ISSUE STATEMENT:
Consumers’ demand for high quality, safe, differentiated food and fiber products, as well as other ag-related high-value enterprises (such as agri-tourism and processing) are in great demand. Iowa farmers and entrepreneurs have a unique opportunity to produce and process high value products (including but not limited to organic, locally grown, place-based) that have social, environmental, and taste attributes that consumers want. Numerous challenges remain in order for producers to be able to satisfy product and service demand in a manner that assures profitability and sustainability of farms and rural communities. ISU ANR Extension can respond to these critical challenges by providing research, technical assistance, education programs, and business and community facilitation to help farmers, farmer networks, and entrepreneurs develop new and grow existing food, fiber and other ag-related enterprises.

STRATEGIC PURPOSE:

Increase farm profitability by providing farmers and entrepreneurs the tools and information they need to succeed in the markets for highly-differentiated food and fiber products as well as other high-value ag-related businesses.

Decrease nitrate pollution and pesticide loading in the environment through the use of alternative production practices

Provide and strengthen the infrastructure necessary for aggregation, storage, distribution, and marketing of these high-value products such that Iowa competes effectively in differentiated food and fiber value chains and related alternative ag industries.

Increase community, county, and state capacity to support farmers and entrepreneurs engaging in these enterprises

GOALS:
Assist at least 500 Iowa farmers and entrepreneurs in adding a new or enhancing an existing food, fiber, or other high-value ag-related enterprise.

Facilitate a train the trainers project that will provide 100 of these farmers/entrepreneurs with the information and tools to train others

Facilitate the formation of at least 10 community and product-based networks across the state

Increase the number of agricultural food or fiber businesses in at least 10 Iowa communities

Increase urban-rural interactions and understanding of value of agriculture; including its benefits and the issues it faces
**APPROACHES FOR BEHAVIOR CHANGE:**
Provide reliable documentation through research and demonstration that production, processing, and marketing of highly-differentiated food and fiber (and other enterprises) will yield significant economic, environmental, community, and life-style benefits to Iowans

Identify financial and technical resources for new enterprise development

Encourage regional networking for mutual support of highly-differentiated product enterprises

**Target Audience**
Mid-size, small, beginning, and non-traditional farmers (could be “U-turners”)
Community and government leaders
Lenders
Vo-ag and community college teachers

**ACTIVITIES**
Provide additional business and value chain training to ANR Field staff

Conduct new business enterprise training workshops with several partner organizations

Highlight successful case studies (such as Amish)
Tours (field days)
Programs that develop and match market skills and “business savvy” with business opportunities
Facilitate creation of supply networks
Distilling non-peer-reviewed literature into credible information for clients to easily use

**How to measure success**
Working with ag census, determine changes in high-value farm enterprises over five-year period
Number of profitable new food, fiber and other ag-related enterprises started among clients
Measured reduction in fertilizer and pesticide use
Number of clients that have appropriate decision-making skills to start or end enterprises
Socioeconomic impact in communities (to be determined)
Percent of Iowa-grown food purchased by Iowa institutions (including colleges, school, restaurants, hospitals, etc.)

**KEY CONSIDERATIONS:** (OK to express as questions. Other key considerations may be substituted or added)

**Potential resources and sources of funds:**
$ - Financial
USDA – SARE, IOP, RMA, NRI, RD, CFSP, SBIR, Value-Added
Farm Bureau, EPA, community, regional, and national foundations (Kellogg)
Leopold Center, Pappajohn, SBDC, CVC

**Technical**
ATTRA, ISU OP, Leopold Center, nonprofits, Extension VA, successful business models
Potential impacts (positive and negative) if ISU ANR fails to take action:

**Negative**
- Losing the farm
- Competition for resources

Positive or negative - ISU reputation

Positive - Diversification leading to food security and community vitality

**Collaborators, contributors, participants:**
- IDALS, PFI, INCA, IOA, LCSA, Farm Bureau, Merchandisers, other higher ed institutions, high school vo ag, local economic development, other private businesses

**Synergy and/or conflict with existing or related programs:**

**Synergy**
- ISU OP, Beginning Farmer Center, Leopold Center ISU Sustag Extension, Papajohn Center, ISU VA Extension, College of Business, CVC, ISU Food service, Pork and Beef Centers, Energy Center, SBDC, CDFIN, CIRAS, BioEconomy Initiative, Family and Consumer Science
- NRCS, RC&Ds, non-profits

**Conflict**
- IDALS (Ag Innovation)
- Staff resources versus potential benefits of the enterprise to Iowa
- FSA (cropland conversion)
- RC&D, NRCS, nonprofits

**Relationship and contribution to other ISU ANR priority issues:**

ALL PRIORITY ISSUES

Especially Beginning farmers, natural resources, and economic development, rural-urban