

# 'Locavore' Barbara Kingsolver

She's the 74th Most Dangerous Person in America—and she's speaking at UK's Memorial Hall!

It turns out you can go home again. Sort of. Author/Activist/Kentucky native Barbara Kingsolver managed it when she and her family left the Southwest and moved to Appalachian Virginia, chronicling their Year of Living Locally in her enlightened, considered, and provocative new work of narrative non-fiction, *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life* (with contributions from daughter Camille, and husband Steven L. Hopp).

This is no fainthearted sissy "year in provence," THIS is a year in the life of the "seventy fourth most dangerous person in America." (A book that identified the "100 most dangerous people in America" was released during the family's first summer in Virginia, identifying Kingsolver, at Number 74, as one of those "cultural elites who down their snobby noses at 'ordinary' Americans...")

In reality, she's a smart, highly-educated woman who doesn't take any crap (she may be willing to wade through more manure than your average successful 50-something author, but she won't try to feed you any).

**"My 'Kentucky NCAA Champions' shirt was by now so bloodstained, you would think I had worn it to a North Carolina game."**

**—Barbara Kingsolver,  
in *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle***

In a section on cheese, she exposes the highly regulated dairy industry and theoretical governmental "concern" for our consumer safety when she suggests none-too-subtly, "it's easy to see how impossibly strict milk rules might gratify industry lobbyists, by eliminating competition from family producers." (HB 298 and SB184 stalled in the Kentucky General Assembly. Kentucky's own Community Farm Alliance has a great deal to say about the dairy lobby. *You can email them at kayciecfa@bellsouth.net, and you can visit www.kyrealmilk.com.*)

For a supposed "cultural elitist," Kingsolver has proven herself to be surprisingly unafraid to get her hands dirty—and even, on occasion—bloody, on the farm, while simultaneously raising two daughters who are already thoughtful, productive

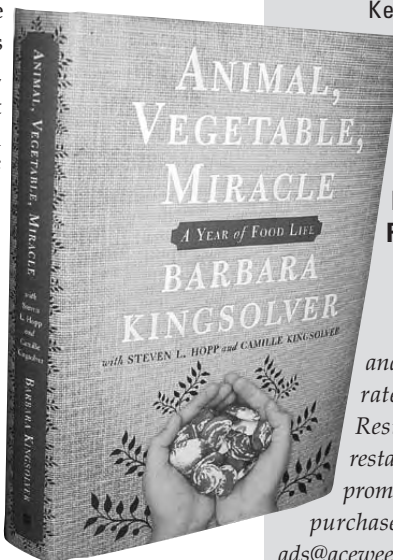
members of their communities. (Lily launches an eco-friendly egg-biz in the book; daughter Camille participated fully in the family adventure before heading off to Duke—and contributes essays to the book.)

Camille writes, "my make-it-yourself upbringing drummed into me the ethic of working for the things I want. I've been involved in growing and cooking the food that feeds me since I was a little kid, and it has definitely given me a certain confidence about relying on myself. Just as meals don't materialize in the grocery store, I realize a new car and a good education won't just spring into my life on their own, but hopefully I will get there. If everything my heart desired was handed to me on a plate, I'd probably just want something else."

Kingsolver observes of parenting, "We're hoping *our* kids will remember us somewhere other than in the driver's seat of the car," and it's clear from Camille's essays that they do.

In addition to being a successful mother (by just about any standard) and widely-laud-

ed author (awarded the National Humanities Medal in 2000), Kingsolver's a feminist who recognizes both the art and privilege of time spent in the kitchen. She measures convenience differently than the average consumer, and tallies its costs with a scientist's precision for detail. She writes, "when my generation of women walked away from the kitchen we were escorted down that path by a profiteering industry that knew a tired, vulnerable marketing target when they



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## Restaurant Rewards

Highlighting a Kentucky Program funding "Locavores"

By Sue Weant

The Kentucky Restaurants Rewards Program began in July of 2002 with a \$50,000 grant from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture to Partners for Family Farms. It's a program designed to create more markets for Kentucky Farmers by encouraging restaurants throughout Kentucky to purchase, serve and advertise foods grown throughout Kentucky. It really is simple. A restaurant purchases product produced by a Kentucky Farmer, then advertises it.

A restaurateur then sends the actual receipts of the monies spent, a copy of the way this was advertised (table tents, newspaper ad tearsheets, or a menu, to name a few) and the restaurant owner is eligible to receive twenty percent—up to \$1,000.00 a month—of his total farm-purchased items (the monies must be spent on advertising).

In 2002, there were only four participating restaurants. Currently there are about 75, including all of Kentucky's State Parks. A directory of local producers was printed which included retail establishments that wanted to purchase locally, and farmers with product to sell.

Commissioner Billy Ray Smith funded the program again in 2003 with a \$45,000 grant, and the program continued under Commissioner Richie Farmer who funded the program with a grant from the Governor's Office of Agriculture Development in the amount of \$150,000 in 2005.

The program has grown to include 48 restaurants and 100 local producers. The money spent since 2005 to purchase local products from farmers had reached \$900,000 and the receipts are still coming in.

The substantial increase in participants and the wide variety of producers that are used have been a very good indicator of the impact that the Restaurant Rewards Program has had on the local food market.

More requests are received for a listing of local producers in order to plan menus and purchase

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local foods. This program has allowed Kentucky restaurants to realize the outstanding quality and taste that local meats and produce bring to their tables. And through the advertising of their local fare, the producers stand to reap double benefits.

The Restaurant Rewards Program is reinforcing that bridge linking consumers to local producers, something that we've struggled with for some time.

To see a program like this continue to flourish year after year brings so much needed attention to Kentucky agriculture and helps keeps Partners for Family Farms on top of its mission to sustain farm life and farmland.

**Sue Weant is Executive Director, Partners for Family Farms.**

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(Ace provides all documentation and receipts on request to any restaurateur participating in Kentucky's Restaurant Rewards Program—restaurants who spend ad dollars promoting their Kentucky farm-purchased products. Info, email ads@aceweekly.com.)

