

LOCH ARTHUR CREAMERY & FARM SHOP

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Dear Friends

The first thing that strikes me in sitting down to write this newsletter is just how few newsletters I am writing compared to years gone by. Age, I suppose!!!!

The last month has definitely been eventful and gives me plenty to write about ... a cancelled Autumn Fair ... an exciting trip to the Terra Madre conference in Italy ... world-wide economic collapse ... and a rather exciting American election ... to mention but a few and in no particular order!! But, funnily, they all seem to link together into a common theme of "Looking towards the Future" - something that we at Loch Arthur are certainly very concerned with at the moment!

So, we had originally planned our **Autumn Fair** for 25th October but had to postpone it till 1st November as Rene and I were invited as Scottish delegates to the Slow Food, **Terra Madre Conference in Italy** that weekend. Well, as it happened, that Saturday in Dumfries & Galloway turned out to be one of the worst days of the year - storms and gales. The following Saturday (1st Nov) was the most beautiful day but, by then we had decided to cancel the fair due to the shocking field conditions. This was a great disappointment for many but, for those who did turn up, we still had a rather festive day at and around the shop at Lochend Farm.

I would like to say a little about our trip to Italy - partly because it was an amazing event, and partly because one of the requests of the conference was that delegates would make the work of the **Slow Food Movement and Terra Madre** better known in their own communities. I have mentioned this in previous newsletters but in brief, Slow Food is a "non-profit, member-supported organization that was founded in 1989 to counteract fast food and fast life, the disappearance of local food traditions and people's dwindling interest in the food they eat, where it comes from, how it tastes and how our food choices affect the rest of the world". Today, there are 85,000 members in 132 countries. It is also beginning to penetrate, and gain recognition and respect in, the highest areas of government and international policy making. (visit: www.slowfood.com)

The Terra Madre Conference began four years ago with the intention of bringing together food producers from all over the world (this year 153 countries were represented by some 7,000 delegates) and it runs in tandem with the Slow Food - Salone del Gusto (halls of taste) exhibition - one of the largest food festivals in Europe. I think that one of the most important messages of the conference was that the solution to the future of Food Security, Economic Stability, Global Warming and our world-wide crisis of food poverty lies, not in increased agri-business, *GMOs* and international corporate domination of the food chain. On the contrary, it lies in the promotion of small

scale, local farming practices, local food supplies and a re-connection to the local culture and production of the food we eat. And, that this can be achieved! This applies as much to a rural region of Ethiopia as it does to Dumfries and Galloway.

In his speech to the Terra Madre conference, Prince Charles (a great supporter) suggested that "The solution to global food shortages rests largely with the truly sustainable farmer and I am enormously encouraged that so many more people are now recognising the benefits of working with nature and harnessing positive forces through healthy soil, healthy crops and healthy animals in order to provide healthy food."

I must say that all of this gave me a renewed sense of the importance of the work we do here at Loch Arthur as producers and purveyors of local foods. It also makes me feel able to remind all of you that shopping in, and supporting, a venture such as ours is much more important than us 'getting your custom'. It is a statement of the fact that through your 'purchasing power' you are able to make a difference to the future of food for us all and to re-connect, in a real way to a more healthy and sustainable future. **Small producers, small businesses and social enterprises need support!!**

For those of you who haven't seen, we have had some wonderful TV coverage on the **Landward programme (BBC Scotland)**. They have done a series about us over the past five weeks. If you missed it you can watch again via the web - there is a link on the BBC website or on our website.

So what news ??

❖ **Our New Website.** After a concerted effort on the part of Matt Chanarin (our new found web-site wiz !!) we have at last launched our new and much improved site. It gives you clear and accessible information about Loch Arthur generally but also up-to-date information about the shop, fresh meat days, events, mail order and more. So do take a look (www.locharthur.org.uk) and if you have any comments or issues ... or notice any blatant errors!! please let us know.

❖ **The Shop** is bursting at the seams with all nature of necessities and delights!! We have once again been acknowledged by being listed in **The Independent Newspapers "Top 50 Farm Shops in Britain"** (and there are a lot of Farm Shops in Britain!!) I somehow feel that these accolades are recognition of the genuine, down-to-earth and sincere nature of our shop - not its star quality.

We have some lovely new products in the shop.

- **Beautiful weavings, scarves, platters, beeswax candles, candle holders, dried flowers, wooden toys and jewellery from our own workshops; some stunning pottery from our friends, the McCues in Selkirk; and all nature of bags and baskets.**
- **Our delicious, hand-made Christmas Puddings, Fruit Mincemeat, and Mince Pies and many other delectable Christmassy things!!**

- Chutneys, chutneys and more chutneys - every conceivable variety - made right here in our shop kitchen by "Beth, Queen of the Hot Pot"
- Our renowned range of quality cheeses from select cheesemakers to offer you a variety of blue cheese, goats & sheep's milk cheeses, brie and smoked cheese, alongside our classic Loch Arthur range.
- A select range of Weleda cosmetic and body-care products and gift packs.
- And, if you're still not sure what to buy ... why not pick up a Loch Arthur Gift Voucher - redeemable for goods in our shop for up to one year.

...and of course, all the old chestnuts (yes there are chestnuts as well); meats, fruit & vegetables, smoked salmon, artisan breads, cakes & pies and one of the finest ranges of organic and ethically sourced foods in the region.

❖ **Fruit & Vegetables.** Those who shop regularly will be all too aware of the remarkable range of produce constantly in stock. From our own gardens we currently have potatoes, beetroots, onions, carrots, parsnips and kale. Please remember that, if you want to be assured of particular vegetables for the Christmas week, you might be well advised to place an order. However we should be well stocked right up to the 24th. **We will now post our weekly selection of fruit and veg (with prices) on our website so you can always check to see what's in stock.**

We have had regular requests for Seville oranges. They should be in stock within the next few weeks.

❖ **Our Christmas Gift Leaflet** is enclosed, offering a range of selected gifts and hampers, which can be collected from the Creamery or sent away on your behalf. New on this year's list is a **simple taster selection of our four cheeses in a lovely wee jute bag**... and remember, we can make up personalised hampers of all shapes and sizes to suit your needs and send them all over the country. Our Truckles are in perfect condition for Christmas and will once again be available (if required) with the 'Girolle' - that delightful gift for cheese-loving friends or perfect centrepiece for your table.

❖ **Fresh-Meat Days.** We have either enclosed an updated meat price list with this newsletter or you can access it via our website on www.locharthur.org.uk. We have recently put our meat prices up slightly. We are well aware of the high price of meat but have researched extensively and are pleased to point out that **we have not found a more reasonably priced supplier of local Organic Meat anywhere in the UK**

We will have fresh meat available throughout the period from Wednesday 17th to Wednesday 24th December! There should be a good supply of Beef, Lamb, Chicken, Pork & Bacon available.

There will also be **Gammons** available, although they are limited in supply and must be ordered - and **Turkeys** of course (see below). We also have a limited supply of **Geese** available. Please order early.

Our lamb is in perfect condition at the moment and, in response to requests, we are offering Half Lambs (approx 7-10kg, butchered) at the very keen price of £6.50/kg or Whole Lambs at £6.00/kg. Great for the freezer over winter!!

If you want to be assured of getting particular cuts of meat for Christmas, especially larger joints or half lambs, we would advise that you send or email an order form or phone in your order by Monday 8th December. Please remember to specify your collection date. If you don't wish to place an order, feel free to stop by any time as we should be well stocked with meat throughout the period.

**Our first 'Fresh Meat Days' in the New Year will be on:
Thursday 12th, Friday 13th & Saturday 14th February 2009**

(Please make a note of this in your diaries as we're not likely to be in touch again before then)

❖ **Fresh Turkeys** will be supplied again this year by our friends at 'Garvald Farm' in Lanarkshire. Their turkeys are organically reared and are extremely tasty and succulent. They will be available fresh for collection on Monday 22nd (from 2pm) Tuesday 23rd (all day) & Wednesday 24th (till 1pm). The price is, unfortunately up once again to £9.50/kg ... but this is still below the price of any comparable Organic Turkey that we could track down. They range in size from 4kg (9lb) to 10kg (22lb). Please place your orders soon and specify what size you are looking for. We will do our best to meet your requirements.

Our opening hours over the festive period will be as follows:

Saturday 20th December:	OPEN 10am - 3pm
Sunday 21st December:	CLOSED
Mon 22nd & Tue 23rd Dec:	OPEN 9am - 5.30pm
Wed 24th December:	OPEN 9am - 1pm
25th, 26th, 27th, 28th Dec:	CLOSED
Mon 29th & Tue 30th Dec:	OPEN 9am - 2pm

We will then be taking our annual break and the shop will re-open on Wed 7th January 2009

We hope to be seeing many of you over the coming weeks and from all of us here at Loch Arthur, we send you greetings and best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

With best wishes

Barry Graham