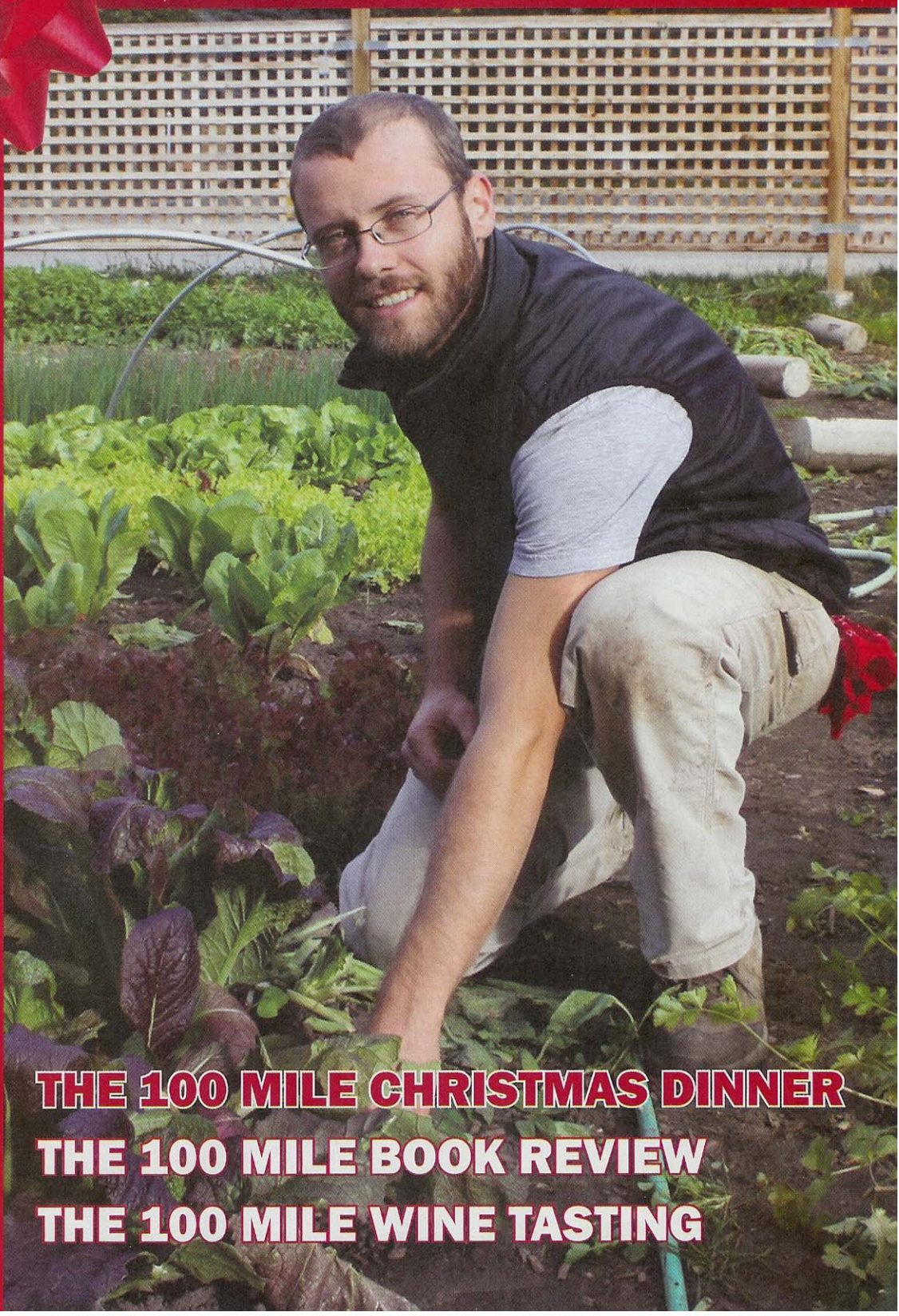


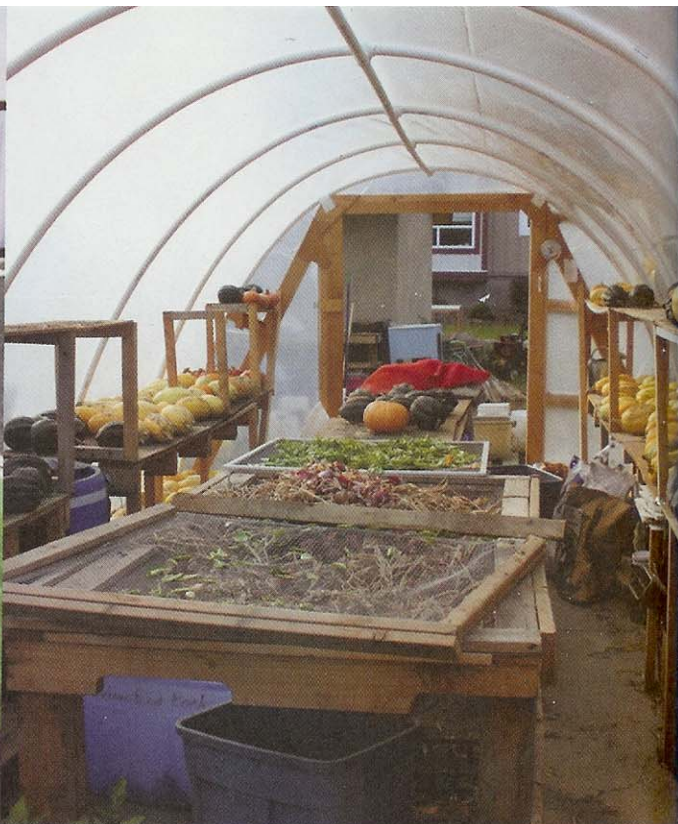
# NORTH OF 50<sup>®</sup>

LOCAL LATITUDE, GLOBAL ATTITUDE December 2010 Vol. 8, Issue 12

Publications Mail Agreement 41188516  
ISSN# 1710-4750

**THE 100 MILE CHRISTMAS DINNER**  
**THE 100 MILE BOOK REVIEW**  
**THE 100 MILE WINE TASTING**





# 100-MILE CHRISTMAS DINNER

By Lisa Harrison



**THIS HOLIDAY SEASON**, imagine the aroma of roasted ham and traditional bronze turkey with walnut stuffing, buttery biscuits, steaming carrots, mashed potatoes, kale and butternut squash with a selection of award-winning wines. For dessert: warm apple pie with fresh whipped cream, organic cheddar cheese on a wedge of pear and eggnog chased with a dash of huckleberry liqueur. Tantalizing, yes, and all locally produced. Who says saving the planet needs to be boring?

Each year, the average person consumes 884 kg (1,950 pounds) of food and beverages. Much of that is transported from other parts of Canada as well as the U.S., Mexico, South America, Europe and even Asia and New Zealand. Reducing fossil fuel use is just one of the benefits of eating locally.

Black Russian tomatoes, nutty Sieglinde potatoes, Red Kuri squash and sweet sunchokes are among the unique items available from local producers. By offering customers greater variety, these entrepreneurs are not only savvy marketers, they help to preserve the biodiversity of plant species. By contrast, large operations plant just a few varieties to simplify production and distribution. To protect their vast monoculture crops, these agribusinesses often rely heavily on pesticides to prevent infestations that could wipe out entire crops. Take tomatoes for example. Supermarkets may carry three or four types of tomatoes but there are more than 7,000 varieties on the planet. Since seeds have a limited shelf life, these varieties survive only through the people who choose to plant them and wild growth. Potatoes are another good example. In the Andes of South America, where potatoes originated, indigenous farmers grow many of the thousands of existing varieties. Their harvest is an eclectic mix of colours, shapes and sizes. If one crop fails, another variety sustains families through the winter.

Here in the Okanagan Valley, the local food movement is keeping many family farms afloat even as cheap imports flood the market. One of the largest imports is apples, mainly from Washington State. Economies of scale on vast orchards, inexpensive labour and, some would say U.S. government subsidies, produce apples cheap enough to compete in one of Canada's most productive apple-growing regions.

*Clockwise from left, Sloane Smith is fascinated by a Hamblett Highland Farms' turkey at the market. Storing the harvest at Green City Acres. Green City Acres' main residential garden plot in Kelowna. Busy bees make a sweet harvest; Helen Kennedy of Arlo's Honey Farm inspects one of her beehives (next page). Curtis Stone 'spin farms' at his home and several other residential plots in central Kelowna (cover). Photos by Lisa Harrison*

For local producers like Andrew Gambell, a second-generation orchardist, selling fruit at farmers' markets is vital to the family business, which was established in 1964. He works on the 34-acre Gambell Farm in Lake Country growing apples, cherries and other tree fruits along with berries and vegetables. Jeremy deVries and his young family are able to enjoy country living by producing Jerseyland Organics' cheeses from a herd of three dozen cows and selling locally. Wolf Wesle of Green Croft Gardens sells his vegetables at markets in the Central and North Okanagan. In the past five years, he has seen a noticeable increase in visitors and sales. Although he is still concerned about cheap imports, today at the Kelowna Farmers' Market, the sun is shining and the stalls are bustling with customers.

From the Green Croft stand, looking along Benvoulin Road to the southeast, rolling hills of green and gold contrast with blue mountains in the distance. It is a perfect autumn day. For many people, being close to nature is what makes the Okanagan Valley so special. There is a clear connection between buying locally and preserving green spaces. In the past century, approximately 50 percent of apple orchard acreage in the valley has been lost, according to Allan Koebel of BC Tree Fruits. In their place are sprawling homes, strip malls and other developments, some a necessary part of community growth, some not.

One young farmer has the antidote for anyone feeling the weight of greenhouse gases. Curtis Stone, founder of Green City Acres, is a one-man, pedal-powered urban wonder. Taking the 100-mile diet to the extreme, he farms on several residential garden plots within a 2-kilometre radius of his home near downtown Kelowna. He bicycles to gardens and the local farmers' market with a wagon in tow. His only fossil-fuel-powered equipment is a roto-tiller (used to turn the soil).

"When I was 28, a trained musician living in Montreal, I became aware of what was happening with food—things like genetically-modified crops, large scale monoculture and other issues, and how they are detrimental to the environment and people's health. I didn't want to be part of the problem anymore. I just felt like there was such a lack of leadership today.... I heard about spin farming and spent a year researching it online. It seemed like something I could do and I was willing to take a risk."

In addition to selling at the market, he works with restaurants to meet their chefs' requirements. Next year, he plans to start a "Communities for Agriculture" program in which customers pay a lump sum for produce from May to October. "It is beyond your regular producer-consumer relationship; people in the program become members of the farm." They also get to experience fresh, seasonal food with a nearly zero carbon footprint. "I have no intention of purchasing a vehicle and no intention of expanding to the point where I hire people and I'm just sitting in an office. I'm



not interested in that. I want to work in the soil my whole life.”

This holiday season, experimenting with a 100-mile menu can be a delicious adventure. There are countless outstanding products available for festive entertaining including: organic lamb from Vale Farms Grassroots in Lumby; open run turkeys from Hamblett Highland Farm in Armstrong; pheasant from North Okanagan Game Meats in Enderby; Sieglinde and Peregrine potatoes from Sweet Life Farms in Vernon; squash, carrots, and kale from many local farmers and stores such as Askew’s Foods. For 100-mile diet purists, honey replaces tropical cane sugar in holiday treats.

At Arlo’s Honey Farm in Kelowna, Helen Kennedy provides her 60,000 bees with more than three acres of flowering plants and sets hives among the grapevines in nearby Tantalus Vineyards. For dessert, try apple pie made with local honey, fruit and wheat milled into flour at Quail’s Farm in Vernon. Finish with huckleberry liqueur crafted with wild berries by Okanagan Spirits in Vernon.

To search for more producers near you, as well as a seasonal harvest guide, visit [www.localeating.ca](http://www.localeating.ca).