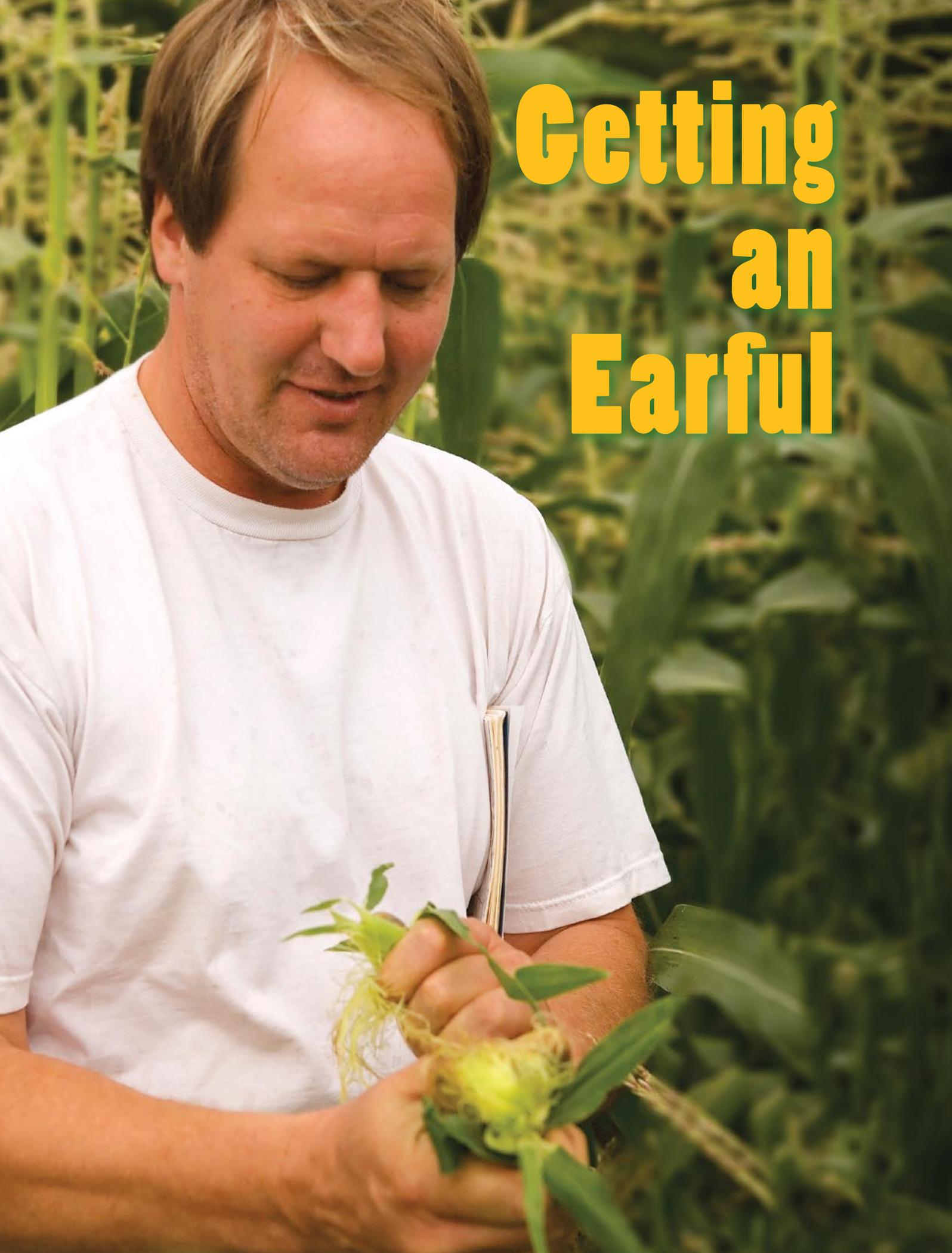


Getting an Earful



• SUMMER AND SWEET CORN •

by Bill Lubing



“Sex is good, but not as good as fresh sweet corn.”

—Garrison Keillor.

Five minutes in the pressure cooker will do it. Fifteen minutes on the grill will bring it to golden perfection. Some people shuck it, slather it with butter, slip plastic wrap around it, and then stick it in the microwave for six minutes. The old standby is to boil it from five to ten minutes (though there are those who will tell you a minute will do it).

When it comes to summertime and sweet corn, Olaf Olson, owner of Pleasant Ridge Produce in the Richland Center, Wisconsin, area, says it’s one of the favorite items enjoyed by his CSA members.

Most people are particular about the sweetness of their corn, but concern abounds around the quality of the kernel formation. The standard test is to peel back the husk and inspect the kernels. While most farmers won’t say anything to you, “It bothers me if customers peel open good ear after good ear and then leave them behind,” says Dan Luck of Luck Produce in Randolph, Wisconsin.

“If they peel an ear that I consider to be a good one, well, no one is going to buy an ear that has been torn open.” Dan explains that “Anything you can see on an ear of corn you can feel. If you take an ear of corn and feel it, starting at the shank end and working up toward the top, if you don’t feel any irregularities such as a dent or a bulge or an area of no kernels, it’s a good ear of corn. You really don’t have to look at it to see it.”

Dan sells corn at the Wednesday Dane County Farmers’ Market (www.madfarmmkt.org) and at his business in Randolph, Wisconsin, The Springs Pub & Grill. “I’m a farmer/bar owner,” he jokes.

While Dan sells both white and yellow corn, “My bicolor supersweets are definitely the top sellers,” he says. “I choose my varieties strictly for flavor because that’s what brings the customer back. Ear size is not nearly as important. Yield out of the field isn’t as important as flavor. You’ve got to have something that tastes good.”

Century Oaks Farm, run by the Marty and Melissa Sprecher family in Lone Rock, Wisconsin, sells everything from Jersey beef, asparagus, strawberries, and green beans to tomatoes, peppers, melons, squash, and pumpkins. This time of year they’re selling corn—and lots of it. The Sprechers are regular vendors at the Wednesday and Saturday Dane County markets, the Richland Center market, and also



operate a farm stand in front of their home. Melissa is happy to share some of her corn cooking knowledge.

“I think if you’re going to boil it, the best way is to just husk it down and put it in a pot, then bring it to a boil,” says Melissa. Once it starts boiling, cook it between 10 to 15 minutes.

“If you like it grilled,” she continues, “take off the silk and then soak it for at least 15 minutes. Set your grill to around 350, a medium heat, put on the corn, and grill it for around 30 minutes.

You want to turn them at least twice. But keep an eye on it because if the ears start burning, you’ll want to keep turning them over.”

Of course, leaving the corn on the cob is not the only option. I tried cutting the corn off the cob, adding in freshly chopped jalapeno pepper and tomato, then sautéing the mixture in a little olive oil. After it was finished I sprinkled some brewer’s yeast (sometimes called nutritional yeast) on top. Wow, what a great flavor!

Melissa uses an electric knife to strip the cob. “For the best recipe for freezing,” she begins, “you put 20 to 25 cups of corn in a turkey roaster (two dozen ears yield around 20 cups). Put in a tablespoon of salt and half a tablespoon of pepper. Add two cups of half-and-half or cream and two sticks of butter (fat-free or low-fat substitutes work well, too).

“Put it in a 350-degree oven for an hour, stirring every ten minutes,” Melissa continues. “Take it out. Cool it. Put it in freezer bags. It’s phenomenal!”

Sweet corn is local, fresh, inexpensive, and easy to prepare. Whether you shuck it, strip it, can it, freeze it, or enjoy it right off the cob with butter and salt, corn on the cob is a classic summertime treat. And as Olaf Olson notes, “People go nuts for it!”

“SEX IS GOOD, BUT NOT AS GOOD AS FRESH SWEET CORN.”

—GARRISON KEILLOR



SWEET CORN FOR SALE.

Dan Luck raises wonderful sweet corn on the shores of Beaver Dam Lake. (Bottom) Melissa Sprecher, her husband Marty, and children sell corn at the Dane County Farmers’ Market and at their Lone Rock farm, Century Oaks Farm.

OLAF OLSON KNOWS HIS CORN. *It’s about genetics, sunshine, rain nutrition, and a little luck.*



Oktoberfest season is here!!

We offer more than 15 types of brats — try them all!

- Bavaria — Fresh (Sheboygan Style)
- Bavaria — Precooked (Munich Weisswurst)
- Cured & Smoked Brats
- Italian Fresh or Precooked
- Nürnberger Style — *Our #1!*
- Cajun, Kaiser, Beef, and Smoked
- Red Lager Beer — *Oktoberfest Party Style!*
- Sampler Packages and More!

Real Pretzels From Munich

Kraut and More For Your *Oktoberfest Party!*

❁ Authentic Old World German Sausage ❁
Family owned & operated for over 50 years



Bavaria Sausage, Inc.

6317 Nesbitt Road, Madison, WI 53719

Phone: (608) 271-1295, (800) 733-6695

Fax: (608) 845-6693, www.bavariasausage.com

Shipping & packaging services
 Mailbox & postal services
 Printing & copying services
 Fax services
 Passport photos
 Moving supplies

2364 Jackson Street
 Stoughton, WI 53589
 608.877.2679 Tel
 608.877.8318 Fax

©2005 Mail Boxes Etc., Inc. 5AJG486965 11.05



The UPS Store®

Ken's Automotive

We Can Handle All Your Automotive Needs

PREMIUM SERVICES

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Air Conditioning | Emissions |
| Alignment | Engine Repair and Replacement |
| Brakes | Fuel System |
| Clutches | Starters and Alternators |
| Cooling System | Steering |
| Cruise Control | Suspension |
| Drivability | Transmissions |
| Drive Train | Windows |
| Electronics | |



Harland Hoveland & John Gilchrist
 4715 Farwell Street, McFarland, WI
 (608) 251-1771 Call For an Appointment
 Email: kensauto@kensauto.biz • www.kensauto.biz