

**Show Transcript  
Deconstructing Dinner  
Kootenay Co-op Radio CJLY  
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**Title: The Local Grain Revolution I / Deconstructing Dinner in Our Schools II**

**Producer: Jon Steinman**

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*Excerpt of quote from Matt Lowe:* Well in doing the 100-mile diet, I quickly realized that I couldn't get grain locally, it simply wasn't being grown around here. The question naturally came, "How can we grow grain around here, is there an area where grain can be grown?" I was aware that the Creston Valley was a very fertile area, that it had been historically an agricultural area. And I had a friend in Creston. I shared the idea with her, that I'd like to see grain grown locally. She said "Well I think there are farmers that I'm aware of, that would also be interested in this idea," and the project was born.

*Jon Steinman:* And welcome to today's episode of Deconstructing Dinner, a syndicated weekly radio program and podcast produced in Nelson British Columbia at Kootenay Co-op Radio CJLY. I'm Jon Steinman, and on today's show, we finally get around to covering a topic that was only a grain of an idea back in September 2007 when we aired the broadcast titled, The Eat Local Challenge.

It was during the month of August when about 150 Nelson area residents pledged to eat locally throughout the month. Now one participant in particular was sparked to action following the challenge, and that was Matt Lowe. Matt recognized that one of the most important ingredients missing from his local diet, was grain, and instead of shrugging his shoulders and remaining reliant on the long-distance transport of this staple, he teamed up with a friend living in Creston to launch what is likely, Canada's first grain CSA – that is a Community Supported Agriculture grain project.

On today's show we'll be learning more about how this project got started, who's involved, what it means for the food security for the Nelson and Creston area, and maybe most importantly, whether this model can be adopted by other regions around the world looking to create a more sustainable and responsible food supply. Along with an interview with Matt Lowe of the West Kootenay Eco-Society, we'll hear from farmer Drew Gailius and also listen in on segments from the first official meeting of the CSA that I attended back in December. This will take up the first 45 minutes of the show and will mark the first in an ongoing

series that will document the first year of this exciting and, dare I say, revolutionary project. This segment will mark the first episode in an ongoing series and the title will be The Local Grain Revolution.

And in the final 15 minutes of the show, we will air the second installment of our periodic series titled Deconstructing Dinner in our Schools. On this Part II, we'll hear from a Grade 4 student at a Nelson-area Elementary School who chose an interesting topic for a recent in-class presentation. And you can stay tuned to hear Kodiak Morasky speaking to his class on the stories children don't hear about *factory* animal farms, certainly a shocking topic that does *not* make its way into public schools, let alone, grade 4 classrooms.

### **soundbite**

*Jon Steinman:* And today's broadcast will be archived on our website at [cjly.net/deconstructingdinner](http://cjly.net/deconstructingdinner).

For most North Americans wishing to adopt a more local diet, the overwhelming rise in demand in just the past year has left a large question mark hovering over the heads of many, myself included. The question is of course, where is all this local food so many are demanding? Now clearly, the state of farming and food production in North America has evolved into such a poor state of affairs that little infrastructure and incentives remain to respond to this current demand for local product. Now while fruits and vegetables may be the most *easily* accessible local foods at farmers markets and a select number of grocery stores, grains are not often referred to when speaking of local food. In fact when we start to envision what plant-based foods we're still missing out on, we can list off wheat, oats, barley, rye, spelt, flax, hemp, corn, and the many leguminous plants like beans and lentils, all of which are predominantly grown in the middle of the continent.

And so today, we'll explore the creation of a project launched by two conservation groups wishing to experiment with creating a local grain market in the middle of the mountains of British Columbia. Matt Lowe of Nelson's West Kootenay EcoSociety and Brenda Bruns of the Creston branch of Wildsight have teamed up with a number of farmers, processors, bakers and eaters to see if such an idea is indeed possible. In a nutshell, the project will see three Creston-area farmers commit to growing three types of grain in the coming 2008 season. 200 member shares will be issued to residents of Nelson and Creston. And at the end of the season, come harvest time, those 200 members, including myself, will, hopefully, receive 100 lbs of whole grains. A miller in Creston and Nelson will be on hand if needed to turn those grains into flour or flakes and ensure that members are *only* using the freshest, tastiest and most nutritious product available.

Now this project has been mentioned on a number of shows in recent months and it's exciting to finally be able to tie all of these shows together. Following its

first mention on our Eat Local Challenge episode, it then received mention during the first of our Heritage Foods series when I spoke with Sharon Rempel - an advocate for one of Canada's heritage *wheat* varieties, Red Fife Wheat. The project was mentioned yet again during the series titled the Colonization of the Canadian farmer and the Genetically Engineered Free Zone episode, because this Grain CSA project could very well help launch the creation of a GE-Free region. And the model for this project was also introduced when we launched our Soil Matters CSA series, which examined the creation of a vegetable community supported agriculture project. It was then when we first learned of how important the CSA model is when looking to claim greater control and responsibility over our food choices. A CSA involves members of a community linking up with a farmer and becoming a member of the farm. In doing so, the farmer receives a financial commitment from its members at the beginning of the year, and ensures a market for when the food is ready at harvest. The CSA model also passes on some of the risks of farming to the member. And we'll learn more about that later on today's show.

Now it was during our September broadcast titled The Eat Local Challenge when we also heard clips from a short presentation by authors James Mackinnon and Alisa Smith. Both James and Alisa were touring through the Kootenay region of BC on a book release tour for their now-well known title The 100-Mile Diet. And it was James Mackinnon who spoke to a Nelson audience in August of 2007 and he spoke of his recent visit to Creston. Here's that clip again.

*James Mackinnon:* And it's a great example, again, of how we can change the system. We had farmers coming to us, saying "Oh, you couldn't find any lentils?" "Oh, couldn't find any grain?" "Get us 100 names and we'll grow them." And 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 stood up and said, "I'm swimming in wheat out on my farm, I can't get rid of the stuff." And by the end of the meeting a group of people were banding together to throw money at her, to get her a grain cleaner so that she can wash her wheat and sell it to them. (*chuckling*) So it can happen fast.

*JS:* And fast it has happened, but not without the efforts of Matt Lowe and Brenda Bruns. I sat down with the West Kootenay EcoSociety's Matt Lowe to learn more about where inspiration for this project originated.

*Matt Lowe:* Well there was that challenge to do the 100-Mile Diet last summer in Nelson that I took up. For me it was one day a week. After I started doing the 100-Mile Diet, I quickly became aware that grain was something I was very dependent upon. I was also working on a campaign to address climate change, and in doing the 100-Mile Diet, that if we could produce more of our food locally, that we could certainly address the problem of climate change.

*JS:* Now Matt Lowe lives in Nelson, which does not have the most ideal topography for the growing of grain, and so instead Brenda Bruns who lives in Creston and who had attended their 100-Mile Diet event, was contacted.

*ML:* Well in doing the 100-mile diet I quickly realized that I couldn't get grain locally. It simply wasn't being grown around here. The question naturally came, well how can we grow grain around here, is there an area where grain can be grown? I was aware that the Creston Valley was a very fertile area, that it had been historically an agricultural area, and I had a friend in Creston who I was aware was becoming involved in community food issues in the Creston Valley. I shared the idea with her, that I'd like to see grain grown locally. She was very excited about the idea and she said "Well I think there are farmer that I know, that I'm aware of who would also be interested in this idea." And the project was born.

*JS:* The first step that Brenda and Matt undertook was to find some interested farmers. And they came across three willing farmers farming in the Creston Valley, and Matt briefly describes two of the three.

*ML:* You know, once we had made contact with the farmers the next step was to go visit them on their farms. That was a wonderful day, because it was last fall, it was a beautiful autumn day, I remember. And for me, it was taking it from the theoretical, it all became very tangible, because we were actually walking on the farms with the famers and imagining the grain growing on these farms. The first farmer we visited, he's a horse farmer, he has been growing small-scale, so mostly for cattle. He actually raises some organic meat on his property, and he has grown some grain on a small scale for his family. But he actually gave us a lesson in food issues and conservation issues. He was an incredibly aware man, and you could tell (*he*) had a real love of working with the land. So there was no doubt that we were on the same page.

Now the third farmer that we have is a more conventional farmer in Creston. They've been able to make a go of farming, unlike the other two, where it was more "hobbier," you know, for providing for their family. They just had an openness, right away, to the idea of doing something different than how they'd been doing it.

*JS:* What stood out upon learning of the three farmers committed to growing grain for the CSA, was the diversity among their backgrounds. In one case, we have an experienced farmer who is more focused on producing for his family and his friends and who uses horses instead of tractors to farm. We have another farm where making a living off of farming is the focus and where conventional practices have long been utilized. And then the third farmers, who we'll meet later on the show, are very new to farming and are currently eager to experiment with as much diversity as possible.

Now it was following the commitment from the three farmers that a first official meeting was set up this past December. And Matt Lowe describes how this meeting was planned.

*ML:* If we had tried to plan it all out from Day 1, it would look much different than it has evolved, and I'm really grateful that we didn't get too caught up in how it was going to look. We really have been letting it evolve in the way that it's meant to evolve. The pivotal meeting was in December, where we met with the farmers. And we invited certain other people in our communities who had expressed an interest in taking part in this project. At that meeting we took it from the theoretical to the actual. We started talking about what would be grown, what was feasible, who would grow how much of each crop, how would we get the product from the farmer to the consumer, what would we pay the farmer. So all these things got put on the table, and they started to get worked out, although that was daunting because we were breaking new ground.

*JS:* Now I did attend this first meeting but not before Matt and I enjoyed a breakfast of pancakes, and these weren't just any pancakes. These pancakes were made with flour milled in Creston and grown by Drew and Joanne Gailius, the third farm that has committed to growing for the Grain CSA project. Certainly a ceremonious meal before what will hopefully become a pivotal meeting in the history of local food security in the Kootenay region of BC.

Attending the meeting were about 14 people all with something important to contribute to the project. There were the three committed farms – Keith Huscroft, Roy and Sherry Lawrence and Drew and Joanne Gailius. Also at the meeting was farmer Wayne Harris whom we heard speak on a recent broadcast of Deconstructing Dinner, and who is in the process of launching Creston's first organic dairy. Wayne was eager to be part of such an exciting project and while he won't be growing grain for the CSA this year, he had valuable information to share at the meeting. Nelson's Dave Everest was also at the meeting. Dave owns a mill that he wishes to pull out of retirement and put back into operation to serve Nelson CSA members wishing to have their grain milled. Jenny Truscott, who has been milling grain in Creston for quite some time has committed to be the Creston miller for the CSA. And a handful of other food security advocates and farmers joined the meeting to lend their experience and inspiration.

Here's a quick clip of Matt Lowe as he first addressed the group and answered the question, why a CSA?

*ML:* We chose the CSA model, the Community Supported Agriculture model, because we wanted to make sure that we didn't make the mistake of the past and that is, have bankrupt farmers. We wanted to make sure that the farmers got a fair wage. And also we wanted to connect the people who are receiving the

product with the people who are growing it, and the Community Supported Agriculture model is good for that.

*JS:* Matt didn't waste any time to share with the group how overwhelming of a response had been received since word began circulating about the project.

*ML:* So since we've launched this project idea we've had an overwhelming response and we've only launched it in one public place in Nelson. I know Brenda has also launched it publically here in Creston. But we had a future food conference in Nelson which was about local food security. We had about 30 people sign up there. Since then, almost daily now I have people coming up to me and saying that they want to be part of it, you know, can they sign up? So there's a real excitement in the Nelson area, to be part of this project.

*JS:* Also to help introduce the project at the meeting was Brenda Bruns, the Creston-based organizer of the project. Brenda is a Director with the Creston branch of Wildsight, an organization that works to maintain biodiversity and healthy human communities in the Columbia and Rocky Mountains ecoregion.

*Brenda Bruns:* I have been interested in the environment, as my passion, and looking at the impact we're having on the earth, since I was about 17 years old and I started an environmental club in Kelowna. I guess what started me off was meeting Elizabeth May, and she's been a great hero for me. One thing has led to another for me and I realized that the more we bring our activities down to the local level, and we see what we're doing around things like food, and how we live in our day-to-day lives, that that's the best way for us to monitor how we're living in harmony with the environment. And if we want to change the way things are going in the big world, that can be pretty dark you know, when we look at what's going on right now, and pretty dismal. I think in our own world, in our own community we can make a lot of change. And so for me, this is about community. It's about making sure that the farmers know the people that they're selling their food to. And that the people that are eating their food are able to thank the farmers who grew the food that they're eating. And I think that connection is reconnecting people with the earth that supports them, and they'll be maybe more careful with their water, their air and their resources. So that's what's prompted me to really want to find some solutions. And this is one tiny little piece in I think, some of the steps we need to take to find a solution.

*JS:* Now while the Grain CSA may just be a tiny piece in the greater scheme of things, the project does possess some pretty significant possibilities should this first season prove to be a success. While there will only be a handful of crops on a pretty small area of land under cultivation, the Creston Valley is an expansive, underutilized, and fertile region. With such widespread interest among farmers there to find alternatives to the conventional systems that clearly are not rewarding them as they should, this CSA *could* mark the start of a significant

allocation of land to be put into production for local needs. Two of these local farmers at the meeting were Wayne Harris and Keith Huscroft.

*Wayne Harris:* I'm Wayne Harris, a local farmer who's very interested in the local food movement and at some point, we do have a small grain cleaner if the growers required something like that.

*Keith Huscroft:* Well there's no pressure on us to come through with a crop, is there? *(audience laughter)* I'm Keith Huscroft, I have a little farm out in Lister, and I'm Wayne's next door neighbor, and I'm just here to see what the opportunities might be. I'm not looking to plant 80 acres of anything, because I want to play with my horses more so what I will be doing, the little bit that I am going to be doing I'm going to try to do completely with my horses, so you might not see any grain from me next year. But that's sort of the direction I'm going to take, and I'm really interested to see where this can lead. I'm not counting on you for much of a living for an acre or two of grain, but we've been grinding our own wheat and making our own bread for 30 years. My grandparents, they were organic, so this is nothing very new. We've always bought our wheat from Alberta because we were just told that it was a better quality of wheat, and why even try to keep my cows in it if we could just go and buy a bag once in a while. Anyway, so I'm looking forward to seeing what you guys come up with, if I can grow it and deliver it.

*Jon Steinman:* And this is Deconstructing Dinner. As the December meeting progressed, the details of how the grains would be grown was discussed including some talk of equipment needs and the milling of the grain. And to give you an idea as to what kind of details were necessary to work out in the creation of a grain CSA, here's a sampling of segments from that meeting.

*Matt Lowe:* First of all we wanted to get into the method of growing, and *(what)* we would like to see is an organic or natural, non-GMO product, from what I know so far. From the three farmers on the committee that are here, that works for you?

*Wayne Harris:* Yeah, well, we seem to be successful with what we're doing.

*Female participant:* You're not certified organic?

*WH:* No, we're not certified organic.

*Brenda Bruns:* One of the concerns that I have, that comes immediately to mind when we talk about "naturally grown," and we start to define this for the customer that's coming to us, is that Jenny's equipment is used for organic product, and she'll have to clean her equipment in-between usage, if we're not organic. And we won't be, so that's an issue for Jenny. I know that Sunset Seed has said that they can help us with packaging if that's necessary. They can clean -- you've

said you've got small-scale equipment which might be more appropriate, depending on our volume. But Sunset Seed has said to me that they put a lot of feed through, so they certainly don't have organic. Now he said that it's been a while since they've put anything bad through, and he could run some cleaner wheat through to clean out the system, then he could clean it again, but again we're not accessing organic equipment through the Sunset Seed, but we may not be able to use Jenny's equipment because we're not. You know, being naturally grown, we're kind of in a grey area, where Jenny isn't going to want us, because we're not organically certifiable, in her equipment off and on. I can see you cleaning your equipment and running our stuff through once in a big batch, but if people are wanting to bring you a bag of grain here and there, like if we distribute grain that isn't milled and we take it to Jenny to mill it, or the customer then takes it to Jenny to mill it as they need it, you're almost going to need a separate set of equipment to handle the non-organic.

*Jenny Truscott:* And I've considered that. If this gets big enough, it would be worth my while to have a separate mill, just for Creston grain.

*Brenda Bruns:* Okay

*Keith Huscroft:* It's too much of a cost, really isn't it? So we're not even going to consider it. My farm hasn't had any fertilizers in a long time, except manure, so it wouldn't be a problem to switch it to organic, but I don't really see a profit. You know, it's like \$300 a year just for the land, that would be it, but \$300 is a ton of your wheat off your two acres, which doesn't make it worthwhile for the little bit that I'm going to do. So we're not even going to consider organic certification. Is that sort of how or where we're going to?

*Brenda Bruns:* Most of our consumers are really interested in naturally grown. They don't want to eat something that's been doused with pesticides. They don't want something that's got fungicides on it. They don't want something that's requiring a lot of chemical fertilizer input that they know to be harming the environment. But on the other hand, I think they're more interested in getting a local product, than they are in getting an organic product, in the sense I get from the people that I know that are interested. They want a healthy, local product.

*Jon Steinman:* This is Deconstructing Dinner. Today's broadcast is featuring the first part of an ongoing series titled the Local Grain Revolution, and we're currently listening to clips from a meeting that took place in December 2007. The meeting was a gathering of food security advocates and farmers who are launching a Grain CSA – a community supported agriculture project whereby 200 member shares will be issued to residents of Nelson and Creston British Columbia, and which will be redeemed at the end of the season in exchange for a bag of whole grains grown locally by three Creston-area farmers. The project seems to be the first of its kind in Canada and hence the title of the series – the Local Grain Revolution. This Grain CSA series will continue throughout the year

as we track the evolution of its creation. And coming up in the final 15 minutes of the show today, we'll air Part II of another periodic series here on the program known as Deconstructing Dinner in our Schools. On this Part II we'll hear from a 10-year old Nelson-area resident who chose a rather interesting topic for a recent school project. His project was titled What's in Your Pizza, and most shocking, were the stories he told of where the pepperoni and cheese come from. And again, that will round off today's broadcast.

But coming back to the December local Grain CSA meeting I attended in Creston BC, that last segment shared some of the discussion as to whether the grains should be certified organic or simply referred to as naturally grown. And there was one important comment in particular that addressed this and it was made by one of the food security advocates in attendance. And the comment was this: "If what we're aiming for in this CSA is to create the linkage between the farmer and the eater, then organic certification doesn't make sense." Certainly a sign of how the local food movement is quite literally moving "beyond organic."

### **soundbite**

*JS:* In this next segment from the meeting, we'll listen in on the discussion that addressed the exciting topic of, *what* to grow.

*Matt Lowe:* We still haven't got clarity on what we're going to grow. Wheat is a definite crop. Beyond that, we have been looking at the possibility of Kamut, oats or rye. And so I wanted to have a discussion on the types of grain. Wheat would be the primary grain that we'd grow, that's the one we grow the most of. Brenda and I have been talking and we'd like to experiment, and I've also been talking to other people like David, with a few other crops, all on a lesser scale. What I've learned so far, is that Kamut is a close relative to wheat and there's certainly a market for it in Nelson. At the store that I work at, it fetches a good price. It's seems to be a pretty popular grain. My own experience is that it's a very tasty grain. I like it. David has made bread with it, so he can talk about that in a minute, maybe.

Oats, I'm really curious about oats because I think it's a staple too for us. I know a lot of people who love granola and porridge and so on. So, I would love to see oats being grown. What I've found out about oats so far, is that you need another machine, to de-hull, even if you're going with hull-less oats. From what I've learned you still end up with a high percentage of the harvest that has hulls on it. So maybe we can get into that in a minute.

Rye is another possibility. I think Roy, you've had experience with rye?  
*(background response)* Okay. It seems like it's a pretty easy one to deal with. So those are the four that I would throw out on the table. And I guess mostly what we're looking for is from the three of you, the three farmers, what you'd be interested in growing, and what I'm hoping is, that we can nail down these varieties and then maybe we can nail down quantity.

*Roy Lawrence:* We were thinking a couple of acres of wheat, and a couple acres of hull-less oats. I don't know about Kamut, what you need, I've never grown it. I don't know what it grows like or what you need to combine it, so I don't know anything about it.

*Female participant:* Can I say something about Kamut? Now I'm sorry I don't know the exact details, but a fellow patented Kamut. He found some seeds somewhere and he patented it. So now I don't know . . .

*Male participant:* I read on the internet you have to be certified organic?

*Matt Lowe:* I think David can help you. He's actually researched it.

*David Everest:* Greenworks sells it under the name "Polish Wheat."

*Female participant:* They do, yes.

*DE:* And I think that's the best way, you stay away from the name "Kamut," you stay away from the restrictions on it, the trademarks. And they said they didn't see any reason why you couldn't buy a bag of Polish Wheat from them, and just put it in the ground.

*Roy:* What does it grow like?

*DE:* It seems to be a cross between a durum wheat and . . .

*Roy:* Would it be similar to a wheat, and harvestable in the same way?

*DE:* Yeah.

*Roy:* Oh, okay.

*Matt Lowe:* And the reason that it's attractive, fairly attractive in the natural food market, is because apparently a lot of people who have allergies to wheat don't have these same allergies to Kamut, not yet anyway.

*Male participant:* Sounds like a gluten-free?

*ML:* It has gluten, low gluten.

*JS:* This is Deconstructing Dinner. Following the discussion on how much and what grains to grow as part of this local Grain CSA, there began a rather long discussion on who will share the risk of this experimental project. What makes a Community Supported Agriculture model so revolutionary, is that instead of leaving farmers to deal with the uncertainties inherent in farming, the eaters, that

is you and I, take on some of this risk. And it's this component of the CSA model that really begins to bring farmer and eater together in a community-like relationship. Here's a clip of that discussion.

*Male participant:* I think there needs to be a different mentality. Roy is willing to grow wheat. Roy needs to be able to know that, even if I have a really poor crop, I can still pay my bills. (*audience agreements*) That's what the mentality has to be. If Roy has an excellent crop, good for Roy. You know, there should be no penalty for the farmer, there should be no limit as to what he can do. But the farmer is taking a risk on growing an organic crop. So Roy needs to be able to count on say, only growing 800 to 1000 lbs per year of wheat, and if he does better than that, so be it. But he shouldn't be confined to only making x (*amount of*) dollars per acre, which is how industrial agriculture works today.

*Matt Lowe:* Yeah, and that's totally the difference, you're right. That, I think, is a really important aspect of this model.

*Male participant:* And so then Roy should be able to say, yeah I'll grow wheat next year, this is what I need to be able to comfortably make it. I'm going to count on being able to grow 700 lbs of wheat, organically, or at least naturally.

*Female participant:* So in that case, say the group set a price, say just to round figures up, 25 cents a pound for wheat, and Roy had a failure, he only got one-third yield. So then, we would pay him 75 cents. Is this how we'd pay him?

*2<sup>nd</sup> Female participant:* We'd pay him full, probable.

*Male participant:* No, I don't think that's a good way to go, either. And I'm not trying to propose an absolute fix here, but it should be, it needs to be consistent. It needs to be consistent for the consumer, as well as the producer. But you know, Roy might get a 2700 lb crop, not likely, but he might end up with a 2000 lb crop. And he might do extremely well on that. That should be okay. But we need to be able to figure that, on 700 lbs I need to make 300 dollars per acre, or 400 dollars per acre, 500 dollars per acre, whatever it is, and then figure back from there to your price per pound. That's just your yearly cost, that's how I see it. And there might be a better way to do it, but it needs to be fair on the consumer end as well, so that they're not always responsible, they know what their cost is going to be, to some extent, to some degree.

*Jon Steinman:* Now certainly one of the most pressing concerns facing the project is that of crop damage throughout the season. As the three farmers have all agreed to grow the grain without the use of synthetic chemicals, an interesting discussion did ensue on the topic of crop protection. What was most exciting, was the knowledge that began to be shared among the farmers in the room, and even the topic of biodynamic practices was discussed. Biodynamic agriculture is a form of organic agriculture that focuses on the interrelationship of the soil,

plants, animals, and looks at a given piece of land as a closed, self-nourishing system. Certainly a philosophy and practice running in opposition to the conventional methods of agriculture dominating our food supply.

*Roy:* In terms of insect damage, I think you might be able to affect that, even organically. . .

*Male participant:* Intercropping helps.

*Roy:* Well, intercropping, and we've had a huge problem with alfalfa where we've grown mustard before, and I think we've affected it quite a bit by changing the biology in our soil, with the brix levels in the crops, and that sort of thing. A higher brix level in your crop is much less appealing to insects, and it's actually more nutrient-dense for the consumer that's eating the product.

*Keith Huscroft:* And I mean biodynamics has really taken off in Australia. From what I've read is they can spray the crop with a super oxygenated compost-tea mix and it will actually eat the insects, or the eggs, you know, dissolve them. It's an ongoing thing, actually the Australian government sponsors this huge biodynamic program over there and they hardly use any chemical fertilizers at all anymore. So it's sound science, before it was kind of like a little witchcraft, but now they're proving that it actually works. This is just starting, there's a lot of opportunity, there's a lot of things that we can do. It might take ten years to figure out something but it will work.

*Jon Steinman:* As the meeting wrapped up, one of the final questions to answer, was how many members the local grain CSA should accommodate in its first year. And here's organizer Matt Lowe.

*ML:* So we want to keep it as simple as possible because we think in subsequent years there's going to be the potential for all kinds of other grains to be grown, and the market is going to be there for sure. I should also say that at the store I work at, there's a big customer base there, we grow leaps and bounds every year. I've already had discussions with the management at the store and they're interested in becoming a buyer of local grain. They almost want to get on board now, but I've said let's do this pilot project, let's wait and see. And that's just one store, I think there's so much more potentials.

*Jon Steinman:* And this is Deconstructing Dinner, a weekly one-hour radio program and Podcast produced at Kootenay Co-op Radio CJLY in Nelson, British Columbia. I'm Jon Steinman and if you've missed any of today's broadcast or are interested to learn more about today's topic, you can visit our website at [cjly.net/deconstructingdinner](http://cjly.net/deconstructingdinner). Today's show will be posted under the March 13<sup>th</sup> 2008 broadcast titled The Local Grain Revolution - Part I.

And again, those last recordings were recorded back in December 2007 in Creston, but I did recently catch up with Matt Lowe to learn more about what's happened since that first meeting.

*ML:* What it looks like now, and mostly as a result of that meeting, the farmers are going to be responsible for harvesting and cleaning the grain, and bagging. We're going to help them out in sourcing I think a bag that they can all use. And probably going to work with them a bit on labeling, we'd like to see a nice label on the bags. And then the next step is to bring it to the consumer, and we've already got a few options, in terms of transportation, to get it from the Creston Valley over the mountains to Nelson. There are people in Creston who will also get this grain so it will look a bit different for them. The most practical way for us to do it was a one-time drop-off, and in the whole grain. We have a person in Nelson and a person in Creston who is going to do the milling on a regular basis, so people can take their bulk quantities of grain and get it milled on a regular basis, getting it fresh, which is a wonderful thing, because apparently the nutrient value and the taste is much greater, when eating fresh grain.

*JS:* Now when speaking of taste, we can recall our November 22<sup>nd</sup> broadcast which acted as Part I of our series titled Heritage Foods: Preserving Diversity. Featured on that broadcast was Red Fife Wheat – a heritage variety that fed Canadians between 1860 and 1900, long before the introduction of chemical agriculture. Red Fife is gaining popularity yet again across the country as one of the tastier varieties to use in baking bread. Now it was on that show when I spoke with Sharon Rempel – a Victoria BC based Red Fife advocate, who is pushing for the reintroduction of this variety.

Let's listen back on a clip from that show as it was that broadcast that had quite the impact on the local Grain CSA featured on today's show.

*Sharon Rempel:* When we talk about wheat, I think many of us think about bread wheats, that's *Triticum Aestivum*. And there's probably a hundred thousand varieties of bread wheats in different gene banks and breeder collections around the world. That's a huge amount of biodiversity that could be explored for each bio-region. Red Fife isn't going to be adapted for every region, and what I've been encouraging through the Heritage Wheat Project for years, and what I will continue to do through my new foundation, the Red Fife Green Seed Foundation, is local farmer groups taking a number of heirloom varieties and field trialing them, not only because there's not a lot of quantity of these old varieties that you can just order a hundred pounds and start planting, you have to start with a 5 or 10 year plan and start increasing the quantity of these seeds. Sometimes it takes a variety 3 years to adapt to a new bio-region, and really get its personality developed. I mean, people will grow Red Fife, cause of its name and its appeal historically, but there are many, many varieties. I've got a freezer of 300 varieties that I've collected, including some varieties from Crete, old-land races, unnamed varieties that I'm starting to name as they go out into fields. And in there I think I

could find a wheat for any region of the world, just because there's so much adaptability in these old varieties. So as your communities start to develop like you say with the CSA, it's a closed loop. So these 300 varieties in my freezer have to get out of the freezer, they have to get into fields. So if you folks would like to collaborate in Nelson and do some field trials, I would like to encourage that. I mean, I hope what we can do for this coming growing season in the spring is have community groups like yourself and maybe others try the same varieties and then share the information on how the varieties did.

*JS:* And again, that show featuring Sharon Rempel aired back in November, and sure enough, Creston will now become a testing ground to see how the variety holds up to the mountainous climate of Interior BC. All three farmers are wishing to try it out this coming season, and even Wayne Harris, the Creston Dairy farmer who was also at the December meeting, is too, eager to try it out on his farm. The Red Fife seed has already been sourced from another familiar guest on Deconstructing Dinner – Marc Loiselle, the Saskatchewan farmer who lent his voice to our January series titled the Colonization of the Canadian Farmer. And here's organizer Matt Lowe.

*ML:* Well the exciting thing about the Red Fife is that, I learned about it on Deconstructing Dinner, in an interview you did with a Red Fife advocate, Sharon Rempel. So we brought the idea of Red Fife to them. When we had a subsequent meeting to the one in December with the farmers, all of them wanted to grow Red Fife, even though we really only had the capacity with the number of shares that we're selling this time around, for a few of them to grow Red Fife. And in the end, the farmer that wasn't to grow Red Fife, he's going to grow it anyways, just for his own personal experiment. And then the dairy farmer who's joined us, he's also going to grow Red Fife. So all of the farmers want to grow Red Fife, they're really curious about it.

The other crops that have been decided upon are rye, red springwheat, we're hoping oats, likely oats, but the complication around oats is an expensive piece of equipment to hull the oats, and also Polish wheat, which is also known as Kamut, it's a very rich-flavoured type of wheat.

*JS:* That was Matt Lowe of The West Kootenay Eco Society – an environmental conservation and advocacy group based in Nelson, BC. And in closing out this segment on the local grain community supported agriculture project, I did quickly catch up over the phone with one of the three farmers, Drew Gailius, who farms with his wife Joanne in the community of Canyon. Drew and Joanne are new to farming and farming is not their main source of income. They currently sell mostly at the farmgate and *have* tried their hand at growing grain over the past two years. As this Local Grain CSA series here on the program continues, we will have a chance to hear more from *all* of the farmers involved, but here's Drew sharing with me how he first became interested in the idea of a Grain CSA.

*Drew Gailius:* We went to the 100-Mile Diet showing at our local library, and that sort of opened doors, talking with people. And there was obviously an interest in people purchasing grain, cause that's sort of something that seemed to be a basic for people. And we had grown grain for a couple of years, so we did know a little bit about it. People expressed interest, and it sort of went from there.

*JS:* As Drew has had a couple of years' experience growing wheat and oats on his land, he describes the suitability of his farm for growing grain.

*DG:* We've grown just oats and wheat, wheat two years and oats one year. We've found it's worked out very well. So much of farming and also one of the things is climate, you know, weather, we're totally weather-dependent. Where we are, we're sort of up on the benchland outside of Creston. Our area seems to so far, touch wood, it's been a very good area for growing grain. Apparently, we were told that we were going to have problems growing wheat, because there's a little pest here, a wheat midge. We were told by one of the local farmers, a large farmer, that we couldn't grow it because we'll run into trouble with the wheat midge and have to spray. And because we didn't want to use any sprays, we couldn't do it. And we have found two years running that we've been successful without any sprays of any kind. So, you know, farming's an ongoing thing. Every year is a different year.

*JS:* For sake of time, my conversation with Drew was brief, but he did share with me the growing interest among other Creston-area farmers upon hearing of this exciting new market for local grains being created in the area.

*DG:* There is definitely an interest. And it's mostly because for farmers to know that you have a market, that is something that's very necessary for a farmer. That's one of the problems, it seems to be when you grow a product, being able to sell it at a reasonable price, that's an issue. So the CSA is great for that, just in knowing that we can sell our product, that it's sold and at a reasonable price. That's a real positive thing for farmers.

*JS:* And that was Drew Gailius of Full Circle Farm – one of three farmers committed to growing grain for the newly formed grain CSA being forged between the communities of Nelson and Creston BC. In my most recent conversation with organizer Matt Lowe, the CSA has already secured about 150 of the 200 available member shares, and that was *without*, any direct advertising. It was also decided that one bakery should come on board, and a Nelson bakery has already committed to 20 of those shares. You can stay tuned to Deconstructing Dinner to learn more about the evolution of this revolutionary local grain CSA.

**soundbite**

*Jon Steinman:* And this is Deconstructing Dinner. In the last quarter of today's broadcast, we'll be featuring the second part in our periodic series titled Deconstructing Dinner in Our Schools. The series was launched to examine how food and agricultural issues make their way into educational settings, with this episode featuring Kodiak Morasky - a ten year old Nelson British Columbia resident who chose a very unique topic to present to his grade four classmates. It was only a few months ago that Kodiak's mother had been browsing through the Deconstructing Dinner website, when she came upon a link to an animated series of short films titled The Meatrix (and those are found at [themeatrix.com](http://themeatrix.com)) The films were created by Free Range Graphics and funded by GRACE – a North American wide initiative based in New York City that has launched many highly informative on-line resources which include among others, [sustainabletable.org](http://sustainabletable.org) and [eatwellguide.org](http://eatwellguide.org).

The Meatrix has earned a number of awards for its effective and creative method of sharing the hidden stories of where the vast majority of North American meat originates. Kodiak chose to watch this film, and it had a profound impact.

*Kodiak Morasky:* Well I was sitting down on the couch, having a great time doing nothing and my mom was scanning through your website and she found The Meatrix. And afterwards, I said "Man, that's just scary." Some of that stuff, what the factory farming is and how they don't tell people and how bad it is. And basically they showed a pork farm where all the pigs were stuffed in these little stalls and then there's this pig and a cow and a chicken that were all against it. And then, in one of them it showed how the cows are put into these milking things that suck the milk out. And then they spend their time between there and the feed lots. And then the babies, how they get fed blood, after they get started on milk and then they get fed blood and stuff.

Then they went into the factory and showed how the workers were getting hurt and how the manure, when they made it really fast, was dripping on the meat and stuff.

*JS:* Certainly not the images most ten year olds would associate with farming. But indeed, such stories are not single cases. It was only last month that the world witnessed the largest meat recall in history, and the reason, because the California-based slaughterhouse had been processing sick animals into meat. Now while the practice is not allowed, this had been going on for years. And it was this film, The Meatrix, that sparked Kodiak to want to share this kind of information with his class, and he titled his class presentation "What's in Your Pizza."

*KM:* I discovered that, whenever someone goes down and eats a pizza, they don't really think about it, they just go, "Oh, this is so good, oh, I'm going to want this again." But they don't think that okay, here, this came out of a factory farm where all the animals are sick, this came out of a factory farm where disease is

ending up in the milk, this came out of a factory farm where they're being sprayed, where tons of pesticides are.

It has the dairy, the meat, the grain, and the fruit -- basically the vegetable, so I was able to cover everything pretty much in one, cover it all in the pizza. That's why I chose this.

*JS:* Kodiak is a grade four student at Blewett Elementary School just outside of Nelson's city limits, and I sat in on his presentation. He stood in front of a poster board that he compiled of images taken on the many factory farms that produce most of North America's meat, dairy and eggs. His first step was to deconstruct the pepperoni on his pizza.

*(background classroom sounds)*

*Voice of teacher:* Boys and girls, you need to take that energy you just received from the band concert and put it into excellent audience skills, please. That means you're seated appropriately, you're using your eyes and your ears for listening. You're paying attention to someone, just like you would want them to pay attention to you.

*KM:* So I did "What's in My Pizza," and I traced everything back to where it came from out of the farm. This is the pepperoni, so that's the pork in the factory farm, and it's basically a big metal building that contains a lot of animals. So these are all pigs there, these are all pictures of live animals in the factory farm. Here you can see the piglets are crammed in so tightly they have to stack on top of each other to fit in there. They just pack them in, quite tightly, and they can hardly lay down. And most animals can't turn around in the holding stall. In the factory farm they're basically fed and given water, then all the rest of their time they just have to stand there, and they're given about two years before they're killed in the slaughterhouse because they don't have enough space to get any exercise, which leads to muscle disease and causes skin problems.

So after a few years they'll be put onto a big truck where they're packed so tightly, where often the animals have their limbs completely snapped from the weight of other scared animals. Then in cold weather the pigs will often have their skin frozen to the sides of the slaughter truck. Then, when they get to the slaughterhouse many animals are so sick that they cannot even walk off the slaughter truck, therefore they are kicked off or dragged off. Then they're taken into the slaughterhouse and what they're doing in there I'm not going to mention.

So then after they're killed they'll butcher them. Well, actually once they get there they'll be stunned before having their hair burned off, but most times the stunning is improper so they'll have their hair burned off by a metal plate still completely conscious, and then they're slaughtered. Then butchered, and then they'll be turned into pepperoni for the pizzas. And they'll be turned into ham and pork

chops, bacon and other pork products, until they're left with the hide and hooves, which is boiled down into gelatin, which is the main ingredient in jello, and is also found in marshmallows, gummy bears, gummy worms, starburst and skittles.

*JS:* And you're listening to clips from What's In Your Pizza – a school project presented by Kodiak Morasky – a 10-year old student at Blewett Elementary School. Needless to say, the grade four class was rather shocked at learning where some of their food comes from, it's not a topic discussed in such detail in most grade four classes. Moving on from the pepperoni, Kodiak then chose to deconstruct the cheese on his pizza, and he touched on one disease that affects roughly 38% of all dairy cows in North America – mastitis, a disease that can significantly increase the somatic or white blood cell count in milk. While the presence of such cells is not seen as a threat to human health, it is seen as a threat to milk quality.

*KM:* It's also found in jelly beans. That's for the pork.

And then the cows, the cheese on the pizza comes from cows' cream. Here's a picture of a cow that's in one of the holding stalls and has an infection which causes some pus and blood to go straight into the milk which goes straight into the cheese on your pizza. That's what we eat. Then, that's a cow that's just so sick she can hardly stand. This is a cow that has been raised in a nice pasture by farmers that care about their animals, so that's a happy cow. These two pictures right here, this one's kind of small but those two pictures are pictures of cows in feed lots where they're crammed with their heads into those metal bars to eat.

*JS:* Moving on from the animals involved in the production of Kodiak's pizza, he then chose to focus on the crust, and he talked about where the wheat for the crust come from.

*KM:* Here for the pizza crust, that's wheat. The wheat so far in Canada, the government has refused to grow genetically engineered wheat but Monsanto, which is a bad company, is constantly asking almost every year if they can come in and grow their wheat. What they've done is they've taken wheat and made it immune to this chemical, where there's a truck and what they'll do is get an airplane basically to fly over the wheat field and spray this chemical down onto the wheat, while causing all frogs, snakes, mice, any animal, any plant in the wheat field to die because of the serious pesticides. Then the wheat is left to grow. And the wheat will end up in the pizza with the pesticide often still on it.

*JS:* Now one topic covered here on Deconstructing Dinner on a rather frequent basis is the transgenic engineering and manipulation of crops aka Genetically Engineered food. Had someone told me that the topic was being taught in a grade four classroom, I probably wouldn't have believed it. And sure enough it's probably not yet a reality, but 10-year old Kodiak Morasky chose to share this topic with his classmates during his presentation.

*KM:* Then these are happy pigs, that aren't factory farmed.

Here this is Franken Foods, basically what GE is, is where they take one cell from one plant or animal, organism, and take it out of that animal and put it into another animal to cause something else to happen. For instance scientists have created "glow in the dark" mice by crossing jellyfish and mice together. They've created red and green ones, and I'm not sure if they've created other colours. They've also created a goat that was crossed with a spider, and whenever they milk it, spider silk comes out in the milk. (*classroom reactions*)

That's why I personally have refused to eat anymore food that I don't know where it comes from, just after knowing where it actually comes from. It comes from somewhere where the pigs can't even turn around, somewhere where the cows end up with blood going straight into the milk cause they're so poorly treated. So that's why I don't eat it, and I hope some people will stop eating it too. (*classroom applause*)

*JS:* Now coming back to my conversation with Kodiak that I had following his presentation, I was understandably eager to learn more about how such shocking information was handled by someone at such a young age. He shared with me what he found most shocking upon learning more about the state of the North American food supply.

*KM:* About how the government so far has refused to let Monsanto grow its GE wheat in Canada, but how they're asking every year, and how quite a few countries are saying "No, if you grow GE wheat in Canada, we won't buy it from Canada." And I'd say it'd be a big problem if Canada was basically contaminated by GE wheat. We would pretty much have to say no GE wheat in Canada if we're going to keep selling it to all the other countries.

*JS:* Kodiak's project certainly highlighted one important lesson. That clearly, there is an interest among children as young as 10 years old, to learn more about where their food comes from and the many truths that understandably, a government-funded education system would shy away from sharing. I ended my conversation with Kodiak by asking him if he would like to see this topic discussed more in his public school.

*KM:* Definitely. I'd say if there was a program on what you eat at your common restaurant, I'd love it, if they could do that in the school.

*JS:* And that was Kodiak Morasky – a 10 year old grade four student at Blewett Elementary School, located just outside of Nelson, British Columbia. You can stay tuned for more similar content on our upcoming episodes of this Deconstructing Dinner in Our Schools series. And you can share this most recent segment with others by visiting our website at [cjly.net/deconstructingdinner](http://cjly.net/deconstructingdinner)

where we've recently added a feature on every page that easily allows sharing of our content among social networking websites and email. I'd also like to congratulate Kodiak on researching a topic that I'm sure was not an easy one to learn about, and his efforts certainly inspire an important question that we could *all* be asking ourselves, is it more painful to expose such shocking stories to children of where most of our food comes from, or is it more painful keeping children in the dark and insisting that all farms have a small red barn where the farmer is named Old McDonald?

And I'll end today's show with one last clip from the question and answer period following Kodiak's presentation. Some of his classmates announced that they would no longer eat candy or pork, while other comments indicated a seeming lack of trust for the Canadian government. This girl who you're about to faintly hear in the background, asks the question, "why doesn't the government do anything about this?" You'll then here her ask whether or not she can *sue* the government. Another classmate responds to her question, by saying "no, they'll kill you."

*Female classmate:* Why doesn't the government do something about that?

*KM:* As long as the companies keep paying him money, to let them do it, he has to.

*Female classmate:* Are we allowed to sue the government?

*Another Classmate:* No, they'll kill you.

*KM:* The other problem is the farms are actually set up so they've got their own security guards on, so that people don't find out about this. It's only after people have pretended to be workers and gone in to find out what really is happening that people started to learn about what's really in there.

*(classroom sounds)*

### **soundbite**

*JS:* 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.

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