



# News from Provident Organic Farm



[www.providentfarm.org](http://www.providentfarm.org)

Season 4, Week 8

“dedicated to a safe, just, and sustainable food system”

July 11<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup>, 2005

## University of Delaware student, Patrick Walters, reflects on his trip to the Amazon

### *"Fruit Juice and Awareness"*

On my walk home from class today I passed through Trabant, partly to escape the chilly gusts of an uncannily cool Delaware March and partly to grab a late afternoon snack. Although I had returned from Peru over a month ago, adjustment came slowly and days like this stimulated warm memories of the tropical clime. Falling into stride with the mass of students making their way between classes, I flowed along to the food court before breaking free from the current. A taco craving had clutched my stomach moments before, but I was disappointed to find a long line standing between me and the Taco Bell Express. I settled for a healthy alternative, picking up an apple juice, paying my \$1.25, stuffing the bottle in my book bag, and continuing homeward.

Back home at my desk I sipped my juice and checked my email. It was a busy day for the inbox, and messages from my parents in Reading, PA, my cousin in Italy, a geography professor in London, and my sister in New Zealand awaited reading. About halfway through the message from the geography professor, the bottle ran dry. Before tossing it into the recycling bin, I took a quick look at the nutrition facts, fifty six grams of carbohydrates, fifty two from sugars. Sugar water, not an earth shatteringly surprising revelation. But a bit of information to the right of the nutrition facts grabbed my attention.

The terse sentence, printed in tiny boldfaced font, read, "Contains apple juice concentrate from the USA, Argentina, Austria, Chile, China, Germany and Turkey." Shocking. Concentrate from seven countries, made of apples from who knows how many others, brought together into a small 15.2 oz. plastic bottle. Troubled and having difficulty actually visualizing the origins of my beverage geographically, I turned to the National Geographic map of The World hung on my wall to the left of my desk. Thousands of miles spread between the various sources of concentrate and the Coca Cola bottling plant in Atlanta, GA.

Wide-eyed with awe I stared at the paper map, picturing apples flying, boating, training, and trucking their way around the globe, ultimately landing in the bottle which laid empty in the palm of my hand. I laughed softly to myself as I realized that the apples I had just drank had undoubtedly traveled many thousands more miles than I ever had, or likely ever would. Until this past winter I had yet to leave the country. Two days into 2005 I disembarked on a month-long UD study abroad trip, three weeks of which were

spent at a remote jungle lodge in the Amazon Basin of northeastern Peru. Strangely enough, Minute Maid had not yet established a market for apple juice there. The trip took us far into the tropical rainforest, a landscape evincing a stark contrast to any that I had experienced before. Immersing ourselves in the refreshingly unique environment, my classmates and I spent our time walking, hiking, canoeing, climbing, and playing hard. And each morning, afternoon, and evening, we sat down in the lodge to one of the most pleasing aspects of the trip, the food, expertly prepared by our skilled and charismatic cook, Panchito. Most invigorating of all was the juice. Papaya, star fruit, mango, guava, and cashew juices appeared with our food each day. The juice was tantalizingly fresh, thick with pulp and even small pieces of fruit, and served at room temperature, quite warm in the tropics. No indication of processing, purifying, pasteurizing, pressurizing, or bottling, presented itself. The juice tasted natural and raw. All of the food we ate at the lodge was grown and prepared locally, brought in on a small boat once or twice a week. In the context of this discussion the term local deserves further clarification. The lodge was situated approximately one hundred and fifty miles up the Amazon and Tahuayo Rivers from Iquitos, a small jungle city accessible only by plane or boat. The food we ate was bought at small markets in Iquitos and the small villages along the way; the fruits, which were squeezed into our juices, were no exception.

Unlike the world traveler apples that went into my bottle of Minute Made, the Amazon fruits that composed my juices at the lodge traveled very little. A pin prick on the map of The World would mark a distance twenty to thirty times greater than any trekked by the fruit I ate this winter. Everyone who drank the juices knew where they came from, within a fifty to one hundred mile range of error. And yet, I wonder how many people know where their Minute Maid originates.

During my stay at the lodge, I met with Dave Meyer, president of The Rainforest Conservation Fund, a small conservation organization based in Chicago. He visited the lodge for a few days to check up on a recent agroforestry project and one evening my classmates and I approached him with some questions. Over a pitcher of fresh orange juice, we sparked a discussion that rolled on well past midnight. Near the beginning of our talk, Dave explained that the primary goal of the RCF is the preservation of pristine rainforest habitat for future generations. *(continued on back page)*

(from front page) This goal, one held by many similar organizations, can have very serious implications for the local residents, the very people who produced the juice we were drinking.

In the past, some reckless conservation organizations have simply forced residents off their land, justifying their actions by claiming that the residents were devastating the rainforest. Luckily, Meyer's organization has not been so dangerously imprudent. RCF projects encourage the people living on preserved land to incorporate ecologically friendly economic alternatives into their lifestyles. The promotion of such projects dispels the far too popularly held myth that residents of preserved land are the enemy, slashing and burning their way through large swaths of unspoiled rainforest habitat.

It is this very myth that blame for deforestation should fall exclusively on "those damn South American slash and burn farmers" that has deluded so many consumers in the developed world, distracting them from their own contribution to the problem. Were the average American consumer to look into the palm of his or her own hand and find, for example, a 15.2 ounce bottle of apple juice, a staggering barrage of questions ought to enter his or her mind. Where does this juice come from? Who produced it? Under what conditions was it produced? How did it get here and at what cost to the environment? The questions are powerful.

The farmers of Chino village, a tiny village of about two hundred inhabitants situated just upriver from the lodge, know where their juice comes from. They grow it in their community gardens, pick it when ripe, squeeze it their home, and drink it. They recognize the need to clear the land, but understand the importance of ecological diversity and work toward sustainability. Buddhists call this mindfulness, awareness of the consequences of ones actions. What do we know of the consequences of our actions? What do I know of the consequences of drinking this apple juice? I know that it was sold in Trabant. I know that it was pasteurized and bottled in Atlanta, Georgia. I know that it is composed of apples from seven countries. But of consequences, I know essentially nothing.

### Let the 'Mater Mania begin!

On August 6, we're having our very first Tomato festival, family picnic. We are so excited to have so many folks help us with all of this fun. We are especially grateful to our two bands, PUGSLY and the Folks Heroes, for joining us. Most of all, we are proud to be raising money for the Medora Harvest Fund.

So what can you do? For starters we would love it if you could sell 5 tickets (or more if you would like) to the event. These tickets are for the requested \$5 per adult donation and we are striving to "sell" 5 per member in order to meet our fund raising goals. Feel no obligation. But do know that if all members sold 5 tickets or donated \$25, we would meet our fundraising goal for this event. This will allow us to have more families in need who otherwise can not afford the fresh, organic veggies offered by Provident Organic Farm.

Tickets are available through your distribution site. It's simple. Just take the tickets. See if your friends, neighbor, co-workers etc. would like to join us on the 6th and donate \$5 to the Medora Harvest Fund. Return the unused tickets to us after August 6. Again, there is no obligation here. Just a lot of fun while trying to raise money for a good cause.

And if you would like to do more than help out with the donations, we have a lot of great things going on the 6th and we need your help to achieve them. Below are the activities and the people spearheading them. If you are interested in helping, please contact that person. We need help both the day of the event and with preparation.

**\*Food Committee**—We need bread bakers for our tomato sandwich extravaganza. Loren Moriarty ([lxmoriarty@salisbury.edu](mailto:lxmoriarty@salisbury.edu)) and Susie Wood ([sewood1954@aol.com](mailto:sewood1954@aol.com)) are heading up this activity. And yes, for all you meat lovers, Tom Moriarty, will be grilling bacon for some yummy BLT's.

**\*Salsa Bar**—We need salsa makers. Jay will help out where he can with some of the ingredients. Jane Hager ([rjane999@yahoo.com](mailto:rjane999@yahoo.com)) is heading up this activity. We also need your favorite salsa recipe. Send it to Mira Beaglehole ([mirabeaglehole@yahoo.com](mailto:mirabeaglehole@yahoo.com)).

**\*Tomato Committee**—We're doing lots of neat things here including the funky home grown tomato contest and tomato tasting. Lisa Lantz is heading up this committee ([llantz@salisbury.edu](mailto:llantz@salisbury.edu)).

**\*Kids Activities**—Lori Lilly ([lilli@mail.umes.edu](mailto:lilli@mail.umes.edu)).

**\*Clean up committee**—Judy Burns is picking up the pieces and would love the help ([billjudy908@verizon.net](mailto:billjudy908@verizon.net)).

**\*Silent Auction**—We're still looking for a committee head, but it should be an easy job as we have lots of fun things to auction off—Horse back riding lessons and a guided canoe trip have been donated thus far. We're hoping some artwork is on the way. Thank you so much to all those who have donated or have helped to get the donations.

If you just want to come out that day and help, please let the 'Mater Mania Committee Chairs, Amy Liebman ([aliebman@comcast.net](mailto:aliebman@comcast.net) or 410-860-9850) or Patti Erickson ([pterickson@salisbury.edu](mailto:pterickson@salisbury.edu)) know. And if you just want to enjoy the fun, we welcome you to join us on August 6 at Cedar Hill Park.

Saving Democracy in America  
Meetings Wednesday nights, 7pm  
Wicomico Public Library

For more information: <http://dfa.meetup.com/242/>  
<http://dfasalisbury.home.comcast.net/>



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### Comments & Contributions

We welcome your comments and contributions, including recipes! Please send to [ubuubok@comcast.net](mailto:ubuubok@comcast.net) or Provident Organic Farm CSA, PO Box 62, Bivalve, MD 21814.