

Mettwurst, Mineola and NW Iowa

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Among the many sausages produced in the Midwest and in Iowa is *mettwurst*. This is a cold-smoked ring sausage, similar in texture to bratwurst but made in a bigger casing and produced by several small communities of Platte German (Schleswig-Holstein), Dutch, and Luxembourg heritage in southwest Iowa and northwest, Iowa. Typically made in midwinter (the traditional time to slaughter hogs, due to the cold weather and lack of other high intensity farm duties), the sausage is ground, mixed with spices, and then smoked at 70 degrees F for three hours. Although Germans (and likely Dutch and Luxembourgois) in Europe eat the sausage without further cooking, those Mineola community members of Platte German descent do boil or grill the sausage after smoking to make sure that all bacteria are killed.

Gary Schoening, whose Platte German community of Mineola in western Iowa celebrated its 125th anniversary in 2005, told me that his community commemorates its annual founders day with the local production of mettwurst—not bratwurst, which are not part of the community’s heritage. Several families, including Schoening’s, continue to make their own recipe for home or church-consumption only, since the cold-smoked process is not a legal or commercially-sanctioned method.

Schoening’s family came to Iowa from Schleswig-Holstein in 1858 with thirty other families. Fleeing the Prussian take-over of their homeland in 1848, many residents of the region settled in first in Davenport area and then made their way west to southwest Iowa. Schoening’s father, like his father before him, farmed 220 acres and raised hogs, corn, and soy. Ormand, Gary’s father, also made about 300-400 lbs of mettwurst a year for family consumption as well as for peddling to friends and local bars. During the 1980s Farm Crisis, Gary along with a neighbor and a cousin

considered taking over and starting a sausage business, but they ended up buying and running a doughnut shop instead.

St. John's Lutheran Church in Mineola has long had an annual mid-February church supper that features boiled or grilled mettwurst as well as homemade sauerkraut, green beans, rye bread, fried potatoes, and banana cream pie. Each year they make and sell over 1200 lbs of sausage to church members and neighbors. People eat the sausage on the spot and buy extra to take home to mix with meatballs (for spaghetti), in spaghetti sauce, or on pizza--or to eat grilled or boiled. Since mettwurst is made only once a year, community members buy it up as soon as it goes on sale.

Gary Schoening related that while few families in southwest Iowa are making the sausage today, when he was a child and a young adult, most families had their own recipe, which some kept as a family secret. Different families used slightly different spices or different cuts of pork. Gary's family always included Boston butts or pork shoulder in the mixture, but in his opinion, it was the two hams from a hog his uncle would butcher that extra flavor to the sausage along with the addition of brown sugar, sage, salt, pepper, and some secret spices. When Gary's daughter was young, he would make mettwurst with her. And later, when Gary was busy with the bakery and other jobs, one of his nieces from San Diego returned to learn how to make mettwurst the traditional, family way.

Everyone in the Schoening family was involved in making mettwurst. When Gary's daughter was young, he would make mettwurst with her. And later, when Gary was busy with the bakery and other jobs, one of his nieces from San Diego returned to learn how to make mettwurst the traditional, family way. But when Gary was younger, his father, Ormand, was in charge of the seasoning, while Gary and his brother-in-law did the deboning. There was a designated sausage stuffer, hand meat grinder, and mixer. Gary's mother guided the casings during the stuffing process and also tied them off. The latter was the worst job, due to the danger of cut fingers.

Once the sausage was prepared, family members would make a fire in the smoke houses (small wooden buildings once found on every farm). Beds of coals were laid and wet logs gradually added to produce a lot of smoke and not much heat. But air temperatures were generally at least as low as 38-40 degrees Fahrenheit, so spoilage was not likely.

Besides the annual church supper in Mineola, mettwurst can be found at lockers in northwest Iowa. Since these lockers do produce and sell mettwurst, someone has apparently reconciled a legal way to prepare this savory meat. Given that more than 50% of Iowans (and Americans) have some degree of German heritage, there might be a market for this specialty sausage that uses Iowa pork and has been made traditionally for many generations—and in a way that is demonstrably German-American/Iowan, Dutch-Iowan, or Luxembourgian-Iowan.

Lockers where mettwurst is prepared and sold include the Lyon County Locker in Rock Rapids in Iowa's northwest corner. This locker also makes ring bologna, a Dutch specialty, and sells organic pork.

The Remsen Processing Center in Remsen, Iowa also makes and sells mettwurst as well as other ethnic German and Luxembourg foods. According to the Remsen Processing Center website, Incorporated in 1889, Remsen was settled by Luxembourg immigrants who fled their homeland to escape religious persecution, Prussian military conscription and economic problems. "A little bit of Luxembourg is still evident at mealtime in some Remsen homes. Treipen, blood sausage, Luxembourg apple cake, and Luxembourg Quetchen Fluet (Plum Pie), and many other foods from the 'Old Country'" are still served on occasion. Each year the [Remsen Oktoberfest](#) celebrates Remsen's Heritage with a fine fare of Luxembourger food and "Old Country" entertainment and celebration" (http://remseniowa.net/general_information.html).

Grandpa Jack's Popcorn
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Grandpa Jack's popcorn from Belmond in north central Iowa involves at least a 4th generation and possibly heirloom 3-color corn variety. Steve McLaughlin told me that his father and his grandfather before him would gift newly married children with one ear each of brown, white and red popcorn. Although Steve, like his father and grandfather, grew up on a farm, he now runs a successful small town car dealership and can't really afford to retire just yet to grow popcorn. According to Steve, Grandpa Jack's popcorn is smaller than and not quite as fluffy as the leading national brand, but it is certainly much tastier!

Jack McLaughlin grew up in Cummings, south of Des Moines. His family moved to Belmond around 1922, moving their livestock and equipment by train. One of eleven children (seven boys and four girls), Steve's family "ate popcorn all the time." He remembers that after the supper dishes were done, they would pop corn in the old dishpan, talk and read the Sears catalogue. His childhood memories are idyllic. The family grew all their own food, from potatoes to watermelon. They hunted every fall and raised cattle as well as hogs, chickens, and a large variety of vegetables, including onions, carrots, beets, several kinds of potatoes, radishes, cabbages, and pumpkins. Steve also remembers going to town to get locally made ice cream at the creamery where his family sold its milk.

After Steve grew up and his father grew too old to plant the family popcorn seed, Steve started growing it himself in order to supply family members-and to gift the newly weds. Eight or nine years ago, after not planting it for nearly two decades, he found some old seed and planted a couple of rows. The corn grew, and he and his wife harvested 15 gallons. His children loved the popcorn and asked him to plant more the next year. He did and produced 40 gallons and gave each child a five-gallon pail of shelled corn. One of his sons suggested trying to microwave the popcorn and did some research on packaging. Snappy Popcorn in Breda packaged the corn, which is named for Steve's grandfather, and produced 1000 custom bags from 45 gallons of corn. It was so good that McLaughlin's grown children and his grandchildren all wanted some. Three years ago, his son set out to market 10,000 bags, produced from 3500 lbs. of corn. They sold out at \$1.50 a bag.

Like K&K Tiny But Might Popcorn, Grandpa Jack's comes from small kernels that produce small but tasty popcorn. According to McLaughlin, popcorn loses its flavor when the seeds get too big. His corn has been cross-pollinated and not kept separate by color, so each ear has some of each color of corn. McLaughlin's challenge today is to find someone with the equipment to plant and harvest the corn, since he is too busy with his car dealership to devote himself to farming again.

Pawpaws and Black Walnuts

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Nut tree farmer and contact for the Southeast Iowa Nut Growers (S.I.N.G), Tom Wahl of Red Fern Farm, thinks there is a definite future in growing naturally certified chestnuts and paw paws, as well as black walnuts and heart nuts, a fast growing tree that produces a mild, sweet-flavored nut in a heart –shaped shell. Unlike walnuts, heart nuts can be easily extracted whole, and there is a huge market for this nut just because of its looks.

Chinese chestnuts are an extremely viable crop for Iowa: they grow well and quickly here, require no investment in expensive agricultural machinery, do not cause soil erosion, and have a proven demand as a specialty crop. But Italy dominates the marketplace for a nut that brings an average wholesale price of \$4 per pound. USDA records show that the United States imports 41 million pounds of chestnuts and produces only half a million. According to Wahl, chestnuts are the third most popular nut worldwide, after peanuts and coconuts.

But of greater interest for this project is Wahl's work and background with pawpaw trees. Although Wahl didn't have much in the way of family stories about pawpaws, as a boy, he did stumble across pawpaw patches along waterways in southeastern Iowa. A member of the custard apple family, pawpaws are also known as the Midwest banana. The trees, which are native to Iowa, are a hardy species, but the rich fruit, which ripens from early September through mid-October, is soft, does not ship well, and is loaded with seeds. On a more positive note, pawpaw pulp does freeze well and is great in pies, jams, custards, and cakes as well as in ice cream. Wahl reports that an upscale restaurant in Tennessee sells pawpaw ice cream for \$10 a gallon. And white tablecloth restaurants in Iowa City stand in line to get all the paw paws he can produce. Of even greater importance, however, says Wahl, are pawpaws potential for treating head lice and cancer, for which research is ongoing at Perdue University. The University of Kentucky has done more extensive research on pawpaw production (<http://www.pawpaw.kysu.edu/>), but there is every reason to think that further cultivation of the trees could result in a very lucrative niche market for southern Iowa.

Black walnuts are also native to Iowa, as well as to other states. While they are difficult and labor intensive to harvest, there are several roasted and candied nut small businesses that would buy Iowa-grown black walnuts if they could find them. These businesses are most often found as concessions in various county and local fair and festivals. I ran into the same ones at the Adel Sweet Corn Festival and Madison County's Covered Bridges Festival. Again, these nuts are require a certain amount of labor to harvest and shell, but the trees can withstand hard freezes and the nuts are tasty and favored by many Iowans for baking, as evidence by a host of recipe books.

K&K Tiny But Mighty Popcorn, Shellsburg

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Gene and Lynn Mealhow, and their sons, have been producing K&K Tiny But Mighty Popcorn ® since the late 1990s. A farmer and soil consultant by profession, and a consultant for USDA organic certification, Gene comes from a farm family. He bought the business from Richard Kelty, whose family had farmed in Shellsburg, IA for several generations. In fact, Kelty had first called upon Gene to consult with him as to how to increase his popcorn yield.

According to Gene, who consulted with experts from around the United States, the tiny K&K kernel is most likely a variety of flint corn. The Kelty and Kramer families either found it growing here in Iowa when they settled here in the 1850s or they traded for it with local Indians, who had probably gotten it from western tribes. What makes this corn unique, besides its tiny kernels and disappearing hulls, is that it is open pollinated. A 128-day corn, K&K is also difficult to raise, process, and keep its integrity.

Gene's first reaction when he encountered the corn was "What in the world is this stuff?" He consulted with a seed salesman from Idaho, who said it was one of the rare varieties of popcorn that the big guys in the business do not want anything to do with. According to Gene, it has different gene expressions and is hard to breed; the seed salesman thought it would crossbreed with only one of his old varieties of seed. When Gene had it tested, the results indicated that it had the lowest GMO content of any popcorn currently being grown. Several consultants have told him that all the old open pollinated varieties came from original Indian seed corn.

According to Richard Kelty, original owner of K&K Popcorn, his great, great, great-grandfather, Samuel Kelty, settled just northwest of what is now Cedar Rapids in the 1850s. While no one in his family knows exactly where the seed came from, they believe it came from Indian neighbors. As the story goes, a returning career army family member found a fruit jar of it on a shelf in the mid-1970s. He planted some and popped the rest—and a new business was born.

Mealhow, who has worked in a variety of agriculture-related businesses, is fascinated by his unique and tasty popcorn. When his father and uncle got out of agriculture, Gene got back into farming. In the 1980s, he started to look at the whole picture involving groundwater and chemicals, and decided to go organic. That business failed and he began work for a soil consultancy company, which advised farmers about soil nutrients, seed selection, and the like. One of Gene's first customers in the early 1990s was Richard Kelty, who brought Mealhow in to cut his throwaway and increase his yield. The popcorn stalks were falling down and producing only 600 lbs per acre, which was not commercially viable.

As Gene tells it, in the very first year, Kelty's corn crop "went nuts." Yield went to 1000 lbs, per acre and he cut the throwaway by 10%. One of the early challenges was getting three-inch long ears to fill to the tip. Gene notes that it was "totally fun to work with Richard." The two changed something each year—upped population, planted deeper, selected for certain traits, and planted different seeds. After five or six years of this, Kelty told Mealhow, who had come up to do a fertilizer order, that he wanted to sell his popcorn business after another year. Gene tried to discourage him—after all, Kelty was the oldest son of more than three generations of farmers. But his sons didn't want the business, and he asked Gene to help him find someone.

Mealhow did his best, telling the story of the amazing popcorn to any one who would listen. One day, his wife's cousin, a marketing expert with his own company in Minneapolis, tried some of the popcorn and asked what it was. Gene told him the story about Richard, the cousin asked to visit the Kelty farm, toured the farm, and suggested that Gene just buy it himself. After discussing the proposition with his wife, Lynn, he asked Richard if he could buy the business. According to Gene, Kelty stuck his spade in the ground, light a cigarette, and said, "I was wondering how long it would take you to do this." In typical low-key Iowa style, Kelty said he'd wanted to sell it to Mealhow all along—but he wasn't going to tell him that; he'd have to come to it on his own.

The Mealhows face certain challenges with this popcorn. Gene still has to figure out how to keep the stalks from falling down, which requires more breeding work. He says he needs to go through his pool, select seeds, find the ones with the fullest ears and strongest stalks, and propagate those. This can be especially labor-intensive given the open pollination method and need to bring forward the promising recessive traits. He is also hoping to find five to six varieties that can be used in organic cereals. Since Gene already works with the Hawkeye Community College Horticulture Department, what he'd really like to do is to turn the research over to students and give them not only the experience but the benefit of supervision.

The other challenge with the K&K popcorn is converting it all to organic production. While some of the fields are organic, not all of Mealhow's growers are. The issue right now is weed control, and he needs another year or two to convert all the fields. His own farm will be certified organic this year. Except for the current use of herbicide on some of the fields, K&K maintains organic standards. There are no fumigants or sprays used in the barns after the corn is harvested.

At this point, K&K Tiny but Mighty Popcorn® is taking off. Mealhow has done an interview with Jan Michaelson of WHO in Des Moines, and he's gone to food shows in Chicago. He's currently working with Whole Foods to market the popcorn, which a local gastroenterologist has recommended the popcorn to those suffering from diverticulitis; the absence of hulls make it a non-irritant for those patients. Gene's son's orthodontist also recommends it for teenagers with braces, since there are no hulls to get stuck in the hardware.

For the Mealhows, their popcorn is not just a business. It's their passion and a product they do not want to let die. One of Gene's biggest pleasures is meeting his customers, which range from friends to people from around the United States. He tries to build relationships, not just customers. And he trusts those who buy his popcorn to just send back their checks; "I've never

been stiffed.” At a recent trade show in Chicago, Mealhow was thrilled to have a mother say to her kids, “This is real farmer, and he’s from Iowa.”

Summary and Recommendations

This study has been just one of the necessary precursors for assisting farmers in choosing sustainable alternatives. Without the identification and solid research among place-based food producers, appropriate marketing cannot happen. And unless economic development dollars and/or a concerted and united private effort to promote Iowa foods, the research from this project as well as related and previously completed studies (exploring produce markets, consumer preferences and awareness of regional food systems, and the relationship between geography and taste) will have gone to waste.

The wonderful research that has been done and that is currently going on as well as the vast variety of really good, locally and sustainably produced Iowa food must be promoted in popular food publications, television and radio shows, and websites (Gourmet, Food and Wine, Bon Appetite, Epicurious.com, RoadFood.com, Food Network, The Splendid Table, Kitchen Sisters, and so on) as well as in academic ones—and at academic conferences. If this enterprise to promote Iowa place-based foods is going to work, there must be a popular and media buzz.

Not to anyone's surprise, there are some very good and popular place-based foods in Iowa. They are foods that have solid local adherents as well as statewide, national, and international fans. Following from recommendations of some ISU service-learning students, it would be important that these foods be framed as wholesome, from the heartland, and affordable—as opposed to catering to a high-end specialty foods market. There are those foods that meet all three criteria and that follow or could follow sustainable and/or organic practices. And there are those foods, among the most well-known and most widely identified as having a taste of Iowa that simply have nothing to do with sustainable farming practices. The challenge will be to figure out ways to encourage at least some producers of those foods to practice better production methods. The current issues with clean groundwater, the increasing cost of fossil fuels, and other environmental and health issues may well continue to encourage this movement—creating better income sources for farmers and better food for consumers.

The irony inherent in combining a marketing approach with one that involves food produced locally, humanely and organically, however, is that the former can create disincentives for the latter—exactly what happened with Amana® meats. When demand outgrew supply, the label ceased to refer to pork and beer actually raised in the Amana Colonies. Instead, the challenge for the Leopold Center, is to encourage geographical identification of Iowa heritage foods and niche marketing, to stay small rather than going the way of Ben & Jerry's ice cream, Horizon milk (now owned by Dean and not always using free range dairy cows), and other once local producers and processors. Such a marketing strategy can “pollute” authenticity, leaving us with tasteless nostalgia, disconnected from any place.

Recommendations for next steps include the next phase of this project, which is to produce a series of web-based “fact sheets” for five Iowa place-based foods. The Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs will create a linked series of pages on its website to introduce the concept of place-based foods to a general public and those involved in agriculture and food production. The web pages will provide informational outreach and models for Iowa place-based foods. Each of the fact sheets will consist of text, photos, audio of the producer/s of a particular food, transcript

of audio, and producer contact information as well as a downloadable PDF of the fact sheet. The web pages will be linked to such sites as the Leopold Center's, Iowa Wine & Beer's (<http://www.iowawineandbeer.com/grapevine.html>), and Practical Farmers of Iowa's.

Other possibilities include developing and refining models for local food and culture tours. Besides these foods that meet all three of the criteria set out for place-based foods, there are a variety of others that one could make a strong case for pursuing, at least for developing further markets and for culinary tourism purposes. This could support and promote those foods that are heritage-based, produced in Iowa, but not necessarily with ingredients from here, as well as those Iowa produced foods whose ingredients are being grown here but that don't have anything in particular to do with ethnic or regional heritage. The former would include Dutch, Danish, Norwegian and other such foods and regions of Iowa, while the latter could encompass those "roadfood" items like tenderloins, cinnamon rolls, but also local ice creams and cheeses, wines, cider, and the like—as well as local restaurant, bakery, and market finds.

Other possibilities include Latino and Southeast Asian foods. Latinos have been in eastern and central Iowa for over 100 years, while Southeast Asians began to settle here 30 years ago. Both groups have been integrally involved in the agriculture of the state, have made significant contributions as agricultural workers, small producers, and, in some cases, as creators of finished products that use (or could use) Iowa-grown crops and meats, including tortillas, chicharones, tamales, and other goat and pork products.

Iowa's first "official" refugee group, the Tai Dam from Laos, transported a certain type of green from Laos, which they sauté with local maple tree whirligig seeds. While those whirligig maple seeds, harvested in early spring and frozen for use for the following lunar New Year, are certainly available around the world, their use by Tai Dam occurs only in Iowa and in their former homeland.

Local Bosnian refugees have brought banana-type pepper and tomato seeds from their former homeland, because they much prefer the taste of home-grown vegetables from those seeds to produce from what they regard as tasteless peppers and tomatoes from GMO seeds. Again, there are Bosnian refugee communities elsewhere, but Iowa does have a unique role in the Bosnian resettlement story—and in their attempts to readapt their foodways.

Norwegian traditional holiday foods such as lefse and kringle as well as Czech kolaches and Dutch letters are also strongly identified as Iowa foods. Many families and communities as well as commercial bakeries are involved in making and passing on these tasty baked goods, without which no Christmas or Thanksgiving holiday celebration would be complete. Given the high numbers of Norwegians in Iowa and the fact that northeastern Iowa was traditionally the potato growing region of the state, it might be quite possible to create a market for lefse made from locally grown potatoes. The lefse makers are already around, and frozen lefse (usually from Minnesota) can be found in refrigerator cases in supermarkets from Des Moines to Belmond.

And finally, neither pork tenderloins nor Maid-Rites® (or loose-meat sandwiches in western Iowa) can be ignored. While not necessarily made from organic or sustainably produced meats, it would be remiss to ignore the popular acclaim and knowledge of these savory meats. For the best

list of Iowa restaurants making and selling breaded tenderloins, check out Allen Bukoff's website <http://www.allenbukoff.com/wildBPTiowa03/>. For grilled pork tenderloin, make sure to visit the Suburban Restaurant in Gilbert. Winner of the 2004 Iowa Pork Producers Association Award for the best grilled tenderloin in Iowa, the restaurant is owned and operated by sisters Susie Lyon and Diane Cox. The two women, who graciously welcome customers to their roadside café along Highway 69, north of Ames, use a lot of their father's recipes. The women grew up in the restaurant their parents ran in the 1940s and 1950s and make a tasty and more traditional breaded tenderloin as well as homemade desserts. Derived from German recipes for wiener schnitzel, pork tenderloins, whether battered or breaded, are as ubiquitous to Iowa. In fact, they are found only in Iowa, Illinois, and western Indiana.

I would further recommend the development of ongoing discussions with the various interest groups (PFI, CSAs, Leopold working groups)—perhaps a listserv. It is critical not to lose the work that has gone into branding Taste of Iowa®, but the program needs to be rethought, the criteria strengthened and clarified, and the program needs funding and marketing.

Finally, I would recommend further research into more potential place-based foods as well as an overall effort to link the networks of Iowa food value chains, from farmers to value-added producers, to points of sale (farmers markets, CSAs, locally-owned supermarkets and convenience stores, ethnic markets, and specialty markets), as well as to restaurants, fairs, and festivals.

Impact of the Results

It is difficult to assess the impact of this project's results at this time. Certainly, there are now the beginnings of documentation of Iowa's place-based foods. The project has garnered a lot of media attention at a time when this movement is taking off nationally and internationally. And with the second phase of the project (development of web-based fact sheets) having been awarded Leopold funding for 2006, there would seem to be great potential to provide publicity and models as well as outreach for Iowa place-based foods. The project has also created national connections to other folklorists doing research on place-based foods around the United States. And, perhaps most importantly, the opportunity to work on this project has created new connections with other RFSPG working group members, which has also created new project ideas for promoting Iowa's place-based foods.

Outreach and Information Transfer (Publications, Workshops, Education and Outreach, Cooperative Efforts)

Presentations and Publications

"Taste of Place: Place-Based Foods in Iowa," different versions presented at:

Society for Applied Anthropology, 4/05

National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, 9/05

American Folklore Society, 10/05

Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture Symposium, 12/05

Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, 1/06

"Taste of Place, Iowa's Food Culture and Heritage," PFI Newsletter, Summer 2005.

Food Surveys:

http://www.iowaartscouncil.org/press_room/announcements/finding-iowas-food-stories.shtml

Food Stories: <http://www.iowaartscouncil.org/programs/folk-and-traditional-arts/taste-of-place/survey.htm>

Recipes: <http://www.iowaartscouncil.org/programs/folk-and-traditional-arts/taste-of-place/recipes.htm>

Those surveys noted as hotlinks in press releases and articles on the Leopold Center's website http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/news/newsreleases/2005/food2_081805.htm, in the Practical Farmers of Iowa Summer Newsletter (http://www.practicalfarmers.org/news_details.asp?I=58), Farm News, Iowa Environmental Council

<http://iaenvironment.org/Archives/documents/IECNB08-2005.pdf>

Ag Online

http://64.233.179.104/search?q=cache:tOdvlsaG_IwJ:iaenvironment.org/Archives/documents/IECNB08-2005.pdf+%22riki+saltzman%22+food&hl=en&gl=us&ct=clnk&cd=34

General Press releases

http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/news/newsreleases/2005/food_030205.htm

http://www.culturalaffairs.org/media/dca_press_releases/2005/finding-iowas-food-stories.htm

Trees Forever <http://www.treesforever.org/content.asp?ID=2088&I=3791> , as well as the Midland Power Co-op

<http://www.midlandpower.com/aspx/scnewsletter/SCNewsletter.aspx?CampaignID=31&NewsID=587>

The Hawk Eye <http://64.233.179.104/search?q=cache:wgJZm ->

[DNzQJ:www.thehawkeye.com/weekly/stories/fi7_0821.html+%22riki+saltzman%22+food&hl=en&gl=us&ct=clnk&cd=29](http://64.233.179.104/search?q=cache:wgJZm - DNzQJ:www.thehawkeye.com/weekly/stories/fi7_0821.html+%22riki+saltzman%22+food&hl=en&gl=us&ct=clnk&cd=29)

Butler County REC

<http://64.233.179.104/search?q=cache:k8OclSkHRagJ:www.butlerrec.com/aspx/News/Default.aspx%3FNewsID%3D587+%22riki+saltzman%22+food&hl=en&gl=us&ct=clnk&cd=45>

“Recognition for Iowa Foods,” Kathy Eastman, Humboldt County REC, 4/13/205

Prairie Energy

<http://64.233.179.104/search?q=cache:hSZdxOqLYUMJ:www.prairieenergy.com/aspx/News/Default.aspx%3FNewsID%3D587+%22riki+saltzman%22+food&hl=en&gl=us&ct=clnk&cd=46>

Evaluation

The original evaluation plan called for evaluation to be ongoing and part of the planning and staged research process. I assumed that after the preliminary surveys were done that I would present those initial findings (about 10-15 days' worth) to RFSWG with suggestions for the next stage of research as well as after the next stage of research is completed. Instead, I ended up doing two presentations (PFI and SfAA) within the first few months of the project's starting. Several members of the RFSWG were present at the PFI conference (January 2005), while others read versions of the paper presented to the Society for Applied Anthropology conference (April 2005). While the first was more about presenting my previous work on Iowa food traditions, the second and more academic presentation occurred after the results from the first round of press release responses were in. Comments I received as well as further contacts from those presentations informed the next stage of the research, which involved follow up via phone, email, and in person visits to various food producers and professionals in the field.

The next stage of the project involved developing the online surveys. While I based the initial questions on my previous work with ethnographic interviews, the actual research itself informed what I asked and how I asked it. As well, several colleagues, both those in Iowa and those from outside but also working on issues related to food and place, made comments and suggestions for revising the surveys. As it turned out, however, those surveys were much better suited to being used to guide in person or phone interviews. As I noted above, they were much too detailed for most respondents and, indeed, fewer than ten people actually filled them out. On the other hand, however, the surveys did result in further stories and several email and phone contacts. The survey stayed up on the DCA website through November 2005.

My article about Iowa place-based foods published in the summer 2005 PFI newsletter, which directed online and hard copy readers to those surveys, included the results of the research done in the spring and early summer of 2005. Again, comments and contacts from that article served to further refine my research. Several colleagues reviewed the surveys before they were posted as well as the PFI article, which also had the result of providing evaluation of that stage of the project.

I continued to do research online, over the phone, via email, and in person throughout the summer and fall. At the same time, I also spoke with news media about the project and gave three more presentations (National Assembly of State Arts Agencies in September, American Folklore Society in October, and the December Leopold Center Symposium). The end result was to receive an ongoing series of written and oral commentary on the various stages of the research.

In sum, this project has been quite successful at generating publicity for the subject and issues regarding place-based foods in Iowa. I have found the requisite number of place-based foods in Iowa, written up their stories, and have plans to follow up this project with a series of web-based fact sheets on several Iowa place-based foods. The Leopold Center has also deemed the initial results successful and approved funding for the fact sheets.

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