

Maranacook Local Foods Buying Club - Club Guidelines - Early Days  
Sept 2011

<http://mofm.buyingclubsoftware.org/>

Welcome! Please take a few minutes to look over the club guidelines. We have made every effort to anticipate questions you may have at this early stage, but we are human therefore quite fallible. Please let us know how we can better address your needs.

### **From Then to Now: A Brief Account of the Maranacook Local Foods Buying Club**

MLFBC is the pilot component of the Maine Dept of Agriculture Farm Fresh for ME initiative ([www.fffme.com](http://www.fffme.com)). With financial support from several sources, the overarching goal of the department is to develop software to enable community members to easily create and maintain local food buying clubs. In the fall of 2010, the then-named Maranacook Area Food Buying Club was launched. Last year's attempts have led us here. This year we will be using software, developed in Maine, which has proven itself in the marketplace. Still, there may be hiccups now and again. We encourage you to hang on tight and ride this wave with us. Together we will make it work.

### **Buying Club Basics**

A Buying Club is a group of friends, neighbors or interested local families who pool their household food demands to allow them to purchase larger quantities of local food at wholesale or below retail prices. Buying clubs are a wonderful way to help local farmers sell more products in a more organized, collective way. In addition, because they bring together a group of buyers, buying clubs provide farmers with more income and more profits while helping local families to continue to have access to local, fresh, and nutritious food. Club members can create their own marketplaces of any vendor they choose, as well as their own rules of participation and operation.

### **How to Use the Website to Buy Food**

Jeremy Bloom and Matt Hokanson created the software which allows us to collectively buy in bulk online. You can read more about them at <http://www.buyingclubsoftware.com/about/>. Jeremy has recorded a generic online tutorial to walk you through the process of buying online. We recommend, without outright demanding, you take a few minutes to watch his video so you are familiar with how the website works. You'll be glad you did. See: <http://www.buyingclubsoftware.com/tour/>

### **Buying and Pick-up Schedule**

To begin, we plan to have a two-week buying schedule which means fresh local food and products available for you to pick up at Maranacook Middle School every two weeks. You will be given seven days in which to reserve products online. The schedule will be subject to change in response to holidays, but for now we anticipate a Saturday to Saturday open buying window with pick up on the following Thursday. Details will be posted on the website - <http://mofm.buyingclubsoftware.org/>

### **Payments**

This new software allows us to avoid using credit cards to reserve your order. Payments will be made on the day of pick up with either cash or a check. You will not receive receipts since final sales are not determined until products are delivered to the pick up location; **therefore please do not fill in you check prior to checking out at pick up.** It is a good idea to copy and paste your order request so you remember what you ordered. You may always check in with the buying club manager prior to pick up to find out whether your order has been honored.

### **Speaking of the Buying Club Manager**

Because the Maranacook Local Foods Buying Club is a continuation of the Dept of Ag's pilot initiative, the management of the club is temporarily being provided by paid consultants – you know them better as Gina Lamarche and Linda Nelson – with the support of Western Mountains Alliance and Maranacook Area Schools. Come the end of December, club members and the schools will be asked to consider how they would like to continue the club. The Western Mountains Alliance will be on hand to help with the transition.

### **Your Responsibilities**

Buying Clubs are as diverse as the people who join them. As stated above, much of the behind the scenes work will be performed by a manager and the students. After four buying cycles we will ask for a \$1 a month membership fee to help pay for the website. Beyond that, we ask that you honor your orders, pick up during the allotted time and have patience with the process. Happy Eating!

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