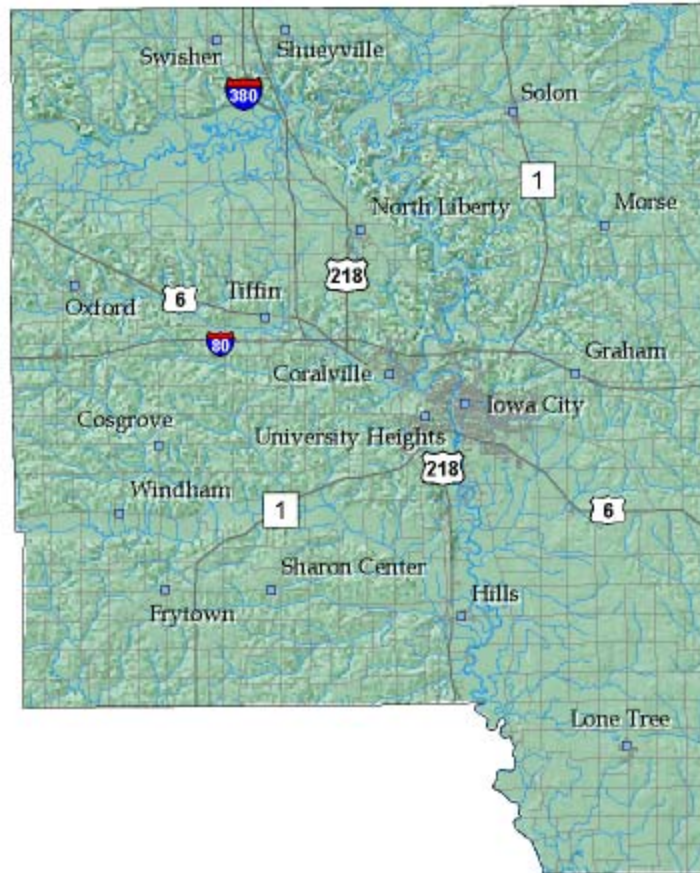


Johnson County Food System Atlas

Exploring Community Food Systems



Iowa State University
Department of Sociology
with support from
The Leopold Center for Sustainable
Agriculture

Introduction to Community Food Systems



Food and agriculture systems in Iowa have been changing. A growing interest in local food systems is emerging as one of these changes. Currently, much of Iowa's food comes from a global food system.

Iowa's agriculture provides many of the commodities for the global food system. However, much of this system operates beyond Iowa. Wholesale commodity production provides some benefits to farmers and rural communities. But the most significant returns are often experienced by businesses outside of Iowa communities. The food dollar multiplies many more times after the commodities have left Iowa, eventually returning as retail food purchased from global businesses.

What would happen if more of our food dollars were spent on products grown and processed

locally? A community food system creates more direct local linkages among food producers, food consumers and the people and businesses in between.

**Parts of a
Community Food System**
Farms and Food Production
Food Processors
Food Distributors and Wholesalers
Retail Food Outlets
Consumers
Schools
Nursing Homes
Restaurants
Hunger Assistance Programs

Thriving community food systems can support local farmers who practice environmentally sound agriculture. A community food systems approach can encourage local processing and retail enterprises, create jobs and recirculate money for local economic development, and improve access to nutritious food for all people in the community.

A community food systems perspective can also help identify and strengthen community assets. This food system atlas "maps"

opportunities and challenges for community food systems based on the unique qualities and situation of Johnson County.

Community food systems offer exciting possibilities for Iowa's rural communities. But community food systems only flourish when communities get involved. How are people in your county working to bring farming, food, and community together? What tools or resources might be helpful to further these efforts?

This community food system atlas highlights work already done in Johnson County and points to future opportunities.



Johnson County Local Food Systems Project

Cover photo credits clockwise from top right corner: Helen Guncerson, Local Harvest CSA, Practical Farmers of Iowa, Bob Atha, Johnson County Local Food System Project

What do we eat and where does it come from?

What do Americans eat?

	<i>one person</i>	<i>Johnson County</i>
<i>fresh fruit</i>	<i>127.0 lbs</i>	<i>7049 tons</i>
<i>fresh vegetables</i>	<i>202.0 lbs</i>	<i>11,212 tons</i>
<i>poultry</i>	<i>66.8 lbs</i>	<i>3708 tons</i>
<i>beef</i>	<i>64.5 lbs</i>	<i>3580 tons</i>
<i>pork</i>	<i>47.7 lbs</i>	<i>2648 tons</i>
<i>eggs</i>	<i>249.7 lbs</i>	<i>13,859 tons</i>
<i>milk</i>	<i>22.6 gal</i>	<i>2,508,736 gal</i>

This includes fresh:

<i>tomatoes</i>	<i>17.3 lbs</i>	<i>960 tons</i>
<i>leaf lettuce</i>	<i>8.0 lbs</i>	<i>444 tons</i>
<i>sweet corn</i>	<i>9.0 lbs</i>	<i>500 tons</i>
<i>carrots</i>	<i>11.1 lbs</i>	<i>616 tons</i>
<i>strawberries</i>	<i>5.9 lbs</i>	<i>328 tons</i>

Source: Economic Research Service data from the food consumption (per capita) data system on the Internet: www.ers.usda.gov/data/foodconsumption. County consumption figured by multiplying per capita consumption by county population. All data for 2000. Data accessed September 25, 2002

Where does Iowa's food come from?

Iowa imports more than 80 percent of its food, most of which travels at least 1,200 miles. We get vegetables from places like California and Mexico, fruit from Chile and China, and meat from Texas and Argentina.

Just consider apples...

We each eat an average of 47.1 pounds of fresh and processed apples each year. But where do these apples come from? The boxes to the right trace the journey of an apple through both the global and the local food system.



Did you know...

By the late 1800s, southwest Iowa had become an important center of apple production for in-state consumption and export. Seven southwest counties alone shipped one-half a million bushels in 1889.

In 1940, many apple trees were killed by frost, and orchards were replaced with row crops. Iowa now grows only about 15 percent of the fresh apples it consumes. But growing condi-

The Global Apple

From farm to table takes up to eight months, traveling thousands of miles.

Tree → Truck → Warehouse → Shipping → Warehouse → Storage → Store → Consumer

Controlled atmosphere storage for eight months or longer. Shipped for international wholesale market with most profits going to multinational corporations.

The Local Apple

From farm to table takes one day to two months, often traveling at most one to two hundred miles.

Tree → Orchard or Store → Consumer

Sold retail at orchards, markets, and grocery stores.

tions are still good for growers to produce more fresh, local apples.

How are landscapes and food systems related?

His first home stood in the edge of the timber on the Iowa River, where that prairie of unsurpassed beauty and richness...

Of Benjamin Swisher,
Johnson County Pioneer, 1841

From here they drifted to the old favorable site on Deer Creek, favorable because of three features...ideal conditions for agriculture--fertile soil, good timber, and running water.

Of Amish settlers in
Johnson County, 1845

Before farming began in Iowa, much of the landscape was covered in tallgrass prairie. Wildlife, especially deer, elk, and prairie chicken were abundant and were hunted for food. Wild geese, ducks, sandhill cranes, and swans were also common. In the mid-1800s, in the Goosetown ethnic village within Iowa City, poultry was pas-

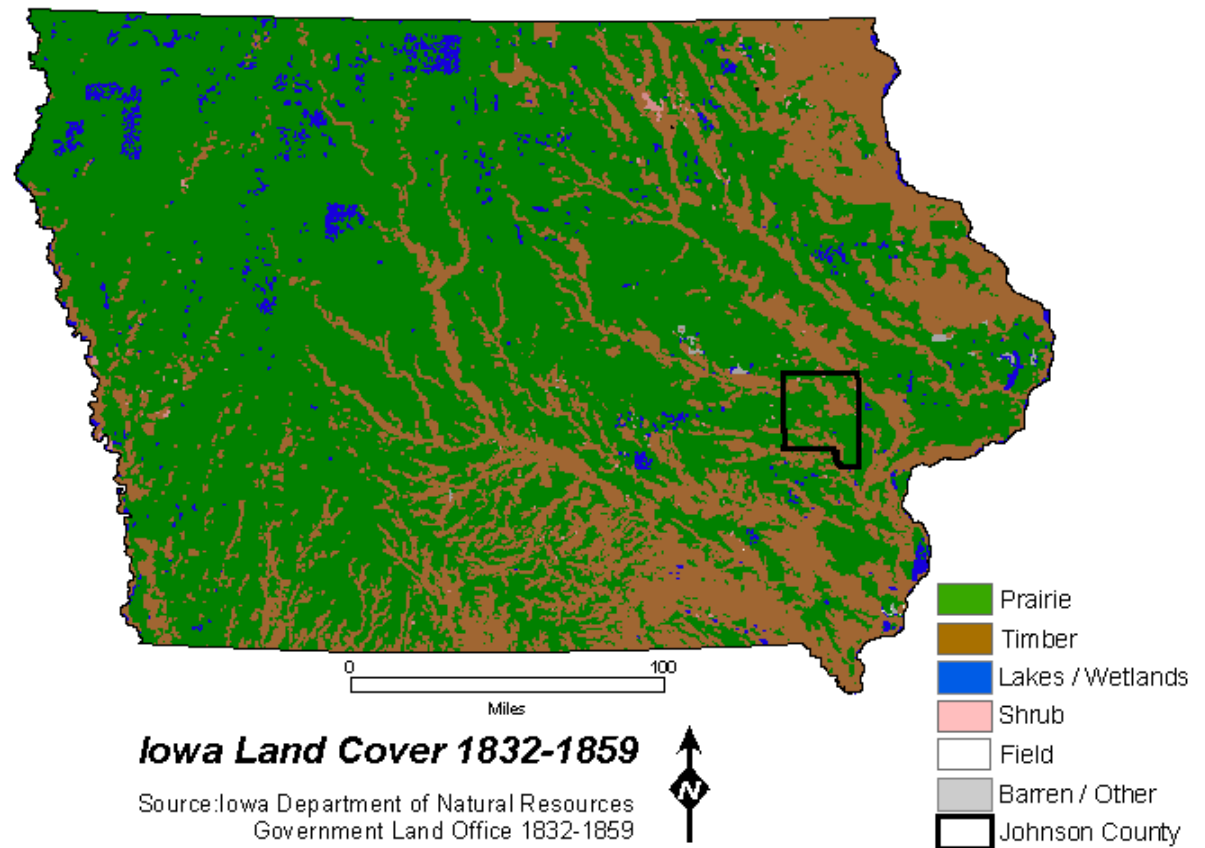


tured daily on native prairie meadows. Residents also foraged the nearby woodlands for mushrooms, hickory nuts, hazelnuts, walnuts, black cherries, wild plums, gooseberries, raspberries, kindling, wildflowers, and curative roots.

The most obvious of Iowa's natural resources is the rich soil, which provides the basis for the agricultural economy. That soil has been forming

for thousands of years under the prairie. Every year the prairie grew, and soil was built as it returned to the ground. When people began plowing that soil, they found it to be some of the most productive land in the world.

Iowa's soils remain some of the richest in the world, even though it is estimated that more than half of the topsoil has been lost from agricultural



fields through erosion in the last century.

As more people settled in Iowa and began farming, they gradually converted almost all of the rich prairie to cropland. Today less than *half of one percent* of the original prairie remains in Iowa. The flat, almost treeless landscape allowed Iowa farmers to use larger machinery to farm more and more acres over time.

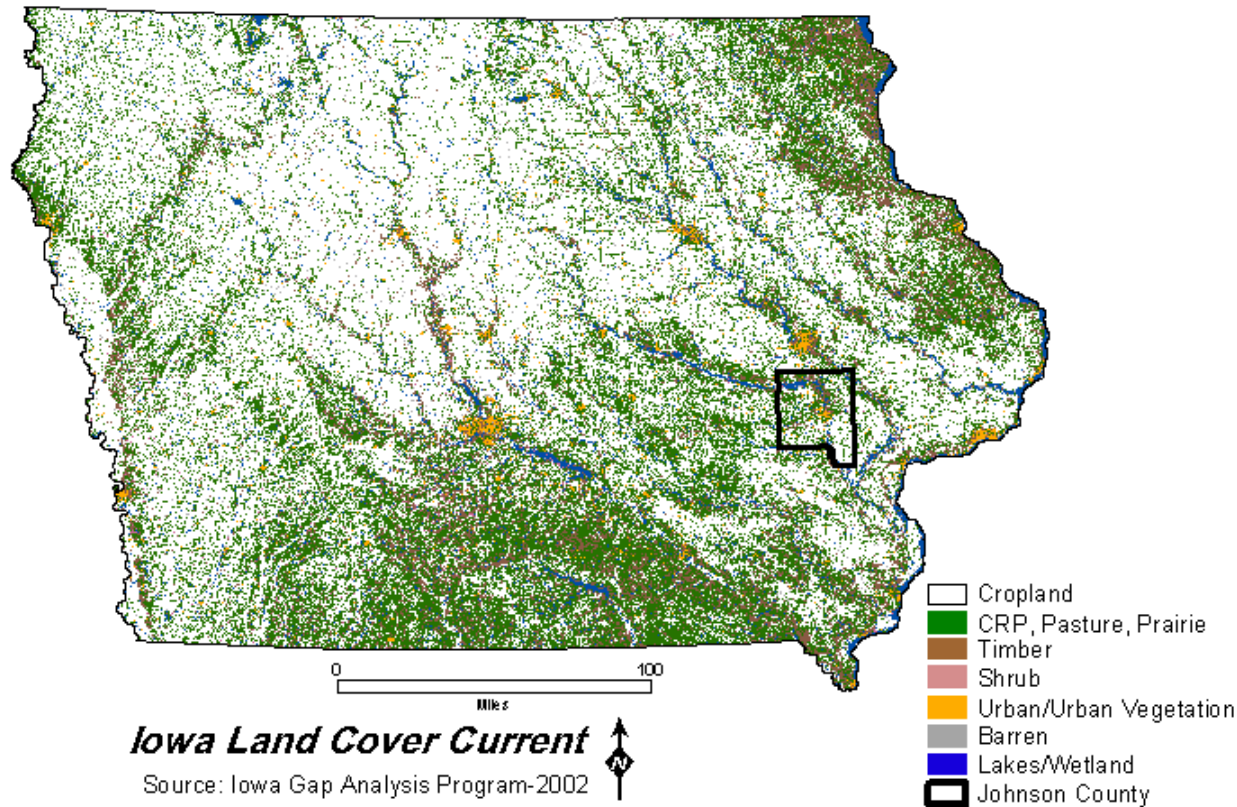
As food systems expanded to the regional, national, and then global level, farm products came to be viewed not as food, but as commodities to be bought in large quantity at the lowest price. In response, farmers had to grow more grain and raise more animals, and farms and machinery grew larger. Most farms began to specialize in one or two commodity crops, instead of growing

a diversity of products.

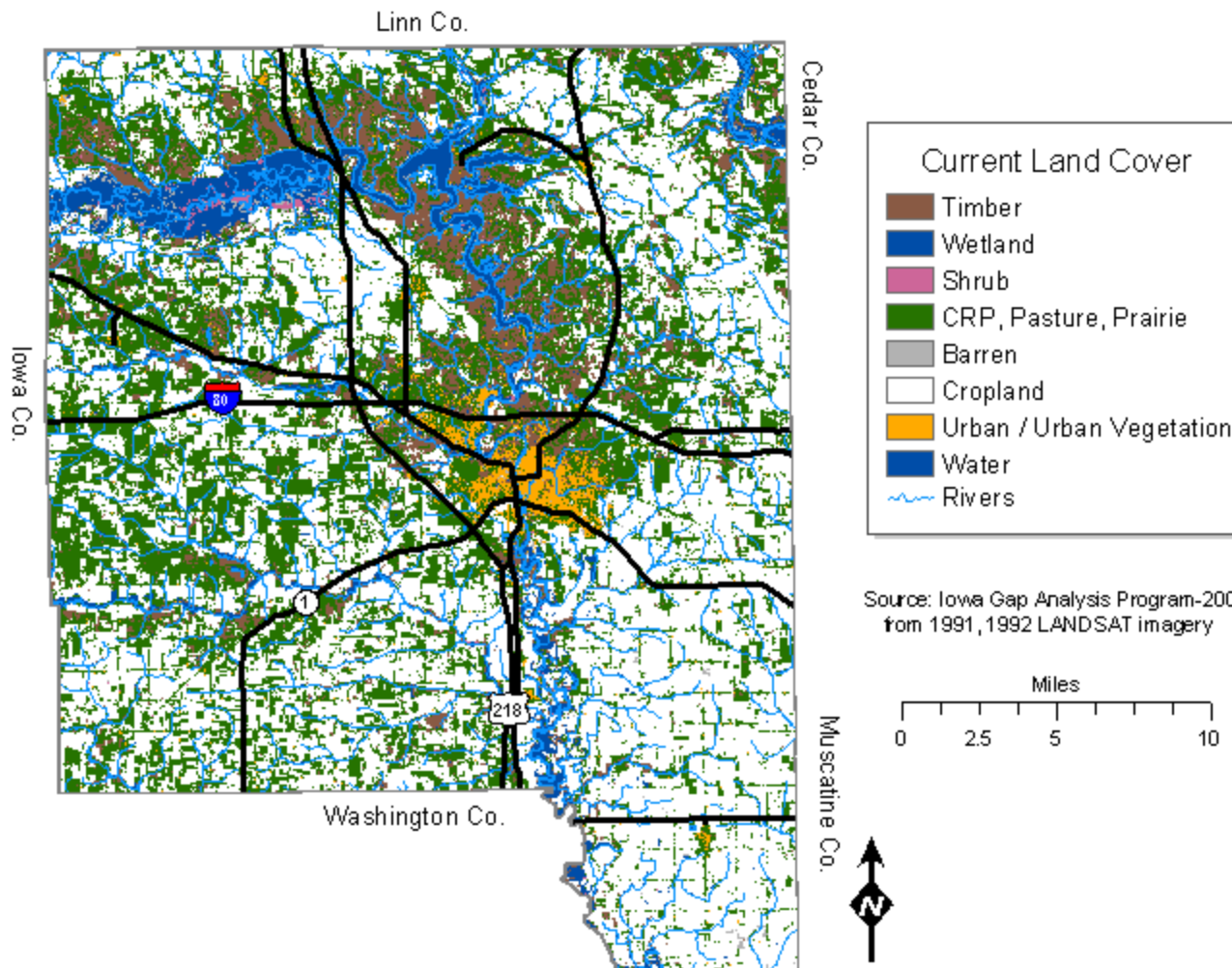
Today, the Iowa landscape is dominated by fields of corn and soybeans, and the beef feedlots and hog confinements that consume the grain.

In what ways can community food systems support Johnson County's ecosystems?

Johnson County has a more diverse landscape than many counties in Iowa. The level fields and high quality prairie soils of the southeastern part of the county are well suited for row cropping. However, much of Johnson County is rolling and hilly, especially along the Iowa River. This landscape encourages more diversified farms with pasture lands and livestock and more forested areas.



How is the land in Johnson County used?



Johnson County faces a different set of challenges and opportunities than other more rural counties. Urban sprawl has reduced the amount of farmland over the years, but at the same time the presence of Iowa City with its large and diverse population provides extensive opportunities for connecting local consumers with the county's small and mid-size diversified farms.

Smaller scale and specialty farmers in Johnson County have been innovators in local marketing, which helps to preserve small farms and encourage sound landscape management practices. As this continues, Johnson County can offer a model for how local food systems build urban-rural connections to preserve farmland.

Who lives in Johnson County?

Johnson County grew steadily throughout the last century with dramatic growth beginning in the 1940s. The University of Iowa continues to play a major role in the local economy. Iowa City is one of the fastest growing areas in the state of Iowa.

Johnson County felt the force of suburbanization as Coralville, Tiffin, and North

Liberty grew at much faster rates from 1990 to 2000 than Iowa City. Smaller towns in more rural areas of the county also grew during this time, but at very different rates (Hills-2.6%, Oxford-6.3%, Solon and Swisher-12.1%, Lonetree-17.6%, and Swisher-26.0%). Newcomers are attracted to

the amenities of these smaller communities and to easy access to well paying jobs in nearby

Iowa City.

Rural population grew at a faster pace (23.9%) than the county as a whole (15.5%) and

What strategies could bring new agriculture, population trends and community assets together?

faster than most cities in the county from 1990 to 2000.

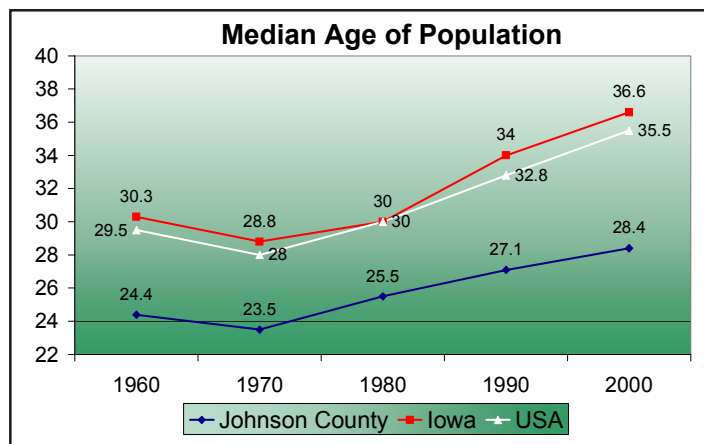
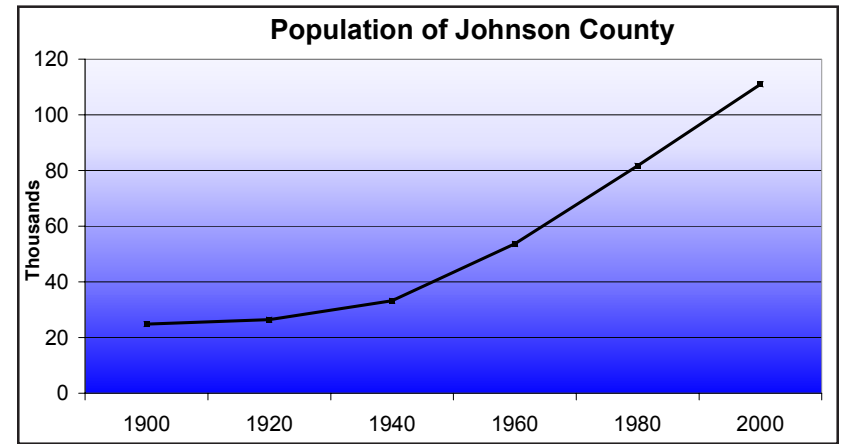
The median age in Johnson County lies well below the median age for the state and national populations as a result of the county's university student population. In fact, the county had the second youngest median age in the state in 2000 at 28.4.

Farm employment declined nearly 23 percent from 1,996 jobs in 1980 to 1,539 jobs in 1999. Between 1980 and 1999, services led employment growth with 11,685 new jobs followed by retail trade and state and local government with 7,474 and 6,506 new jobs respectively. Amish and Mennonite farm fami-

lies continue to play a significant role in diversifying Johnson County agriculture.

Recent demographic changes pose some challenges for the county's food system. These include retaining farmland, keeping medium sized farmers in operation, increasing opportunities for new farmers, and addressing changing patterns in how people are making homes in the countryside.

But, population changes also provide opportunities. New markets may exist for farmers growing food for direct human consumption. Families who do not farm may value a connection with local farmers and want to buy fresh food grown on family farms. New or expanded local food enterprises could increase farm and food related employment possibilities within Johnson County.



What does farming have to do with food?

American farms once produced a diversity of crops and livestock that were marketed regionally. Today American commercial farms tend to be larger and more specialized. Most products from today's farms go to a global market. For example, most of the fruits and vegetables eaten in Iowa come from California, Florida, and increasingly from other countries.

Iowa is clearly capable of raising some of these foods. But is it economically feasible? What are some of the benefits? What are some of the challenges?

As the Iowa farmer's share of the consumer

food dollar gets smaller, a widening gap emerges between the growing of food and eating of food in Iowa. The opposite page shows the mix of crops

What would it take to bring a job growing and marketing food back to the farm?

and livestock raised in Iowa during the 20th century. Notice how many foods were listed as important in Iowa agricultural production in 1920.

But by 1997, the number had narrowed to ten products.

How many of these ten products make it to the dinner plate in Johnson County? And of those that do, which arrive directly as foods and which come as inputs and components of other food we eat?

Certainly, commodity production remains important to Iowa agriculture and the economic health of Johnson County. Advances in agricultural technology and production have allowed many Johnson County farmers to specialize in a few crops. However, these trends have encouraged an increase in farm size and a decrease in farm numbers. Are there possibilities beyond commodity agriculture for bringing Johnson County farms and Johnson County food closer together?

How do trends in agriculture reflect changes in what and where Iowans eat?

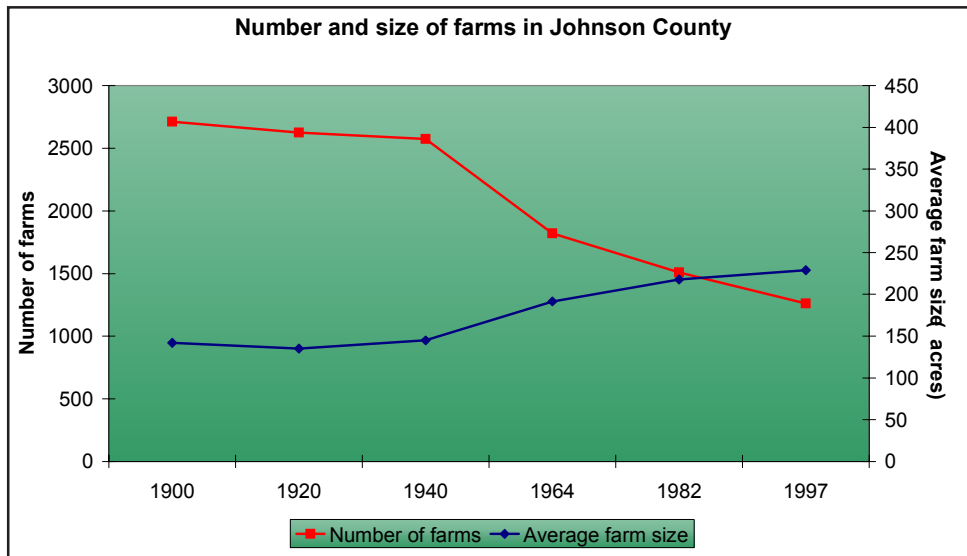


Photo by Matt Russell

Crops and livestock produced for sale on at least 1% of Iowa farms

<u>1920</u>	<u>1935</u>	<u>1945</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1997</u>
Horses	Cattle	Cattle	Corn	Corn	Corn	Corn	Corn
Cattle	Horses	Chickens	Cattle	Cattle	Soybeans	Soybeans	Soybeans
Chickens	Chickens	Corn	Oats	Hogs	Cattle	Cattle	Hay
Corn	Corn	Horses	Chickens	Hay	Hay	Hay	Cattle
Hogs	Hogs	Hogs	Hogs	Soybeans	Hogs	Hogs	Hogs
Apples	Hay	Hay	Hay	Oats	Oats	Oats	Oats
Hay	Potatoes	Oats	Horses	Chickens	Horses	Horses	Horses
Oats	Apples	Apples	Soybeans	Horses	Chickens	Sheep	Sheep
Potatoes	Oats	Soybeans	Potatoes	Sheep	Sheep	Chickens	Chickens
Cherries	Cherries	Grapes	Sheep	Potatoes	Wheat	Ducks	Goats
Wheat	Grapes	Potatoes	Ducks	Wheat	Goats	Goats	
Plums	Plums	Cherries	Apples	Sorghum	Ducks	Wheat	
Grapes	Sheep	Peaches	Cherries	Red Clover			
Ducks	Peaches	Sheep	Peaches	Apples			
Geese	Pears	Plums	Goats	Ducks			
Strawberries	Mules	Pears	Goats	Goats			
Pears	Ducks	Red Clover	Grapes	Geese			
Mules	Wheat	Mules	Pears				
Sheep	Geese	Strawberries	Plums				
Timothy	Sorghum	Ducks	Wheat				
Peaches	Barley	Wheat	Red clover				
Bees	Red Clover	Geese	Geese				
Barley	Strawberries	Timothy	Popcorn				
Raspberry	Soybeans	Geese	Timothy				
Turkeys	Raspberry	Rye	Sweet potato				
Watermelon	Bees	Popcorn	Sweet corn				
Sorghum	Timothy	Sweet Corn	Turkeys				
Gooseberry	Turkeys	Raspberry					
Sweet Corn	Rye	Bees					
Apricots	Popcorn	Sorghum					
Tomatoes	Sweet Corn						
Cabbage	Sweet Clover						
Popcorn	Goats						
Currants							

Does Johnson County reflect these trends?

Or are there additional crops and livestock grown today in Johnson County?

Grown on more than 50% of Iowa farms
Grown on 15-49% of Iowa farms
 Grown on less than 15% of Iowa farms

What are the possibilities for 2020?

Source: Michael Carolan, Sociology Department, Iowa State University. Data from U.S. Census of Agriculture

How has farming changed in Johnson County?

One way to see change on the farming landscape is to follow the history of different agricultural commodities. We chose six products that have continued to be important commodities in Midwestern agriculture and whose place in Johnson County has changed significantly since 1929. We also looked at fruit and vegetable production.

How has technology in agriculture affected people's choices of food?

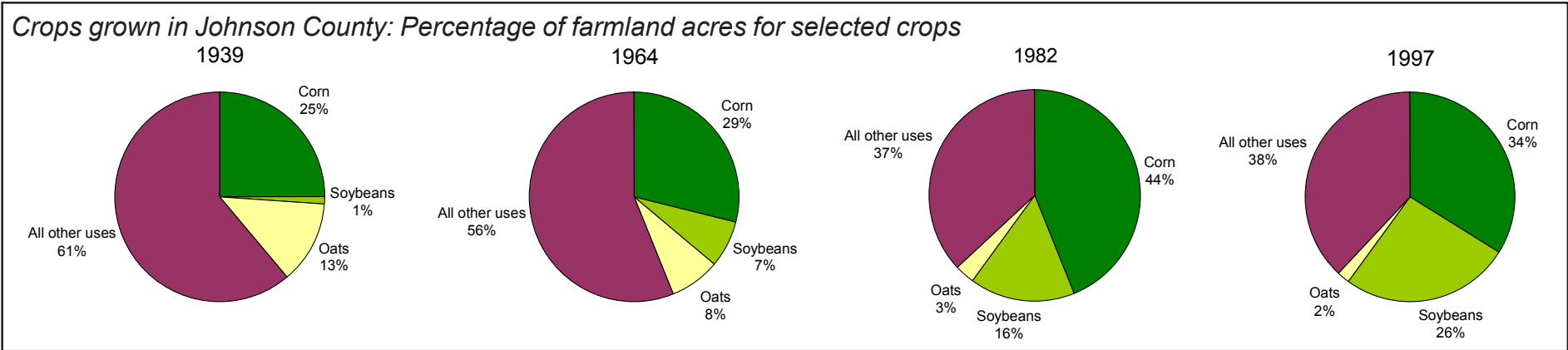
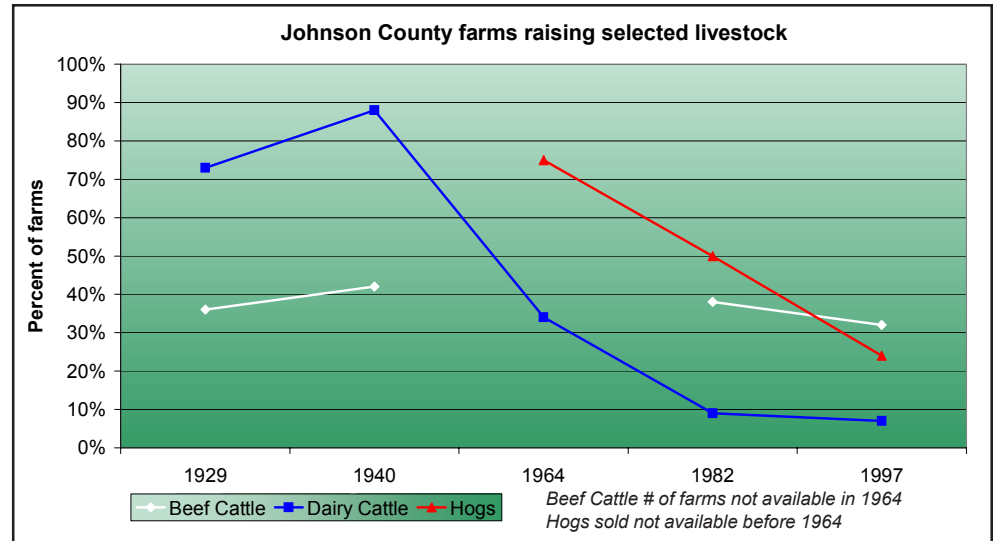
The charts and graphs of census data on these two pages show some of the significant changes in land use, crop diversity, and livestock production patterns. The proportion of Johnson County

farms with livestock has significantly declined since 1940, especially for dairy cattle and hogs. Soybeans have increased from 1,179 acres in 1929 to 76,018 acres in 1997.

The percentage of combined acres for corn and soybeans remained the same from 1982 to 1997 at 60 percent, although the percentage of soybean acres increased and corn acres decreased. The percentage of acres for "other uses" actually grew by a modest

one percent from 1982, in contrast to statewide trends for the same period.

Agriculture in Johnson County presents farmers, landowners, beginning farmers, communities, and the landscape with challenges and opportuni-



ties. Do different production and marketing practices hold some promise for creating new opportunities?

In the past, many farms in Johnson County and around the state raised fruits and vegetables both for home use and sale. The box to the right shows the diversity of fruits and vegetables that were harvested for sale in 1929 on two or more Johnson County farms.

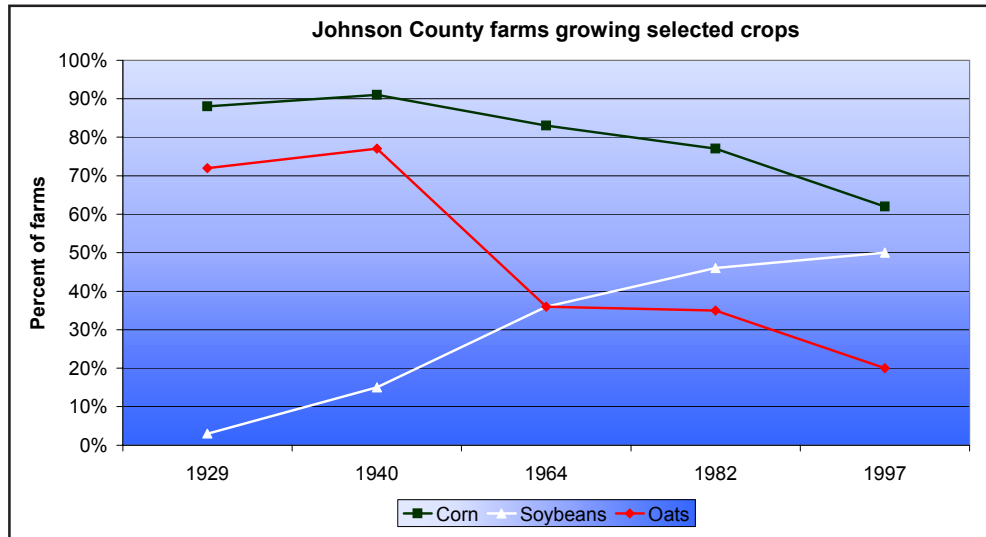
The 1997 Census of Agriculture records 25 farms with land in orchards and 27 farms growing fruits and vegetables for sale. These crops include asparagus, snap beans, lettuce, sweet peppers, pumpkins, squash, sweet corn, tomatoes, apples,

apricots, cherries, grapes, peaches, pears, plums, raspberries, and strawberries. Reporting such quantity and variety of fruit and vegetable production in the 1997 Census of Agriculture sets Johnson County apart from most Iowa counties and may be evidence of the impact of Johnson County's Amish farmers. This list of produce, although shorter, shows some similarity to the bounty harvested in 1929.

Certainly the situation today is different than in 1929, but do possibilities exist for locally grown produce to become an even more significant part of Johnson

What would it take to increase fruit and vegetable production in Johnson County?

County's food and agriculture? What other foods and farm products could connect Johnson County dining tables with Johnson County farms?



Fruits and vegetables grown for sale on at least two Johnson County farms in 1929:

- | | | |
|--------------|-------------|----------------|
| Potatoes | Asparagus | Sweet potatoes |
| Lettuce | Beans | Cabbages |
| Cantaloupes | Peas | Cucumbers |
| Onions | Sweet Corn | Spinach |
| Watermelons | Tomatoes | Cherries |
| Peaches | Grapes | Apricots |
| Blackberries | Pecans | Gooseberries |
| Apples | Raspberries | Pears |
| Strawberries | Currants | Plums |

Which of these are still or could be grown in Johnson County today?

What about food processing & retailing in Johnson County?

While recreating the past is not possible, Johnson County's rich food production, processing, and retailing history highlights local assets and offers some clues about what might be possible in the future.

Coralville has a particularly strong history of local food production, processing, and retailing. In the 1850's, with a mill on the Iowa River, Coralville began processing flour. In the early to mid 1900's, although Coralville no longer produced flour, several small farms in and around Coralville provided fruits and vegetables for Johnson County markets.

"There were a lot of small truck gardens [in Coralville] then...they raised all the fruits and vegetables for the Iowa City area...and took it to Means Bros. grocery...and White Way and all those grocery stores that were all downtown."

--Dean Rammelsberg who worked on Ferrel Ambrose's farm near Coralville as quoted in the book *Coralville, The Rest of the Story*.

The Goosetown area of Iowa City has a rich history of vegetable gardens, orchards, grape arbors, and backyard poultry cooperatives.

Goosetown residents also purchased orchard fruits, eggs, butter, milk and other products directly from the neighboring Irish Estate Farms.

Fresh Cheese Curds



Located in the southwest corner of the county, the Twin County Dairy is one of the few cheese manufacturing plants still operating in Iowa. The business was started in 1946 when a group of Amish and Mennonite farmers organized to build a cheese factory. The Roetlin family purchased the plant in 1967 and continues to buy milk from local dairy farms to produce award winning cheeses.

Rural and urban communities across Iowa are now successfully growing and marketing fresh produce and meats to restaurants and institutions. Each year, one restaurant in Waterloo buys nearly \$150,000 of products direct from local farmers and lockers.

In Johnson County, 25 grocery stores, several nursing homes, school districts, and more than 174 restaurants are possible markets for local



Photo by Shelly Gradwell

foods. Several small towns in the county have grocery stores. In Iowa City and Coralville, the New Pioneer Coop continues a commitment to purchase products from local farmers. Through the Johnson County Local Food Project, Carol Hunt has linked farmers in the county with several grocery and restaurant markets, including the University of Iowa.



Where are opportunities for local marketing?

Because it is vital for life itself, food is crucial in our market economy. Therefore, people argue that marketing possibilities for food are endless. While this may be true in theory, marketing food is difficult, especially in our society where food is so often taken for granted.

Fortunately, many people are finding ways to grow and sell food directly to consumers. National trends indicate a growing demand for food purchased directly from farmers. Advantages of food that travels more directly from the farm to the table include freshness, nutrition, quality, taste, and accountability. Increasingly people are interested in knowing about the source of their food.

Some of the products that are grown, marketed, or processed in Johnson County:

Eggs, cheese, honey, milk, specialty beef, pork, lamb, goat, poultry, and bison products, baked goods, jams, jellies, breads, wood, animal fiber, wheat, sorghum

Examples of how Iowa farmers sell directly include farmers' markets, roadside stands, community supported agriculture (CSA), and sales to restaurants, nursing homes, and schools. Often, farmers work together in alliances or cooperative relationships. Legal, economic, marketing, and regulatory issues pose real barriers and significant risks. However, the benefits of such entrepreneurship are proving to be significant for both farmers and consumers. Community and environmental benefits also develop when farmers and consumers become more connected.

Trends such as specialization and concentration in agriculture are creating a global food system in which corporations benefit more than farmers. Farmers, retailers, processors, and consumers can work together to revitalize community food systems starting by building local markets. These efforts see community food systems being based on local assets that create opportunities to support local communities.



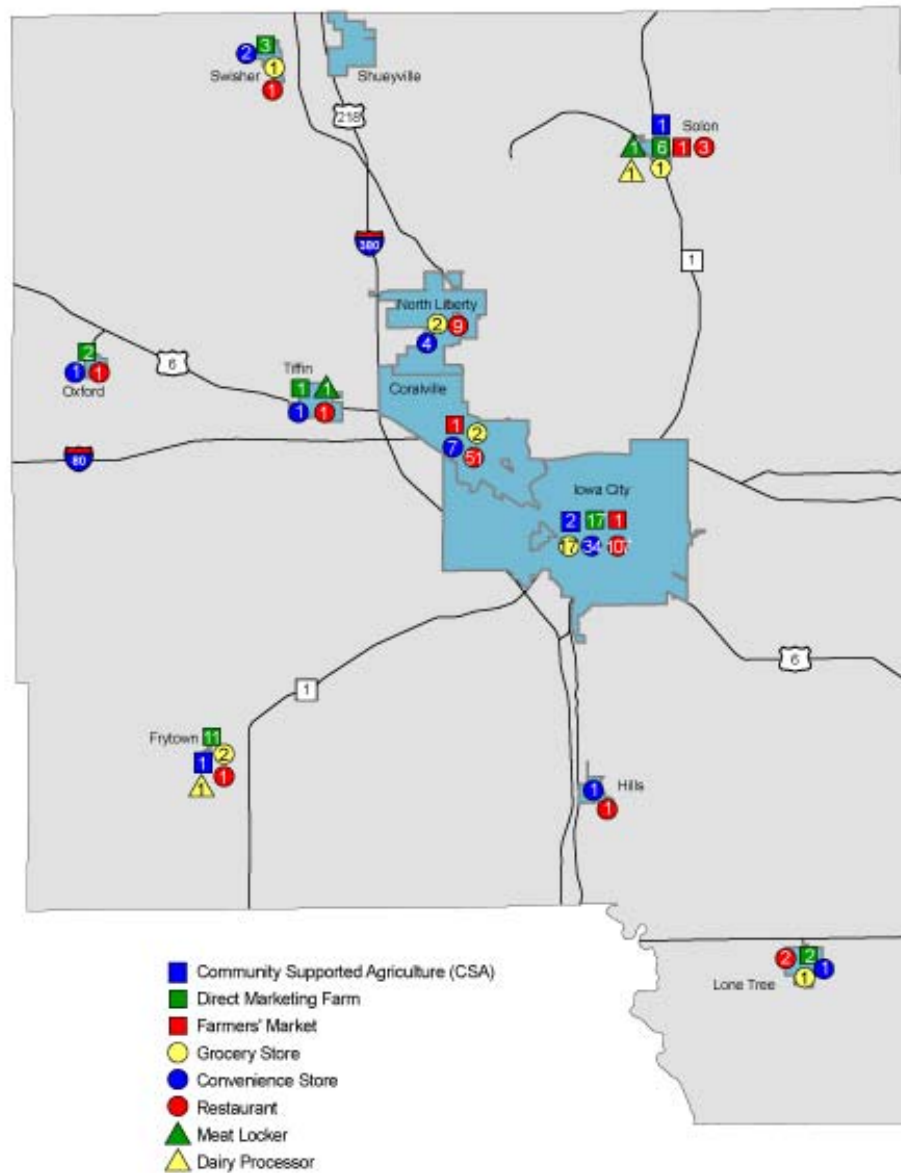
Johnson County Local Food Systems Project

Direct Marketing of Food in Iowa

Total Iowa	1992	1997
Farms direct marketing	2,235	2,174
Total value of sales	\$5,382,000	\$7,475,000

Source: 1997 Census of Agriculture. Value of agricultural products sold directly to individuals for human consumption in Iowa.

Where can people buy food in Johnson County?



Note: Numbers inside shapes indicate the number of such enterprises located in or associated with that community.

This food system map only tells part of the story for Johnson County. People can buy food from additional places in the county. For example, hospitals and schools usually have cafeterias that sell meals. Catering services may or may not be included on the map. Bed and breakfasts serving meals can potentially add value to local produce and meat products.

Many communities have food-buying clubs where people pool their food needs with others in order to create a demand large enough to reap discounts or improved service. As the largest food retailer in the U.S. now, Walmart demonstrates that stores with general merchandise may also sell a great deal of food.

Hospitals, restaurants, and other institutional food services are increasing the amount of local food they serve and grocery stores have increased their marketing of local products. The components of your community food system mentioned on this page give a sense of the number and diversity of opportunities for those with a stake in the business of eating.

Where else can people get food in the county?

Across the nation, people obtain food in ways other than buying at a grocery store or market. While hunger still persists in America, there are many publicly and privately funded programs to combat it. In Johnson County, these programs can benefit everyone, from the very young to the very old. The programs are usually based on financial need, but they fill other community needs as well. The challenge is to increase the benefits of these services throughout the county.

Some things, like neighbors lending a helping hand or backyard gardens, are difficult to map. But they have real benefits. What strategies can be designed to develop these networks of support and self-reliance?

Other services are much easier to identify. Governmental programs provide commodities

and funding for local services. These funds and food services make such programs as school lunch, Congregate Meals, nursing home food service, and Head Start meals possible throughout the county. However, the benefits are only remotely related to the county's agriculture. Very little food grown in the county makes it into these programs. Across the country and in Iowa, people are starting to connect local production to these programs.

The Farmers Market Nutrition Programs for WIC and for seniors are two additional examples of connecting local farming with local food needs. These programs allow at-risk residents to use federal money to purchase fresh produce from farmers' markets. The result is increased demand at farmers' markets and federal money staying in

the community to be spent again.

Members of Johnson County's Local Harvest CSA subsidize the cost of shares providing fresh produce for low-income families.

What are the possibilities for developing a more integrated community food security plan that benefits the entire community--program participants, farmers, and local businesses?



Gardens provide people in the county with healthy food for very little money.

Some Extra-market Food Resources in Johnson County

SHARE Iowa: reduced price box of food in exchange for volunteer efforts

Senior Dining and Home Delivered Meals: federal, state, and local subsidized meals for seniors

Nursing homes: commodities and programs for meals

Head Start: federal meal/snack program for preschool children

School lunch: federal program for school

children, can include breakfast and snacks

Table to Table: Non-profit food rescue and distribution program (Iowa City, Coralville)

WIC (Women, Infants and Children): food assistance, includes Farmers Market Nutrition Program

Farmers Market Nutrition Program for Seniors: one time program combining federal funds for food purchases with state funds for administration

Food Stamps: federal program providing food assistance coupons based on financial need

Community Garden Plots (Iowa City)

Food Pantries (Iowa City)

Adopt a Family CSA Membership (Local Harvest CSA)

How are food and agriculture promoted and celebrated in Johnson County?

Promoting and celebrating food and agriculture are important ways to build community spirit and educate people about the importance of local food systems.

Johnson County provides a wide variety of education programs, tours, and celebrations to promote food and agriculture in the area.

The Johnson County Fair is held in Iowa City each July. Through 4-H and FFA projects, the fair continues a long tradition of youth-education about food and agriculture.

Local Harvest CSA hosts seasonal celebrations, farm tours, and potlucks for members.

As the Johnson County Local Food Project Coordinator, Carol Hunt coordinates a local food information table at the Iowa City Farmers' Market and has organized several public events



Johnson County Local Food Systems Project

including an All Iowa Harvest Party to promote and celebrate Johnson County-grown food, prepared by local chefs. Carol and the Johnson County Soil and Water Conservation District have also hosted workshops aimed at helping



Johnson County Local Food Systems Project

people develop local food systems.

The Iowa Slow Food Convivium coordinated by Johnson County Chef Kurt Friese, is part of a

60,000 member international group that “promotes the beneficial effects of the deliberate consumption of nutritious locally grown and indigenous foods.”

Several Iowa City restaurants not only serve locally-grown cuisine, but also promote those local growers right on their menus.

Johnson County Extension hosts an annual Ag Festival, designed to give people a view of where

their food comes from. Visitors can enjoy food samples from the farm, observe displays of farm machinery, and take the kids to a farm animal petting zoo. The Johnson County Master Gardeners also host a variety of educational meetings and events.

Each summer, visitors to Plum Grove Historic Farm, in Iowa City can walk through the re-created kitchen gardens of Friendly Lucas, wife of Iowa’s first territorial governor.

Many local residents visit Bock’s Berry Farm in Lone Tree. The diversified farm provides pre-picked or pick-your-own apples, berries, pumpkins and Christmas trees along with a petting zoo and a gift barn.



Photo by Bob Atha

How are people making community food systems work?

Johnson County Local Food Systems Project

In 1999, Carol Hunt initiated and began coordinating this innovative project with the support of the Johnson County Soil and Water Conservation District and Johnson County Extension. Carol coordinates an institutional buying project to help restaurants and similar institutions in Iowa City and Coralville to buy more of their food from local producers. In 2000, 10 local growers sold products to 7 restaurants in the area. Carol also compiles a directory of food producers in the Johnson County area and organizes a variety of educational events to promote local food systems.

“[Buying food locally is] a way of keeping money in Iowa’s economy. It’s a way to give farmers an opportunity to earn additional income. It gives consumers access to very fresh, high quality food. And I think that when consumers buy food directly from the producer, it can strengthen the consumer’s connection with the food, with the land it was grown on and with the people who raised it.” --Carol Hunt

Local Harvest Community Supported Agriculture

Local Harvest CSA, formed in 1997, is a group of small family farms that markets a variety of products to families in southeast Iowa, centering on Iowa City. The farms are mostly organic or chemical-free, and growers are committed to “supporting local farms and farm families, preserving and building the soil for the future, and providing wholesome food directly to the consumer.”

The Zacharakis-Jutz family farm produces vegetables, goat cheese, and pasture-fed lamb and pork. The Alvarez family provides bread, free-range eggs, pastured-veal, goat meat, and fresh flowers to CSA members.

The CSA farmers host themed celebrations for members, including a preserving and garlic-braiding party and a harvest party. Members are also encouraged to visit the farms and help out if they wish, and are even encouraged to have input into planning the year’s crop or suggesting new vegetables.



Local Harvest CSA

Simone’s Plain and Simple Artisan Bread & Farm Fresh Products



Simone Alvarez is the proprietor of a farm-based restaurant near Frytown. She obtains many of the necessary ingredients from her own garden and farm in Johnson County, including fresh vegetables for wood oven-baked pizzas and fruits for desserts.

The outdoor oven is also used for baking specialty artisan bread, which is served at the restaurant and sold to local customers through the Local Harvest CSA and is also made available at the Farmers’ Market and Devotay restaurant in Iowa City.

What about economics in Johnson County's food systems?



Current Production Situation

In 2000, Johnson County sold \$97,413,000 of farm products and received government payments of \$19,473,000. Net farm income was \$13,406,000.

In 2000, Johnson County's farmers spent \$107,670,000 raising farm products. Many of these purchases were made from distant rather than local suppliers.

Opportunities

Local grain and livestock farmers can meet changing regional demands more quickly than large international corporations. Focusing on local and regional markets is a way for Johnson County farmers to find ways to distinguish their specialty products and add value to bring higher economic returns.

Current Consumption Situation

Each year, consumers spend more than \$218 million at food stores and more than \$136 on eating and drinking away from home in Johnson County. Even though some of these food purchasers are currently made by people from outside the county, there are many additional ways to capture more of the value of these food dollars for the Johnson County economy.

If just *five percent* of the food purchased by Johnson County residents came from local farms, this would generate more than *17 million dollars* per year for Johnson County farmers, businesses, and entrepreneurs. This money would stay longer in the community instead of moving rapidly out of the county.

Opportunities

If farmers, processors, store owners, restaurants, nursing homes, hospitals and schools worked together to create more community-based food systems, the food dollars could further multiply in the local economy to create a more thriving Johnson County.



Some Community Food Systems Resources

Iowa

Ecumenical Ministries of Iowa, Des Moines, 515-255-5905, www.iowachurches.org

Agricultural Law Center, Drake University, Des Moines, (800) 44-DRAKE x2824 or (515) 271-2824, www.law.drake.edu/centers/agLawCenter.

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS), Bureau of Horticulture and Farmers' Markets, 515-242-5043, Direct Marketing Specialist, 515-281-8232. www.agriculture.state.ia.us/horticulture.htm

Iowa Local Food Systems homepage, www.ialocalfood.org

Iowa Network for Community Agriculture (INCA), Jan Libbey, Coordinator, 641-495-6367, libland@frontiernet.net

ISU Extension Value Added Agriculture Program, 515-294-6946, www.extension.iastate.edu/Pages/valag

Iowa State Sustainable Agriculture Extension Program, Dr. Jerry DeWitt and Margaret Smith, 515-294-1923, <http://extension.agron.iastate.edu/sustag>

ISU Organic Agronomy/Horticulture Program, Dr. Kathleen Delate, 515-294-7069, kdelate@iastate.edu, <http://extension.agron.iastate.edu/organicag>

Taste of Iowa, atasteofiowa@ided.state.ia.us, www.atasteofiowa.org

Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa State University, 515-294-3711, leocenter@iastate.edu, www.ag.iastate.edu/centers/leopold

National Catholic Rural Life Conference, Des Moines, Carol R. Smith, Director of Community Resources for the Ligutti Rural Community Support Program, 515-270-2634, csnrcrc@aol.com, www.ncrlc.com.

Practical Farmers of Iowa, Robert Karp, Gary Huber or Rick Hartmann, 515-232-5661, robert@practicalfarmers.org, www.pfi.iastate.edu/PFIhomenew.htm

Slow Food, Iowa City, Kurt Friese, 319-337-7885, SlowFoodIowa@Devotay.com, www.devotay.com/SlowFoodIowa%20Main.htm

Women, Food, and Agriculture Network, Denise O'Brien, Coordinator, 59624 Chicago Rd., Atlantic, IA 50022, 712-243-3264, hnob@metc.net

Regional and National

Alternative Farming Systems Information Center, National Agricultural Library, Rm 304, 10301 Baltimore Ave, Beltsville MD 20705-2351. 301-504-6559

Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS), 1450 Linden Drive, Rm 146, UW Madison, Madison WI 53706. 608-262-5200, www.wisc.edu/cias

Community Food Security Coalition, P.O. Box 209, Venice, CA 90294. 310-822-5410, www.foodsecurity.org

Land Stewardship Project, 2200 Fourth Street, White Bear Lake, MN 55110, 651-653-0618, www.landstewardshipproject.org.

Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, W2493 County Rd ES, East Troy, WI 53120. 262-642-3303, Fax: 262-642-4028

Small Farm Program, USDA, Cooperative State, Research, Education, and Extension Service Stop 2215, Washington, D.C. 20250-2215. 800-583-3071. smallfarm@reeusda.gov, www.reeusda.gov/smallfarm

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SARE), USDA, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Stop 2223, Washington, D.C. 20250-2223. 202-720-5203, www.sare.org

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program—North Central Region (NCSARE), University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 13A Activities Bldg., P.O. Box 830840, Lincoln, NE 68583-0840. 402-472-7081, www.sare.org/ncrsare

Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN), Hills Building, Room 10, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405, www.sare.org

USDA Farmer Direct Marketing Website www.ams.usda.gov/directmarketing



Photo by Bob Atha

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U.S. Census of Population and Housing 1900-2000.

PROfiles

Iowa State University
Department of Economics
<http://ia.profiles.iastate.edu>

Coralville: A Small Town Grows Up by Anne Beiser Allen. 1998. Johnson County Historical Society.

Coralville: The Rest of the Story. Johnson County Historical Society.

Leading Events in Johnson County, Iowa History by Aurner, 1912

“Comparing Apples to Apples: An Iowa perspective on apples and local food systems.”
Rich Pirog, Education Coordinator
Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture
www.ag.iastate.edu/centers/leopold

Farm Fresh Directory and
Iowa Family Farm Meats Directory
Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land
Stewardship www.agriculture.state.ia.us

Local Harvest CSA brochure

Slow Food brochure

A Tree Walk in Goosetown. Heritage Tree Program. Civic Center, Iowa City, Iowa.

For more information about this community food systems study of Audubon, Benton, Johnson, and Marshall counties in Iowa, please contact Clare Hinrichs, Dept. of Sociology, East Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011. September 2002.

This county food system atlas is one product of an action research project (2000-69) funded by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture and directed by Dr. Clare Hinrichs, Dept. of Sociology, Iowa State University. The three-year project has involved assembly of secondary data and primary field research about multiple facets of community food system development and change in four Iowa counties. A “community food system” may not perfectly match a county’s borders, but counties are still good places to begin due to the availability of county-level data and prevalence of county organizations and affiliations in Iowa. ISU researchers and people working in and concerned about agriculture and food in this county came together at a workshop held the first half of 2002 to discuss information and ideas in an early draft of the atlas. The workshop experience promoted dialogue and improved shared understandings of the county’s food system. The present version of the atlas incorporates comments and concerns of community members and ISU researchers.

Credits

Research and assembly by Shelly Gradwell, Matt Russell, and Wendy VanDyke Evans, Iowa State University.

Geographic Information Systems Maps
by Patrick Brown, GIS Analyst
Iowa State University GIS Lab.

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