USING ORGANIC AGRICULTURE AND SUSTAINABLE CROPS AND LIVESTOCK IN THE

Local Food System

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Local Foods

The local food system is one of the fastest-growing, most promising markets in agriculture today. The concept behind local food is based on one central idea: when food is grown, processed, and sold locally, it is better for farmers, better for communities, better for the environment, and—in both taste and nutrition—better for you.

In the early 1900s, almost all agricultural systems were local food systems, but with the technological innovations of the 20th century, most of the local facilities, transportation and delivery systems, and marketing connections have disappeared. Much of what remains is designed for agricultural scales well beyond the needs of local food. Generally, local food implies both that all production, processing, and retail of food occurs within a specific locality; and all production, processing, and retail are locally owned. There may be specific rules applied to local foods, varying with context. For instance, the “A Taste of Iowa” logo recognizes food and agricultural products that are at least 50 percent raised, grown, or processed in Iowa.

Compared to conventionally grown food, local food not only travels a shorter distance from farm to plate, it shortens the “social distance” between farmers and consumers, and it puts consumers more

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closely in touch with the food they eat. Consequently, people who participate in the local food system can claim a wide variety of benefits from local food:

- Fresher, tastier, more nutritious, and safer food;
- Support to local farmers and the local economy;
- Broader consumer knowledge about food from production through consumption;
- Lasting relationships among farmers, processors, retailers, and consumers;
- Creation and strengthening of community; and
- Protection of the environment by transporting food shorter distances and by supporting more sustainable agricultural practices.

Many local food efforts focus on education, food policy, and food security.

Who should participate in local food?

- For consumers, local food is an opportunity not only to eat fresher, tastier food, it is an opportunity to "vote with dollars" for a more transparent food system that aligns with values of sustainability and community.
- For small and mid-sized farmers, local food is an opportunity to disengage from some of the price and efficiency pressures of commodity agriculture, to market a value-added product, to adopt more sustainable agricultural practices, and to develop relationships with different marketing venues and individual consumers.
- For processors, retailers, restaurants, and institutions, local food is an opportunity to provide for distinct needs in a growing sector of the food economy while also supporting local farms and an alternative vision of agriculture.
- For everybody, local food requires (and rewards you with) more relationships and a deeper knowledge of the food you eat, emphasizing its unique character in the marketplace.

There are many possibilities in local food, including organic, conventional, direct marketing, and marketing through special relationships with brokers, processors, restaurants, schools, and/or retailers. Some local food enterprises are privately operated; others are cooperatively operated; and others are government operated. Many local food efforts focus on education, food policy, food security, and other significant issues not directly involved in the food supply chain. There is as much variation in local food systems as there is in the communities where they can be found.

The Relationship among Organic, Sustainable, and Local

The Sustainable and Organic Agriculture Programs at Iowa State University Extension are committed to assisting and advancing the interests of local food and local food farmers in Iowa.

According to the National Organic Standards Board, *organic agriculture* is "an ecological production management system that promotes and

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In 2001, there were 2.3 million acres in organic production in the United States.

enhances biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity. It is based on minimal use of off-farm inputs and on management practices that restore, maintain, or enhance ecological harmony" (NOSB, 2003). For a farm to be certified organic, a third-party certifier, accredited with the USDA-National Organic Program, must certify annually that synthetic chemicals have not been used on the farm for a period of three years. Farms generating less than $5,000 per year from organic sales are not required to undergo organic certification but must be registered with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) if selling their produce as "organic" (see PM 1880, *What Is Organic Agriculture?*).

Market studies indicate that people buy local food for freshness and taste.

Many local farmers use organic practices, although some opt not to be "certified organic." Due to scales of production and the farming philosophies involved, organic agriculture and the local food system often go hand in hand. Both offer alternatives to conventional commodity agriculture—organic agriculture provides an alternative to its production practices, while local food provides an alternative to its long-distance, unsegregated market strategies.

The *sustainable agriculture* movement identifies three areas of concern: economics, environment, and social structure. Sustainable agriculture must provide a fair and reasonably secure living for farm families; it should benefit rather than harm the natural environment and must at least maintain basic natural resources such as healthy soil, clean water, and clean air; and it should support viable rural communities and fair treatment of all involved in the food system, from farm workers to consumers. While a fully sustainable system of agriculture does not yet exist, both organic and local food systems are important steps in the direction of achieving sustainable agriculture. For more information on sustainable agriculture, contact the ISU Extension Sustainable Agriculture Program (see "Resources").

Local food provides many benefits to the customer that may not be available in highly processed food that has traveled long distances.

The Benefits of Local Food

The growth in local foods is being driven by both ends of the food chain. Consumers demand locally grown food largely because of its taste, its freshness, and the support it provides to local farmers. Farmers with an entrepreneurial spirit and an ability to build relationships seek out local food production as a way to step away from the commodity chain. There are many benefits from local food; the most commonly discussed are taste, freshness, and supporting local farmers. This section provides a brief overview of local food benefits categorized by four types: food qualities, economy, community, and environment, and provides case studies of farm families and marketing groups who sell local foods in Iowa.

Food Qualities

Freshness and Taste

Market studies indicate that people buy local food for freshness and taste. Food at the grocery store routinely travels from such distant places as Colorado, Florida, California, Mexico, and New Zealand. When food travels so far from farm

Many consumers feel safer knowing the farm or farmer who has provided the food on their table.

to plate, it can spend days or weeks in transit. To make such a journey, it must be bred for shelf life and durability. In contrast, food bought today from a farmers' market or at a local-food-oriented restaurant may be as fresh as this morning, and the farmer producing it can exercise greater flexibility in selecting flavorful breeds and varieties.

Nutrition

Recent data suggests that changes in cultivated varieties may have led to declines in nutrition in a trade-off for higher yields (Davis et al., 2004). Because local farms are free to produce a wider variety of breeds and varieties, they can select to grow more nutritious foods. Also, because foods begin losing nutritional content at the moment of harvest, fresher local foods retain more nutritional value. Additionally, as documented by a recent study of local farm-to-school programs in California, access to local food can improve the nutritional choices made by school children by exposing them to fresh, nutritious selections (Ohmart and Feenstra, 2004).

Food Safety

Every year, consumers navigate a series of food-borne diseases, contaminations, and safety concerns. Dramatic recent events include a major outbreak of hepatitis-A, mercury contamination, scares of mad cow disease and bird flu, and concern over genetically modified and irradiated foods. More common but less publicized cases of food poisoning, environmental contamination, and recent concerns about the potential for terrorism affecting the U.S. food supply have led many to become more informed about the sources of their food. Local food does not provide immunity on issues of food safety; however, many consumers feel safer knowing the farm or farmer who has provided the food on their table—the ability to trace food to its origins offers direct accountability that is often absent in supermarket food purchases.

Economy

Next to taste and freshness, the top reason consumers cite for buying local food is to support local farmers. In 2002, farmers earned their lowest real net cash income since 1940 (USDA, 2002). Meanwhile corporate agribusiness profits have nearly doubled since 1990 (Elitzak, 2000). Nearly 90 percent of farm households rely on off-farm income. By choosing to buy local, consumers "vote with their dollars" for an agriculture that accords with their values—values such as family farms, community, local economy, and sustainability. In doing so, consumers help both local farmers and the local economy.

Studies suggest that—when taste, quality, and price are comparable—roughly one-quarter to one-third of consumers will pay a 5–20 percent premium for locally grown vegetables and meats (Burdine et al., 2001; Zumwalt, 2001; Leopold Center, 2003), thus indicating the potential for local food profitability. When combined with more labor-intense practices, local food can generate many times the net return *per acre* as common commodity crops (Leopold Center, 2003), suggesting that local food can be a viable strategy for small acreages. Additionally, data show that only 20 percent of the average consumer food dollar contributes toward the farm value of the food (Elitzak, 2000); since many local food schemes feature direct farmer-to-consumer marketing, it is possible for a farmer at a farmers' market, CSA (community-supported agriculture), or roadside stand to capture more of the consumer food dollar while still offering a competitive price.

On the broader scale, local food purchases also have the effect of bolstering the local economy. A study in southeast Minnesota revealed that, despite over $866 million in the sale of regional farm products in 1997, the region still lost as much as $800 million because of non-local consumer food purchases and farm input purchases (Meter, 2001). Even if local food can capture as little as 1 percent of that

loss, that would be $8 million that stays in the region to support local farms, communities, and towns. The same study estimates that local food dollars cycle 2.3 times through the local economy, while dollars spent at larger farms only cycle 1.9 times.

Community

In addition to the economic benefits brought to the local economy, many social benefits also accrue from a robust local food system. Key among these are the relationships that local food systems build; these relationships both connect people and establish lasting business ties. The following list provides just a small sample of the possibilities:

- Farmers and customers at a farmers' market
- Neighbors in a community garden
- Nutritionists and chefs engaged in food security education
- Farmers, food brokers, and wholesale retailers in a delivery system
- Hospital purchasers, farmers, and county officials arranging institutional buying.

A local food system demands the cultivation of more relationships among *all* stakeholders, and these relationships usually involve a greater diversity of stakeholders. Many who choose local food production or consumption find that the community they develop is one of the most rewarding aspects of their involvement; however, there can be no doubt that the relationships also demand more time and people skills.

Another community benefit of local food is the building of a sense of place and identity. When shoppers know the farm that produces their food—when they know a farmer, a chef, a nutritionist, a city official, and neighbors who buy locally—then they will feel a stronger connection and greater pride in place. Not surprisingly, communities with a strong sense of place can—through farmers' markets, local festivals, and local character—develop attractive agritourism possibilities. Examples of this sense of place could include the Muscatine Melon Festival, the Adel Sweet Corn Jamboree, and the Greenfield Squash Round-Up.

A third benefit of local food is in raising food awareness. When people buy locally, they are encouraged to think more about the health and nutritional consequences as well as the social and economic consequences of their decisions.

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Finally, local food bolsters food security. *Food security* denotes the ability for all people "to obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice" (CFSC, 2005). Local food naturally boosts food security due to its link with organic and sustainable agriculture. However, a large number of local food initiatives intentionally service low-income stakeholders through WIC coupons (the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women,

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Organic crops are required to be grown in rotations, as demonstrated by the corn-soybean-oat-alfalfa rotation, shown at the ISU. Neely-Kinyon Farm.

Organic livestock must be fed 100 percent organic feed and hay.

Infants, and Children) and food stamps, school programs, gleaning (food recovery programs associated primarily with food banks and group meal sites), and other strategies. Additionally, emphases on education and democratic participation help make many local food groups more food secure.

> Local food provides one clear benefit in limiting the fossil fuel used in transport.

Environment

One reason many consumers choose to buy locally is the perceived environmental benefit it confers. Local food provides one clear benefit in limiting the fossil fuel used in transport, but it also correlates with agricultural practices that are also friendlier to the environment.

On average, food travels more than 1,500 miles from farm to plate, the equivalent of a drive from Davenport, Iowa, to Miami, Florida. The main reason is because so much food we eat travels all the way from California and Florida. Consequently, for many foods, we burn more fossil fuels in transporting them than we do in growing them. A 2002 study by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture indicated that local foods would save 79–94 percent of the CO_2 emissions from food transport versus non-locally sourced foods (Pirog et al., 2001). Local food, by its very nature, provides an obvious alternative for lowering harmful greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel consumption involved in transporting goods.

As stated earlier, local food is often correlated with organic practices. When a consumer chooses to support a local organic farmer, the consumer supports environmental practices aimed to provide cleaner water, soil conservation, pesticide reduction, and wildlife diversity. Other local farmers implement environmentally sound practices associated with small-scale and/or local farming.

Local Food Strategies

On the practical level, how does local food work? How can you engage in it? There are several avenues:

- Direct marketing
- Indirect marketing
- Local food processing
- Education
- Policy and advocacy

For resources to get you started on any of these topics, please see the “Resources” section at the end of this document.

Direct Marketing

Direct marketing refers to any situation in which a farmer sells directly to the end consumer. More than any other form of marketing, it requires good people skills and the desire to build personal relationships. For farmers, it is also a chance to fully control how food is sold and to bypass intermediaries in the food chain. For the consumer, direct market buying is the best opportunity to connect a farmer's face and farming practices to the food one eats. The personal connections forged can lead to stable long-term buyer-seller relations and to excellent educational opportunities.

Farmers' Markets

Over the past 10 years, the number of farmers' markets in the United States has more than doubled. Organic growers account for one-third of market vendors and participate in more than 80 percent of farmers' markets. As of 2004, the USDA lists 172 farmers' markets in Iowa (AMS, 2004). Farmers' markets present an attractive place to buy and sell food. Farmers interact directly with consumers, gain valuable feedback, and sell without a middleperson. Consumers get to know the farmer growing the food they eat, receive fresh food, and engage in a cultural event. Larger markets can increase sales in nearby businesses and boast a variety of crafts, performers, or other attractions. However, like all local food initiatives, the successful construction of, or participation within, a farmers' market is a process involving thoughtful planning and an ability to adapt. The market should not only attend to the preferences of its consumer base, but it also needs to follow municipal guidelines and give consideration to its own rules of self-governance. (See resources on Farmers' Markets.)

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Farmers' markets offer opportunities for small- and large-scale operations.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Farms

In a CSA farm, consumers purchase advance shares (and sometimes contribute their labor) in a small, local farm's production that includes a wide variety of vegetables and may include animal products, fruit, flowers, honey, jam, or other items. Consumers become shareholders in a CSA because they receive fresh produce, support a local farm, develop a personal relationship with the farmer, and often support environmentally safe practices. Farmers develop relationships with their customers, often practice organic methods, are able to share their risks, and are guaranteed a reliable market. The CSA structure often provides flexibility to accommodate needs of both farmer and consumer. As of January 2005, the demand for CSAs in Iowa well exceeds the ability of local CSAs to meet it. ISU Extension maintains a directory of known Iowa CSAs. (See "Resources" section on CSAs.)

Farm Stands and U-Picks

Farm stands and U-Picks provide a direct marketing opportunity without issues of delivering or transporting food. The success of both depends heavily on location and good marketing. Farm stands can be as small as a pickup bed or as large as a small grocery store; either way, customers are as interested in the relationship with the farmer as they are in their purchase. U-Picks provide more of a seasonal and agritourist experience, and farmers can save some labor on harvest, since customers can assist with harvesting. In both types of enterprises, farmers need to be aware of permits, liability, and insurance issues. (See resources on Farm Stands and U-Picks.)

Indirect Marketing

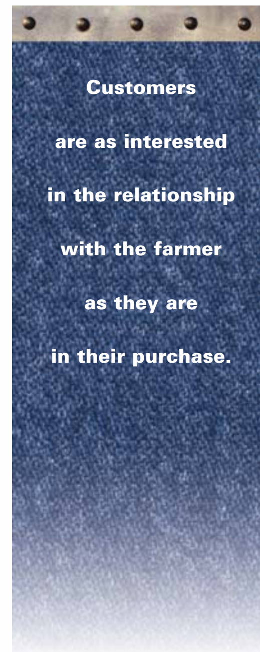
Indirect marketing refers to the sale of food to any entity who is not the end consumer. Schools, restaurants, hotels, hospitals, convention centers, cafeterias, grocery stores, wholesalers, and food brokers are all venues for indirect marketing.

Farm-to-School

At a time when childhood obesity has become a national concern, farm-to-school programs offer an innovative strategy for food service providers and farmers alike. A recent study in California reinforces the connection between farm-to-school programs and improved children's nutritional choices (Ohmart and Feenstra, 2004). When combined with school gardens and curricula, they create unique educational opportunities. In Iowa, farm-to-school decisions occur at the school district level, but a variety of resources also issue from the Department of Education's Bureau of Nutrition Programs and School Transportation. Farm-to-school programs are susceptible to similar barriers as other farm-to-institution agreements: communications, delivery, supply, food safety, food service labor, and price. Procedures for school food service purchasing usually do not accommodate small-scale local buying. Successful farm-to-school programs begin with initiative, flexibility, collaboration, patience, and good relationships among farmers, food buyers, and food service staff. (See resources on Farm-to-School.)

Farm-to-Restaurant

Restaurants offer one of the most robust opportunities in the local food economy. In 2000, 47.5 percent of the U.S. consumer food dollar was spent in restaurants (Elitzak, 2000). In a 2003 survey of chefs of sustainable cuisine, 73 percent agreed that "purchasing locally grown food has a positive impact on my foodservice establishment's bottom line profits," and 57 percent preferred to purchase local food directly from a farmer (Zumwalt, 2003). Independent and upscale restaurants tend to carry local food more often, because their menus are flexible enough to accommodate seasonal availability, and because their clientele is perceived as more willing to pay a premium for local food. As in other local food operations, consistency in availability, supply, and delivery can present obstacles; communication, ordering procedures, and pricing also can be problematic. A case study on selling to institutions is described in the next section. (See resources on Farm-to-Restaurant/Institution/Retail/Wholesale.)



Farm-to-Institution

Marketing to hotels, hospitals, nursing homes, conference centers, and corporate cafeterias is an attractive idea because institutional buyers generate a steady demand for food and could serve as an excellent consumer education forum. Many institutions are interested in the fresher, often healthier diet that can be achieved

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Opportunities are available to producers who wish to sell their products through larger vendors.

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by supplementing food service with local produce, dairy, and meats. Farm-to-institution umbrella groups have been founded in multiple locations in Iowa over the last decade, meeting with varied success; these have usually been initiated by producers. When farmers decide to sell directly to institutions, they need to be aware of the new responsibilities they are undertaking and the standards that those institutions have come to expect from food suppliers. Frequent challenges include pricing, adequate supply, transportation and delivery setups, food safety, and consistency, among others. Working with institutions will generally require more professionalism and more of a business mindset than other local food ventures. A case study on *Selling to Institutions* is described in the next section. (Also see resources on Farm-to-Restaurant/Institution/Retail/Wholesale.)

Farm-to-Retail/Wholesale Operations

Most Americans purchase their take-home food at the supermarket; it is here where food of any sort can reach the widest audience. However, it is also a market that is difficult for small local food providers to enter, and even entry into the market will not guarantee success without adequate promotion. Contrary to misconceptions, large grocery chains like Hy-Vee and large wholesalers like Sodexho and Sysco are interested in local food. The main obstacles arise in logistics—providing enough food meeting specified criteria in a *consistent* fashion at a low enough price. Large vendors are interested in local food, but it must be provided in a way that is compatible with the business sense of commercial retail food operations.

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Farmers interested in selling to retail and wholesale markets should consider a few strategies. First, cooperation among farmers can be effective, because it helps provide the market with an adequate supply, and it can help streamline delivery and packaging requirements. Second, individual stores usually have flexibility in their ability to purchase local food; building a relationship with the purchaser is important, as is making the purchaser's job as straight-forward as possible. Finally, advance planning and product development are prerequisites.

Many farmers prefer to avoid large retailers and focus instead on small, local groceries, ethnic food stores, consumer co-ops, or health and nutrition stores. Many of the logistical barriers are more negotiable in the smaller setting, and the use of local food may be more explicitly in line with local retailers' missions. Additionally, by targeting a niche market (i.e., organic or ethnic), a farmer may minimize competition. Finally, selling through a locally owned vendor is more in keeping with the philosophy of local food. (See resources on Farm-to-Restaurant/Institution/Retail/Wholesale.)

Local Food Processing

A farmer must sell more than 83 lbs. of corn to purchase 25 oz. of frosted flakes on sale. The value of processing, packaging, and marketing food vastly increases its purchase value. Obviously, processing and preparing food is a real opportunity in local food. However, the history of 20th-century agriculture has dictated that many of the facilities associated with adding food value no longer operate in such a way as to accommodate small scale or local farming Nonetheless, with innovative thinking, planning, and product development, local farmers can successfully launch and sustain value-added enterprises.

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Local food processing can range from simple home operations to free-standing private enterprises. Individual farmers can make cheese, dry meat, ferment tofu, and pickle, can, or preserve many fruits and vegetables. All of these sell with value added and also diversify a farmer's product line and seasonal availability. Farmers should do their research on the labor, skills, and equipment requirements of these processes, the market, and applicable regulations, and then they should develop a sound business plan. (See resources on Business Planning.)

Other sorts of processing require facilities, equipment, and labor that generally necessitate farmer cooperation, private business, or governmental assistance. These include community kitchens (incubator kitchens), meat lockers, grain elevators, and slaughterhouses. As local food develops as a market, the need for and opportunity arising from local food processing operations will only continue to grow. Strategic ventures that service local food will, in turn, invigorate regional and local food markets. (See resources on Local Food Processing.)

Labeling and Certification

Labeling and certification are important strategies in raising consumer awareness. Labels are present on the product and therefore distinguish it from other similar products at the point of sale. Certification verifies the authenticity claimed by the label according to a set standard. Since food's local origin is not obvious just by looking at it, local food is a logical candidate for labeling. Ultimately, a recognized label seeks to both increase demand and create a premium for locally grown food.

Labeling and certification are important strategies in raising consumer awareness.

In Iowa, there are two large-scale local food labeling programs that are combined with marketing programs to promote their visibility—A Taste of Iowa (ATOI) and Buy Fresh, Buy Local. ATOI is administered by the Iowa Department of Economic Development and designates food that is at least 50 percent raised, grown, or processed in Iowa. Buy Fresh, Buy Local is a FoodRoutes Network program administered in Iowa by Practical Farmers of Iowa and regional partners; Buy Fresh, Buy Local specifically services direct marketing farmers.

Labeling also can operate at the farm or community level, as exhibited by Amana meats, Naturally Iowa dairy, local wineries, and any number of place-specific brand names. (See resources on Labeling and Certification.)

Education

A successful future for local food systems hinges heavily on developing a market of educated, committed consumers. There are many strategies toward raising awareness, but three are noted here: community gardens, health and nutrition, and consumer-initiated efforts.

Community Gardens

Community gardens can effectively serve multiple purposes in an urban area. They offer land and a venue for gardening enthusiasts, including apartment dwellers, retired farmers, and ethnic communities. Community gardens address food security problems by providing fresh and nutritious foods to low-income areas at a minimal cost. Gardens educate youth and adults alike about where food comes from and how it is grown. However, the strongest benefit of urban gardens is their contribution to building community and bringing together an often diverse assembly of neighbors in a common activity.

The successful operation of a community garden requires attention to the coordination of many issues from access to water and soil testing to writing membership rules and attending to liability issues. Buy-in from a city park district, master gardeners' club, and/or church or private sponsor can really improve a garden's flexibility and ability to cope with challenges. (See resources on Community Gardens.)

Health and Nutrition

There has been a strong health and nutrition emphasis in local food education. The root of it lies with food security—access for all people to a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice. At a time when nutritionists and dietitians have been grappling with widespread obesity in the United States, they have encountered glaring blind spots in the average American diet. The causes included massive commercial marketing of non-nutritious products, busy consumer schedules, ignorance of healthy, balanced dietary needs, and lack of training in basic cooking skills. In order to encourage the consumption of locally grown foods, it may be necessary to educate consumers on how to balance a diet and how to cook foods that are locally available. Conversely, one effective way to provide this education is to connect consumers more closely to the food chain—talking to farmers, learning new recipes, and understanding organic and sustainable principles. Farm-to-school/cafeteria/restaurant programs raise the profile of local food and encourage more knowledgeable eating habits. Nutrition education and local food are mutually compatible exercises. (See resources on Health and Nutrition.)

Consumer-Initiated Efforts

Organized consumers have the capacity to change the food system without waiting for retailers or producers to take the lead. This has been witnessed when college students lobby campus food services for local and organic food. It is evident when consumers combine buying power to form a co-op grocery. It is evident when meditative, yoga, naturopathic, or spiritual groups explore diet and self. Oftentimes, small informal education activities will emerge from the nucleus already present in such efforts.

Organized consumers have the capacity to change the food system.

The consumer voice is becoming increasingly apparent through the explosive growth of Slow Food International. Slow Food is "an educational organization dedicated to promoting stewardship of the land and ecologically sound food production; reviving the kitchen and the table as the centers of pleasure, culture, and community; invigorating and proliferating regional, seasonal culinary traditions; creating a collaborative, ecologically oriented, and virtuous globalization; and living a slower and more harmonious rhythm of life." As of February 2005, consumers have coalesced to form four Slow Food chapters in Iowa—Ames, Des Moines, Iowa City, and Pella. (See resources on Consumer-Initiated Efforts.)

Policy and Advocacy

Government

The policies of state and local government—incentives and regulations—form an integral component of local food systems. A favorable policy environment encourages entrepreneurship, promotes local farm stability, and advances public awareness. For instance, the city of Burlington, Vermont, has pledged to a goal that 10 percent of food purchased in the city will be local. Such a policy sends a strong signal of support to local farmers. In Iowa, many policies are embedded in the activities of various agencies and departments—the Department of Education implements farm-to-school programs, and IDALS engages in everything from farmers' markets to organic certification to marketing promotions of Iowa-grown fruits and vegetables. Additionally, some individual state and local officials dedicate significant personal energy to championing and supporting local efforts. Iowa's support for local food is also evident in many ISU Extension programs and the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture.

Food Policy Councils

Food policy councils are organizations that identify strategic opportunities and challenges, working to influence policymakers in designing regulations and legislation that are favorable to local agriculture. Most advisory councils are sanctioned by government but have no official decision-making capacity. Established in May 2000 by Governor Vilsack, the Iowa Food Policy Council was one of the first state-level food policy councils in the United States. Regional and municipal food policy councils are also becoming increasingly popular in the United States. (See resources on Food Policy Councils.)

Many governmental institutions are working to create policies that support local agriculture.

Local Food Alliances

Perhaps the most common advocacy groups are networking organizations that forge alliances among key stakeholders in the food system. As more growers, buyers, and consumers engage in local food, the need for coordination becomes more apparent. In Iowa, local food programs are active in Practical Farmers of Iowa (PFI), the Iowa Network for Community Agriculture (INCA), the University of Northern Iowa Local Food Project, and the Grinnell Area Local Food Alliance.

One of the more useful tasks often undertaken by policy councils and food alliances is the "food audit"—a sort of census of food resources, eating habits, agricultural practices, and general demographics for a region. With this information, groups are able to strategically plan how to increase local food consumption in the food system. (See resources on Local Food Alliances.)

Challenges

The local food system offers an inviting array of benefits and provides a robust alternative to commodity agriculture for those who are willing to put the extra time into developing their markets. More relational marketing means more time required to maintain the network of connections involved. Organic approaches may mean more labor required per acre. Buying locally often entails a search for local food vendors. For institutions and processors, local food supports local farmers, but it may invite logistical maneuvers and problems with supply and demand.

What follows is a list of common obstacles and challenges associated with local food. Some challenges are more relevant to some local food operations and regions than are others.

In the Local Food System, a Farmer is Rarely Just a Producer: To sell locally, farmers often must take on the responsibilities of adding links in the food supply chain. With these new functions come the need for new skills, new equipment, and new knowledge. Farmers must learn, hire, and/or cooperate in order to achieve economical sustainability.

Business Planning: Participating in a local food system involves a complete marketing strategy, and it requires a well-crafted plan. Research suggests that some CSAs sell their shares too cheaply, some farmers overlook their labor in calculating costs, some sellers overestimate the potential market, and some processors fail to investigate the appropriate regulations and restrictions for labels. Therefore, it is strongly advised that stakeholders learn how to develop a business plan. (See resources on Business Planning.)

Marketing: For labels, new products, and roadside stands, a local food enterprise needs to have the resources and the ability to reach and captivate the public eye. Spending adequate funds to develop an appealing label, informational brochure, and/or farm stand will help sell your product. Networking will improve your sales through word-of-mouth advertising, as well as other opportunities. When selling through a retailer,

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Any local food effort needs to understand and highlight the region it serves.

restaurant, or institution, it is important to coordinate marketing efforts with the vendor in order to maximize your sales and to make your product an indispensable part of your vendor's operation.

Customer Service and People Skills: Local food requires more relationships. Farmers who market directly will need to have sales skills and be able to respond directly to the needs of the end consumer. Selling to restaurateurs and hotels also requires an ability to appeal to and appreciate the needs of the purchasing agent. Make an appointment and bring your best product to show. Learn buyers' needs and work backwards to provide for them—supplying the crop varieties or cuts of meat they want and delivering according to their schedule.

Networking: If farmers market directly, they need to cultivate and maintain a consistent clientele. If marketing to restaurants, schools, or institutions, they need to develop relationships with administrators, chefs, and food service professionals. Conversely, consumers, restaurants, schools, and institutions need to know where to find sources for local foods. It is largely due to a lack of local food infrastructure that local farmers, buyers, and consumers must compensate with stronger networks.

Local Character: Any local food effort needs to understand and highlight the region it serves. This is not only true for producers, processors, and retailers who need to research the market and the availability of compatible resources, it is also true for policy councils, alliance organizations, and educational efforts.

Infrastructure: As communities rediscover the value of locally centered agriculture, infrastructure building must occur. Proximity to appropriate facilities may create a time and transportation issue, and installing your own equipment can be cost prohibitive. Working with city, county, regional, or state economic development programs can be a fruitful exercise for securing local processing facilities.

Logistics: Particularly in indirect marketing, logistics—delivery, ordering, adequate supply, appropriate packaging—has proven to be one of the most common stumbling blocks. Purchasers are accustomed to standardized protocols, and producer groups need to be able to meet their expectations. The most successful producer groups invent solutions to logistical dilemmas. Above all, a lack of consistency and dependability is one of the most significant frustrations voiced by local food purchasers.

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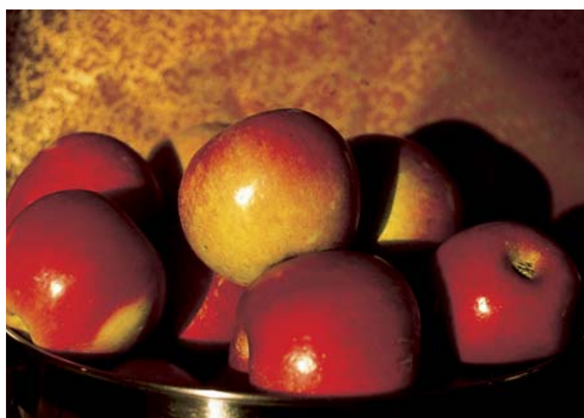
Seasonality: Especially for institutional buyers, seasonality can be a serious factor. It complicates planning when a vendor can only offer products for part of the year, and with vegetable farmers, the selection of produce changes frequently. Seasonal concerns also demand more coordination with the food service staff. For school programs, purchasing ceases during most of the summer months. For many of these reasons, some farmers have targeted high-end restaurants that have frequent menu turnover and flexibility in food preparation.

Legal Issues and Insurance: Permits for farm stands, organic standards for livestock, rules for food stamps at farmers' markets, food safety standards for processing and institutional purchasers, labeling restrictions on products, liability for injury at a U-Pick—these are but a few examples of the legal restrictions, regulations, and insurance issues that apply to local food ventures. The Drake Agricultural Law Center is one of the nation's best authorities on agricultural legal issues, and their book *The Legal Guide for Direct Farm Marketing* is a valuable resource.


K. DELATE

Seasonality can be an issue of concern and requires that producers effectively target other markets with alternate crops.

Policy Environment: Having a local food system is an economic development strategy. Because it is local, it multiplies the flow of money within the local area, and because it is community-oriented, it builds connections and cohesion as well. For these reasons, city and county officials can be great resources if they are onboard with local food. Every effort should be made when feasible to engage governmental representatives and departments. However, policy also can aspire to a higher level of organization—to a more strategic vision—and this vision can be written into municipal, county, and state legal codes. The vision of food policy councils is to create a legislative atmosphere that rewards stakeholders who buy, sell, and eat locally grown food.

Cooperation: In most cases, participants in local food systems are better off when they cooperate with one another. Farmers' markets are more successful when they have more farmers and when farmers do not undercut prices. When farmers work together, sales to institutional buyers include more food and often arrange better delivery. CSAs can provide more variety when they partner with other local farms. Local food efforts do more to build the community when they act with a common purpose. Most people who stay with local food over the long term are committed to the need for cooperation.

Targeting a local market is a choice for those who wish to avoid the commodities market with its large volumes and low margins.

Case Studies

Local Organic Dairy Operation

Our local dairy case study operates according to a strictly local marketing strategy. The entire operation of the dairy is on-farm, from the organic pasture, to the milking facility, to the processing, packaging, and marketing functions. The dairy processes 1,500 gallons of dairy weekly and produces three types of milk (whole, 2%, and skim), several cheeses, yogurt, and whipping cream. These products are marketed through a dozen local restaurants and three grocery stores—two supermarkets and a locally owned natural food store.

The farm family's decision to remain local has been an intentional one. They emphasize a strong desire to continue serving their customers a quality product. Customers enjoy the taste of grass-fed, organic, non-homogenized milk; they appreciate the nutrition; and some like the nostalgia of cream that rises to the top. Because they are local, customers also have become friends. Customers have come to feel both ownership and pride in the dairy. Despite increasing demand for their products, the family has decided not to expand the dairy due to the need for a series of major business decisions, leading to land expansion and facilities acquisitions that would ultimately change the nature of the dairy and its local relationship with its customer base.

K. DELATE

Milk from grass-fed, organic cows is enjoyed for its taste and nutrition.

The farm family cites two central reasons for their success: (1) they have grown the business slowly; and (2) they have a strong local base. Their slow growth mirrors the prevailing wisdom in local food of taking small steps. To run an operation akin to this dairy requires a broad increase in skills and knowledge—they are not only grass-based organic producers, but processors and marketers as well. So, small steps make good sense. Their buyer base is at least as important. The farmer believes that most places in Iowa could not provide an adequate buyer base for his grass-fed organic local dairy; he identifies large cities and college towns as the most viable markets. Maharishi International University, with its focus on organic and sustainable foods, helps create such a market in Fairfield, Iowa.

Asked why a dairy would target a local market, the farmer says it is a choice for those who wish to avoid the commodities market with its large volumes and low margins. If you can develop a local identity—a locally marketed, value-added product—then you can produce less quantity and get higher value for what you do produce. When the farm family bought the dairy 13 years ago, most dairy farmers were shedding their on-farm processing operations, and there was little discussion of value-added farming. On-farm processing did not make sense in a commodity context, but it did in a local context.

The farmer does not encourage most producers to farm for the local market. "Those who try it just to make money probably will not make it." Likewise, local food is not for those with a "commodity mindset" either. "It is labor-intensive and knowledge-intensive. If a farmer is committed to, or has an enthusiasm for producing for local markets,

and if the farmer likes a challenge, then (s)he can make it work. Local is a lot like organic in this way."

Recommended reading for getting involved in local dairy operations is included in the resources on Local Dairy Operations.

"In local food systems, producers contribute toward community through the product they grow."

Local CSA and Farmers' Market Operation

This case study examines a primarily vegetable-based, 3- to 4-acre CSA farm in north-central Iowa. The farm also generates revenue from pasture poultry (butchered at a state-inspected facility nearly 60 miles away). Flower-selling has become a hobby developed by their daughter. The variety of strategies is akin to diversifying one's farm for stabilizing income. The farm also partners with other local growers, providing its members with more variety; while this arrangement does help the partners to sell some produce, the increased variety is also a tool to engage CSA members by both making more variety available and by making it easier for them to participate in local food.

The farmer first entered the local food system when she grew a large garden for the local town's farmers' market. Two years later, she expanded to the CSA. The CSA has 73 members and delivers locally to four cities within 45 miles, as well as to Des Moines and West Des Moines. The farm participates in farmers' markets in two towns within 35 miles of the farm, but this may be reduced to one in the future. While using organic practices, the farm chooses to not seek organic certification because of the strong connection to its consumers. The consumers learn directly from the farmer what methods were used to grow a crop.

With an environmental education background, the local food system concept has been attractive to the farmer because it integrates areas of the environment, social justice, community, and *rural* community. For these reasons, the farmer began an association in 1996 with the Iowa Network for Community Agriculture (INCA—see "Resources") to help organize local food producers and consumers, because it integrates areas of the environment, social justice, community, and *rural* community. Education and advocacy are included in her role as a producer. In her vision, local food is both a production strategy and a community-organizing strategy. In local food systems, producers contribute toward community through the product they grow (with an intentional focus on the market).

The benefits of the local food system have been:

- Viable livelihood. Local farming generates income and acts upon issues they care deeply about (i.e., they have found meaningful work). Like most CSAs, they mix their income sources; it is a financial parallel to diversifying your farm.
- The work also builds identity for the family. It builds values for the children and generates dedication to a mission. In particular, the connectedness and complexity of their way of farming (for both community and the environment) is important for their family.
- The farm is enriched by the number of connections in this relationship-based business.
- Hope and possibility are greater than before to stop the decline of rural communities.
- Enough evidence has been amassed that others are getting intrigued and are more willing to experiment with similar local food systems.

The local food system in north-central Iowa is market-challenged. The farmer presents the following information: "If you don't already have a market, then it's a real leap to decide to enter the local food market. For example, it has been difficult to locate chefs and restaurants with the interest, the labor, and the logistical flexibility to serve locally raised food."

The lack of infrastructure of production restricts the options. For example, if there were a community kitchen such as a cannery or meat locker, they could plan their farm to take advantage of the resources at hand. There is a need for a skill base—business plans, the ability to compile a price list, etc. By increasing these skills, local food could become more than just a hobby.

> "By increasing skills, local food could become more than just a hobby."

For those who want to get involved in the local food system, the farmer recommends contacting one or more of the following organizations: Iowa Network for Community Agriculture; Practical Farmers of Iowa; the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture; the Women, Food, and Agriculture Network; your local RC&D; and certainly other local food farmers and farmers' marketers.

Local Organic Meat Production/Processing

This local organic farm is 620 acres—480 owned, 140 rented. The farm is run using a whole-systems approach. This statement of sustainable and organic principles also has a practical-level consequence in that the family markets a wide variety of farm products—grains (food corn, feed corn, barley, oats, soy) and livestock (beef, pork, chicken). This effort can be viewed as an agro-ecological equivalent of a diversified investment portfolio. Income is derived solely from farm enterprises.

Livestock operations include 90 cows in a cow-calf operation (grass-finished), 150 hogs (farrow-to-finish), and chickens. Some of the beef is butchered in Des Moines; the rest is sold to a large organic marketing cooperative. Most of the hogs are butchered at a nearby meat locker, but the rest are also sold to the same organic marketing cooperative. The chickens are butchered at a third facility and then flash-frozen at the local meat locker. A particular problem of the meat industry is the distance to certified lockers for processing and distance to markets. Everything is certified organic except the chickens and the locally processed hogs (the processing facilities are not certified, so although the farm meets certification criteria, livestock processed through the two facilities are not certified organic). Organic grains are marketed in Iowa and in other states (see PM 1880 for potential organic grain and buyers).

Meats are marketed either directly to the end consumer or through health food stores in greater metropolitan areas. The farm family first started selling locally through a connection with alternative medical clinics that wanted to encourage healthier eating in their patients. Some of the patients who were receiving chemo-/radiation therapy noted that the grass-fed organic meat was easier to digest than other meats. Subsequently, their local food marketing grew primarily by word of mouth, selling to almost 150 customers in Des Moines.

Plans to scale back marketing in Des Moines and increase sales more locally are under way. Storage issues are easier to control and cheaper if they store meat locally rather than in Des Moines. The loss of city customers will

Grass-fed organic meat has been found to be easier to digest than other meats, according to some consumers.

be replaced by building a larger customer base nearer to home, and selling to the organic co-op will always be possible. The farm family has learned a lot through trial-and-error, and their experiences in Des Moines will serve for many practical purposes as a trial run for marketing locally in their home county.

"If you know what you're doing and if you know your market, and if you've got a quality product, then try it," this operation advocates. It is labor-intensive, however.

"The main reason for marketing food locally is the community."

Inventory is a consideration in livestock. Marketing to the health food stores has had a stabilizing effect, since they have fairly regular patterns of purchase, both in quantity and selection of cuts. Direct marketing is more erratic; meat is sold in packages, which both guarantees that their cut inventory is balanced and that their customers get a good variety. The farm has seven freezers at home. As a note, chickens are more trouble for inventory, since they do not store compactly and because their sales are more variable. Chickens are also a bit more labor-intensive, because they need to be processed at two locations.

The farm family has taken to developing information for customers on how to prepare their meat.

The main reason for marketing food locally is the community. Local food brings them into contact with interesting people, bridges the urban-rural divide, allows them to get feedback and ideas, and gives them a place to market a truly quality product to an appreciative audience. The appreciation for "good meat" has cemented their reputation. Their consumers gain all of these things plus knowing the source of their food.

When they chose to process their beef organically, they had to make a broad and thorough search before they decided upon a butcher in Des Moines. The owner there took the necessary steps for the beef to be organically certified with the farm family paying the costs of certification. The relationship is strong, and it makes the final product even better, both in the quality of processing and in the packaging.

University of Northern Iowa Local Food Project

"What we've done here can happen anywhere. What you need is a commitment of time." Kamyar Enshayan is the Director of the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) Local Food Project (LFP), an organization that facilitates local food buying and selling between institutional buyers (hospitals, nursing homes, colleges, restaurants, and groceries) and producers. LFP began in 1997, when the Practical Farmers of Iowa (PFI) began to examine local food and farm-to-college strategies.

In 1998, with funding support from the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, LFP facilitated connections between local farmers and UNI, Allen Memorial Hospital, and Rudy's Tacos, generating $110,000 in local food expenditures. By 2002, seven institutions were spending $200,000 in the project. By 2004, LFP's participation had jumped to 23 institutions in and around Black Hawk County, trading in $460,000 of locally produced food. The recent jump coincides with the Buy Fresh, Buy Local Campaign that was launched in Black Hawk and neighboring counties through a partnership between LFP and PFI.

Enshayan emphasizes that the components for LFP were already in place—there were institutions ready to experiment with serving locally supplied foods, and there were farmers who could provide an adequate supply for the scale of operations contemplated. What was needed was a person or organization—a catalyst—to invest the time needed to forge connections. Enshayan's affiliation with UNI afforded him a position from which to facilitate those connections. The readiness of both farmers and institutions reinforces Enshayan's assertion that institutional local food buying "can happen anywhere."

The strategy for LFP has been to target purchasers, because they have the buying power to leverage and start a market, and because most buyers are not necessarily committed at first but become so through little steps that lead to increased commitment and trust. Conversely, at the outset, it was not difficult to find farmers—the farmers are there and are producing a product—they need the market. However, as LFP has grown, supply is apparently becoming more of a constraint, as there are a limited number of farmers able to provide the requisite amount of food and who are trained in the practices required to sell to institutional buyers.

"Buying and selling locally is an economic and relationship-building act that intentionally builds community."

The chief reward of LFP's efforts has been their benefit to the community. LFP connects many institutions and farmers who otherwise may never identify their common interest. LFP also expends significant energy in public education (see "Buy Fresh, Buy Local" campaign in the Labeling and Certification section) that generates enthusiasm and builds a market base. The community also benefits from the economic impact. Over the 7-year span of the program, LFP has helped the Black Hawk County area retain almost $1.5 million in food expenditures. For every dollar invested in LFP, LFP has helped $6.50 stay in the community. Enshayan explains that buying and selling locally is an economic and relationship-building act that intentionally builds the community, since the focus of the system is on the community, not the commodity.

For those interested in investigating their own local food projects, Enshayan suggests a four-ingredient recipe: (1) Funding, (2) Time, (3) Making Connections, and (4) Organizing. The work is, at its core, about community organization. The LFP Web page, along with many lessons drawn from its experiments and experience, is available at http://www.uni.edu/ceee/foodproject/. Also, please see resources on Selling to Institutions in the "Resources" section.

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Resources

General Resources (Iowa)

Agricultural Law Center, Neil Hamilton, Director, Drake University, 2507 University Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50311, Phone: (515) 271-4956; http://www.law.drake.edu/centers/default.aspx?pageID=aboutAgCtr

- Hamilton, Neil D. 1999. *The Legal Guide for Direct Farm Marketing.* Drake University Agricultural Law Center.

Ag Marketing Resource Center, 1111 NSRIC, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011-3310; Phone: (866) 277-5567; Email: AgMRC@iastate edu; http://www.agmrc.org/homepage.htm

- Iowa Cafe II: Training for New Food and Farming Ventures; http://www.agmrc.org/services/cafeii/cafe%20ii.htm

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Maury Wills, Bureau Chief, Agricultural Diversification & Marketing Development Bureau, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319. Phone: (515) 281-5783, Email: maury.wills@idals.state.ia.us, www.agriculture.state.ia.us/agdiversification.htm

Iowa Network for Community Agriculture, Email: info@growinca.org; http://www.growinca.org/

Iowa State University Extension Organic Agriculture Program, Dr. Kathleen Delate, Associate Professor, Organic Specialist, Depts. of Agronomy/Horticulture, 106 Horticulture Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011, Phone: (515) 294-7069; Email: kdelate@iastate.edu; http://extension.agron.iastate.edu/organicag/

Iowa State University Sustainable Agriculture Extension Program, Jerry DeWitt, 2104 Agronomy, Ames, IA 50011-1050. Phone: (515) 294-7836; Email: jdewitt@iastate.edu; http://extension.agron.iastate.edu/sustag/

Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, 209 Curtiss Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011-1050. Phone: (515) 294-3711. http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/

National Catholic Rural Life Conference, 4625 Beaver Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50310. Phone: (515) 270-2634

Practical Farmers of Iowa, P.O. Box 349, Ames, Iowa 50010. Phone: (515) 232-5661. http://www.practicalfarmers.org/

Women, Food, and Agriculture Network. 59624 Chicago Road, Atlantic, IA 50022-9619. Phone: (712) 243-3264. Email: cowfan@metc.net; http://www.wfan.org

General Resources (United States)

Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA). P.O. Box 3657, Fayetteville, AR 72702. Phone: (800) 346-9140. http://attra.ncat.org/

Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems, University of Wisconsin–Madison, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, 1450 Linden Drive, Madison, WI 53706. Phone: (608) 262-5200; http://www.cias.wisc.edu/

Community Food Security Coalition. P.O. Box 209, Venice, CA 90294. Phone: (310) 822-5410. http://www.foodsecurity.org/

FoodRoutes Network. P.O. Box 443, Millheim, PA 16854. Phone: (814) 349-6000. http://www.foodroutes.org/

Local Harvest. http://www.localharvest.org

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)—North Central Region Office, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, 13-A Activities Bldg., 1734 N. 34th Street, Lincoln, NE 68583-0840. Phone: (402) 472-7081. http://www.sare.org/ncrsare/

USDA-SARE, 2003. Reap new profits: marketing strategies for farmers and ranchers. http://www.sare.org/publications/marketing.htm

W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Food and Society Program; http://www.foodandsociety.org/

World Hunger Year. 505 Eighth Ave., Suite 2100, New York, NY 10018-6582. Phone: (212) 629-8850; Email: FSLC@worldhungeryear.org; http://www.worldhungeryear.org/fslc/

Farmers' Markets

Agricultural Marketing Service of the USDA http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/

- Iowa Farmers' Markets Listing: http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/States/Iowa.htm

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Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Horticulture and Farmers' Market Bureau: http://www.agriculture.state.ia.us/horticulture.htm

- Barbara Lovitt, Iowa Department of Agriculture, Wallace State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319. Phone: (515) 281-8232; Fax: (515) 242-5015; E-mail: barb.lovitt@idals.state.us.ia/

- Farmers' Market Directory, http://www.agriculture.state.ia.us/farmermarket.asp

Practical Farmers of Iowa (see General Resources, Iowa).

Resources for CSAs

Alternative Farming System Information Center, http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/csa/

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Robyn Van En Center for CSA Resources, http://www.csacenter.org/

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education, http://www.sare.org/csa/index.htm

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CSA Directories

FoodRoutes: http://www.foodroutes.org/

ISU Extension, PM 1693. 2003. Community supported agriculture: Iowa CSA farms and organizers: http://www.extension.iastate.edu/pubs/su.htm

SARE: http://wsare.usu.edu/csa/csasearchTesting.cfm

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Farm-to-School

Community Food Security Coalition, P.O. Box 209, Venice, CA 90294, (530) 756-8518, http://www.foodsecurity.org/farm_to_school.html

Iowa Department of Education, Bureau of Nutrition Programs and School Transportation (515) 281-5356, http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/fn/index.html

ISU Extension publication, PM 1853A. 2000. "Local food connections: from farms to schools," http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1853A.pdf

National Farm to School Program, Center for Food and Justice, Urban and Environmental Policy Institute, Occidental College, 1600 Campus Road, Mail Stop M1, Los Angeles, CA 90041, (323) 341-5095, http://www.farmtoschool.org/

Farm-to-Restaurant, Farm-to-Institution, and Farm-to-Retail/Wholesale

GROWN Locally, 776 Old Stage Road, Postville, IA 52162. Phone: (563) 864-3847 or (563) 382-9255.

Iowa State University Hotel, Restaurant, and Institution Management Extension. http://www.extension.iastate.edu/hrim/localfoods/

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University of Northern Iowa Local Food Project, Dr. Kamyar Enshayan, Center for Energy & Environmental Education, Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0293. Phone: (319) 273-7575. http://www.uni.edu/ceee/foodproject/

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Food Processing

Food Entrepreneur Program, Jill Gifford, The Food Processing Center, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, 143 Food Industry Complex, Lincoln, NE 68583-0930. Phone: (402) 472-2819; Email: jgifford1@unl.edu; http://fpc.unl.edu/FoodEntrepreneurProgram/index.htm

Iowa Department of Inspection and Appeals, Robert Haxton, Program Manager, Food and Consumer Safety Bureau, Lucas State Office Building, 321 East 12th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0083. Phone: (515) 281-6539; Email: rhaxton@dia.state.ia.us;_http://www.state.ia.us/government/dia/page9.html

Iowa Manufacturing Extension Partnership, 2701 SE Convenience Blvd., Suite 13 Ankeny, IA 50021. Phone: (515) 289-0600 or toll free (877) 965-4637; http://imep2.imep.org/

Iowa State University Extension publication PM 1294. 2000. "Iowa laws: sale of home-prepared food." http://www.extension.iastate.edu/hrim/publications.htm

Iowa State University Extension, Dr. Sam Beattie, Food Safety Specialist, Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition, 133A MacKay Hall, Ames, Iowa, 50011-1120. Phone: (515) 294-3357; Email: beatties@iastate.edu

Labeling and/or Certification

Buy Fresh, Buy Local Campaign (see Practical Farmers of Iowa under General Resources).

Food Alliance Midwest, Blair Arcade West, Suite Y, 400 Selby Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55102. Phone: (651) 265-3682; Email: jean@foodalliance.org; http://www.foodalliance.org/producers/fa_midwest/midwest.html

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Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture. 2003. Ecolabel value assessment: consumer and food business perceptions of local foods. http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubs/staff/ecolabels/index.htm

"The Consumers Union Guide to Environmental Labels," http://www.eco-labels.org/home.cfm

Community Gardens

American Community Garden Association, c/o Council on the Environment of New York City, 51 Chambers Street, Suite 228, New York, NY 10007. Phone: (877) ASK-ACGA or (212) 275-2242; http://www.communitygarden.org/

Des Moines Community Gardening Coalition, Teva Dawson, Community Garden Coordinator, Des Moines Parks Department, 3226 University Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50311. Phone: (515) 237-1386; E-mail: TLDawson@dmgov.org; http://www.ci.des-moines.ia.us/departments/PR/Comm_Gard/

Health and Nutrition and Food Security

American Dietetic Association, Hunger and Environmental Nutrition Dietetic Practice Group, Angie Tagtow; http://www.hendpg.org

Community Food Security Coalition (see General Resources, United States)

Iowa State University Extension. Iowa food: security, insecurity and hunger. http://www.extension.iastate.edu/hunger/

ISU Extension to Families, Nutrition and Health Field Specialists. http://www.extension.iastate.edu/families/staff/nutrition.html

Society for Nutrition Education, Division of Sustainable Food Systems, 7150 Winton Drive, Suite 300, Indianapolis, IN 46268. Phone: (317) 328-4627 or (800) 235-6690. http://www.sne.org

Women, Food, and Agriculture Network (see General Resources, Iowa)

Consumer-Initiated Education

Slow Food USA (and a directory of Iowa chapters), http://www.slowfoodusa.org/

Food Policy Councils

Iowa Food Policy Council, Neil Hamilton, Drake University, The Law School, Agricultural Law Center, 2507 University Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50311. Phone: (515) 271-2065; (515) 271-4956; http://www.iowafoodpolicy.org/

State and Local Food Policy Council, Neil Hamilton, The Agricultural Law Center, The Law School, Drake University, 2507 University Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50311. Phone: (515) 271-2065; (515) 271-4956; http://www.statefoodpolicy.org/

Toronto Food Policy Council, Wayne Roberts, Project Coordinator, 277 Victoria Street, Suite 203, Toronto, Ontario M5B 1W1. Phone: (416) 338-7937; Email: tfpc@toronto.ca; http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/health/tfpc_index.htm

Local Food Alliances

Grinnell Area Local Food Alliance, Jonathon Andelson, Center for Prairie Studies, Grinnell College, Grinnell, IA 50112. Phone: (641) 269-3139; Email: andelson@grinnell.edu; http://web.grinnell.edu/cps/galfa/index.htm

Iowa Network for Community Agriculture (see General Resources, Iowa)

Practical Farmers of Iowa (see General Resources, Iowa)

University of Northern Iowa Local Food Project (see General Resources, Iowa)

Business Planning

"Grow Your Small Market Farm." Contact Penny Brown Huber, Program Manager. Penny L. Brown at 515-289-0238 or Brownpenny@aol.com; or Sherry Shafer, Small Business Development Center at Drake University at 515-271-2655 or sharon.shafer@drake.edu

Dairy Operations

Dunaway, Vicki H. 2000. "The Small Dairy Resource Book." SARE: Beltsville, MD. Note: out of print. Available online at http://www.sare.org/publications/dairyresource.htm

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture website http://datcp.state.wi.us/index.html

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