

Agriculture

Illinois pizza farm draws tourists with a slice of alternative

DOW, Ill. (AP)—Walt Gregory found a way to make dough harvesting pizza. The retired insurance agent and his business partner have carved up quite a tourist draw near the Mississippi River town of Alton, educating people with a half-acre circular plot divided up like the slices of a huge pizza. Each of the eight wedges represents something used on a pizza — from tomatoes to peppers to herbs including rosemary and sage. Three goats represent milk and Cleo the cow is symbolic of beef. Seven penned-in pigs illustrate pork. The chickens pecking nearby? Eggs, of course. “I enjoy it immensely, just to see the looks on people’s faces and seeing some people make the connection,” Gregory said

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Walt Gregory, pizza farmer

from his 3-year-old “R” Pizza Farm. “A 62-year-old lady, standing with her husband, didn’t know pepperoni came from pigs.” Only a handful of such farms are believed to exist in the United States. However, farmers increasingly are turning to inventive land use — cornfield mazes are another example — to supplement their bottom lines. Illinois, which is among the nation’s leaders in pumpkin and horseradish production, is no exception. The project seems to be working for Gregory and business partner Lynne Weis. They expect their organic pizza “demonstration” farm to draw 5,000 to 6,000 visitors this year, far more than the 1,500 visitors in 2004 or the 300 the year before that. The two have a similar venture near Quincy, with plans for a third next spring near Peoria.

“Word’s getting out,” Gregory said as he walked through the wedges, plucking peppers and tomatoes along the way. During tours offered from April through October, Gregory briefs guests about the ingredients, then walks them through each slice. Afterward, there’s pizza and soda in a pizzeria inside a log cabin. Most of the ingredients come from the farm and are organic, including the fennel herb commonly used to flavor Italian sausage. Gregory still hopes to find a source of organic cheese and is talking with an Amish slaughterhouse about supplying organic pepperoni. Gregory hopes to educate guests about organic growing. He makes no bones about his opposition to corporations behind ag-

ricultural biotechnology or farmers who use herbicide-resistant products he considers dangerous. “Someone’s got to stand against them. That’s what I try to accomplish with the pizza farm,” said Gregory, who elsewhere on his spread grows asparagus, zucchini, watermelon, cantaloupe, strawberries, squash, pumpkins and corn. Elizabeth Decker, a second-grade teacher in nearby Bethalto, can’t seem to get her fill of the farm. She has taken her classes, which typically number 20 students and chaperoning parents, on the tour every year since the farm opened. Decker said the place teaches kids firsthand what goes into a pizza, from harvest to hearth. “I think parents learn just as much as the children,” she said.

What’s the difference between red and white?

HERMISTON, Ore. (AP)—Bob Hale took a risk a decade ago, pulling up his yellow onions and planting red ones instead. “Color is the new thing,” he predicted. He was promptly ignored by the others farmers here at the heart of the nation’s onion belt. But Hale was proved right in 1997, when Pizza Hut took the plunge and switched from yellow to red onions on all its pizzas. Two years ago, Subway, the nation’s largest selling sandwich chain, embraced red, saying they added a splash of color to subs. Now, large and small chains are experimenting with the brightly pigmented onion, a highly temperamental plant that takes far more skill to grow than its yellow cousin. Of the overall onion market nationwide in 2004, 88 percent were yellow onions, 7 percent were reds, up from 5 percent five years before, and 5 percent were white, according to the National Onion Association. Fast-food chains are discovering what gourmet chefs have long known — a dish’s visual presentation is almost as important as its

taste. “Consumers, first of all, eat with their eyes,” said Shirish Mehta, chief food innovations and technology officer for Dallas-based Pizza Hut Inc. In the company’s pizza lab, researchers were bothered by the fact that the yellow onion blended with the cheese. “Cheese is light in color and so a white or yellow onion doesn’t show up,” said Mehta. So they did a test, putting two pizzas in front of customers — identical but for the fact that one was topped with reds, the other with yellows. Overwhelmingly, their subjects chose the more colorful one, even though the two onions also differ in taste, with reds generally thought to be milder. The decision to switch was a “significant investment” for the chain because red onions are pricier than their yellow relatives, he said. The same held for Subway, which changed to reds in 2003. In spite of the higher price tag, the switch was a “no brainer,” said Subway’s Nick Hauptfeld, manager of new product development. After doing tests in selected sand-

wich stores, Subway researchers concluded that their customers chose red onions to yellow 3-to-1, he said. “Red was outpacing yellow to the point where there was no point in having the yellow anymore,” said Steve Sager, who owns a franchise in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., where the two were tested side-by-side. Last year, Burger King began using red onions in their salads, though it is staying with yellow on their Whoppers. Not all major chains have jumped on the red bandwagon. Domino Pizza is sticking with yellow after testing red onions and finding their quality and consistency were harder to assure. The red onion’s sudden popularity caught the farming industry off guard, with many farmers forced to scrounge for seeds. Dan Miyasako, 44, inherited his father’s farm in Homedale, Idaho, where the elder Miyasako had been growing yellows since the 1940s. In the last two years, he has doubled his area of reds from 30 acres to around 60 acres, hoping to meet the recent demand from grocery chains. When he’s not out harvesting or

caring for his fields, he’s now on the phone looking for a good pail of red seed. “There’s a real shortage of it. It’s hard to get your hands on it. “You can get the ugly, the not-so-pretty reds. “But the real pretty — the red wing, salsa, red bull seeds — those are hard to find,” he said. Because the yellow onion has been by far the most popular variety for decades, seed breeders have focused most of their attention on yellow. And producing a good variety takes on average around 10 years, said Ton Van Der Velden, U.S. sales manager for Nunhems Inc., the largest onion seed supplier in America. “You can put a red in the ground,” warned Hale, whose red onions are sold in Subway’s 20,000 North American franchises. “But you may not harvest it.”

National Popcorn group offers trivia about crop

October is National Popcorn Month and for those who enjoy their popcorn, the Wendy Boersma Rappel with the National Popcorn board offered the following trivia. Americans consume some 17 billion quarts of this whole grain, good-for-you treat. That’s 54 quarts per man, woman, and child. Popcorn is a type of maize (or corn), a member of the grass family, and is scientifically known as Zea mays everta. Of the 6 types of maize/corn-pod, sweet, flour, dent, flint, and popcorn-only popcorn pops. Popcorn is a whole grain. It is made up of three components: the germ, endosperm, and pericarp (also know as the hull). Popcorn needs between 13.5-

14 percent moisture to pop. Popcorn differs from other types of maize/corn in that it has a thicker pericarp/hull. The hull allows pressure from the heated water to build and eventually bursts open. The inside starch becomes gelatinous while being heated; when the hull bursts, the gelatinized starch spills out and cools, giving it its familiar popcorn shape. Most U.S. popcorn is grown in the Midwest, primarily in Indiana, Nebraska, Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky and Missouri. Many people believe the acres of corn they see in the Midwest during growing season could be picked and eaten for dinner or dried and popped. In fact, those acres are typically field corn.

Personal Property Auction

For Larry Arehart and Others

Date: Saturday, September 17, 2005

Time: 10 a.m. CT (Doors open at 8 a.m. day of sale)

Auction Location: T-N-T & Jones Auction Facility, 200 N. Franklin, Colby, Kan. Preview sale items between 5-7 p.m. CT Friday, September 16, 2005.

ANTIQUES
1930s Poster Bed and matching Vanity; 1920s Wicker 3 cushion setae; 1920s Wicker rocker; 1920s Grocery Store cart; 1900s Wardrobe; Shoe lathel Large Mosler Safe & Lock Co safe (dated March 22, 1881); Silver mirror and brush set; Foreign Japanese money; HO Train Set w/extra pieces; 1900 Empire Style Sofa; 1940’s End table; Assorted Fostoria pieces Assorted pieces of Coin Glass in (Red, Amber, Green, Blue, Crystal); Several kerosene lamps; Assorted Silver pieces

HOUSEHOLD
2-Wing back Chairs; Ethan Allen Rocking Chair; Ethan Allen Early American China Hutch; Blue early American Sofa; Floral Love seat; 2-rocker / recliners; 3 piece wicker patio set; Computer Desk; King size Bedroom set, Triple Dresser, Nite Stand, Chest of Drawers, Bookcase Headboard; Ethan Allen Round Maple Table W/4-chairs; 6-drawer chest Merry Moo Moo’s Collection; Franklin Mint “Victorian Wedding Party” set; Miller Lite & Coors Lite assorted pictures; Oak school teachers desk; Metal cabinets; Floor polisher; Stools; 2 Swamp coolers

GUNS will sell @ 1:30 pm ct

GUNS
Hi-Standard Model H-D Military Pistol - 22 cal long rifle w/clip; Mauser Model 98 - 1940 chrome plated rifle (no bolt/trigger); Marlin Model 806 with scope - 22 cal w/clip; Remington Model 550-1 rifle - 22 short/long rifle; Benjamin BB air rifle gun - 100 shot; Marlin 30-30 Model 336 - lever action; Riverside Arms Co Model 520 - 16 gauge shotgun; Ammo boxes

BLACK POWDER GUNS
2 - Matching dueling pistols - 50 cal; Derringer pistol - 50 cal; Hex barrel long rifle - 50 cal; Shot bag; Powder horn

TRAINS
1930s Lionel train set, Coal loader #397, Whistle tender car - #2466WX, Engine - #2025, Engine - #2020, Log car with logs - #3461, Cattle car - #3656, Baby Ruth candy car - #2454, Sunoco oil tanker car - #6465, Cattle stock yard - #6656, Auto refrigerated milk car - #3462, Caboose car - #2257, Signal light

(ALL THE ABOVE WITH BOXES)
Mar 1930s train sets with track and accessories; Mar Derrick #412; Mar Search light tower #436; Mar Girder bridge; 2 - American Flyer 3/16" scale train accessories - in box; American Flyer water tower; American Flyer Mistic railroad station; Lionel Trainmaster transformer - Type ZW - 250 watts; Many more train cars, switching units and track

SHOP & GARDEN
Tradesman 14" Chop saw; Toro Snow Blower; Lighting System II Like New Tiller; JD Self Propelled Mower model #14SB; 15 amp Generator; Aluminum Pickup Tool box; Aluminum Extension Ladder

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 2003 Ranger Edge Supercab - 4x2, Red w/Gray Cloth, V-6, Auto Transmission, 19K Miles. \$13,995	 2003 Expedition XLT - 4x4, 3rd Seat, Custom Wheels, Loaded! Only 14K miles. Was \$23,850. Now \$22,850	 2001 Eddie Bauer Expedition - Green w/Tan Leather, 5.4 L, V-8, Moonroof, Quad Buckets,Rear Entertainment, 59K miles. \$18,500
 2003 Eddie Bauer Expedition - 4x4, White w/Tan Leather, 5.4 L., Quad Seats, 47K Miles. \$26,850	 2004 Grand Marquis LS - Silver w/Gray Leather, 30K Miles, PS, PL, PW. \$16,995	 2002 F250 Crew Cab XLT - 4x4, White w/Gray Cloth, Power Stroke 7.3, 75K Miles. Was \$27,850. Now \$26,995
 2003 F150 Supercrew Lariat - White w/Graphite Leather, 5.4 L V-8, 51K Miles, 1 Owner, Nice! Was \$24,850. Now \$22,995.	 1998 Grand Marquis - White w/ Gray Leather, V-8, 78K Miles. Was \$7,500. Now \$6,995.	 2000 Regal LS - 4 Door, Maroon w/Gray Cloth, V-6, 70K Miles. \$5,995
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