

Idaho's Bounty Co-op

Edible Idaho Feature: 0104GH_IdahosBounty.wav Feature 5:18 01/04/10
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[HOST INTRO] The local food movement is exploding in popularity. At this time of year, though, fresh local produce can seem like a distant memory. But even as the snow flies, there are people connecting hungry consumers to local food.

In this installment of Edible Idaho, correspondent Guy Hand visits Idaho's Bounty Co-op, a pioneer in the distribution of home-grown food. (5:18 to soc out; ambient crowd sounds to 5:54; fade at will)

[HOST OUTRO] Idaho's Bounty serves restaurants and consumers in the Treasure Valley, Wood River Valley and beyond. For more on Idaho's Bounty or to listen to past Edible Idaho programs, go to [northwest food news dot com](http://northwestfoodnews.com).

[SCRIPT]

- 1.(Picking sounds) (Reed) This is a mesclun mix of lettuce and we have spinach here, we have carrots . . .
2. (Hand) James Reed is one of the founders of Idaho's Bounty. Outside this Hagerman Valley greenhouse, it's winter. Inside, Reed picks through a spring-like forest of vegies.
3. (Reed) It's so squeaky. I guess that means it's fresh huh?
4. (Hand) Now, Idaho's Bounty doesn't just grow squeaky greens. In fact, that's a small part of its business plan. It's something Reed does during the winter thanks to Hagerman's relatively mild temperatures and abundant geothermal greenhouses. Idaho's Bounty is primarily a local food distribution system.
5. (Reed) We just act as a conduit from the farm to the end user.
- 6.(Hand) By that Reed means Idaho's Bounty is the kind of old-fashioned food delivery system that was common before WWII: local, simple, direct. But with a powerful new ingredient: the internet.

7. (Reed) Members go on line and they place their orders by going through the different producer lists and filling their baskets, their shopping baskets . . . (Hand) And this is a virtual market. (Reed) That is correct. This is all done over the internet.

8. (Hand) Reed says their system is unique. Except for a local food distribution network in Oklahoma that they used as a model, Idaho's Bounty is actually a pioneer. The fact that Idaho hasn't lost as much of its agricultural infrastructure as many states, Reed says, makes a big difference.

9. (Reed) Idaho is one of the unique places, southern Idaho in particular, where we have all these resources. We're very lucky. There are other areas who are having a very difficult time sourcing food locally because number one they don't have the farmers. We just happened to have hit the jackpot here.

10. (Hand) So where are we? (Reed) We're at Ramblin' Rose Ranch

11. (Hand) I certainly think I hit the jackpot — or my head — when I step into another Hagerman greenhouse — this one owned by Merrily Eckel (ehk-el). Outside, cold winds blow. Inside, are fruiting orange trees. Merrily Eckel:

12. (Eckel) Anything you could grow Baja north you can grow in here.

(Hand) It looks a little like Mexico right here. (Eckel) It's beautiful isn't it.

(Hand) It is, it's amazing.

13. (Hand) If you thought local food during a Northwest winter meant nothing but potatoes, carrots and onions, well, this greenhouse blasts that notion out the door. Eckel pulls a tangerine off a tree — an *Idaho tangerine*.

14. (Eckel) These are amazing. And we are selling these in Idaho's Bounty this week. They're just the best tasting tangerine in the world.

15. (Hand) So what citrus do you have? (Eckel) I have tangerines, I have tangelos, I have Meyer lemons, limes . . .

16. (Hand) It's like walking through a fruit-tree Eden . . .

17. (Sound of leaves) (Eckel) . . . isn't that beautiful? This is a Satsuma tangerine. That's the kind that the skin comes off of like a jacket, really

easy, one hand. Lots of kids get these in their stockings Christmas morning in places like California . . .

18. (Cross fade from greenhouse to distribution center) (Jeannie Wall) In front of me are these big tables with a sort of chaotic mix of boxes and coolers and cheeses and squash bags and potatoes and . . .

19. (Hand) Here at the Hailey Armory, Idaho's Bounty director Jeannie Wall shows me how they collect and sort food before each weekly delivery.

20. (Hand) This is sort of like the Fed Ex Depot where everything gets sorted and then goes to where ever it goes? (Wall) This is where all the hard work comes in, the manual labor side of it. It's great; it's really actually a lot of fun.

21. (Hand) Along with fruit and produce Wall shows me stacks of pastries, frozen enchiladas, pasta, pizza dough, bread, poultry, meat, milk, cheese. .

22. (Wall) And in fact I think our better months and our biggest sales will be from the end of October through May and even into June when the markets really aren't in abundance yet and we still have tons of fresh food.

23. (Hand) Local distribution networks like Idaho's Bounty give consumers an alternative to food shipped from thousands of miles away, but they also give local farmers an alternative: *not* to ship their food away.

24. (Wall) Some of these producers who used to sell on the commodities market, they would have actually have to take it out of Idaho and sell it. They may be able to sell all of their product within Idaho, within their own food shed, which is exciting to them. And we feel really fortunate just to keep local food moving all year, all winter.

25. (Sound at pick up point) (Woman) Hi! How are you doing? . . .

26. (Hand) At the Hemingway School in Ketchum, later that same day, Idaho's Bounty members are picking up their orders. I ask Jeff Gardner what he thinks of year-round local food.

27. (Gardner) Oh, it's fantastic, it's just what we need. Local food, middle of winter. (Hand) What kind of stuff did you get? (Gardner) We get all the greens, we get squash, eggs, the eggs are fantastic, milk, beans, onions.

28. (Hand) Again, Idaho's Bounty director Jeannie Wall:

29. (Wall) I mean I think that's the beautiful part of this is that we're actually taking an age old tradition and culture and reviving that and giving life to that again. But we're able to meld it with modern technology. Here we are taking farmers who barely got on computers in the last decade and they're actually excited to get on there and list their products and list what their farm does and practices and photos.

30. (Hand) A new study says that worldwide local food businesses are key to economic recovery and growth. Local food companies keep money from escaping rural communities, provide jobs, conserve energy — and, in Idaho's Bounty's case, put local greens and tangerines on plates in January.

31. (Hand) For Edible Idaho and KBSX 91.5, I'm Guy Hand.

32. Tag for Boise Co-Op