



**HEALTHY
HARVEST
of North Iowa**

Bites from Healthy Harvest of North Iowa

Winter 2018

The Gathering: Coming Together Around Local Food on Feb. 24th

Our local food movement is growing and it's time to bring it all together and celebrate. Presented in partnership by Healthy Harvest of North Iowa, Ag Ventures Alliance, One Vision, and the North Iowa Corridor Economic Development Corporation (EDC), this new event aims to be **an interactive gathering that inspires and promotes a deeper understanding of how to engage in the local food system.**



Through workshops, keynote address, and a Marketplace feature, North Iowans will have an opportunity to really get to know North Iowa's local food scene. New relationships and insights gained from the day will provide further fuel to the energy of this local food movement.

All this will be happening on **Saturday, February 24th from 8am-1pm at One Vision in Clear Lake.**

Watch for photos and reports from this exciting event on our Facebook page and website:
www.healthyharvestni.com/thegathering.

A New Way to Network: The NI Local Food Connection

Thanks to a Rural Business Development Grant, we have started a business networking group called the North Iowa Local Food Connection. This group will convene regular meetings of local food business owners allowing participants to identify and prioritize topics for business management focused seminars, workshops, field days, and consulting opportunities. We have hosted two meetings and a social meet up thus far, and are planning a **Social Media Workshop to be held March 25 at NIACC in Mason City.** *See our website for more details!*



Farm to School in North Iowa



Energy is building around Farm to School programing at schools across North Iowa! **A USDA Planning Grant application was submitted in December** in partnership between West Fork School District,

Hampton-Dumont CAL School District, Mason City Community Schools, Cerro Gordo County Dept. of Public Health and Healthy Harvest of North Iowa. **A School Gardens 101 training is being led by ISU Extension in Franklin County** to build on the work currently being done to create holistic school garden plans that will engage facility, staff, and student participation across the districts for increased sustainability and success. Finally, Clear Lake and Mason City Community Schools, were selected as one of ten districts to participate in a project that will craft a plan to significantly increase Farm to School purchases from Iowa farms during October's Farm to School Month, hosted by the ISU Extension and Outreach Local Foods Team!

Our Work Is Stronger Because of the Support We Have from These Sponsors

POET Biorefining of Hanlontown, Hearing Associates Ltd of Mason City., County Board of Supervisors in Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Franklin, Mitchell, Winnebago, and Worth Counties, CL Tel, First Bank Hampton, and, Comm1net.

2018 North Iowa Local Food Guide Sign-Ups Happening Now!



We're currently collecting submissions for businesses to be in our 2018 North Iowa Local Food Guide. Listings can be for producers, buyers, and farmers' markets, with additional advertising opportunities for support businesses. **Each listing is featured in our printed guides as well as our online searchable directory**, making it a great

promotional opportunity. Don't wait, because the final cut off will be **March 1st** for getting in the printed guide!

HH Website Gets a Fresh Look



We are beyond excited to showcase our new website design that features **new navigation** and **increased use of our high-quality producer photos**. The new site includes added tools, such as **the ability to search for local food by zip code**. We are always working to improve our **resource offerings** and keep an **up-to-date events calendar** for all the local food events in the area, so be sure to pop by regularly for all the information!

NI Local Food Coalition Update

North Iowa was well represented at Iowa State's **Community Food System Annual Celebration** this past **January**. Representatives were featured on a panel and two workshop presentations. The Coalition held its February quarterly to review 2017 projects and plan for the 2018 season where it was decided to realign a few priorities **2018 focuses will include: Food Hub, Food Waste, Farm to School, Community Gardens, and Farmers Market support**. The next quarterly meeting will be held in April. Anyone interested in these priorities is invited to join a project team and/or the quarterly meetings! Participation is encouraged!

Producer Profile Highlight



We'd like to celebrate the great work being done in North Iowa by highlighting a local business who we feel is moving that needle. This month we'd like to commend Purple Ribbon Beef from Clarion. Ashley Recknor and family pride themselves on 'raising high quality beef that is corn fed, has no added hormones and non-continuous antibiotics, as well as being age and source verified.' More than that, Ashley is a great advocate for the local food movement in Wright County, has been a core attendee of the Local Food Connection, and is always willing to step up and share her story – whether that's being filmed for our video or on a panel at The Gathering. **Thank you Ashley and family** for your work, and for being a part of this local food system!



Upcoming Events:

Explore our Events Calendar on the HH website for TONS of upcoming trainings and events. Here are a sample:

Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training Course – Thurs. March 29, 8am-5pm at Cerro Gordo County ISU Extension Office in Mason City

High Tunnel Workshop – Tues. April 10, 8:30am – 3:30pm at the North Iowa Fairgrounds' 4-H Learning Center in Mason City, including a tour of the high tunnel at North Iowa Berries.

Get Involved with HHNI



YOU are invited to **join our Programing Committee, become a sponsor, help to lead a local project, and more!** Those interested should contact Jan at 515-851-1690 or jan@healthyharvestni.com.