



What are the New Financial Benefits for Members?

Member-only pricing on monthly, weekly and produce specials

We are significantly increasing the numbers of specials we offer and the savings on those sale products. It made sense that our members would be the primary recipients of this major push for great pricing. (Specials pricing was previously available to all shoppers.)

A Co-op card valued at 10% of the total for a single purchase of over \$300 – the card can be used for your next shop.



In our Member Survey results and member forums, members told us they favoured everyday low pricing over our existing member benefits package. During our forums and in subsequent member feedback, we also heard members clearly tell us they felt there should still be a benefit that supported high-volume shops. The Co-op Card benefit is the result!

Special case-lot pricing in our spring and fall Case Lot sales

Another continuation of an amazing member benefit.

10% discount on products special ordered by the case

This is a continuation of an existing member benefit.

Special pricing and promotions during our annual Wellness Week

This is an exciting new member program. For one week during the month of February we will be offering amazing savings on a wide range of Wellness products as well as unique educational opportunities.



Discounts on cooking classes and events

We continue to increase our offerings of fun and educational opportunities. Our popular cooking classes (including an amazing meal) are only \$20 for members. We have expanded our classes offerings to now include a Wellness Class Series for the Fall/Winter season with great member pricing.

A share of the Co-op's profit through the distribution of an annual patronage return

At the AGM in September, the membership approved the distribution of 15% of this year's profit among the membership for the financial year ending May 2012. The amount of the return is based on purchasing; the more you spend at the Co-op, the higher your patronage return will be! This benefit is an expression of the uniqueness of participating in a cooperatively-owned business. The return recognizes your ownership in the Co-op by offering a financial return on your patronage in profitable years, without risking the Co-op's financial security.

New Member Financial Benefits take effect November 1st, 2011

Other questions you may have:

Why is the MAD day not part of the member benefits anymore?

We heard a lot from members who were tired of playing the MAD day game every month. They did not want to have to save up all their shopping for one day in the hopes that we would have all the products they need in stock and that the store would not be too busy to shop in (which is frequently was at the end of the month as people attempted to use their MAD day before they 'lost' it). In addition, many of our members do not do volume shops and felt that this was yet another benefit that unfairly favoured members who could.

Also, we, along with many other natural foods co-ops, have discovered that offering these kinds of discounts before you know the profitability of the business, can--and has--put co-ops in risky financial positions.

The strategy required to mitigate this risky situation has been to increase shelf-pricing, which somewhat cushions the unpredictable effect of the discounts on our gross profit. Unfortunately, it has the effect of inflating shelf prices and making us appear more expensive.

Our new benefit program comes with a commitment from board and staff to ensuring that member-owners receive great everyday pricing on all our products and amazing great deals that quickly exceed the value of their invested shares... and keep on giving! We appreciate our member-owners every day!

The Co-op is expensive, how can I afford to shop here without my MAD day?

We recently conducted a comprehensive price comparison with the other grocery stores in Nelson. When comparing the exact same products, we found that the Co-op is NOT more expensive and is, in several cases, lower.

We do recognize that the Co-op carries a wide selection of unique, fair trade, organic, local and premium products that are often more expensive than mass-produced conventional brands. We are working hard to ensure that we bring you these products at the best possible price and that our financial benefits provide members with great discounts on great foods and products.

Also, we have spent the past several months lowering shelf prices wherever possible. You may have already noticed that Bulk pricing is approximately 20% lower overall! We will continue to reduce shelf pricing on many products now that we do not have to increase pricing to compensate for the MAD discount.

How did you communicate these changes to the membership?

The Board has been working on updating the member package for most of the past year. They held 3 member forums to discuss the proposed changes, wrote monthly articles in the newsletter and brought the changes to the Annual General Meeting in September. The vast majority of the members who participated in these events support the new package. If you would like to be kept up to date on initiatives of importance like this, we enthusiastically encourage you to sign up for our eNewsletter online (www.kootenay.coop and click on the Enews icon) or at Customer Service and to read our monthly newsletter, *On the Table*.

We hope you will continue to give us feedback about how our member programs and policies work for you as a member-owner: board@kootenay.coop