

Care 4 Iowa

You can help build a humane, sustainable future for Iowa!

Steps you can take, right now!

1. Eat with conscience.

"The choices we make when we buy food are serious choices. More and more people understand this. They no longer see themselves as passive food 'consumers'. Rather, they embrace their roles as 'creators', know that the foods they decide to grow or purchase will create a different future for themselves, their families, generations to come, and the natural world." – Alice Waters, Chez Panisse Restaurant.

One of the first steps you can take toward leading a more humane life is to change your food and product choices.

The Humane Society of the United States recently conducted a poll of 600 Iowans from every corner of the state. Over 77 percent of them indicated they would buy humanely and environmentally soundly raised meat products if they could.

You don't have to become a vegetarian. Even a small change in your consumption patterns can make a difference.

Ask your grocer where the meat and produce you buy comes from. Is it raised locally? Is it raised humanely? Without antibiotics? Without genetically modified seeds? Is it grown organically?

Food retail corporations pay close attention to the requests of customers, sometimes assuming one spoken or written request represents the unarticulated feelings of dozens of others. So speak up at your food market.

2. Volunteer to help!

You can help build a humane, sustainable Iowa in a number of specific ways.

☐ Help staff an outreach table at your local farmers market.

☐ Invite a Care 4 Iowa campaign organizer to talk at your church or civic group or hold a meeting of friends/neighbors in your living room. See contact info below.

☐ Join and participate in the organizations listed here. They are working for a sustainable Iowa.

3. Join these organizations.

The Humane Society of the United States

Founded in 1954, The HSUS, with the support of seven million members and constituents, is the nation's largest animal protection organization. The Mid-West Regional Office in Des Moines, one of ten regional offices, works (1) to preserve and strengthen the bonds between companion animals and their caregivers, (2) to save wildlife by preserving their natural habitats, and (3) to stop the suffering of farm animals raised in the animal factory system by supporting a transition to a humane, sustainable agriculture while opposing inhumane treatment. Individuals can join The HSUS for as little as \$10. Contact the Mid-West Regional Office at 515-283-1393 or email mwro@hsus.org. Or visit our website at www.hsus.org.

Sierra Club/Iowa Chapter

The Iowa Chapter of the Sierra Club works to protect Iowa's natural environment. We do this by hosting educational hiking, skiing, and canoeing trips; monitoring the quality of Iowa's waters; coordinating letter writing campaigns; lobbying our elected officials; and contacting state agencies on natural resource issues. Call 515-277-8868 or email iowa.chapter@sierraclub.org to volunteer or become a member. Cost to join is \$39. Come help make Iowa an even better place to live for our families, for our future. Website www.sierraclub.org

Iowa Farmers Union

The Iowa Farmers Union is an organization of farmers and consumers who represent family farmers and ranchers on issues ranging from farm income to rural health care. Its primary goal is to sustain and strengthen the family farm in Iowa. It believes sustainable agriculture is the foundation of strong farm families, thriving rural communities and healthy food for consumer. One year membership is \$40. Two years - \$65. Four years - \$100. Contact the Iowa Farmers Union at 800-775-5227 or email at iafu@isunet.net.

Women, Food & Agriculture

WFAN is a grassroots organization of women and men who (1) promote sustainable agricultural and community structures, (2) insist on social and ecological justice for current and future human and nonhuman communities, (3) educate on the economics and environment of a holistic view of agriculture, and (4) create networks that support growers, consumers, workers and others who strive for sustainability. To join or volunteer contact Denise O'Brien at 712-243-3264 or email CoWFAN@merc.net. Website www.wfan.org

National Catholic Rural Life Conference

NCRLC is a membership organization grounded in a tradition that brings together the Church, care for creation and care for community. NCRLC fosters programs of direct service and systemic change--seeking to relate religion to the rural world, developing support services for rural ministers, and serving as a prophetic voice and as a catalyst for social justice. Now in its eighth decade of service, NCRLC welcomes all people who share its vision to join as active members. Membership is \$25. Contact NCRLC, #4625 Beaver Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50310; 515-270-2634 www.ncrlc.com.

"We cannot fundamentally change the direction of agriculture unless we win the hearts and minds of people on the land and engage them in making that change."

—Fred Kirschenmann,
Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Ames, Iowa
Des Moines, Iowa "Urban-Suburban Conversation" March, 2002

The Humane Society of the United States

Suite 220
#1515 Linden Street
Des Moines, IA 50309

TO VOLUNTEER

Call
Stephanie Weisenbach
or Chris Bedford at
515-283-0777
Or e-mail
sweisenbach@hsus.org
cbedford@hsus.org

Or write,
Iowa Food Campaign
The Humane Society of the United States,
Mid-West Regional Office,
Suite 220, #1515 Linden Street,
Des Moines, Iowa 50309.



Care 4 Iowa

Building a new agriculture to sustain Iowa's farmers, communities, consumers, and farm animals!



Iowa faces a crisis.

The miracle of industrial agriculture that transformed Iowa farms after the Second World War is becoming a nightmare. The resulting damage mistreats animals, threatens rural communities, impoverishes farmers, and impacts consumers.

In 2001, Iowa was first in the nation in the number of hogs raised (27 percent of the U.S. total) and the number of eggs laid. In part to feed these millions of animals, Iowa farmers raise 20 million acres of corn and soybeans annually. Together with meat packing, these elements form one continuous industrial production line from genetics to feed to animal raising to slaughter.

Approximately 80 percent of Iowa's hogs are raised in this animal factory system which values uniformity over diversity, short term profits over sustainability, and automation over human care. Automation, farming with fewer and fewer farmers, is the future envisioned in the high tech displays at the annual Hog Expo in Des Moines.

Iowa's industrial pork production line is hailed by some as the future of agriculture, as necessary to feed a hungry world, as inevitable, as progress. They are fundamentally mistaken.

Iowa's animal factory system is stricken with a large number of unintended and fatal consequences. Animals aren't widgets. Nature isn't a monoculture. Sustainable farms aren't factories.

Inhumane Confinement.

Farm animals raised industrially live in inhumane conditions. Hogs are sentient, intelligent creatures who suffer immensely in the crowded, unhealthy, and painful conditions of animal factory barns. They live their entire lives in crowded confinement, often standing in pain on slatted floors, breathing ammonia and hydrogen sulfide from their own manure.

Because the industrial system treats animals as raw materials, ethical boundaries have virtually disappeared. In Wisconsin, human genes have been inserted into cloned dairy cows. Pigs are being genetically prepared to be human organ donors.



Hogs are sentient, intelligent, social creatures. When hogs are raised humanely respecting their nature, nature itself is respected.

Agribusiness corporations have announced plans to clone hogs on a mass scale. Nature's rules are being systematically violated. A society's ethical measure (and hope for survival) is taken, in part, by how it treats its animals.

Dirty Water.

Our state's water is threatened by nutrient runoff from the three billion pounds of manure produced by Iowa's factory hogs each year. Often this

"We abuse the land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect."

Aldo Leopold
"A Sand County Almanac"

manure is applied to land already saturated with phosphorus and nitrogen. Though Iowa comprises a mere 5 percent of the Mississippi River watershed, it contributes over 25 percent of the nutrient pollution that causes the dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico each year.

Soil is Eroding.

Our state's soil is eroding 17 times faster than it is replenished. The U.S. Geological Survey reports that Iowa loses three pounds of topsoil for every pound of corn grown. The resulting loss of soil fertility is made up by the increasing use of oil based chemicals and fertilizers. As a result farm income may be threatened as oil prices rise in a time of uncertainty.

Risking Public Health.

Public health is threatened by hog factories. Ammonia, hydrogen sulfide, and noxious gas produced by the industrial hog manure have killed farm workers and pigs AND endangered rural neighbors' health.

Public health is challenged by drug resistant bacteria resulting, in part, from industrial animal production. Antibiotics critical to human health are routinely fed to hogs and chickens in animal factories to promote growth and prevent disease among the crowded, genetically similar animals.

This practice, in turn, encourages bacteria to develop resistance to these drugs. In June 2002, a University of Iowa

Economic development suffers when businesses are driven to locate elsewhere because of animal pollution and smell.

County budgets face deficits produced, in part, by expensive tax breaks for hog and chicken factories. Iowa CCI has documented tax breaks amounting to \$800,000 for hog confinements in one county alone.

Consumer Interests Ignored.

The consumers pay for industrially raised food in ways that are not measured by its low, subsidized price.

Iowa imports 80 percent of its food, a \$3.7 billion market local farmers lose to out-of-state imports. At the same time, Iowa consumers want locally grown food, raised in a way that respects consumer values and nature's rules.

Some food reviewers find hog factory raised pork relatively tasteless. The cheap price of industrially raised meat doesn't reflect its true environmental and public health costs. And many consumers, whether they eat meat or not, are concerned about how farm animals are treated.

Industrial agriculture strip mines Iowa's future, polluting its water, robbing its farmers, destroying its rural communities, cheating its consumers, and limiting its economic prospects...all because a handful of industrial animal corporations say "This is progress. We have no choice!"

Well, Iowa has a choice. We can raise animals in a way that respects farmers, rural communities, consumers, and animal nature.

We can care for Iowa. There are actions we all can take. Read on.

The Four Confinements of Hog Factories



Hogs

Born in crates. Confined for their entire lives in metal pens with slatted floors. Raised in crowded, unsanitary conditions. Fed antibiotics to keep them alive. Hogs raised in factories lead stressful, inhumane lives.



Farmers

Forced to sign unfair production contracts by monopoly-like prices. No right to bargain. Production decisions made by integrators. Liability resides with farmer. Much shackle space at processing plants controlled by integrators.



Rural Communities

No local control. Residents experience health effects. Quality of life declines. Water supplies threatened. Many county budgets decimated by tax assessment losses & subsidies. New businesses turned away by smell and controversy.



Consumers

Factory pork taste judged inferior by some. Drug-resistant bacteria may be present. Label claims may be misleading. Cheap price hides environmental/public health costs. Unable to connect concerns for animals with product choices.

Care 4 Iowa

Building a humane, sustainable future!

LOCAL ENERGY.

Iowa's agricultural economy is highly dependent on oil and natural gas. As a result, farmers are extremely vulnerable to changes in the price of oil that may be produced by global instability. Iowa has an abundance of highly productive sites for wind generators. Bio-diesel made from Iowa crops offers a sustainable homegrown alternative to oil. Iowa could produce 24 times its current electricity needs from renewable energy sources.



2. Respect Nature

Wendell Berry wrote in *Fatal Harvest*, "In a sound local economy, in which producers and consumers are neighbors, nature will become the standard of work and production."

Environmentalists have a saying: "Don't mess with Mother Nature. She owns the ball park and bats last." Everything in agriculture is governed by nature's rules. Everything. It is the height of folly to think that an industrial agriculture based on overcoming nature, disrespecting her rules, can last very long. So what are nature's rules?

RESPECT ANIMAL NATURE.

Virtually all the damage from animal factories arises from the treatment of animals as inanimate units of production. Natural animal behavior needs to be respected. Hogs can be raised profitably in nonconfinement in hoop barns with straw bedding and access to pasture. Egg laying chickens can be free range. Humane animal raising satisfies consumer demands in a way that profits farmers, and protects the environment while reducing the suffering of animals. Respect nature. Respect animal nature.

ENCOURAGE DIVERSITY.

Nature's principal feature is diversity. Monocultures, whether crops or animals, depend on costly and often destructive inputs for their survival. Soil productivity depends on millions of microorganisms. The more diversity, the healthier the soil.

This principle of diversity extends to farm income as well. Farmers who put all their income eggs in one monoculture basket are as vulnerable as their crops. Iowa needs to recreate a diverse smart agriculture that works with nature to respond to local environmental conditions, local markets.

ELIMINATE WASTE.

The concept of waste does not exist in nature. Everything is food for something else. The nutrients from animals must be recycled in a closed loop that prevents them from running off into streams and rivers.

This goal necessitates whole farm nutrient plans based on composting and diverse crops. This goal also means the raising of fewer animals in less concentrated, more humane conditions including access to pasture.

John Ikerd wrote, "If you spread out the hogs and let hog manure lay where it falls in a pasture, it doesn't bother anyone very much. But if you start collecting it, flushing it, spreading and spraying it all around -- all normal practices in confinement hog operations -- it becomes pollution."



1. *Fatal Harvest: The Tragedy of Industrial Agriculture* Foundation for Deep Ecology, 2002

3. Promote Fairness

Fred Kirschenmann wrote in *Fatal Harvest*, "But scale does matter. Scale often leads to numerous scale related consequences -- many of them unanticipated -- that can be costly to the environment and to human communities. In our industrial agricultural economy such costs are seldom accounted for."¹

Iowa's farming future depends on ending the *monopoly-like* control and corporate subsidies that now support industrial animal production. First and foremost, we need independent pork producers who raise hogs in a sustainable manner with access to open and competitive markets.

REAL MARKETS.

Monopoly-like control undermines sustainability. Today, the top four corporations in the beef industry control 81 percent of the market, the top four in pork control 62 percent of the market, the top four in chickens control 53 percent.

This *monopoly-like* control allows these agribusiness giants to influence market prices and impose destructive industrial practices on Iowa agriculture. The federal and state governments must use anti-trust laws to re-establish a true free market in agriculture. State tax subsidies to hog factories must be eliminated.

Iowa's "Packer Ban" law that prevents corporations that own packing plants from owning animals must be defended. The rights of farmers who grow under contract need to be protected.

The system of direct access to local foods through Iowa's 125 farmers markets, Community Supported Agriculture, and alternative web based marketing must be supported and expanded.

PLANNED TRANSITION.

Iowa's farmers are trapped in an industrial system that abuses them, their animals and their environment. Our future depends directly on how effectively we help farmers escape this industrial system and make a transition to a humane, sustainable agriculture. We must take pro-active steps to support farmers in this transition.

State extension and research funds need to be redirected to more effectively promote land stewardship, integrated farming systems that work with nature, and fair access to markets. Independent farmers practicing diverse, humane, and ecologically positive farming need fair access to capital.

Consumers need to work with farmers to redirect subsidies away from industrial production and towards paying farmers for the public environmental and social benefits from sustainable agriculture.

What does "sustainable" mean? Some say if agriculture makes a profit, it is sustainable. But others look beyond the short term to consider what underlies a food's price. How much of the profit comes from direct subsidies from the government? How much comes from the uncounted costs such as environmental destruction, animal suffering, loss of farm equity, public health dangers, and loss of community tax base? And if these costs aren't being paid, is current industrial farm income truly sustainable?

The answer is a simple no! Industrial agriculture endangers Iowa's future. Iowa's economic future depends, in some important measure, on how fast Iowans can make the transition to sustainability. This transition will take time and planning. But it is possible and must begin now, if our children are to have a future anything like our present. Sustainability in Iowa (and everywhere) grows from three simple ideas.



1. Act Locally

Wendell Berry wrote, "Our present leaders do not know what it means to take a place seriously: to think it worthy, for its own sake, of love and study and careful work." We need to take the Iowa homeland seriously.

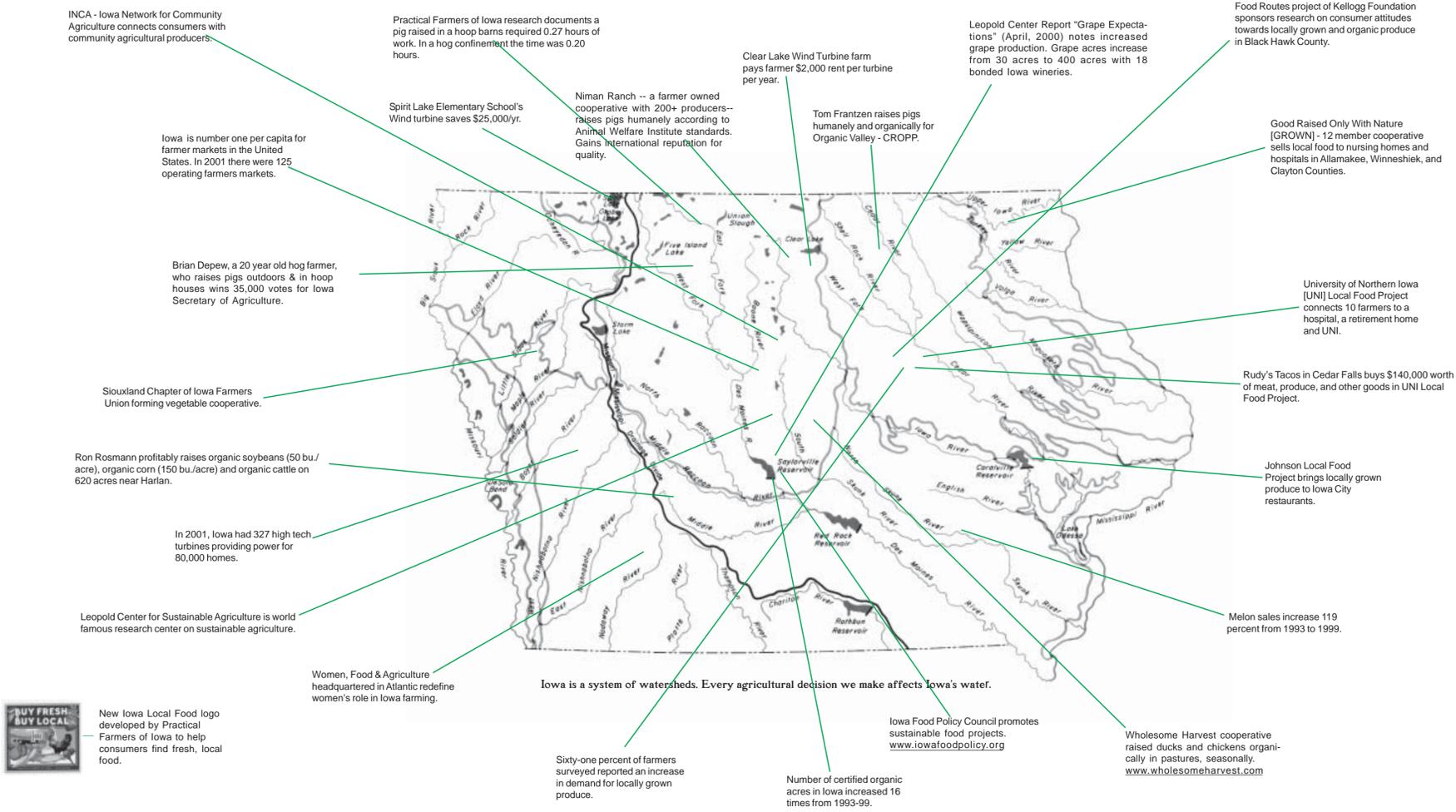
LOCAL CONTROL.

Agriculture in Iowa must include the right of communities and counties to make plans and implement policies for the sustainable use of their land. One of the first acts of the industrial hog industry's move into Iowa was to eliminate that power of counties. It must be restored. The current "matrix" for the siting of hog confinements does not give counties that power. Local control must be restored and expanded.

LOCAL FOOD.

Public policies and private investment must support the expansion of local food production efforts. Iowa has a good start in this direction. (SEE MAP) In a survey, Iowans indicated they wanted local food because it is fresher, more nutritious, and chemical free and because it supports local farmers, the local economy. Iowa currently imports over \$3 billion of its food. This giant market is a place to begin.

Map of Iowa's Growing Sustainable Future



Three myths of industrial agriculture.

Myth #1:

Industrial ag will feed the world. Industrial agriculture is not the solution to hunger. In the name of modernization, subsistence farmers have been forced off their land. Their land in turn is used to produce export crops which do not feed the local population. The food that is available comes increasingly from elsewhere and is too expensive for many. We have plenty of food. Distribution and price are the problems.

Myth #2:

Industrial food is cheap. The price of food produced industrially seldom reflects its true costs. Industrial commodity crops like corn and soybeans are heavily subsidized by the USDA. The cost of the environmental destruction caused by industrial animal and crop production is not included in the cost of the food we purchase. Nor are the health costs. Finally, tax subsidies to industrial ag corporations impoverish rural communities. Consumers do not pay for these costs either.

Myth #3:

Biotechnology will solve the problems of industrial agriculture. GMO crops actually may use more chemicals over time, not less. Weeds are becoming more resistant to pesticides. Nature adapts quickly to the initial success of biotech crops forcing farmers to use more and more inputs to make them work. Finally, because these new crops are largely untested, there is an emerging threat of unintended side effects for people, animals and the environment.

Industrial agriculture represents a failed paradigm that needs monopoly-like control and subsidies to make a profit.



"We're creating Soviet style command and control agriculture in Iowa today," he said, "Only corporations are in control instead of the state."

Today, a handful of giant animal factory corporations control the fate of Iowa's farmers. In hog factory production, four packers control 59 percent of capacity, compared to 34 percent a decade ago.

More ominously, large industrial hog corporations are seeking to impose a total vertical integration in the hog industry. The goal is to control or own all aspects of hog production from genet-

ics and feed to farrowing, feeding, and processing to maximize profit.

Today, a handful of giant animal factory corporations control the fate of Iowa's farmers.

Farmers and the hogs they raise are victims of this effort. A chart by Stewart Smith of the University of Maine reproduced here shows, farmers are getting less and less of the consumer dollar, forcing them to raise more animals, faster and with less care than in previous generations.

In an auto assembly line, this would be called speed up. In the hog factory assembly line, it's called "the price we pay for cheap food."

But as the chart shows, food isn't really cheaper. Input costs like technology charges for genetically modified organisms and antibiotic costs for hogs continue to rise. So, too does the marketing portion of the pie. To maintain the

food's so-called "cheapness", farmers and hogs suffer.

Other costs don't even appear on the chart. The massive environmental destruction, the loss of rural quality of life, the reduction in land values, and the increase in health cost and water treatment costs don't appear on any industrial hog corporation's balance sheet.

The result is an industrial animal system that seeks *monopoly-like* control for its future and depends on externalized costs and subsidies for its profits. The result is a market situation that threatens the continued existence of farmer independence. Iowa has lost two-thirds

of its independent hog farmers since 1998--a year when hog prices fell to 1932 levels.

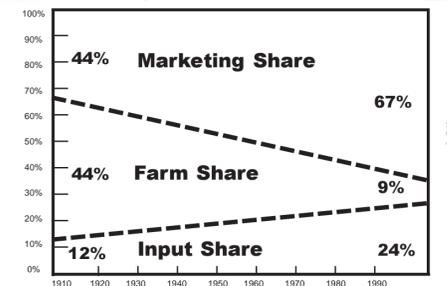
In some important way, the whole system can be judged by how it treats farm animals. A system that abuses animals, is likely to treat farmers, communities and consumers badly, too.



Chart by Stewart Smith of the University of Maine

FARMERS SHARE OF FOOD DOLLARS

Marketing, Farm, and Input Shares 1910-1990



Corporate control of Iowa agriculture impoverishes farmers.