's endangered prairie chicken to call attention to the plight of many grassland species. The walk will begin July 21 at the Iowa line near Hatsfield, and end October 14 at Prairie State Park, near Liberal. Special events are being planned in sixteen communities along the way. Each event will highlight some aspect of the importance of grasslands to our agriculture, wildlife, biodiversity or our cultural heritage. Activities include Prairie Days, Pioneer Days, historical reenactments, parades, hog-roasts, picnics, storytellers, native American dance exhibitions, poster contests, pioneer crafts, antique shows, old-time fiddlers, square dances, and more. Member groups of the Grasslands Coalition will provide displays. Everyone is invited to walk with the Lek Trek, and to "buy" a mile to raise funds. Two public walk days will be provided each week. Proceeds will support the work of the Grasslands Coalition in assisting private landowners with grassland improvements.

If you are a farmer and interested in helping to raise consumers or the eaters awareness about food issues be sure to join aboard the FCNP and Lek Trek venture. For more information about the Lek Trek, use the following contacts: The Lek Trek Line 816-561-8735; The Lek Trek / 315 Lawrence St. / Kansas City, MO 64111; Sharron Gough / P.O. Box 106 / El Dorado Springs, MO 64744 / goughs@mail.conservations.state.mo.us or Michael Lintecum at: Lintecum.michael@worldnet.att.net

April Foods Day a Successful KC event

By: Craig Volland

The Kansas City Area Food Circle's April 1st Farmers Exhibition at Penn Valley Community College was a success. We estimate that from 350 to 400 people came through the event mostly in the morning, and farmers were busy talking to customers. Some 200 Producers' Directories were handed out at the reception table by Food Circle volunteers. According to an informal survey at the door, our ads for the event in the Food Section of the Kansas City Star attracted a significant number of people.

The turnout of 21 producers was excellent. We scheduled the event 4 weeks later than last year to allow farmers to bring more early produce and plants. This really worked well as the greenery added to the festive atmosphere. New this year were organic flour offered by Lee Quaintance of Soaring Eagle Farms, who sold out, and dairy products including the Buchmayers' Green Hills Harvest selling organic cow's milk on site (including yummy chocolate), and Doug Schroeder promoting goat's milk. David Schafer and Alice Dobbs sold so many gourmet pizzas, although they figure they lost some regular sales because they were so busy serving up samples. We never worry about David, the master marketer, though. We will send out a survey to the producers this summer to get opinions about planning next year's event; we'll probably shorten the hours in the afternoon.

In addition to the farmers and eaters, eight non-profit groups staffed tables, and the KC Food Circle gave away a lot of literature about the food system. At one end of the gym, Dr. Carol Giesecke, Nutrition Specialist from Lincoln University, lectured on the pleasures of eating locally grown food, and Fred Messner, of Nature's Choice, talked to people about the risks of genetically engineered food. The Food Circles Networking Project was instrumental in arranging for Carol's important contribution to the event.

We want to express special appreciation to our cosponsoring organizations: the Food Circles Networking Project, both the Ozark and Kansas Chapters of the Sierra

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CONNECTING
FARMERS, CONSUMERS,
AND COMMUNITIES



Food Circles in the Garden

By: Thomas Kerr, Ruth Anne Parrott and Kevin Webb

Kansas City Gardening Projects

In Jackson County, FCNP has teamed up with 4-H and the Food Nutrition Education Program (FNEP) to create sustainable summer gardening projects at five area locations. The Kansas City Community Gardens and USDA's Department of Natural Conservation are also involved.

The first gardens have been created at the Friendship Village Apartments and St. James United Methodist Church's camp – 40 Acres and a Mule. Other sites include the Blue Hills Neighborhood, Paul Robeson Middle School, and Chick Elementary.

4-H hired a part-time employee to organize the gardening projects. Telester Powell, a long-time community developer in KC, MO, will work with site coordinators at each of the gardens to ensure quality seasonal curriculum. This summer also marks a renewal in Master Gardener support for urban residents, as Jackson County Extension begins to revitalize its Outreach to the innercity.

Warsaw Community Garden

Jim Breshears and Kathy Fisher have been actively working with community residents to begin a Warsaw Community Garden. Three meetings were held at the Benton County Extension Office in March.

The Warsaw Community Garden can be found at the Warsaw Industrial Park. Continue through the park to the end of the road.

The land was plowed in preparation for Spring planting, and seedlings and starters have been set in the ground. On-going garden considerations include seeking a permanent water source. There has been some discussion around attaching a hose to a local fire hydrant. Another option is to purchase



Kids garden at Friendship village apartments in KC



Construction day at Columbias' Unity Garden

a water tank. Ruth Ann Parrot from Warrensburg may have a source for a water tank.

Warrensburg Community Garden

The Warrensburg Community Garden has planted Spring crops. Saturday April 8th was the first garden workday. Gardeners received their garden plot and are ready to plant. All 20 Garden spots are taken so more gardens will be added for this year. The exciting thing that is happening at the community garden is that the Warrensburg First Presbyterian Church has taken four garden plots. These plots will be used to educate the children about the way food is grown and be able to eat the food that they raise at the summer Lunch Box Program which the church sponsors for the summer. What a great learning tool for these children. Also the community service youth will be returning to take on two plots, and grow food for the food pantry.

We hope to offer an educational course for the community on composting, as we have a working composting project going on. There will be a day in June dedicated to canning carrots so that gardeners will have a general idea on how food preservation is done.



First day of garden construction in Warrensburg.

Columbia Community Gardens

In Columbia the FCNP has been working with the Community Garden Coalition to help establish a new garden that will benefit low-income residents. Appropriately named 'Unity Garden', the participants in the planning, design and building process have included many different local organizations including the Columbia Area Food Circle, Columbia Housing Authority, Columbia Public Schools, and the Successful Neighborhood Resource Center.

Six raised beds have been built so far with enthusiastic participation by local residents, the children in particular. Local businesses have generously supplied topsoil, lumber, tools, and mulch for the garden. If you have any questions, or would like to participate, contact Kevin Webb at 882-3776 or Ben Winchester at 442-9605.

Seeds for Health

Eight Master Gardeners spent several days working with 197 children at Warsaw South School for the "Seeds for Health" program. Kathy Fisher, Nutritionist for the Department of Health, is also a

Benton County Master Gardener.

The children, grades pre-school through 5th, were shown how to plant onions, carrots, and beans. They also learned how plants grew and what parts of the plants we eat. Discussions centered around the importance of eating fruits and vegetables.

Master Gardeners will be going back into the classroom over the next few weeks to check on the plants and to answer any questions.

Local Food Directories: Making consumer to farmer connections

"Fresh Off the Farm"

A new food circle directory that will list farm-fresh local foods is in the works. Called 'Fresh Off the Farm', this directory will include Johnson, Lafayette and Henry Counties. It is planned to have the directories out to the public by the middle of June. If you reside in one of these counties or are right next to the county line, be sure to contact Food Circle Networker Ruth Anne Parrott at 660-747-3210 so she may be sure to include your farm in the directory.

Many other food circle directories are available in Missouri, see the list below for more information. If you are interested in putting together a food circle directory in your area, contact Kevin Webb with the Food Circles Network Project at (573) 882-3776. Also in June expect to see notice of the publication of a 'how to' guide for putting together a food circle directory.

- ◆ Kingdom of Callaway Food Circle c/o Lisa Weil
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Presentations in KC Address Food Issues

By: Thomas Kerr

While talking recently about community supported agriculture, a lady who remembered her youth in Italy commented about getting food from a local farmer. "The farmer brought eggs, a fryer hen, and vegetables to our house each Friday afternoon," said Josephine Palazzi, of Kansas City. "Those hens made the best chicken soup in the world, and that farmer was like a family friend."

Josephine was one of a dozen present at the Don Bosco Senior Center on March 28, 2000, for a discussion about food, nutrition and ways to provide fresh, quality meals for the family. "Eating in the New

Millennium" was held at 9 locations in the final week of March, and had a voice on two local radio shows. Over 75 people attended the public forums held in KC, KS, Independence and throughout the Midtown area.

Addressing ways parents can help their families participate in the alternative food system, the presentations described resources like community gardening, shopping at farmers markets, eating at restaurants and shopping at grocers who buy produce from family farmers in their area. Leading the discussions were Dr. Carol Geisecke, Food, Nutrition and Health Specialist, Lincoln University, and Bill Heffernan and Mary Hendrickson, both of the Department of Rural Sociology at MU, and cofounders of the Food Circles Networking Project.

Missouri Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Award Program

The Missouri Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Award Program started in 1995 after being funded by the Missouri Legislature. Each year since then, 23 grants of up to \$3,000 have been awarded to farmers across the state. The grants encourage producers to reduce their dependence on nonrenewable resources such as petroleum and minerals, and promote the preservation of natural resources such as soil, water, and air. They help farmers experiment with techniques that will make their farms ecologically sound, economically viable, and socially responsible. The Demonstration Award Program is sponsored by the Missouri Department of Agriculture and administered through the Sustainable Agriculture Extension Program of the University of Missouri and Lincoln University.

The deadline for turning in applications is November 30, 2000. To receive an application form, call the Missouri Department of Agriculture at 573-751-5505.