

# Farmer Jack Sez

**You Are What You Eat**

Fifth Estate Collective

1971

Worried about the drug problem? How about the chemical problem? Do you know how many you had for lunch?

Considering the amount of preservatives added to keep foods on the shelf longer (calcium silicate, propyl galate, propylenglycol), the amount of fillers (like water and cereals) used to pad the contents and boost profits, and the process themselves, food becomes a very important problem. In a profit-oriented society the quality of food and its usefulness to the body become secondary to its salability.

Part of the struggle we're involved in is the need to control our own lives. Where do you begin? The people involved in the Open City Food Co-op believe an important place to start is a basic part of life—the food you eat. They point out that people must become aware of the importance of eating food that is good, instead of the chemically preserved pseudo-foods available at your local chain store, which is not only nutritionally negative, but often ridiculously expensive too.

The store that houses the Co-op (4551 Third near Prentis in the WSU campus area) carries natural (organically grown) grains, beans, nuts, figs, real peanut butter (as compared to the chemical conglomeration sold in stores) and all sorts of good stuff. It's open every day, Tuesday through Saturday. Food bags containing vegetables, fruits, eggs and cheese are sold on Saturdays. Recipes are available to teach people how to deal with the “real thing.” People are told how much the food actually costs, how much the mark-up is and what the money is being used for. It really says something to people when they learn there is a place where they can pick up approximately \$7 worth of food for \$3. Education through practice.

Carlson Tuttle of the Food Co-op believes they have accomplished some very important things: They have helped destroy the image of food as a commodity, and have returned it to the reality of peoples lives. Dealing with real foods, free from preservatives and not processed to death, gets people into actually cooking. Foods available from the Co-op make it possible to be creative with what you eat and how you eat it—a sensual experience instead of a dry ritual. People become aware of what they are eating and they begin to enjoy their food, instead of just eating to fill their stomachs.

The Co-op, too, is not just some place you go to occasionally where salespeople provide you with merchandise. People involved in the Co-op buy and work there as well. Not only does food take on a new reality, but the means by which you come by the food develops new understandings of working with brothers and sisters to meet basic needs ourselves.

The Co-op doesn't plan on stopping where it is either. They have plans for a much larger store which will make more food available and a (cheap) restaurant. The possibilities opened to a cooperative effort are endless, and groups like the Open City Food Co-op are only the beginning of a true, alternative culture.

# fifth Estate

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