

### October is the Month !



October just happens to be National Cooperative Month, Fair Trade Month, Anti-GMO Month and host to Howard Bower's day on October 22 and October 16 is World Food Day.

"Cooperative enterprises build a better world" is the theme for October. Why, because cooperatives are owned and democratically controlled by their member owners not outside investors. As an entity, cooperatives are motivated by service, not profits, and when surplus revenues occur, these are returned to the owners. Some examples of cooperatives large and small include the Alvarado Street Bakery in San Francisco, Port Clyde Fresh Catch in Maine, ACE Hardware, and all Credit Unions.

Howard Bowers was a Cooperative Grocery activist who was General Manager of the Hyde Park Co-op in Chicago for many years. He was instrumental in helping build cooperative ventures throughout the midwest as well as being very involved in community civic organizations. He passed away in 1991. The Howard Bowers fund promotes and develops consumer-owned food cooperatives and consumer education, and to encourage people to pursue careers in cooperative management. The fund gives grants and scholarships to pursue these objectives, and has given out over \$250,000 since being established in 1993.

The core idea behind Fair Trade is to develop a world in which justice and sustainable development are at the heart of trade structures and practices so that everyone, through their work, can maintain a decent and dignified livelihood and develop their full potential.

Finally, October is anti-GMO month, with efforts to raise awareness that genetically engineered foods designed with insecticides and herbicides in them are not healthy for humans. Dave Murphy's article which is included in this newsletter highlights the issues we face with corporate control of agriculture. Certainly a Monsanto patent on most grains and vegetables is not a future situation we want to face.



## Fiddleheads is Growing !

The future is here today for Fiddleheads, ready or not. With the purchase of much of the display and shelving equipment from the former Puritan and Genesta natural food market in in Mystic, Fiddleheads is already changing product locations and store layout. Produce is moving up to the front of the store, health and beauty aid shelving is going to be on the same side as the produce, with dairy products in the coolers to the rear and a six door frozen food units where the produce cooler was. The new frozen unit will contain meat products, while the other becomes frozen deserts, vegetables, bread, and vegan products. A loan from the City of New London will help repair the front door and put an awning over the front windows in the grand tradition of old time stores. Just keep in mind that with the exception of part-time Shift Coordinators Sheila Herbert and Lacy Dunn, and Produce Coordinator Steve Marchi, all help in Fiddleheads is from unpaid volunteers! Below are volunteers who showed up to move the contents of the store display refrigerators and freezer into the walk-ins in preparation for Hurricane Irene. Fortunately power stayed on in the store during the storm and its aftermath.



## **Politics, Farmers and Change: The End of Rural America** **by Dave Murphy, Founder of Food Democracy Now**

posted in the [Huffington Post](#) On 8/17/11

This week President Obama returned to Iowa, where he launched his successful bid to the White House, to speak about "jobs and economic security" in rural America. According to the White House, his bus tour is not a campaign trip, but veteran political observers would disagree. For farmers and rural advocates this tour is really about something much larger than electioneering or a new jobs program, it's about the survival of rural America.

While the plight of urban decay has been widely publicized in the mainstream press, similar issues facing our country cousins (myself included), lack of well paying jobs, rural brain drain, food deserts, poverty and lack of access to quality health care, have either been ignored or largely misunderstood by policy makers and the press. Today, more rural Americans are on food stamps and face bleaker economic prospects than their urban counterparts, despite the romantic image of small town life often portrayed by the media.

For the past 50 years, rural America has seen it's best, brightest and most mobile flee the countryside in search of jobs as federal farm, economic and trade policies have slowly bled family farmers off the land. Since 1960, when John F. Kennedy was elected, America has lost over 1.7 million family farms, the backbone of rural economies, with the number of farmers in the U.S. today being outnumbered by prisoners.

Despite increases in farm productivity and improved planting and harvesting equipment, more insidious economic factors like increased industry consolidation, poorly designed subsidy programs and over specialization in industrial livestock production, with poor contract protections, have hallowed out the countryside. Instead of prosperity, industrial agriculture has created vast profits for corporations at the top of the food chain, but left a growing number of rural America's Main Streets to resemble ghost towns and its residents poorly prepared or able to meet the nation's important challenges for the 21st century.

While many people in urban areas have never met a farmer or someone who produced the food that appears on their plate each day, despite a growing national awareness of food and agriculture issues, most Main Street businesses in rural America realize that their livelihood and very survival are tied to the economic wellbeing of the local farm economy.

And if you want to save rural America, you have to save the family farmer.

## **Obama's Rural Agenda, circa 2007**

Since the president's Rural Tour is about creating jobs and economic opportunity for rural America, it might help to start out with a refresher of what President Obama promised the first time he toured the state, which helped him on his road to unexpected victory during the When Obama first ran for president in Iowa, he cultivated a serious grassroots reform platform in agriculture that included:

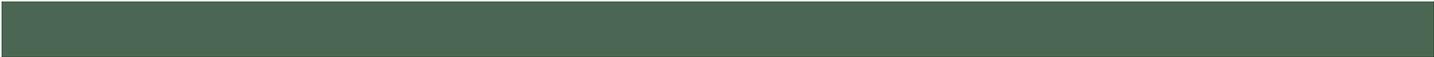
- Caps on subsidy payments
- Regulating CAFOs (factory farms)
- Encouraging local and organic agriculture and
- "Preventing anticompetitive behavior against family farms".

That last one was important. I remember receiving an advanced copy of Obama's Rural Agenda before it was released in October 2007 and reading those words and thinking we finally have a candidate who understands rural issues and is willing to do something about it.

In the past 30 years, since Ronald Reagan took office, the U.S. government has stopped enforcing antitrust laws, while recklessly encouraging an orgy of corporate mergers. During this time, food and agriculture production has become one of the most concentrated sectors in the U.S. economy. General economic theory states that when 4 or less companies control more than 40% of market share that industry is no longer competitive, competitiveness being the lifeblood of capitalism, innovation and democracies. Today just [4 companies control](#) 84% of the beef packing industry, 66% of the pork packing industry and just one company, Monsanto, controls genetically engineered seeds for corn, cotton, soybeans and canola on more than 90% of the acres that are planted with GMO seeds. Such excessive market concentration has given corporations an increased stranglehold on supply, shrinking both profits and markets for family farmers. Since 1952 farmers have seen their share of the food dollar that they receive shrink from 47¢ on every dollar spent on food to [barely 20¢](#).

### **Antitrust Investigation to Nowhere?**

To his credit, President Obama and his staff listened to the plight of family farmers when he caucused in Iowa. As a result, last year the Obama administration launched a series of workshops to investigate anti-competitive practices in food and agriculture. These workshops were potentially so historic that I felt compelled to travel



across the country to all 5 of them in hopes of witnessing the dawn of a new era in agriculture, when our government would finally stand up for family farmers instead of promoting agribusiness profits.

Regretfully, the Department of Justice has so far refused to issue a report or take any meaningful actions against the largest violators.

Even worse for farmers was the news last month that DOJ antitrust chief Christine Varney was leaving the administration without finishing the job to join a white glove law firm in New York. For many farmers, who have endured the corrupt practices of agribusiness for decades, Varney was seen as the last best hope of freeing farmers from an unfair system that has driven hundreds of thousands livestock farmers out of business and shackled them with [abusive contracts](#).

In December of last year I traveled to Washington DC to deliver more than 200,000 comments from farmers, citizens and Food Democracy Now! members in a private meeting with Christine Varney and other DOJ and USDA staff to explain the urgent need for antitrust enforcement. As always, Varney was committed in her personal statements, but did let it slip that others who were part of the investigations were potentially opposition. With Varney leaving, family farmers and rural America may never get the justice they deserve.

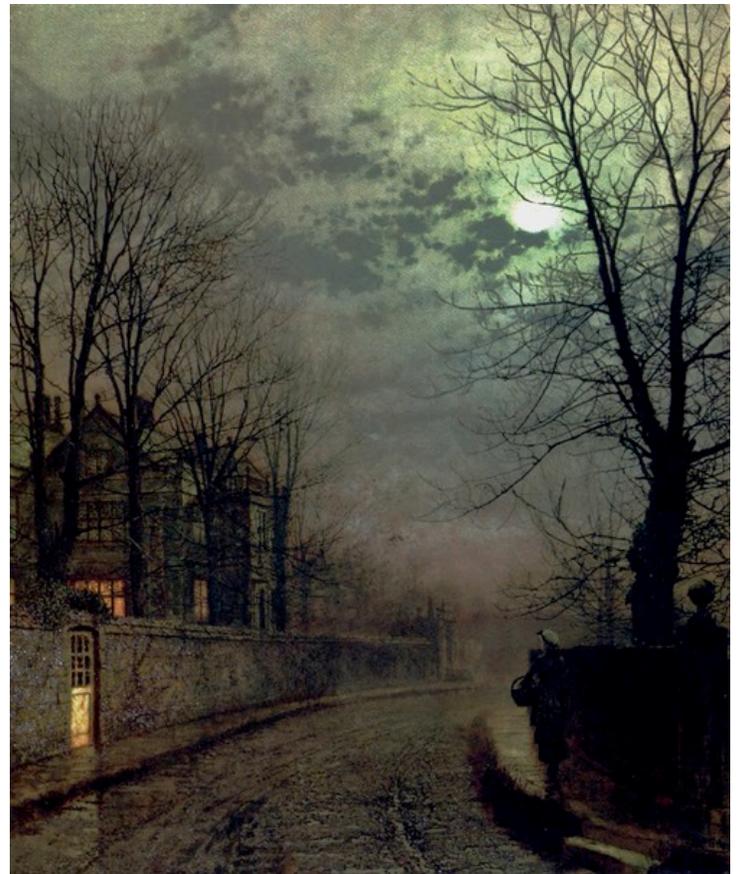
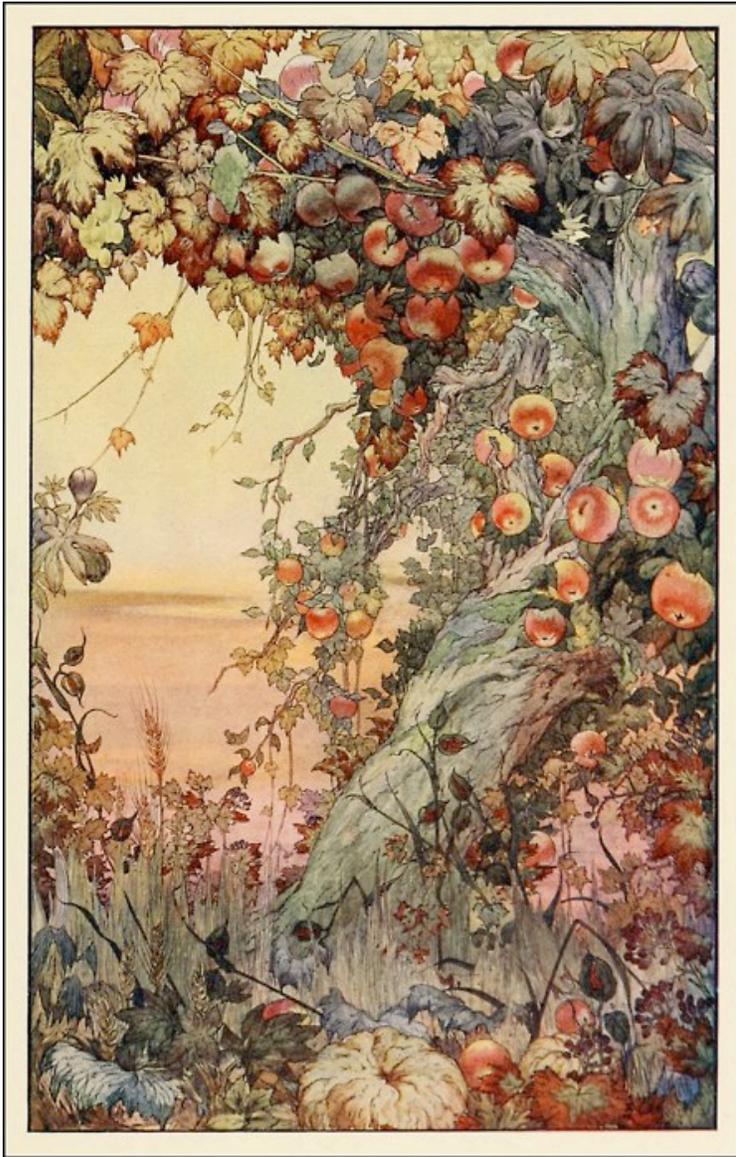
### **Hope for Rural America?**

Even now an important decision waits on the president's desk that will have more to do with creating jobs and economic security for rural America than any bus tour or another White House briefing paper on jobs.

During the 2008 Farm Bill, Congress required the USDA to write rules that addressed problems of market manipulation and unfair contracts to protect livestock farmers. Known as GISPA, for the USDA agency that oversees their enforcement, Grain Inspectors, and Packers and Stockyard Administration (GIPSA), the new rules would create a fair marketplace for farmers to sell their livestock without fear of retaliation, require packers to maintain written records over price deviations and prevent undue preferences.

More than anything, the completion of the DOJ/USDA antitrust investigations, with significant enforcement actions, and the finalizing of strong GISPA rules will determine the fate of the family farmer and rural America for the century to come. If President Obama truly wants to create jobs and economic security for rural economies and see farmers thrive, he'll follow through on the promises he already made to Iowans and make sure that farmers have the access to fair markets that they deserve.

In reality, the best way to create jobs is by saving the ones that you already have. The same is true about keeping farmers on the land. The equation for success in rural America has never changed, make sure farmers receive a fair price in the marketplace and the wealth will spread, our communities will prosper and our nation will flourish. After a century of listening to false promises by DC politicians, rural America is paying closer attention to what these folks do once they're elected, versus what they say on the campaign trail. And it's time that Washington got down to the business of putting farmers first, after all their jobs just might depend on it.





Bara-Hack  
Farmers Market  
Set for 10/31/11  
One Night Only  
Special Opening

Bio-decay, post-organic Farm owners Vlad and Lilith Ghoulette will be opening their farm market specializing in jack-o-lanterns, uncured bat bacon, and raw spider milk along with their artisan blackcheese "Widow's Shriek" for one night at their very large scenic yet total ruin of a farm house at long alledged to be haunted ghost town of Bara-Hack near Pomfret Ct.



Just take a left at the marker of Mr. Jack O' Greenglow (left photo) and drive down Spook Woods Road until you hear moans and howls and see shadowy figures fliting about. The Ghoulette's weirdogs will come and greet you and lead you into the market. Bring your own shopping shroud. Shovels, pitchforks, torches and EMF readers are optional.



**Please be aware this is fictional, although Bara-Hack is a real reputedly haunted former community, now reverted back to woodland, in Connecticut - you can google it. Observers have even reported ghost cows and horses there.**

The Fiddleheads Board of Directors are:

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**Ed DeMuzzio - Treasurer**

**Lisa Cygan - Director**

**William Hossack - Director**

**Ned Ruete - Director**

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**Jim Stidfole - Director**

**Susan Zimmerman - Director**

**Jamie Lee - Recording Secretary**

**Newsletter Editor:**

**Allen Longendyke**

**Store Photos:**

**Sheila Herbert**



## **Fiddleheads Saturday Winter Farmers Market will return November 5th.**

Vendors will include: Lazizah, Maria's Kountry Kitchen, Bread & Cookies, Farm to Hearth Bakery, Philomel Gardens, 18th Century Purity Farm, Monnerat Artisian Truffles, Olive & Oud, and Keifer's Kettle Korn.

Music will include: Celtic Ceol, Dan Spurr & Liz Larson, and Noah Feldman and Nathaniel Ross.