



# Veggies on Wheels



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NEWSLETTER OF PFENNING'S ORGANIC FOOD BOX

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*"Veggies on Wheels" (edited by Wolfgang W.) generally appears around the beginning of every month.*

## Dear Pfenning's Food Box Community,

### Happy and Healthy New Year – and welcome back to all of you!

After what seemed like a pretty lengthy break, we are happy to be back to serve you with our **Organic Home Delivery Service**. As you know, we are heading into the 22<sup>nd</sup> year since we started offering our service. Of course, our Store had already been around quite a while before that, starting out as a Farm Store on the Pfenning's Organic Vegetable Farm – way before organics were mainstream. You can read more about our history on our **About Us** page:

<https://www.pfenningsorganic.ca/About-Us.htm>.

Before we move on, we would like to thank all of you for your thoughtful and so much appreciated Christmas and holiday wishes – both for the Store as well as for the delivery service (and your faithful and devoted driver and delivery person, Wolfgang). Any greeting cards we received were hung up in the Store and warmed our hearts during the festive season. Thank you!

### Winter Season and Winter Veggies

This is the time of the year when we are headed into the very **root-oriented offerings** coming from local sources – all great ingredients for a heartwarming soup or stew. On a bright note, although there is no more local field production, we still have some greens from last season available, such as Leek and Kale, which you are seeing in this week's Local Basket. You will also be receiving local greens going forward – such as hydroponic Lettuces, Sprouts and Belgian Endives – coming from regional hothouse production. We may also look forward to other local operations, such as Organic Oasis north of Stratford, ramping up their early greenhouse production once February rolls around with greens such as Spinach and Dandelion. More produce you will see from local storage is Carrots, Cabbage, Celeriac, Potatoes, Onions, Mushrooms, Parsley Root, Rutabaga, Garlic and Squash. In addition to this local plethora, we are already seeing produce coming up from Georgia, USA, such as Spinach, Chard, Kale and Broccoli. We are still happy to have any other vegetables or fruits come to us during the winter from California, Mexico or South America.

While we are in the midst of soup and stew season, we are looking into reactivating our popular **Soup & Stew Vegetables** – about 2-3 lbs of mixed root vegetables (such as carrots, cabbage, potatoes, onions, rutabaga) with around 5-7 assorted vegetables which will make you a great stew, soup, stir-fry or casserole. Some of you will remember them from last year – along with Almut's simply delicious **Root Veggie Casserole**, which you can already try now with the veggies you have on hand:

<https://tinyurl.com/wz6llpj>. Let us know if you are interested!



## The Short on Shortening

With all that talk about food, you might be interested in a revealing article that I stumbled over, focusing on how industrial food came to play such an overwhelming role in our nutrition today. Although it looks for the most part only at the popular Crisco shortening, the article – *by Helen Zoe Veit, a professor at Michigan State University who specializes in American history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, focusing on the history of food and nutrition; read it here: <https://tinyurl.com/ygy5j4yv>* – describes how people were taken in to eventually give preference to processed rather than natural foods.



Vegans, bear with us, but it appears that until late into the 19<sup>th</sup> century lard was predominantly used in cooking and baking, even in cakes and pies, despite the noticeable pork taste. When the invention of industrial bleaching and deodorizing techniques late in the century made it possible to produce clear and tasteless, but most of all cheap cottonseed oil from the then seed waste product being spewed out from the booming cotton industry, it soon displaced the traditional lard. Early cottonseed oil and shortening companies did their best to make the public believe that cottonseed was not a waste product, but a superior alternative for the new times.

Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Crisco (created by Procter & Gamble) went a step further by replacing animal fats, then still used to solidify the cottonseed oil, with a new process called hydrogenation – soon called the “Crisco process.” Crisco not only praised and aggressively marketed their new product, but swayed away from its cottonseed basis, as cottonseed’s reputation had been declining due to questionable production practices. Most of all, Crisco lured the public away from any focus on ingredients, but trained them to trust in brand reliability and the purity of modern factory food processing.

As a result, Crisco quickly became the prized shortening of choice with a neutral taste, high shelf life and high frying temperature, and made entirely from plants which appealed to certain cultural and religious groups. Lard had become archaic and unfashionable – and remains so to this day for the wide public. Crisco’s aggressive and one-sided advertising, emphasizing the “purity and modernity of factory production and the reliability of the Crisco name,” has allowed it to transcend laws requiring clear labeling and the disclosure of ingredients. The article’s author mentions popular companies such as Spam, Cheetos and Fruit Loops following Crisco’s example with little or no reference to their products’ ingredients. Even when more recent, stricter labeling laws required much more clarity about the ingredients in processed foods, Crisco and other popular brands continued to work on convincing consumers that they didn’t need to understand the ingredients in processed foods, as long as those foods came from a trusted brand.

Interestingly, although they may have been stumped by the unpronounceable and mysterious ingredients in many highly processed foods, consumers have gone right on eating these foods. If you are one of them, you now know a bit better how this came about.

**Wishing all of you a Happy, Peaceful and Healthy New Year,**

**Wolfgang, Almut, Annemiek, Andrea & Aurélie**

*(and greetings from our family too...)*

