THE SHELF WHERE EVERYTHING IS HALF OFF

June 16, 2026


AL SALE
DYNAMIC HEALTH
Noni Juice
Certified Organic
SECTION G
SHELF 5
50% OFF
SPECIAL SALE
From our distributors
50% OFF
TOP FIVE ~~FOUR~~ SHELVES
(Prices as marked)
SPECIAL SALE
SECTION G
SHELF 6
PHOTO BY ZACHARY SCHULMAN

June 16, 2026

By Kayla Levy

There are many places to begin a shopping trip at the Coop. Some people beeline for the produce section or go straight to the bulk aisle. Others begin filling up a cart at the meat freezer. Others still walk directly back to the end of aisle four, where there's a shelf—called an endcap in the shopping business—full of discounted goods.

"I've had a lot of shoppers tell me this is the first thing they look at when they come into the Coop," said Receiving Coordinator Gillian Chi. "When I stock the sale endcap, people come and grab items before I even put the price label up." Chi would know, as she is the one who started—and is responsible for maintaining—the sale endcap, where all items are half off.

It all began with an email. In 2021, Chi received a message from KeHE, one of the Coop's main distributors, with a spreadsheet highlighting hundreds of half-off items. The cost of groceries was skyrocketing, and Chi thought the discounts would benefit shoppers, so she placed an order for an endcap's worth of items (the end of aisle four had just been cleared of extra supplements). Everything sold quickly.

4B
5A
SPECIAL SALE
50% OFF
PHOTO BY ZACHARY SCHULMAN


SPECIAL SALE
50% OFF
Everything on these shelves
(Prices as marked)
50% OFF
Everything on these shelves
(Prices as marked)
PHOTO BY ZACHARY SCHULMAN


EDEN
KAMUT FLAKES
ORGANIC WHOLE GRAIN
SPECIAL SALE
From our distributors
50% OFF
Everything on these shelves
(Prices as marked)
PHOTO BY ZACHARY SCHULMAN



“I called my sales rep to understand why she sent the discounted list in the first place, and she said, ‘Oh, we have one every week,’” said Chi, recalling her surprise. “I asked her to start sending it to me weekly.” From there, the sale endcap was born.

Every week, Chi receives the half-off list via email and sorts through to find about 20 items to purchase. She starts by removing frozen or refrigerated goods, as well as anything with artificial ingredients or an expiration date less than three months away. From there, she’s left with about 100 products.

“It’s a gamble, but I’ve gotten pretty experienced at having a gut feeling about what people will buy,” said Chi.

She typically buys 200 units of each product (the most that can fit in the basement), hoping the supply will last a week—but that rarely happens. Turnover on the endcap is quicker than in other parts of the store, and there are fewer items in backstock, Chi

explained. Chips and chocolate are usually the first to go, she said.

Coop member Robert Berkman shops the sale endcap all the time but is disappointed when items sell out. “The only problem is buying something really good and then going back and they’re all gone. Forever,” he said.

Other members said they have a hard time finding predictable products or flavors they like on the endcap. “I’ve mostly found unusual snacks there,” said Sophie Pugh-Sellers.

In some cases, sale items are products that exist elsewhere in the store or are staple goods. Once, Coop member Mo Christ discovered a shelf-stable curry from the endcap that they now purchase at full price. “It’s a perfect office lunch,” they said.

For her part, Chi tries to stock the shelf with pantry staples when possible. “The other items are impulse purchases, but buying a pantry staple makes me feel good because it’s a chance for shoppers to save money on an item they’d be buying anyway,” she said.



One member noted that the best item they'd ever bought on the endcap was a Graza olive oil refill for just $9.

The endcap at aisle four isn't the only place where shoppers can find sales in the Coop. When the Coop gets an extreme deal from KeHE or another distributor, the team tends to put it elsewhere on the floor—like in shopping carts with a special sign.

Distributors regularly put products on sale from 10% to 25% off for the month, and the Coop passes those savings along, but unless you're someone who buys the same item regularly or closely tracks your receipt, you might miss them. "We have no way of indicating that on the shelf, so it's kind of like a hidden sale," said Chi.

In recent months, bolstered by continuing demand, the discount initiative has expanded into the side of aisle four. Chi tries to divide products, putting non-edible goods next to the supplements, and edible treats on the endcap itself. "It's a very random selection, but it's fun," she said.

“This week we have noni juice. I’d never heard of it before, but we’ve almost run out.”

Kayla Levy is a freelance contributor covering housing and culture for New York Magazine*. She’s been a Coop member since 2019.*

WHAT THE COOP’S SUPPLEMENT AISLE TELLS US ABOUT HEALTH AND WELLNESS TRENDS

June 16, 2026

PHOTO BY AZIKIWE ABOAGYE

December 30, 2025

By Zach Schiffman

If you want to understand the American vitamins and supplements industry—its booms, busts, fads, fears and the quiet ways it reorganizes our anxieties—there may be no better vantage point than the Park Slope Food Coop's own supplement aisle. And there may be no better guide than Jessa Fisher, who has been overseeing and ordering the Coop's vitamins and supplements since 2016.

"I was a member and lived in Brooklyn for 10 years," Fisher said from Rochester, N.Y., where she now lives. "And then once COVID hit, I left New York City, but I kept ordering the vitamins and supplements remotely."

PHOTO BY AZIKIWE ABOAGYE


Melatonin
5 mg
Healthy Sleep Cycle*
· Free Radical Scavenger*
· Gastrointestinal Support*
180 Veg Capsules
A Dietary Supplement
Vegetarian/Vegan
PHOTO BY AZIKIWE ABOAGYE



Fisher began her career at Willner Chemists, a store on Park Avenue in Manhattan that “only sold supplements and vitamins,” then worked at the herb shop Flower Power in the East Village.

At Willner, she helped people with their questions and their products. At Flower Power, she sold tinctures and herbs in a space where the whole point was explanation: *What is this? What does it do? Why would I take it?*

But the Coop is different. “We don’t do any of that at the Coop,” Fisher said. “All of it has to sell itself.” Other stores, she noted, “have displays, they’ll have information, they’ll have trainings, they’ll have all sorts of things. They’ll have samples.”

PHOTO BY AZIKIWE ABOAGYE

But, Fisher said, “we don’t do any training or give out any information at the Coop, which is so crazy that it all just sells itself.”

Nationally, that’s where the industry has gone: away from hand-selling and toward self-directed consumer research. According to the Council for Responsible Nutrition, supplement use is at an all-time high, driven more by people reading articles and newsletters and watching TikToks than by staff in white coats behind a counter. If supplements once needed a person standing next to the shelf, now they mostly need a phone and a search bar. The Coop’s shelves—shrinking, expanding, rearranging, never quite containing what the membership suddenly wants—mirror those shifts.

When Fisher started, the aisle looked different.

“When I started, we had a really big presence with Solgar, and this up-and-coming company, Garden of Life,” she said, the latter of which exploded in popularity. “They were super popular, constantly coming out with so many new products. Then, at their height, they got bought out.”

Garden of Life was purchased by Nestlé in 2018. The arc she describes is now standard: small natural brand, explosive growth, then acquisition by a multinational and, at times, a more frustrating relationship on the purchasing end.



According to Grand View Research, the global dietary supplements market, now close to $190 billion, is in exactly that phase of corporate consolidation. The aisle in the Coop feels those mergers as Fishers's reps and the minimums suddenly change, but it's the same story.

Present-day health trends are felt strongly in the health aisle. As Ozempic has surged in the last few years, the demand for supplements promising weight loss has waned. "When I first started, raspberry ketones were really popular," Fisher remembered. "Dr. Oz was touting it for weight loss—it was a big thing. And then probably people just realized, oh, this isn't working all that well."

(When Oz was nominated by President Trump to become head of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, he was grilled in the U.S. Senate for his promotion of supplements as diet miracles.)

Right before Fisher left Brooklyn, CBD hit. "That was huge," she said. Getting CBD in-

to the Coop was a project in itself. “We were trying to figure out where the cabinet should go and then how to design the cabinet,” Fisher recalls. “And then because it had to be locked, there were tons of logistics with that.” It was, she said, “hot stuff.”

The more important long-term shift may be the rise of basics: melatonin, vitamin D, and magnesium. These are the things people talk about not as fads but as part of their daily lives: sleep, bones, stress.


NEW LOOK
MELATONIN NUTRASPRAY
1.5MG
MELATONIN
1.5 mg
MELATONIN
2.5MG
Liquid Melatonin
NaturesPlus
FAST ACTING
MELATONIN
3 mg
90 Tablets
$64.56
MELATONIN NUTRASPRAY SOURCE
$8.07
$96.56
MELATONIN SPRAY PEPP NATURE'S PLUS
$12.07
$0.09
MELATONIN 2.5MG ORANGE SOURCE
$10.84
$43.92
MELATONIN LIQUID 3MG NOW C3
$5.49
$0.00
MELATONIN 3 MG 90 TAB NATURE'S PLUS C3
$5.47
ryptophan
500 mg
CoQ10
60 mg
+ Fish Oil
$20.89
$29.69
$31.89
T-Relief
PLANT-BASED RELIEF
ARNICA
+12
PHOTO BY AZIKIWE ABOAGYE

National surveys, including a 2022 study in *JAMA*, show U.S. melatonin use has roughly quadrupled over the past decade, particularly among young adults and parents. At the Coop, Fisher has noticed the form-factor creep as well, as melatonin gummies have surged in popularity. The Coop has some gummies scattered throughout the vitamin, kids', and herb sections, but she's wary. "You don't get as much of the medicine in the gummy," she said. Vitamin D is everywhere too, but Fisher doesn't fall for the hype. "A lot of people say that you really need really high doses," she said. "I don't carry those, like 50,000 IUs." (IU is a measure of vitamin potency.) "I just stick with the 10,000 in our aisle."

According to the NIH Office of Dietary Supplements, vitamin D deficiency is widespread in the U.S., and supplement sales jumped after pandemic-era studies linked low vitamin D levels with worse health outcomes, especially in colder climates.

"Magnesium has also exploded," she said. "It is out of control. Before, all you could get was magnesium citrate, but now it's magnesium glycinate, magnesium taurate, magnesium fizz."

Nationally, magnesium has become one of the fastest-growing supplements in the country. According to the Council for Responsible Nutrition's 2023 survey, usage has risen sharply, with many Americans taking magnesium specifically for sleep and stress—exactly what TikTok videos and clinicians now recommend.

What looks like an overstuffed section at the Coop is just following the national boom. "Even though we have 10 trillion magnesiums, it's hard to cut any of them because they all sell so well," Fisher said.



PHOTO BY AZIKIWE ABOAGYE

Everyone also seems to be talking about protein. But the Coop tells a more local story.

“There’s been a backlash, too, because a story came out in the *New York Times* about how a lot of these protein powders have heavy metals in them,” Fisher said.

She was immediately alerted that one of the Coop’s products was cited in that story. “I took it off the shelf.” Another performance supplement, though, has clearly arrived.

“Creatine is pretty popular in the weightlifting world,” Fisher said. “I definitely have noticed a spike in that.” National sales data backs that up: creatine has quietly become a staple, driven by younger consumers who treat it as an everyday performance and recovery tool rather than a niche bodybuilder’s aid.

Just as Fisher rushes to add things to the aisle, she is also constantly evaluating what

should be cut.

“For the last five years, we could not keep enough elderberry in stock,” she says. “It is one of the herbs that has actually been proven to be antiviral.”

However, in the past year, Fisher has noticed elderberry sales waning as COVID immunity concerns have softened nationally. But space, not enthusiasm, is what kills most products.

“I just don’t have room to carry everything,” Fisher says. “I had to cut the tincture section, the essential oils, the flower essences and a bunch of homeopathic remedies.”

A lot of those items “sold only once a week—or once every two weeks,” she explains. “It really is based on sales volume.” Nationally, tinctures and essential oils peaked in the mid-2010s wellness boom and have since flattened, while mushrooms, minerals like magnesium and sleep aids have surged. The Coop’s aisle reflects the same transition—just with more members emailing about it.

“I have an attachment to every product I order, so it’s very hard for me to get rid of the products that don’t sell,” she said. “They’re all like my little babies.”

Zach Schiffman is a social editor and writer at New York *magazine, comedian and Park Slope local.*

THE PREPARED FOOD SECTION IS EXPANDING (COULD ROTISSERIE CHICKEN BE NEXT?)

June 16, 2026



October 7, 2025

By Zach Schiffman

One of the most beloved cases at the Coop is growing: a second refrigerated section will join the current array of Court Street Grocers sandwiches, sushi, salads, and, most recently, King David Tacos. One of the Coop's coordinators, Yuri Weber, is the mastermind behind the expansion, and its maintenance is a constant negotiation of supply, price and demand.



Coordinator Yuri Weber.

Court Street Grocers was the first outside vendor to say yes to the Coop about a decade ago. “I reached out to so many people about making food for us, and literally Court Street was the first place to do that,” Weber said. “I reached out to caterers, I reached out to a lot of the restaurants, and no one seemed to have the capability to keep up. They were the first ones that said, “Yeah, we can do that.”

Court Street makes slightly smaller sandwiches for the Coop than what it sells at their stores. “I don’t think they’re also as fully loaded as they are in their stores,” Weber said. “Just to kind of keep their price point at a place where they’re making money and we’re selling them at a reasonable price,” he said with air quotes. The prices of the sandwiches have been relatively stable, only going up once last March.



Sandwiches in the case.

Other prepared items have rotated in and out. “We had the onigiri for a while from different places, and those were popular, but they couldn’t keep up. It wasn’t financially viable for them to keep doing it for us,” Weber said. The sushi also has been a mainstay for nearly a decade. “The sushi is also very reasonably priced, but you kind of also get what you pay for. It’s not bad sushi, but it’s not *great.*”

King David tacos were added more recently. “Someone that works in the membership office, Jason Weiner, mentioned them a year ago,” Weber said. “We didn’t really have room to make that happen.”



Tacos in the case.

But when the onigiri went away, an opportunity arose. Current space constraints have been an issue, however.

“The tacos really need the salsa. There was just no room. We tried so hard to jam them in there, and it was messy. That’s top of my list to try to figure out,” said Weber, referring to his priorities after the new fridge is installed.

Chez Chrystelle’s salads joined the case a year and a half ago. “She just brought us samples, and we loved the salads,” he said. “We thought they were dynamite. The quality and the quantity were both there right off the bat.”

Although, Weber does miss the Court Street salads. “Those were so good. The ones with the soft-boiled eggs and the avocado were delicious.” He says he is working with Court Street to bring some packaged salads—more along the lines of potato salad—back to the case.



A working member passes a sandwich to a shopping member.

Asked about his philosophy, Weber said it comes down to two things: “A, can the suppliers meet our demand and B, meet a certain price point and value. You know, like, maybe they’re a little pricey, but it’s got a value to it.”

The grab-and-go case was designed to be low-maintenance.

“One of the requirements that we had was that we really can’t have overstock in the basement,” Weber said. “It was one of those things where it’s, like, someone needs to come in, put the things in there, and then we just, like, forget about it. Totally.”

Sandwiches and sushi have been successful in that model, but tacos and salads have required some adjustments. “There’s just not enough room to put the whole order on the shelf at once,” he said. “So now we’re storing the back stock in the basement, and it’s not being stocked as frequently.”







PHOTO BY ZACHARY SCHULMAN

Members shop the case.

Managing expectations is part of the process. Most members expect that if they come to the Coop in the evening, the grab-and-go case will be mostly empty.

“I feel like I’ve got it pretty close and nothing’s running out too early, but those things aren’t great the next day,” Weber said.

Sushi leftovers are picked up and credited, but Court Street sandwiches require constant calibration. “I’m constantly in the process of figuring out, like, ‘When did the Vegetalians sell out this week? Oh, they all sold out at 5 p.m., maybe I should get more vegetalian.’ It’s a balance of making sure there aren’t too many leftover sandwiches the next day.”

Weber distinguishes between the grab-and-go case and the prepared-foods fridge that includes the pastas and falafel across from the cheese. “Everything in grab-and--go you can eat on your way out of the Coop,” he said. “That was our philosophy. This really is the grab-and-go, and then the other one is the prepared foods. These are ready-to-eat, and those are more like things you need to heat up.”

The new fridge will go in the produce aisle, near where the onions and potatoes are.

“We’re going to extend the refrigeration there, and then the onions and potatoes will probably end up in the middle of the aisle somewhere,” Weber said. “Then, we’ll have room for more stuff, and I’ve been talking with a lot of people about bringing in more meals.”


COURT STREET GROCERS
HEAT 'N EAT!
PHOTO BY ZACHARY SCHULMAN

Sandwiches and salads in the case.

He is in conversation with restaurants, caterers and corporate-style meal providers offering nutrient-specific dishes. “Right now a lot of it is about the packaging,” said Weber. “I really like the way the Chrystelle salads are packaged. It has the compostable bottom and minimal plastic for what it is. If we could do something like that for the prepared meals, I would be happy.”

Rotisserie chicken has long been a dream item at the Coop, but the logistics are trickier than expected.

“Someone has to roast this off-site, and then they have to cool it, and they have to put it in a bag or someplace that we can then sell it from.”

Even so, Weber sounded optimistic about what’s next. “The next round of samples are probably going to come next week, and I’m super excited about this French chef that’s going to bring the rotisserie chicken and the sides. I think those are going to be dynamite.”

Zach Schiffman is a social editor and writer at New York *magazine, comedian, and Park Slope local.*

WHERE THE HECK DO WE PUT THIS STUFF? STORAGE IS AN ONGOING CHALLENGE

June 16, 2026



By Walecia Konrad

Making the most of the limited storage space at the Park Slope Food Coop is a science, an art and—these days—a complete obsession.

As most members know, the Coop prides itself on unusually fast turnover of inventory—many times higher than traditional grocery stores. It's a good thing inventory moves fast, because there is limited space to store all the produce and other goods that the Coop sells. Coop coordinators are experts at ordering just the right amount of stuff to store in the basement for just the right amount of time before storage space becomes nonexistent.

But it's a delicate art. There are times when holiday products, bumper crops from favorite suppliers or close-out deals just too good to pass up turn into extra palettes and U-boats full of stuff waiting to be sold. On top of that, staffers are grappling with life after the height of the pandemic and shutdowns.

THERE’S A REASON WHY STORAGE IS A UNIQUE PROBLEM FOR THE COOP: THE SELLING SPACE IS SMALL—ONLY 6,000 SQUARE FEET. HOWEVER, ANNUAL SALES ARE $9,000 PER SQUARE FOOT, WELL ABOVE MOST GROCERY STORES.

Storage was already very tight before the pandemic, explained General Coordinator Joe Szladek, “but now with all the changes we’ve made, there’s a lot more to deal with as we try to get back to normal.”

A DIFFERENT KIND OF STORE—AND STORAGE

There’s a reason why storage is a unique problem for the Coop: The selling space is small—only 6,000 square feet, Szladek explained. However, annual sales are $9,000 per square foot, well above most grocery stores.

Many traditional grocery stores, with more square footage and shelf space than the Coop, stock most of their goods directly from the truck onto the shelves, eliminating the need for paid staff to move the goods from a storage space onto the shelves. This is especially true with non-perishables.

“[The Coop’s] member labor means we can take advantage of the storage space we do have, so we can keep our smaller store stocked fast enough to meet shoppers’ needs,” explained Szladek.

DURING THE PANDEMIC, THE COOP BOUGHT A LARGE MACHINE CALLED A HOPPER THAT BAGS BULK ITEMS SUCH AS RICE, BEANS, AND GRAINS—PRETTY MUCH EVERYTHING THAT SHOPPERS USED TO FIND IN THE SCOOP BINS ON THE FLOOR OF THE BULK AISLE.

Therein lies the puzzle: how to make the most of the storage space we do have in an organized efficient manner?

A NEW SPACE HOG: THE HOPPER

The biggest storage challenge the Coop has been facing in the past few months basically boils down to rice and beans.

During the pandemic, the Coop bought a large machine called a hopper that bags bulk items such as rice, beans and grains—pretty much everything that shoppers used to find in the scoop bins on the floor of the bulk aisle.

This change to some prepackaged bulk definitely cuts down on crowding in the bulk aisle—a huge priority during the pandemic. As a result, shoppers now simply grab a prepacked bag of these items out of the boxes along the floor and keep moving.

The bins with pour spouts holding granola, nuts and other bulk items above the prepacked items are still self-serve.

Today, as shopping returns to normal at the Coop, many members appreciate the convenience of not having to scoop and bag the prepackaged items themselves. (Although that hasn't stopped some members from complaining that the pre-filled bags aren't the right size for their needs.)

Until the beginning of this year, the very large, tall and heavy hopper was housed and operated in the former childcare room. That made sense, since childcare had been suspended during the pandemic. It was a relatively spacious place for staffers to work on the machine and there was enough room to stack the giant bags of rice, beans and other items, as well as the boxes of plastic bags and twist ties used to package bulk goods.

Now, post-pandemic, members and staffers are looking to reclaim the former child-

care space.

> COORDINATORS ANNOUNCED AT THE FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING THAT CHILD-CARE WILL NOT RETURN. IT PROVED IMPOSSIBLE TO GET LIABILITY INSURANCE BE-CAUSE THE COOP WOULD HAVE HAD TO SECURE A LICENSE TO OPERATE A CHILD-CARE FACILITY.

So the coordinators decided to move the hopper to the basement. Staffers needed to find an area large and well-ventilated enough to safely operate the hopper, with enough room for the supplies and bagged bulk items. The answer was a relatively roomy corner near the freezer that already had an air vent.

But the move wasn’t simple, said General Coordinator Elinoar Astrinsky. It entailed adding power, threading the hopper air hose through the current venting system to the air compressor outside the Coop, improving the lighting, installing new water pipes and redoing the floors so they are easy to clean and mop.

So far, members and staffers are operating the hopper just fine, Astrinsky reported. She did add that shift workers are moving a bit more slowly, though, as they get used to the new digs, and many miss the windows and high ceilings of the former childcare room.

The move freed up the childcare room, but—disappointing for many members—coordinators announced at the February General Meeting (GM) that childcare will not return. It proved impossible to get liability insurance because the Coop would have had to secure a license to operate a childcare facility, explained General Coordinator Ann Herpel.

EVERY NOOK AND CRANNY

Coop staffers are great at taking advantage of any nook, cranny or corner in the Coop to store everything from pallets of Passover matzo, to dish towels, to endless cartons of craft beer.

In late January, housewares were dominating the upstairs meeting room, including glassware, kitchen gadgets, dishtowels and candles. Those items have since been moved to the former childcare room. “Now we can have staff and member meetings upstairs again,” said Szladek.

> STAFFERS ARE CONSTANTLY ADAPTING AND INSTALLING CUSTOM-DESIGNED SHELVES, MOVING BOXES AND CARTONS OF MERCHANDISE FROM ONE AISLE TO ANOTHER, AND MONITORING THE SURPLUS ITEMS STACKED ON U-BOATS.

Elsewhere upstairs you might find a few U-boats stacked with surplus non-perishables or seasonal items. Boxes of supplies and other items are stacked on every shelf above and below people’s desks, including on the ceiling beams. In General Coordinator Joe Holtz’s office, some very old financial files have given way to storage for bulk bags, and, in the kitchen, staffers have donated cooking supplies to make room for pallets of merchandise that needed a home.

Back in the basement, staffers are constantly adapting and installing custom-designed and precisely measured shelves, moving boxes and cartons of merchandise from one aisle to another and monitoring the surplus items stacked on U-boats towards the end of the week when inventory swells to accommodate weekend crowds.

HALF PRICE BUT TWICE THE SPACE

Shoppers love the end cap across from the yogurt that houses half-price items, ranging from peach juice for bellinis to cranberry crackers. Staffers call these “dusty box

deals.” Trusted vendors call Coop buyers asking if they’d like to take on some almost-expired, need-to-move-quickly inventory at really good prices.

> “THERE’S NOT ENOUGH STORAGE AND THERE WILL NEVER BE ENOUGH STORAGE,” SAID RECEIVING COORDINATOR BRITT HENRIKSSON.

Those vendors know how fast our turnover is, and that our members love a deal. While the shelf on the shopping floor takes very little space, storing these dusty boxes, thanks to mondo shipments all at once, does not. The aisles that store these items are constantly being rejiggered to fit the latest shipments.

AN EVOLVING TASK

These are just a few of the storage highlights going on at the Coop. Think for a minute about the daily, sometimes hourly, trucks full of produce (another story for another time), the giant bags of coffee, dried fruits, nuts, wheels of cheese, loads of vitamins, boxes of personal care items and countless other Coop goodies that need their space.

Figuring out storage for all of that is a constantly evolving Coop Rubik’s Cube. And sometimes it seems insurmountable—even for staffers.

“We are not calibrated yet for sales, [at a] pre-pandemic [level],” Receiving Coordinator Yuri Weber said matter-of-factly.

“There’s not enough storage and there will never be enough storage,” exclaimed Receiving Coordinator Britt Henriksson.

Dire as these pronouncements sound, it’s likely that staffers and members will work out all the storage issues—like we do all Coop challenges.

Walecia Konrad is a freelance writer, editor and content producer specializing in personal finance. She has been a PSFC member since 2001 and on-and-off contributor to the Gazette *for almost as long*.

RETAILING 101: COOL STUFF AT END OF THE AISLE

June 16, 2026



By Travis Hartman

THE ENDCAP IS WHERE YOUR SHOPPING SHOULD START

As shoppers wind their way through the Coop, ticking items off a shopping list, eyes wander up and down the aisle among a wide array of items, looking for what they need. When they exit certain aisles, they may encounter a treasure trove of new

items, potential gifts and delightful things from around the world, curated and displayed on the shelf at the end, known as the endcap.

PHOTO BY JOHN MIDGLEY

Endcaps like this one can boost sales significantly for the items it features.

ENDCAP BASICS

In normal stores, endcaps are highly prized real estate, and stores often charge a premium to display items on them. Actual numbers are hard to pin down, but anecdotal evidence from 2018 points to somewhere between $6 billion and $8 billion charged for placement each year in the United States. This is because endcaps punch far above their weight in sales. According to a study done in 2009, in a typical store, only about 2% of total items are displayed on endcaps, but the items placed there result in around 30% of total sales. Supermarket research from the last 50 years has established that endcaps can increase an item's sales from between 23% to as high as over an 1,000% increase.

Almost every aisle in the Coop has shelving that faces out at the end, but the Coop has designated three endcaps that feature new and interesting items for shoppers, where items are rotated and updated frequently. Unlike most stores, the Coop does not charge distributors to place items on endcaps. The three endcaps are referred to as the "new products" endcap (across from the eggs), the chocolate endcap (at the front of aisle 6/7) and the specialty, or fancy, food endcap (across from the chicken case).


LOVE CORN
PHOTO BY JOHN MIDGLEY

Fancy food buyer Yuri Weber poses in front of the fancy sauces and sausages.

YURI'S TAKE

Yuri Weber, the buyer for the fancy foods endcap, explained the difference between the selections: "For the front endcap, it's new products (and sometimes mis-picks from distributors) and things that just don't quite fit anyplace else—water filter systems, for example."

> YURI WEBER SAYS THAT THE FANCY FOOD ENDCAP SHOULD CONTAIN ITEMS THAT WOULDN'T NORMALLY SHOW UP WRITTEN ON YOUR SHOPPING LIST BUT, ONCE YOU'VE SEEN THEM, ARE HARD TO RESIST.

Treats? "The chocolate endcap is fancy chocolate and seasonal sweets," Weber said. "The fancy food endcap usually has a smattering of local products, high-end olive oils, vinegars and hot sauces that rotate in and out. It also acts as an extension of the cheese department, in that we buy cheese accompaniments that would be sold at the cheese counter of more traditional stores."



Colorful chocolate bars entice customers on the endcap near the checkout.

GIFTS AND SHOPPING SEASONS

Weber has been stocking the fancy foods endcap since 2008, when he inherited it along with the cheese department. His philosophy for the fancy food endcap is that it should contain items that wouldn't normally show up written on your shopping list but, once you've seen them, are hard to resist. Items that you might purchase as gifts or simply on impulse. He has a rough schedule for varying items corresponding with the time of year, like BBQ sauce in the summer and fancy olive oil and vinegar and gift boxes during the holidays.

"I'm always on the lookout for new items either locally produced or specialty from Europe that members would be interested in. These are either discovered by (Coop cheese specialist) Britt [Henriksson] or myself, recommended by members or distributors," Weber said.

ENDCAPS HOLD A TREASURE TROVE OF NEW ITEMS, POTENTIAL GIFTS AND DELIGHTFUL ITEMS FROM AROUND THE WORLD.

WHAT'S YOUR FANCY?

Items on the fancy food endcap don't normally make their way into the general circulation of the store, but there have been some exceptions when it just made sense and the items have become mainstream enough to start getting scribbled onto shopping lists. The chili crisp condiment is one that became so popular that it transitioned to a regular item this year, migrating to aisle 6B with the other ethnic condiments. "I think it was an item that captured the zeitgeist for some reason," said Weber. "That and it's really tasty."



Fancy hot sauces are lined up on an endcap near the express checkout.

Sometimes Weber finds that the fancy foods shelf is just too small to hold all the fancy foods. At one point he pulled in a wide variety of Rancho Gordo beans that have now found a home in aisle 6: Black Garbanzo, Christmas Lima, Cranberry, Domingo Rojo, Mayocoba, Royal Corona, Pozole and Wild Rice. “I tried to pick beans that were either different from what we sold in the bulk aisle or what members had suggested in our Instagram feed,” said Weber.

Weber says the biggest challenges stocking the fancy foods endcap are that all the prices need to be applied with a price gun, and that the area can get congested when the express line snakes around. But this may be a boon to the shopper waiting in line, who can peruse some of the finest items from around the world while waiting to check out.

Editor’s Note: Since this article was written, there is a new endcap that features discounted food. Located at the back end of aisles four and five, across from the yogurt, the selections here change frequently.

Travis Hartman has been a Coop member for over 10 years and likes trying to find the why behind the who, what, when and where.

GUN IMAGERY IN THE PRODUCE AISLE

June 16, 2026

Letters to the Editor



ILLUSTRATION BY GABRIEL WILLOW

Dear Coop Community,

We were shocked and appalled to find, when trying to buy blueberries for our toddler, that we are stocking blueberries called “Bangin’ Blues” featuring a prominent label of two giant rifles over an American flag. The extreme gun violence in our country is unconscionable. We do not need to further promote this toxic culture with guns on blueberries, of all things. We implore the Coop to cease buying this product immediately

and redirect our purchasing power to farms that do not promote gun culture as part of their product.

With concern,

Brit and Jon Schoepp-Wong