



# IOWA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND LAND STEWARDSHIP

PATTY JUDGE  
SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

## Fresh News

Winter - Spring 2002

### The Farmers' Market Newsletter

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#### The 2002 Farmers' Market Managers/Organizers Workshop



*Photo by Barbara Lovitt*

Bob Chorney, Executive Director, Farmers' Markets Ontario – Guest Speaker

*“Excellent”, “Stimulating”, Dynamic”, “Exciting”, “Tons of great ideas”, “Great Workshop”*

These are just a few comments from the 2002 Iowa Farmers' Market Managers/Organizers Workshop held at the Des Moines Botanical Center on Saturday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Workshop attendees were treated to nearly a full day of information from Bob Chorney, Executive Director, Farmers' Markets Ontario.

Speaking to a packed house, Bob presented information on the importance of developing community partnerships for successful markets, effective product presentation and signage, value added products at the market, and a special presentation of his organization's \$1.1 million dollar marketing campaign for Ontario's farmers' markets called "Project Impact". (Cont. on page 2)

(Cont. Workshop)

Interspersed throughout his lively and animated presentations, Bob provided a slide presentation and several videos pertaining to his topics.

Workshop participants left the meeting with new ideas, renewed enthusiasm and fresh visions for their own markets for the upcoming season.

## Specialty Crops Grants Awarded to Five Iowa Farmers' Markets

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) received \$600,000 from the federal emergency supplemental farm assistance bill that was passed by Congress in August of 2001. These funds were to be used to assist agriculture with a priority given to "specialty crops."

IDALS has many programs that are under-funded at either the state or federal level, so there were plenty of ways these funds could be used. Secretary Judge decided to allocate the funds in the following manner. The first \$250,000 is being used by IDALS to maintain many of its programs dealing with specialty crops such as:

- Funding administrative costs for the Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs
- Funding an organic conference and expansion of the organic program
- Funding additional promotions of farmers' markets (see related article on bus and radio campaign)

The remaining \$350,000 was given out through competitive grants to organizations that work with specialty crops. IDALS requested proposals and received forty-one responses, totaling almost one million dollars, which meant that many proposals were not funded at all or only partially funded. Five of Iowa's farmers' markets took advantage of this unique funding opportunity and all five of the proposals submitted did receive some funding.

- The **Mississippi Valley Growers' Association**, Inc. received \$7,000 to improve public awareness of the farmers' market through the media.
- The **Blackhawk Farmers' Market Association**, Inc. received \$8,350 to increase the marketing of specialty crops through new signage, special event equipment, media promotion, and market coupons.
- The **Mount Pleasant Farmers' Market** received \$4,020 to promote their market through increased media coverage, a new market banner, and a web site. Mount Pleasant will also be printing and distributing recipe cards for fresh produce and conducting market vendor workshops.
- The **Dubuque Farmers' Market** received \$7,450 to promote the market through advertising, with a special emphasis on WIC/ Farmers' Market Nutrition Program clients, and to reconfigure the market layout for improved "market atmosphere" and customer safety.
- The **Drake Neighborhood Farmers' Market** received \$10,000 to increase public awareness of the market and develop incentives for people to visit the market. Drake will print and distribute posters and fliers in multiple languages, order signs and banners, do a pre-market mailing to area residents, schedule and advertise food demonstrations and special events, and distribute market coupons.

Efforts are underway by the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) to have Congress appropriate specialty crops funds for 2002. If funding becomes available, farmers' markets will be given another golden opportunity to improve their markets. We'll keep you posted.

**ENTER YOUR MARKET !!!**

**in the**

**2002 Iowa Farmers' Market Improvement Competition**

During the 2002 market season, your market has the opportunity to be a participant in the Iowa Farmers' Market Improvement Competition with the possibility of winning CASH prize money for your market! Three population categories to compete in – three first place cash awards of \$1,000, three 2<sup>nd</sup> place cash awards of \$750, and three 3<sup>rd</sup> place cash awards of \$500.

The Improvement Competition is the rejuvenation of a program sponsored by IDALS nearly 10 years ago. We've had the updated concept waiting in the wings for a couple of years - and now – we've partnered with the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation of Iowa to make it happen.

The Iowa Farm Bureau Federation has very generously invested in the Competition to sponsor the cash awards.

The Improvement Competition was announced at the 2002 Workshop – and since then, all market managers have been mailed a Competition brochure that outlines the steps to undertake plus an Intent to Participate form. (If you did not receive the brochure, please call Barbara Lovitt at 515-281-8232)

It is a great program to participate in – while you're doing what you do every market year – improving your market, you're also in the running to win money for your efforts!

So take the challenge - fill out that Intent to Participate form and mail it back to our office, ASAP.

**Deadline to enter is Monday, April 15' 2002 by 4:30 p.m.**

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*Photo by Barbara Lovitt*

Workshop breakout sessions were filled with lively conversations and the exchange of creative ideas.

**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION (Bus) AND RADIO  
STATE WIDE "SHOP IOWA'S FARMERS' MARKETS" CAMPAIGN**

For the first time ever, a state wide marketing campaign to promote shopping at Iowa's farmers' markets will run from June 1 through August 31, 2002 in cities with bus systems and on radio stations throughout Iowa.

These campaigns are possible by funds allocated to the Bureau of Horticulture and Farmers' Markets from the Specialty Crops Block Grant awarded to the IA Dept. Agriculture and Land Stewardship by the USDA this past year.

Starting June 1<sup>st</sup>, buses in the cities of Des Moines, Ames, Cedar Rapids, Davenport, Dubuque and Waterloo will have "tail lite", or rear end posters featuring "Shop Iowa's Farmers' Markets" on them.

Iowa Radio Network Clear Channel radio will be airing the "Shop Farmers' Markets" ads in the following cities/stations from June through August:

WHO Des Moines	WMT Cedar Rapids	WOC Davenport
KIFG Iowa Falls	KWMT Fort Dodge	KMNS Sioux City
KASI Ames	KXIC Iowa City	KBKB Fort Madison
KDWD Emmetsburg	KKSI Ottumwa	KSOM Atlantic
KKIA Storm Lake	KEXL Waterloo	KCIM Carroll
KVJZ Des Moines	KDTH Dubuque	KDEC Decorah

These two media were chosen for the most "bang for the buck" exposures. Estimated average times a person will see a bus poster is almost 12 times during the 3 month run. Data provided by the Des Moines Metropolitan Transportation Authority extrapolates this out to more than 9 million viewings for the tail lite posters based on the combined populations of the six cities selected. Radio was chosen for its constant and easy access by listeners, for the number of ads aired during the 3 months (840).

So, while driving around these cities or listening to your radio anywhere in Iowa, keep your eyes and ears open for the "Shop Iowa's Farmers' Markets" ads!

**2002 FARM FRESH DIRECTORY                      ATTENTION**  
**If you have not done so - PLEASE RETURN your updated Market**  
**information for the 2002 Farm Fresh Directory IMMEDIATELY !**



**Iowa Farmers' Market Association Board of Directors**

Ginny Gieseke, Lori Johnson (Darwin Johnson) Greg Rinehart, Ken Shelly, Jr., Dawn Kupka, Judy Anderson, Barbara Ristau, Bob Shepherd (not pictured, Bob Alexander)

### **Iowa Farmers' Market Association Formed**

On January 11, 2002, nine market managers from around the state came together to explore the possibility of forming a non-profit organization for Iowa's farmers' markets. At the end of the three hour meeting, Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws were written – demonstrating a unanimous and cohesive decision to provide an organization supporting and furthering the development of Iowa's farmers' markets.

During the lunch break of the 2002 IA Farmers' Market Managers/Organizers Workshop, the Articles of Incorporation were signed and notarized. An informal meeting followed this signing with Mr. Bob Chorney, Executive Director, Farmers' Markets Ontario who provided pointers, suggestions and examples of other association practices. As a professional consultant who has helped other associations, Bob praised these individuals for their initiative and determination in forming the association.

With the ink just dry from being formally filed and accepted as a newly incorporated non-profit association with the IA Secy. Of State's office, the new board will meet on April 1 to discuss a course of action for the association and election of officers. It is also accepting applications for membership. There are two membership types: A Farmers' Market membership and an Associate Membership. A Farmers' Market membership is for a market itself, it is a voting membership, and dues are \$20 per year. An Associate membership is available for a person, family or organization that is not a farmers' market but is interested and would like to participate in the further development and support of farmers' markets in Iowa. Dues are also \$20 per year, but are non-voting. A copy of each application type is enclosed with this newsletter. You are encouraged to join as a market, and encourage others that you know who support your market and farmers' markets in general to join as an associate member.

## 2002 Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs in Iowa

Last year, the **Women, Infants, and Children Farmers' Market Nutrition Program** (WIC/FMNP) received a federal grant of \$639,078 as well as a state appropriation of \$304,758. This year, the federal grant was cut to \$328,175 and the state appropriation has not been determined. Cutbacks in the program will have to be made. The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) will likely spread the cuts among clients, service areas, and the benefit level. Specifically, clients served by the program will no longer include children from 6 months to one year, five counties with consistently low redemption rates will be dropped, and the benefit level will be reduced from \$28 dollars down to \$26.

USDA Secretary Ann Veneman has decided not to release any additional funds because the money is needed to support the rising number of clients in the regular WIC program. The only ray of hope on the horizon is in the Senate version of the Farm Bill which allocates an additional \$15 million for the WIC/FMNP. A conference committee is now hammering out the differences in the House and Senate versions of the Farm Bill. If the final version of the Farm Bill contains the additional allocation and is signed by the President, the funds to restore Iowa's program up to last years' level may become available later this season.

Last year the **Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program** (SFMNP) grant from the USDA was \$560,000. This year the grant award was cut to \$282,958. No states received full funding and nine states received no funds at all. Again, the bright spot on the horizon is the Senate version of the Farm Bill, which includes an additional allocation of \$15 million for the seniors program. We will have to wait and see if Iowa will receive any additional funds available after the President signs the final version of the Farm Bill.

The WIC/FMNP still requires vendor training at least every three years. Information on training times and sites is available by contacting Margaret Long at (515) 242-6239 or [margaret.long@idals.state.ia.us](mailto:margaret.long@idals.state.ia.us). The Seniors FMNP does not require training. Any vendor participating in the Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs in 2001 should have received an application and information mailing within the last few weeks.

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### STAY IN TOUCH OR HOW TO CONTACT US

Bureau of Horticulture and Farmers' Markets  
Iowa Dept. of Agriculture and Land Stewardship  
Wallace Building, 502 E. 9<sup>th</sup> St.  
Des Moines, IA 50319

Barbara Lovitt, Marketing Specialist  
Phone: 515-281-8232  
e-mail: [barb.lovitt@idals.state.ia.us](mailto:barb.lovitt@idals.state.ia.us)

Mike Bevins, State Horticulturist  
Phone: 515-281-5402  
e-mail: [mike.bevins@idals.state.ia.us](mailto:mike.bevins@idals.state.ia.us)

Margaret Long, Administrator, WIC/IFMNP and Seniors IFMNP  
Phone: 515-242-6239  
e-mail: [margaret.long@idals.state.ia.us](mailto:margaret.long@idals.state.ia.us)

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### Iowa Farmers' Market Factoids

- Managers of farmers' markets in Iowa averages 51 years of age, with ages ranging from 29-79.
- Sixty-four percent are female and 36 percent male.
- Nearly 6 of every 10 managers are also vendors at their farmers' markets.

*From ISU Dept. of Sociology "Retail Farmers' Markets and Rural Development: Entrepreneurship, Incubation and Job Creation"*