

UNICORN

manchester's co-operative grocery

Foodzine, Winter 2009

Printed at Marc
the Printers
on recycled
paper



Winter is upon us and the fields are flooded but as mentioned in the seasonal update below, the climate so far has been good for growing and we have an excellent range of UK produce. While our veg team work hard to deliver the best range of local produce around we have remained, as always, competitive on price. Those of you who shop at Unicorn regularly would

have seen the price comparisons we have been doing every couple of weeks on our fresh produce. A recent price comparison is on the back and shows that our prices compare extremely well to Supermarkets organic & non-organic. Buying seasonal produce always means you get the freshest, most affordable fruit & veg - check the blackboard in Unicorn's porch for our weekly

seasonal update. We have a couple of events mentioned on the back you may be interested in and some info on the ever expanding 'deli to go' range, very popular with all of us at lunch time. Remember to check out our website for recipes, info on how we work as a co-operative and prices for many of our 3,500 lines.

Local Growers, reducing the gap between field & fork

With our fruit & veg, we aim to be like an urban farm shop, supplied by a range of local growers as close to the shop as possible. This makes for fresher, tastier and better value produce. It's been a great year for local produce as we have taken on two new suppliers:

Stockley Farm (21 miles away), in between Northwich and Warrington, well known for its open farm. They also have around 20 acres where they grow organic vegetables like potatoes, cabbages, cauliflowers and sprouts.

Chris Hewitt at Dunham Massey (8 miles away) is another new supplier this year. Farming on National Trust land, he has a great range of produce including curly kale, Savoys, orange pumpkins and sprouts.



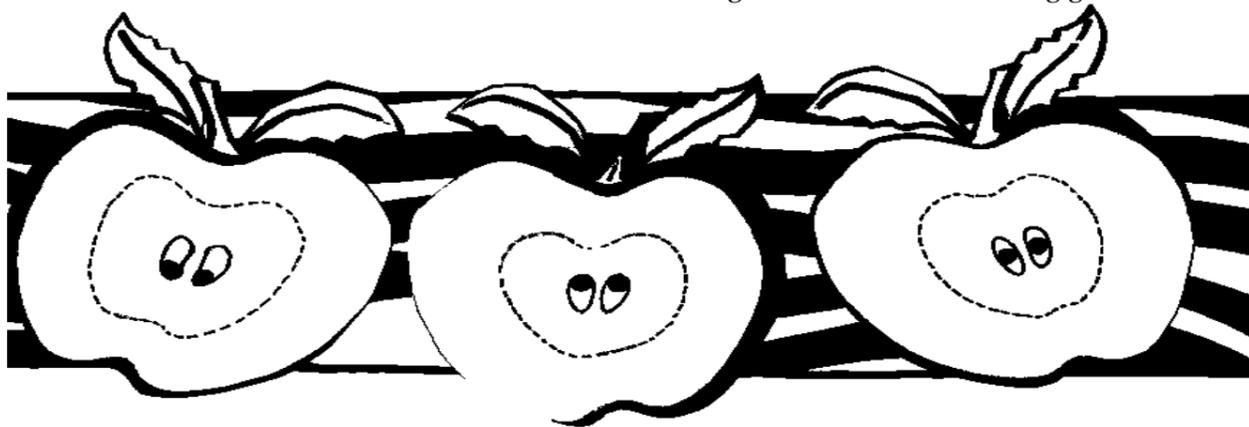
**Rob & Dan planting leeks at
Glazebury, 14 miles from Unicorn**

Meanwhile, our closest supplier continues to be Glebelands City Growers in Sale (2 miles from Unicorn). Over autumn & winter they will produce kale, herbs and mixed salad leaves (often with 6 or more different types of leaf).

Tom Rigby is another local grower at Lowton, near Warrington (18 miles away), specialising in potatoes - look out for his Arran Victory, some of the best roasting spuds around.

Next year we hope to add to this list with produce from our own farm. In September 2008 we bought 21 acres of agricultural land near Leigh (14 miles away). There's still a lot of work to be done - putting in essential infrastructure, choosing tenants - but it's looking good so far.

Seasonal Update



Autumn and early winter is a great time to be eating seasonal UK produce. Although some of the summer crops are gone (lettuce, strawberries etc.), this is peak season for lots of hearty warming roots & greens. There are some great flavours to explore (e.g. celeriac, rainbow chard, kale) as well as good value staples like carrots & potatoes.

And finally, after two wet years, it's been great growing weather for most of the season, so supply is strong. We have more local growers than ever (see below) and, because we buy direct from the farm (with crops often on sale the same day as being picked), this makes our range as fresh and affordable as can be.

On fruit, we'll continue to have a wide range of UK apples & pears. So far we have sold around 20 different varieties of English apples, from Ashmead Kernel to Worcester Pearmain, Lord Lambourne to Laxton Fortune, Gala to Fiesta.

We're entering the European citrus season too, with most of our supply coming direct from Sicily. Navel oranges, clementines and grapefruits are already with us; blood oranges, mandarins and Seville oranges just starting.

Other seasonal highlights include Jerusalem artichokes, January King cabbages, and cavolo nero. From abroad: Spanish pomegranates, sweet potatoes, avocados, Italian kiwis and French chestnuts.

Unicorn Grocery, 89 Albany Road, Chorlton, Manchester, M21 0BN.
www.unicorn-grocery.co.uk

Deli To Go

Unicorn is always evolving, and some of the most obvious progress in the shop over this year has been made at the deli counter. We started making our own sandwiches a couple of years back, and encouraged by their success, moved onto fresh salads and meals. From quinoa salad and peanut & tofu noodles to dhal, our fresh food is tasty, nutritious and very good value. The deli range is made with organic Unicorn veg every morning so there are new choices every day.

Hot soup made its first appearance this year - making the best of seasonal, organic ingredients and showing what can be done with some of our more unusual vegetables, as well as the old favourites. 'Kettle of Greens' anyone? Our soup's gone down so well we've now launched a range of fresh Unicorn soups tubbed up to go. And there's more. This year saw the launch of our fantastically popular Spanish tortilla and the 'too good to be tofu' cheesecakes. Peanut butter & chocolate and lemon & coconut have proved the winners there.



Nina doing a soup making demonstration during the Food & Drink Festival

We think this is the way to go - cutting down on food miles by making food on site with ingredients we source ourselves, and making the most of our own skills in the kitchen! The demand has been very high since we started our 'deli to go' range and we're really keen for feedback on all our fresh food - including suggestions for dishes you'd like us to try.

Tree O'Clock at our Glazebury land

With the season of short days and cold nights upon us new activities and challenges present themselves at Unicorn's land out at Glazebury. It's tree planting season and we are planting a hedge all the way around the 21 acres - more pricey than putting up a fence but the benefits are worth it. Hedgerows are an important and attractive part of the countryside, providing a very important habitat for a wide range of species and often linking together different areas of habitat.

We are taking part in BBC Breathing Spaces world tree planting record on Saturday

December 5th and we need your help! We need as many people as possible to help plant between 11 am and 12 noon - plantings will be happening all over the country and hopefully our combined efforts will get us into the Guinness Book of Records. You will also get to see our land and the leeks we are growing for sale in the shop next year.

Please sign up in the shop as there are very limited places - and check out our website and shop blackboard for details of transport and location nearer the time.

www.bbc.co.uk/breathingplaces/treeoclock

'Meet the Producers' Wed Dec 2nd 7.30 - 9.30pm

We like to connect our customers with the food they eat, so on Wednesday December 2nd we are having a 'Meet the Producers' evening, where you can have a chat with some of the growers, bakers, brewers and other producers who supply your weekly groceries. From Little Valley Brewery in Todmorden to the new Glebelands City Growers team just down the road in Sale, a varied bunch of 12 or so of our producers will be bringing their samples and stories here to the shop. We'll also be providing materials to make Christmas hampers from the produce you try, perfect for Christmas presents because everyone has to eat!

As well as producers, the director of one of the overseas projects we support is in England just at the right time to come along to this event. Karen Inwood, director of the El Salvador Permaculture Network will be telling us more about their work with a growing network of subsistence farmers using ecological farming methods, in some of the most impoverished communities in El Salvador.

This event has a limited number of places so please come into the shop and get a ticket now! Tickets are £2 but this is redeemable against purchases made on the night (tills will be open until 9pm). Mulled wine and nibbles will be served. Please arrive promptly at 7.30 for brief presentations from Karen and the producers.

As part of our 1% & 4% funds (see our Principles of Purpose available in the shop) we support a variety of groups locally and globally

An important part of Unicorn's founding Principles is our commitment to contribute a sum equal to 5% of our annual wage bill, presently around £25,000 a year (& just so you know this doesn't mean we get big wages, there are 45 of us here) to projects both here and in the global south, that "share our vision of community and society".

This year we've been able to support some fantastic UK projects. They've ranged from *Abundance Manchester*, who harvest fruit and veg that would otherwise have been wasted from gardens, parks and allotments, and distributes it to groups that can use it, to *Climate Camp*, which brings individuals together from all over the country to take urgent action on Climate Change. We were able to help with publicity costs for *Soundbites*, a co-operative grocery in Derby quite like ours, and the running costs for Chorlton's fab, first ever *Green Festival*.

Further from home, we were really pleased to make a second donation to the *Permaculture Network of El Salvador*, which works with a growing network of subsistence farmers to develop ecological farming methods that are passed from farmer to farmer. The director of the project is speaking at our 'Meet the Producers' evening on December 2nd - see the article above. We also made contact with a project in Haiti using a 'beyond fairtrade' model - our donation took the *Just Haiti* fund up to their target amount, enabling them to provide a revolving loan fund for farmers to develop their organic, shade-grown coffee business.

For more of the projects we've assisted this year, please see the project support page of our website - <http://www.unicorn-grocery.co.uk/projectsupport.php>

UNICORN PRICE CHECK

Prices (per kg) taken 3rd nov 09 comparing Unicorn organic produce with organic (where available) and non organic at Morrisons.

Produce	Morrisons Non-organic	Origin	Morrisons Organic	Origin	Unicorn All Organic	Origin
Potatoes	46p	UK	99p	UK	64p	Cheshire,
Baking Potatoes	79p	UK	None Available		64p	Lincs & Yorks
Onions	74p	UK	£1.34	UK	86p	Norfolk
Red Onions	98p	UK	£2	Egypt	£1.08	Yorks
Purple Sprouting Broccoli	£7.95	Lincs	None Available		£4.16	Yorks
Turnips	£1.39	Portugal	None Available		99p	Yorks
Parsnips	£2	Notts	None Available		£1.62	Norfolk
Squash	£1.90	Notts	None Available		£1.74	Lincs & Lancs
Vine Tomatoes	£3.75	UK	None Available		£3.06	Lancs
Lemons	28p each	Unknown	None Available		15p each	Sicily
Grapefruit	49p each	South Africa	None Available		59p each	Spain
Plums	£4.99	Spain	None Available		£2.62	Spain