



FOOD ETHICS FOR IMPASSIONED GOOFBALLS

Are you what you eat? BY SHANNON FINNELL

The recipe: one part food news from around Oregon and the globe, one part concerned foodie philosophy and two parts goofy host. The result: the yummy, locavorian, organic, slightly cynical but with-a-sense-of-humor KLCC radio show *Food for Thought*.

Hosts Ryan Dawe-Stotz and Boris Wiedenfeld were already immersed in their jobs buying food and wine at Marche Provisions and Sundance Wine Cellars when KLCC's longtime "Natural World" host John Cooney (that's John with an 'h') approached them each with the suggestion that KLCC needed a show on local food.

Dawe-Stotz has worked on radio shows before, Wiedenfeld has an extensive recording background as a musician and, when they met, they clicked. For six months, *Food for Thought* has utilized a mix of news, interviews and listener tips to contribute to the discourse about how food works in the lives of Oregonians. "Food is something that affects directly every single American because everyone has to eat, but it gets very little attention in the national media," Wiedenfeld says.

Years ago, buying local and organic food was difficult and almost always expensive, but the hosts say *Food for Thought* is proof that the movement is expanding economically and geographically. "It's not this yuppie phenomenon," says Dawe-Stotz. Though not everyone has easy access to farmers' markets, the growing use of Oregon Trail cards shows a rising demand for locally produced food, as does the demographic of *Food for Thought* callers. "A lot of people call in from Southern Oregon, the coast and the mountains," Wiedenfeld says.

Both hosts note that one of their hottest topics is genetically modified organisms, which even informed eaters have a tough time avoiding. Shows that solicit recommendations and tips from the audience also garner a lot of calls. Dawe-Stotz says the Oregon wine industry is taking a series of fascinating turns right now. "It's really grown up after years of fits and starts," he says. A combination of the recession and crop difficulties has forced Oregon wineries to "regroup as an industry," and figure out an as yet undetermined new role in the marketplace.

In the remainder of its first year, *Food for Thought* will continue its focus on impactful, goofy food news, and add a segment that features cooking with local figures.

Dawe-Stotz says that their day jobs procuring food and wine from around the Northwest help tip him and Wiedenfeld off to trends, problems and news that they then work into the show. "It's easier for a lot of people to hear a dialogue of people actually speaking about it, people who are actually in the industry, who worked cooking with and procuring local foods on a daily basis rather than somebody who was just writing about it as an interested journalist," Dawe-Stotz says.

They also think their background helps them understand the significance of their topic. Wiedenfeld says the hosts are careful to keep the conversation on a level that the average listener can understand, and sometimes others in the food industry are surprised to hear him ask simpler questions. "If we did a show where Ryan and I only asked things we didn't know, it would be a very short show," he jokes.

"What's surprised me is the political tone that the show took," Dawe-Stotz says. "When it started up we intended it to be a fun, funny rundown of here's what's going on in local food." Fun and funny is still *Food for Thought*'s tone, but local food topics are rife with politics and the hosts discuss them candidly, letting the chips fall where they may. "We're equal opportunity disher-outers," says Wiedenfeld.

And that cool, catchy track that kicks off every show? Wiedenfeld wrote and performed it. "He's the Renaissance man of the show," Dawe-Stotz says.

Like a Renaissance philosopher, Wiedenfeld is hankering for a rebirth of appetite consciousness. "Eating is something a lot of people do with their brain turned off," he says, "and we'd like them to pay more attention to it — enjoy it more and at the same time care where it comes from, too." ■

Food For Thought airs Sunday noon-1pm on KLCC 89.7 FM

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