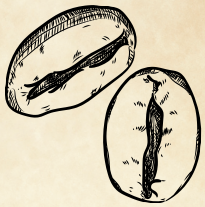


DNF CO-OP'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



cup O' JOE



I'm sure, as I am, you are tired of the political season. I'm writing this a few days before the election but whatever happens, I'm positive it will not be over for many months.

Back in March, I expressed in this column that Co-ops are kinda stuck in an odd place: they have been political for years since the mid 1800s (despite one of their original principles being political neutrality) but now generally avoid taking political stances. You can read that column by visiting our Newsletter archive page by going to https://www.durangonaturalfoods.coop/newsletter

While my thoughts haven't really evolved since then, I do think about this a lot and there was even a discussion on this by a national co-operative support group in September. They didn't come up with definitive answers either.

When the Co-ops started over 175 years ago, they were very aware of their socialist roots although, mostly, they concentrated on their own organizations rather than a societal means of governance.

Most notably, they were a huge supporter of woman's suffrage and not only allowed women to join them but also allow them to be on their Boards. While this might seem minor now, back in those days it was a giant political statement.

New Zealand was the first country to come to their senses and accepted woman's right to vote in 1893. That was the only country in the 19th century. Australia followed in 1902. The UK in 1918 but was partial (only women over 30 who owned land) until 1928. The US in 1920. Slowly (very slowly) one by one through the 20th century, these rights were recognized with countries we think of as advanced dragged their collective feet with Switzerland in 1971 and Portugal in 1976. Heck, it took Saudi Arabia until 2011!

So you can see that this issue was huge. And political. It certainly had to do with the first 2 Co-op principles: Open voluntary membership and Democratic control. So do we stop there?

At the end of my column in March, I stated that I thought Co-ops should add another principle (there are currently 7) which would be: 8) concern for humanity, peace, health and non-violence. The "official" 7th principle was added in 1995 by the International Cooperative Alliance which is "Concern for Community." They argued about this for decades and it is broad enough that it can certainly be used as a reason to be political.

One of the things that bind American Co-ops together is their dedication to natural and organic foods. And there are very real political issues associated with that. But there are new Co-ops that are opening that are termed "hybrid" co-ops which move towards carrying all goods like any other grocery store. Will this make a difference? You don't see Walmart or Kroger stores (City Market in Durango) taking political stands. They just want your money and will side with anyone who offers them an economic advantage.

While we have around 3,000 active Members, we are still quite small in our physical size as

-CONTINUED ON PAGE 6!

Join Us at

LOCAL FIRST FOUNDATION

NOEL Night

GIFTS!

TREATS!

FUN!

Presented by the Local First Foundation

DURANGO NATURAL FOODS CO-OP

Friday December 4th

ON THE CORNER OF 10TH & MAIN TIL 8PM

A MONTHLY LETTER FROM YOUR DNF BOARD:



Dear DNF Members/Owners,

As we settle into the time change and the changing season, I hope everyone is staying warm, dry, and doing well!

For those I haven't had the chance to meet yet, my name is Caroline McCulloch, and I was recently appointed to the DNF Board of Directors this past September. I'm excited to step into this role and contribute to a community that brings together so many things I care about. I've already learned a great deal about our co-op and look forward to continuing to learn and get more involved in the months ahead.

A New Store Door!
First, thank you all for your patience during our recent store closures while we installed our new door! It's been a long time coming, and we're excited to finally have it in place. Thank you for bearing with us as we made this much-anticipated improvement.

We Want to Hear from You!
Your feedback and ideas help our co-op grow, and we want to hear from you! There are two easy ways to share your thoughts:

- **In-store:** Drop a note in our suggestion box with your name so we can get back to you.
- **Online:** Visit the "Contact Us" page on our website to submit feedback through the online form.
- **Board Meetings:** Our board meetings are open to all members. At each meeting, we review and discuss member feedback, questions, and concerns.

Whether you have a suggestion, a question, or an idea for the future, we'd love to hear from you!

A Little About Me
My love for local and organic food began on the East Coast. I spent Sundays visiting farmers markets with my mom. She taught me early on the importance of supporting local farmers and choosing organic whenever possible.

In high school, my curiosity about where our food comes from led me to volunteer at a nearby organic farm. From planting seeds to harvesting vegetables, I experienced firsthand the hard work and challenges of small scale organic farming. That experience deepened my appreciation for farmers and the food industry as a whole. This ultimately inspired me to study food science and pursue a food industry based career.

When I moved to Durango, I wanted to find a way to connect with my new community through food, as I had in every place I'd lived. Joining the co-op was a natural fit, allowing me to bring together my passion for food and my desire to connect with the community. I'm grateful for the opportunity to now contribute as a board member!

I'd love to meet more of you, so if you see me around the store, please say hello! Thank you for welcoming me into this new role. I look forward to getting to know more of you and working together to support our co-op and the community we share.

Kindly,
Caroline McCulloch
DNF Board Member



MEET DELLA!

SHE'S ONE OF OUR NEWEST CASHIERS ON THE FRONT END!

CHECK BACK EVERY MONTH FOR A SPECIAL FEATURE CELEBRATING THE HEART OF DNF-- OUR STAFF!

Q: So, where are you from?
A: Haiai'i, specifically Waimea on the big island.
Q: What's your favorite part about living in Durango?
A: The change and different environment that allows me to grow! Definately the community and nature.
Q: When you're not at DNF, what else are you getting up to?
A: Dancing or walking talking with a friend.
Q: What is your message to the world?
A: Be kind.
Q: Favorite things about working at the co-op?
A: The co-workers that always support me no matter what! Truly the best group of people.
Q: What is something you are excited to bring to the store?
A: Not sure yet!
Q: In preparation for any adventure, which three DNF products would you bring?
A: High Desert bagels, green grapes and a dark chocolate Nelly's bar.
Q: In ten words or less, how would you describe our Co-op to an out-of-town visitor?
A: Friendly, fun, full of goddies, fantabulous, foodies, lots of love!



cup O' JOE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2...

well as earning capabilities. We don't want to alienate folks but what does that mean to our overall appeal? Maybe taking stands will get others to shop here more than we might lose.

Back when Russia invaded the Ukraine, I put up signs that we stand with Ukraine. That, to me, was a no-brainer (which is what I need as I am surely challenged in the brain department) and no one objected. But when the situation with Israel arose, there were heated opinions on both sides. Folks challenged us to take a stand as they did in many Co-ops across the country. The closest we came was contemplating that we support a cease-fire and even that was challenged. While it seems clear-cut to many, it is not. It has also made me rethink standing with Ukraine but I still believe this is an obvious call.

What about ICE? Again, personally I think this is a no-brainer but I do know that there are those (Members) who support them. I believe human rights topple other arguments but what right do I have to determine this for our Cooperative?

One of the saddest days in recent Co-op history was when the Berkley Co-op collapsed in 1988. They were the largest food co-op in the country at the time with 12 stores, over 100,000 Members and many services. They were also very overtly political, both externally as well as internally. While there are quite a few reasons for their failure, many do point to their political nature as one of the main reasons for their collapse.

And political they were. They were fiercely anti-war, pro union, boycotted companies and were fervent consumer advocates and actually was born out of political activism in the late 1930s. They lobbied the California legislature and was a template that many Co-ops followed in the '70s and '80s.

Truly, the study of their demise is a huge topic but after it happened, many Co-ops back-pedaled away from political activism. With increasing competition in the 1990s, most Co-ops dropped their political leanings as survival became the main issue.

So we remain "neutral." But that too can be considered making a choice. Here's what I'm thinking although it's about a year away: we do a large Member survey every two years in October. 2027 is the next one. The last one had about 1/3rd of our Membership respond. Almost any statistician will tell you that that is a great response. I'm thinking we can have a section on political responsiveness and see exactly what our Members think about all this.

We certainly need to consider the economic impact also. What we may feel in our hearts may not be what is needed for survival. And while we are doing well right now, the entire grocery industry is in major flux and the environment may be quite different a few months down this road.

Yet I do not think this question will go away. While I don't think we should support political parties, there are quite a few issues I think we should weigh in on. We are not simply a grocery store. What do you think?

DURANGO NATURAL FOODS CO-OP

JOE Z. - GENERAL MANAGER, DNF



NEW PRODUCTS

in store now!

CONSERVAS RAMÓN PEÑA



The story of Ramón Peña dates back to 1920. A small canning company in Galicia began with the careful production of fish and seafood preserves, controlling the raw materials and precious artisanal processes from the origin, in order to make the tins authentic luxuries for the palette.

MASPANADAS

Empanadas are a Hispanic hand pie, similar to an American turnover, except they have a flaky crust and are typically stuffed with a savory filling, then baked or fried. They're usually shaped like a half-moon and range in size from bite-size to as large as a calzone, these versatile treats are fast-food ready and restaurant staples across Spain, Latin America and the Philippines!



HÄXAN FERMENTS



Haxan Ferments is dedicated to making unique, culinary-driven condiments. Working closely with local farmers to source the best ingredients available in the Pacific Northwest. Using natural fermentation to capture and preserve these fresh ingredients at peak flavor while also transforming them into something unique.

A Walk Through Dusty Dog Gardens


1

Gabrielle Fultz, a full-time student at Fort Lewis College and owner of Dusty Dog Gardens was kind enough to take us on a tour of her farm in late September. Located just a few minutes south of Durango, she has been providing DNF with a steady supply of chicken & duck eggs for the past couple of years. Plus, thanks to an interest free loan from Four Corners Slow Money in 2026 for modest infrastructure upgrades, she has begun selling produce to the Co-op as well.


2


3


4






5

Establishing Dusty Dog in 2024 following her completion of the Farmer in Training Program at The Old Fort at Hesperus, Gabbie's approach to farming is with a focus on sustainable and regenerative farming techniques following indigenous Navajo cultivation traditions. She has slowly been transforming her farm since moving in in 2025 and when we visited the fruits (or vegetables, rather) of that work was clearly beginning to pay off.

While the chicken's free range around the property and graze through the day, in the evenings Gabbie wrangles them all back into their homemade mobile chicken coop. Thanks to this mobility, she typically changes their grazing area

-CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE


6

every few days to ensure there is plenty for her hens to eat that is safely protected from predators.

Dusty Dog used to sell quail eggs to DNF in addition to eggs from their other fowl. Unfortunately, they needed to take a break to reestablish their flock after an incident involving a fox earlier this year. Over the past few months, the flock has rebounded to the point where their eggs will, if all goes according to plan, make a triumphant return to the co-op before too long.

While the current growing season is beginning to taper off, you can find Dusty Dog Gardens' chicken and quail eggs throughout the winter at Durango Natural Foods Co-op. Their produce will be available again come next season.

Photos: 1: Crooked struts her stuff as we tour the farm; 2: Cayuga & Khaki meandering about; 3: Buffy, ignoring us acting all big and tough; 4: Dusty Dog's ducks getting themselves in a row; 5: The main garden bed full of tasty produce. 6: One of the dusty dogs, Suzie, standing guard in case of predators.; 7: Gabbrielle standing beside her mobile chicken coop; 8: Rona, another of Dusty Dog's laying hens. Credit: Jacob Lienhardt



















Fort Lewis College Students!

SAVE



5% OFF* EVERY PURCHASE!

*With a Free Student Account

ASK YOUR CASHIER FOR MORE DETAILS!

What's new in Wellness







Sol & Café
Cooperativa de productores

EQUAL EXCHANGE
FAIRLY TRADED

GERARDO'S STORY



Written by guest contributor Megan Minnick.
Megan is a regular writer for Willy Street Co-op, a food co-op in Madison, Wisconsin, that is a longtime partner of Equal Exchange.

October is a busy month. It's both Fair Trade Month and Co-op Month—two of the central themes in Willy Street Co-op's vision of a sustainable, accessible, and equitable food system. Both movements are near and dear to us—it can be a real challenge to decide which to focus on.

But what if they weren't in competition?

What if, rather than choosing between the fair trade and cooperative movements, we instead celebrate them both and the synergy between them? What does that synergy look like?

It was with these questions in mind that I sat down to interview Gerardo Goicochea.

Gerardo is a fair trade coffee farmer from the village of Santa Rosa in Jaén Province in the mountains of northeast Peru. He's also a founding member of the Sol & Café Farmer's Cooperative, a key supplier of our longstanding coffee partner, EqualExchange. Sol & Café's coffee is a regular component in two of our top-selling coffee blends: Organic Love Buzz and Organic Breakfast Blend.

I spoke with Gerardo over a video chat and through an interpreter. While I've tried to keep his original thoughts and voice as intact as possible, what follows has been edited for clarity.

Megan: How did you come to be a coffee farmer? Did you grow up on a farm?

Gerardo: I know coffee because of my father. He first came to Santa Rosa in the 1960s, when he was in the army. He saw that the soil was good for growing coffee, and came back here to have a family. I'm the third child. My father didn't know how to read or write. He signed papers just using his name. He told my siblings and me that he didn't have the resources to educate us, but he could teach us to work. Back then, there wasn't any other option than working. After I finished primary school, I decided to plant my own coffee crop. I started when I was 13.

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THE MOUNTAINOUS LANDSCAPE OF ONE OF THE COFFEE-GROWING COMMUNITIES WHERE SOL Y CAFÉ HAS MEMBERS. CREDIT: EQUAL EXCHANGE

Megan: And you continued until now?

Gerardo: More or less, though 2003 marked a turning point.

Over the years, my family had accrued a debt of 3,000 sols [around $900 USD], which we owed to a man who lent money to families like ours. In 2003, the time came to pay. The common method of payment was in coffee, and the man had written in his notebook that we owed him 30 quintales of beans [3,600lb]. But that was much more than 3,000 sols worth. He was taking advantage.

It wasn't fair. I had my own family by then, and the money from the crop paid for our food for the year. But we had no choice. We had to pay. It was very difficult, and I spent all my time growing coffee. For me, it was the breaking point.

That was before the cooperative.

Megan: How did the cooperative come into being?



COFFEE CHERRIES, FRESHLY HARVESTED, READY TO SORT FOR QUALITY. CREDIT: EQUAL EXCHANGE

Gerardo: It started back in 1997, when Cáritas [a Catholic organization dedicated to empowering vulnerable populations] arrived and started a program funded by USAID to help farmers learn new growing techniques in coffee, rice, and cocoa.

I was identified for my leadership and selected to be part of the committee created by the project. I became involved in workshops on coffee growing. I was excited by what I was learning, and my family agreed to let me use our land to implement the new techniques.

In 2005, after surviving that difficult year when we settled our debts, I decided to travel to Jaén [the capital city of Jaén Province and an important coffee trading hub] to sell my crop, rather than selling to the local traders. No one from Santa Rosa had ever done this, but I'd heard that in the city, buyers were paying three times what we were getting in the village.

The trip took two days. I brought my wife and baby son (who's now a university student!) with me, because it was a risk, and we didn't want to get separated. But it was worth it. In that year, we won because we were able to sell at a much higher price. I also met buyers and experts in the coffee trade who would eventually become important to the business of the cooperative.

In Jaén, I saw firsthand how my coffee was mixed with other producers' coffee and sold as a commodity. That made me sad, because my coffee was much higher quality than the others.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 20

BELOW: GERARDO ALARCÓN, GENERAL MANAGER OF SOL Y CAFÉ, AND COFFEE FARMER GERARDO GOICOCHEA WORK SIDE BY SIDE IN THE FIELD. CREDIT: EQUAL EXCHANGE





ABOVE: GERARDO WELCOMES EQUAL EXCHANGE STAFF AND CUSTOMERS TO HIS FARM. CREDIT: SOL Y CAFÉ

Thawing your Turkey



Refrigerator Thawing

When thawing a turkey in the refrigerator:

- Plan ahead: allow approximately 24 hours for each 4 to 5 pounds in a refrigerator set at 40° or below.
- Place the turkey in a container or on a tray to prevent the juices from making a mess/dripping onto other foods.

*A thawed turkey can remain in the refrigerator for 1 or 2 days before cooking. Foods thawed in the refrigerator can be refrozen without cooking but there may be some loss of quality.

Weight	Time to Thaw
8lbs	Two Days
12lbs	Three Days
16lbs	Four Days
20lbs	Five Days

Cold Water Thawing

When thawing a turkey in the cold water:

- Allow about 30 minutes per pound.
- Be sure your turkey is in a leak-proof plastic bag to prevent cross contamination and so the turkey doesn't absorb water.
- Submerge the wrapped turkey in cold tap water. Change the water every 30 minutes until your turkey is thawed.

*Cook your turkey immediately after it is thawed. DO NOT REFREEZE!

Weight	Time to Thaw
8lbs	Four Hours
12lbs	Six Hours
16lbs	Eight Hours
20lbs	Ten Hours

TURKEYS LAND NOV 2!

- Available on a first come, first served basis.
- No Holds

Ferndale



Each Ferndale Market turkey has been raised antibiotic-free and with room to roam on our family farms in Minnesota. Naturally processed with no additives, our frozen whole turkeys are the perfect tradition for your holiday meal and all year-round! Make sure to try them in the smoker, on the grill, and in the deep fryer!

- Antibiotic Free
- Free Range
- Naturally Processed
- No Aditives or Fillers
- Independent Family Farm

Mary's Organic



Mary's Certified Organic turkeys represent a higher standard of humane farming. These turkeys are free to access outdoors and are fed a premium diet made from organic certified feed. Raised with care, they are free from antibiotics, preservatives, and added hormones, ensuring a clean, natural choice for your holiday table or everyday meals. Choosing Mary's Organic Turkey means choosing a tradition of quality, sustainability, and authentic flavor that families have trusted for generations.

- No Preservatives
- Gluten-Free
- GAP Certified
- Certified Humane
- No Antibiotics Ever
- Fed a Organic Vegetarian Diet
- Fed No Animal By-Products
- No Added Hormones

Field Roast Celebration Roast



The Sage & Garlic Plant-Based Celebration Roast is seasoned to perfection and excellent for impressing your guests during special celebrations or inspiring your everyday meals. Enjoyed as a centerpiece, appetizer or sliced in a sandwich.

- Vegan
- Non GMO

2026 Impact Report

THE GOOD FOOD COLLECTIVE

Total raised in 2026 so far:

$17,366.46

LA PLATA FOOD EQUITY COALITION

WOW! We are beyond grateful and moved by how generous DNF members and shoppers have been this year. The donations that people have made at the cash register have created major ripple effects across our local food system, and we want to celebrate a few of them:

Did you know that in the 2026–2027 school year, school districts across Southwest Colorado have about $250,000 to buy food grown, raised, and processed right here in Colorado? The Good Food Collective has worked for years to support this state-wide effort, and now we're transitioning into implementation mode– meaning the money is finally here, what do we need to do to make sure local food procurement in schools is actually successful? For example, to receive this funding, school districts have to create an advisory committee made up of parents and students to provide direct input on menu planning–ensuring meals are healthy, culturally relevant, and genuinely appealing to students. Durango's dining staff are deeply committed to gathering student feedback and want this committee to be truly meaningful, but they don't have the time to design, build, and run it, so the Good Food Collective stepped in to help! We are honored to have the opportunity to help build a diverse, representative, and productive advisory committee that adds genuine value to cafeteria menu options.

Another standout success this year was our Roots of Health program in partnership with Mercy Hospital and CommonSpirit Health. This initiative connects hospital employees directly with local food through sliding-scale produce and meat shares—simultaneously tackling food insecurity, encouraging healthy habits, strengthening community ties, and boosting our regional agricultural economy. This season reached milestones we are so proud of:

- 190 employees enjoyed weekly vegetable CSAs from Beet Street Farm, Terra Sana Farm, and Homegrown Farm.
- 90 employees took part in our first-ever meat share pilot, receiving weekly rotations of locally raised beef, pork, and chicken from Big Ben's Meats and Jake's Farm.
- All participants received 1 lb. bags of regional Pueblo, black, and pinto beans sourced from Adobe Milling.
- Generated $262,629 in economic impact
- Reduced food insecurity rates by 8%

Next we want to talk about the vital role—and challenges—of independent grocery stores. If you're reading this, you already know why stores like DNF are critical to our communities and local economy. However, independent grocers are facing unprecedented pressure from big-box chains, slim profit margins, inflation, workforce shortages, and aging owners. Across the country and in Southwest Colorado, rural independent grocers are losing the fight and being forced to close their doors. That leads directly to food deserts, higher prices, and then















eventually the hollowing out of small towns. Because many store owners are seeking support, the GFC is partnering with local grocers, the Colorado Department of Agriculture, and the Southwest Small Business Development Center to survey independent grocery stores across Southwest Colorado. Our goal is to better understand their unique challenges and identify what resources need to be mobilized to help them stay open and thrive.

Your support also gave our food system a powerful voice in local policy and municipal planning. Recently, we joined forces with the newly formed Animas Business Coalition to influence the redevelopment of Durango's mostly abandoned mall. We are advocating for a project that builds lasting community wealth and public benefit—specifically for affordable space for food entrepreneurs and growing local businesses, shared commercial kitchens, a year-round indoor farmers market, and a central hub where local farmers and ranchers can store food bound for schools, restaurants, and grocers. In the months ahead, we will work with the coalition to facilitate community participation at City Council and County Commissioner meetings, publish Letters to the Editor, and leverage this rare opportunity to transform an underutilized property into a destination that reflects Durango's character, meets community needs, and creates lasting benefits for future generations.

All of these achievements tie directly into a unified vision: the newly launched La Plata County Food System Plan. Built on a full year of input from farmers, educators, tribal leaders, and residents, the plan offers a five-year roadmap to build a resilient, equitable, and sustainable food system that reflects the values and needs of our diverse communities. It is designed to align efforts across governments, organizations, businesses, and residents, reducing duplication and amplifying impact through shared vision and coordinated strategies. We are excited to share that the La Plata County Commissioners have already taken the first step to help implement some of the plan's priorities by appointing an official Food System Liaison to refine agricultural building codes and streamline city processes so local food entrepreneurs face fewer regulatory hurdles related to starting and growing their businesses.

Every single dollar you rounded up at the DNF registers fueled this systemic, interconnected work. Thank you for showing up for our farmers, students, food businesses, and our community. Together, we aren't just buying food–we are cultivating a thriving local food ecosystem!

-The Good Food Collective

Continue rounding up at Durango Natural Foods Co-op to help support the Good Food Collective through Dec. 31st

the DNF Deli SMOOTHIE EDITION



CHERRY BOMB SMOOTHIE

LOCAL PLANT PROTEIN

Our Cherry Bomb smoothie features local Sarvaa Organics Maha Chocolate Protein. It's a plant-based protein powder that has greens, probiotics, mushrooms, warming spices, and chilies. Sarvaa boasts this blend as being full of adaptogenic herbs and bioavailable nutrients; for us, we love the rich cacao flavor that it adds to smoothies, like our Cherry Bomb!

ADD SOME SPIRULINA

We use organic spirulina from Frontier Co-op. Spirulina, or cyanobacteria, is blue-green algae; it's said to be filled with antioxidants and anti-inflammatory properties. The powder is a deep green color, which really shows off in blended drinks (and sometimes stains our fridge!). It comes in our Mean Green smoothie, but can be added to any smoothie you'd like!



MEAN GREEN SMOOTHIE



what's in a smoothie?

ORGANIC INGREDIENTS

Our smoothie bar has nearly 100% organic ingredients! As with the ethos of our whole store, we make exceptions within our organic focus for some local ingredients. Reducing food miles and keeping our dollars local is just as important to us as organic. For example, our Sarvaa Organics protein powder is the only thing on our smoothie bar that's not Certified Organic! Sarvaa products are made in Durango with organic ingredients, but the product itself is not certified organic. That's still pretty great, and something we're happy to carry in the Deli!



PINEAPPLE EXPRESS SMOOTHIE

BUILD YOUR OWN

As with our lunch menu, you can also get your smoothie made-to-order! You can choose from our fruits, protein powders, boosts, and fun add-ins (like cacao nibs and chia seeds) to make whatever you're craving. Over the winter, be on the lookout for new arrivals to our BYO-Smoothie Menu!



IN THIS COFFEE-GROWING COMMUNITY IN THE REMOTE MOUNTAINS OF PERU, SOL Y CAFÉ HAS HELPED CREATE BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY SPACES AND SERVICES.
CREDIT: EQUAL EXCHANGE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13...

I realized then that we needed a better way.

After that, the Cáritas project ended. We had been very successful, and we continued with that success. While many farmers in the area were getting 14-15 quintales [1,680–1,800lb] of coffee per hectare, we had farms in the program that got up to 23 quintales [2,760lb].

What to do with all that coffee became a problem. We needed buyers who valued the high quality of our bean, and we needed an efficient way to get it to market. The cooperative came out of this need.

At first, we debated whether to become a cooperative or an association, and in 2008 we chose a cooperative—Sol & Café ["Sol" has a double meaning: "Sun," but also "Solidaridad."] I was called to become part of the board, and ultimately elected president.

At the beginning, I worked as a technician for the co-op, helping other farmers with their growing techniques. This position paid a salary, and in this way I was able to make money so my siblings could study and pursue livelihoods of their own.

Megan: How many members does the co-op have?

Gerardo: We started with 950. We now have 1,091.

Megan: What difference has the co-op made to your family—and the other members' families—compared to the way it was before 2008?

Gerardo: The difference is in both the social and business aspects of the cooperative. We are family, and we work as a team. If we have an objective or goal, we all pull in that direction.

It's created a safe place for our farmers. We're not alone anymore, and we don't need to look for opportunities elsewhere, which can represent a danger—as our experience with the debt collector showed.

We trust in each other, that no one will take advantage of us, and we feel safe.

It's not something to be taken for granted. I've found that I need to remind members of these values and benefits all the time in the cooperative meetings. Especially now, when coffee prices are very high, it can be tempting for members to look outside the co-op for short-term gain. But we need to think in the longer term, and in that, we're much better together in the cooperative.

Megan: Sol & Café became Fairtrade Certified in 2010. How has that affected your livelihood?

Gerardo: The fair trade premiums have contributed greatly to the management and development of the cooperative. Honestly, without them we wouldn't be talking right now. I consider myself a result of fair trade.

Megan: What sorts of things have been made possible by the fair trade premiums?

Gerardo: We decide together how to use the premium money. Some of it goes into the co-op's financial reserves, and some toward technical support so we can continue growing high-quality coffee in the face of climate change and other challenges.

We realized that if we want to have good results and

CONCLUDES ON NEXT PAGE



ABOVE: THE CO-OP'S VISION AND INVESTMENT HAVE HELPED CREATE DENTAL SERVICES FOR ITS MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES.
CREDIT: EQUAL EXCHANGE



BOTTOM RIGHT: STUDENTS ENGAGE IN A FULL CURRICULUM, INCLUDING MUSIC, AT THE ONLY CO-OP SCHOOL IN PERU. SOL Y CAFÉ INVESTS IN MUSIC AND DANCE AS A WAY FOR CHILDREN TO EXPERIENCE COOPERATION FROM AN EARLY AGE, LEARNING TO WORK TOGETHER THROUGH THE ARTS. CREDIT: EQUAL EXCHANGE

production, we need healthy members, so we used premium money to fund a health center and preventative health program. No one wants to lose a family member, and now we have a means to identify illnesses and save lives.

We've also funded a school—the only co-op school in the country. In fact, just earlier today, I went there to see the children's science experiments.

Megan: What is your farm like now? How many people do you currently support?

Gerardo: There are four of us here—my wife, daughter, and my mom. My son is at university in Jaén. My sister is a professional who works for the government, and one of my brothers works with orchids.



GERARDO'S FRESHLY-HARVESTED COFFEE READY FOR SORTING
CREDIT: EQUAL EXCHANGE.

We have fourteen hectares that we work together as a family. Some is in coffee, and some is in conservation, which is very important to me. I gave my last salary from my paid work with the cooperative to my mom, and she bought cows. I also own five hectares myself, three of which are in coffee. My father died 8 years ago, and I'm very proud to have the family together like this.

Megan: Is there something you wish that the people who drink your coffee in the United States knew about you or the coffee you grow? If you could speak to them, what would you say?

Gerardo: I would ask them to drink the coffee with responsibility, solidarity, sustainability, and trust. I'd like them to not only remember me, the coffee farmer, but to think of the next generation.

So there you have it.

Gerardo's story is unique, of course, but it's a beautiful illustration of what can happen when the cooperative movement and the fair trade movement combine. The cooperative provides the structure—the foundation and connection between farmers—which is then nourished by the fair trade premiums.

The results are nothing short of transformational as farmers like Gerardo are empowered to disrupt the cycle of generational poverty and create a new future for their families and communities.

Kids are able to go to school. Life-saving healthcare becomes accessible.

Farmers are able to think in the long term—about creating a sustainable agricultural system that future generations can inherit—rather than just short-term survival.

I was particularly struck by Gerardo's statement that members feel "safe" within the co-op, and how they were no longer alone.

In the face of so much uncertainty, with climate change and a wildly fluctuating global coffee market, this safety and solidarity means everything—for Gerardo, for his family, his community, and for all of us who connect with him through the coffee he grows.

The next time you brew your cooperatively grown fair trade coffee or tea, or break into a delicious fair trade chocolate bar, be sure to think of Gerardo, and do it with responsibility, solidarity, sustainability, and trust.



GERARDO WITH HIS WIFE MARGARITA AND DAUGHTER SOL.
CREDIT: EQUAL EXCHANGE

Many thanks to Equal Exchange for facilitating this conversation.

While the exact makeup of Equal Exchange's coffee blends changes with each harvest and season, Sol & Café's coffee may be found in Organic Peru Medium Roast, Organic Breakfast Blend (both the original and Dark Roasts), Organic Love Buzz, Organic Espresso, and the Organic Peru Light Roast that is part of the new Co-op Origins Series 12oz product line. *Not all blends available at Durango Natural Foods Co-op

CRAN-MAPLE SLAW

TOTAL TIME: 20 MINUTES | SERVINGS: 4-6



INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 BUNCH DINO KALE
- 8 LARGE BRUSSELS SPROUTS
- 3 CUPS SHREDDED RED CABBAGE
- 1 MEDIUM CARROT, SHREDDED
- 1/4 CUP OLIVE OIL
- 1/4 CUP BALSAMIC VINEGAR
- 2 TABLESPOONS MAPLE SYRUP
- 1/2 TEASPOON SALT
- 1/2 TEASPOON BLACK PEPPER
- 3/4 CUP DRIED CRANBERRIES

PREPARATION

TEAR THE LEAVES OF THE KALE AWAY FROM THE STEMS. ROLL UP THE STACKED LEAVES, AND SLICE THINLY CROSSWISE. SLICE BRUSSELS SPROUTS CROSSWISE THINLY. SLICE RED CABBAGE IN HALF, AND THEN CUT CROSSWISE INTO THIN SLICES TO MAKE THREE CUPS. SHRED THE CARROT, AND COMBINE ALL THE VEGGIES IN A LARGE BOWL.

IN A CUP, COMBINE THE OLIVE OIL, VINEGAR, MAPLE SYRUP, SALT AND PEPPER. WHISK TOGETHER, THEN POUR OVER THE VEGGIES. ADD THE DRIED CRANBERRIES, AND TOSS TO MIX.



$4.99/LB



$2.29/LB



$11.49/16OZ



$4.49/4OZ

CHORIZO CORNBREAD STUFFING

TOTAL TIME: 40 MINUTES | SERVINGS: 4



INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 CUP GROUND CHORIZO
- 1 LARGE ONION, CHOPPED
- 1 RIB CELERY, CHOPPED
- 1 SMALL GREEN PEPPER, CHOPPED
- 1 LARGE CARROT
- 3 CUPS CUBED CORNBREAD
- 1 CUP CHICKEN BROTH
- 1/2 TEASPOON SALT
- 1/2 TEASPOON PEPPER

PREPARATION

PREHEAT THE OVEN TO 375 F, AND LIGHTLY OIL A SMALL CASSEROLE OR BAKING PAN.

PLACE A LARGE SKILLET OVER MEDIUM HEAT, THEN CRUMBLE THE CHORIZO INTO THE PAN, STIRRING AND BREAKING INTO PIECES AS YOU COOK UNTIL BROWNED. POUR OFF ANY EXCESS FAT. ADD ONION, CELERY, GREEN PEPPER AND CARROT AND STIR FOR FIVE MINUTES. STIR IN THE CHICKEN BROTH.

TURN OFF THE HEAT, ADD CORNBREAD, SALT AND PEPPER, AND FOLD TO MIX. SPREAD IN PREPARED PAN AND BAKE FOR 20 MINUTES. WHEN THE TOP IS LIGHTLY BROWNED, COOL ON A RACK BRIEFLY BEFORE SERVING HOT.

FIELD DAY
CHICKEN BROTH
$2.49/32OZ

DNF PRODUCE
GREEN PEPPERS
$4.49/LB

GOSAR
GROUD CHORIZO
$8.99/LB

FIELD DAY
CORNBREAD MIX
$3.99/14OZ

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NOV 4 - NOV 17, 2026



4.99

Field Day Organic Walnuts Halves & Pieces
7 oz.



2/$3

Field Day Organic Cut Green Beans
14.5 oz.



2/$5

Field Day Organic Gravy
12 oz., selected varieties



2/$4

Field Day Organic Broths
32 fl. oz., selected varieties



5.99

Field Day Organic All-purpose Flour
5 lbs.



2/$7

Field Day Organic Saigon Cinnamon
1.5 oz.



2/$5

Field Day Organic Pasta Sauces
24 oz.



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