

2-2013

## Leopold Center Marketing and Food Systems Initiative Competitive Grants, 2011-2014

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### Recommended Citation

Kleiman, Laura and Bregendahl, Corry W., "Leopold Center Marketing and Food Systems Initiative Competitive Grants, 2011-2014" (2013). *Leopold Center Pubs and Papers*. 100.

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# Leopold Center Marketing and Food Systems Initiative Competitive Grants, 2011-2014

## **Abstract**

This is an evaluation of nine projects funded by competitive grants from the Leopold Center's Marketing and Food Systems Initiative between 2011 and 2014. For every dollar invested, another \$1.20 was leveraged by project leaders and partners to create jobs, increase local foods commerce and access to healthy food, also improved food safety practices, with implications for new and young farmers as well as food processors.

## **Disciplines**

Agriculture

## Impact Snapshot:

# Leopold Center Marketing and Food Systems Initiative Competitive Grants 2011-2014

### OUR GOAL:

The goal of tracking impact is to ensure Leopold Center investments are making a difference in targeted areas. The projects included here are selected competitive grants awarded to various recipients in the last four years to develop local and regional food systems in Iowa.

### IMPACTS:

As a result of this work, we have seen an increase in local foods commerce, new job creation, increased access to healthy food, local foods collaboration, and an improvement in food safety practices. Together, this has implications for new and young farmers and food processors, improving the health of Iowans, and creating new community and economic development opportunities.



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### THE NUMBERS:

The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture invested **\$209,707** in **9** food systems and marketing projects from 2011-2014. For every dollar of Leopold Center investment, another \$1.20 was leveraged by project leaders and partners, totaling **\$251,616**.

Project title and end date	Leopold Center investments	Leveraged funds
Regional Flavors of Northwest Iowa (January 2012)	\$47,419	\$133,146
Improving profitability in small and very small meat processors in Iowa (January 2014)	\$22,788	\$59,600
Transitioning farmers to produce for wholesale markets (January 2014)	\$36,850	\$16,820
Des Moines farm to school pilot project: Local sourcing for special events and summer feeding (December 2012)	\$7,475	\$16,600
Procurement tools to develop sustainable local food purchasing models for farm to school chapters (January 2014)	\$36,000	\$12,000
Iowa immigrant and refugee incubator farm program (January 2012)	\$6,985	\$13,450
Harvesting our potential on-farm mentorship program (July 2012)	\$2,000	\$0
Working together to grow more: A community-based approach to food hub development (July 2012)	\$1,700	\$0
Research and development of an online local foods buying club cooperative (January 2013)	\$48,490	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$209,707</b>	<b>\$251,616</b>

### MORE THAN 40 NEW PARTNERSHIPS

- County economic development groups
- County Extension councils
- Iowa State University
- ISU Extension and Outreach
- ISU Extension and Outreach Vice President's Office Strategic Initiative
- ISU Beginning Farmer Center
- Farmers markets
- ISU Community Vitality Center
- The Iowa League of Resource Conservation and Development
- USDA Rural Development
- Iowan faith communities
- County Boards of Supervisors
- Siouxland District Health Department
- Northeast Iowa Food & Farm Coalition
- Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
- National Center for Appropriate Technology
- The City of Des Moines Parks and Recreation
- Eat Greater Des Moines
- Metro Waste Authority
- Iowa Food Cooperative
- City of Des Moines
- Iowa Department of Education
- Johnson County Employees
- Mathew 25 (community development organization)
- Red Earth Co-Op
- Wallace Centers of Iowa
- Soper Farms
- Rapid Creek Ranch
- Des Moines Central School's Central Campus Culinary Arts program
- Des Moines Central School's Food Service and Central Kitchen
- Des Moines School Nutrition Service
- Iowa FoodCorps
- Gateway Market
- Luther College
- Allamakee New Beginnings
- New Iowan Center

## COMMUNITY AND FARM DEVELOPMENT

## INCREASED COMMERCE AND JOB CREATION

- Des Moines School Nutrition Service staff are less skeptical about working with farmers (produce was cleaner and better quality than they expected)
- About 80 ethnic families were connected to community gardens where they were able to grow their own food (none had previous access to land or a way to grow specialty produce)
- 4 community gardens were created in Des Moines
- Food safety plans and safe food production and post-harvest practices were initiated on many Iowa farms, along with improved efficiencies in distribution and transportation
- 19 producers (including 1 Amish producer) became certified in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)
- Food safety monitoring plan in process between Hy-Vee and Iowa producers
- 3 peer-to-peer mentoring programs established for producers
- Des Moines Central Schools food service began sourcing locally grown foods



Vendor at Akron Farmer's Market [Courtesy Regional Flavors of Northwest Iowa]

Volunteers help distribute food for customers [Courtesy Iowa Valley Food Cooperative]



- 6 new farmers' markets were created in Marcus, Quimby, Holstein, Ida Grove, Salix and Onawa, Iowa
- 3 new businesses were created: 2 new wineries (Hannel Cellars, Calico Skies) and Eden Valley Apple Orchard and Farms CSA
- \$600,000 of sales were tracked at the Sioux City Farmers Market, with 54 vendors participating
- 296 consumers and 60 vendors joined a new online local foods buying club cooperative serving the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City areas, Iowa Valley Food Cooperative
- 8 Iowa producers expanded their product lines
- 19 producers received Good Agricultural Practices Certification
- GROWN Locally, a producer cooperative in northeast Iowa, is certified to sell to Sysco and Rhinehart companies that serve large-volume institutional buyers
- 2 full-time jobs created: Regional Foods Coordinator and Regional Foods Program Assistant for Flavors of Northwest Iowa;
- 2 part-time jobs were created: GROWN Locally, a farmer co-op, hired an Order Coordinator and Eat Greater Des Moines, a regional food group, hired a refugee growers consultant
- 240 volunteer hours were donated to the online local foods buying club cooperative

## PUBLICATIONS AND OUTREACH

Publications	Educational workshops, meetings, outreach programs and special events
1 local food directory was maintained – the Local Food & Flavor Guide for Flavors of Northwest Iowa	1 new class was created for Flavors of Northwest Iowa - Food Preservation 101
1 producer manual was written – Grower's Manual: A Template for Grower's Cooperatives for GROWN Locally	2 producers and HyVee West in Mason City cooperated to develop a pilot marketing collaborative
1 farm safety checklist was created and 5 schools have agreed to use it	2 GAP workshops held
1 online local foods buying club cooperative developed documents outlined membership structure and by-laws	Series of 8 workshops on "Growing Food in Iowa" presented in four different languages (Nepali, Kirundi, Karen and Burmese) attended by 55 people
1 Internet software guide was created by an online local foods buying club cooperative, now used nationally by other co-op's; this document rates Internet software for buying and selling cooperative goods	Des Moines Central Schools Central Campus Culinary Arts program developed two classes to teach high school students to cook using local foods
2 local foods newsletters were initiated	Upper Missouri Valley Local Foods Project was created
1 communal map of producer assets was produced, plus a detailed document outlining collective knowledge of market demand and potential profit	Des Moines Central Schools held 36 events during the summer of 2012 to provide students in need with locally sourced meals
1 marketing poster was created for Farm to School Month to be used in Des Moines Central Schools and is available for other districts	4 educational sessions were facilitated for Des Moines Central School students regarding the local foods used in their school lunches
2 websites were updated with local producer information	1 field trip was organized by Des Moines Central School's Central Campus Culinary Arts program for students to visit a local farm



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Spring 2013  
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