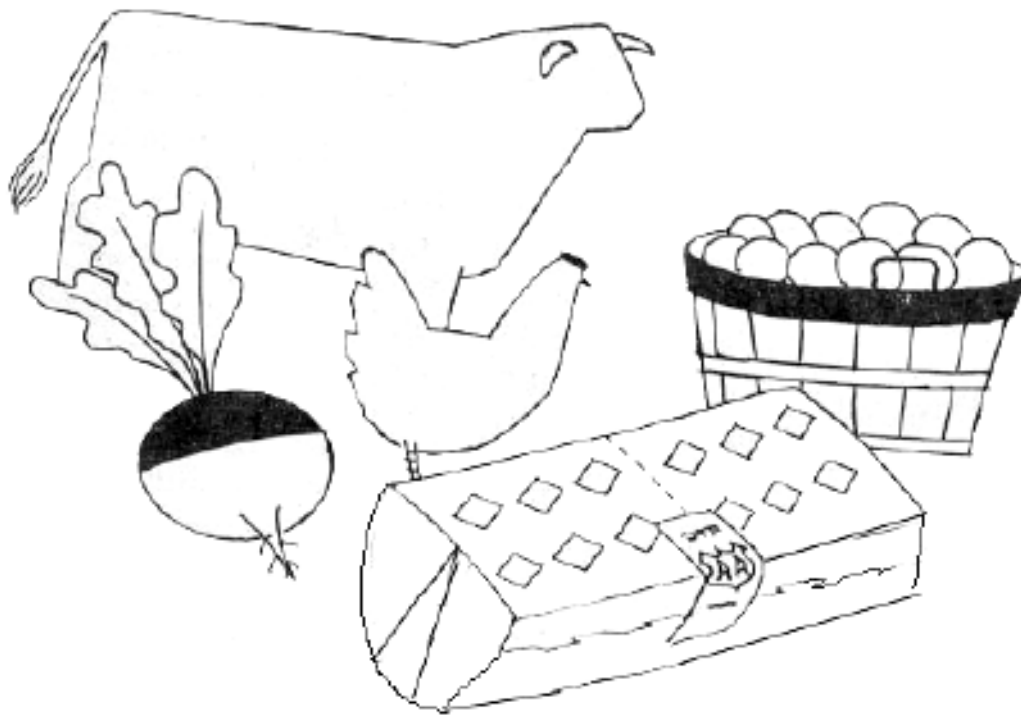


# Directory of Grinnell Area Food Producers Who Market Locally

April 2004





## Center for Prairie Studies

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This directory has been created in response to a recent increase in consumer demand for locally produced foods – and in the hope that it will stimulate more interest in the local foods movement. It contains a listing of area producers and the foods they raise and sell, along with information about how to contact them and where to buy their products. It also contains a listing of regional farmer’s markets and community supported agriculture (CSA) organizations.

This directory is a publication of the Center for Prairie Studies at Grinnell College, in association with the Grinnell Area Local Food Alliance (GALFA). Brian Turner, a 2002 graduate of the college, conceived the idea for the directory. The information contained in the current edition has been compiled by the Center’s staff. We have included as many of the region’s producers as we were able to contact. If you are a local producer but not listed in this directory and would like to be in future editions, please contact the Center for Prairie Studies office at 641-269-4720.

For state-wide listings of growers who direct-market vegetables, fruits, meat, eggs, and other foods, consult the Iowa Department of Agriculture’s webpage:

[www.agriculture.state.ia.us](http://www.agriculture.state.ia.us).

### Center for Prairie Studies Staff:

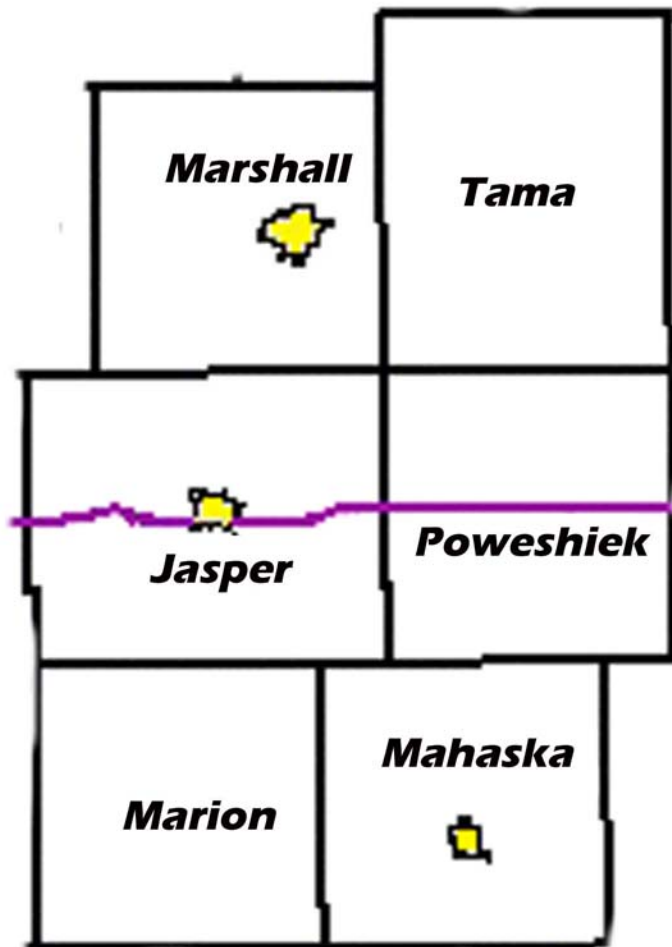
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## Five Reasons to Buy Local

**1 Taste & freshness.** Locally grown fruits and vegetables are usually raised for taste and quality, rather than transportability and durability. A diverse diet of fresh produce also provides a natural source of vitamins and nutrients.

**2 Food safety.** When you buy locally grown foods through Farmer's Markets and Community Supported Agriculture, often you can meet the growers. From them you can learn about their farming and animal husbandry practices—including their use of pesticides—and influence their farming practices.

**3 Environmental protection.** Modern farming practices, and the transportation system for distributing foods, is energy-intensive. By buying local, you help conserve energy, as well as reduce the pollutants that result from industrial agriculture. Organic foods and those foods grown with few pesticides also help protect our groundwater. In addition, fresh foods are packaged by Mother Nature, reducing the solid waste sent to landfills.

**4 Economic health.** When you buy locally grown food, you get the satisfaction of helping support your community's local farms and economy. Even in states such as Iowa where the soils are some of the richest in the world, more than 80 percent of the food is currently imported--much of it traveling more than 1,000 miles. That means the food dollar is imported as well.

**5 Connection.** When you buy locally, you may develop connections with growers as well as the land. You become increasingly aware of the seasons and weather, and which foods are available during various times of the growing season.

*Developed by the Center for Energy & Environmental Education, UNI, Cedar Falls, IA 50614; 319-273-2573 with support of the Recycling and Reuse Technology Transfer Center.*

# Alphabetical Directory of Producers

## **B & B Farms**

Bahrenfuse, Robert

15365 S. 12th Ave. E.; Grinnell, IA 50112

641-236-4566

Venues: direct marketing, wholesale: Café Phoenix

Methods: minimum chemical usage, free-range

Meats: beef, pork, lamb, goats

Poultry: chickens

**Bahrenfuse, Robert**, *see B&B Farms*

**Barnes, Linda**, *see High Hopes Gardens*

## **Brau, Ann**

506 Montezuma St.; Malcom, IA 50157

641-528-5800, 641-990-6832, brau@pcpartner.net

Venues: Compass Plant CSA, Grinnell farmer's market

Methods: organic methods, but not certified

Eggs

Herbs

Vegetables: assortment

## **Brezina, Rudolph & Helen**

1333 380th St.; Tama, IA 52339

641-498-7453

Venues: direct marketing, Grinnell, Tama, and Toledo farmer's markets

Methods: minimum chemical usage

Fruits: apples, berries, melons

Nuts

Vegetables: assortment

**Broadston Produce**

Broadston, Dennis & Pamela

1144 Forest Home Road; Montezuma, IA 50171

641-623-4430, 641-990-2678

Venues: CSA, Grinnell farmer's market, produce stand by Ponderosa Marina

Methods: organic methods, but not certified

Vegetables: assortment

**Cadson Apiary**

Cadwallader, Eves

2420 285th St.; Oskaloosa, IA 52577

641-673-3993, weic@kdsi.net

Venues: direct marketing, wholesale

Methods: minimum chemical usage

Honey: variety and beehive products

**Cadwallader, Eves**, *see Cadson Apiary*

**Carroll's Pumpkin Farm**

Carroll, Danny & Joy

244 400th Ave.; Grinnell, IA 50112

641-236-7043, fax: 641-236-7897; dcarroll@iowatelecom.net

Venues: direct marketing

Methods: minimum chemical usage

Vegetables: pumpkins

**De Vilder, David & Margery**, *see Sojourn Farm*

**DeVilder, Gretchen**

1678 355th Ave.; Brooklyn, IA 52211

641-522-7200, 641-485-0306

Venues: direct marketing

Methods: organic methods, but not certified, free-range

Eggs

Fruits: apples, melons

Poultry: chickens

Vegetables: assortment

### **Dreesman Buffalo Ranch**

Dreesman, Tom & Connie

3575 L. Ave.; Tama, IA 52339

641-484-6725, 319-330-9029, fax: 641-484-6725, dreesman@iowatelecom.net

Venues: direct marketing, Des Moines downtown and metro farmer's markets, wholesale

Methods: free-range

Meats: bison

### **Dunham Farm**

Dunham, Lisle and Brenda

2039 North Penrose; Grinnell, IA 50112

641-236-7400, lbdunham@iowatelecom.net

Venues: Compass Plant CSA, direct marketing

Methods: organic methods, but not certified, minimum chemical usage, free-range

Eggs

Meats: beef

Vegetables: assortment

### **Earth Whispers Farm**

Nowotny, Randy

1978 Ave.; Victor, IA 52347

319-647-2156, 641-522-3078

Venues: Grinnell farmer's market,

Methods: organic methods, but not certified, free-range

Meats: beef

Poultry: chickens

### **Ebert Honey Co.**

Ebert, Phil

14808 S. 102nd Ave. E.; Lynnville, IA 50153

641-527-2639, ehoney37@netins.net

Venues: direct marketing, Des Moines farmer's market, wholesale

Honey: liquid, comb

**Emmack Farms**

Emmack, Delmar

7044 S. 60th Ave. W.; Colfax, IA 50054

515-994-2810

Venues: Des Moines farmer's market

Methods: minimum chemical usage

Vegetables: assortment; (specialty: potatoes)

**Freedom Forest**

Sexauer, Rebecca

4915 235<sup>th</sup>; Deep River, IA 52222

Phone: 641-595-3810

Venues: direct marketing, farmer's market

Methods: organic methods, (state-certified), greenhouse

Fruits: berries, grapes

Herbs

Vegetables: assortment; (specialty: greens, lettuce)

**Harvey, Dave and Dori**, *see The Bakehouse*

**Haworth, Ron**

5302 140<sup>th</sup> St.; Montezuma, IA 50171

641-623-2053, rhaworth@netins.net

Venues: direct marketing

Meats: beef, lamb

**Heartland Farms**

Suiter, Jack & Barb

Suiter, Jim Bob

PO Box 1032; Newton, IA 50208

641-787-9419, fax: 641-787-9419; heartlandfarms@fbx.com

Venues: direct marketing, Newton farmer's market, wholesale

Methods: organic methods, but not certified

Fruits: melons

Vegetables: assortment (specialty: cabbage, cucumbers, broccoli, tomatoes)

**Hempy, Robert & Frances**

2952 D. Ave.; Montour, IA 50173

641-492-6252; 641-750-2961, franbob@iowatelecom.net

Venues: direct marketing, Toledo, Tama, Grinnell, and Marshalltown  
farmer's markets

Methods: minimal chemical usage

Fruits: apples, berries, grapes, melons

Vegetables: assortment

**Herr, Joel and Doug**, *see Interstate Produce.*

**High Hopes Gardens**

Runquist, Mark

Barnes, Linda

2860 Knapp Ave.; Melbourne, IA 50162

641-482-3185, fax: 641-482-3131; highhopes@prairienet.net

Venues: direct marketing, Marshalltown farmer's market

Methods: organic methods, but not certified, free-range

Eggs

Fruits: apples, berries, cherries, pears, peaches

Meats: lamb

Poultry: chickens, turkeys

**Hinegardner Orchard**

Hinegardner, David & Julie

1348 295th St.; Montour, IA 50173

641-492-6353, hinie@pcpartner.net

Venues: direct marketing, Grinnell and Marshalltown farmer's markets,  
wholesale

Methods: minimum chemical usage

Fruits: apples, berries, melons, pears

Meats: beef

Soy Products

Vegetables: assortment; (specialty: squash, pumpkins)

### **Hopkins Family Farm**

Hopkins, Steve & Sara

7000 Clay St.; Newton, IA 50208

641-791-2740, andhop@pcpartner.net

Venues: direct marketing

Methods: organic methods, but not certified, free-range

Poultry: chickens

### **Humphrey Sweet Corn**

Humphrey, Brad

11293 Hwy F 17 E.; Gilman, IA 50106

641-498-7317, sweetcorn\_guy@hotmail.com

Venues: direct marketing, Grinnell farmer's market, produce stands in  
Grinnell and Newton, wholesale

Fruits: apples

Vegetables: sweet corn, tomatoes

### **Interstate Produce**

Herr, Joel and Doug

313 E. 25th St. N.; Newton, IA 50208

641-792-2041, joelh@iowatelecom.net

Venues: direct marketing, Newton farmer's market, wholesale

Methods: organic methods, but not certified, minimum chemical usage

Fruits: melons

Vegetables: assortment; (specialty: tomatoes, bell peppers, summer squash,  
cabbage, onions)

### **Jack's Vegetables**

Taylor, Jack

607 South 4th St.; Montezuma, IA 50171

641-623-5750, jackltaylor@netins.net

Venues: direct marketing, wholesale

Methods: organic methods, but not certified, minimum chemical usage

Fruits: berries, melons

Vegetables: assortment, (specialty: sweet corn, head lettuce, broccoli,  
squash, tomatoes, peppers, gourmet potatoes)

**Jansen, Karen, *see Sisters***

**Kupka, Dawn**

404 North Center St.; Toledo, IA 52342

641-484-2177, moralhunter@yahoo.com

Venues: Toledo, Marshalltown, and Grinnell farmer's markets, wholesale

Methods: organic methods, but not certified

Fruits: apples, berries, cherries, melons

Herbs

Nuts

Vegetables: assortment

**Maytag Dairy Farms**

2282 E. 8th St. North; Newton, IA 50208

641-792-1133, fax: 641-792-1567, mverploeg@iowatelecom.net

Venues: direct marketing, wholesale

Cheese: Blue Cheese

**McDonough, Howard**

697 370<sup>th</sup> Ave.; Grinnell, IA 50112

641-236-3293, 641-260-3293

Venues: Wholesale: Dayton's Meat Products, Malcom, IA

Methods: organic methods, but not certified

Meats: beef (including Texas Longhorn)

**Norton's Greenhouse**

Norton, Dan and Lori

700 W. Ross St.; Toledo, IA 52342

641-484-3995

Venues: direct marketing, Grinnell farmer's market

Methods: organic methods, but not certified

Fruits: apples, berries

Herbs: as plant starts

Vegetables: assortment; (specialty: fall cole crops)

**Nowotny, Randy**, *see Earth Whispers Farm*

**Paul's Grains**

Paul, Steven & Wayne

2475B 340th St.;Laurel, IA 50141

641-476-3373, spaul@adiis.net

Venues: direct marketing, farmer's market,

Internet:<http://www.paulsgrains.com>

Methods: organic methods (some certified)

Grains

Meats: beef, lamb

**Pleasant Lane Farms**

Werner, Clint

7768 16th Ave. Tr.; Luzerne, IA 52257

319-454-9068, cwerner7768@directway.com

Venues: direct marketing, Cedar Rapids and Belle Plaine farmer's markets

Methods: organic methods, but not certified, minimum chemical usage,  
free-range

Eggs

Fruits: berries, melons, pears

Herbs

Poultry: chickens, geese

Vegetables: assortment

**Runquist, Mark** *see High Hopes Gardens*

**Sexauer, Rebecca,** *see Freedom Forest*

**Sisters**

Jansen, Karen

7679 E. 152nd St. S.; Grinnell, IA 50112

641-527-2554, 641-891-2660, dkjansen@netins.net

Venues: Grinnell farmer's market

Baked Goods

**Smith Hill Orchard**

Smith, Robert & Harriet

3535 Hwy S-52 North; Newton, IA 50208

641-792-4370, hjsmith02@mailstation.com

Venues: direct marketing

Methods: minimum chemical usage

Fruits: apples, pasteurized cider

**Sojourn Farm**

De Vilder, David & Margery

1535 345<sup>th</sup> Ave.; Brooklyn, IA 52211

641-522-9605, devilder@netins.net

Venues: CSA, direct marketing, Grinnell farmer's market

Methods: minimal chemical usage

Fruits: apples, berries, cherries, grapes, melons, pears

Herbs

Vegetables: assortment

**Squire Farm Produce**

Squire, Herb & June

1519 Wallace Ave.; Marshalltown, IA 50158

641-474-2376, 641-750-2376

Venues: direct marketing, Des Moines, Grinnell, Marshalltown, and Toledo  
farmer's markets, wholesale

Methods: minimum chemical usage

Fruits: melons

Vegetables: assortment; (specialty: ornamental corn, gourds)

**Suiter, Jack & Barb**, *see Heartland Farms*

**Suiter, Jim Bob**, *see Heartland Farms*

**Taylor, Jack**, *see Jack's Vegetables*

### **Terlouw Bros. Produce**

Dennis and Doug Terlouw

12139 S. 60<sup>th</sup> Ave. E.; Lynnville, IA 50153

641-526-8244, 641-594-4428, or 641-594-4269

Venues: Compass Plant CSA, direct marketing, Grinnell farmer's market, wholesale

Methods: organic methods, but not certified, minimum chemical usage

Fruits: melons, berries

Vegetables: assortment

### **The Bakehouse**

Harvey, Dave and Dori

117 William St.; Brooklyn, IA 52211

641-522-9570, dorisbreads@yahoo.com

Venues: direct marketing, Grinnell farmer's market

Methods: organic methods, but not certified, certified organic

Baked Goods

Eggs

Fruits: apples, berries, pears

Grains

Herbs

Soy Products

Vegetables: assortment

### **Upah's Pumpkin Patch**

Upah, Dean & Marlys

3017 K Ave.; Toledo, IA 52342

641-484-5066, marlys@pcpartner.net

Venues: direct marketing

Vegetables: (specialty: pumpkins, squash, gourds, Indian corn)

**Utility Shop**

Worley, Whitney

1302 Main St.; Grinnell, IA 50112

641-236-5276

Venues: CSA, direct marketing, Grinnell farmer's market, wholesale

Methods: use certified organic grain

Baked Goods

**Van Renterghem Berries**

Van Renterghem, Jessie and Mike

4006 160th St.; Brooklyn, IA 52211

641-522-9425

Venues: direct marketing, Grinnell and Oskaloosa farmer's market

Methods: minimum chemical usage

Eggs

Fruits: apples, berries, cherries, melons

Vegetables: assortment

**Werner, Chuck & Ginger**

3456 T Ave.; Chelsea, IA 52215

641-489-2046

Venues: direct marketing, Tama, Toledo, and Grinnell farmer's markets,  
wholesale

Methods: organic methods, but not certified, free-range

Baked Goods

Eggs

Fruits: apples, berries, melons, pears, other

Grains

Herbs

Nuts

Poultry: chickens, ducks, geese,

Vegetables: assortment

**Werner, Clint**, *see Pleasant Lane Farms*

**Worley, Whitney**, *see Utility Shop*

# Directory of Producers by Product

## ***Baked Goods***

Sisters	Grinnell
The Bakehouse	Brooklyn
Utility Shop	Grinnell
Werner, Chuck & Ginger	Chelsea

## ***Cheese***

Maytag Dairy Farms	Newton
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## ***Eggs***

Brau, Ann	Malcom
DeVilder, Gretchen	Brooklyn
Dunham Farm	Grinnell
High Hopes Gardens	Melbourne
Pleasant Lane Farms	Luzerne
The Bakehouse	Brooklyn
Van Renterghem Berries	Brooklyn
Werner, Chuck & Ginger	Chelsea

## ***Fruits***

Brezina, Rudolph & Helen	Tama
DeVilder, Gretchen	Brooklyn
Freedom Forest	Deep River
Heartland Farms	Newton
Hempy, Robert & Frances	Montour
High Hopes Gardens	Melbourne
Hinegardner Orchard	Montour
Humphrey Sweet Corn	Gilman
Interstate Produce	Newton
Jack's Vegetables	Montezuma
Kupka, Dawn	Toledo
Norton's Greenhouse	Toledo
Pleasant Lane Farms	Luzerne
Smith Hill Orchard	Newton
Sojourn Farm	Brooklyn
Squire Farm Produce	Marshalltown
Terlow Bros. Produce	Lynnville
The Bakehouse	Brooklyn
Van Renterghem Berries	Brooklyn
Werner, Chuck & Ginger	Chelsea

## ***Grains***

Paul's Grains	Laurel
The Bakehouse	Brooklyn
Werner, Chuck & Ginger	Chelsea

## ***Herbs***

Brau, Ann	Malcom
Freedom Forest	Deep River
Kupka, Dawn	Toledo
Norton's Greenhouse	Toledo
Pleasant Lane Farms	Luzerne
Sojourn Farm	Brooklyn
The Bakehouse	Brooklyn
Werner, Chuck & Ginger	Chelsea

## ***Honey***

Cadson Apiary	Oskaloosa
Ebert Honey	Lynnville

## ***Meats***

B & B Farms	Grinnell
Dreesman Buffalo Ranch	Tama
Dunham Farm	Grinnell
Earth Whispers Farm	Victor
Haworth, Ron	Montezuma
High Hopes Gardens	Melbourne
Hinegardner Orchard	Montour
McDonough, Howard	Grinnell
Paul's Grains	Laurel

## ***Nuts***

Brezina, Rudolph & Helen	Tama
Kupka, Dawn	Toledo
Werner, Chuck & Ginger	Chelsea

## ***Poultry***

B & B Farms	Grinnell
DeVilder, Gretchen	Brooklyn
Earth Whispers Farm	Victor
High Hopes Gardens	Melbourne
Hopkins Family Farm	Newton
Pleasant Lane Farms	Luzerne
Werner, Chuck & Ginger	Chelsea

## ***Soy Products***

Hinegardner Orchard	Montour
The Bakehouse	Brooklyn

## ***Vegetables***

Brau, Ann	Malcom
Brezina, Rudolph & Helen	Tama
Broadston Produce	Montezuma
Carroll's Pumpkin Farm	Grinnell
DeVilder, Gretchen	Brooklyn
Dunham Farm	Grinnell
Emmack Farms	Colfax
Freedom Forest	Deep River
Heartland Farms	Newton
Hempy, Robert & Frances	Montour
Hinegardner Orchard	Montour
Humphrey Sweet Corn	Gilman
Interstate Produce	Newton
Jack's Vegetables	Montezuma
Kupka, Dawn	Toledo
Norton's Greenhouse	Toledo
Pleasant Lane Farms	Luzerne
Sojourn Farm	Brooklyn
Squire Farm Produce	Marshalltown
Terlouw Bros. Produce	Lynnville
The Bakehouse	Brooklyn
Upah's Pumpkin Patch	Toledo
Van Renterghem Berries	Brooklyn
Werner, Chuck & Ginger	Chelsea

# Directory of Regional Farmer's Markets

## Dysart

- Tuesdays at 4:00 pm
- late May to early October
- Dysart Community Building (418 Main St.)
- Neta Wightman 319-476-3628

## Grinnell

- Thursdays 3:00–6:00 pm and Saturdays 8:30–10:30 am
- late May to mid-October
- Central Park on Broad Street and downtown Main Street
- Jack Robertson 641-236-3682 or Chamber of Commerce 641-236-6555

## Knoxville

- Tuesdays 12:00-5:00 pm; Saturdays 8:00 am-noon
- late May to mid-October
- west side of Town Square
- Leta Nichols 641-943-2366

## Lynnville

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month 8:00-10:00 am
- June through September
- Downtown
- Barb Freeborn 641-527-2535  
or Linda Russell 641-527-2111

## Marshalltown

- Wednesdays 4:00–6:00 pm and Saturdays 8:00–11:00 am
- mid May to late October
- N. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. just north of East State Street under pavilion
- Margaret Hala 641-752-2981

## Newton

- Thursdays at 4:00
- late May to late September
- Courthouse
- Annette West at Chamber of Commerce 641-792-5545

## **Oskaloosa**

- Tuesdays 4:00-6:00 pm; Saturdays 8:00-11:00 am
- mid-May to early October
- east side of Town Square
- John Patterson 641-673-7357

## **Pella**

- Thursdays 3:00-6:00 pm
- mid-May to late October
- west side of City Park
- Marion Terpstra 641-637-4294

## **Tama**

- Tuesdays at 5:15 pm
- early June to early October
- east lawn of Tama Civic Center, 305 Siegel Street, Tama
- Dawn Kupka 641-484-3163

## **Toledo**

- Fridays at 5:15 pm
- early May to late October
- Courthouse Square, Broadway Street
- Dawn Kupka 641-484-2177

## **Traer**

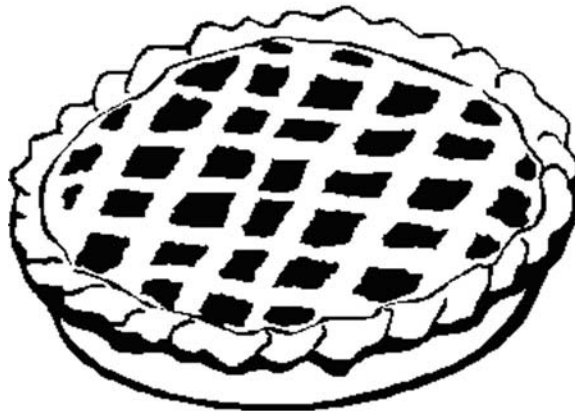
- Wednesdays at 4:00 pm–6:00 pm
- May to October
- Farmers Savings Bank parking lot at corner of 63 and Hwy 8
- Marlys Svoboda 319-479-2279

## **Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Organizations:**

Compass Plant CSA: serves the immediate Grinnell area, provides a weekly share of locally grown fresh produce, eggs, and bread to members. Contact Brenda Dunham at (641) 236-7400 or [lbunham@iowatelecom.net](mailto:lbunham@iowatelecom.net) for information.

# Directory of Producers by City

<b>Brooklyn</b>	DeVilder, Gretchen Sojourn Farm The Bakehouse Van Renterghem Berries	<b>Marshalltown</b>	Squire Farm Produce
<b>Chelsea</b>	Werner, Chuck & Ginger	<b>Melbourne</b>	High Hopes Gardens
<b>Colfax</b>	Emmack Farms	<b>Montezuma</b>	Broadston Produce Haworth, Ron Jack's Vegetables
<b>Deep River</b>	Freedom Forest	<b>Montour</b>	Hempy, Robert & Frances Hinegardner Orchard
<b>Gilman</b>	Humphrey Sweet Corn	<b>Newton</b>	Heartland Farms Hopkins Family Farm Interstate Produce Maytag Dairy Farms Smith Hill Orchard
<b>Grinnell</b>	B & B Farms Carroll's Pumpkin Farm Dunham Farm McDonough, Howard Sisters Utility Shop	<b>Oskaloosa</b>	Cadson Apiary
<b>Laurel</b>	Paul's Grains	<b>Tama</b>	Brezina, Rudolph & Helen Dreesman Buffalo Ranch
<b>Luzerne</b>	Pleasant Lane Farms	<b>Toledo</b>	Kupka, Dawn Norton's Greenhouse Upah's Pumpkin Patch
<b>Lynnville</b>	Ebert Honey Co. Terlouw Bros. Produce	<b>Victor</b>	Earth Whispers Farm
<b>Malcom</b>	Brau, Ann		



# Farming in East-Central Iowa Then and Now

-Jonathan Andelson

“There is no better soil anywhere than the soil of this county,” wrote the author of an 1865 promotional tract about Poweshiek County.<sup>1</sup> Such boosterism was common in the nineteenth century as land speculators exaggerated the virtues of a place in an effort to promote its settlement. In point of fact, the soil of Poweshiek County was excellent, but so were most of the soils of east-central Iowa. Their fertility has been the foundation for agricultural productivity in the region for millennia, although the nature of the agriculture has changed considerably over that period, especially in the last 50 years.

Native Americans began farming in the region during the late Archaic period, roughly four thousand years ago. They favored the wooded areas adjacent to rivers and streams where the soil was easier to work. By 1000 A.D. they were cultivating several varieties of corn, edible beans, squash, pumpkins, tobacco, common sunflower, bottle gourd, marsh elder, little barley, watermelon, and reed canary grass. Native peoples also hunted game and gathered a variety of wild plants for both culinary and medicinal purposes from the open prairies as well as the woodlands. Among others they used white prairie clover, wild onion, Jerusalem artichoke, and prairie turnip as foods, while various tribes used rattlesnake master for bladder trouble, butterfly milkweed for bronchial ailments, and great lobelia as love medicine.

Some of the first Europeans to visit Iowa, accustomed to a denser and more continuous forest environment, believed that the absence of trees on the prairie indicated an infertile soil. The early settlers soon realized the truth and, with the aid of the self-scouring steel mold-board plow, developed in 1837 by John Deere, they broke the prairie and began producing a rich harvest of crops. For the most part they ignored the native cultigens in favor of their own. Wheat, oats, flax, barley, and rye all grew well in the area and appear on early crop lists of every county in east-central Iowa. They also generally preferred European fruits and vegetables.

One native crop, however, corn (much modified from the aboriginal varieties) quickly came to dominate production for market. Already in 1856 Iowa farmers planted 737,000 acres of corn compared to 388,000 acres of wheat and 190,000 acres of oats. That year 31 million bushels came off Iowa corn fields, ten percent more than the corn harvest in New York and the six New England states combined, though Iowa had only one-tenth of the population. Ten years later, the yield had nearly doubled to 58 million bushels, and in 1876 it stood at 177 million bushels. Nearly all of the increase came from farmers planting more of their land to corn rather than from higher per acre yields, which statewide ranged between 30 and 50 bushels per acre until the 1940s. In 1866, Iowa farmers harvested 1.8 million acres of corn; in 1876, the figure was 5.2 million, roughly a three-fold increase. In 1886, the harvest was 230 million bushels from nearly 8 million acres.

Corn became the leading field crop in the counties around Grinnell as well. Driven by higher yields than the statewide average, by 1879 the corn acreage in Poweshiek, Jasper, Marshall, Mahaska, and Tama Counties was one and one half times the acreage in all the other grains combined. A cautionary note about this trend was sounded that year by L.G.C. Pierce in his presidential address to members

of the Poweshiek County Central Agricultural Society: “To the farmers I would say, don’t concentrate too much on one kind of grain. Corn is king, but don’t worship too much at his shrine to the neglect of other grains and grasses. It has become an established fact that corn too long continued after corn will not prove a success; there are too many enemies in the field.”<sup>2</sup>

Despite Pierce’s concern, farming in east-central Iowa in the 1870s and ‘80s could still be described as diversified. In addition to the various grains, farmers raised potatoes, buckwheat, peas and beans, sorghum for molasses, and broomcorn as well as timothy, clover, and Hungarian (or smooth) brome for hay, all on a commercial basis. Many kinds of fruits added to the diversity. Apples thrived in the region. Pears grew less well, but they were raised for market in all the counties, as were currants, strawberries, gooseberries, raspberries, cherries, and grapes. Early settlers also raised a medley of garden vegetables, mostly for their own use. Beans, beets, cabbage, carrots, cucumbers, gourds, kohlrabi, lettuce, onions, parsnips, peas, peppers, pumpkins, radishes, squash, tomatoes, and turnips added nutrition, color and flavor to their meals.

The other main element in Iowa agriculture was animal husbandry, and in east-central Iowa livestock played an important role from the first. By 1880, Poweshiek, Marshall, Mahaska, Tama, and Jasper Counties held a total of roughly 539,000 swine, 142,000 beef cattle, 62,000 milk cows, and 34,800 sheep. (Mahaska County had led the state in sheep shorn in 1867 and was third in 1880.) Approximately 63,000 horses in the five counties provided service as draft animals and for transportation in 1880.

In the twentieth century, Iowa agriculture grew increasingly specialized. Increasing mechanization, the development of hybrid corn, the introduction of the

soybean, the replacement of horsepower by tractor power, and heavy use of pesticides, herbicides, and synthetic fertilizers revolutionized farming in Iowa and elsewhere, especially after mid-century. Wheat, barley, sorghum, rye, flax, potatoes, edible beans, buckwheat, broomcorn, pears, and small fruits all gradually disappeared as commercial crops as farmers specialized in corn and soybeans. In 2001, Iowa farms produced an incredible 1.74 billion bushels of corn, 459 million bushels of soybeans, 15.4 million hogs, 3.65 million cattle and calves, 37.8 million chickens, and 7.55 billion eggs.<sup>3</sup> The counties of east-central Iowa show a similar degree of specialization. Over 99 percent of the cropland in these counties is planted in corn and soybeans. Similarly, hogs and beef cattle account for 99 percent of the non-poultry livestock raised.

Regional specialization characterizes nearly all of American agriculture today. A concomitant is, of course, regional interdependence, which implies a tremendous increase in the distances that food travels before reaching our tables compared to a century ago. A recent report issued by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University cites estimates that 90 percent or more of the food Iowans consume today is raised out of state (although it cautions that, in the absence of detailed evidence, such estimates should be considered tentative). It can be added that much of the fruit and even some of the beef we eat was produced in other countries. The converse is obviously also true: “Most Iowa farms no longer produce food to supply Iowa consumers directly.”<sup>4</sup>

Not only is more of our food shipped longer distances, more of it arrives in our homes already processed – pre-cooked, canned, frozen, packaged, or with an assortment of extra ingredients added to provide color, flavor, and longer shelf life. The same is true of most of the food Americans consume away from home, and we

are eating out more than ever, especially at “fast food” restaurants. According to Eric Schlosser, author of *Fast Food Nation*, “In 1970, Americans spent about \$6 billion on fast food; in 2001, they spent more than \$110 billion. Americans now spend more money on fast food than on higher education, personal computers, computer software, or new cars. They spend more on fast food than on movies, books, magazines, newspapers, videos, and recorded music – combined.”<sup>5</sup>

The distance our food travels, the amount of processing much of it gets before it reaches us, and our recent penchant for fast food all suggest a growing separation between the production and consumption of food. In his recent book, *Coming Home To Eat*, Gary Paul Nabhan wrote, “One fact from our time is so blatantly obvious that even to repeat it is to pretend that it is not immediately self-evident. More people than ever before in history have absolutely no involvement in producing the foods that sustain them.”<sup>6</sup> When he says “no involvement,” Nabhan does not simply mean that most people no longer farm, but that most people no longer even relate to the production of food. It is a gulf measured not only by the distance food travels, but by the lack of knowledge on the part of most consumers about where their food comes from and how it is produced and processed, and also in the absence of a social relationship between the food consumer and the food producer.

Farmers in east-central Iowa, and farmers around the country, have traded diversified farming and a greater degree of regional self-sufficiency for the higher productivity -- though not necessarily higher prices -- that come from monocultures. Whether this trend proves economically and environmentally sustainable in the long run depends on many unforeseeable factors. The economic difficulties facing farmers in recent years, coupled with dependence on petroleum-fueled machinery and transport, and growing environmental concerns about chemical usage and soil

erosion, suggest that alternatives to specialization should again be considered. What has been called the “local foods movement” is one alternative that is being explored. This directory is intended to assist individuals and institutions in the Grinnell area investigate the possibilities and pleasures of locally grown food.

## Endnotes

1 Anonymous, *Powshiek County, Iowa: A Descriptive Account of Its Climate, Soil, Productions, Surface, Water, Prairie, Timber, Schools, Churches, and Occupations of Its People*. Montezuma, Iowa: W.C. Condit, Printer. 1865.

2 Report of the Secretary of the Iowa State Agricultural Society for the Year 1879. Des Moines, Iowa: F.M. Mills, State Printer. 1880.

3 Iowa Agricultural Statistics. Iowa Department of Agriculture.  
[www.agriculture.state.ia.us](http://www.agriculture.state.ia.us) (June 2002).

4 Rich Pirog, Timothy Van Pelt, Kamyar Enshayan, and Ellen Cook, *Food, Fuel, and Freeways: An Iowa Perspective on How Far Food Travels, Fuel Usage, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions*. Ames, Iowa: Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture. June 2001. <http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/>

5 Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers. 2002.

6 Gary Paul Nabhan, *Coming Home To Eat*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. 2002

## Seasonal Availability

	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT
<u>FRUIT</u>							
Apples				◆	◆	◆	◆
Blueberries			◆	◆			
Elderberries				◆	◆		
Gooseberries			◆				
Melons					◆	◆	
Raspberries			◆	◆			
Strawberries			◆				
<u>VEGETABLES</u>							
Asparagus		◆					
Beets			◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Broccoli				◆	◆		
Carrots				◆	◆	◆	◆
Cauliflower			◆	◆			
Cucumbers				◆	◆	◆	
Eggplant				◆	◆	◆	
Garlic			◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Green Beans			◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Leek					◆	◆	◆
Lettuce		◆	◆			◆	◆
Onions			◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Peas			◆	◆		◆	◆
Peppers				◆	◆	◆	
Potatoes				◆	◆	◆	◆
Radishes		◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Rhubarb	◆						
Soybeans					◆	◆	◆
Spinach		◆					◆
Summer Squash (Zucchini)				◆	◆	◆	◆
Sweet Corn					◆	◆	
Tomatoes				◆	◆	◆	◆
Winter Squash						◆	◆

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