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FROM THE DIRECTOR: Here's a thought worth repeating from Father John Rausch for the National Catholic Rural Life Conference: " 'Energy independence' has morphed into code for 'drill it all, dig it all and double it all.' For the present, traditional forms of energy are needed to find the glide path into the terrain of alternative energy sources, yet in the future, the emphasis cannot rest solely on supply." Read the rest of his column at: <http://www.ncrlc.com/corner-post.html> -- Jerry DeWitt

FUEL EFFICIENCY As fuel prices continue to rise along with interest in local foods, consumers and farmers alike are looking for options that will decrease their fuel use. A new Leopold Center study looked at which transportation option consumed less fuel and emitted less carbon dioxide: farmer delivery or customer pick-up of food products for an Iowa Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) enterprise. According to the report, weekly farmer distribution (using a four-door hybrid compact car) used 2.77 times less fuel than customer pick-up using average U.S. passenger vehicle efficiency. Read the report on the Leopold Center web site at: <http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubs/staff/files/fuel0608.pdf>.

COME TO THE FARM! Summer means field days, and there will be plenty of opportunities to see what's happening on Iowa farms. Since 1999, the Leopold Center has provided direct support to Practical Farmers of Iowa (PFI) for its on-farm research demonstration and field day program. The Leopold Center also participates in the Iowa Learning Farm project, a statewide initiative that includes farmer cooperators, agency partners and ISU researchers to build a "culture of conservation" in Iowa. Check our web events calendar for details of upcoming field days at <http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/news/events.htm>.

AGRITOURISM The Leopold Center also is supporting a statewide project designed to support a growing segment of the rural economy, agritourism. These enterprises include bed and breakfast operations, Christmas tree farms, farmers' markets, fruit and vegetable u-picks, hiking for a fee, hunting/fishing for a fee, mazes for a fee, retail stores, trail riding and wineries. Producers are encouraged to list their agritourism operations on a new web site hosted by Iowa State University Extension, <http://www.visitiowafarms.org>.

FOOD SUPPLY CHAINS Where are the opportunities for local producers who want to enter the food supply chain? Where in the supply chain hold the greatest value? The answer depends upon the product, and a new series of Leopold Center fact sheets looks at frozen fruits and vegetables, fresh pork and sausage products. The information was gathered as part of a Leopold Center marketing project. Download and view the fact sheets at: http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/research/marketing_files/foodsupplychains.html.

DIRECT MARKET SALES Three new publications target farmers and foodservice buyers and how they can better work together. "What Producers Should Know About Selling to Local Foodservice Markets," "What Retail Foodservices Should Know When Purchasing Local Produce Directly from Farmers," and "Buying Local Foods for Retail Foodservices" are in the "Other Resources" section of the Leopold Center Marketing Initiative web page, <http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/research/marketing.htm#newpubs>.

LIFE CYCLE ASSESSMENT On July 21, the Leopold Center will host "A Life Cycle Perspective on Food System Sustainability: Lessons from the Field" by Nathan Pelletier, a doctoral student at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, Canada. He is a carbon footprint consultant and has studied potential environmental impacts of global food production systems including salmon and tilapia, field crop production and poultry. He also is working with the Leopold Center on a study of several Iowa beef production systems. The seminar will begin at 3 p.m. in Room 2019 Morrill Hall. Details on our event calendar at: <http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/news/events.htm>.

DISAPPEARING MIDDLE The Agriculture of the Middle (AOTM) project has generated a new book published by MIT Press, *Food and the Mid-Level Farm: Renewing an Agriculture of the Middle*, edited by Thomas Lyson, Steve Stevenson and Rick Welsh. The opening chapter, "Why Worry about the Agriculture of the Middle?" is based on work by Leopold Center Distinguished Fellow Fred Kirschenmann, also a convening member of AOTM. More about the project at the Association of Family Farms web site, <http://www.familyfood.net>.