



## **Finding Local Food**

We all know the importance of buying our purchases locally whether we buy clothing, cars or farm supplies. Buying local products at locally owned businesses keeps money circulating closer to where you spend it. This creates a ripple effect as those businesses and their employees in town in turn spend your money locally.

The same principle applies to your food. Did you know that much of the food we eat travels hundreds of miles before it gets to our plates? A study by the Leopold Center found that 16 common crops that grow in Iowa travel an average of 1494 miles to reach grocery stores here. Bought from local growers, the food traveled only 56 miles.

The 2007 Local Food Directory is one of the tools being used to increase the sale and consumption of locally grown food in Northeast Iowa. In doing this, we hope not only to link consumers with direct marketing farmers, but we also hope to increase the vendors and diversity at local farmers' markets, promote healthy living by connecting consumers with sources of fresh foods, and promote economic vitality in the communities served by this directory.

Research has shown that of each dollar spent at a traditional food market, only 9 cents goes to the producer as compared to a farmer's market where 80-90 cents is retained by the producer. The more funds retained by the producer, the higher the investment back into the local economy.

The Local Food Directories will be distributed in local newspapers and shoppers in the next few weeks. Watch for yours in the mail. Support your local farmers...Buy Fresh, Buy Local!

The purpose of the Northeast Iowa Food & Farm (NIFF) Coalition is to build a stronger local food and farm economy in northeast Iowa. More information about the NIFF Coalition can be found at [www.niffcoalition.org](http://www.niffcoalition.org).