



# Iowa Food & Farm Plan: Executive Summary

The Iowa legislature passed an amendment in 2010 mandating that the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture develop a Local Food and Farm Plan for the state of Iowa.

AMENDMENT - LOCAL FOOD AND FARM PLAN. To the extent feasible, the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture established pursuant to section 266.39 shall prepare a **local food and farm plan** containing policy and funding recommendations for supporting and expanding local food systems and for assessing and overcoming obstacles necessary to increase locally grown food production. The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture shall submit the plan to the general assembly by January 10, 2011. The plan shall include recommendations for short-term and long-term solutions, including but not limited to the enactment of legislation.

The Iowa Food and Farm Plan contains 34 unique recommendations grouped in three main sections:

## 1. Recommendations for state appropriations

The key recommendation here is a one-year appropriation to create a full-time Local Food and Farm State Coordinator position.

## 2. Recommendations to create a Local Food and Farm Advisory Board and a Local Food and Farm Program Fund

Once the Local Food and Farm State Coordinator is on board, he/she will help create a Local Food and Farm Program Fund from voluntary sales of "local food symbol" collectible posters, bumper stickers, and stamps, and local food state license plates. The fund will pay for the salary of the state coordinator after the first year and provide resources to implement recommendations found in section 3.

## 3. Recommendations related to operation of the Plan

**Business development models** – building profitable community-based local food businesses that can serve as models for bankers, economic development officials, and aspiring local food businesses

**Financial assistance** – increasing availability and access to loans to build local food businesses

**Processing** – providing more education, training and incentives to increase the productivity and efficiency of Iowa's small meat processors and other local food processors

**Food safety** – providing more education, training and incentives for local food farmers to profitably access new markets while ensuring food safety to Iowa consumers

**Beginning, minority, and transitioning farmers** – education, training and incentives to help local food farmers increase their profitability while protecting Iowa's natural resources.

**Assessing progress** – setting benchmarks and collecting appropriate data to determine whether Iowa's local food economy is growing and benefitting local food businesses and communities

**Local food incentives** – pilot local food purchase incentives to open up unique local food markets, and including local food as a designation of an Iowa Great Place

Recommendations are characterized as either short- (one to three years) or long- (more than three years) term in their implementation and need for financial resources.

The Leopold Center drew on the expertise and experience of more than 1,000 individuals across the state to develop the Iowa Local Food and Farm plan recommendations, using a variety of methods including working sessions and workshops, listening sessions, one-on-one visits, and surveys. With the initial set of recommendations drafted, we distributed some or all of them to appropriate representatives from 21 different state agencies, institutions, and organizations mentioned in the Plan. In face-to-face meetings or teleconferences, these representatives were asked to provide feedback on the accuracy and extent to which the agency/organization was already executing the recommendation(s). We reviewed their comments and integrated them into the Plan to ensure the final recommendations were as accurate and actionable as possible.

# Iowa Local Food and Farm Plan Recommendations at a Glance

January 2011

			Short-term	Long-term
<b>Needs state appropriation</b>	1.1	Hire Local Food & Farm state coordinator*	✓	
	1.2	Provide 2-year support for Iowa Farm-to-School Program*	✓	
<b>State-level local food program fund and advisory board</b>	2.1	Appoint Local Food & Farm Program advisory board*		✓
	2.2	Set up voluntary funding mechanism for Local Food & Farm Program (to fund coordinator after year 1)*		✓
	2.3	Annual local food and farm report*		✓
<b>Business development and financial assistance</b>	3.1	Implement 4-6 local food business projects across the state	✓	
	3.2	Extend Iowa Small Business Loan Program Fund*	✓	
	3.3	Recruit women & minorities for local food small business program	✓	
	3.4	Offer local food business development program for bankers	✓	
<b>Processing</b>	3.5	Offer local food processing educational program for farmers, entrepreneurs		✓
	3.6	Pilot small meat processing facility investment credit program*	✓	
	3.7	Reclassify small meat plants as industrial property*		✓
	3.8	Pilot meat-cutting education and mentoring program for small businesses	✓	
	3.9	Expand education and training for small meat processors		✓
<b>Food safety</b>	3.10	Set up task force to review state laws and regulations on local foods*	✓	
	3.11	Offer recurring Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) educational training		✓
	3.12	Pilot food safety audit cost-share program for farms selling wholesale to larger volume buyers	✓	
	3.13	Increase outreach about Iowa food regulations		✓
	3.14	Add local food producer to Iowa Food Safety Task Force		✓
	3.15	Train educators working with local food producers about food safety	✓	
<b>Beginning, minority, transitioning farmers</b>	3.16	Develop programs for beginning farmers and food entrepreneurs with outreach to minority populations	✓	
	3.17	Business training program for food brokers and supply aggregators	✓	
	3.18	Business training program for recruiting, managing and optimizing labor for small food operations	✓	
	3.19	Create sample contracts/production agreements for local food sales	✓	
<b>Assessing progress</b>	3.20	Set up subcommittee to oversee data collection and track growth of local food businesses*		✓
	3.21	Track state agency purchases of Iowa grown foods*		✓
	3.22	Survey producers of edible horticultural food crops	✓	
	3.23	Survey producers about labor skills needed for fruit/vegetable production, processing	✓	
	3.24	Survey capacity of food production and aggregation centers for distribution, storage and processing	✓	
	3.25	List sources of technical assistance for local food businesses		✓
	3.26	Increase outreach for local food producer liability insurance options	✓	
<b>Local food incentives</b>	3.27	One-year pilot program to reimburse five K-12 school districts that serve Iowa produce	✓	
	3.28	One-year pilot program to reimburse five health care facilities that serve Iowa produce	✓	
	3.29	Add local foods component to Iowa Great Places program		✓

\* These recommendations require legislative action; others could be implemented in whole or in part without legislative action.

Find this report on the web at: [www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubs-and-papers/iowa-local-food-and-farm-plan](http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubs-and-papers/iowa-local-food-and-farm-plan)

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