



Bites from Healthy Harvest of North Iowa

SUMMER 2017

The Impact of Local Food System

Our local food system provides us a tool to achieve desired outcomes on essential community issues - health, economic development, community vitality, environmental concerns. But how do we measure the impact?

Numerous studies are cited in an article "Do Local Food Systems Really Benefit the Economy" (5.11.17 by Peter Hanlon). Overall, the article confirms that studies of sales and related jobs do, indeed, benefit the

economy. Healthy Harvest's most recent local food sales survey (2014) contributes data to the discussion. Twenty four farmers reported \$822,550 in local food sales, adding new jobs, and increasing wages from 2013 to 2014. As noted in Hanlon's article, research into this area has room to grow.

In 2017, we add anecdotal evidence of the growing impact of our local food system. New farm-to-fork restaurants have opened this summer increasing demand for local product and adding jobs. Sales at several of the farmers markets Healthy Harvest has assisted are taking off as local organizers build market capacity. Thanks to a meat project, several local meat producers are finding new sales. As conversations around Vision North Iowa continue to develop, this data is extremely important in articulating the growing quality of life assets available through our local food system. We will continue to explore this important issue in future articles and projects.



Kids are Cooking at Farmers Market

New Kids Cooking Classes are being piloted at the North Iowa and Clear Lake Farmers Markets this summer. Thanks to support from the Mason City Clinic and the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, this monthly event puts kids front and center in the kitchen and creates toolkits for five local markets to host their own classes and food demonstrations. These classes allow young chefs to be guided by local chefs and dietitians to shop the market for ingredients, prepare a recipe, and learn why cooking from scratch with

fresh ingredients is good for their bodies. Special thanks to our partners at Cerro Gordo County Department of Public

Health, Hy-Vee, and the Decker House Bed and Breakfast, as well as special guests Cassie Peterson of Bread & Buttercreme, Joshua Frederick of Fieldhouse and the Fertile Cafe, and Andrea Berger, of Caliope Catering. For more information on this project, contact Marie Boyd, marie@healthyharvestni.com.



2017 North Iowa Local Food Guide Showcases Producers, Markets, Buyers

The 2017 North Iowa Local Food Guide features 36 local food producers, 14 farmers markets, and 13 businesses that buy local product. Guides are available at libraries, Extension offices, Chambers of Commerce, and farmers markets this summer. A pdf is available at www.healthyharvestni.com.

Local Food Coalition Explores Farm to School Programming

The North Iowa Local Food Coalition's Summer Meeting was held on July 6. The meeting included updates on priority projects, including Supply Chain, Farmers Market Support, Branding, and Incubator Farms and a discussion about Farm to School programming. Healthy Harvest and the Cerro Gordo County Public Health.

Department have begun a discussion with several school districts about developing a Farm to School grant. Coalition members were invited to consider how Farm to School might be a logical addition to priority projects.

An initial planning meeting was held with the Coalition meeting with representation from Hampton-Dumont/CAL, West Fork, and Mason City School Districts. The Coalition members expressed enthusiasm that work to date does, indeed, contribute to Farm to School efforts.



Bob Cole, Ag Ventures Alliance visits with Kaitlyn Bonzer, West Fork Ag Instructor, during the July 6 Coalition meeting.

Quarterly Coalition meetings are open to anyone interested. Check the Healthy Harvest Calendar of Events for the October meeting date.

New Members

We welcome these new members: Rich Halverson, Mason City; Barb & Paul Mac Gregor, Mason City; Pam Hildebrand, Mason City; Diane Sparrow, Osage, Mary Markwalter, Mason City, and Robbie Anderson, Mason City. Membership sign up available on the Healthy Harvest website. Join the growing number of North Iowans who support North Iowa's local food work!

Fall Farm Fresh Events:

2017 offers some brand new locations for our popular Farm to Fork Dinners and Fresh on the Farm Tours. All serve to help learn more about the power of local food.



Hancock County Fresh on the Farm Tour

Saturday, August 5, 2-7 pm - Explore the diversity of agriculture in the county.

Mitchell County Farm to Fork Dinner

Thursday, August 24 - Taste the flavor of Mitchell County on the Sponheim's Farm.

Worth County Farm to Fork Dinner

Wednesday, August 30 - Join the conversation about local food in Northwood and Worth County with this first Farm to Fork Dinner!

Hampton Main Street Restaurant Crawl

Thursday, September 20 - Back by popular demand, this dinner involves the whole community.

Other communities working on Farm to Fork Dinners include Osage and Clear Lake. Watch the Healthy Harvest website Calendar of Events for more details.



Sponsor update

We are pleased to announce sponsorships from POET (supporting the North Iowa Local Food Coalition), First Bank Hampton (supporting local food work in Hampton), and continued support from Boards of Supervisors from these six counties: Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Franklin, Mitchell, Worth, Winnebago.

Thank you to all of these sponsors!

Grants received

Thanks to a grant from Aureon Charitable Foundation we will be purchasing some audio visual equipment to help with outreach. Contact us if your group would like to learn about North Iowa's local food movement. Ag Ventures Alliance has provided the first support of the North Iowa Local Food Conference to be held in February 2018. Stay tuned for updates.