

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****CONTACT**

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**Please run in your publication prior to Oct. 30. Thank you.****The next big thing: local vegetables fermented for peak flavor, health, and shelf life**

Bayfield, WI (October 17, 2014) – Talking with Jennifer Sauter Sargent of Spirit Creek Farm, you realize that she’s been converted. She didn’t start out loving sauerkraut, having only tried the commercial-style pickled and pasteurized kind. But once she tried kraut that was actually fermented, she became a fan.

“It’s not soggy, and it has a nice bite,” says Jennifer. “It’s completely different from commercial sauerkraut. I love it now!”

The credit goes to her husband Andrew, and to the book *Salt: A World History*, by Mark Kurlansky, which inspired a return to this traditional way of preserving cabbage and other vegetables.

From their 70-acre farm near Bayfield, Andrew and Jennifer are bringing produce from local organic and sustainable farms together with their homegrown ingredients, and transforming them in their on-farm commercial kitchen. The area farms contributing produce are proudly listed on their website, [spiritcreekfarm.com](http://spiritcreekfarm.com). They processed 30,000 pounds of cabbage last year, and are on course to do 40-50,000 pounds this year.

The products are unique, dynamic versions of some traditional standards, such as sauerkraut, but with a twist. Their lacto-fermented Curtido is a Latin-American sauerkraut made with green cabbage, onions, carrots, oregano, sea salt, and red pepper flakes. Their recipe is their own, inspired by the traditional version, and it won them a 2012 Good Food Award.

Spirit Creek Farm’s Kim Chi, a Korean style kraut, is their best seller and is also a variation on tradition, featuring ginger and red pepper flakes along with cabbage, carrots, radishes, onion, salt, and garlic. Other fermented products made at Spirit Creek Farm include ginger carrots, beets, green beans, garlic scape pesto, mustard sauerkraut, and the purple sauerkraut that won a 2011 Good Food Award.

You’ll notice their ingredient lists include no additives. That’s part of the advantage of fermentation, along with the healthy gut bacteria that it promotes. Think probiotics.

Modern commercially-made sauerkraut is pasteurized, which means that any fermentation that has occurred is abruptly halted with the addition of the thermal processing. Heat kills the many micro-organisms but makes for a more simple and consistent product that can sit on store shelves indefinitely.

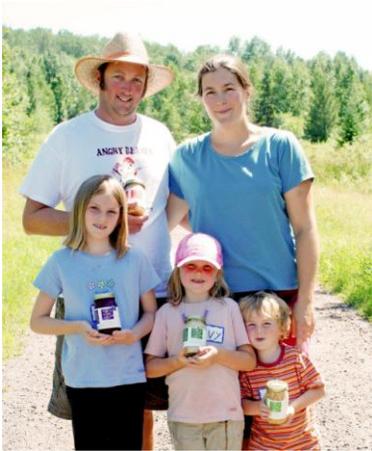
Making traditional kraut, however, requires careful monitoring of temperature and timing, to foster just the right growth levels of the good bacteria responsible for the characteristic sour flavors and tender texture of these vegetables, which are essentially still raw.

Traditional kraut is a good source of vitamins C, B, and K, fiber, calcium, magnesium, folate, iron, potassium, copper, manganese, and the antioxidants lutein and zeaxanthin. Even better, the fermentation process increases the bioavailability of these nutrients. And because it hasn’t been heat-treated, it still contains healthy live enzymes.

You’ll find Spirit Creek Farm products at over 25 stores in Wisconsin, as well as locations in Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, and the Dakotas. They’re not with a distributor yet, but instead make use of a distribution partnership known as “cross-dock shipping,” where they do the communication and sales, but the product is warehoused and shipped with the distributor’s other products.



Andrew Sauter Sargent at the 2011 Good Food Awards, wearing the medal they won for their Purple Sauerkraut.



*Andrew and Jennifer Sauter Sargent with their children and their farm-fermented, locally-grown sauerkraut*

Jennifer is looking forward to the upcoming *Feast! Festival and Tradeshow* to build their markets. “We have hope and intention of some major growth in the next couple of years,” she said. They are looking to expand into some additional regions, increase their production capacity, and find a distributor that works for their scale.

The *Feast! Festival* on Sunday, Nov. 2 is open to the public, and will be a great time to satisfy your curiosity for local foods. Visitors will be able to taste and purchase a variety of foods that are made throughout Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa, and hear the stories behind the food. Admission is \$5/adults and \$2/children. There is an additional charge for sampling the local beer, wine, and hard cider.

Following the *Festival*, the *Tradeshow* on Nov. 3 will offer an exclusive experience for exhibitors to network with buyers.

For more information about the *Feast! Festival & Tradeshow*, please visit [www.local-feast.org](http://www.local-feast.org). To keep in touch with the latest updates, like *Feast! Local Food Network* on [Facebook](#), follow @Local\_Feast on [Twitter](#), and use #localFEAST to make sure your voice is heard.

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