

NOTABLE EDIBLES

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REAL LEADERSHIP FOR RURAL AMERICA

Barack Obama promised change for America during his campaign and looking at his “Real Leadership for Rural America” document, it appears that farming policies will be getting some presidential attention. Currently, less than 1 percent of the US population claims farming as an occupation and about 40 percent of them are 55 or older. According to the EPA, this “graying of the farm population has led to concerns about the long-term health of family farms as an American institution.” To address this, the Obama administration wants to create a new program to identify up-and-coming farmers and ranchers, helping them develop professional skills and outlets that will lead to farm ownership and management. Additionally, the administration will “provide a capital gains tax break for landowners selling to beginning family farmers, and a first-time buyers tax credit for new farmers,” making it easier for new farmers to start farming on their own land. The administration will also seek to support local family farmers and promote regional food system policies. Unfortunately, hard details on this are sketchy. Obama says he recognizes that local and regional food systems are good for both the environment and local economies, and will therefore “emphasize the need for Americans to buy fresh and buy local, and implement USDA policies that promote local and regional food systems” but exactly *how* that will be accomplished is left unsaid. Still, the recognition that local food systems are important is heartening. Perhaps farmers and communities that rely on them really can keep hope alive. Access Barack Obama’s “Real Leadership for Rural America,” at www.barackobama.com.

HAUTE CHOCOLATE

Are there really people who can resist chocolate? Puritans perhaps—those who routinely deny themselves pleasure—but not hedonists. And who better to serve those who pursue gastronomic pleasure than Jennifer Posey and Zahra Langford, the duo behind Hedonist Artisan Chocolate? Posey, Hedonist’s chocolatier, puts her considerable talent towards turning out a diverse range of chocolate confections, from classics like bittersweet truffles, candied and chocolate-dipped orange peels to more exotic pairings like lavender, ginger, or whiskey sage. Chocolate offerings change with the seasons. For winter, Hedonist offers an assortment of truffles including eggnog, fig, orange clove, molasses, and Champagne pomegranate. For Valentine’s Day, they spice things up with a truffle collection of raspberry wasabi, peanut butter cayenne, coconut curry, orange chipotle, and lemon pepper. If you prefer to sip your chocolate rather than sink your teeth into it, Hedonist’s drinking chocolates combine shaved chocolate with cocoa powder for a decadently rich hot chocolate experience. Purists can indulge in their Bittersweet Drinking Chocolate but for a little something different, there’s also Cinnamon Chipotle, Lavender Lemongrass, and Yerba Maté (a flavor similar to green tea). Hedonist chocolates can be found at 674 South Avenue in Rochester and at www.hedonistchocolates.com.

