

## Food co-op

(Continued from Page B2)

equipment, there is a small assessment made on each order. For orders over \$25 there is a two percent charge; for orders under \$25 there is a three percent charge. There is also a one-time non-refundable charge of \$10.00 as a commitment to the co-op. Officers and others who help process orders do not have to pay the percentage charges.

Sarah Murr, who processes the fish, arranges to have it delivered when she arrives home from work, then divides and re-packages it and calls members when their orders are ready. "It's in and out of my house in three hours," she says.

Others have an established pick-up time, usually from 3-5 p.m. Since most homes are within walking distance of others, many of the women simply take their

child's wagon and walk from pick-up point to pick-up point, collecting their groceries.

When there are extra items delivered, like extra tomatoes or bananas, these are offered for sale as people come for their orders. The meat and cheese handlers have established a "deli" in which they offer sliced and packaged leftover meat or cheese, marking each package with weight and price. This has the extra advantage of giving members the opportunity to try new things.

If an order from a supplier is short, the produce is re-distributed, usually taking a few items from those with large orders. The supplier then corrects it for the next month.

There are some pitfalls. One is that members sometimes get caught up in buying things they don't need because of the attractive quality and price. This, of course, happens in supermarkets too. Occasionally there can be a problem with quality, but suppliers

have been very cooperative in correcting the problem. Occasionally members buy too much of something, but most say they are learning what they need.

Most agree that it cuts down on trips to the grocery store, although it doesn't cut them out entirely. Personal items still need to be purchased at the store, along with items which the co-op has not yet been able to get. Kathy is optimistic about them increasing their variety, and as more is available she expects to purchase more through the co-op.

Members also say they eat a lot better. Sue says, "I couldn't buy the amount of things I buy. I definitely would not buy mushrooms or tomatoes in the winter, and it is a real treat having a variety of fruits all winter."

Not the smallest benefit is the sense of community which has arisen. Ann says, "Until we got into the co-op I didn't know a lot of

people, but it has been good for our community because it brings people together."

Indeed this community has demonstrated its closeness in many ways. There is a neighborhood Bible study, a neighborhood Halloween parade, a neighborhood yard sale, a neighborhood picnic and a neighborhood hay ride. Most children there are under 10, and there is even a home nursery school among four mothers, who take children at least one morning a week for some constructive play and learning activities.

As Sue points out, "Not everyone does everything. Different people do different things." Nevertheless, the feeling is one of commitment to the community and of caring for neighbors.

The Ironbridge Co-op may not be the only one of its kind in the county, but it is certainly one of few. After it was featured on

WGAL-TV, co-op officers received calls from others interested in the concept.

One thing is certain: This co-op is supplying a service for its members who reap the benefits of savings, convenience and the value of working together.

## 4-H Dairy Club

The Centre County 4-H Dairy Club met on May 14 at the Logan Grange in Pleasant Gap.

Cookies for a cookie sale were distributed and the group was given instructions.

The group discussed a new award which will be given to the Outstanding 4-Her and Showing and Fitter at the next Annual Achievement night in October.

Mel Brown showed a slide presentation entitled "Growing Heifer Calves."

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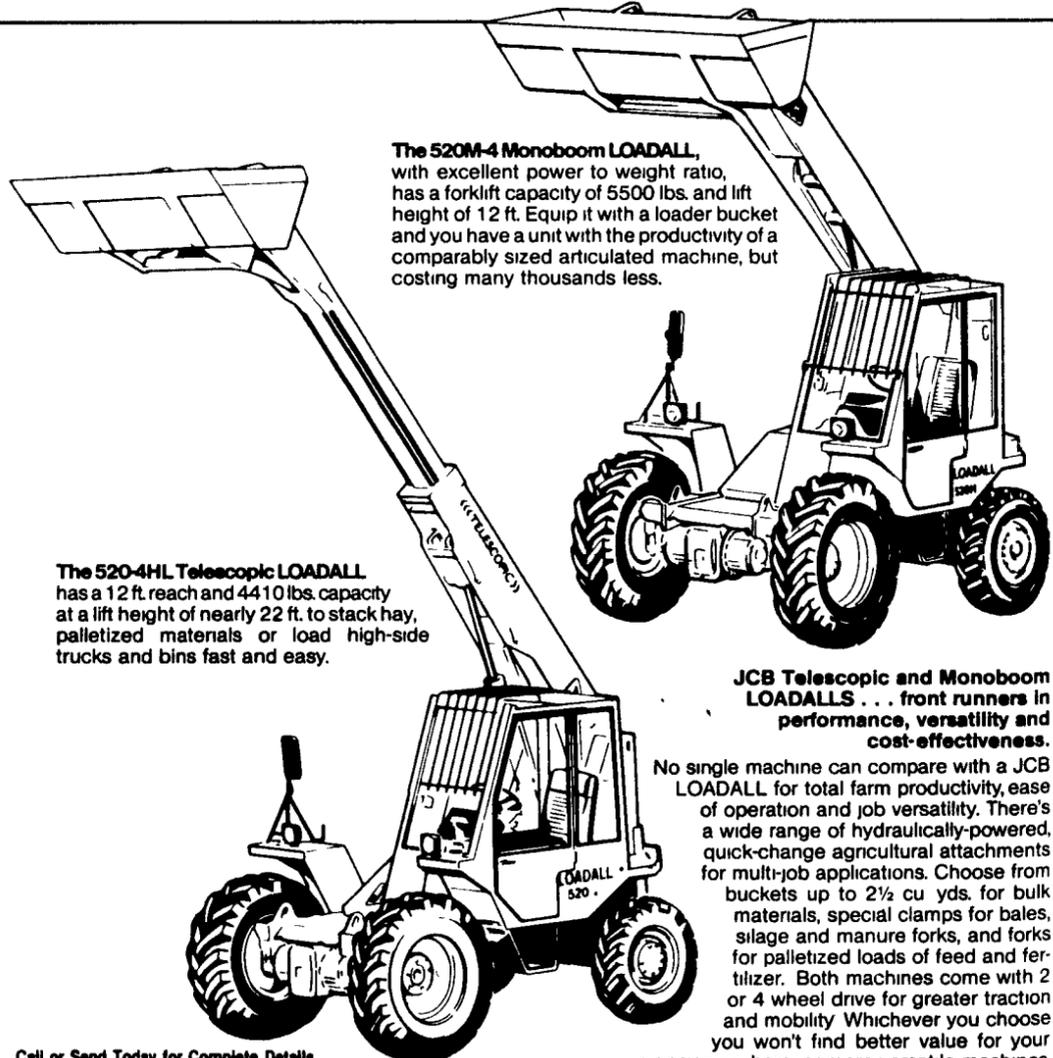
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