



THIS MONTH ▶ Tips for tight times ▶ Vitamin B12 ▶ The golden yoke

PRICES CRASH!

The big news is we have a new supplier of maca powder, mesquite meal and cacao beans and powder and prices will drop by as much as a third to a half – SEE BOX. More on the new supplier and its range of products next issue and on the website.

| | WAS | NOW |
|-----------------|---------|---------|
| Goji berries | \$44.33 | \$36.75 |
| Maca powder | \$75.30 | \$42.00 |
| Mesquite powder | \$68.25 | \$42.00 |
| Cacao beans | \$94.50 | \$42.00 |
| Cacao powder | \$62.80 | \$33.30 |

Vanilla beans will also drop in price soon.
ALL PRICES PER KILO BEFORE DISCOUNT.

WHAT'S NEW

- ▶ All organic TRAIL MIX (regal raisins, sultanas, cashew pieces, almonds, pepitas, apple wedges). Australian-made from local and imported ingredients.
- ▶ ANDEAN MIX (mix of amaranth grain, plus white, red and black quinoa), organic from Bolivia
- ▶ Organic PINEAPPLE. It's sliced thinner than last season's.
- ▶ New season organic PECANS
- ▶ Organic LOW SALT BOULLION
- ▶ Organic/biodynamic brown rice is gone. We can't import it because of

quarantine restrictions, so we've got some conventional long-grain brown rice in as a trial. We'll see how it goes.

WHAT'S BACK

- ▶ Making a welcome return: CHAI and SPICED DANDE. We're determined to keep these favourites well-stocked.
- ▶ All the chocolate-coated nuts and fruits are back in stock as are the Kitz Bars

WHAT'S OUT OR GONE

- ▶ Various pulses are currently unavailable. Our supplier isn't impressed with the quality of the organic red kidney beans, white kidney beans, lima beans, navy beans and borlotti beans and has chosen not to stock them. We are investigating other options.
- ▶ Spinach chia cawkers. The supplier has discontinued them but we still have pizza, mexican, tomato and cumin
- ▶ The dried mango season has finished.
- ▶ Rolled brown rice it's gone because of the rice crisis
- ▶ Apple and pear juice concentrates. Our supplier has deleted them; however, we're looking for an alternative source.
- ▶ Herbon laundry liquid is out of stock at our supplier.
- ▶ Sunflower seeds. The new season is just around the corner.

– Monika Baumann, Groceries Coordinator

F+V

what's good in fruit+veg with Renata Field

NEW ARRIVALS

- ▶ ARTICHOKE GLOBES: These delicacies are beautiful to look at and to eat!
- ▶ FD GARLIC GREENS: Like shallots but with a garlic taste.
- ▶ PEAS: These little darlings are a burst of flavour, direct from the farmers.
- ▶ POMELO: Like a grapefruit but bigger and sweeter.
- ▶ SPRING ONIONS: Spring has sprung and they are yummy!
- ▶ SALAD TURNIPS: White FD turnips that can be chopped straight into a salad.
- ▶ ITALIAN GARLIC: purple cloves
- ▶ ASPARAGUS

ON THEIR WAY OUT

- ▶ GRANNY SMITH APPLES: It's the end of their season.
- ▶ PIMPLY SQUASH: Only a few of these beauties left. And they're at cost price!

WHAT'S GOOD NOW

- ▶ ALBERT BROCCOLI: Small and super sweet. Add these FD babies to a stir-fry.
- ▶ APPLES: We now have juicing apples, cost effective and great for processing.
- ▶ BABY LEEKS: Smaller and sweeter than regular-sized leeks.
- ▶ LEMONADES: Sweet and juicy. Just eat them like an orange!
- ▶ CABBAGE: It's the season for it! Try the farmer direct "Sugar-loaf" for a sweet and crispy cabbage.
- ▶ CARROTS: A bit sporadic in supply, but they're beautiful when they come in.
- ▶ GRAPEFRUIT: very abundant

- ▶ HERBS: Fresh parsley, coriander, rosemary and more in the shop fridge.
- ▶ MUSHROOMS: The "Swiss Browns" are a staff favourite.
- ▶ ORANGES: FD Washingtons are very sweet right now.
- ▶ PUMPKIN: Japanese and Butternut
- ▶ WHITE KUMERA with purple patterns throughout and sweeter than the golden.
- ▶ FD TURNIPS

■ The fruit+veg comes in Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and we always need people to help between 9am-12pm on those days. If you can help or if you would like to ask about anything, email produce@alfalfahouse.org

■ For week-to-week fruit+veg availability: go to www.alfalfahouse.org/html/PRODUCTS/fruit+veg.htm

FD: Farmer-Direct

Have you tried the lemonades?

Hello there, lovely Alfalfans!

It's rather strange to think that about two months ago, I walked into Alfalfa House for the first time and saw my first lemonade. I'd moved to Sydney in June so my fair gentleman could pursue a Masters in Solar Engineering at UNSW. I didn't know where in Sydney I'd be living, or what a lemonade was, but I knew two things: first, I wanted to get involved with the Alfalfa community, and second, I wanted to eat a lemonade. We don't have lemonades in the States. I was intrigued. I bought two, and walked away excited about Alfalfa and all the new things Sydney would reveal.

Those lemonades were delicious, and a few weeks later, I found myself accepting the position of Co-op Coordinator. In the weeks since then, I've thoroughly enjoyed myself. Meeting the wide and welcoming Alfalfa community has been wonderful. Being new to Sydney hasn't been easy, but I've never felt unwelcome at Alfalfa. And who wouldn't be thrilled to work surrounded by so much fresh, healthy food? I mean, have you tried a lemonade? They're beyond amazing.

Back home in Atlanta, GA, I worked as a part-time graphic designer, and I was a full-time student in a graphic design program. I was also producing a radio show on local authors, and I shopped at my local food co-op all the time, of course. Atlanta is a beautiful town, and I miss it, but getting involved at Alfalfa has been a good way to put my mind off missing home. Sydney is a huge adventure, and I'm very excited to be here; already, loads of new and interesting things have crossed my path, most notably the elegant and incomparable lemonade.

Alfalfa's going through a bit of a winter cleanout at the moment; I've taken the opportunity of being new on the job to go through all our stuff, reorganise, and make space for more storage, so we can bring our members greater variety. I've been getting some projects out of the way, like getting some shiny new scales — come check them out sometime! And I'll also be continuing work on other projects, such as getting some blackboards for the shop and getting this year's Annual General Meeting together.

I feel honoured to be at Sydney's oldest food co-op, an organisation that stands against the social, economic, political and environmental destruction of our food supply. For 20 years, Alfalfa has made real progress toward a world with healthy food for everyone, and it has redefined the dynamics of power that so often controls our food. With the support of our members, our Management Committee, our staff, and the community, Alfalfa House creates tangible positive change. I'm proud to be a small part of this effort.

I'm in the shop five days a week, so come by and say hello. We'd love to see you around the co-op, and don't forget to try a lemonade! They're my favourite fruit.

Nija Dalal

2

PRODUCT OF
THE MONTH

The golden yoke

Forget about that age old riddle of 'what came first, the chicken or the egg', Ian of Clarendon Farm's first love is most definitely the humble egg.

Ian's poultry farm in Pitttown, 80km west of the Sydney CBD, began life in the early 90s as a demonstration research project exploring the principles of free-range chicken housing. In 1995, Ian bought the property and built on the freerange management techniques to convert it into an organic poultry farm. He currently runs 10,000 free-range birds that graze on locallygrown organic grain as well as the certified organic pasture.

The birds have easy access to a flotilla of portable housing and are protected from predators such as foxes by a herd of Maremma dogs — an Italian breed that also guards sheep and, amazingly, penguins.

Ian delivers his eggs to Alfalfa House within 24 hours of them being laid. You can check the freshness of an egg by seeing if the uncooked egg sinks in a bowl of water. Very fresh eggs lie on their side at the bottom of the bowl; a medium fresh one will stand up on the bottom and bob while stale eggs to the top float.

Fresh eggs are great for poaching, soft boiling, frying and omelettes. Not-quite-sofresh eggs are perfect for hard-boiling, scrambling, baking or quiches. Any egg that floats should be discarded. Eggs age more in one day at room temperature than they do in a week in your fridge, so Ian always recommends refrigeration. An egg stored in the fridge should keep fresh for up to four weeks while an egg at room temperature will lose freshness after seven days.

Most poultry farmers wash and disinfect their eggs after they're collected — a practice which strips their natural coating. Each egg is then recoated in white oil to prevent bacterial contamination. Ian delivers his eggs to the co-op uncoated. He ensures his eggs are kept clean by regularly changing the hens' nesting material and doing five pickups a day. Any dirt on his eggs is 'dry-cleaned' by hand using steel wool.

The type of chicken laying the egg determines the colour of an egg's shell. Generally hens with white feathers produce white-shelled eggs and hens with red, brown or black feathers produce brownshelled eggs. Ian runs Isabrown chickens, a French bird that is a cross between a whitefeathered male and a redfeathered female. This results in a reddish brown bird that can lay a mix of brown and white shells, thus explaining the colour range customers see in each dozen eggs.

The perfect boiled egg

It's more difficult than you might think.

- ▶ Start by putting your refrigerated egg under a tap of running water for a few minutes to bring to room temperature.
- ▶ Place the egg in a saucepan and cover with at least 3 cms of cold water. Bring to a boil then reduce heat to a simmer.
- ▶ For soft, runny eggs cook for 3 minutes. Hard-boiled eggs should be simmered for 5 minutes.
- ▶ Place your hard-boiled egg under a cold tap to make peeling easier. If your egg is overcooked, the shell will stick to the egg white and a dark ring will form around the yolk.

Jo Rose



THE VITAMINS A^{TO}Z

3

The dreaded hayfever season

B12 is the vitamin in the B group that not only causes the most concern to people, but is also the most controversial. It is needed to ensure the normal functioning of the brain and nervous system and also in the formation of blood. As B12 is vital to the brain, the main symptoms of deficiency are mental: fatigue, depression and poor memory. These are fairly non-specific symptoms and it's impossible to know from these alone if a Vitamin B12 deficiency is to blame and further testing is needed.

Various schools of thought say B12 can only be obtained from animal sources and therefore vegetarians and especially vegans will have trouble getting enough in their diets. In fact, B12 deficiency is just as prevalent amongst non-vegetarians as it is in vegetarians and often moreso. Having enough B12 in our bodies comes down to more factors than diet and absorption. It turns out, throughout our entire life, we only need about 40mg, a very tiny amount. In a fully

healthy and functioning body, this is excreted in the bile and effectively reabsorbed through enterohepatic circulation, which refers to the circulation of bile from the liver, where it is produced, the small intestines, where it aids the digestion of fats and other substances, back to the liver. So it is more a case of not hampering this process than it is about putting more in.

Vitamin B12 is in fact a microbe, a bacterium. There are no food sources for it. Rather, it's produced by microorganisms, and hence it can be found in animal sources as well as in the dirt left on our organic fruits and vegetables and also in our own bodies. The majority of what we take in through diet, whether from animal sources, from the dirt left on our organic foods, or from supplements won't be absorbed unless our natural circulation and reabsorption processes are working.

One way to help our bodies remain healthy enough for B12 reabsorption to occur is to ensure we get an adequate intake of minerals and trace elements in our diet. Cobalt and calcium are particularly important. Cobalt is present in pulses and vegetables and calcium in beans, nuts, fruits and leafy green vegetables. A deficiency can result from taking antibiotics or from animal products that have had antibiotics used in their production. Alcohol, smoking and stress all increase the body's requirement for B12. The best way to make sure our bodies have adequate Vitamin B12 is to eat plenty of fresh, raw and unwashed organic fruits and vegetables. And of course reduce those lifestyle factors such as drinking and smoking and make sure you get plenty of rest and exercise to counter the inevitable stress factors present in all our lives.

— Lucy Marinelli

Spring is here again and after such a cold winter it could not be more welcome. However, with spring come the sniffing, runny noses, sneezing and itchy eyes and noses.

Yes, spring is hayfever season. Although hayfever is generally considered a mild complaint, to those who suffer from it whether only in spring or all year round, it's anything but. Some children are particularly susceptible and often experience more severe symptoms as a result, such as hives, rashes and even asthma.

So why is spring such a bad time of the year for hayfever sufferers? Well, after their winter hibernation, plants get their new growth for the coming year. In spring and early summer, it is mostly the pollen that gets up our noses and into our eyes, causing irritation. Children's sports start up again at this time of the year as well as good old

playing out in the backyard, so close contact with grasses is at an all-time high. Ideally, you would make sure your children avoid contact with pollens and grasses, but who wants to keep their kids indoors when they can be outside running around and having fun? And pollens, as tiny airborne particles, are pretty hard to avoid unless you stay indoors with the windows and doors shut tight.

An option, too often used as a first and only remedy, is turning to antihistamines. These, most often prescribed by a doctor, work by inhibiting our bodies own immune response to foreign matter, in this case pollen and

grass particles. The problem that results is two-fold. Firstly, constant use of antihistamines over time makes them less effective and then people end up using more or they go for stronger doses. The

other, more concerning issue, especially where children are concerned, is the suppression of their immune systems, particularly as they're in constant contact with viruses in their everyday interactions.

So the best defence is to keep them healthy and especially hydrated. Drinking lots of water is the key and ensuring their diets are full of fresh fruits and vegetables, which have high water content. This ensures the toxins are constantly being diluted and flushed from their systems and also that they are getting an influx of vitamins and minerals to help build healthy immune system function.

A quick and yummy recipe that will give kids the hydration they need and provide ample vitamins and minerals is the citrus smoothie. Simply peel a few oranges and/or a lemonade

or two and puree them in a high-powered blender. Add water to achieve the desired consistency and drink (or eat with a spoon if it's thick enough). I like adding half a lemon, or a handful of fresh mint for a lovely pickup. Celery is also good as it adds elemental sodium, which is great to replenish the body now the warmer weather is prompting us to be more active.

A Healthy Start is a regular column on children's nutrition.



tips for tight times

or how to eat organic without breaking the bank

compiled by Jo Rose, Lucy Marinelli and Stevie Bee

There's been a bit of talk lately about the economic downturn and rising rents and the effect they might be having on retail sales. In such times, usually the first things we cut down on are eating out, holidays, the extra new season outfit and so forth. But people also cut down on food spending, going for cheaper cuts and generic brands. While those of us who prefer organics aren't immune to our economic woes, there's a sneaky suspicion food will be one of the last things we'd be prepared to trade-off. So, we thought why not brainstorm some ways to stretch the dollar but not compromise food quality. So, in no particular order, here are 20 tips to keep you eating organics and not break the bank.

1 Shop with a list. Go around the kitchen and write what you plan to buy between shops. Think about the kinds of meals you'd like to make and plan accordingly.

2 While we're talking planning, be prepared with bags, jars and other containers. Have a stack of them in your car, bike panniers or shopping bag. You'll save on buying new paper bags and jars. And have your shopping bag near the door as you are going out. If you do forget your bags, avoid the paper bags and grab a box to pack things in to carry home, particularly if you live close by.

3 Choose what's in season. As the co-op has a seasonal focus, that should be a lot easier. Tailor your meal preparation and your recipes to suit what's available.

4 Make your own muesli, and vary the ingredients to suit the season and your budget.

5 If you're a single householder and/or not a big bread eater but still enjoy the odd slice or two, slice your loaf, pop the slices in a plastic bag and freeze them. Thaw out what you need when you need. That way you can buy a whole loaf without wasting any.

6 Instead of buying ready-made pasta sauce, make your own from fresh tomatoes (when in season) or tinned and some fresh herbs and an onion.

7 Likewise, with humous (check out this blog <http://humus101.com/EN/2006/10/14/hummus-recipe/>)

8 Depending on how big your garden/balcony is, grow your own herbs and vegies either in the ground, in pots or poly boxes. The co-op has some of the best seeds around; check out the range behind the second till.

9 Plan your meals ahead of time (including cooking large batches and freezing some for later) so you don't end up buying expensive takeaways at the last minute, especially when you're home from work late.

10 Always keep your basics on hand so you can make simple, quick, easy-to-make dishes that satisfy you when you get home from work or study so you're not prone to grabbing a takeaway on the way home.

11 If buying herbs, think of other uses for leftovers, e.g., using basil for a pesto sauce, or freezing them.

12 Still on herbs, when buying dried herbs and spices there's simply no contest between our bulk herbs and what you can buy in the supermarket. Our organic herbs and spices are in general a lot cheaper and arguably fresher than their non-organic cousins in the supermarket. The same goes for organic herb tea bags. Buy in bulk and use a tea ball to brew an individual cup or two.

13 Volunteer in the co-op and be strategic with your use of the extra discount, which is worth 25%. Don't waste it on a little shop. A \$200 household shop, for instance, can cost you \$150, a \$30 saving on the regular 10% discount.

14 You don't have to buy vegies whole. Most are sold by weight, so if you want just three celery stalks,

take three. Pumpkins, cabbages and caulis can be cut to the size that suits; many are on display, but if not, ask a Shop Coordinator to cut one for you.

15 Storage is the key to reducing spoilage. The fridge crisper does, as the name implies, keep vegies crisper. Plastic bags are also useful to keep leafy greens leafy and green.

16 Don't be afraid of checking out the Cost Price section down the back of the shop. Sure, it used to be pretty skanky at times. However, these days the quality's much better. You can save 40% of the regular price, which is not bad value for cutting out the odd bad bit. Great for cakes, pies, casseroles, soups, stir-frys, blends. Even if broccoli tops have gone yellow, you can always use the stems in stir-frys or blended soups.

17 Buy food that is produced 'locally'. For instance, our Farmer-Direct fruit+veg is harvested just before shipping and is generally transported over shorter distances than other produce we stock. Which means they remain fresher longer and hence less potential wastage.

18 Minimise pre-made foods such as potato chips, juices, biscuits and other snacks. They turn out to be lousy value in terms of nutrition and not at all sustaining.

19 Buy your vegies fresh. They're usually less expensive than canned versions and more nutritious.

20 Only buy what you need. Keep track of what's on your shelves, in your pantry or fridge so you don't double-up on foods unnecessarily.

In short, be prepared. If you want to save money, you have to be.

■ We're keen to hear from you. Have you changed what you buy or how you shop due to the economic downturn? And do you have any smart shopping tips to share with other members? If so, email them to info@alfalfahouse.org.

Recipe of the moment

WITH RENATA FIELD

Pink Pie

VEGAN

Pie crust

- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 3/4 cup oil
- 1/4 cup cold water (approx.)
- Combine flour and salt in a bowl. Make a well in the centre and add oil and mix.
- Slowly add water until mixture forms a ball of dough. (use more or less water to achieve this consistency). Cover bowl tightly and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Filling

- splash of oil
- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 1 tsp Garam Masala
- 1 tsp cumin seeds, ground
- salt+pepper (chilli, other spices) to taste
- 6 swedes, diced
- 200g sunroot, diced
- 600g jap pumpkin, diced
- 4 beetroots, diced smaller than others
- 1 cup split red lentils
- Fry onions, spices in oil until onions are transparent. Add vegetables, lentils and enough water to cover. Simmer 20 mins with a lid on until vegetables are soft.
- Pre-heat oven to 190°C. Remove dough from fridge, roll out and press 2/3 of it into a greased pie tin. (For a crispier base, prick base and pre-bake 10 mins.) Add filling.
- Roll out remaining pastry and cover filling. Use a little water to stick pastry top to edges of the base. Bake approx. 20 mins or until top is golden brown.

URBAN ORCHARD

is a new monthly local produce swap. It's based on similar projects in Melbourne and Adelaide and brings people together to share excess produce from their gardens, and food gleaned from their neighbourhoods. By hosting Urban Orchard at Alfalfa House, we're hoping to build on our objective of creating community. What to bring? Anything you have spare in your garden, or



anything you find in your local area such as herbs, fruit or vegetables. Swap lemons for apricots, apples for tomatoes, basil for nectarines, recipes for gardening tips, on a completely informal basis.

Urban Orchard starts

Saturday September 27

from 10-12noon, then the last Saturday of the month.

My little German holiday

In August I was in Germany for a month, visiting loved ones. And while there I had a bit of a look at the German organic industry. And boy was I amazed. Large organic supermarket chains with products I'd never dreamed could be organic! It's virtually impossible to buy non-organic baby food for example, as parents are unwilling to feed their babies conventional food. Unfortunately these chains don't always have the 'local' politics you'd wish for, preferring to stock New Zealand apples, for example, even when there are German ones available. There are also co-ops, but as here, they're smaller and less significant in terms of impact than the chains. What Germany does well is farmers' markets. Most towns have a daily farmers' market, and most markets have at least one organic stall.

Like Australia, Germany is seeing the introduction of more genetically-modified crops. Fortunately, though, there's a big groundswell of opposition to new plantings of GMOs.

There are also numerous communes and community-supported agriculture projects such as the Karlshof, two hours out of Berlin. The Karlshof attempts to do non-commercial agriculture. I found it really exciting as it is the first project of this nature that I've come across. The first crops have been sunflowers and potatoes. People can get involved and help out throughout the year then share in the produce. This year they harvested, sorted and transported 17 tonnes of potatoes to a cellar in Berlin for people to share. So inspiring! So if anyone has any spare land, let me know. I'd love to start something similar in the Sydney region.

- Renata Field, Fruit+Veg Coordinator (produce@alfalfahouse.org)

5

for the diary

Alfalfa House's
Annual General Meeting
Wednesday November 12, 2008
6.30 for 7pm start
Children's Services Central
Training Room B21
Addison Road Community Centre
142 Addison Road Marrickville

PLEASE NOTE that the nutritional advice given in the eNews is of a general nature only and is not intended as a substitute for professional advice.

PRICEWATCH

| Product | Alfalfa House Cert. Organic | Health Food Store Cert. Organic | Supermarket Cert. Organic | Supermarket Not Organic |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Honey, 100g | \$0.90 | \$1.10 | \$1.79 | \$1.31 |
| Choc-coated almonds, 100g | \$6.08 | \$8.08 | \$5.51 | \$3.90 |
| Corn Cakes, 100g | \$1.94 | NOT AVAILABLE | \$1.29 | \$1.32 |
| Yogurt, plain, 100g | \$0.92 | \$1.20 | \$0.75 | \$0.60 |
| Milk, full cream, 2 litres | \$6.00 | \$6.20 | \$5.18 | \$4.99 |

SURVEY NUMBER 3, SEPTEMBER 2008

- Compiled by Jo Rose

FEED THE eNEWS

This newsletter is your voice and a great way to communicate with other members.

Please feel free to send in your hints, tips, ideas, suggestions and recipes to feedback@alfalfahouse.org

E-News is edited and designed by Stevie Bee for Alfalfa House Community Food Cooperative Ltd