

# Another Season of Food To Bank On Growing New Farms, Feeding the Hungry

Shonie Schlotzhauer, Sustainable Connections



Cristine Goldberg of Uprising Organics and Billy Tate of Moondance Farm compare notes on an heirloom cucumber variety.

with experienced mentors. They made market connections and built viable, sustainable, land-based businesses that will keep a little more farmland in farming and a little more local food available in Northwest Washington. And they couldn't have done it without you, the many Co-op members, community donors, and sponsors who launched this project and supported it all the way through its fourth year.

Thank you for your commitment to local agriculture!

Looking ahead to 2007, Food To Bank On is growing up! The project is now accepting applications from Skagit County, with an eye toward supporting a greater diversity of regional farms. Participants will notice easier systems and even greater value in the project's next season. Shoppers and diners will begin to see evidence of new community partnerships in some local restaurants and stores in 2007. You'll also see the Co-op's Farm Fund taking on a new project, and we hope that you'll continue to support both FTBO and the Farm Fund's new initiative.

The Co-op has pledged to continue support of FTBO as an underwriter, and has granted the project a 2007 Community Shopping Day—so schedule yourself a big grocery day for August 18 in your new calendars and day planners. There are many ways to support this valuable work. Give a gift of local food to those who need it for the holidays by sending a donation to Food To Bank On. Offer your land for a beginning farmer. Volunteer for Sustainable Connections' Food & Farming Program, from stuffing envelopes to research projects.

Most importantly, support these new farms, the mentor farmers who give so much time and knowledge, and Food To Bank On's sponsors and partners by buying their products and sharing a word of thanks or encouragement!

For more information or to make a donation, call 360-647-6902 or visit [www.sustainable-connections.org](http://www.sustainable-connections.org).

"I am finishing my growing season euphoric. I have read prolifically, visited lots of farms (most of them thanks to the Food to Bank On program), talked with other growers, learned a whole lot through the school of hard knocks, had a wonderful time getting to know the good people at the Bellingham Food Bank, and done almost all of it with a smile." So says Laura Plaut of Common Threads Farm, one of the eight farms that Food To Bank On (FTBO) supported in 2006.

FTBO's newest farmers delivered over \$10,000 worth of farm-fresh, sustainably grown, top-quality produce to Whatcom County food banks this season. They developed relationships with those food banks, volunteering time and often delivering far more food than their FTBO contract could pay them for. They participated in educational workshops, conferences, and tours. They made valuable connections



In Big Sky Garden's pumpkin patch, a group of FTBO farmers consults with mentor Steve Powers.



Walter Haugen of F.A. Farm points out the fields he'll put in production next season.

## New Projects on the Horizon

### Co-op Members Hailed for Support

Jean Rogers, CCN Staff

Four years ago, Co-op members, local farmers, and food activists sat around a table in the Co-op Connection building discussing how to best use funds earmarked to support local, sustainable farming, and also to address hunger in Whatcom County. Out of this brainstorm, the Food to Bank On (FTBO) project was born, beginning with four new farms and many volunteer hours. Now, with the ongoing support of Co-op members and in partnership with Sustainable Connections, FTBO farms are steadily joining the landscape of Whatcom County organic growers and FTBO has a permanent home with Sustainable Connection's Food & Farming Program. We cannot thank you, the Co-op membership, enough for your support and commitment to our local farmers, and for making sustainable food and farming a priority. FTBO wouldn't have happened without you.

This winter the Co-op Farm Fund will be seeding their next project in support of our local, sustainable farm economy. Anyone with a passion for farming and sustainable agriculture is welcome to join. We'll announce next year's focus or project in December or January. There is still a long way to go to assure the viability of our local farms and the health of our local food systems, and your support is critical to the ongoing work of both the Farm Fund and FTBO. We'll continue to accept donations for both programs at the register. Stay tuned—we can't wait to tell you what's next.

For more information on the Farm Fund, contact Jean Rogers at 360-734-8158 or [jeanr@communityfood.coop](mailto:jeanr@communityfood.coop).

## Food To Bank On 2006

### New Farms

Double Rainbow Farms  
Uprising Organics  
Nandaño Farm  
Holistic Homestead  
Eagle Valley Farm  
Common Threads  
F.A. Farm  
Moondance Farm

### Mentor Farms

Big Sky Gardens  
Paradise Farm  
The Growing Garden  
Sunseed Farm  
Cedarville Farm

### Sponsors

Samuel's Furniture  
Tony's Coffee  
Emerald Valley Kitchen  
Equal Exchange  
GloryBee Foods  
Springfield Creamery/Nancy's  
Yogurt  
Natural Factors  
Santa Cruz Organic  
Woodstock Farms

Photos by Shonie Schlotzhauer

## Co-op Kids' Halloween Party



### Volunteer Thanks

Our annual Kids Halloween party was a howling success due to the great bunch of volunteers who contributed their enthusiasm and time. On hand were some of our wonderful regulars.

Chantel Murray  
Campbell Thibo  
Analeise Volpe  
Carol Waugh

It was a treat to be joined by a cadre of new volunteers, students at WWU, who jumped right in with high spirits:

Mary Asher  
Brie Hegarty  
Sara Huddleston  
Allison Lindsay  
Allison King  
Blake Harrington

Thank you all.

Photos by Joanne Plucy