

**Show Transcript
Deconstructing Dinner
Kootenay Co-op Radio CJLY
Nelson, B.C. Canada**

October 11, 2007

Title: The Eat Local Challenge

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JON STEINMAN: You're tuned in to Deconstructing Dinner, produced in the studios of Kootenay Co-op Radio CJLY in Nelson, British Columbia. Deconstructing Dinner is heard weekly on stations around the world and is available as a podcast. I'm Jon Steinman, your host for the next hour.

Today's broadcast is titled, The Eat Local Challenge. As has become an innovative way to experience the joy and difficulties of eating local food, many communities are challenging their people to eat more locally or better yet, entirely local for a specified period of time. In September 2007, the city of Vancouver proclaimed the month as eat local month, the city of Hamilton Ontario has launched an eat local project, and here in the city of Nelson, our own eat local challenge took place in the month of August with 150 people pledging to commit to eating more locally, and many local businesses taking it upon themselves to provide their customers with more local options.

On today's broadcast we will hear segments from a conversation I facilitated with seven of those who pledged to take the challenge in Nelson, and we'll hear how they managed such an undertaking, what they learned from the experience, and whether or not they gave up. Also on the show we will hear a few short segments from a recent visit to Nelson by authors Alisa Smith and James MacKinnon of the bestselling title, "The 100-Mile Diet." Both of them have been featured here on the program before as they are the most well known examples of taking upon an eat local challenge. A few interesting comments came out of that event, and we'll take a quick listen to those.

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Before we launch into today's feature on Nelson's Eat Local Challenge, I will for just a few moments share a very interesting interaction that took place between myself, a friend and a random individual sitting a few stools down from where we were enjoying a few pints of local organic beer. Now this took place at one of our local bars here in town, and it was only a few nights ago on a weekday, with no more than a dozen others in the bar. So there I was sitting at the bar catching up with an old friend, and sitting just down from us, just a few stools away, was a lone visitor to town enjoying a few drinks. On a few occasions this man engaged himself in our conversation, but for the most part was amusing himself in conversation with the bartender and others at the bar. After a couple of pints, I asked the bartender to serve my friend and I two glasses of port, and this request, caught the attention of this man sitting just a few stools away. And he commented on how we were both very unlikely candidates to be drinking port, which I'm assuming is because port is often seen as a posh drink and I can assure you my friend

and I looked far from being posh (and I hope my friend doesn't take exception to that). But he was impressed at our ability to appreciate good flavours and he began telling us of his favourite blackberry port that comes from a winery on Vancouver Island, where he happens to call home. And it was this, by no instigating by either myself or my friend, that led this man into a roughly 30-minute speech on the importance of eating locally and supporting local farmers/producers and local economies. And he was good, he knew everything that anyone should know, about the benefits of local food, and he was doing a perfect job at preaching the message. Of course my friend looked over at me in amazement, that such an unlikely candidate would not only be talking about this topic, but that he was preaching it to me, someone who has been speaking on these issues on the radio for approaching two years now, and the best part about it, is that the speech was very influenced by the number of drinks that he had had. It was fully understandable, and he knew exactly what he was talking about, but within every couple of sentences, he threw in a little bit of profanity, and aggression and the common ranting one would typically hear I guess in a bar. And throughout the whole monologue, never once did I or my friend have a chance to share with him the coincidence of such a conversation, or should I say monologue, and just before he got up to go smoke a cigarette outside, he looked at us and said that, "all I want, is to share this information with people, like you two, so that you can then go and share this information with others, so that everyone will have local chickens in their freezers and local eggs." And he got up and walked out to smoke his cigarette.

Now as you can imagine, I was floored, and my friend was floored. And, for myself, I would expect to walk into a bar and have others at the bar maybe start speaking to me about football, maybe about hockey, or women, or something that most men who've been drinking a lot tend to talk about in bars, but this, this was about local food, and perhaps, it was a real sign that times have indeed changed, and it nicely introduces today's show that will focus in on the benefits and challenges of eating locally. So to my new acquaintance from Vancouver Island, this show is for you.

soundbite

For a little over a year here in Nelson a collective of concerned residents have been meeting as part of a group called Community Food Matters. Roughly once a month members of this coalition, get together and discuss issues pertaining to local food security. Back in November 2006, the group hosted a food forum when roughly 100 people arrived in attendance to learn about our local food security. And it was just this past spring, that one member of the group suggested to launch an Eat Local Challenge as a means to bring the community together yet again to learn and experience the benefits and enjoyment of eating locally, but to also learn of the threats and barriers that such a challenge could face. Over the course of the following months, Community Food Matters set up information tables at the local farmers market asking members of the community to pledge to eat locally for the month of August, and it was up to them as to what sort of pledge they chose to take. A radius of 100 miles was set up as a means through which "local" could be defined, and roughly 150 people signed the pledge sheets. During the month of August, participants did get together for local food potlucks and to discuss the progress of their efforts, CBC radio even ran a segment on the challenge that was broadcast to listeners throughout the Southern Interior of the province. And for the majority of today's broadcast, we are going to hear about the experience of seven of these participants. Following the conclusion of the challenge I

invited these brave foodies into our studios here in Nelson and we talked about their experience, what they learned, and how it has changed the way they eat now.

Now of course the idea of challenging oneself to eat locally isn't new, authors James MacKinnon and Alisa Smith took on a 100% 100-Mile diet a couple of years ago and have since wrote a book about it, titled, *The 100-Mile Diet*. We first featured James and Alisa here on the program back in January of this year 2007, but they did speak to a Nelson audience yet again just this past month on a small tour through the Interior of the province. *Deconstructing Dinner* did record their presentation, and as seems fitting to launch today's broadcast with, here is one quick segment with James MacKinnon speaking on the absurdities of our current food system, and why challenging oneself to eat locally requires the asking of some critical questions.

JAMES MACKINNON: We looked into it some more and not even the numbers really captured how absurd the food system has become and some of this we've learned since we, since we published the book. We were in Ontario and we met a farmer. He raises carrots, but of course if he goes to his local grocery store, he can't get his own carrots for sale in the grocery store. His go to North Carolina and when he goes to the grocery store to buy carrots, they come from North Carolina. So somewhere around the border there's trucks full of carrots passing in the night, waving, and doing that trucker honk. Another one that struck us as we were doing the book: Dungeness crab. Dungeness crab—Dungeness is a little town in Puget Sound so it's well within 100 miles of Vancouver. We thought Dungeness crab would be a pretty nice thing to eat for a year. At this point in history some of those crab are fished off the sea floor, packed into refrigeration, put onto cargo ships, and sent to China. So in China people remove the meat from the shells, put the meat into refrigeration, put it back onto cargo ships and send it back across for sale in places like Vancouver and Seattle. So here's this 100 mile product that, if we don't ask the right questions, may have travelled eight thousand miles to reach us. And the reason it makes sense is because oil is still cheap enough that it makes sense to ship it across the north Pacific so that people who are paid the lowest possible wages can remove the meat from the shell. So, we're combining an environmental harm with a social injustice and the end point that we get from it is cheap crab.

JON STEINMAN: These examples provided by author James MacKinnon are indeed enough to justify any individual, group or community to challenge such an absurd food system by challenging themselves to eat locally.

Joining me in the studio to share their eat local challenge stories were Nelson residents, Anne Marchildon, Becky Quirk, Nancy Roulston, Matt Lowe, Tara Stark, Lorraine Carlstrom and her daughter Mackenzie. Both Anne and Matt work at the local Kootenay Co-operative food store who launched their own eat local challenge among the staff, and they signed up twenty-three staff members who also took the pledge in the month of August. Nancy also happens to work for a local food business, Endless Harvest, an organic food delivery service that set-up 100-mile boxes for their customers who were also taking the pledge.

As we first sat down in the studio, I asked the group to first share what their pledge was during the month, and we hear some interesting comments on giving up bananas,

eating locally being similar to cleansing one's body, the impossibility of giving up coffee, and the joys of finding local grain.

JON STEINMAN: We're all here to talk about the Eat Local Challenge that everybody, in some form or another committed to in August. Now, that's the big question: what were the different approaches each of you took to this Eat Local Challenge? How serious were you? Were you fully committed to eating from within a hundred mile radius? Was it more of a once a week kind of thing? Was it fifty percent local, fifty percent from outside of the region? Maybe we could just go around and you could quickly state what your challenge was personally and who else was involved in the challenge that you were involved in. Maybe we'll start, Anne, with you.

ANNE MARCHILDON: Sure. At the Co-op we started two weeks early just to sort of get the staff rolling on the whole challenge. So my challenge, my pledge, was to eat locally one day a week. And initially I thought, yeah ok one day a week, I can do that, that's a good challenge and I have to say right now that actually I never spent one day in the end of July or the end of August, or the whole month of August, my meals in that day, all coming from within a hundred miles of where we lived. I drank coffee. Oh, and I had bread! Yeah, locally made bread but not grains from this area.

MATT LOWE: Like Anne, I had set a personal challenge of eating local one day a week, and I mostly succeeded but like Anne I had a few coffees. I found it to be challenging for sure. For me it became almost like a cleansing day, because my foods were fairly limited. But at the same time, as the month went on, I found that I was sourcing more foods and my meals were becoming more complete.

ANONYMOUS: For my challenge I tried to eat all my produce locally and then tried to use value-added for many of the other items, so things that were made here but their ingredients weren't necessarily grown in this region. I did pretty well but I found my most difficult times were when I was travelling around to find. Once I got used to this area I was comfortable, but when I went to Vancouver and Washington I obviously had no idea what I was doing.

ANONYMOUS: Yeah. What I particularly liked about this challenge was that you could modify it to what you wanted to do. And I have two kids who weren't super enthusiastic about the idea. But we chose three meals a week and fifty percent our produce and competently made that and probably did more, with everybody's exception of coffee. I think breakfast was pretty easy to do locally, but for the coffee. So yeah I think we did better than we had anticipated.

LORRAINE CARLSTROM: Yeah. Our family pledged fifty percent, but we actually did a lot better. I've been actually trying to eat local for a long time, so I'd already sourced out a few things. The key thing that I really wanted to keep was my sourdough, so I got spelt from Lofstedt Farm and I know that was a big challenge, was the wheat part for everyone. And I'm super lucky that I don't drink coffee anymore (laughs). But, so we did pretty well. Mackenzie could probably add, too, how she felt about giving up bananas in her smoothie!

JON STEINMAN: Yeah. How was the giving up bananas, MacKenzie?

MACKENZIE CARLSTROM: It didn't taste the same at all, it didn't have the same taste as it does with the bananas.

JON STEINMAN: So what was in your smoothie instead?

MACKENZIE CARLSTROM: We just didn't put in bananas and just did the drink with the fruit.

JON STEINMAN: And are you back to bananas now?

MACKENZIE CARLSTROM: Yup (laughs).

JON STEINMAN: One interesting observation that comes out of these comments was the heightened difficulty one who attempts to eat locally experiences when travelling. I too, have experienced such difficulties, and it is these experiences that eating local food can lead to, experiences whereby by eating locally, one adopts a real sense of place - a real connection to one's home. In our world of consuming products coming from everywhere but where we live, we have, I think it's safe to say, potentially lost our sense of place, and perhaps have never really acquired the ability for our surroundings and community to feel like home.

Now with eating local food seeming to require an increased level of planning, for some of those participating in the Eat Local Challenge, planning wasn't so difficult, especially when a local grocery store is making concerted efforts to stock their shelves with local food.

ANONYMOUS: I think that's probably my downfall, the lack of planning. It ended up that for many reasons, local food was a huge focus this summer for me. It was just sort of the radar was turned on, it would catch my eye when I'd find something that I could eat that was grown locally. One thing I did was go through cookbooks that I have at home and look at recipes and sort of try and find some recipes that I knew I could do with local ingredients.

MATT LOWE: I tend to involve myself in a lot of different things so I don't leave myself a lot of time for this sort of planning. I work at the Kootenay Co-op, which has the largest supply of local food in the Kootenays, I'd say, at least more than the big stores, and so it was easy for me to look around the Kootenay Co-op and source local food especially in August. So the planning amounted to me combing the shelves of the Kootenay Co-op, by going to the local meatery and asking them, what meats they had that are local, and eggs, and then providing my food for that one day from those places.

NANCY ROULSTON: Planning in the beginning, and then, once I'd sort of planned it, I almost ate the same thing all the time. I pretty much had local eggs from Mad Dog Farms every single morning and with tomatoes and I just got in the habit and by the weekend I'd had about enough of egg, enough eggs. But I would say I did that, and then in the mornings or at night I'd have to make a stew or something like that for lunch. And then dinner kind of got a bit more difficult because I'd eat it with my partner and he wasn't in on the diet, so I was sort of trying to fit in local foods but sort of make some sort of compromise without having to do everything.

ANONYMOUS: I think if you do have your local produce and then go, sort of build, from that, that was a good to start. The one thing that I'll echo is, I'll call it a starch, something other than potatoes. And I remember one meal in particular, we were all the way local and then my spouse said, "how about pasta?" I'm like, "no-o, how about potatoes?" He said, "you've gotta be kidding! Just because they're local!" And I said, "well we are doing this, so let's do it!" Anyway something other than potatoes would be nice, local (laughs).

JON STEINMAN: One of the highlights of challenging oneself to eat locally is most certainly the new experiences that such an endeavour can provide. In the case of Nancy Roulston, she began drinking tea harvested from the local forests. Lorraine Carlstrom has learned how to butcher turkeys and chickens and has even begun dreaming of local food.

NANCY ROULSTON: I had told one of my co-workers at Endless Harvest that I was doing this challenge and I was really worried about tea, because I drink tea every day and my tea comes from the UK, and those probably come from India, from there, like, I thought I would be doomed. And she told me that she forages her own tea in Ymir and so my time wasn't spent, but her time was definitely spent in the forests finding me tea, which was great and that's what I've been drinking ever since.

LORRAINE CARLSTROM: This is sort of my passion so I do it all the time. It's in my mind probably 24 hours a day, even in my dreams! So I actually learned this year how to butcher turkeys and chickens, so I had that in the freezer, got half a cow, so I had that in the freezer, and of course, I really advocate for milk products, and there that's tricky because it's illegal here in Canada. But I also made sure I had all of Jerseyland's products and the spelt was ahead of time. So I guess, yes, I do a lot of planning but it's really kind of second nature to me, so I just love it. It wasn't like a big chore. It was like, "this is exciting!" The only thing that I could not give up was sea salt. That's the one thing that we couldn't find and then we are addicted to good dark chocolate.

ANONYMOUS: I'd never had venison before and I now have, both chops and sausage. I like the chops better.

JON STEINMAN: So you found local venison?

ANONYMOUS: Yes.

JON STEINMAN: Was it farmed or was it hunted?

ANONYMOUS: When I announced to the office I work in that I was doing the local challenge, a woman said, "oh, my partner just, you know, went hunting! Would you like some venison?" And my first reaction was, "Eugh!" But we had it. It was tasty and then we got some sausage, and that wasn't as good, but it may have been a matter that we don't know how to prepare it.

NANCY ROULSTON: I tried a lot of different fruits and vegetables that I probably would never have tried. Working in Endless Harvest and speaking with a lot of the local farmers that provide us foods, especially Mad Dog Farms, they grow so many different types of varieties of food as well as just so many different species of food. And having

all their different types of eggplants and all their different types of tomatoes, and even getting tips on how to cook them really kind of broadened my vegetable intake. And they were so great, and so delicious, and really grown with love.

JON STEINMAN: And this is Deconstructing Dinner, where we are listening to segments from an in-studio discussion that took place between myself and seven Nelson residents who all pledged to eat locally in varying frequencies, for the month of August. As all of these participants most certainly realized, taking on such a challenge, required giving up certain foods, which for some was surprisingly easy, for others, giving up grains and oils was difficult, but who ever said you couldn't dress a salad with mashed apricots.

NANCY ROULSTON: I used to eat bananas and avocados every single day and to have to cut those out was actually, surprisingly, really easy for me. And I haven't had any since just because when I started eating local, local fruit it tasted so much better and I really cut them out and I don't miss them at all, so that's what I thought would be the most difficult thing for me and it was probably the easiest.

LORRAINE CARLSTROM: Rice for us was a big deal because we have it at least once a week. But that was what we really missed, and we tried to just do a lot of the potatoes. And so I guess that was a big one for us, as well as the bananas which we mentioned earlier.

MATT LOWE: For me it would be the grains were the things that I miss the most. It would seem I have grains a couple of times a day, a bread for breakfast or for lunch and then something like rice or pasta for dinner.

ANONYMOUS: So especially in salad season, you really notice how much olive oil and lemon juice come into play in a lot of meals and a lot of dishes. And so using butter, and I did go to a pot-luck where someone dressed a salad with mashed apricots and it did create sort of a citrus flavour.

JON STEINMAN: What is often a concern among anyone choosing to take on *any* new diet, is the amount of extra time involved in the process. I posed this very question to the group: did taking on an eat local challenge require more time? And for some, taking on the challenge led to some new thoughts on the environmental impact of local eating, for Becky Quirk, it involved learning that local chickens who *don't* spend their entire lives in industrial barns, aren't so reliable year-round.

BECKY QUIRK: At the very beginning of August it was quite warm, and apparently the hens weren't laying as productively as they often are and that had never crossed my mind before. I really had for the first week or so, I really had to search for eggs and that immediately drove home what going local was all about. You really have to be attuned to things like that.

JON STEINMAN: So your egg supply got cut off at one point?

BECKY QUIRK: Yeah well, I went to the Co-op, and then the thing on Josephine Street, and then I ultimately did find them, but it wasn't just pop into the grocery and get a dozen.

LORRAINE CARLSTROM: Well I did do a lot of driving, but I think I do a lot. I drove out to Soil Matters, which is out in Thrums. So I go do that every week to get the vegetables and she also has eggs there. And then when she didn't have eggs, I drove out to Krestova and then I drove up to the Slocan Valley to get both the beef and the turkey and the chickens. We did some driving and that always makes me question is it better for me to be driving within a hundred miles to get my food than having a huge truck come in and deliver it to a bunch of people. So it's always this big decision of should I be doing this? It's a bit ridiculous that I'm driving so far to get a dozen eggs, when I really could buy them, not that I would, at Safeway. But it also brought up this other thing: Is it truly the hundred miles that we should be thinking about? Or is it how it was raised and whether it was organic? Because I thought, Gosh! If it was within a hundred miles of a genetically modified soy or canola field I wouldn't want to be eating it. I would actually go further. So it made me start questioning while I was driving all the different angles to this, the lighter footprint on the earth. And is it better to source out an organic farmer that's a little further away?

music

JON STEINMAN: And that last tune was musician Alice Weiler and her song, Eggs. Alice is based in Montoursville, Pennsylvania, and that song was released on her 1999 children's album We Don't Monkey Around.

As we speak of the discoveries and insights that arose from those who participated in Nelson's Eat Local Challenge organized by Community Food Matters, we also arrive at the new connections some participants were encouraged to make with local farmers. Nancy Roulston shares such a discovery.

NANCY ROULSTON: I found because I became so dependent, particularly on Mad Dog Farms, as I mentioned, and with their hens having difficulty laying eggs, and also they had elk come in and eat several thousand dollars' worth of their winter squash, I realized how dependent I am on just their farm and so I guess time I spent I started going up there. I've been up there a few times now, and just volunteering there and seeing how they farm and just being a part of it and learning all the different little bits that go into it. And I just felt a lot more connected to food but also that it's a food system that I should be more involved in. So I spent time actually going quite close to the source of my food, which I would never probably would have thought of doing.

JON STEINMAN: Yet another interesting discovery was made by Tara Stark, who helped launch the Eat Local Challenge. Tara was inspired to launch the challenge because she herself was already trying to eat locally, but by challenging herself to only eat locally, she discovered how difficult it really can be.

TARA STARK: One thing that really surprised me was that I'd developed this real little comfort zone with eating local. Because going into the challenge I already ate a lot of local foods. I didn't realize how difficult it would be to go beyond that. Everything that was already easy for me to access, I was already doing, so making the next step and commitment was actually a much bigger step than I had anticipated. So for example I'd get my vegetables from CSA. That was really, really easy. Buying my meat from local source was harder. I felt like it took more planning even just going to the fish market if I

didn't get there before it closed, and I call it the fish market but I'd go there to buy the Meadow Creek chicken, but if I didn't get there before it closed and then I was stuck going to Overwaitea, well that option for me for dinner was gone.

JON STEINMAN: Now when we often talk about locally grown food we quickly think of fruits, vegetables, dairy and meat, but when it comes to processed food, the chances of finding a fully local item begins to decrease. I posed such a concern to the group and in doing so, discovered that one participant, Lorraine Carlstrom, discovered that the local yogurt she was purchasing wasn't actually made in the city listed on the label. Now with that said, the product is only made another 100 miles or so away, but the city in which it was thought to be produced, was already about 100 miles away from Nelson. So needless to say, this shocked some of the other eat local challenge participants.

JON STEINMAN: And what about with maybe processed foods that actually have labels? Were those foods kind of out of the question? Because I know with so many foods you look at labels and it'll say, 'Product of Canada' but you have no idea where the ingredients are coming from. Did anyone run into that trouble and did you try to overcome that by calling up the company? Were there any efforts along those lines?

LORRAINE CARLSTROM: Well I did call a couple of companies and one that I was shocked at was Jerseyland's yoghurt isn't produced in Grand Forks. They're trying to move it. I mean that doesn't even have a lot of ingredients. The ones that have a lot of ingredients, there was just no way. You can call them, but that's what I always tell people when they are trying to eat right is if it has more than five ingredients it's first of all a lot of them could be coming as far away as China. Like some of our skim milk, had the powder form of it to bring it, some of the protein powders are coming out of China. So those are really hard. You can call the companies, but they sometimes won't tell you. I mean, like SunRype juice, some of their concentrates are also coming out of different countries, like China. So it's a very tough thing, the second it becomes processed, I don't know what to tell people except for try to not eat as much processed unless you have a few favourites, but just to know that they're not local and they're not necessarily that great for you.

JON STEINMAN: And is this new information for everyone, that Jerseyland Organics yoghurt isn't coming from Grand Forks? Does this change what you were actually eating? Was anyone else eating Jerseyland yoghurt?

MATT LOWE: I'm shocked! That was a big part of my diet, my (laughs) hundred mile diet. That's a great piece of information and something that I'll be more aware of in the future. I had no idea that these small local producers do contract out or go out to other places.

JON STEINMAN: So that yoghurt's coming from where? Is it the Okanagan it's coming from?

LORRAINE CARLSTROM: I think it was Salmon Arm or Kamloops. I can't remember exactly, but they're really trying hard to move it to Grand Forks. We went to the farm. I think that's one nice thing that this did for us is it encouraged us to go to the farms and actually see them. And you can ask them, and you can see their cows that are on the grass, and you're, like, Great! These cows are not on cement. They're actually on the grass. And that makes me feel great.

music

JON STEINMAN: And you're tuned in to Deconstructing Dinner, a syndicated weekly one-hour radio program and podcast produced in Nelson, British Columbia. I'm Jon Steinman and on today's show titled The Eat Local Challenge, we zoom in on 7 of 150 Nelson residents who, in the month of August, pledged to take on an Eat Local Challenge organized by a local food security group known as Community Food Matters. I invited these 7 participants into our studios to share with me what challenges they faced by eating locally, what enjoyments were found from taking on such a challenge, and how making such new connections with their surroundings has changed the way they eat today. I was joined by Anne Marchildon, Becky Quirk, Nancy Roulston, Matt Lowe, Tara Stark, Lorraine Carlstrom and her daughter Mackenzie.

Now while most of those who attempt to eat more locally are often found eating more seasonal fruits and vegetables, Lorraine Carlstrom along with her children chose to also weed a farm, slaughter their poultry and milk a cow. Hearing of children and teenagers taking on such an experience raises many questions about the absence of such food and agriculture based education in our public school system. Until such a shift towards recognizing the importance of such skills and awareness takes place, Lorraine and her husband's decision to home-school their children and take them on such field trips provides one example of how to bypass such an absence of this important subject in school curriculum.

LORRAINE CARLSTROM: Going out and having to butcher chickens which I learned to do this year, and my son came with me to do the turkeys and that really was great. I've learned so much and then to be able to actually milk the cow. I've never done that and I feel that at age forty-five it's amazing I've never done that. So I really went a step further. I'd already had sourced everything. I just hadn't seen how to do it all. And so learning to weed for me was a big deal. I'm not a gardener, I grew up in Banff, where you really have very little summer. And so for me to learn like what not to pull out when they say, "Pull the weeds." I was always the dangerous person who might pull out the really good onion, that's just about to come up (laughter). So working out of the CSA in Thrums and going out to the farms in the Slocan Valley to see how they actually do that was really awesome. But now I totally feel for them now that all these rules are coming into play and we won't be able to get our chickens, turkeys, beef, maybe not even our eggs from us locally. So I'm really now feeling for them and wanting to speak for them as, in that part any way I can.

JON STEINMAN: Mackenzie, were you involved at all with the milking of cows, or did you want to get involved in the butchering, as well?

MACKENZIE CARLSTROM: Well, when my Mom came home, she goes, "You know, Mackenzie, you wouldn't have liked that." So I was glad I didn't go and I've milked a goat before but I haven't milked a cow.

JON STEINMAN: And do you want to, maybe next year, try that?

MACKENZIE CARLSTROM: Maybe milking the cow, but not butchering. Ah, no!

JON STEINMAN: What was it like for your other kids?

LORRAINE CARLSTROM: Well Logan is thirteen and he was actually really fascinated by the turkey butchering. He said the first one he watched was really hard on his stomach, kind of felt a little bit woozy, but he said right after that the farmer was so gentle and really it's interesting when he thought of it as food and he thought this was just part of a cycle, and he actually felt OK. And he was right in there plucking the feathers. He wasn't into gutting them but he did really well. And I think every child should learn where their food comes from and I wish I learned it at a young age.

JON STEINMAN: Was it something he ended up telling his friends about and were his friends at all interested?

LORRAINE CARLSTROM: Guaranteed! His vegetarian friends, he loves to tell them this story. (laughter)

JON STEINMAN: As we often discuss here on Deconstructing Dinner, being part of the fostering and development of more localized food systems has a tremendous benefit to one's sense of community and sense of belonging. And this was most certainly the case for Anne Marchildon and Nancy Roulston, who also discovered that local food just tastes better.

ANNE MARCHILDON: One thing I really did enjoy was going to a couple of local potlucks and just being part of the community around this whole event. It was amazing to see the dishes that people prepared were incredible and delicious and I went to a few local potlucks and that was definitely a highlight of this experience.

NANCY ROULSTON: I think one of the best meals I've had in a long time was the very first local potluck we had. Everything tasted so great and there were so many stories behind all the food that, for some reason, I really felt like I really belonged in the Kootenays because I was eating this food and we'd brought all these people together and we were all talking about it and excited about this challenge and I think it was one of the best meals I have ever had. And as far as in the kitchen I'm not a very good cook (I'll be the first to admit that) but when I would have a lot of local food in the kitchen I did want to put on a lot of dinners for my friends and family because I wanted to share a lot of the food that I had and tell stories about it and I felt that I had changed in that way.

JON STEINMAN: Now in this case, both Anne and Nancy developed new connections with other local eaters in the community, but I did also ask the group what new relationships they created with local farmers. Take a listen.

Nancy, you were saying you were developing a lot of new relationships with other people in the community through these potlucks; Anne, you were saying that too. Did anybody meet farmers or producers, or just other people that you had to develop these relationships with in order to satisfy this challenge? Does anyone have any interesting stories about people you've developed new friendships with or simple business relationships with?

LORRAINE CARLSTROM: Yeah, I definitely have an enormous respect for farmers now, more so than I ever did, because just learning, like you say, their struggles that they

have, and I just want to tell everyone: Listen to these people! They are so knowledgeable. I have one farmer who doesn't think they can teach me anything: "Oh no, this is just something...it's so simple" and I'm like, "No, you guys know this stuff." And before a hundred years ago, a lot of us did know how to farm, we did know how to produce our own food and now I look around and most of the people, my friends and my peers, there's very few of us that could survive and I just think these people are so valuable and we just need to really, really put them higher up in respect than we do and start learning from them, because I think we're all going to end up needing to produce more of our food especially kids that are younger than us. I just don't see that we're going to be using all the greenhouse gases to make our food. So I really just learn to really respect and honour them and I'm going to try and get as much information out of them as I can before they die because some of them are getting old. They know so much.

music

JON STEINMAN: And this is Deconstructing Dinner. And that last musical segue was courtesy of Port Dover Ontario's Fred Eaglesmith and his tune John Deere, heard on his 2001 release, Ralph's Last Show.

In just a few moments we will move on from my discussion with those involved in Nelson's Eat Local Challenge, and hear some more clips from the most well known Eat Local Challengers, James MacKinnon and Alisa Smith, authors of the book, The 100-Mile Diet. We have featured the two of them on the program before, but they were in Nelson back in September, when they spoke to an audience about their eat local challenge and we will listen in on some comments from that event.

But as we close out these recordings, it's important to end on the impacts that taking an Eat Local Challenge and eating more locally can have on one's lifestyle or one's personal life. Upon speaking with others in the community, in some cases, there were participants who took the challenge but their partner whom they live with did not. In some cases it created for some uneasy planning of meals, but in other cases such as with Tara Stark, she suggests that eating locally can have a net benefit to one's personal relationships.

TARA STARK: I was just going to share that my partner signed up for the challenge. We cooked way more together than we usually do and, so for us I think, that was really fun and I also think that for him it was a really neat experience, because he would get all excited about the different cheeses that he found or farm eggs that came from a place that he didn't know they would have farm eggs. And I like the way it brought us together in the kitchen because usually we kind of take turns cooking, but we cooked a lot more as a team.

JON STEINMAN: Now in the case of Matt Lowe, his eat local challenge has had an impact on his lifestyle. In Matt's case eating locally has taught him to slow down.

MATT LOWE: I think in my busy life I too often tend to just grab a wrap or a pre-made sandwich or something like that and this forced me to either prepare the meal, the breakfast or the lunch, beforehand and then go to work. Or while I was at work, take my

lunch hour, part of it, to prepare the lunch and relax and eat it. And I think that was a really good lesson for me in slowing down and appreciating food.

JON STEINMAN: With the many impacts to one's lifestyle to be found from eating more locally, I was curious to discover if any other household members were sucked into the challenge, and in particular, pets. Local mice and birds certainly don't count in this respect and sure enough Tara Stark has a dog, who, has been eating somewhat locally.

TARA STARK: Well (laughs) I have a dog that I feed raw food to so my dog, ever since I joined the CSA, he's been eating lots of local vegetables, particularly local greens which apparently I have a hard time getting through.

JON STEINMAN: Now I would like to conclude this feature of Nelson's Eat Local Challenge with a segment featuring some comments made by Matt Lowe. As there are no doubt many benefits to be found from eating more locally, through his affiliation with the West Kootenay EcoSociety, Matt has been inspired to launch something that is yet another example of what challenging oneself to eat locally can do to the food security of our communities. But before we hear of this exciting project, let's first quickly take a listen to one of the difficulties Matt found from challenging himself to eat more local food.

MATT LOWE: I didn't even look for local grains, I think I might have enquired a little bit, but I just assumed that there weren't opportunities for local grains. But since the challenge, I've learned that there are grains grown in Grand Forks by at least a couple of sources and there is a local mill there. Creston has some local mills and I think there's a great potential for there to be a lot more grain grown locally in the near future.

JON STEINMAN: Now with Matt learning of such potential to grow grain locally, he has, along with a friend planted an idea to create a grain CSA – that is a community supported agriculture program where those residents in the Nelson area interested in local grain, can all chip in at the beginning of the year, and farmers in the region will take on the challenge.

MATT LOWE: The EcoSociety together with a friend in Creston is hoping to start up a local grain CSA over the winter. So we do have a few farmers that have expressed interest in growing grain in Creston and possibly one here, right close to Nelson and we have a huge amount of interest already expressed of people who would be happy to buck up some money and pay up front and be part of this pilot project for growing grain locally. We have a number and that is asking people to contribute a hundred dollars each, which I think for a lot of us is very doable. And if the crop is a total bomb, which I would be surprised, but if it is, well then, you know, I don't think a hundred dollars out of most of our pockets is that unbearable, and I think we've tried to support something that I think is essential for communities, because with peak oil and the effects of climate change that are coming on so fast, we're going to need to grow our grains locally again as well as everything else.

JON STEINMAN: And that was Matt Lowe, introducing the West Kootenay EcoSociety's intentions to launch a grain CSA in the Nelson area. Deconstructing Dinner will be documenting the creation of this project and will hopefully act as inspiration for other Canadian communities to begin doing the same.

And I would like to thank those who joined me in the studio to share their Eat Local Challenges and their experiences. And all of this was organized by Nelson's Community Food Matters. The voices you heard were those of Anne Marchildon, Becky Quirk, Nancy Roulston, Matt Lowe, Tara Stark, Lorraine Carlstrom and her daughter Mackenzie.

And links to more information on Community Food Matters and other eat local projects across the country will be made available on the Deconstructing Dinner website at cjly.net/deconstructingdinner.

soundbite

In the remaining time left on today's broadcast we will, as promised, tune in to a few segments we recorded back in September of this year at an event hosted by the Nelson Municipal Library and the organizers of an upcoming regional food security conference. Now this upcoming conference, taking place here in Nelson, is called the Future of Food in the Kootenays. And the conference is a non-partisan event taking place on November 13-14th and will be hosting speakers Richard Balfour of the Metro Vancouver Planning Coalition, Ione Smith of SmartGrowth BC, Herb Barbolet of Simon Fraser University, and FarmFolk/CityFolk. Deconstructing Dinner will of course be attending the conference to record the presenters and panel discussions. And I will also be speaking at the conference and sharing with the audience a condensed version of much of what was broadcast on today's show. And so to get the community excited about the upcoming conference, the organizers along with our municipal library hosted authors James Mackinnon and Alisa Smith, who authored the book "The 100-Mile Diet." Some of their comments made during the question and answer period tie in nicely to the topic of today's show. For one, and similar to the efforts by Matt Lowe, James and Alisa also discovered how easily it can be for communities to impact what farmers choose to grow.

JAMES MACKINNON: And it's a great example of how again, of how we can change the system. I mean we had farmers coming to us saying, "Oh, you couldn't find any lentils? Oh, you couldn't find any grain? Get us a hundred names, we'll grow them." We had no idea that we could have that kind of direct impact, just as consumers, on what's being grown. So now we see that if we organize ourselves a little bit we can really change what the agricultural landscape looks like. At a talk like this in Creston one of the people who attended kind of stood up and said, "Oh, I'm swimming in wheat out at my farm. I grew [it but you know] I can't get rid of the stuff." And by the end of the meeting, they had people, a group of people were banding together to throw a bunch of money at her to get her a green cleaner, so she can wash her wheat and sell it to them. So it can happen fast.

JON STEINMAN: There is certainly an apparent ease through which Canadians can begin assuming greater control of the food that is available to us. As James Mackinnon suggests, in the past 50 years, policies and practices have been destroying local food instead of supporting it. He further commented on this impact individuals and groups can have on challenging the unsustainability of our dominant models of producing and transporting consumer goods. James suggests, that food is the most ideal place to launch such efforts.

JAMES MACKINNON: We spent fifty years destroying local food systems, letting them languish. Very little effort's been put in at any level into supporting them. We've spent really most of the last century building as much efficiency as we can into a global food system. So we need to reverse that. We need to have governments thinking about how can we build, even take some of the lessons we've learned from the global food system, and build some of that efficiency back into the local system. One thing that I'm sure everybody who tried eating locally around here, I'm sure, found that it's not that easy to access local food. But there's nothing about that that we need to accept. We have the power to rebuild local food systems and make those foods much more accessible. It's starting to happen in Vancouver. All kinds of food groups are meeting. They're trying to figure out regional distribution networks, how to move more local food into stores, how to have more farmers' markets in more neighbourhoods, and really try to turn it into something that we can just go out and access. And have that farmers' market connection kind of anywhere that we need to buy food. I'm not a wholesale advocate of consuming our way to change, but we eat, if we're lucky, three times a day, and we're not going to cut down that consumption any time soon. It's a huge, huge part of our daily budgets, of our national spending and we really can make fast change with our choices there.

JON STEINMAN: And this is Deconstructing Dinner. Now this significant global push to eat more locally is having a significant impact on how organic food should be defined. Located on the Deconstructing Dinner website has long been a question that reads, "Was the truck that was transporting my coffee using organic fuel. If not, is it still organic?" It's an important question, because as the new Canadian Organic Standards slowly come into effect, it can be assured that there is no requirement of how far that food has travelled. But in the United Kingdom, for one, there is talk of that changing.

ALISA SMITH: Like in England they're talking about not even certifying as organic things that have been flown in, because they think that that's such a negative part of the food.

JAMES MACKINNON: That said, there are a couple of strange things to watch out for, like glasshouses that are heated with natural gas or coal. There's a lot of that in the Fraser Valley. Again it's a case of: if it looks too good to be true, then it's probably unsustainable. If you're getting tomatoes in the middle of winter anywhere, they're unsustainable tomatoes. What we need to be looking at, really, is focusing on seasonal eating, if we really want to be serious about sustainable eating. Another of the famous studies that kind of pokes holes in local eating was a tomato study that found that field tomatoes from Spain flown into the UK in winter was more energy efficient than organic tomatoes, greenhouse grown in the UK. And a number of observers looked at that and said all we're doing here is comparing two unsustainable systems. And there's simply no doubt that you can eat local tomatoes in season, you're going to be making as minimal a carbon footprint as you can make.

JON STEINMAN: For any listeners who have not caught some of our previous broadcasts of Deconstructing Dinner, we will over the coming months be featuring recordings from the CropLife Canada conference that took place in Saskatoon back in September. This conference represented most of the companies who are part of this dominant food system that has been operating at the expense of local food systems for quite some time. And one show that will be coming out of these recordings will be focusing on the common argument made by the conventional agriculture industry, that in order to feed

the world, plant science technologies such as chemical pesticides and genetic modification are necessary. Now there are many out there who argue with such an idea, and James MacKinnon is one of them.

JAMES MACKINNON: I have to say that after the time we've spent looking at this, I really don't have any concern about our capacity to feed people. I mean there's so much land not in use. Everywhere we go we see there's so much potential in cities themselves. There's so much we could do with planting fruit trees. And we could do an hour-long talk just about the innovative ideas we're seeing for the production of food, and the places that we can produce food, and our ability to go out and draw some more of our food from wild space even.

JON STEINMAN: And that was James MacKinnon, who along with his partner and co-author Alisa Smith, wrote the book *The 100-Mile Diet: Adventures in Local Eating*. And you can hear more of James and Alisa speaking of their Eat Local Challenge on our January 11th broadcast. And that broadcast is archived on our website at cjly.net/deconstructingdinner.

ending theme

JON STEINMAN: That was this week's edition of *Deconstructing Dinner*, produced and recorded at Nelson, British Columbia's Kootenay Co-op Radio. I've been your host Jon Steinman. I thank my technical assistant Doug Farquharson.

The theme music for *Deconstructing Dinner* is courtesy of Nelson-area resident Adham Shaikh.

This radio program is provided free of charge to campus/community radio stations across the country, and relies on the financial support from you the listener.

Support for the program can be donated through our website at cjly.net/deconstructingdinner or by dialing 250-352-9600.