

March 2022

the heart beet

A Pulse on What's Happening at the **Viroqua Food Co-op**



Celebrate Women's History Month

- Welcome, Spring..... page 2
- Fairtrade and Olive Oilpage 4-5
- Get Your Greens! page 6-7

Welcome, Spring!

Olive Reynolds, VFC Board



March is here and spring is just around the corner. This is one of my favorite times of the year. I love the anticipation and excitement of longer warmer days to come and what will be done to fill them.

On the board, we continue to review sales trends, monitor the budget, discuss plans for updates and improvements to the store, and troubleshoot the ever-evolving challenges posed by COVID. While our focus is member representation and oversight of VFC's fiscal health, we also enthusiastically explore options for improving member, staff, producer, and guest experiences.

To that end, if supply chains stay viable, there are some exciting new additions and upgrades in the works that will add value to your shopping



experience and better serve our community's needs.

In all communications, our goal is to provide safe, open-minded, and honest conversations to create an inclusive workplace and community. This honest feedback whether a positive note or a suggestion for what we can do better keeps us on the right track and serving our community in the best way possible. We love to hear from everyone, but before you drop that next note, we ask that you familiarize yourself with the new guidelines posted in the comment area on our website and in-store near the comment box.

We welcome March not only in anticipation of the first day of spring, but also to honor Women's History Month! Globally, this month is designated to highlight women's achievements and promote continuing and emerging women's empowerment and gender equality. From management to staff, to farmers and producers there is no shortage of powerful women helping to elevate this cooperative. The VFC is packed full of amazing women who make our store and community a success. Be sure and take time this month to reflect, celebrate, and share appreciation with the important women in your life. Celebrate all those who helped mold and shape you and look forward with anticipation to the ones you have yet to meet.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Peter Bergquist, *President*
Elizabeth Tigan, *Vice President*
Aurora Boyd, *Secretary*
Lizzy Haucke, *Treasurer*
Andrew Anderson
Olive Reynolds
Julie Tomaro

GENERAL MANAGER

Jan Rasikas

The Board meets at 6:30pm on the 3rd Monday of each month. Meetings are hosted virtually for now. Changes are posted on the VFC website. To make a presentation or ask questions at a meeting, please contact a Board member 10 days in advance. Contact the Board at: vfcbod@viroquafood.coop

PUBLICATION TEAM

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Writing, Editing, Photography
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Design, Editing, Writing
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Photography, Design, Writing

The Heart Beet is intended as a vehicle for communication among VFC Owners & shoppers. Articles pertaining to health and nutrition are presented for informational purposes only. VFC recommends consulting a healthcare professional for medical problems and advice.

The Heart Beet is printed and available in-store monthly. A digital copy is available online at: viroquafood.coop/vfc-publications

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VFC News

Spring in to Ownership!

Do you want to support local farmers and producers and help to strengthen our local economy? You can do this and more when you join the Viroqua Food Co+op! VFC is owned and democratically controlled by over 4,300 members of our community! By joining the co-op you keep jobs and profits in our community and support our local food shed.

New owners who join between March 14th and March 27th receive a free VFC canvas shopping tote, coupons, and a chance to win a \$100 VFC shopping spree!

Already an owner? Pick up a flyer at any register to refer a friend! When your friend joins the co-op and pays in full you will BOTH be entered into the drawing for a chance to win!

VFC owners enjoy the following benefits:

- Free VFC canvas tote or ball cap
- \$10 coupon for new owners
- Welcome coupons for products in our store
- Periodic member-only coupons and deals
- Opportunity to vote or run for the Board of Directors (BOD)
- Opportunity to nominate and vote for your favorite non-profits through Give Where You Live
- Discounts on food and cooking classes at Driftless Folk School
- Admission to Annual Meeting and Board Meetings
- Eligible for a patronage refund when declared by the BOD

Ownership requires a one-time equity investment of \$75. Join in-store or online at viroquafood.coop

Celebrating Women in Leadership at VFC!



In honor of Women's History Month we recognize and celebrate the incredible women who shape and guide our cooperative community.

Pictured starting top left

Row 1: Finance Manager, Angela Chown, Grocery Manager, Kat Lemmer, Board Secretary, Aurora Boyd, Board Member, Julie Tomaro, Customer Service Assistant Manager, Rose Wildhack, Prepared Foods Manager, Sam Witte.

Row 2: Board Vice President, Elizabeth Tigan, Board Treasurer, Lizzy Haucke, General Manager, Jan Rasikas, Purchasing Manager, Sally Colacino, Marketing Manager, Jen McCoy.

Row 3: Board Member, Olive Reynolds, Customer Service Manager, Deb Ecklund.

Not pictured: Human Resources Manager, Alycann Taylor, Marketing Assistant Manager, Shana Meshbesher, Produce Manager, Linda Gallardo, Produce Assistant Manager, Katie Mae Lamb.

"Women belong in all places where decisions are being made."

- Ruth Bader Ginsburg



La Riojana Cooperative

Fairtrade and olive oil

all March long!

\$2
off

La Riojana Organic Extra Virgin Olive Oil Bottles
25.5 fl. oz., Reg. Price: \$11.99/ea
no coupon necessary; discount taken at register

What happens when you combine producer co-ops with Fairtrade certification? You get delicious, high-quality products that build economies and effect social change.

La Riojana Organic Extra Virgin Olive Oil is one of these products, and it's on sale through March at the Viroqua Food Co+op! The La Rioja province is where the majority of the La Riojana Cooperative's members live and work. This area is one of the most fertile agricultural regions in Argentina, but it is also one of the most remote. Limited access to markets is one reason why La Riojana has made Fairtrade a fundamental part of their cooperative model.

The direct connections forged through Fairtrade help to establish a buyer network and business model that producers can rely on year after year. The La Riojana Cooperative received Fairtrade certification in 2015, which made them the first certified olive oil producer in Latin America. Certified Fairtrade producers receive a pre-established price for their product along with a Fairtrade premium that goes into a fund

for farmers and workers to spend on local projects that not only benefit the producer but also their community. The Certified Fairtrade label guarantees fair labor standards, good working conditions and environmental protections. What's more, through direct connections, producers gain important insight and information that help them to produce the highest quality most desirable products on the market.

As a producer-owned cooperative, every member of La Riojana Cooperative votes to help decide what the cooperative does with their community fund. Their projects include clean water, a secondary school, medical equipment and health centers, and a new community center. La Riojana Cooperative also invests in sustainability initiatives and reforestation projects. For people in the developing world, these projects have a great impact on their community and quality of life.

So, let's look at what makes La Riojana Organic Extra Virgin Olive Oil unique. The olives used to produce this high-quality oil come from Arauco and Manzanilla olives grown in the Antinaco Valleys - Los Colorados in La Rioja province; one of the most important olive-producing regions in South America. The olive oil produced by La Riojana is extra virgin olive oil and is first cold-pressed, preserving important nutrients.

aroma of green and ripe olives, and both sweet and spicy flavors. And it is so tasty that it is best used in dipping sauces, salad dressings or drizzled over the top of your favorite roasted vegetables.

With every purchase of La Riojana olive oil, you are supporting a business model that is equitable throughout the supply chain. Now on sale at the VFC through the end of March, 2022.



This blend, in particular, offers notes of dried fruits, an

Top 5 Interesting Ways to Use Olive Oil



Olive oil is as versatile as it is delicious. Check out our top five uses that go beyond the table. 1. Remove paint from hands. Rub olive oil into hands, let it soak in for a few minutes and the paint will peel right off! 2. Season your

cast iron. Apply a light layer of olive oil on a clean pan to prevent rust. 3. Moisturize skin. Rub generously into dry skin for immediate relief. 4. Unstick your zipper. Dab on a stuck zipper to open. 5. Remove your eye make up.

Get Your Greens!

It's no secret that green and leafy vegetables are good for you. But while a side of steamed broccoli is nutritious, it lacks ... excitement. Even salads, with their endless potential for variety, can begin to feel too familiar.

Liven things up! To enjoy more of those glorious greens, start by making small additions to your daily diet: Snack on crunchy cucumbers and snap peas, or add a pop of flavor with fresh herbs. Toss leafy greens into any soup, smoothie, stir-fry or curry. Hungry for more ideas? Give these simple, green-themed recipes a try.

Baby Kale Stir Fry

Serves: 2. Prep time: 15 minutes.

- 1 tablespoon tamari
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon avocado oil
- 1 small carrot, sliced diagonally
- 1 5-ounce package baby kale

1. In a small bowl, stir the tamari, rice vinegar and honey; set aside.
2. Place a wok or large saute pan over medium-high heat for a couple of seconds, then drizzle in the oil.
3. Add the carrot slices and stir for 1 minute, then add the kale and stir. As the kale starts to wilt, after about 1 minute, drizzle in the tamari mixture and stir to coat. Cook until kale is softened, about 1 minute longer.
4. Serve hot.

Nutrient-dense dark leafy greens like kale, spinach and collards are an excellent source of vitamins A, C and K, minerals, antioxidants and fiber.



Great Green Goddess Salad

Serves: 4. Prep time: 20 minutes.

- 1 clove garlic
- 1 small anchovy (optional)
- ½ cup lightly packed fresh parsley
- 2 medium scallions, white and green parts separated
- ½ teaspoon dried tarragon
- ¼ cup plain Greek yogurt
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 5 ounces baby spinach, washed and dried
- 1 medium cucumber, peeled and sliced
- 1 medium avocado, sliced

1. For the dressing, in the food processor, combine the garlic, anchovy (if using), parsley and the white parts of the scallions. Process to mince very finely. Scrape down and process again. Add the tarragon, yogurt, mayonnaise, vinegar and salt and process until smooth. With the machine running, drizzle in the olive oil until well mixed. Transfer to a pouring cup or jar; keeps for 4 days, tightly covered, in the refrigerator.
2. For the salad, spread the spinach on a platter or four small dinner plates. Cover with cucumber and avocado, and drizzle with dressing, then chop and sprinkle the scallion greens over the salads. Serve immediately.

Give Where You Live

“Round Up” at the registers for local nonprofits!



Round up during the month of March for Friends of Vernon County Parks & Forest

The Friends of Vernon County Parks partner with park staff and volunteers to celebrate, protect and preserve the Vernon County Parks of the Driftless Area. Their vision is to better connect the Vernon County community with our publicly-owned natural spaces.

Congratulations – 2022 Microloan Recipient

We are pleased to announce that Driftless Brewing Company, LLC is the recipient of the 2022 Viroqua Food Co+op Microloan of \$3500. Located in the Village of Soldiers Grove in the scenic Driftless area of Southwestern Wisconsin, Driftless Brewing Company expanded production and opened a new taproom shortly before the start of the pandemic. As a destination brewery, the pandemic has been difficult for this small business.

The brewery team Chris Balistreri, Cynthia Olmstead,

and Scott Noe will use the microloan to help expand production, diversify their portfolio, and increase the distribution, sales, and profitability of their products. You can find their beer at their taproom or on the shelves at VFC.

The VFC Microlending Initiative aims to strengthen small, local farmers and producers that are part of our local food system by offering a one-year no interest loan of up to \$3,500.



Everyone is welcome to shop at the Viroqua Food Co+op!