

CCNet
Local Foods Discussion Group
7/20/10
9 Attendees
Location: Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance

Tour of Prosperity Garden on North First Street

- Kids in troubled youth program tend the garden and sell the produce at the North First St farmers market.
- \$15,000 to get started: from City of Champaign. Paid for raised beds, fence and concrete pad for cooking demos

Update on the North First St Market

- Received \$1,000 from Lumpkin Foundation and \$500 from Provena to provide double value for food stamps.
- About \$350 in food stamp sales so far (average of maybe \$150/week). Urbana market averages about \$400/week.

Buy Fresh, Buy Local (<http://www.ilstewards.org/content/3977>)

- Is this underway in C-U?

Grains

- Do any of the markets sell grains in bulk? No. Common Ground offers bulk grains.
- Regulation issues: if you mill grain on the farm, you are classified as a processor.
- Industrial Harvest: an effort underway in Chicago to give away grains milled in IN <http://www.industrialharvest.com/>

Other resources mentioned:

- Stewards of the Land: interesting way of selling farm produce to consumers (<http://www.thestewardsoftheland.com/>)
- Environmental Working Group: data on farm subsidies (<http://farm.ewg.org/>)
- Unnatural Causes: linking health to wealth (<http://www.unnaturalcauses.org/>)

Refining the topic of Local Foods

Melia led an exercise for the group, where we list out the categories that we would like to explore under local foods. This topic group is preparing to split into two related, but different, sections: "local foods" and "community health".

Suppliers/Producers

- How do we increase crop diversity in the region
- How can we expand regional food production

Demand

- individual
- institutional

Equitable Trade

- cost of food vs. value

Local Food as Economic Driver

Innovations in food production and storage

"Local" vs. "Organic"

Policy and Regulation
Local Opportunities and Challenges

Food processing

Business Models

Local Networks

- community gardens
- community leaders
- community efforts
- who the players are

Who's missing from this discussion?

- farmers/producers
- policy makers
- educators
- distributors
- businesses
- objectors

- Rural King garden
- can we help promote this better?
- who are the early adopters?

Check out this great resource on sugar content in foods: www.sugarstacks.com

New program on WILL led by Lisa Bralts: In My Backyard

<http://will.illinois.edu/agriculture/inmybackyard-item>

Great new posts every week!

How can we alter land use in our region from monocrop production to variety?

New kind of greenhouse being used in China

- very thick north wall made out of clay or stone to hold in heat
- sheet of plastic on south side to invite sunlight and heat in
- insulated cover placed on at night
- extends seasons and holds heat very well without any augmentation

Biochar Symposium at ISTC Sept 1

- from wikipedia: The burning and natural decomposition of trees and agricultural matter contributes a large amount of CO₂ released to the atmosphere. Biochar can store this carbon in the ground, potentially making a significant reduction in atmospheric GHG levels; at the same time its presence in the earth can improve water quality, increase soil fertility, raise agricultural productivity and reduce pressure on old-growth forests.
- One of ISTC's initiatives: <http://www.istc.illinois.edu/research/biochar.cfm>
- link between food, farm and energy
- "carbon-neutral": actually removing carbon from the atmosphere and storing it in the soil even as it nutrifies the soil
- Watch a 2-minute video here: <http://www.biochar.org/joomla/>

Ideas for activities or meeting topics?

- visit the student sustainable farm
- learn about the Sustainable Homestead project from Wes Jarrell
- visit Tiny Greens, a hydroponic farm with lots of water use innovations
- Blue Moon farms – learn about their business model

Next meeting:

Tuesday, July 20

Land of Lincoln Legal Assistance

302 N First St, Champaign

5:30pm