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Selling to Institutions:

An Iowa Farmer's Guide[®]



By Robert Luedeman and Neil D. Hamilton

*Funded in part by a grant from the
Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship*

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<http://www.law.drake.edu/centers/agLawCenter/>
<http://www.iowafoodpolicy.org>

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Drake University Agricultural Law Center
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INTRODUCTION:

WHY SHOULD I CONSIDER INSTITUTIONAL SELLING?



The possibility of selling your products to institutional buyers is an important one for all Iowa farmers and food producers who want to grow their businesses by reaching a new group of customers. These customers may be different than ones you are used to in your present business and because they have special requirements, it is important you understand some of the issues surrounding institutional purchasing.

To begin, it's important to appreciate these sales are possible; there are some outstanding success stories you may have heard about. Furthermore, there are opportunities for smaller Iowa producers to grow their businesses. Consumer demand for healthier and tastier locally grown products send signals to suppliers to think locally when making purchasing decisions.

Many of the same ideas are applicable in the institutional setting. Now is a good time for you to be at the forefront of the movement toward local food and rural economic development that is emerging in the state of Iowa.

1 HOW IS INSTITUTIONAL SELLING DIFFERENT FROM DIRECT MARKETING?

The best answer to this question is to first look at direct marketing. As you know, direct marketing focuses on selling directly to consumers, whether at the farmer's market, from the roadside stand, on the website, or off the back of the pickup truck. It is a relatively straightforward business that has few formal requirements.

Institutional marketing on the other hand, has potential for additional sales volume on a recurring basis although profit margins may be thinner and product requirements may differ. It requires careful study to determine whether you can meet an institutional customer's requirements or whether you even want to get involved with it. If you are presently involved with direct marketing you may have to change your operation to more closely meet the customer's requirements.

Selling to institutions may introduce other handlers between the grower and the consumer, and for that reason it involves different internal commands than direct marketing. What institutional buyers want is a close working relationship with the grower that will enable the institutions to meet their commitments. Sales to institutions can vary from selling to a produce wholesaler, working with a broker, stocking a restaurant pantry, providing product to a processing operation, meeting the needs of an institutional kitchen, or stocking the shelves at a grocery store.

Institutional customers will often demand packaging, grading, handling or processing procedures that may be unfamiliar. Institutional customers often require more than a simple washing, and that gets you into processing. Institutional customers may also require you to maintain more liability insurance than you presently have, particularly if they are distributors. To sell processed fruit and vegetables or meat and meat products to institutional customers you will have to conform to State of Iowa regulations, inspection and licensing procedures. In order to be licensed, the facility that you use may need to be quite different than what you are using now.



With institutional purchasing frequent deliveries of product from the producer to the buyer are the norm, and the product may be stored or transported over some distance. Much effort has gone into developing crop varieties that can withstand machine handling, storage, and transport, but these may not be what you currently produce. If you intend to produce for the institutional market you may need to adjust your planting and harvesting plans.

2 WHAT KIND OF PRODUCTS SHOULD I CONSIDER?



This depends on what you can grow and what there is a market for. Most importantly it's a matter of whether or not you can be competitive.

Obviously you cannot sell Iowa grown pineapples but there are things you can grow competitively. Our growing season and climate, our soils and present infrastructure all place some limits on what we can grow in Iowa. Much of the produce we grow competes directly with similar products from California, Texas, Florida and Mexico that are available all year round to institutional buyers. Despite this, Iowa farmers do enjoy some structural advantages in location and facilities.

Competition that you will encounter in institutional selling is broader and more diverse than what occurs at the farmers' market. You are in competition with growers, producers and processors from around the world, and thus your offerings will have to be competitively priced to give you credibility when making a sales call.

As an example, your local Hy-Vee grocery store often sells the Braeburn apple at \$0.89 per pound, and these apples, which are graded Washington State extra fancy (the highest there is) have been imported from New Zealand, half a world away. If it's your intention to sell apples, that may be your competition.

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Another disadvantage you may face is that processing facilities within Iowa are few and far between. So, depending on the product involved, you may have to develop your own processing capacity whether it is in house, contracted to an outside facility, or developed as a cooperative of farmers. In some ways this presents a unique opportunity for Iowa farmers to cooperatively develop processing facilities closely suited to their needs and responsive to their requirements. These are also opportunities for Iowa farmers to retain more revenue by doing their own processing.

On the other hand, you enjoy some distinct advantages. By far the greatest advantage farmers enjoy here in Iowa is consumer preference. Every California carrot or market tomato has to travel halfway across the country, and that can be a decided advantage for Iowa farmers in terms of freshness, flavor, and variety. Most consumers, if given the choice, will opt for the freshest and tastiest locally grown produce available, even when they pay a premium for it. Another advantage you have is that you are local, and you can supply products that may not travel well or supply products at a price that does not have to include transportation costs. You are directly responsible and accessible, which allows you to react more quickly to changing market conditions than if you were halfway across the country.

Another advantage you have is your direct knowledge of the food markets in the state. For that reason direct relationships between producers and buyers can be made that are not possible when large multi-state enterprises get involved. Further, if you are producing meat or meat products, your advantage is that Iowa grown meats are first quality and our growers can compete with any region in the country.

Finally, another advantage Iowa farmers enjoy is that their food is Iowa grown. In recent years a number of institutional customers have joined an effort to purchase more locally grown food and Iowa food products because it is good for business.

3 WILL I HAVE TO INVEST IN NEW EQUIPMENT OR FACILITIES?



The answer to this question depends on what type of sales you plan to make and who you plan to sell to. The first investment you will need to make is educating yourself in all the things potential customers will require, the licensing and inspection you will be required to put in place, and what it will take to meet these requirements. That in turn will determine what kind of equipment you will need. If you plan on doing some processing, for example, the equipment or facilities you need will depend to a large extent on what you are processing and how much you are doing, what and how much storage is required, and what packaging will be needed.

For example, if you are interested in selling to the Iowa Department of General Services or another large institutional customer, you will have to figure out what it is they are willing to buy from you, how they want it delivered, and what it is going to take for you to get your operation to where you can do the business. If the product is canned goods or frozen food, for example, you will need to get your product canned and graded or frozen in the appropriate fashion before you can sell it to the state or anyone else for that matter. On the other hand, if your product is delivered raw and fresh on a daily basis to a restaurant kitchen that does its own preparation and processing, you may not have to do more than make a delivery.

If you are selling meat or meat products, you will need to make sure the locker plant you use (or if you are a cooperative member, the plant you set up) is capable of fulfilling your requirements in a timely and cost effective manner and in compliance with all licensing and sanitary requirements. One good resource for understanding the requirements for meat and poultry processing is the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship Meat and Poultry Inspection Division, which is charged with inspecting meat and poultry processing operations in state. Another good resource is the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) which implements similar requirements on a federal level. FSIS has a website at www.fsis.usda.gov and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship website is located at www.agriculture.state.ia.us. The Meat and Poultry Inspection Division

4 WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO GET INVOLVED IN INSTITUTIONAL PURCHASING?

can be contacted at (515) 281-3338 during business hours.

In general, institutional purchasers can be subdivided into several groups, and what you will have to do depends on your potential buyer.

In the first instance, many potential institutional purchasers such as restaurateurs and chefs are involved in the direct preparation of fresh food for the table. They may be looking for a product that is characterized as “high end”, and that has identity. For these buyers, the origin and quality of the product are selling points.



Remember that a good restaurant is offering an experience as much as it offers good food. The most important requirements for these customers will be quality and reliability of delivery, but the scale of the operation may not be very large, so you will need multiple customers.

Another sector of the institutional purchasing market concerns wholesale accumulation and distribution. This includes firms that distribute products to groceries, restaurants, institutional buyers, brokers, dealers who assemble deliveries for combination and resale, and firms that operate packing sheds for adding value to product. When the customer is a grocery operation, it may be possible to deal directly with the grocery chain rather than a broker or other middleman. For these customers, price, grade and delivery are most important, and this means that you will have to compete with global producers and prices set by the market. It is important to note that these firms are not immune from customer demands, so where local producers can offer a wholesaler concrete advantages such as short distances to market, organic certification, locally desired varieties and other important qualities related to locally grown products, they may consider buying locally. But they will need a strong reason to do so.

A third part of the institutional market that can be served are the contractors that operate and maintain food service operations for businesses, colleges and universities within the state. This includes firms like Sodexo, Aramark and others. In addition, many of the larger grocers in the region are involved in catering to some degree. These firms are genuinely interested in responding to their customers' requests for fresh products that reflect local values and may be good markets for local producers.

State and local government entities and private entities funded with public money make up the fourth segment of the institutional purchasing market. In general, the state universities operate a system of pre-qualifying sellers that allows the purchasing department to determine whether the seller can meet its contractual commitments. This allows the seller to freely compete with others for bids when they are announced. These public entities are also required by law to set goals for complying with the state's targeted small business program. With respect to K-12 schools and nonprofit organizations that receive some government funding the procurement environment is somewhat different and requires more general discussion. Local governments that operate USDA funded child nutrition and other entitlement programs are required to conform to federal contracting guidelines, the effect of which is to encourage open and free competition.

What this means in practice is adoption of formalized and regularized purchasing procedures by the entity purchasing food and equipment used in the federally funded program. Purchasing is generally divided into informal procurement, in which it must be documented that an adequate number of quotations from qualified vendors were received before the award. Formal purchasing can be used at any time but it must be used when the acquisition or the total sales dollar amount is above \$100,000. This means these buyers may have more flexibility for smaller sales.

Similar procedures are often used by non-governmental, non-profit institutions that receive federal funds, including public and private hospitals, universities and colleges, and charitable organizations.

5 WHERE CAN I FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THESE ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS?



The State of Iowa, Department of General Services has a very informative website that addresses food buying procedures located at:

www.state.ia.us/government/dgs/Purchase/business.htm.

The state universities all have purchasing websites located at:

Iowa State University: www.public.iastate.edu/~purchasing/

University of Iowa: www.uiowa.edu/~purchase/purchase/

University of Northern Iowa: www.uni.edu/pur/

With respect to K-12 schools and nonprofit purchasing rules, the Iowa Department of Education publishes The Lunchline, a newsletter that contains information of interest to institutional food managers including details on K-12 school purchasing programs. The Department's website is located at: www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/fn/

For further information, please see Additional Resources on page 18.

6 WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS TO UNDERSTAND WHEN SELLING TO INSTITUTIONAL PURCHASERS?

If you plan on doing any food processing to sell on a wholesale basis, you need to look at what you will be required to do to meet state laws. In general, "processing" refers to any process that disturbs the skin of the product or alters it in any way, shape, or form. A simple water wash is not considered to be processing, but the prudent farmer should conclude that anything more than a water wash is processing and act accordingly.

If any processing is involved the business will have to be licensed and inspected by the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals as a food establishment or a food processing plant. This means the facility you use must meet certain sanitary requirements and be licensed. If you prepare any food products other than jams, jellies, or certain baked goods for sale at the farmers market you must be licensed and inspected.

If you offer meat or meat products, the plant that processes the product must be inspected by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship's Meat and Poultry Inspection Division. If the product is frozen you will be required to obtain a cold storage license and submit to inspection by IDALS as well.

Another issue you need to understand is that the type of packaging and transport material you use needs to meet certain guidelines. When selling food or food products, food safety and quality are of the utmost importance. Therefore, some fundamental principles with respect to packaging need to be kept in mind.

First, materials that were not intended to be used to pack, store, or process foods cannot be used. That means that garden vegetables cannot be packed in things like plastic trash bags, recycled paint buckets, tubs, crates, baskets and cartons that were not intended for holding foods. Plastic trash bags, for example, contain a high recycled content and compounds that suppress odors in trash. They also contain other materials intended for ease of manufacturing and handling; none of which are intended for human consumption.

Second, recycled plastic tubs and buckets may contain injurious materials and this may not be readily apparent from a surface inspection or cleaning. Recycled cardboard cartons may have inks and other materials that are not approved for food use, and they may have been contaminated in storage or transit. Supermarket plastic shopping bags may or may not be food grade materials, but why gamble? It is unwise to assume that recycled materials of any type are suitable. In addition, new containers such as plastic buckets that contain recycled plastics may not be suitable for food use.

A food grade material does not transfer injurious material or contaminants into the product. In addition, food grade packages and

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containers should protect the product from environmental damage, animal, or insect pest contamination, handling damage, and microbial or fungal contamination. This is especially important if the product contains moisture or has other characteristics such as high or low pH (acid or base), or contains oil, fat or alcohol. Materials or containers that are approved for some food products are not necessarily approved for others because the processing can affect them, particularly if environmental extremes are involved.

Third, the package or container must be able to tolerate processing and storage temperatures. If you are doing any sort of processing or food handling, you will need to be sure the packaging you select qualifies. If you intend to use new materials, you need to determine from your supplier if the materials are FDA approved for food use. If the origin of recycled material cannot be documented they should not be used under any circumstances.

You must be able to show documentation that the material used in processing was approved for food use in the event you are asked to do so. This includes belting, plumbing, and other materials used to transfer the product through the processing or used to maintain the machinery such as lubricants. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulates products that have direct contact with food, including packaging, containers, and processing equipment components. Some products and materials which have indirect or incidental contact with food such as lubricants and maintenance materials should also be considered regulated.

In addition, your buyer may have special rules for packaging, storage, and transport that you will need to discuss and understand before you can make sales. A very informative paper that will introduce you to the subject of food grade packaging was written by Alan T. Hagen, and is available at the following website:

www.waltonfeed.com/grain/faqs/ival.html

7 WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT INSURANCE?

Insurance is a lot like preventive medicine. Nobody looks forward to the annual trip to the dentist for a checkup, but everyone understands the value of anticipating and treating small problems rather than allowing them to become big expensive problems.

The amount and type of insurance you will need depends on four general factors.



First, what your customers require is a matter for careful study. If you are required to become a pre-qualified or preferred vendor, you can be sure there will be a required minimum level of insurance you will have to have in place, before you can even bid on a contract. Further, you cannot assume that because your customer didn't ask about it the requirement does not exist.

Second, the amount of insurance you feel is necessary to protect your investments from a potential claim against you is a fundamental requirement of your business plan. This will require you to project costs and profits, and spread the cost of insurance across those costs and profits to determine your insurance burden. This will be important in determining what kind of cost structure you have and whether the business can be profitable.

Third, you may be required to maintain a level of insurance as a pre-condition of bank financing for your operation if it is your intention to expand above your present level of operations.

Fourth, your insurance costs will depend on the nature and type of product, its physical properties, the manner in which it is processed, packed, and stored, the number of workers involved and the processing itself (freezing, cooking, baking, cutting, etc.) as well as the regulatory environment .

Insurance comes in four basic varieties: premises liability insurance that addresses injuries or damage that may occur on your property; workman's compensation insurance that addresses injuries to your

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employees if any; physical damage coverage that protects the operation against losses due to damage to property of the operation, such as machinery and buildings; and product liability insurance that addresses injuries that stem from using products. You may also need to have some form of insurance to protect your product against casualty losses until title changes and payment is received.

In addition, most producers have various types of insurances including: a homeowners' insurance policy or a farm policy that has some overlap with the premises liability insurance mentioned; a motor vehicle insurance policy for the farm trucks and vehicles; and they may have crop insurance that can compensate for crop failures or environmentally related damage. Organic producers may also need to insure themselves against inadvertent misuse of chemicals that can impair organic certification.

When bidding for larger contracts producers may need to be bonded to be eligible to bid. In some cases purchasers may require the seller have adequate insurance as a contractual requirement to become a qualified vendor. Part of minimizing the impact of insurance costs on your bottom line is to conduct a comprehensive inventory of potential hazards and problem areas that can be the source of preventable claims. This may range from a simple analysis of potential hazards such as fire protection, workplace safety and worker training, to a larger view if the operation is open to the public. Children have inquiring minds and can be counted on to locate potentially dangerous conditions, and other folks can slip and fall in areas that have a wet floor.

In general, obtaining adequate insurance protection for your operation presents major challenges and will require careful study. Direct marketers have had problems obtaining insurance for their operations because insurance agents may be unfamiliar with the type of operation, or because insurance carriers have decided they cannot afford the cost of claims and have discontinued insurance plans. It is likely that each individual operation will have to be examined and inspected prior to getting a policy or substantially enlarging a present one.

The best practice is to visit with your insurance agent, explain what you are planning to do and ask your agent to prepare a proposal addressing your insurance needs.

8 WHAT SHOULD I DO IF THE INSTITUTIONAL PURCHASER TELLS ME THEY DON'T PURCHASE DIRECTLY FROM FARMERS ?

In many cases, institutional food service operations at private colleges and firms have been contracted to companies like Sodexo, Aramark, and others who are strictly in the food service business. In such cases the local commissary manager may not have the authority to make small spot purchases for the kitchen except under unusual circumstances. In other cases the food service manager at a college or university may not have direct purchasing authority. Even under these conditions direct input from consumers and groups can open up opportunities for business when the contractors see the value of buying locally. If you encounter resistance, it becomes your job to figure out who buys for the institutional caterer or university food service operation and determine what it is that you can do to sell to them.

Many institutional buyers have a "qualified vendor" system. What this means is that you will have to do some preliminary paper work to become eligible to receive invitations to bid or even to be considered among other suppliers of similar items for potential sales. Another feature of qualified vendor systems used in the private sector is that there may be periodic inspections of your facility by the purchaser.

In particular the Iowa Department of General Services uses a vendor qualification system for prospective sellers, and the Regents Universities use a similar system that pre-qualifies vendors so that they may receive invitations to bid. Some institutional food service providers may not deal directly with you but will refer you to a local wholesaler that can manage small lot purchases for them. It should be noted that becoming pre-qualified will probably tell you what it is your potential customer is looking for in terms of licensing, facilities, amount of insurance coverage, financial stability, personnel involved, and other considerations.



9 WHAT DOES THE STATE OF IOWA DO TO AID SMALL BUSINESSES IN SELLING TO THE GOVERNMENT? ARE FARMERS ELIGIBLE?

In order to assist certain small businesses in competing for public contracts, Iowa created the Targeted Small Business program. Under this program, if a small to medium sized business meets certain requirements it can get assistance that can include preferences, advance notice of invitations to bid, and financial assistance.

Farmers are indeed, eligible for targeted small business (TSB) certification if they meet certain defined criteria. Status as a TSB is contingent on size and on ownership or management by traditionally underrepresented groups. TSBs in Iowa are defined as businesses entitled to preferential treatment in competing for state contracts as well as for receiving financial assistance. State agencies are required to establish goals for purchasing from targeted small businesses and in the case of some agencies purchasing agents are to some extent performance rated on their contribution to achieving the TSB goals.

The Code of Iowa defines a “small business” as one that is:

- Located in the state of Iowa
- For profit
- Has less than twenty employees OR annualized gross income of less than \$3 million as determined by an average of the last three years.

This definition does NOT apply to other programs under state or federal law where a “small business” definition exists.

A “targeted small business” under Iowa law also has the following features:

- 51 per cent or more owned, operated and actively managed by one or more women, minority persons, or disabled persons.

Minority is defined as a person of African American, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, or Alaskan Native American ancestry. There are specific exceptions to the definition of a disabled person in the context of qualifying for the Targeted Small Business program.

In order for a vendor to be classified as a Targeted Small Business, the business must be certified by the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals. If the business meets the formal requirements it is certified as a Targeted Small Business and is then eligible for special preferences and financial assistance from the Department of Economic Development .

There are presently ten TSB's involved in manufacturing or distributing food products under the TSB program and an additional seven involved in food service and catering businesses.

10 WHAT ARE THE MOST CRITICAL LEGAL ISSUES I SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?

Lawyers usually enter the picture when there's a problem that needs fixing. The following discussion addresses important legal issues you need to consider. A checklist is provided to help you avoid problems in the future.



One major concern for farmers is the subject of food safety. It is an important subject that affects a farmer's ability to remain profitable, and a failure on your part will affect other farmers' ability to grow their business because it makes everyone look bad. Your customers expect you to understand your operation and know how food safety figures into it. You cannot learn enough about food safety as a subject. You can minimize your exposure to liability if you make a practice of knowing what regulations apply to your business and its products. You should also be sure to comply with all applicable regulations and have a system of recordkeeping that allows you to document any aspect of your business if called upon to do so.

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Contracts farmers are asked to sign only later to discover they have problems are a second legal concern. Often these contracts are offered on a take it or leave it basis, or have terminology that is intended to put the signer at a significant disadvantage in the event conditions change or the market turns down. It's worthwhile remembering the First Law of Contracts, and that is, whoever drafted the contract took care of themselves.



An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure if someone puts a contract under your nose and hands you a pen. Taking the time to check it out with help from your attorney could be the best money you can spend.

A third issue to be aware of concerns the increasing use of mandatory arbitration clauses in many commercial contracts. While many people believe that arbitration is an inexpensive alternative to litigation, arbitration rules and the fees involved may favor the larger commercial party.

A CHECKLIST FOR THE FARMER.

The following is a checklist of things to think about before starting a new business or expanding the scope of an existing one. It is not all inclusive but is meant to stimulate thought.

1. **Business plan:** Have you developed a business plan that is an operating manual for your business?
2. **Business entities:** Have you selected the business entity that best fits your business plan?
3. **Insurance:** Have you reviewed your insurance coverage for your business recently and made sure you have adequate coverage?
4. **Food safety:** Have you taken the time to determine how food safety rules fit into your present and future business plan?
5. **Equipment and packaging:** Have you reviewed your equipment and packaging materials to make sure they are food grade?
6. **Finance:** Have you reviewed your business plan with your banker and lined up adequate financing?
7. **Marketing plan:** Have you identified your prospective customers and determined how to market to them?
8. **Equipment plan:** Have you priced and located the type of equipment you will need to conduct your business?
9. **Facility plan:** Have you determined what facility you will use and if you will need a new or different facility?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.

The following resource links have proven to be helpful. Please consult them for further information on any of the subjects discussed herein.

Iowa Department of Education Bureau of Food and Nutrition (K-12 programs)
www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/fn/index.html

Iowa Department of General Services (state purchasing agent)
www.state.ia.us/government/dgs/Purchase/business.htm

Iowa Department of Economic Development (TSB programs)
www.iowasmartidea.com

Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship (meat & poultry inspection)
www.agriculture.state.ia.us

Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals (Licensing and Inspection)
www.state.ia.us/government/dia

Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University
www.leopold.iastate.edu

Practical Farmers of Iowa
www.pfi.iastate.edu

Iowa State University Purchasing Department
www.public.iastate.edu/~purchasing

University of Iowa Purchasing Department
www.uiowa.edu/~purchase/doingbusiness.shtml

University of Northern Iowa Purchasing Department
www.uni.edu/pur/

Drake University Agricultural Law Center
www.law.drake.edu/centers/agLawCenter

The Legal Guide for Direct Farm Marketing is available for \$20.00 from the Drake University Agricultural Law Center
Des Moines, IA 50311

Northeast Center for Food Entrepreneurship (information about startup businesses-booklet "A Technical Guide for Food Ventures" \$15.00)
www.nysaes.cornell.edu/necfe/pubs/booklet.html

University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program
www.sarep.ucdavis.edu

University of Idaho College of Agriculture Cooperative Extension System
www.uidaho.edu/extension

University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
www.agnr.umd.edu/ces/

University of Arizona College of Agriculture Arizona Cooperative Extension
www.ag.arizona.edu

Walton Feed Company
www.waltonfeed.com

Community Food Security Coalition
www.foodsecurity.org

Vest Pocket Farmer
www.vestpocketfarmer.com

National Center for Agricultural Law Research and Information
www.nationalaglawcenter.org

Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas
www.attra.org

United States Food and Drug Administration Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
<http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov>

United States Department of Agriculture Agricultural Marketing Service
www.ams.usda.gov/

Drake University Agricultural Law Center's State and Local Food Policy Project

The project is designed to expand the agricultural law teaching and research capacity at Drake University Law School to serve as a national resource for state and local governments, farmers, food processors, and others dealing with the impact of law and policy. Drake's effort is a counterpart to the National Center for Agricultural Law at the University of Arkansas. Together the two Centers address a wide range of agricultural law issues - from national matters to the important area of state and local policy. Their location at nationally recognized law schools means the two Centers will be able to train and educate law students who are able to address the needs of farmers, governments, and other institutions serving agriculture.