

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

June 12, 2008

Title: Cross-Canada Trike Tour II (Nelson, BC – Prawda, MB)

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Transcript: Ross Vaga**

Jon Steinman: And welcome to another episode of Deconstructing Dinner a syndicated weekly one-hour radio show produced at Kootenay Co-op Radio CJLY in Nelson British Columbia. This show is heard on radio stations around the world and is also available through our website or as a Podcast by visiting deconstructingdinner.ca. I'm Jon Steinman.

Having now aired a couple of encore presentations in the last two weeks, we are long overdue for an update on the whereabouts of Darrick Hahn and Sinisa Grgic - the two cyclists who, since May 7th, have been making their way across the country while promoting this very radio show.

On today's broadcast we take off where our May 15th segment on the tour last left off and we catch up with Darrick and Sinisa, who, as of June 12th were crossing into Ontario after an extended and inspiring stay in Manitoba. This full one-hour will explore some of the symbolism of this trip and will also go through the highlights between here in Nelson when we last left off and their time spent in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.

increase music and fade out

Jon Steinman: A quick reminder for Nelson area listeners to mark Tuesday June 17th on your calendar because on that day the Kootenay Co-op food store will be donating 1% of sales to the Deconstructing Dinner Cross-Canada Trike Tour, so 1% of whatever you buy throughout the day will help support some of the expenses that this tour has incurred. And again, that's Tuesday June 17th at the Kootenay Co-op Food Store.

soundbite

Jon Steinman: For those who missed our May 15th broadcast featuring the first of our ongoing segments on the cross-Canada deconstructing dinner tricycle tour, it was back on May 7th of this year that two old high school friends linked up in Victoria to embark on a journey across the country using a unique form of

transportation – recumbent tricycles – they essentially look like lazy-boys with wheels, certainly a comfy way to see the entire country.

While the trip had long been a dream for both of them, it was in the summer of 2007 when Darrick came across Deconstructing Dinner and quickly became a fan of the show. In January of this year he approached the show with a proposition to use their cross-Canada trip to promote the show and encourage people to listen in and learn more about their food.

The two cyclists have been maintaining an on-line blog for listeners to follow along on the internet as they make their way across the country, and on our May 15th broadcast we heard an interview from correspondent Andrea Langlois as she saw the two cyclists off from the 0-Mile mark of the Trans-Canada highway in Victoria. We also heard from Darrick while he stayed over in Grand Forks, BC just one day before arriving here in Nelson. In fact shortly after that broadcast was recorded live here in Nelson, I hopped on to a *two-wheel* bike to go and await their arrival at the entrance to the city.

And so while here *in* Nelson, I did get both of them into the studio to learn a little more about what inspired them to use their cross-Canada tour to promote an independent radio show.

In fact Darrick Hahn himself is a perfect story *for* Deconstructing Dinner because Darrick embodies many of the issues that are discussed here on the show each week, and what you may find *most* inspiring by listening in just a moment to segments from my conversation with him, is how this trike tour really has developed (or I should say evolved) into what essentially is a well-functioning organism so to speak.

And what do I mean by that. Well when Darrick first came across the show in the summer of 2007, he was immediately captivated by the content because, as you'll shortly hear, he had long been considering heading back to the farm on which he grew up in Ontario.

Since then, Darrick has been listening to episodes weekly and his philosophies on *how* he would like to farm have been developing alongside the show's content. It was then in January of this year, that he got in touch with the show and proposed to use the trip as a tool to help promote the show. Of course they received a resounding yes, and in exchange, I've been spending the past month or so now acting as somewhat of an agent for the two of them as they make their way across the country, I've been contacting local media shortly before they arrive in a communities, I've been linking them up with some of the many contacts that I've developed across the country (farmers and local food producers); listeners of the show have even been coming forward and donating *food and accommodations*, and all the while, Darrick and Sinisa are promoting the show by handing out flyers, talking about the show to people on the streets

and showing off their signs which are affixed to their trikes that read deconstructingdinner.ca. And an image of the trikes is posted on the Deconstructing Dinner website.

Now this is where this organism that I speak of somewhat completes itself, because just as the content of Deconstructing Dinner has helped influence Darrick's vision for how *he* would like to farm, he's now also making his way across Canada's rural communities and spreading the very same message that has helped influence him. Certainly a success story of what can happen when we begin to take apart our food system as we do here each week on the show.

Now coming back to my mention of Darrick embodying many of the issues discussed here on the show, Darrick grew up on a farm – a conventional dairy farm in the community of Moncton Ontario just north of the city of Stratford.

Just as is often raised here on the show, much of Canada's younger rural populations have been declining as farming itself is no longer a very viable or attractive career to pursue. Darrick was one of those people who saw farming as burdensome and wished instead to explore *city* life – which he's now been doing since the age of 19, most recently in Vancouver for the past two years. But rarely do we get to learn of what it's like for someone growing up in Canada's rural communities to all of a sudden enter into the urban life – the life that the vast majority of Canadians now live.

Well when Darrick mentioned that he was heading back to the farm after spending 13 years living the urban life, I thought perhaps there are some worthy observations that he could share with those of us Canadians living in cities. And sure enough there are. One comment in particular that you'll shortly hear, was Darrick's reference to city life being (as he says) fabricated, and that for him (someone who grow up connected to the land) the city life was, as he put it, "surreal."

Now before we get to my longer conversation with Darrick, his cross-Canada trike mate Sinisa also has a history of being more connected to the land and to his food than he his today. Sinisa grew up in Croatia and moved to Canada about 13 years ago. Before I chatted with Darrick, Sinisa briefly shared how his values around food were first shaped.

Sinisa Grgic: Well, I think I have always been eating pretty natural. I grew up in a different country and we have been relatively, I wouldn't say poor, but we didn't have bananas twice a day and all the luxuries that I think that everybody gets here in Canada. So, my family has always had a garden, we always had our local fruits and vegetables, and neighbours always worked with each other and traded commodities to make everybody's life better. So, even after we moved to Canada we kind of continued to eat in a certain, in a same manner, and we bought our food mostly local. I got a lot of it from Darrick being that his parents are organic

farmers and he kind of introduced me into the whole organics concept. But um, we always eat pretty natural still to this day have a garden and my parents and my sister everybody plants a little bit and we still do our sharing and eating relatively healthy. We don't, most of our foods are not canned and all made from scratch so. I think that's the basics and it's from our primal needs and we should stick, I mean thousands of years it worked for us and now all of a sudden everybody is changing because this can look better than the next can. So it kind of goes against what I think food should be.

Jon Steinman: And that was Sinisa Grgic one of the two cross-Canada Deconstructing Dinner cyclists.

Now in getting to know *Darrick's* history of farming a little better and his rural upbringing, here's Darrick Hahn.

Darrick Hahn: Well, I grew up on a conventional dairy farm at the time. And it was a small family farm operation and I think we were at maybe twenty-five cows to start and then just around my early teens my dad expanded to about thirty-six cows and like I said it was conventional. We were doing everything that most farmers were doing at the time which was you know the chemical fertilizers and the pesticides to take care of all our weed issues. And my chores were I wouldn't say everything my dad did but a lot of it. Like I took care of feeding the cows, milking the cows, I've delivered my fair share of calves. I've cut hay, baled hay, stacked hay, organized hay, feed hay, combined grain. I didn't do any of the seeding, dad usually took care of that because it was at a time I was always in school but come summertime we were always helping out on the farm. Getting wood for the winter for heating and you know, your regular daily chores. Like I said: feeding the cows, taking care of the cows, taking care of the calves, milking the cows, separating milk, there was a time we were shipping cream as well as shipping milk. I can be confident in saying that I was pretty much the right hand man being the oldest son on a farm so I got a fair amount of responsibility in that. And just in growing up in that area, it was a typical farming community where you had a town where a few people were living in there and they worked in the nearby cities. The odd people would work in a town at the local supports like the farmers co-op or the variety stores the grocery store et cetera et cetera. Being a usual kid I went to a catholic school for my childhood and adolescence.

Jon Steinman: Once at the age of 19 Darrick went off to university to study agriculture and horticulture but on the other hand, was not so interested in taking over the family farm, and because none of Darrick's brothers had any interest either, his father eventually sold his quota and his cows. Now quota is the quantity of milk that's allowed to be produced by a certain farm under Canada's Supply Management System.

Now the reasons aren't always the same as to why young Canadians growing up on farms are increasingly discouraged from taking over the farm, and in the case of Darrick, it was partially because of laziness.

Derrick Hahn: My issue at the time is kind of naïve to think of back now but I wasn't really interested in getting up so early and also growing up with the farm, we would always pay visits to family and friends, and right around dinner time it was time to go home because we had to go and take care of the cattle. It was just a really big commitment and it also enhances my respect for those people that do get involved in it. But, main reason was that just wasn't interested in getting up early and ironically I get up earlier now than my dad did it.

Jon Steinman: Following University Darrick pursued a career path that eventually took him into designing golf courses and working in factories, but just like with many young rural Canadians, Darrick was also drawn towards the city life.

Derrick Hahn: I ended up moving around in a couple industries I was working in some agricultural construction for a while then I got into what I was looking for or one aspect was in the horticulture department where I got involved in the construction and maintenance of a golf course. I did not go back to the farm, I'm not going to say I wasn't interested in going back to rural life but I did want to get a taste for what it was like in the city at that time and on top of that gain a little bit of world experience while I was attending the University of Guelph. Although looking back at it now in perspective now it wasn't such a big deal but from there I grew up in a small community, predominately white, and Christian based. And then I went to University where I was exposed to just a wide and extreme variety of people from different cultures and backgrounds and I was hungry for more experience and more perspective on the way the world is.

Jon Steinman: Because Darrick Hahn does embody this very phenomenon of our rural communities becoming desolate while cities continue to grow, I introduced this idea to him during our conversation, and he commented on this rural to urban migration that has been taking place since the mid-20th Century.

Derrick Hahn: It's a phenomenon that continues to happen. I remember hearing the fact whose it was a couple years ago that finally there are more people living in cities than there are people living in rural areas which if you actually wrap your head around that is rather startling. What has essentially happened and in my experience is a desire to not have to work long hours a day. Long hours every day all year long to working a nine to five jobs and not having to worry about getting dirty or being at the mercy of the weather. You go into an office building or a factory and you are in an essentially a controlled environment. I think a lot of those things are attached with the draw from rural to urban. I once read back in the fifties, this is when the whole rural to urban migration began; people were selling essentially lots, but the way they were selling it was; you can live like kings. The way kings used to live where you have this house and you have this

nice lawn and its clean and you don't have to work too hard or you are working in an easier life style and you are in a protected area and you are not living amongst the peasants who are out on the land working their butts off. I think a lot of people grasped onto that concept and just flocked into the city and it just continues as culture continues to evolve and media continues to evolve where it is based on an urban culture. You watch television and commercials today and a lot of it is based off of urban culture and what is cool in the urban environment where the emphasis is much less what is going on in the earth or what is going on in the rural areas because it is more sparsely populated and in marketing terms it is just not economical to relate those concepts.

Jon Steinman: And this is Deconstructing Dinner where we're getting to know Darrick Hahn – one of two cyclists currently making his way across Canada while using their trip to promote this very radio show to media, to farmers and the general public.

While there are indeed many Canadians who grow up on farms and move to cities, we don't often here what it's like for them to make such a drastic transition from one way of life to another. As mentioned earlier, Darrick has now gone full-circle as someone who grew up on a farm, lived in the city (most recently in Vancouver) and has now chosen to go *back to* the farm.

His decision came for a number of reasons, one of which was what he observed of city life, and his observations are important ones because for those of us living and growing up in cities, it may be more difficult to recognize what Darrick did. Again, someone who has instead, grown up on the land.

Darrick Hahn: In a large city you can isolate yourself much easier than you can in a rural community. There is so much more population and so many more people around you that essentially you immerse yourself in your own world and they may or may not notice you or what you are doing. But if you are growing up in a rural community, many people see what you are doing, and how you are doing it. Quite often you will hear opinions on what you are doing, whether you want it or not. It didn't take long for me to realize how many people build a barrier between themselves and everybody else on the street and they create their own little world that they are unwilling to look beyond or stick their head beyond and say, get to know the person that's walking beside them on the street let alone acknowledge them. And on top of that like I see how just in basic mannerisms I watch people walking on the street and its tied into that concept of being in their own world; I see a complete sense of detachment from their entire environment. I couldn't handle that. I got to a point where I just wanted to be closer to the earth and not in a concrete and paved area. Because it just was completely fabricated in my opinion and surreal to say the least. I guess the advantage I have is I actually have experience in the rural country and knowing what it is really like to be exposed to weather and seeing like seeing a storm blow in and you've got two hours to get everything prepared for the storm to come in and you're seeing it

come in and the excitement and the thrill of that happening where in a city you don't really, you don't get a chance to experience that or at least I didn't. So just those simple experiences that I am able to actually recognize them as such a lot of these people can't because they have never ever been able to compare to anything else other than living in the city the entire time.

Jon Steinman: Now one of the great outcomes of exploring food with such depth is that it can act as a great tool to explore many more issues that impact our lives, such as in this next case, our leisure time.

In that last segment Darrick began sharing what he believed those who live in cities are missing out on, and in asking him to expand on this, he used an example that was shared with him while he was staying in the community of Hedley, British Columbia. Take a listen.

Darrick Hahn: I think it was best put by one of our hosts in Hedley a man by the name of Terry where he said that you see all these kids these days that are dying to get into extreme sports and you know doing all the crazy stuff and for no better reason other than they have not been able to get connected to the earth and they don't know how to get connected to the earth and they don't even know that they are not connected to the earth. So they get involved in all these crazy things and all of a sudden they may get seriously hurt or killed or whatever and it was all strictly coming from an undetectable desire to reconnect with the earth.

Jon Steinman: Now this idea that extreme and high-energy sports are perhaps a sign that life is not otherwise being experienced as best it could certainly resonated with me. I for one grew up in a city, in Toronto and know exactly what it feels like to engage in high-energy sports or feel compelled to go to the gym and work out every day. Just as many extreme sport enthusiasts often say when referring to their passion, "it makes me feel alive." In some people this sensation is so strong, that many sport enthusiasts are willing to risk death in order to experience this rush of adrenaline.

Now on the surface this may seem like a good thing – that here we are as a culture that has seemingly figured how to connect with ourselves or with the earth, but when stepping back, it could be looked at as a sign of (and to be blunt) an illness – and that illness is that the lifestyles that so many of us now live, are so detached from the earth throughout our daily routines, so detached from the energy that our bodies need to thrive, that the only way to experience life is to, from time to time, seek out concentrated forms of adrenaline or even, risk death.

Of course the alternative *to* seeking these quick fixes is to instead seek this sense of feeling alive throughout every moment of every single day, so that no matter *what* we do, we *always* feel alive.

And that's what makes Darrick's story so important to all of us, because here is someone who knows first-hand what it is to be connected to the earth, and to then be so suddenly detached from it, can give the rest of us the opportunity to see what it is we may be missing. It can give the rest of us the opportunity to ask ourselves, why is it so many of us enjoy such high energy activities such as windsurfing or downhill mountain biking, extreme skiing, whitewater kayaking, power boating or kite boarding or even just driving fast in our cars. Perhaps it really is because throughout the *rest* of the day, we're *not* experiencing life as much as we could be.

For Darrick, it was a couple of moments in particular that finally made *him* realize that the city was not a place for him, and that instead, he should return back to the farm he grew up on in Ontario.

Darrick Hahn: There's been two specific moments that told me where I needed to be. The first one was probably about four years ago and I was tending the farm for my dad while he was on vacation and I was out checking on the cows on a little lot that he rents for grassland. I don't know, something happened that was kind of something out of the sky, it could be a call from God or whatever but it was spiritual and that sense gave me knowledge that this is, this is where I need to be or want to be or where I should be. And then the second thing and this was the dealmaker for me was last summer on my parent's farm, on the north facing side of the barn roof, a few years back we painted a big Canadian flag on the thing, and last summer we put another coat on it, Sinisa and I. And I was just sitting on the peak and it was kind of a cold day and it was kind of windy and I was just looking around and it was just like yeah: This is exactly where I belong and this is where I feel truly peaceful and this is where I got to come back to.

Jon Steinman: And this is Deconstructing Dinner. Now helping Darrick along on his path to return to the farm, was again, his coming across this radio show in the summer of 2007. Curious as to what it was about the show that resonated with him, I asked him what it was that sparked his decision to use his cross-Canada tour to help promote the show.

Darrick Hahn: The things that really jumped out at me was when I was hearing a lot of perspectives from farmers and hearing actual farmers opinions. I don't ever recall getting such candid details from a farmer's perspective on any show I've ever heard of in my life and I grew up in a lot of country western shows and you hear some perspectives but never in the context that you offered and just in the simple concepts like especially when I hear you having interviews with the National Farmers Union or like talking and hearing you talk with Percy Schmeiser. And seeing those angles and those experiences, it's something I am quite confident that a lot of farmers have had but have never ever had an outlet to hear or express to their fellow farmer because you are dealing with grown men and in a traditional sense the man's man. I've encountered it several times when I was hunting with my dad and encountering his peers and his friends and a lot of

them looked up to dad because he was just a pretty solid guy. Or is a solid guy, I shouldn't say was he always is but hearing their stories and how they approached things or how they deal with things and you learn how a simple step forward in communicating your experiences with people can create a great degree in solidarity and I think if more farmers were able to hear more of the show there might be that opportunity of expanding that solidarity and experience where people are like that same thing happened to me. I thought I was the only one. I think that happens a lot more often than you might think.

Jon Steinman: Now while Darrick is indeed set to return to the farm on which he grew up, he remains *unsure* as to what and how he intends to farm. Now some of the very topics discussed here on the show have helped move him to consider methods that are far more ecological, sustainable and responsible, and as he makes his way across the country meeting with farmers and learning of alternative farming philosophies, he's certainly taking in a lot of inspiration.

Darrick Hahn: Right now I am a sponge, I am absorbing all sorts of ideas and entertaining everything to see what I can make work and I've already learned in my past experience I am a pretty creative person and bold enough to set out on the road less traveled. So you know, among the ideas I've entertained is I am a big advocate of this whole raw milk idea. Maybe there will be an opportunity in developing something like that or entertaining more ideas on that. Definitely something in more the organic or even biodynamic is something that is really entertained me and aligned my values with the whole concept of not controlling our environment but working with it and essentially that's where I want to start from and I can't just from life experience, I can't say this is where I am going to go, this is what I am going to do, because as soon as you make that plan it changes and you are going all the way out to right field. So I am just allowing the path to open itself in front of me and take it as it goes.

Jon Steinman: If you are just tuning in we're hearing segments from my conversation with Darrick Hahn as he stopped here in Nelson back in May while making his way across the country with Sinisa Grgic on recumbent tricycles.

Darrick and Sinisa are using their trip to raise awareness of Deconstructing Dinner and just as Darrick has been partially influenced by the show to pursue an alternative approach to farming perhaps his own experience will influence the more productionist oriented farming taking place across Canada's prairies. I asked him if he believes if he's capable of having such influence.

Darrick Hahn: It would be a pipe dream for me to think that I could walk in and go, yeah, I was a farmer once, I grew up on a farm, and I have all these great ideas for you, and those guys will probably go, you know what I've been farming for thirty to forty years and you don't know nothing and most of the stuff you are telling me is crack talk. Honestly I think I am going to encounter that more than I am going to encounter a positive response, if the opposite happens I will

definitely be thrilled about it and I don't think that there are people out there that are against that there are going to be people looking for that option to get out and there are always people looking for that option to get out and it does take a certain degree of character for someone to have enough guts to step outside the circle of comfort or circle of community where that is the norm. It comes down as simply as what we've discussed earlier, standing out in a circle of community can be your ultimate undoing, just simple, simple actions where it doesn't offend anyone it just or it doesn't really affect the community at all other than it may offend one or two people that tend to be the leaders of the community or spearheads of whatever movements. But again with that said it's not going to stop me from suggesting ideas or at least talking to farmers if I get an opportunity or just talking to people in general and getting a feel for where they are at and what they think and what they believe and just that as the trip has progressed is that is manifested itself naturally that you just hang out on a street and people show up and go cool bikes what are those signs and from there it's just an instant opening to talk a little bit about it and just say; hey, you owe it to yourself to check it out and learn more.

Jon Steinman: Now that concluded my conversation with Darrick while him and Sinisa were passing through Nelson, but I did just recently catch up with him on June 11th while they were finishing up their time in Manitoba. But before we get to that, here again is Sinisa Grgic sharing why their recumbent tricycles are such a great tool to help promote a cause. Following Sinisa's comments, you'll hear Darrick Hahn being recorded live as he cycled east out of Nelson. A small contingent of Nelsonites joined them as they were heading out of town, and being one of them, I of course did not forget to bring a microphone. You'll hear Darrick describing some of the food that he picked up at the Nelson farmers market and at the local co-operative grocery store. And in the background you will hear his food fueling his mode of transportation.

Sinisa Grgic: No, I don't think we get nearly as much attached and we see bikers go beside us or behind us or we see them on the street all the time but nobody really bats an eye at that because it's a lot more common place than a tricycle rolling down the street. It is something a little bit different and I think that it automatically turns heads. They are bright yellow which also helps the cause but it is such a unique way, I mean, it looks comfortable, it's just as comfortable as it is, and people are really drawn to something different and they see a couple of guys biking with a whole lot of gear and they want to ask a lot of questions always and see what is going on with what are the machines all about.

background wind and road noises

Darrick Hahn: We picked up a delicious looking loaf of sour bread. I was really excited about it and we just got some cookies for the ride.

Unfortunately the season is early so fresh produce was harder to come by. We got some leafy greens but I don't think we got any dressings to go with them so I kind of sat out on that if it'll pay out in the long run or not but we also did stop at the co-op food store and pick up a couple of peppers and some apples, last year's Okanogan apples and some cheese which will be delicious as well.

Tricycle soundbite

Jon Steinman: And that was a short clip of Frances England's Tricycle following a brief segment of Darrick Hahn listing off *some* of the food that he picked up to help fuel his pedal-powered recumbent tricycle between Nelson and Creston back in May of this year.

And this is Deconstructing Dinner a syndicated weekly one-hour radio show and Podcast produced at Kootenay Co-op Radio in Nelson, British Columbia. I'm Jon Steinman. You can learn more about this show and also follow along on Darrick and Sinisa's cross-Canada tour by visiting our website at deconstructingdinner.ca.

Now just before and during that last segment Darrick and Sinisa shared some of their thoughts on how because the tricycles that they are taking across the country are so unique they've been doing a great job at drawing attention to not only the trikes themselves but to Deconstructing Dinner because affixed to both trikes are signs with the Deconstructing Dinner website.

Now in British Columbia, the interest by the public into wanting to learn more about Deconstructing Dinner was pretty successful, but according to Darrick, it didn't quite receive the same success in Alberta.

Darrick caught up with me over the phone while in Prawda Manitoba, just a day before they planned on heading across the border into Ontario.

Darrick recalls his time in Alberta.

Darrick Hahn: My impression of Albertans is that they are really friendly but they are definitely, they are more production oriented, and the only reason that I could say that is that when we talked to Albertans about say our trikes or about Deconstructing Dinner the focus of the conversation always fell on the trikes and how they worked. There didn't seem to be too much interest or awareness of the concept of buying local or supporting your local farm or less industrial models.

Jon Steinman: Now this productionist mentality that is far more noticeable in Alberta was best captured in the case of food while Darrick and Sinisa passed through the town of Brooks. They had both decided to take a detour up through Calgary to visit with Darrick's two brothers, and we will come back to their time spent in Calgary in just a moment, but located in Brooks – which is southeast of

Calgary, is one of Canada's largest slaughterhouses and meat packing facilities. Lakeside Packers is owned by American food giant Tyson Foods and the facility is said to process about 4,000 head of cattle every day. This slaughterhouse epitomizes the industrialization of our food, so much so, that even if you *were* to travel *out* of the city to see where your food came from, a visit to Lakeside Packers would not teach you much.

Darrick Hahn: We approached it from the northwest side I guess. And you know, from a distance it looks relatively inconspicuous, looks like a large building and there is a little bit of steam or I would assume it is steam billowing out and obviously it is really blocked off and hidden by a lot of trees and whatnot and all it says is like there is a little inconspicuous sign on the entrance and that is about all you can find out. So obviously they know it is a sensitive issue on what goes on there. While I biked by I saw everything from large transport trucks and trailers going in and out to small farmer owned trailers, like a pickup truck pulling a trailer that might have five or ten head of cattle. So, I've done a stint in a meat packing plant and I've seen how things get done there and it's your typical industrial model where production rules. Get as much done as quickly as possible and maximize profits.

soundbite

Jon Steinman: This is Deconstructing Dinner and that was Saskatchewan musician Little Miss Higgins and her tune Slaughterhouse. Little Miss Higgins was most recently nominated for a Juno award and her slaughterhouse tune was in fact inspired *by* the Lakeside Packers plant in Brooks Alberta.

Today's broadcast of Deconstructing Dinner we are catching up with Darrick Hahn and Sinisa Grgic the two cyclists who are currently making their way across the country while promoting and raising awareness of this radio show.

Now coming back to Calgary, we do learn that not all of Alberta is geared towards mass-production and extraction of commodities. Following our May 12th episode when we first aired a segment on the cross-Canada trike tour, a listener from just north of Calgary sent an email and presented a generous offer to donate food to both Darrick and Sinisa. Local food. The listener was Jeffrey Casey who operates Casey's Heirlooms of Airdrie. Jeffrey specializes in organic heirloom seeds that he harvests in his backyard garden, and he enthusiastically met up with Darrick and Sinisa in Calgary.

Darrick Hahn: I couldn't have met a more enthusiastic person while I was in Calgary. This guy was based in Airdrie and drove out of his way all the way into Calgary, pretty much downtown Calgary where I was staying with my brother, and came in and we talked a bit, he gave us some of his sun-dried tomatoes, he gave me some carrots, some radishes, some leafy greens, some spinach, some onions, but they were kind of like a Japanese variety, and then his wife who is

Japanese also made us this delicious precooked meal of these leafy greens with sesame seeds and seasoning and it was delicious. We incorporated it into some of our meals and we made some sandwiches with leafy greens and in fact just today we finished off the sun-dried tomatoes and a little rice. And I got to say it's just a great experience to meet people with such enthusiasm and wanting to contribute in one way or another.

Jon Steinman: Following their time in Alberta, Darrick and Sinisa passed through Medicine Hat, conducted a brief interview with the local paper there and then made their way into Saskatchewan. Following a stop in Swift Current and another interview with a southern Saskatchewan newspaper, they chose to depart the busy ness of the Trans-Canada highway and instead made their way further south on an alternate route. What was most surprising to the two of them was how agriculture has seemingly taken a back seat in southern Saskatchewan, because standing on many of the farms they passed by was an oil rig, and as Darrick puts it, these farmers are having a field day with their new source of income.

Darrick Hahn: It was really interesting because as we were travelling through Saskatchewan I was amazed at how many oil rigs were up and about. While we were camping in camp grounds we actually met a couple of oil rig workers and kind of got their view on things and while I've never really witnessed it personally I've heard from other people in communities mentioning that the incentive for farmers to keep farming after their making such a nice royalty from having a rig on their farm has dropped drastically and yes they are completely frivolous in my opinion. I'm sure there's exceptions to every rule but they are all driving brand new pick-up trucks and the way I am understand it, they might be getting benefits towards reduced cost fuel or refuel. I know the oil workers benefit from that. But you see that and what about building improvements to the farm or taking advantage of this time and because these farmers are squandering a great opportunity to make themselves more efficient farmers or better farmers the fact there is oil on their land and it is available to them to make some money off of is a good thing no matter how destructive oil can be but to find out that they are not really taking the farming side seriously because they don't really have to is a bit discouraging. I've talked to a couple people where their take on it was fifty years ago our grandparents, they knew to save in the good years, because they knew that was going to become some lean years and it just seems like that mentality's been lost, and I'm quite afraid in five or ten years when the oil boom is done in Saskatchewan there will be a lot of farmers crying the blues and I will have a hard time pitying them because they really squandered the opportunity that was given to them.

Jon Steinman: One of the reasons Darrick and Sinisa chose to take a more southerly route through Saskatchewan was because of yet another fan of Deconstructing Dinner who contacted the two cyclists and proposed some generous accommodations in the town of Carlyle. Ben Husband who sent the

email is also a writer for the Carlyle Observer and he of course wrote an article about the cross-Canada trike tour.

Darrick Hahn: He introduced himself as a fan of the show and he worked in the local media in Carlyle and he told me a lot of cyclist's bike through Carlyle and he wanted to do an interview with me and also put me up for a night or two if it worked out. So that was way back when I was in Calgary and I took a look at the map and it really wasn't that far out of the way and I was like well sure why not and why not meet somebody who is interested in the show and interested in food security issues and so we decided to change the route and head down that way. We arrived late on a Sunday at Ben's place and he had prepared like an organic salad and then managed to get, I believe they were elk sausages, from local farmers so it was farmed out. We sat down, we had a little bite to eat and we gave a little interview with him and their recent converts to the whole concept to buying local and buying organic and up until recently they had been fairly oblivious to the concepts of where their food was coming from and what was being put into the food and what they produced. You could see it was really clear there was something that Ben was really passionate about.

Jon Steinman: The article written by Ben for the Carlyle Observer is linked to from the Deconstructing Dinner website.

Now it was around the Alberta/Saskatchewan border when one of the first major mechanical concerns descended onto the trip, but as it turned out, the extended stay in southern Manitoba proved to be a fruitful opportunity.

Darrick Hahn: We noticed that Sinisa's tires were starting to show some serious wear and they actually ended up deteriorating or at least the one tire ended up deteriorating pretty rapidly so we ended buying a cheap BMX bike tire and then from there we agreed to try to coordinate a spot to buy some new tires and just drive through Winnipeg and pick them up. As a result when we talked to the bike shop we were getting them through they told us it would be a few days before they could actually come in so we decided to take advantage of the opportunity and rather instead of sitting around and wait; tour around southwestern Manitoba.

Jon Steinman: One of the highlights of their time spent in Southern Manitoba was just outside the town of Boissevain. A fan of the show had contacted me and suggested that Darrick and Sinisa make their way to the farm of David Neufeld and his family. Known as Room to Grow – the farm was the first certified organic farm producing organic bedding plants in Manitoba back in 1994.

Darrick Hahn: We've stayed at a farm near Boissevain called Room to Grow and the feature of the farm mainly is the straw veiled of construction that has taken place at the farm. But when we got there and got to know the family and got to know David Neufeld and Maggy, his wife. There is a whole lot more going on

there then really meets the eye. Here is a guy that is making the most of everything that is available to him on the land and around the community and really in my opinion is leading by example when it comes to a new approach and a new view to life in general. He specializes in greenhouse growing, where he grows a lot of bedding plants and he also grows a lot of herbs. A lot of the herbs are going to many community-initiated ventures throughout southwestern Manitoba but he does also travel as far as Winnipeg to provide herbs to costumers as well.

Jon Steinman: While the farm itself was a model for more responsible farming, as could be expected, the food too was a model for more tasty and enjoyable eating.

Darrick Hahn: The first night we were there, he cooked up a delicious bison meatloaf and then also just had some of the vegetables he had grown on his farm and he has a nice big beautiful garden. Potatoes and carrots and whatever he had stored over the year baked as a complimentary dish. He was able to get himself a few fresh vegetables, obviously from in town just to top things off. The second dinner we had was pizza that he made, I think he actually ground the wheat himself, and made the bread; that was equally as delicious. We were truly treated to delicious meals there, that's for sure.

Jon Steinman: Now David Neufeld of Room to Grow is very well connected in the world of farming and food production in Manitoba, and he provided Darrick and Sinisa with a long list of places to visit as they continued east from Boissevain. Their next stop was the town of Clearwater and located there is an organization known as the Harvest Moon Society which acts as a model for how a community can reinvigorate a more local food system.

Darrick Hahn: We met a great farming couple Keith and Joline Gardiner. They are heavily involved in the Clearwater community where there is a lot of local and cooperative initiatives taking place but the big one that takes place is called the Harvest Moon Society and the best way to describe it in my opinion is, it's just a group of people that are dedicated to rural development and maintaining their rural lifestyle that they are all familiar with and happy with. They have actually been able to create like a little bit of a central command center where they purchase and hold school and have been able to give a building for people to socialize with their peers. Create resource groups and support groups for farmers, be they young farmers just starting out, be they old farmers looking to retire, be they farmers that have been stretched thin from taking on too much which can happen quite often. Coming into the community, it doesn't take much to actually see what's going on there, they got a little community garden that is taking place and in the back of the school area there is a teepee and then they have a, basically, community owned restaurant there as well so. Even the people we met while we were there, you could see it was a fairly tight knit community.

Jon Steinman: And this is Deconstructing Dinner. In approaching the end of my conversation with Darrick as he spoke to me from Prawda Manitoba I asked him to share some examples of discussions he's had with farmers. The example he shared is an important one when juxtaposing small-scale diverse farming practices versus those of the more conventional mono-cropping systems that in the end, farmers are just trying to pay the bills, and so long as people in the cities don't reach out with their time and their wallets to encourage more responsible farming practices, Canadian farmers will have little choice but to continue producing food in the most economical way they know how.

Darrick Hahn: I think most people were quite open to the discussion and for example, talking with Keith Gardiner, it's real simple in his approach to farming, is in that, you have to be able to make sure that all your bills get paid and you have to do that in the way you know see being the farmer as the best way to do it and in my discussions with him he is one that does grow Canola. And that being said there is really nothing but genetically modified Canola and that was what he was growing. He introduced some interesting arguments that I was happy to debate, obviously in a constructive manner with him about farmer's obligations to be able to provide the world with food; something as simple as that. It really helps to gain a perspective from a farmer's mindset and just one of the possible views that they do have.

Jon Steinman: And in closing out my conversation with Darrick, he briefly shared some of his goals for the next leg of the trip into Ontario.

Darrick Hahn: Well we are still crossing our fingers that we can make it to Ottawa for Canada Day but we are going to have some long days ahead of us for biking. We have been fighting headwinds throughout the prairies like I got to say that, common knowledge is that prevailing winds come from the west but I have to seriously contest that after what we have been through. We have spent probably seventy five percent of the time biking into an east wind or some variation in east, be it northeast or southeast. But it has built a lot of character.

Jon Steinman: And that was Darrick Hahn who spoke to me over the phone while stopping in Prawda Manitoba. You can follow Darrick and Sinisa's cross-Canada Deconstructing Dinner Trike Tour by staying posted to their blog which is linked to from our website at deconstructingdinner.ca.

And that marks show number 99 produced here at Deconstructing Dinner – stay tuned for a celebratory 100th episode on our next broadcast.

ending theme

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 John Ryan.

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.