In Southwest Iowa and Southeast Nebraska
COMPONENTS OF OUR REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM

We work to build a sustainable regional food system that links local food production, processing, distribution, and consumption for

- better health
- Increased food security
- Stronger, vibrant communities
- Local economic development

This food system supports long-term connections between farmers and consumers while helping to meet the health, social, economic and environmental needs of communities within the foodshed.

Our communities work to link producers and markets by rebuilding efficient infrastructures that:

- promote environmental health;
- encourage humane livestock production
- provide competitive advantages to local food: producers, processors and retailers;
- inspire identification with our region’s culture, history and ecology; and
- share risks and rewards equitably among all partners in the system.
To break down the rural vs. urban competition, we collaborate openly and build transparent, equitable and just dialogue between all stakeholders.

Our urban and rural communities share more characteristics than we are led to believe:

- Infrastructure decay
- Investment decline
- Poor educational attainment
- Transportation struggles
- Increased poverty
- Lack of food access and high rates of food insecurity

Our shared goals, once recognized, are to improve the health and wellness of our region’s residents through increased access to locally grown food and to foster economic activity through the development of regional food systems.
In southwest Iowa, consumers spend more than $370 million on food each year.

More than 95% of that food is sourced from outside the region.

If local food producers were to capture only 15% of the food market that would be more than $55 million in local food sales.

This money, being closely linked to the community; is likely to recirculate before leaving the region. As opposed to the roughly 95% of the $370 Million that leaves the region the instant it is spent.
NEW TECHNOLOGY & YEAR ROUND PRODUCTION

As we work to develop community-based food systems, work must be done to replace lost abilities, skills, and knowledge. Jobs in place based agriculture tend to be long-term, family friendly, stable and equitable.

Locally-owned-import-substitution economic development supports new technology jobs in:

- Specialty crop production
- Grass based livestock systems
- Horticulture
- Business management
- High tunnel & greenhouse design, engineering and construction
- Alternative energy systems
- Soil science & Alternative growing media
- Bio fuels engine development, maintenance
- Refrigeration
- Food Safety
- Processing
- Distribution
- Aggregation
The role of County Supervisors in:

- Encouraging non-traditional agriculture and food systems as economic development
- Land use planning to include local and regional food systems
- Examining policies to ensure fair and equitable support for micro-entrepreneurs i.e. Story City Locker
FOR MORE INFORMATION

Additional Publications:
http://foodsystems.msu.edu/

http://iowafoodsystems council.org/

http://www.planning.org/search/results.html?Keyword=local+food+systems

http://www.uwyo.edu/winwyoming/pubs/healthyland%20healthyfood%20healthyeaters.pdf


http://www.crcworks.org/?submit=articles
Bahia Nightengale  
Local Food Systems & Community Development Consultant  
heartlandlocalfood@gmail.com

Melvyn Houser  
Pottawattamie County, Iowa  
Board of Supervisors  
melvyn.houser@pottcounty.com