



Northeast Iowa local food survey summary report

Abstract:

Institutional buyers in northeast Iowa were questioned about local food attributes and purchases.

What are the current purchasing patterns for institutional buyers in Northeast Iowa, and if products are not being purchased by institutional buyers or not at the quantity desired, what are the barriers? The answers to these questions will allow producers the access to an additional market for their local products. In particular, the addition of local hospitals, restaurants, and nursing homes increases the opportunity to market products that typically couldn't be sold direct to consumers.



MARKETING

What was done and why?

The Northeast Iowa Food and Farm (NIFF) Coalition, formed in 2006, includes agricultural growers, banks, market gardeners and orchardists, extension agents, retailers, independent meat processors, and fundraisers. The group supports development and marketing of locally grown agricultural products to enhance the lives of local citizens. The coalition hopes to encourage producers to diversify, develop regional processing and storage opportunities, and increase local food sales and consumption.

The coalition conducted a survey to:

1. Assess current purchasing patterns by institutional buyers and households,
2. Map out the assets in the region, and
3. Determine what economic impact can be achieved by reaching the goals.

What did we learn?

Institutional buyers see taste and quality of products as extremely important. Food safety and guaranteed consistent quality also ranked high on the preference scale. Forty-one percent of the respondents thought locally grown food products would have an advantage in appealing to customers. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents indicated that they currently use locally grown food. Producers and processors should ask institutional buyers if there are virtues to using locally grown products and what those advantages are. With that information, vendors can tailor their marketing message to match the buyer's needs.

Sixty-one respondents reported that they are not purchasing or have stopped purchasing locally grown products because local products were not accessible or available, they had not been approached by local farmers or processors selling these products, or they did not know who to contact for local products. View the survey results summary at http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/research/marketing_files/NEIowa_0707.pdf

Investigator:

Craig Chase
Iowa State University
Extension
Tripoli

More details:

www.leopold.iastate.edu/research/grants/2009-1/RWG2007-01.pdf