



CATTLE DRIVERS KEPT TOES TAPPING AT CORNAPALOOZA.

## FARM AND FIELD



By JULIA RAPPAPORT

"I expand and live in the warm day like corn and melons," wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson. Mr. Emerson never wrote about the Vineyard, but it is clear that he fully understood one of our favorite summertime indulgences. With the evenings getting cooler and the days of school looming, the corn stalks on Island farms have reached their full height. This corn is not the stuff of early summer teasers. Although always better than canned, frozen, or — gasp — off-Island, early summer corn is wonderful and tender and sweet, but far too scarce. It runs out as soon as it is on the stand, but in August sweet

corn comes into its own. August is peak corn season.

And what better way to celebrate than to throw a full-day party dedicated to the stuff?

The second annual Cornapalooza went down at the FARM Institute in Katama on Saturday and it was all corn all the time. The sizzle of deep-fried falafel and the smoke from fresh-grilled, grass-fed burgers filled the ears and noses, but it was the aroma of boiling sweet corn that stole the show.

Behind a booth marked Kinsman's Corn, Drew Kinsman worked nonstop, doling out 1,000 ears of fresh Morning Glory Farm corn grown right in Katama.

"It's tasty," proclaimed Ella Von Heuhe after her first bite. Miss Von Heuhe — who is eight, though almost nine, like eight and three-quarters, she explained — thought the corn tasted best plain, not a touch of butter in sight.

Her cousin, August Graves, also eight almost nine, preferred hers with a coat of butter. "It's really sweet," Miss Graves said, wiping the remains from

her cheeks.

So sweet, in fact, that some passed over cookies from the Scottish Bakehouse and went straight to corn to satisfy their sweet tooth.

"It's unbelievable," said Linda Everly of Oak Bluffs and Blackstone. Her husband, Art, stood next to her, savoring the last bites of his ear. "We had falafel for lunch, but decided it was corn for dessert," he said.

Matt Goldfarb, executive director of the FARM Institute, could be found tucked away from the action in a hammock, a devoured cob next to him. "I like it raw, fresh off the stalk," he said while taking in the live music and the laughing kids in front of him. "In the field, munch on it, throw it over my shoulder."

The corn was delectable, but it takes more than corn to make a party. On Saturday, the FARM took one part corn, mixed it with some bales of hay, threw in a shake of live music and stirred in a whole lot of people.

"This farm belongs to the community," said Rob Goldfarb, the FARM's summer program, communications and event director. "At the center of every community is a farm. The community is only as strong as the farm and the farm



Pictures by Mark Lovewell

INTREPID FAMILY PREPARES TO ENTER MAZE.



DEVIN HILL PUTS ON NEW FACE.

is only as strong as the community."

On Saturday, Island cooks and growers came to support the mission of bringing people together at the farm.

"I love the FARM Institute," said Danielle Dominick of the Scottish Bakehouse. Ms. Dominick routinely buys the farm's kale, herbs and meat to sell at her State Road establishment. "It's connecting people from their food to their mouths," she said.

Ms. Dominick whipped up a wide variety of salads for the event and shared a booth with the folks from ArtCliff Diner, another devotee of fresh Island produce. Next door, Offshore Ale offered their local beer and Wes Wood, the institute's head farmer, threw burgers on the grill.

The local flavor could be found in the food, but it was also filling the airwaves. Island musical act the Cattle Drivers, regulars at the West Tisbury farmers' market, sat on haybales, eating lunch and taking in the tunes of Milo and Maynard Silva.

"It's such an organic environment," said Kevin Keady, the group's singer and songwriter. Mr. Keady also wrote the advertising jingle for the festival. "My kids participate at the farm,"

said the group's violinist, Rebecca Barca-Tinus. "It's what makes the Vineyard unique."

As the musicians grooved, the kids got busy. They clambered through a hay maze, waited in line for face painting and built scarecrows for the farm's field.

A woman going only by the name of Quicha sat at a small table reading fortunes from corn kernels she dropped into a bowl of water. Usually, she uses only black beans to tell the future. "I'm surprised at how wonderfully they've both worked," she said.

Many that turned out on Saturday already support the farm. John Meeks Jr., 4, is a regular at the farm camp. "It's fun because it has animals," he said. "And we feed them."

Mr. Meeks turned out to be an excellent guide on everything from the hay maze — "I keep getting lost in this one" — to the corn maze. "You have to take



BECKY BROWN AND FATHER DICK BROWN ENJOY DAY.

a map and look at it in the maze," he said as he led a timid group of four into what looked like a wall of cornstalks. "It is very important to take a map."

Mr. Meeks forgot to mention that the maze spans seven acres and once inside, a map provides little direction. "It just didn't work," a defeated trio said, leaving the maze. "We even brought a map and an eyeliner pen and we got lost," said Amalie Tinus, one of the three.

During a summer filled with benefits and fundraisers, Cornapalooza is a party everyone can attend. "We want

people to feel at home at the farms on the Vineyard," Rob Goldfarb said.

With people like Mr. Meeks leading the way around the farm, it was clear that, for one day at least, the gap between mouth and food closed just a bit. All it took was a few ears of sweet corn.

This column is meant to reflect all aspects of agricultural activity and farm life on the Vineyard. To get in touch with Julia Rappaport, please call 508-627-4311, extension 133, or e-mail her at jrappaport@mvgazette.com.



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