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My Month of Eating Local

A Journey to the Heart of the American Dream

Local/Regional Food Systems Roundtable
Town Craft - Perry, Iowa

August 12, 2009

The Challenge!

Eating Only Food Grown & Ingredients Produced
Within 100 Miles of Woodbury County Courthouse
For the 30 Days During the Month of June 09

- No Meat
- All Ingredients Must be Local

Appreciating the Challenge

Food/Ingredients That I Knew Are Not Local

- No Coffee: No Coffee Plantations In Iowa
- No Sugar: No Sugar Plantations in Iowa
- No Salt: Where Are the Salt Mines? 😊
- No Typical Bread: Identification of Ingredients
- No Orange Juice: We Are Not in Florida 😊
- No Soda
- No Flour, No Pasta, Olive Oil (Olive Garden Does Not

Count!)

All Ingredients Have to Be Identified: LOCAL

Why the Challenge?

- To Bring Public Attention to What We Eat
- To Discover What We Do & Don't Produce
- To Unearth Potential Business Opportunities
- To Advertise the Farmer's Market
- To Appreciate the Difficulty in Going Local
- To Have Control Over A Project
- To Embark on An Adventure
- To Bring Back "Food Memories"
 - Collective Memories (Sourdough Jack)
 - Personal Memories
- To Re-Discover "The American Dream"

Preparing for the Challenge

May - 2009

- You Die if You Don't Eat
- What Are the Basics in Cooking?
 - Is there local cooking oil or butter
 - Is there a local dairy?
- Identify Who Is Producing Food
- What Is Being Produced and When?
- What! No Cheese? Think Homer's Iliad

The Great Yogurt Controversy of 2009

Is a yogurt "starter culture" local?

What would Aristotle say? The Metaphysics of Food.

Facts of Life

Excitement: the Moment You Think of the Adventure

Dread & Insecurity Creeps in As the Time Approaches

You Take Your First Steps

You Meet New People Who Have a Story

You Gain Confidence With Each Step

You Discover It Was Easy - A Memory Created

Facts | Learned

Cheese Can Be Made Without Rennet

Make Butter from Simple Cream

Grain Is Readily Available for Flour - Flat Bread Makes Good Pizza

Soy Oil Actually Makes a Good Cooking Oil

Fluffed Egg Whites Can Act as a Leavening Agent

Yogurt Is Easy to Make

People Are Incredibly Interested in Food

There Are Amazing People Out There

Ah - The Stories! The Journal

- The World According to Pancakes
- The Pusher-Man & His Blue Corn
- My Dogs Do Not Like Vegetables
- The Milk-Bottles Make Good Bowling Money
- There Are Food Angels - I Have Seen Them
- Sheep Shall Be My Shepherd
- Where is the "Bud", "Coors", & America?
- Driving an Hour for Potatoes & Cooking Oil
- Little Miss Muffet - Eating Her Curds & Whey
- What Do Iowa, Damascus, & Japan Have in Common?
- Food As Economic Development

How Pancakes Saved the World

June 24, 2009 - The world according to pancakes. I have become proficient at making pancakes in the morning: blue corn pancakes, corn meal pancakes, and even soy flour pancakes. It suddenly hit me, pancakes have been a constant in my adult life - memories of a trip to Alaska where I first experienced sourdough pancakes (sourdough is the bedrock of Alaskan identity), or going to Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco and buying sourdough starter that I perpetuated for years. In my early days as a lawyer in Colorado, I used to make sourdough pancakes for my roommates every morning - one roommate was Marshall Shelley, a young seminarian who is the son of the great Dr. Bruce Shelley, a professor at the Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary. Marshall has gone on to become Vice-President of Christianity Today Magazine - although I seriously doubt that my pancakes had anything to do with his success.

The memories flooded in as I heated up the griddle. But I also realized that I have made a new memory that will stay with me throughout my life: attempting the Penny muffin trick with this batch of corn meal pancakes - getting the cakes to rise without baking powder by fluffing the egg whites before folding into the milk and flour. I sincerely hope that you have a fond childhood memory of your mother serving her signature dish - "Mom, will you make me some of your [blank] today?"

Permit me to digress. While sourdough used to define Alaska and San Francisco, the romance with sourdough (the food of the gold rush) is fading like the big red barns on the farms of the Midwest. And while we cling to the memory of a spiritual conversion, the experience of that conversion seems to fade into a black hole of social and political conflict.

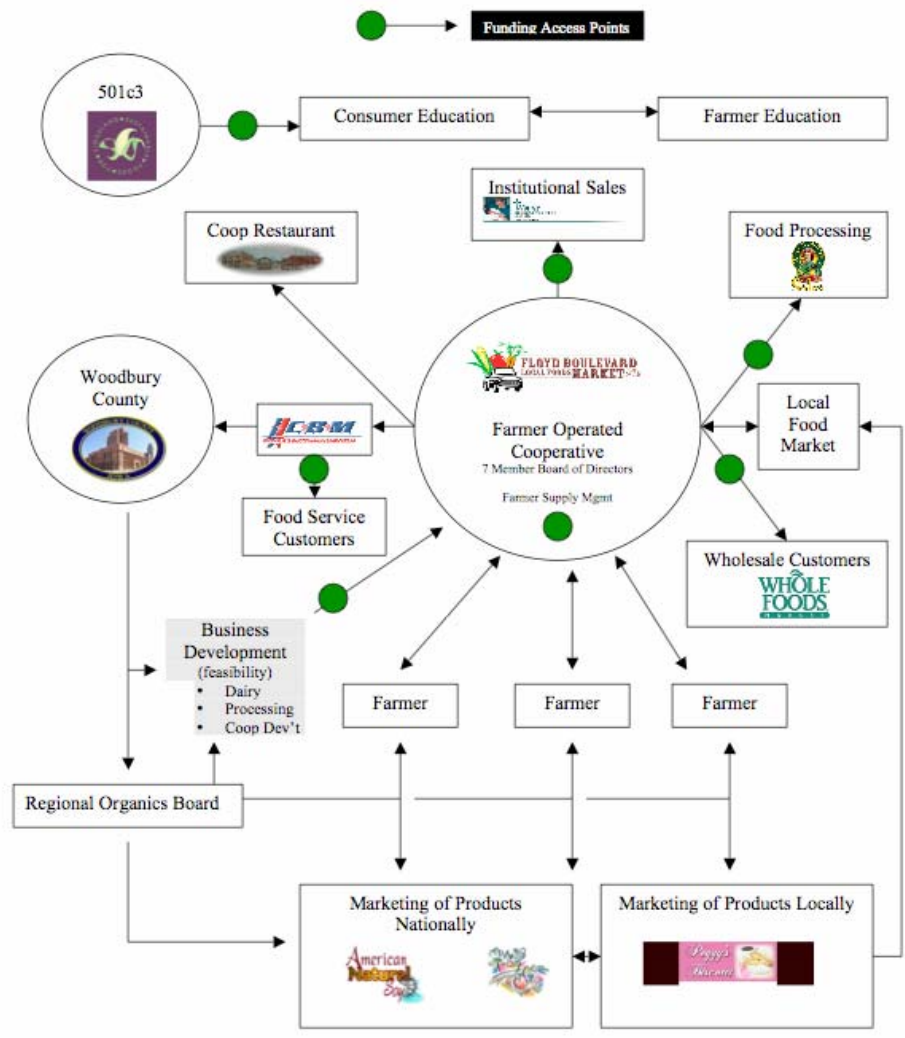
I submit: pancakes will save the day. Think about it.

Ah - The Opportunities

- Cooking & Salad Oils
- Butter, Cheese, & Yogurt
- Flour Varieties - Blue Corn, Small Mill Outlets
- Soy Based Products: Tempeh
- Corn Based Products: Oil, Relish, Chips
- Soups
- Restaurant Offerings
- Incubator Kitchens
- \$2B Annual Food Market in Challenge Area
- Entrepreneur Opportunities in Food
- Remanufacture Economic Dev't Tools to Local

“Bon Local Appetite!”

Julia Child ~ well sort of 😊





Partnership Between Woodbury
County, City of Sioux City, and
Siouxland Chamber of Commerce

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