

**Building capacity for local and regional food systems in Iowa:
the *Regional Food Systems Working Group***

Local/Regional Food Systems Roundtable – Perry Iowa
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LEOPOLD CENTER

Food miles - sliced peaches

Peaches grown in Spain

Peaches shipped to Thailand
For processing



Peaches shipped to U.S.
for distribution

Peaches arrive in Iowa store

Total food miles:
14,700 (minimum)

Energy Consumption in the food system

- Total U.S. Energy Use: 100 QBtu (2005) **1**
- Food System: 10.25 Qbtu **2**



Production
Transport
Processing
Packaging
Retail
Restaurants
Home Prep-Refrigeration

Based off producing 3,800 calories of food

Source: Heller and Keoleian

Sources: 1) Energy Information Administration Annual Energy Overview (2005); 2) Heller and Keoleian "Life Cycle-Based Sustainability Indicators for Assessment of the U.S. Food System" (2000);

Building capacity community-based food systems

- Economic impact of increased production and consumption of healthy local foods
- Building capacity for local food systems through nested networks – the Regional Food Systems Working Group

Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture

Three Initiatives

Ecology

Marketing & Food Systems

Policy

- Iowa Groundwater Protection Act - 1987
- State funded --- at ISU
- Aldo Leopold namesake
- \$1.1 million in grants



More than 100 food systems projects since 2002

Special projects examining economic impacts of local foods

Scenario

Linking health with rural economic development

- lowans eat 5 servings*/day of fresh fruits and vegetables
- 25 percent of this consumption provided by Iowa farmers - i.e.
- 3 months/year

* Serving = 1/2 cup of cut-up fruits and veggies or
1/2 cup cooked veggies



Assumptions

- ✓ Increased production in fruits and vegetables will reduce corn and soybean production
- ✓ Half of the new fruit and vegetable sales would be farmer to consumer (direct-market) sales, the other half are wholesaled and retailed conventionally
- ✓ Existing food store retail sales (actually retail margins) will be reduced by an amount proportionate to coincide with the new direct market sales
- ✓ All of the production to meet this goal of 25 percent is for in-state consumption (therefore, primarily import substitutes)

Economic Impact

- ✓ Net creation of 4,100 jobs in Iowa's economy
- ✓ Estimated infrastructure cost for the state - \$96,000,000
- ✓ Economic impact of improved health not considered
- ✓ Impact of same magnitude as Iowa's ethanol plants

Other Iowa studies

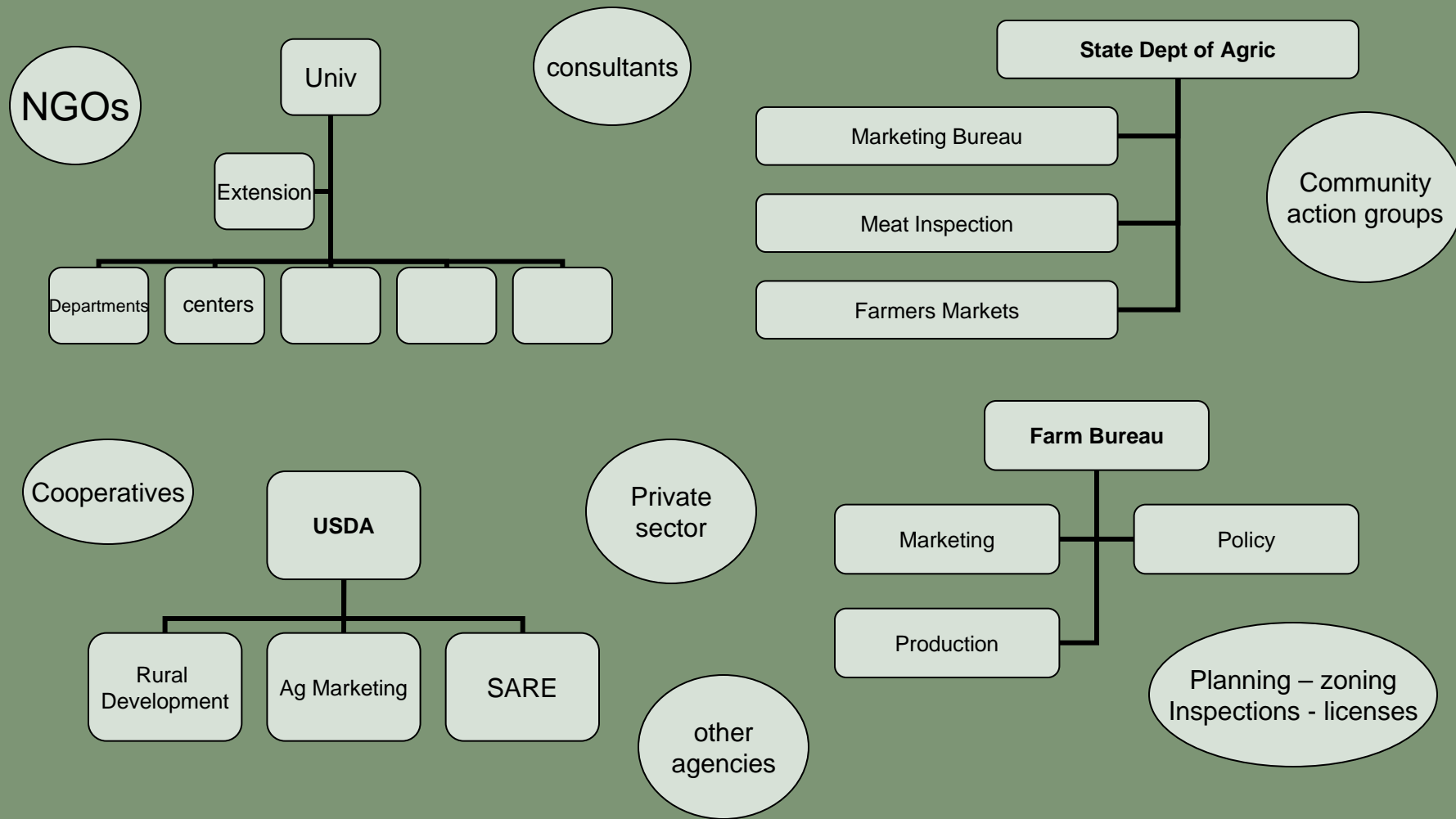
- For NE Iowa, a diet based local production scenario involving fruits, vegetables, grain products, dairy, and meats, we found that, in producing for the region's population
 - Farm level impacts considering offsets was 47 more jobs
 - Total impacts to include retail activity and the introduction of new processing capacity was 408 jobs





Local and Regional Food Businesses Technical and Financial Assistance

Difficult for businesses/communities to negotiate





Value Chain Partnerships

An Iowa-based Network of Food and Agriculture Working Groups

Pork Niche Market



Grass-Based Livestock



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY



Fruit and Vegetable



Regional Food Systems



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
University Extension

Small Meat Processors



— Funded in part by the Wallace Center at Winrock International and the Leopold Center



Regional Food Systems Working Group (RFSWG)

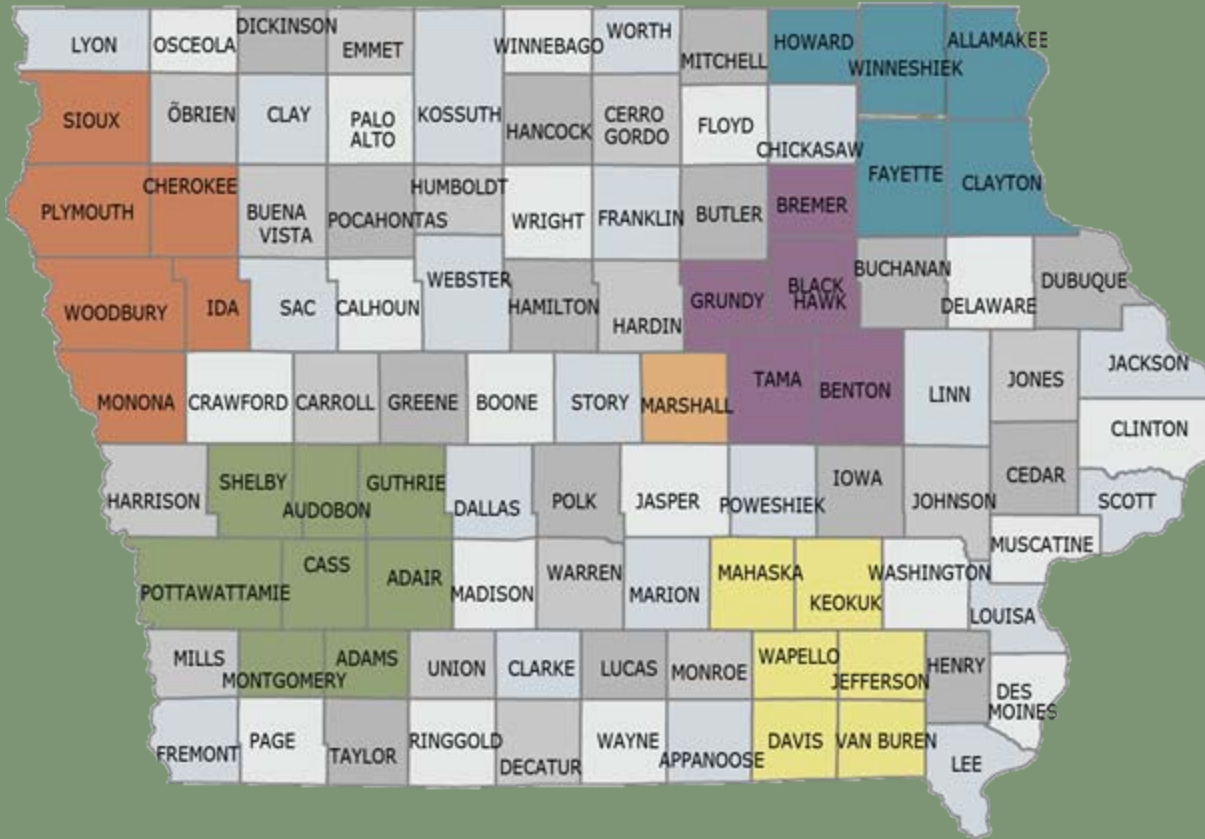
- Leopold Center's Marketing & Food Systems Initiative and Value Chain Partnerships project (began fall 2003)
- **Mission:** RFSWG conducts research, supports education, and facilitates partnerships to increase investment and support of community-based, economically sustainable, and environmentally and socially responsible regional food enterprises
- Six local groups and more than 20 organizations participate





Regional Food Systems Working Group

Local groups that participate



Northeast Iowa Food and Farm Coalition (NIFF)

South West Iowa Farm and Food Initiative (SWIFFI)

Hometown Harvest of SE Iowa

Northwest Iowa Regional Local Foods System

Northern Iowa Food and Farm Partnership

Marshall County (COMIDA)





How RFSWG functions

- Groups meets quarterly in central Iowa
- Seed grants awarded to local groups to strengthen key elements needed to build a more resilient food system
- Funds used for assessment, coordination, leadership development and economic impacts
- Experienced groups learn from each other and provide mentoring as new groups develop





Northern Iowa Food and Farm Partnership (Waterloo/Cedar Falls)

- NIFFP has made connections between local producers and institutions
- Currently purchasing some food items produced locally:
 - 15 Restaurants
 - 1 College (UNI)
 - 1 Hospital (Allen Memorial in Waterloo)
 - 5 Retirement Homes
 - 7 Grocery stores
 - 2 school districts
- Sales of local foods in area appx. \$2.5 million in 2008
- For each \$1 in grant money received, \$7 of local food purchases were created and retained in the local economy





NE Iowa Food and Farming Coalition (NIFF)

In two years, the initial \$20,000 provided by the RFSWG in 2006 to support the NIFF Coalition has leveraged approximately \$1.2 million in food and fiber infrastructure and resources for the region.

Includes investment in greenhouses, apple and pear trees, grapes, poultry expansions, garden expansions, honey bee production, farm stand marketing, packing shed construction, hydroponic production, etc.

Included in \$1.2 million is a \$500,000 planning grant for the Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation

NIFF Coalition has realized an increase of more than \$377,000 in local food purchases from 4 institutions (2 years).

The NIFF Coalition has also documented over \$222,000 in increased local food sales from farmers, restaurants, food co-ops





Hometown Harvest (in SE IA)

- Led by Pathfinders RC&D, Fairfield
- Mission: Through cooperation, educating our community members about their food, and utilizing good business practices, we are building a high-quality of life and a diverse healthy landscape to allow future generations to be self-sustaining.





COMIDA (County of Marshall Investing in Diversified Agriculture)

- A partnership between Iowa State University Extension, Marshalltown Community College, Prairie Rivers RC&D, and Marshalltown Chamber of Commerce
- COMIDA is working with the Marshalltown Community College “Start Your Own Diversified Farm” eight-week beginning farmer program





Southwest Iowa Food and Farming Initiative (SWIFFI)

Who is all involved?

- Funders
 - Iowa West Foundation
 - Pottawattamie County Board of Supervisors
 - Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture
- Partners
 - Henry A. Wallace Country Life Center
 - Adams County Cooperative Extension
 - Audubon County Cooperative Extension
 - Cass County Cooperative Extension
 - Cass County Memorial Hospital
 - Harrisdale Homestead
 - Iowa Farmers Union
 - Montgomery County Cooperative Extension
 - Golden Hills RC&D
 - Pottawattamie County Board of Supervisors
 - Shelby County Cooperative Extension





Other groups that participate in RFSWG

- Buy Fresh, Buy Local chapters
 - 10 groups in Iowa, one in north-central Iowa
 - Humboldt, Kossuth Counties included in Prairie Partners Buy Fresh, Buy Local chapter
- Iowa Farm to School
 - Currently 9 chapters in Iowa:
 - Price Lab
 - South Clay
 - Independence Area
 - I-Food
 - Lakeside Area
 - Atlantic Farm
 - Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative
 - Villages – Van Buren Community School District
 - Oelwein



Iowa Foundation for Microenterprise
And Community Vitality



Regional Food Systems
Working Group



Local capacity building and investment leads to local outcomes

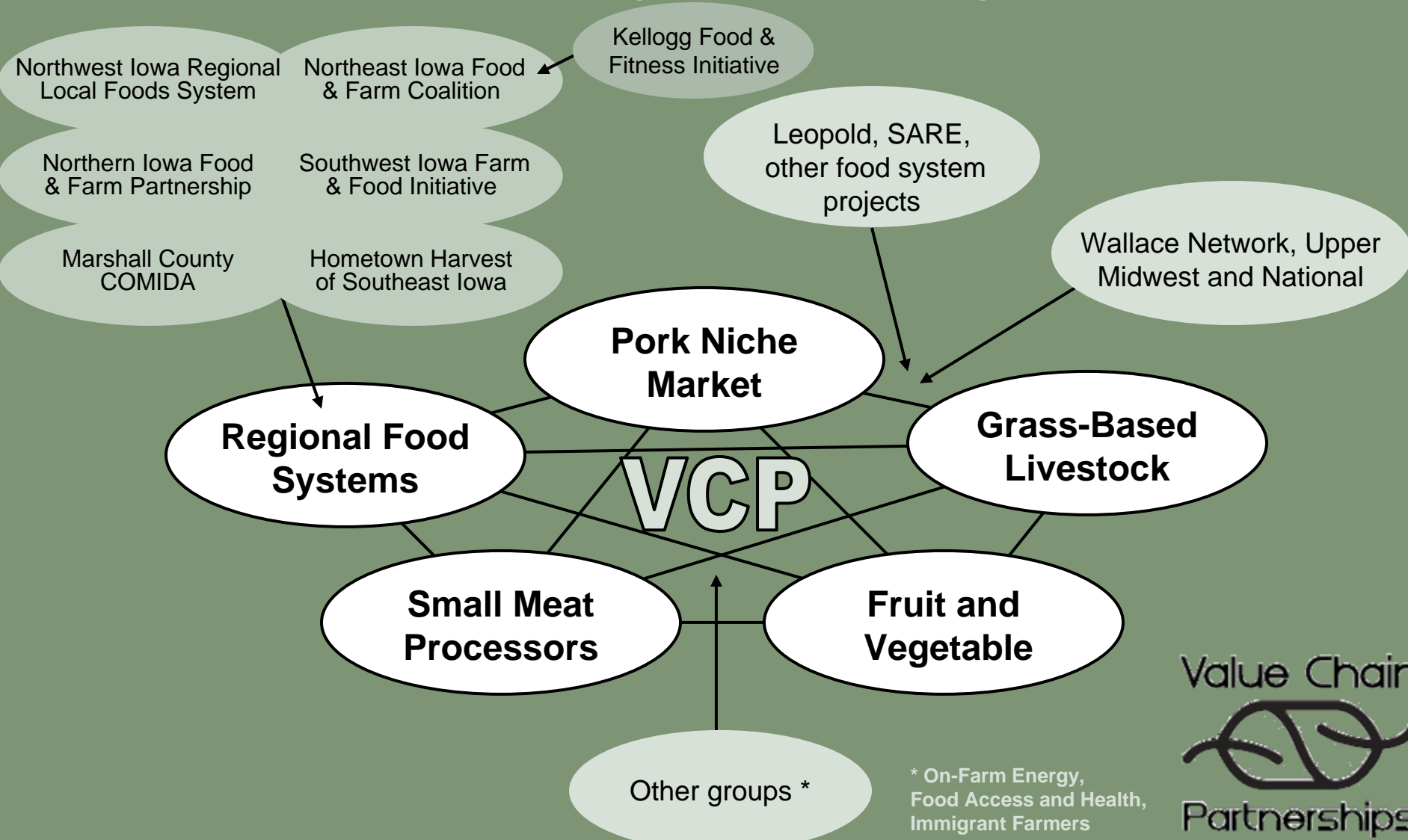
- Meeting quarterly builds capacity by sharing experiences
- Each local group collects local food sales data
- Each group tracks leveraging of local-state funds
- County government investing in local foods in Pottawattamie, Linn, Blackhawk, and Cass counties (all in past 9 months)
- Involvement of county/community foundations
- New and existing businesses
 - NE Iowa implement dealer now ordering small scale equipment
 - New farm to school business created





Value Chain Partnerships:

An Iowa-based Network for Food and Agriculture Working Groups



* On-Farm Energy, Food Access and Health, Immigrant Farmers

Value Chain



Partnerships

An Iowa-Based Network for Food
and Agriculture Working Groups

www.valuechains.org

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