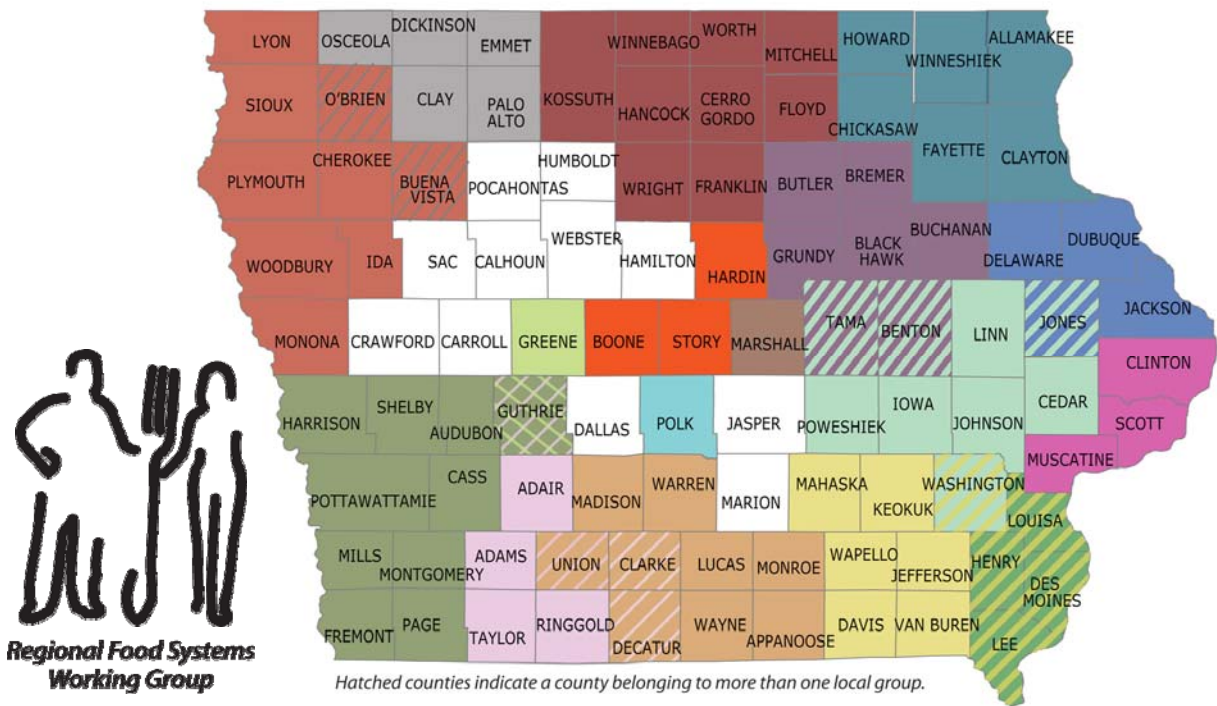

COLLECTING DATA FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT: A GUIDE FOR COORDINATORS IN THE REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS WORKING GROUP

A HOW-TO MANUAL FOR DOCUMENTING THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF
REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEMS WORK IN IOWA



Prepared by Corry Bregendahl and Laura Kleiman, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, with Teresa Wiemerslage, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

Support for this Guide was provided by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture.



LEOPOLD CENTER

February 2013

COLLECTING DATA FOR COLLECTIVE IMPACT: A GUIDE FOR COORDINATORS IN THE REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM WORKING GROUP

This guide was written for coordinators of 17 Regional Food Groups working in 88 counties in Iowa and funded by the statewide Regional Food Systems Working Group (RFSWG). The guide outlines how to implement a shared measurement system for collecting economic data to better tell the story of the RFSWG's impact in Iowa.

Corry Bregendahl is an evaluator for the RFSWG and the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, a research center at Iowa State University that convened RFSWG in 2003. Laura Kleiman is a graduate student in Sustainable Agriculture with a co-major in Sociology. Teresa Wiemerslage is the coordinator for one of the first Regional Food Groups, the Northeast Iowa Food and Farm Coalition, and is a county-based education coordinator for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture

General inquiries: (515) 294-3711

www.leopold.iastate.edu

Regional Food System Working Group of Iowa

Email: rfszwiowa@gmail.com

<https://sites.google.com/site/iowarfwg/>

This guide also can be found on the Leopold Center website at:

www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubs-and-papers/2013-02-RFSWG-data-collection-guide

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach



Iowa State University Extension and Outreach programs are available to all without regard to race, color, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. veteran. Inquiries can be directed to the Director of Equal Opportunity and Compliance, 3280 Beardshear Hall, (515) 294-7612.

PROJECT/DATA COLLECTION TIMELINE

COMPLETION DATE	TASK (those in RED or marked with * are the responsibility of the Regional Food Group coordinators)
February, 2013	*Regional Food Group coordinators receive and review data collection guide, tools (surveys), and timeline.
February, 2013	*Regional Food Group coordinators attend conference call training session to learn about the data collection process (detailed in the guide).
March-April, 2013	*Regional Food Group coordinators collect data from farmers and institutions who buy/sell local food.
April, 2013	Evaluator from the Leopold Center will call each RFSWG coordinator to discuss data collection challenges and to offer support. *RFSWG coordinators take the time to discuss data collection issues with the evaluator.
April 30, 2013	*Regional Food Group coordinators submit farmer sales and institutional purchasing data to corry@iastate.edu .
May 30, 2013	*Regional Food Group coordinators submit institutional purchasing data from schools to corry@iastate.edu .
June 15, 2013	Leopold Center evaluator(s) aggregate and analyze the data.
July 7, 2013	Evaluator(s) write draft report of results and distribute to RFSWG steering committee and Regional Food Group coordinators; *Regional Food Group coordinators will review and comment on the draft.
July 20, 2013	Final draft of Year 1 report released.
August, 2013	Individual regional food group reports written by evaluator(s) using a common template and distributed to each Regional Food Group coordinator.
October, 2013	Data collection protocol modified as needed and revised instruments/guide distributed to Regional Food Group coordinators.
January, 2014	No cost extension requested from Leopold Center.
March-April, 2014	*Regional Food Group coordinators collect data for Year 2.
April 30, 2014	*Regional Food Group coordinators submit farmer sales and institutional purchasing data to corry@iastate.edu .

May 31, 2014	*Regional Food Group coordinators submit institutional purchasing data from schools to corry@iastate.edu .
June 15, 2014	Evaluator(s) aggregate and analyze the data.
July 7, 2014	Evaluator(s) write final draft report of results and share with steering committee and regional food group coordinators; *Regional Food Group coordinators review and comment on the draft.
July 20, 2014	Final draft of combined Year 1 and 2 report released.
May, 2014	Individual regional food group reports written by evaluator(s) using a common template and distributed to each regional food group coordinator.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Project/Data Collection Timeline	ii
What Is the Purpose of this Guide?	3
Why Develop a Shared Measurement System for RFSWG?	3
What Are We Measuring?	4
Why Do We Need to Measure Food System Change in the Same Way?	6
What Tools Will I Use to Collect Data?	6
What Is My Role in Collecting and Submitting Data?	7
What Are Some Tips and Strategies for Collecting Data?	8
How Will My Group’s Contributions Be Honored?	9
How Will This Process Benefit the Work of My Regional Food Group?	10
How Do I Submit the Data?	10
Frequently Asked Questions.	11
Who Can I Contact With Questions?	13
Where Can I Find the Survey Tools and Guide Online?	13
Additional Resources.	14
Local Food Sales Survey for Iowa Farmers.....	15
Local Foods Purchasing Survey for Institutions.	17
Regional Food Group Coordinator Data Submission Instructions.	19

[This page intentionally left blank.]

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE?

This guide was written to document methods used to collect data from 17 Regional Food Groups doing work in 88 counties in Iowa. These 17 geographically-based, typically multi-county groups all were initially funded by the statewide Regional Food System Working Group (RFSWG), a network for Iowans working to strengthen local and regional food systems. Developing a shared measurement system gives us the opportunity to collect the same data in the same way across 17 (geographically) distinct but aligned efforts. This allows us to aggregate the data to present a common picture of the collective impacts of the Regional Food Systems Working Group.

OUR GOAL



To implement a shared measurement system for collecting economic data to better tell the story of the Regional Food Systems Working Group's impact in Iowa

WHY DEVELOP A SHARED MEASUREMENT SYSTEM FOR RFSWG?

The work of the Regional Food Systems Working Group has spanned a decade and involved hundreds—if not a thousand—partners in Iowa and beyond. How is this possible? What is it about the work of the RFSWG that draws people in? And how is it this work has been sustained for an entire decade? Consistent, effective funding, first and foremost, is one part of the answer. The key words here are *consistent* and *effective*. The ability to focus on the same work for such a long time (10 years) is a rare and fortunate luxury. However, consistent funding is only part of the story. Effective funding is the other part. Yet, how do we know it was effective? By measuring what's different as a result of the work *and whether what's different makes a difference*.

So what progress did we make? Ten years of working to support regional food systems have brought new growth, new partners, new challenges, new leadership, and new opportunities. Some of these changes have been documented very well while others have not, depending on our ability to measure change (based on resources available to us for this purpose, AND our understanding of *which* changes were important to measure at a particular point in time). In years past, we tracked partners who joined us in this work; changes in organizational relationships, policy, and culture; the development of new collaborations; changing credibility of the work; organizational capacity building; and the changing structure and culture of local foods work in Iowa¹. While these aspects are important to know *how and why* the work maintains momentum, very few people are interested in these kinds of details except—usually—the architects of it and maybe the funder(s).

¹ See Pirog and Bregendahl. 2012. "Creating Change in the Food System: The role of regional food networks in Iowa." Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems. Online at <http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Project-Products/North-Central-SARE-Project-Products/Creating-Change-in-the-Food-System-The-Role-of-Regional-Food-Networks-in-Iowa>.

However, this year, we decided to do something a little bit different—actually, a lot different. We vowed to track the work of the RFSWG in terms of what impact it is having on local commerce.

In 2011, John Kania and Mark Kramer published an article they called “Collective Impact” in the *Stanford Innovation Social Review*.² Their thesis? Simply put, the only way to effectively address crises in complex systems such as education (or agriculture) is to design a long-term process to coordinate change efforts among a “group of important actors from different sectors [committed] to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem” (p. 38). “Collective impact initiatives involve a centralized infrastructure, a dedicated staff, and a structured process that leads to a common agenda, shared measurement, continuous communication, and mutually reinforcing activities among all participants” (p. 38).

We pounced on the idea of shared measurement systems, with 17 geographically distinct regional food groups now comprising the RFSWG collaborative. “Developing a shared measurement system is essential to collective impacts. Collecting data and measuring results consistently on a short list of indicators at the community level and across all participating organizations not only ensure that all efforts remain aligned, it also enables the participants to hold each other accountable and learn from each other’s successes and failures” (p. 40). Coordinating the measurement of impacts also creates opportunities for leveraging new credibility, new resources, and new partners necessary for supporting the work. Aggregating results across all 17 groups will help us tell a potentially powerful story about what we have accomplished together as opposed to alone, and what changes our collective work is bringing communities and commerce in Iowa.

WHAT ARE WE MEASURING?

Our short list of change indicators (in other words, ways we know something is different in part as a result of our work) includes the following:

- Local food sales by farmers;
- Local food purchases by institutions;
- Jobs created and expanded;
- Dollars leveraged to support the work (grants, donations, etc.); and
- Stories of noteworthy business partnerships and arrangements that resulted in increased commerce.

² Kania, J. and M. Kramer. 2011. Collective Impact. *Stanford Innovation Social Review* (49): 36-41.

Regional Food Group coordinators agreed to focus on economic indicators for the following reasons:

- **Appeal/Relevance:** Economic data is appealing to a wide variety of audiences interested in economic growth for Iowa communities.
- **Ease of data collection:** Economic data is tracked by most businesses and institutions. Therefore, completing the surveys for our data collection system will require less cumbersome additional work for most local food buyers and sellers.
- **Consistency of data collection methods:** Economic data can be collected uniformly by different individuals in different locations by following the standardized data collection protocols outlined in this guide.
- **Uniformity of data:** Economic data is easily added up to represent a broader picture of change.
- **Potential for stories:** Although economic data is usually presented in numerical form, it also can be described using words that capture powerful change stories that resonate with those who connect to the personal and detailed element. Stories give meaning to our work. Both storied and numerical data provide a more comprehensive understanding of changes brought by the work of the RFSWG groups.

The notion of economic contributions of local food system development is appealing to a variety of audiences, especially those in the policy arena. In the past few years, the Iowa legislature committed \$150,000 to local food systems work in Iowa (through the Local Food and Farm Initiative, or LFFI) in the hopes of growing the economy. In Iowa, creating and maintaining viable job opportunities in agriculture is a core element of the state's rich agro-political heritage and culture.

Yet economic change indicators are not without limitations. We are well aware that focusing on economic indicators improperly elevates financial value of regional food system work above and beyond other important outcomes associated with social equity and the environment. Furthermore, focusing on economic indicators fails to account for systems connections. In other words, collecting purely economic data does not place the data in the context of the larger local food, social, and political systems. Solely focusing on economic data also ignores the fact that other important emerging outcomes and change stories will not be tracked.

FIVE CHANGE INDICATORS WE ARE MEASURING



This guide outlines the rationale and common procedures for collecting data on a handful of indicators across all 17 RFSWG groups. The data will be aggregated and shared with the RFSWG groups, partners, and the public. The five change indicators are:

1. Local food sales by farmers;
2. Local food purchases by institutions;
3. Jobs created and expanded;
4. Dollars leveraged to support the work (grants); and
5. Stories of business collaborations that resulted in increased commerce.

So while we acknowledge that economic outcomes are only part of the story, they do offer the most traction and greatest advantage for gaining public support. Arguments focusing on environmental, equity, and other social benefits of local and regional food systems are rapidly critiqued or worse, ignored. Therefore, our measurement focus should by no means be construed as a commentary on what we value most about this work, but rather what our culture and society value most about the work.

WHY DO WE NEED TO MEASURE FOOD SYSTEM CHANGE IN THE SAME WAY?

Past requirements for each Regional Food Group that received initial funding from the Regional Food System Working Group were to:

1. “Document the increase in purchases of healthy, fresh, community-based foods in Iowa communities or counties, and provide details as to how group efforts influenced these purchases,” and
2. “Document how RFSWG resources leveraged other resources for local businesses and increased the capacity for local and/or regional food commerce.”

These requirements, by themselves without specific guidelines for collecting data, created different interpretations about what outcomes should be reported by each group, ultimately resulting in a pile of information that was neither easily summarized nor comparable. Thus, we hatched the idea to create a shared measurement system *and* protocol to guide all groups to collect the same data in the same way on a shoestring budget.

WHAT TOOLS WILL I USE TO COLLECT DATA?

We have developed three tools to facilitate data collection:

1. Farmer Survey
2. Institutional Survey
3. Coordinator Instructions

FARMER SURVEY

The Regional Food Group coordinator should distribute a hard copy of the farmer survey to all individual farmers/producers who have agreed to provide your Regional Food Group with sales data. Alternatively, you can call the farmers and ask them the questions over the phone. We are aiming for **a minimum of at least three participating farmers** from your region (more if possible). The farmer survey can be found near the end of this guide. To make copies of the survey, simply print off or copy the survey.

INSTITUTIONAL SURVEY

The Regional Food Group coordinator should distribute a hard copy of the institutional survey to all institutions who have agreed to provide your group with local food purchasing data. Alternatively, you can call your institutional contacts and ask them the questions over the phone. We hope you can gather data from **a minimum of at least three institutions** from your region. These may include, for example, schools, hospitals, care facilities, restaurants, farmer's markets, or food coops. The Institutional survey is also included near the end of this guide; to make copies, simply print off or copy the survey.

COORDINATOR INSTRUCTIONS

The Coordinator Instructions appearing at the end of this guide provide you with details on how to submit your data once you have received surveys or responses back from farmers and institutions. In addition, **we ask you to provide additional information on financial resources** (grants, budget allocations, and other funding) leveraged by your Regional Food Group in the past year.

WHAT IS MY ROLE IN COLLECTING AND SUBMITTING DATA?

YOUR ROLE AS A REGIONAL FOOD GROUP COORDINATOR WITHIN RFSWG

All of the Regional Food Group coordinators will facilitate the local data collection efforts by first identifying and then developing relationships with potential participating farmers/producers and institutional buyers. Secondly, the coordinators will distribute the farmer surveys and institutional surveys to partners (or conduct a phone interview using the surveys) and then collect the completed surveys. Coordinators will then submit the data according to the Regional Food Group Coordinator Data Submission Instructions. Leopold Center evaluators will receive and analyze the data. The evaluators will aggregate the data and use it to create a brief report summarizing statewide results. In addition, they will create an individual report for each region to use for leveraging local support.

THE ROLE OF RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT (RC&D) STAFF

Ten of the 17 Regional Food groups that comprise the RFSWG are coordinated by RC&D staff. The RC&Ds have received a grant from the USDA-Rural Community Development Initiative (RCDI) to track local food sales. This task can be fulfilled in conjunction with the RFSWG data collection efforts using the forms developed for the RFSWG process. The RC&Ds will provide 59 percent (10/17) of the staff time needed to assist in the RFSWG data collection efforts. RC&D staff is also working on developing databases of Iowan farmers and institutions involved in regional food systems. This partnership with the RC&Ds and other organizations providing in-kind time to help in this effort will be recognized as partners in the statewide report of results.

THE ROLE OF THE RFSWG STEERING COMMITTEE AND THE LEOPOLD CENTER

The Leopold Center evaluators, with support from the RFSWG Steering Committee, will lead and coordinate the development of the shared data collection system. The evaluators are working closely

with the steering committee to implement the process. The Leopold Center evaluators also will provide support to assist RFSWG coordinators in data collection. The evaluators and the RFSWG Steering Committee worked in tandem to develop this guide of data collection standards and protocols to ensure data quality and consistency. The tools for collecting shared data included in this guide were created as a result of discussions with the RFSWG Steering Committee and Leopold Center evaluation staff. Leopold Center evaluators will aggregate the data and report statewide results publicly. Regional results will only be shared with the coordinator of each Regional Food Group for use as that group sees fit.

WHAT ARE SOME TIPS AND STRATEGIES FOR COLLECTING DATA?

The following is a list of tips that Regional Food Group coordinators have learned over the years in the process of documenting outcomes of their work. Most are based on building quality relationships early.

- Data collection and associated relationship-building takes times and energy and requires patience.
- Try having a yearly meet-and-greet for local buyers and sellers where people can share what products they are looking for and what is produced.
- Most farmers involved in this work want to share what they are doing and teach others about their operation and business. However, some may need to see that you are willing to put in extra effort just as you expect them to take the effort to provide data. For example, one Regional Food Group coordinator says he volunteers physical labor on some local farms in exchange for participation in a survey. Or, if you have creative access to other resources (like an energetic class of after-school youth), perhaps you can connect those resources with participating farmers to demonstrate your stake in the process.
- Visit your local farmer's market to meet local producers and talk about their products and growing techniques.
- Attend local farmers' meetings to introduce yourself and network with them.
- Make phone calls, send emails, or organize round table discussions to check in with local farmers to see how they are doing or if your food group can provide any new or improved services.
- Offer to work with farmers or institutions to develop simple electronic tools like a spreadsheet that help them track local food sales or purchases throughout the year.
- Offer to provide the farmers and institutions the regional report of results that Leopold Center evaluators will prepare for your region. You can also offer your partners the statewide report of results.
- Try not to pressure people to participate but be persistent and professional. Multiple contacts are often necessary to ensure participation.

- Distribute the surveys at appropriate times of the year. We have timed the release of the surveys and this guide to coincide with tax reporting when local food farmers and buyers may be already gathering their financial records. In addition, the surveys are being released prior to the start of the growing season when farmers are expected to have more time to devote to this.
- You may have to distribute the surveys in a variety of ways depending on the farmer or institution with whom you are working. Some prefer to receive a hard copy while others may want you to e-mail them a copy. Also, consider delivering the surveys in person and using the meeting as an opportunity to better know your partner or do a face-to-face interview! Some may prefer to answer the survey questions over the phone.

HOW WILL MY GROUP'S CONTRIBUTIONS BE HONORED?

We honor and value your group's contributions in the following four different ways.

1. First, the **Leopold Center is paying for time** needed to a) develop the data collection instruments you are using to collect the data, b) write this guide, and c) support your data collection efforts by checking in and helping you troubleshoot during the process. We are not asking for funding from the grant awarded to the RFSWG by the Leopold Center to do this work. The Leopold Center also will cover staff time needed to post tools and instruments online and will publish statewide results. We will also cover telecommunications costs associated with this project.
2. **Each group will receive a total of \$600 for submitting data over two years.** This covers 30 hours of time to collect data at a rate of \$20 per hour. We know this amount may not completely cover the cost it takes to collect the data but we hope that by compensating each group at least partially, we are demonstrating our appreciation for each group's contributions. Since the

WHAT YOU RECEIVE FROM PARTICIPATION



1. The Leopold Center has developed the data collection instruments, guidebook, data collection coordination services, data analysis, and reporting pro bono in honor of the work all 17 groups are doing.

2. In 2013, each group will be compensated \$400 for the time they spend collecting and submitting the requested data, although nine groups have opted out of this to support the RFSWG coordinator's time. In 2014, each group will receive \$200 for collecting the data.

3. Each group will receive a brief, customized report of their region's results to be distributed locally to participating farmers, institutions, and others you want to inform and engage in your work.

4. The Leopold Center will develop a comprehensive report of statewide results that also highlights important change stories. This report will be distributed widely and can be used by any RFSWG group or affiliates to make the case for supporting regional food system development in Iowa.

work may be more intensive in the first year as each group becomes familiar with the data collection process, we will provide a stipend of \$400 once we receive your group's data in the spring of 2013. In 2014, each group will be offered a stipend of \$200. You will receive the stipend once we review the data and, if necessary, discuss challenges associated with collecting it.

3. A third way to show that we value your contribution includes **preparing a summary report for your region that you can use as a tool to better engage new and existing partners**, and report back to those who were kind enough to participate in the process. Only your Regional Food Group will receive this report. No other Regional Food Group will be compared to another. The Leopold Center is covering the staff time it will take to prepare these 17 reports.
4. Finally, **Leopold Center evaluators will aggregate all responses from all groups and summarize results in a brief report**. The report will include **only** the totals for each indicator (**not** broken down by region) and highlight stories that demonstrate increased commerce (with appropriate permissions). This statewide report will be publicly available electronically and in print form for distribution.

HOW WILL THIS PROCESS BENEFIT THE WORK OF MY REGIONAL FOOD GROUP?

The process of making contact with local food buyers and sellers will strengthen the relationships your group has with local food farmers and purveyors in your region. Participating in this process will help your group better understand what is happening on the local foods scene in your area and how it is connected to the work of your Regional Food Group. Documenting positive economic change will aid your group in the development of new partnerships. The process also will help connect your group and efforts to other RFSWG groups across the state, which reportedly brings increased credibility to your local work (based on past interviews with RFSWG participants).

Participation will also build your group's capacity to do its own evaluation in the future using either the same set of indicators or different ones your group feels may be more important.

This data collection process also will generate a customized report of outcomes generated in your region, which your group can use to communicate and inform others about the impact of your work and the importance of sustaining it.

HOW DO I SUBMIT THE DATA?

Go to: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RFSWG2012CollectiveImpactSurvey>. You will be prompted to enter your data based on the surveys or responses you have collected from farmers and institutions.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: WHEN IS THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING THE DATA?

A: We would like farmer sales data reported by April 30th, 2013. We mindfully set this date after the deadline for filing taxes to make it easier to collect the sales data. We would like the institutional purchasing data to be submitted no later than April 30th as well. However, we understand that school purchases will not be complete until the end of the school year, which is typically in late May or early June. Please submit school purchasing data as soon as you can get it, after you have submitted the farmer sales data and purchasing data from participating non-school institutions.

Q: I DON'T HAVE DATA FROM FARMERS BUT I DO HAVE TOTAL SALES FROM THE FARMER'S MARKET. CAN I USE THIS INSTEAD OF CONTACTING FARMERS?

A: We prefer you contact farmers individually to provide you with their local food sales figures for the year. There are several ways to do this. Your best bet is to contact farmers who are already participating in your Regional Food Group efforts. If few are participating, you might try to contact farmers who sell at a local farmer's market to see if any of them will individually provide their annual local food sales data. Other ways of contacting farmers are to attend farmer meetings and field days, or contact others who have connections to farmers selling local foods to see if you can make contact with them. Contact local institutions who may be buying local foods to see if you can find out which farmers are supplying them with product so you can contact them.

If you have tried to collect total annual local food sales data from individual farmers in good faith and all of your efforts fail, we will accept farmer's market data for the season. Be mindful, however, that farmers selling at farmer's markets may not be selling to institutions, so how will you capture data from farmers selling to institutions? Farmer's market data is unique in that it does not include total annual sales of all participating farmers, so it is simply a snapshot in time. When you submit the data online, simply indicate when asked that the data originated from a farmer's market and provide the dates.

Q: WE HAVE A FOOD COOPERATIVE FOR WHICH I HAVE FIGURES. CAN I JUST SUBMIT THAT INSTEAD OF FARMER SALES?

A: You may submit the sales data from the food coop, which again, does not represent total farm sales of all the farmers participating, but it can be useful if you are unable to contact each farmer who sold product through the coop. We prefer that you contact farmers who sold through the coop and ask them what their total sales were last year. However, if it is not possible to do so, when you submit the data online simply indicate that the data originated from a coop and the date.

Q: SINCE SCHOOLS DON'T OPERATE ON THE CALENDAR YEAR, HOW SHOULD THEIR DATA BE TRACKED?

A: We know that the school year does not coincide with the calendar year. As a result, we do not expect you to report school purchases by the April 30st deadline. Instead, please submit all the other data by then. We would, however, like you to report schools' purchases of local foods shortly after the school year ends when complete data are available. Unlike farmer sales data, which will be reported by

calendar year (January through December), school purchasing data must be reported by the school year (usually August through May). Therefore, please report the dollar value of local food purchased by the school during the 2012-13 school year.

Q: WHAT SHOULD I DO IF FARMERS IN MY AREA DO NOT REPORT INCOME TO IRS AND/OR DO NOT DO ANY KIND OF FINANCIAL RECORD KEEPING?

A: Try getting an estimate from these farmers. If by your own judgment a reasonably accurate estimate is not available, then don't use it.

Q: I HAVE CONTACTED FIVE FARMERS TO PARTICIPATE BUT ONLY ONE HAS RESPONDED. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

A: Try reaching out to non-respondents using a different method of communication such as a phone call, email, face-to-face conversation, or a farm visit. Try to make it as easy and convenient as possible for them to provide you with data. Let them know estimates are okay if they don't have final figures. If your continued efforts are unsuccessful, submit the data you do have and for the next round of data collection try using some of the relationship-building techniques described in "Tips and Strategies for Collecting Data."

Q: HOW MANY FARMERS DO I NEED DATA FROM TO MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS?

A: We would like you to collect data from at least 3 farmers, but the more farmers from whom you receive data, the greater your sales figures will be. When we report the statewide data, we will also report the total number of farmers reporting so that figures in subsequent years aren't artificially inflated based on an increasing number of farmers reporting.

Q: HOW MANY INSTITUTIONS DO I NEED DATA FROM TO MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS?

A: Try to collect data from at least 3 institutions. Again, the more institutions, the greater the total purchases. Some Regional Food Groups may report purchases from 20 institutions, while others may only report 1 or 2. If you have no institutions in your regional food system area buying local foods, you cannot report any institutional purchases. Again, when we report the statewide data, we will also report the number of institutions reporting.

Q: DO YOU HAVE SOME TIPS OR STRATEGIES I CAN USE TO GET FARMERS TO GIVE ME THEIR SALES DATA?

A: Promise farmers a copy of the regional report that will be prepared for your group and/or a copy of the statewide report that will be released after all the data are collected in 2013. After your first year of data collection, you can use the results to encourage farmers to participate in a second year of data collection. For example, the Northeast Iowa Food and Farm (NIFF) Coalition, which has been collecting data for more than five years, offers to share the results from the previous year's data collection efforts to farmers who have contributed data. In their contact letter accompanying the survey to farmers, the NIFF Coalition writes, "This information is being collected by Iowa State University Extension on behalf of the NIFF Coalition. Because of YOUR participation, we are able to show over \$1.5 million in local food sales last year!"

Q: I MAY HAVE SOME QUESTIONS COME UP WHILE I TRY TO COLLECT SALES DATA FROM FARMERS AND PURCHASES FROM INSTITUTIONS? WHAT SHOULD I DO?

A: Please contact Corry Bregendahl at 515-462-0450 any time to ask questions. You can also e-mail her at corry@iastate.edu. Corry or an evaluation assistant will call you to offer support and see how things are going prior to the data submission deadline of April 30th. These calls are not meant as a checkup but simply to help you troubleshoot issues that are sure to arise.

Q: I HAVE A COLLEAGUE IN ANOTHER STATE WHO IS INTERESTED IN IMPLEMENTING A PROCESS LIKE THIS. CAN I SHARE THE GUIDEBOOK AND SURVEYS DEVELOPED FOR THE RFSWG WITH HER?

A: Yes. We will put the guide and tools online at the Leopold Center website so others may use and adapt the tools and process as they see fit. Our intent is to model a process others can use to further other regional food systems work taking place throughout the country.

WHO CAN I CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS?

For more information or to ask questions, please contact:

Corry Bregendahl, Assistant Scientist
Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture
209 Curtiss Hall – Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa 50011
corry@iastate.edu
(515) 462-0450

WHERE CAN I FIND THE SURVEY TOOLS AND GUIDE ONLINE?

- **Collecting Data for Collective Impact: A Guide for Coordinators in the RFSWG** [*this document*]
www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubs-and-papers/2013-02-RFSWG-data-collection-guide
- **Local Food Sales Survey for Iowa Farmers** [*also in this document on the pages following*]
www.leopold.iastate.edu/sites/default/files/pubs-attachments/farmer-survey.pdf
- **Local Food Purchasing Survey for Institutions** [*also in this document on the pages following*]
www.leopold.iastate.edu/sites/default/files/pubs-attachments/institution-survey.pdf
- **Regional Food Group Coordinator Data Submission Instructions** [*also in this document on the pages following*]
www.leopold.iastate.edu/sites/default/files/pubs-attachments/data-submission-instructions.pdf

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Regional Food Systems Working Group website <https://sites.google.com/site/iowarfwg/>
- Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture website: www.leopold.iastate.edu
- More about the RFSWG: www.leopold.iastate.edu/regional-food-systems-working-group
- Other resources about Regional and Local Food Systems:
www.leopold.iastate.edu/marketing/food_systems

LOCAL FOOD SALES SURVEY FOR IOWA FARMERS

Thank you for agreeing to provide local food sales data from your farm business. Data you provide is CONFIDENTIAL meaning that your data will NOT be traceable to you or your business. Note that all data provided by you and other cooperating farmers in our region will be combined to track total regional local food sales. In addition, the data you provide will be added to data collected from up to 16 other regional food groups in Iowa to track local food sales statewide. For questions or concerns please contact:

_____ (Your local regional foods coordinator)

Your farm name will be used for tracking purposes only. Your farm name will be assigned a code and then separated from the data you provide so it cannot be connected to your farm. Your data will be used to total regional local food sales as well as state local food sales.

Farm name _____

SECTION 1. SALES AND SALES AREA

Thinking about the last calendar year (January 1, 2012-December 31, 2012)...

1. Within what geographic radius from your farm do you sell the majority of your food?
_____ Estimated radius in miles (for example, 100 miles, 35 miles)

2. What were your total local food sales between January 1, 2012 and December 31, 2012? (Your IRS Schedule F may have this information.)

Total local food sales \$ _____

2a. Is the figure above an estimate or actual numbers?

3. Please use the space below to share any highlights from your farm or business this year.

4. Are you WILLING or NOT WILLING to openly share or discuss information provided in Question 3 above with media or others interested in your story? If you are willing, you may be contacted about this at a later date.

SECTION 2. JOB CREATION

Thinking about the last calendar year (January 1, 2012-December 31, 2012)...

5. Please list all of the different job positions needed to support your farm business last year as a result of producing local foods. This might include production-related positions, farm labor distribution, marketing, coordination, etc. Use one line for each *position*. One position may employ 6 different people, all of whom do the same thing (e.g., you may have 6 people who are farm laborers). See the examples below.

List the job title.	How many people are employed in this position?	Write in the number of new jobs that were created on the farm in 2012 (write "0" if none).	Is this job filled year round?	Is the job full-time? (At least 40 hours per week)
<i>Example: Farm owner/operator</i>	1	0	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Example: Farm laborer</i>	4	1	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Example: Farm laborer</i>	2	0	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>Example: Sales Associate</i>	1	1	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
			Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

6. Does your farm business have any noteworthy arrangements or agreements with other businesses to supply product, barter goods or services, or engage in creative business solutions that benefit more than one business? No Yes If yes, please describe.

7. Are you WILLING or NOT WILLING to openly share or discuss jobs information provided in this section with media or others interested in your story? If you are willing, you may be contacted about this at a later date.

LOCAL FOODS PURCHASING SURVEY FOR INSTITUTIONS

Thank you for agreeing to provide local foods purchasing data for your institution. Data you provide is **CONFIDENTIAL** meaning that your data will **NOT** be traceable to your institution. Note that all data provided by you and other cooperating institutions in our region will be combined to track total regional local food purchases. In addition, the data you provide will be added to data collected from up to 16 other regional food groups in Iowa to track local food purchases statewide. For questions or concerns please contact:

_____ (Your local regional foods coordinator)

The name of your institution will be used for tracking purposes only. Your institution's name will be assigned a code and then separated from the data you provide so it cannot be connected to your institution. Your data will be used to total regional local food purchases as well as state local food purchases.

Name of institution _____

SECTION 1. PURCHASES AND PURCHASING AREA

Is your institution a school? Yes No

If **YES**, use the past school year (August, 2012 through May, 2013) to answer the following questions.

If **NO**, use the last calendar year (January 1, 2012-December 31, 2012) to answer the following questions.

1. For purchasing purposes, how does your institution define local food?

2. What were your total **local food** purchases in the past year?

Total **local food** purchases \$ _____

Is this an estimate or actual numbers?

3. What were your institution's **total food purchases** last year?

Total food purchases \$ _____

Is this an estimate or actual numbers?

4. Please use the space below to share any highlights of your local food purchasing activities last year

5. Is your institution WILLING or NOT WILLING to share or discuss information you provided in Question 4 with media or others interested in your story? If willing, you may be contacted about this at a later date.

SECTION 2. JOB CREATION

6. Have any NEW JOBS been funded or created WITHIN YOUR INSTITUTION as a result of purchasing local foods? This might include food service, purchasing, education, or coordination jobs, for example.

Yes No

If yes, please list all new created positions in the following table using the examples as your guide:

List the job title.	How many people are employed in this new position?	Is this job filled year round?	Is the job full-time? (At least 40 hours per week)
<i>Example: Food prep (Part time)</i>	2	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>Example: Food prep (Full time)</i>	1	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Example: Local foods educator</i>	1	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>Example: Local foods buyer</i>	1	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

7. Have any EXISTING jobs WITHIN YOUR INSTITUTION been EXPANDED as a result of purchasing local foods? This might include jobs that changed from part-time to full-time or seasonal to year-round or existing jobs that added local food work to job responsibilities. Yes No If YES, please describe.

8. Is your institution buying from any new vendors or have any new arrangements or agreements with other businesses to supply product, barter goods or services, or engage in creative business solutions that benefit more than one business? Yes No If YES, please describe.

9. Is your institution WILLING or NOT WILLING to openly share or discuss information provided in this section (Job Creation) with media or others interested in your story? If willing, you may be contacted about this at a later date.

REGIONAL FOOD GROUP COORDINATOR DATA SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Congratulations, RFSWG Coordinators! You are now at the point where you are ready to submit your data. After you have distributed the surveys and collected data from participating farmers and institutions, you will need to submit the data to the Leopold Center via Survey Monkey. In addition to entering data you collected from farmers and institutions, please note that you are also asked to compile and submit data on funding leveraged for your work, which is detailed in Step 4 below. Below are the steps to needed complete the process.

Step 1. Using Excel, create a Respondent ID sheet and keep it separate from the responses you receive for the Farmer and Institutional Surveys. Please use the template below.

Region Code	Respondent ID	Name of farm/institution /farmer's market/food coop	Contact name	Contact's phone number	Contact's email
<i>Example:</i> 12	1	Green Acres Farm	Paul Brown	1-515-555-5555	paulbrown@greenacres.net
12	2	Lincoln Community School	Joe Black	1-515-555-5556	joeblack@lincoln.edu

Step 2. Below is a list of codes assigned to each region. You will need this code when you enter your data into survey monkey and the Excel spreadsheet shown above. Enter the appropriate code for your region on each row for *each* farmer and institutional respondent as shown above.

- 1=Central Iowa (coordinators: Penny Brown Huber and Rich Wrage)
- 2=Flavors of Northwest Iowa (coordinator: Laura Kuennen)
- 3=Iowa Great Lakes Local Foods Network (coordinator: Becky Leach)
- 4=Northeast Iowa Food and Farm Coalition (coordinator: Teresa Wiemerslage)
- 5=Northern Iowa Food and Farm Partnership (coordinator: Kamyar Enshayan)
- 6=Harvest from the Heart (coordinator: Sally Wilson)
- 7=Food and Farm Initiative of the Heartland (coordinator: Bahia Nightengale)
- 8=Southern Iowa Regional Food Systems (coordinator: Alexi Groumoutis)
- 9=South Central Iowa Area Partnership (coordinator: Joe Sellers)
- 10=Hometown Harvest of Southeast Iowa (coordinator: Jan Swinton)
- 11=Dubuque Eats Well (coordinator: Brittany Bethel)
- 12=Iowa Corridor Food and Agriculture Coalition (coordinator: Jason Grimm)
- 13=Healthy Harvest of North Iowa (coordinator: Jan Libbey)
- 14=Eat Greater Des Moines (coordinator: Linda Gobberdiel)
- 15= Great River Food Alliance of Southeast Iowa (coordinator: Bob Dobbs)
- 16=Quad Cities Food Hub (coordinator: Carla Jaquet)
- 17=Greene County Local Foods Working Group (coordinator: Chris Henning)

Step 3. Once you have the Respondent ID sheet set up, please keep a copy and e-mail corry@iastate.edu a copy for backup purposes only. She will not release these results nor combine them with the data, but this additional copy will ensure it is available to new coordinators in the case of coordinator turnover in the future. If you prefer not to do this to ensure total respondent confidentiality, then skip this step.

Step 4. Before entering your data in Step 5, you will need to collect data about financial resources your group has leveraged in the past year to support your regional food system work. If helpful, you may choose to complete the table below before submitting these data simply as a way to organize it.

Document grants, budget allocations, and other funding leveraged by your regional food system that was used in the past year. Include Leopold Center funding as well. Do not include in-kind contributions or salary FTEs.

Grant or Resource Description/ Purpose	Source(s) of resource	Monetary value of resource	Which organization acquired the grant (usually who wrote the proposal or who is the fiscal agent)?	Beginning date of the grant	End date of the grant
<i>Ex.: To support local foods coordinator</i>	<i>Howard, Clayton, Winneshiek, Allamakee, Chickasaw, and Fayette Ext. Councils</i>	<i>\$10,000</i>	<i>Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative</i>	<i>11/1/11</i>	<i>10/31/12</i>

Step 5. To enter your data, go to: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RFSWG2012CollectiveImpactSurvey>.

Although Survey Monkey is designed as a survey tool, it is also a great data collection tool! We are therefore using it to collect data from all of the RFSWG groups where it will automatically aggregate the data in a common file and format. Just follow the steps as prompted at the link to enter your data. Please report any problems or direct questions or comments to Corry Bregendahl at corry@iastate.edu or 515-462-0450.

Note that some of you have already indicated you will be collecting data from a Farmer’s Market Manager or a local foods coop coordinator. You will be prompted before entering each line of data whether the type of data you are entering came from a farmer, institution, farmer’s market, or food cooperative.

Step 6. Celebrate! You have just participated in the first collective data collection effort for the Regional Food System Working Group. You will be asked to review the final aggregate report before it is released and will receive a print copy of the final report. In addition, your regional food group will receive a brief, formatted report detailing your region’s data that you can use or distribute as you see fit (to local media, for talking points with local legislators, writing grant proposals, etc.).