



## OBSTACLES SUMMARY

### CROP PRODUCTION

Facilitator: Matt Russell – Drake University  
 Recorder: Corry Bregendahl – Leopold Center

#### PLEASE NOTE: This is a draft.

This summary document is based on the feedback provided at the June 24<sup>th</sup> Working Session and should not be considered as final recommendations for the Iowa Local Food and Farm Plan.

#### Preliminary Ranking of the Top 5 Crop Production Obstacles

1. Insufficient producers
2. Insufficient labor base
3. Lack of knowledge and equipment to diversify operations (i.e. post harvest handling, technology for year round production, weeds and pests)
4. Skills training
5. Cost and availability of land

#### Additional Comments

##### Many factors contribute to lack of producers

- Labor and capital intensive work
- Social perception and identity of farming
- Need to be creative about accessing land (renting, leasing, incubator model)
- Access to appropriate technology is necessary to increase efficiency
- Social barriers – need to facilitate entry of immigrant and new farmers
- Need to reach many different audiences (retiring farmers, LGU/vocational ag students and beginning farmers)

##### Reconciling alternative vs. conventional farmers

- Local food movement is not competing for same type of producers
- Commodity farmers don't have to switch to specialty crops
- Lots of different farmers can peacefully co-exist
- BUT, row crop farmers are getting tired of ag company control so might be starting to look for alternative options

##### Two big ideas on how to set farmers up for success

- Need certification to legitimize alternative production systems
- Need commitment from big local distributors to local food producers

#### OBSTACLE #1

Insufficient producers

##### Short term strategies:

- Identify current producers by foodsheds
- Inventory of available farmland and make accessible to producers
- Inventory available markets in order to match producer supply with consumer demand

##### Long term strategies:

- Regional incubator farms
- Food business incubators
- Linking land to new farmers
- Linking new, transitioning or diversifying farmers with mentors connected to the land
- Develop wholesale business models

#### OBSTACLE #2

Insufficient labor base

##### Short term strategies:

- Anti-Arizona—"Welcome to Iowa" campaign
- Producer education about how to hire legally
- Displaced workers directed to agricultural job opportunities

##### Long term strategies:

- Retrain displaced people into agriculture
- Increased mechanization

#### OBSTACLE #3

Lack of knowledge and equipment to diversify operations

**Please Note: For time reasons, no strategies were discussed for this obstacle during the small group discussion session**

#### Organizational Affiliation of Participants

There were **16** participants in this small group session, including the following:

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Farmers                | ISU Extension                          |
| Iowa Farmers Union     | Natural Resources Conservation Service |
| Iowa RC&D Coordinators | The Soyfoods Council                   |
| Iowa State University  | USDA                                   |



## OBSTACLES SUMMARY

## LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

Facilitator: John Lawrence – ISU Extension  
 Recorder: Sharon Wastenev – Southern Iowa RC&D

### PLEASE NOTE: This is a draft.

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### Preliminary Ranking of the Top 5 Livestock Production Obstacles

1. Need for improved business skills for producers, cost of production data and budgets for niche producers to address lack of capital
2. Regulatory barriers for small producers/processors; access and cost of processing
3. High cost and access to land
4. Lack of education on how to market niche products
5. Vets are not sufficiently trained in alternative production systems

### OBSTACLE #1

Need for improved business skills for producers, cost of production data and budgets for niche producers to address lack of capital

#### Short term strategies:

- Assess current business skill set to identify needs
- Survey lenders to identify barriers to loans
- Develop case studies and benchmarks
- Identify other sources of funds, external to government (i.e. directory)

#### Long term strategies:

- Commitment to build and maintain easy to use database of financial records based on case studies
- Make state funds available to local food producers for start-up costs
- Education for ag lenders on awareness and how to evaluate this new enterprise

### Additional Comments

#### Addressing producer's lack of capital

- Need for concrete business skills in order to be profitable in alternative and niche livestock markets
- Must train producers on how to capture data on production and develop a business plan
- Loyalty to current supply chain poses difficulty for producer to get desired price – so education needed on how to market and sell differentiated product

Regulatory barriers exist for small processors that are available for resale, and difficulty for livestock producers to sell animal by-products on smaller level

#### Issues with veterinarians

- Perception that vets are not trained so producers bring in someone from out of state or do only one species and have limited knowledge of certain species
- Vets don't have strategies for "natural" or alternative production systems
- Difficulty in developing these skills as different livestock species have very different needs

### OBSTACLE #2

Regulatory barriers for small producers/processors; access and cost of processing

#### Short term strategies:

- Learn to communicate with legislative body/policy makers effectively both within organizational structures and independently

#### Long term strategies:

- Address the disposal of by-products (i.e. value recovery, technology)
- Increase awareness of regulations

### Organizational Affiliation of Participants

There were 7 participants in this small group session, including the following:

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Iowa Cattlemen's Association    | ISU Extension                              |
| Iowa Pork Industry Center       | National Center for Appropriate Technology |
| Iowa Pork Producers Association |  |

### OBSTACLE #3

High cost and access to land

**Please Note: For time reasons, no strategies were discussed for this obstacle during the small group discussion session**



**OBSTACLES SUMMARY**

**PROCESSING**

Facilitator: Arion Thiboumery — ISU Extension,  
 Niche Meat Processor Assistance Network  
 Recorder: Nick McCann — Leopold Center

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**Preliminary Ranking of the Top 5 Processing Obstacles**

1. Regulatory challenges, and barriers to interstate shipment of state meats
2. Realities of labor and lack of training and education for meat cutters
3. High start up and operating costs (leading to a lack of mid-scale processors and fruit and vegetable processing)
4. Need for education on community and home kitchen processing
5. Lack of grants and incentives for small scale processing

**OBSTACLE #1**

Regulatory challenges, and barriers to interstate shipment of state meats

**Short term strategies:**

- Expand range of Iowa guidebooks to include fruits and vegetables and dairy
- Short term exemptions that make sense from a food safety and environmental perspective
- Size specific regulations would be a better way to work create new community partnerships

**Long term strategies:**

- Size specific regulations for state level and national level in Iowa Code
- Conduct cost/benefit research
- Further integration of agencies to streamline regulatory processes

**Additional Comments**

**Discussed regulatory challenges facing the processing industry**

- Human factors in interpretation lead to variance in processing regulation enforcement
- Subjective process for regulation implementation
- Ambiguous development of regulations, makes it difficult for regulators to regulate in a uniform manner
- Knowing what is out there – who can help – Department of Economic Development can help to put you in touch with the right people

**Availability of labor is a huge issue in rural areas**

- Everywhere, recruitment is a problem
- There are people there, but pay is not high enough to find people, even with high rural unemployment

**OBSTACLE #2**

Realities of labor and lack of training and education for meat cutters

**Short term strategies:**

- Help educate processors in the value of their labor Pledge programs
- Help smaller processors better utilize existing business development resources (i.e. SBDC)

**Long term strategies:**

- Going to community colleges and combining all the business classes together, then have hands on training sessions
- Educate people on the value of local foods and the viability of careers/tying in ag in the classroom with these types of enterprises
- Develop state of Iowa supported sector specific training – supported with financial work

**Organizational Affiliation of Participants**

There were **13** participants in this small group session, including the following:

- |  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| Dairy producer/processor                                 | ISU Extension          |
| Great River Food Alliance of Southeast Iowa (non-profit) | Meat processor         |
| Iowa Meat Processors Association                         | Pottawattamie County   |
| Iowa RC&D Coordinators                                   | USDA Rural Development |
| Iowa State University                                    |                        |

**OBSTACLE #3**

High start up and operating costs

**Short term strategies:**

- Assessment of current capacity, present needs, what kinds of opportunities are available for the future



**OBSTACLES SUMMARY**

**AGGREGATION AND DISTRIBUTION**

Facilitator: Andy Larson – ISU Extension  
 Recorder: Mary Swalla Holmes – Leopold Center

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**Preliminary Ranking of the Top 5 Aggregation and Distribution Obstacles**

1. Lack of coherent business structure for distribution
2. Lack of pre-planning communication between producers to aggregate supply
3. Lack of business investment with producer distribution networks
4. Disconnect with education in understanding each parties business role
5. Inadequate on-farm cold storage facilities and distribution infrastructure (i.e. loading docks, roads)

**Additional Comments**

**Need markets for “seconds” on a larger scale.** One farmer observed, “if every tomato I produced didn’t have to be perfect, I could make a living”

**Need template for how local food can work**

- A successful model of profitable producer distribution network needs to come from industry, not public sector (i.e. hybrid coop model in Wisconsin)
- Chef’s collaborative is another example of how to create an organization that reaches out and teaches producers how to work with distributors and aggregators

Information sharing is critical for distributors to know “what’s available when”  
 Aggregation needs to be a segregated, stand alone business

**Other obstacles include:**

- Lack of capital to finance distribution operations
- Hesitancy on using cooperative structure
- Packaging requirements needed for distribution
- Trust in partnerships and social networks are necessary
- Local distribution inefficiencies

**Organizational Affiliation of Participants**

There were **19** participants in this small group session, including the following:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Crossroads Resource Center (non-profit) | Kalona Organics (aggregator/processor)   |
| Farmers                                 | Pottawattamie County Food Council        |
| Hy-Vee (retail grocer)                  | Local Harvest Supply (food distribution) |
| Iowa Institute for Cooperatives         | Sohodojo (small business research)       |
| Iowa Organic Association                | Sysco (food distribution)                |
| ISU Extension                           | University of Northern Iowa              |
| ISU – Iowa Learning Farm                | USDA Rural Development                   |

**OBSTACLE #1**

Lack of coherent business structure for distribution

**Short term strategies:**

- Develop templates and success stories of profitable local food supply chains
- Ensure transparency and traceability in aggregation & distribution
- Gather data to make business projections

**Long term strategies:**

- Producers need to know standards and requirements of selling to larger markets and distributors need to learn how to aggregate smaller amounts from smaller producers
- Target financial support to new businesses which would fill gaps in the supply chain

**OBSTACLE #2**

Lack of pre-planning communication between producers to aggregate supply

**Short term strategies:**

- Build strong personal relationships
- Expand technology into rural areas in order to connect growers and distributors

**Long term strategies:**

- Integrate “human dimension” and personal relationships into a new type of business model (paradigm shift)

**OBSTACLE #3**

Lack of business investment with producer distribution networks

**Short term strategies:**

- Identify infrastructure assets
- Public incentives for productive distribution infrastructure
- Develop state plan for growth of producer distribution networks

**Long term strategies:**

- Seed capital for private enterprises to support local food systems
- Track effectiveness of producer networks (metrics of success)
- Investors share risk with producers



## OBSTACLES SUMMARY

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Facilitator: Carole Richardson-Smith – Private Consultant  
 Recorder: Jonah Brown-Joel – Leopold Center

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### Preliminary Ranking of the Top Five Financial Assistance Obstacles

1. Lack of funding for planning, coordination, and networking to start building the capacity of a local food system
2. Banks have difficulty assessing the profitability of local food businesses
3. Producers lack information about how to gain access to capital
4. Lenders perceive high lending risks
5. Lack of targeted assistance to distributors and aggregators

### Additional Comments

Lenders are reluctant to lend money to growers because growers' businesses are perceived as risky, not profitable, and too small to financially justify the transaction cost of making the loan.

**A "roadmap" or strategy is needed to provide direction towards increasing growers' access to capital. A successful roadmap will include:**

- How to increase the profitability of growers' businesses by, for instance, outlining a program that will increase growers' business skills
- How to decrease growers' risks and thus increase the profitability of insuring these businesses
- How to provide lenders with the industry information they need to make loans to growers, as well as a way to decrease lenders' transaction costs and thus increase lenders ability to profitability lend money in smaller increments

**Other obstacles include:**

- The current financial situation has increased the cost of capital and made capital more difficult to most businesses to acquire
- Growers may lack collateral and insurance which increases lenders' risk
- Growers in remote locations make them less accessible to programs that could increase their business skills

### Organizational Affiliation of Participants

There were **13** participants in this small group session, including the following:

|                                     |                                    |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Consultant                          | Iowa RC&D Coordinator              |
| Farm Security Agency                | Iowa State University              |
| Fresh Connections Food Co-op        | ISU Extension                      |
| Grow Your Small Market Farm Network | Sohodojo (small business research) |
| Grundy National Bank                | University of Northern Iowa        |
| Iowa Micro Loan                     |                                    |

### OBSTACLE #1

Lack of funding for planning, coordination, and networking to start building the capacity of a local food system

#### Short term strategies:

- Build on and use RC&D system interest
- USDA Rural Development could provide seed funding
- Use S.M.A.R.T. planning monies to fund initiative

#### Long term strategies:

- Provide information to supervisors and decision makers for funding by counties, regions, and legislative districts
- Facilitate networking to capture, transfer, and leverage information
- Capture county and regional cooperation and commitment for 5-10 years

### OBSTACLE #2

Banks have difficulty assessing the profitability of local food businesses

#### Short term strategies:

- Give bankers information for assessing profitability including case studies, comparables, and records
- Provide bankers with contacts experienced in lending to sector

#### Long term strategies:

- Re-task T.I.F. (tax increment financing) to give producers increased access to capital

### OBSTACLE #3

Producers' lack information about how to gain access to capital

#### Short term strategies:

- Develop and disseminate "road maps" showing how producers can gain access capital
- Develop a mentoring system to connect experienced farmers with beginning farmers

#### Long term strategies:

- Develop and disseminate case studies of producers that gained access to capital
- Teach growers the business skills that bankers look for



**OBSTACLES  
SUMMARY**

**MARKETING AND MARKET OPPORTUNITIES**

Facilitator: Sue Honkamp —Value Chain Partnerships  
 Recorder: Malcolm Robertson — Leopold Center

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**Preliminary Ranking of the Top 5  
Marketing Obstacles**

1. Need for “one voice” for marketing local food (i.e. branding unification)
2. Producer’s inability to effectively market product (i.e. time/knowledge constraints)
3. Need for business training for producers so they can better establish price points
4. Inconsistent supply
5. Educating the consumer on value of local food (i.e. not just healthy but the concept that they are supporting the local economy)

**Additional Comments**

**Also discussed inconsistent supply problems (obstacle #4)**

- *Short term strategies*
  - Education on seasonal availability
  - Encourage regional grower cooperatives
  - Develop a better understanding on the importance of the buyer/seller relationship – highlight need for ongoing communication to develop relationships of trust
  - Buyers possibly need to formalize their purchasing agreement with producers by possibly holding winter meetings to develop contracts and to strengthen relationships
- *Long term strategies*
  - More formalized contracts between producers and buyers – this contract is more about showing a level of commitment.
  - Start developing regional cooperatives

**Organizational Affiliation of Participants**

There were **16** participants in this small group session, including the following:

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce Consultant                  | Iowa State University ISU Extension |
| Dahl’s Foods   | Local foods organizer               |
| Farmers Markets Today (local foods media)                | New Pioneer Food Co-op              |
| Great River Food Alliance of Southeast Iowa (non-profit) | Sysco (food distributor)            |
| Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship      | Wheatsfield Cooperative             |
| Iowa RC&D Coordinators                                   |                                     |

**OBSTACLE #1**

Need for “one voice” for marketing local food (i.e. branding unification)

**Short term strategies:**

- Raise awareness of ag marketing clubs
- Link *Buy Fresh Buy Local* campaigns with local food coordinators
- Work more closely with Farm Bureau’s value added sector to help create a specific program on local food
- Organize producers into one structured body – strength in numbers. This can be done by developing flyers and handing them out at farmers markets, etc

**Long term strategies:**

- Funding for local food market campaign
- Need a “voice” (a leader) for the state focused in developing the local food market campaign
- Use one consistent message and need to focus on what local food is and what it is not (part of the education process)
- Need to involve buyers, from a marketing stand point, and possibly as a potential funding source
- Need to reprioritize or strategize on better ways to create/move more funding into local food
- Give stores tools that will help them do a better job on promoting local Iowa products – this may included brochures pamphlets etc on the benefits of local

**OBSTACLE #2**

Producer’s inability to effectively market product (i.e. time/knowledge constraints)

**Short term strategies:**

- Education is the cornerstone to assisting growers in marketing
- Producers need more help on knowing what resources are out there and where to find them
- Extension classes/webinars/video libraries need to be developed
- Develop a tool where people can go and find what and where things are available
- Need to develop a “speed dating” type of product that can match producers and buyers



## OBSTACLES SUMMARY

### FOOD SAFETY AND REGULATIONS

Facilitator: Brenda Ranum — Regional Extension Education Director  
 Recorder: Margaret Smith — ISU Value Added Agriculture Extension and Sustainable Agriculture

#### PLEASE NOTE: This is a draft.

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#### Preliminary Ranking of the Top 5 Food Safety and Regulatory Obstacles

1. Need for education about food safety laws and food safety principles
2. Need for size appropriate regulations based on outcomes
3. Increasing cost for licensing and certification
4. Traceability systems needed
5. Reasonable standards for small producers/processors

#### OBSTACLE #1

Need for education about food safety laws and food safety principles

##### Short term strategies:

- Each producer should have a farm safety plan – extension is involved and using templates that are already there
  - Inventory of available tools done in the first month and make it available online
  - Extension office the source, must adhere to GAP standards

##### Long term strategies:

- Need for more inspectors so that they can resume facility training activities

#### Additional Comments

##### Discussed whether standards really should be different based on business size

- Need studies and research tied to regulations
- Need education and technical assistance
- What are appropriate categories for determining when laws scale
- University of Wisconsin has some research about meat carcass safety and protocols that are being used in smaller plants
- Different standards don't mean "watered down" standards
- Laws differs for various products
- 1,000 broilers per year on farm allowed direct sales to consumers, not to institutions
- Apple cider can be sold un-pasteurized on-farm sales

##### Discussed recent new Federal rule for red meat and poultry (i.e. proposed rule)

- Not for eggs or cracked eggs
- Doesn't allow state inspected product to cross state lines
- If a plant wants to be state and eligible for interstate commerce, they must make application Title V

#### OBSTACLES #2

Need for size appropriate regulations based on outcomes

*and*

#### OBSTACLES #3

Increasing cost for licensing and certification

**Please Note: For time reasons, no strategies were discussed for these obstacles during the small group discussion session**

#### Organizational Affiliation of Participants

There were **21** participants in this small group session, including the following:

Farms/farm cooperatives  
 IDALS Meat and Poultry Inspection Bureau  
 Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals  
 Iowa State University  
 ISU Dining  
 ISU Extension

Law firm  
 National Association of College and University Food Services  
 Sodexo (food service)  
 State representative  
 Sysco (food distributor)  
 Villisca's New Horizons (non-profit)



## OBSTACLES SUMMARY

### BEGINNING & UNDERSERVED FARMERS

Facilitator: Teresa Opheim — Practical Farmers of Iowa  
 Recorder: Laura Miller — Leopold Center

#### PLEASE NOTE: This is a draft.

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#### Preliminary Ranking of the Top 5 Beginning and Underserved Farmer Obstacles

1. Need for a pathway to define steps of production and site-appropriate and integrated enterprises (i.e. a systems farming approach)
2. Lack of desirable land for purchase or rent (e.g. reaching women landowners; connecting the dots between interns/bankers/realtors; lack of creative thought to access farmland; connecting retiring farmers to beginning farmers)
3. Lack of business, financial and marketing knowledge is missing in producers
4. Lack of community college and university partnerships to support new farmers
5. Need for more people relationships between agricultural organizations and those that serve immigrant communities and more bilingual resources/people – including culturally appropriate education and technical assistance

#### Additional Comments

##### Other obstacles that were identified include:

- Access to capital
- Access and support of farmer-to-farmer training and mentoring programs and apprenticeships; connecting older farmers to new farmers
- Reduce risk for beginning farmers and options for risk management
- Decline of FAA instruction in high schools, youth programs for diverse farming opportunities
- Resources exist but may not be accessible by those who need them most

Feasibility studies are needed to connect all the pieces involved in entering farming (especially difficult when you have very, very different types of ag production)

There is much value in a diverse farm, but new farmers must be able to understand the differences in land. Sustainable farming is land-specific and land is very different from area to area. Marketing skills may be more generic.

#### Organizational Affiliation of Participants

There were **11** participants in this small group session, including the following:

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Business facilitator           | National Center for Appropriate Technology |
| Farm to School                 | Northeast Iowa Business Network            |
| Farmers                        | Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative |
| ISU Extension                  | Practical Farmers of Iowa                  |
| Iowa Workforce Development     | Rebuild and Retrofit                       |
| Marshalltown Community College | SoyaWax International                      |

#### OBSTACLE #1

Need for a pathway to define steps of production and site-appropriate and integrated enterprises

##### Short term strategies:

- Catalog existing resources – business planning, land assessment
- Identify gaps
- Identify stakeholders and form a beginning farmer work group
- Push community colleges and universities to support new farmers

##### Long term strategies:

- Financial support for a statewide beginning farmer resource coordinator with regional counselors (permanent position)
- Case studies and reader-friendly narratives of farmers (successful and unsuccessful)
- Network/program that connects farming interns
- Beginning Farmer Working Group (institutions and stakeholders that coordinate beginning farmer work)
- Push community colleges and universities to support new farmers

#### OBSTACLES #2

Lack of desirable land for purchase or rent

*and*

#### OBSTACLES #3

Lack of business, financial and marketing knowledge is missing in producers

**Please Note: For time reasons, no strategies were discussed for these obstacles during the small group discussion session**



**OBSTACLES  
SUMMARY**

**PLANNING (ROADS, LAND AND BUILDINGS)**

Facilitator: Alan Vanderhaar – ISU Extension  
 Recorder: Juli Obudzinski – Leopold Center

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**Preliminary Ranking of the Top 5  
Planning Obstacles**

1. Include local food systems in city or county comprehensive plans and address food deserts
2. Lack of awareness of local food systems by local governments
3. Lack of sufficient funds to maintain transportation infrastructure (including county roads)
4. Staffing resources at local level planning and budgeting limitations
5. Accessing underused buildings and vacant lots (rural and urban)

**Additional Comments**

**Local government and local policy are key vehicles for expanding Local Food Systems**

- Food access, availability and food deserts need to be addressed
- Need to solidify link between LFS, planning and economic development
- Tax policy is key barrier to sale of farmland (i.e. retiring farmers can't afford capital gains tax)
- Transportation and energy infrastructure are critical

**Conservation Reserve Program may be a harmful land management tool**

- CRP is damaging to rural communities, especially in southern Iowa
- Potential to transition CRP land into local food production (i.e. beginning farmers)
- Land trusts might be better option for land use than enrollment in CRP

**Rural vs. Urban**

- Interface between urban and rural communities will need to be addressed as expand LFS
- Loss of farmland affects price of remaining farmland, but urban sprawl may provide advantageous market to expanding LFS

Need to see true cost of transportation in agriculture to allow alternative food system models to become competitive.

**OBSTACLE #1**

Include local food systems in city or county comprehensive plans and address food deserts

**Short term strategies:**

- Identify rural and urban food deserts
- Provide statewide recommendations on developing LFS to local government
- Integrate local food into state "SMART" planning process
- Asset map of local food systems

**Long term strategies:**

- Develop and implement 5 or 10 year plans that include LFS at city or county level
- Provide incentives to retail outlets to locate in "food deserts"
- Identify and fund staff at local and state levels to work on local food planning
- Encourage professional planning organizations to conduct a workshop on how to develop LFS

**OBSTACLE #2**

Lack of awareness of local food systems by local governments

**Short term strategies:**

- Increase awareness on LFS through professional planning organizations that are working at city/county/and regional levels
- Reach out to cities and counties and educate elected officials

**Long term strategies:**

- No long term strategies were discussed for this obstacle

**Organizational Affiliation of Participants**

There were **15** participants in this small group session, including the following:

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| City of Dubuque                         | Linn County Planning and Developer |
| Iowa Department of Economic Development | MIDAS Council of Governments       |
| Iowa Department of Transportation       | Pottawattamie County               |
| Iowa Farm Bureau                        | State representative               |
| Iowa RC&D Coordinators                  | Story County Planning and Zoning   |
| Iowa State University                   |                                    |
| ISU Extension                           |                                    |

**OBSTACLE #3**

Lack of transportation infrastructure and county roads

**Please Note: For time reasons, no strategies were discussed for this obstacle during the small group discussion session**



**OBSTACLES  
SUMMARY**

**CONSUMERS**

Facilitator: Judd Jensen — Leopold Center  
 Recorder: Jeri Neal — Leopold Center

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**Preliminary Ranking of the Top 5  
Consumer Obstacles**

1. Need for education on true costs of food and economic benefits of a local food system
2. Limited knowledge of how to prepare, preserve and cook with local produce
3. Lack of access to local foods
4. Limitations of Federal food programs
5. Educate kids about local foods and food quality (e.g. farm-to-school programs)

**Additional Comments**

**Discussed Food Banks**

- Need for developing a better system for getting local food into the food banks via community gardens and bartering work for food
- Need for additional funding to purchase refrigerated trucks in order to retrieve leftovers and seconds from local producers
- Need community help from churches, master gardeners and farmers

**Create a statewide program to:**

- Highlight nutrition
- Develop food access networks
- Help build community relationships
- Develop a food ethic
- Create a unified marketing strategy

Many areas of the state need to develop a better public transportation system to better service public food sellers and low income members of the public

Research how many consumers it takes to support a local food system

**Organizational Affiliation of Participants**

There were **16** participants in this small group session, including the following:

- |                                      |                        |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| City of Dubuque                      | Iowa RC&D Coordinators |
| Environmental Nutrition Solutions    | Iowa State University  |
| Feeding America                      | ISU Extension          |
| Iowa Arts Council                    | Local Foods Connection |
| Iowa Department of Natural Resources | New Pioneer Food Co-op |
| Iowa Department of Public Health     |                        |

**OBSTACLE #1**

Need for education on true costs of food and economic benefits of a local food system

**Short term strategies:**

- Create intensive advertising campaign
- Social networking (e.g. Facebook)
- Create new community partnerships

**Long term strategies:**

- Develop social marketing networks dedicated to showing the value of a local food system
- Conduct cost/benefit research

**OBSTACLE #2**

Limited knowledge of how to prepare, preserve and cook with local produce

**Short term strategies:**

- Finance and develop agro-tourism
- Pledge programs
- Develop tasting opportunities for the public to sample local food
- Create menus and cookbooks for utilizing local food

**Long term strategies:**

- School curriculum changes
- Develop “Food Folios” detailing what local food is produced, where it is grown and how it can be used.

**OBSTACLE #3**

Lack of access to local foods

**Short term strategies:**

- Labeling should identify where food comes from in the grocery store
- Develop creative solutions to get local food into convenience stores

**Long term strategies:**

- Research where food deserts exist in the state and what specific access problems exist in different areas of the state
- Improve public transportation
- Make farmers markets more accessible to low income people
- Get big box stores like Walmart and Target to support local market