

Company Shops Market: A local co-operative food market, located in downtown Burlington, offering locally grown organic foods, coffees, teas, and other goods. With over 10,000 members, Company Shops Market is one of the premier food co-ops in the state, with its own bakery, slow food restaurant, and an extensive line of wines and beers from local producers. Started as a vision for bringing the community back to downtown Burlington, the CSM has become hub of commerce, bringing the farm back to town...



Are You Ready To "Go Local?"

By Sam Moore

This is the vision of a small group of determined citizens – farmers, professionals, and business people – who believe that a co-operative market can help create community, preserve family farms, and recreate the idea that was Company Shops: a crossroads of commerce and community.

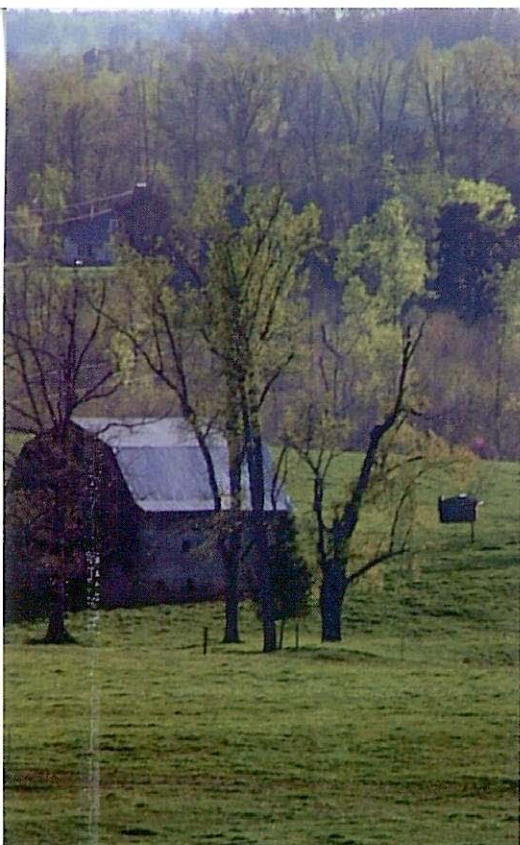
There is a growing movement in America that believes communities should be self-sufficient and more connected to the local agriculture economy. The average grocery item has more than 1,000 miles of travel invested in it before it hits the shelves at the store. Many folks would like to see local food producers get their opportunities at local customers and want more sustainable food, i.e., food with less travel miles than Eric Henry, on their grocery shelves. So much food could be produced right here at home, if there is

a place where a market community could be created.

If one wanders the local by-ways and visits Dr. Charles Sydnor's Braeborn Farm, with its herd of grass-fed Red Devon cows, and the rows of vegetables at Isley's Farm, or sees the lights on at the Reedy Fork farm at 4 a.m. as the Teagues begin the morning milking, one can feel the connection to the old North Carolina. When my grandfather had his store in Graham, most of the produce and meats came from local farms, along with milk and cheese. Those were times when farming was a mainstay, and one shopped at a particular market because they carried beef from this farm, or apples from another. In the old days, one did not doubt community, because everyone felt the connection each time they went to the store.

In Carrboro and in Pittsboro, vigorous local markets are thriving, and, along with them, local farmers are too. The markets have heavy volumes of traffic, as anyone can see if one tries to find a parking spot in Carrboro around Weaver Street. During the Carolina Farm Stewardship tours, one can visit the farms providing the meat, veggies and dairy products for Orange County's vigorous local markets.

On June 9th, the citizens of Alamance County will have their chance to demonstrate support and become a part of the beginnings of Company Shops Market by attending an outdoor event for families,



such as the casual hamburger and hotdog dinner (locally produced of course), or the feast from our fields haute cuisine dinner, prepared by some of the finest chefs of our region and matched with great local wines. All of the proceeds will go towards the formation of the Company Shops Market Co-op.

Our goal is to raise as much money as possible and hire a professional developer to get the co-op organized, enabling a founding capital campaign and the creation of a community space within Alamance County of which we all can be proud. Please visit our Web site, www.companyshopsmarket.com, for more information, and read the local media for news about this event.

Put it in your calendars now! Without a groundswell of support from the community, this is not going to happen. The amount of enthusiasm and support for this kick-off event will be a good indication of whether or not Alamance County is ready to "go local" and support our urban and farm community. ♦

(Elon resident Sam Moore is past CEO of Burlington Chemical Company. He teaches sustainable business strategies at the Love Business School at Elon University. He has been active in the effort to create this marketplace for a couple of years.)



The Sydnor's Braeburn Farm, shown here, will be the site June 9 of the benefit for Company Shops Market. There will be live music, hay rides, and an actual farmers market as well as two food events: locally-produced hotdogs and hamburgers from pork and beef in the afternoon and early evening, and a VIP "Food from our Fields Dinner" sit-down dinner, featuring local chefs, locally-grown produce and meats and wines. The price is \$40 per family or \$20 per person for the burgers and dogs. VIP Tables at the dinner will be \$2,000 for an 8-person seating. All proceeds, after costs, will be used to organize the market. A co-op market, such as Weaver Street in Carrboro and Hillsborough, needs thousands of members to be successful, and many farmers to supply the products. If this event is a big one, the community will have voted positively to continue to develop this market. If there is little interest, then the message is clear that Burlington is not yet ready for a community co-op marketplace.