



IOWA FOOD COOP

November/December 2010 Newsletter

FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Greetings IFC Membership,

The onset of the busy holiday season signals the end of another successful year for the Iowa Food Cooperative. It is gratifying to see how far we've come in just two years of operation. We have a strong membership base which includes committed volunteers, superior producers, dedicated staff, and many others who are simply committed to buying the best food produced in the state. Aside from having a strong membership, the cooperative's financial stability continues to improve as we increase the amount of product purchased through the co-op and the opportunities for members to make those purchases. The IFC board of directors approved a budget that will begin paying General Manager Gary Huber, something which is well deserved. It is no small accomplishment that the IFC has been able to create a few paid positions this past year and looks to be in a financially

stable position. Our position is certainly bolstered by months like November with 160 members ordering over \$15,000 worth of products!

I'd like to extend a hearty thanks to outgoing board members Linda Gobberdiel and Chris Lerch. Their service to the IFC is much appreciated. Filling the vacancies are incoming producer member Pete Woltz and consumer member Kelly Tagtow. We look forward to working with Pete and Kelly and know their contributions will certainly help us grow and prosper.

Don't forget to invite those "on the fence" family members and friends down to the IFC's open house at the Merle Hay Mall site on December 4th. Many producers will have products for sale and for sample, so stop by and see what's available.

Happy Holidays!

Jason Jones
IFC President

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK & TWITTER!



Important Dates

Shopping Cart Opens

December 1st
January 1st

Shopping Cart Closes

December 11th
January 15th

Distribution Dates

December 16th
January 20th

Des Moines	W.D.M.
@ Merle Hay Mall	@ Village of Ponderosa
4:00 - 7:00 p.m.	5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

IFC OPEN HOUSE

December 4th

11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Samples Galore!

Products for Purchase!

Meet Some of the

Producer Members!

IFC Gift Certificates!

Do Your Holiday

Shopping in One Stop!

for more info, see page 3

IFC Board Meetings

1st Sunday of the month

5:00 p.m.

At Merle Hay Mall Distribution Site

"The mission of the Iowa Food Cooperative is to facilitate farmer-consumer relationships and build our farms and communities through web-based marketing of Iowa products."

GETTING TO KNOW THE PRODUCERS

[Keith Kuper Farm](#)

Keith & Marian Kuper
10749 Co. Hwy. S55
Ackley, IA 50601
marian.kuper@gmail.com
641-640-0022 (home)

Keith Kuper Farm, started in 1992, has been raising pasture-raised beef without the use of hormones, antibiotics, implants or steroids for close to twenty years.

Keith hasn't always been a farmer; he has danced around with many jobs including an agronomist and stockbroker to name a few. Marian was not used to the farm life by any means when they started out. She had helped manage a natural foods co-op and had worked to become an accountant. They decided to move back to Ackley and give farming a try. So far, so good.

The Kupers usually purchase three to 10 beef calves from a local cattleman during the spring; the number of calves bought depend on the corn screenings from the previous fall. Corn screenings are the small particles of the kernel that have been ground or broken off the kernel itself. It is screened to separate the kernel from the smaller particles. It is a byproduct of the cleaning of corn. It is then used to feed livestock.

The farm can pride itself on the fact that they have never given their animals any hormones, antibiotics or steroids. A veterinarian has never had to tend to their cattle. They are checked twice daily for signs of injury or sickness. Not only do the cattle have corn screenings at their leisure, they also get to graze on the lush grasslands of the farm.

The farm raises only raises a select few of cattle per year to slaughter in the months of November and December. With this being said, now is the perfect time to get in contact with the Kupers to make sure you get their beef. Don't miss out!

Updates from producers:

The IFC currently has 78 producer members who have been approved to sell products. Whether these producers list product each month varies for reasons like scheduling conflicts on delivery days or the low inventories. We hope to institute better systems to keep members informed when producers have issues that prevent them from listing product, but there are a few we want to let you know about here. The first is Northern Prairie Chevre, which (we are sad to note) sold its last cheese in November. Located near Woodward, they have been a part of the IFC since we launched two

[Hibbs Farms](#)

Jeff & Christy Hibbs
1711 Knapp Ave.
Albion, IA 50005
hibbsfarm@heartofiowa.net
641-488-2259 (home)

"You just can't buy beef in the grocery store like we get from you, the taste is out of this world!" - Dana Ersland-Kozinski.

When visiting the Hibbs' website, this is the first thing an interested consumer sees under the testimonial portion of the site. Judging by the other testimonials, the farm does a wonderful job supplying the Iowa River Basin and surrounding areas with prize winning cattle.

A family farm in its sixth generation of family members involved, it has become a tradition of raising quality, genuine beef cattle. High standards of selection offer a great finished product; the herd comes from Black Angus cows that have around 650 acres of pastures to graze upon. No animal proteins are used in their feed. Antibiotics are used but only when necessary such as instances of sickness. The only replacement hormone used is extremely minimal and goes into the steer's ear, which is not used in the finished food product.

Their cattle have produced meat that has consistently placed in the top five of the Beef of Merit Show at the Iowa State Fair. They have also received champion honors twice while also being named reserve champion in recent years. Hibbs farm offers its customers ¼, ½, and whole beef as well as custom bundles or individual products for your cooking needs, whether it be hamburger, patties, roasts or jerky.

To learn more, visit their family website at www.hibbsfarms.com.

years ago this fall. They have been in business for 10 years and were the first company in Iowa to secure a license for on-farm goat cheese plant. Connie Lawrence, Kathy Larson, and Wendy Mickle, were its founders and operators, but they have decided that the time was right to sell the business. "We at Northern Prairie Chevre wish to thank everyone for all the support from the members of the Iowa Food Coop. It was a difficult decision to move on but it is the right time for us. We feel fortunate to have been a part of this organization and hope for nothing but growth and continued success."

Two others are Anything But Green Gardens (operated by Jim and Brein Osborn from near

[Elements of Rejuvenation](#)

Mark Wells & Elaine Langel
23905 220th Street
Leon, IA 50144
admin@elementsofrejuvenation.com
515.240.2178 (home)

Have you ever bought a candle that smelled heavenly in the store, but once you got it home, it wasn't so pleasant? The same problem happened one too many times to the owners of Elements of Rejuvenation, so they decided to take matters into their own hands. The solution? Making their own soy wax candles.

They hand pour the candles into small batches; the candles then sit for two weeks to ensure the perfect aroma of the finished product. The soy wax is produced from soybeans and has not been molecularly altered. The fragrances are based on natural oils.

The candles are virtually soot-free with burn times averaging around 40 hours. Soy wax has a melting temperature near 100 degrees, close to the human body temperature. The wax can be used as a lotion when melted and typically does not burn skin if accidentally spilled. The soy wax cleans up with hot water. Another major plus of the candles is that they use soybeans from local farmers.

With Christmas just around the corner, don't forget that every room in the house deserves a candle. When the product is made right here in Iowa with many different scents, why not give them a try?

Vinton) and Audubon County Family Farms (operated by Cindy and Vic Madsen). Anything But Green Gardens had been supplying fresh and dried mushrooms, and Audubon County Family Farms had been supply pork, broilers, eggs, and honey. Both have had unexpected family health issues that arose this past summer that caused them to scale back their operations, but both are expecting to return, although the exact dates are not known.

If you are curious about a specific producer who hasn't listed their products, please feel free to contact them directly or send an inquiry to info@iowafood.org.

CONSUMER/PRODUCER MEMBERSHIPS

	Consumers	Producers	All
Up to 8/30	392	77	469
9/1 - 10/31	29	1	30
Totals	421	78	499

IFC Open House
Saturday December 4
11am to 4 pm
Merle Hay Mall Pick Up Site

Samples galore and products for sale plus the opportunity to chat with the great folks that provide our food!

Come out to the pick up site at Merle Hay Mall Saturday, December 4 and sample some of the best that IFC has to offer! You will also be able to purchase products from the available vendors, maybe some summer sausage for your holiday get togethers? Beef sticks for those hunting trips?

If you know someone who has been hesitant about joining the IFC, bring them out on Saturday, one sample of Shanon Ebersol's beef jerky and they will be hooked!



IOWA FOOD COOPERATIVE

Fiscal YTD Profile & Loss Statement

	07/09 - 10/09	07/10 - 10/10
INCOME		
Member Purchases	\$23,140.14	\$50,686.44
Annual Fees	\$240.00	\$340.00
Producer Fees	\$2,310.77	\$5,136.82
Consumer Fees	\$2,334.64	\$5,047.42
Other Income	\$61.51	\$31.39
	\$28,087.06	\$61,242.07
EXPENSES		
Producer Sales	\$23,136.69	\$51,595.38
Other Expenses	\$3,288.90	\$13,590.71
	\$26,425.59	\$65,186.09
NET INCOME	\$1,661.47	-\$3,944.02*

*The net loss is due in part to the decision to start paying people to perform certain tasks. Please see page 4 for more info.

Quotable Quotes

"We get amazing gifts from the Earth and we should care about the people who tend to those gifts... I like to show the farmers that I don't just care about the food they grow but about them." Steven Satterfield, of Atlanta's Farm to Table restaurant, Miller Union quoted in a Yes Magazine [article](#) about "Crop Mobs."

Healthier Holiday Desserts

The Des Moines Raw Food MeetUp Group will hold a special event called "Healthier Holiday Desserts" on Wednesday, December 8 from 6:00 until 8:30 p.m. at R Studio, 3988 NW Urbandale Drive, Des Moines. The program will include a presentation and demonstration by Sheree Clark, health counselor and raw vegan chef. Sheree's talk will cover how easy it is to prepare holiday treats that don't include refined sugar, flour or dairy products. The \$15 fee includes food samples. For more information and to register, visit <http://www.meetup.com/RawFoodDSM>, email sheree@fork-road.com or call (515) 249-2992.

Karen Hunter Wins Golden Okra Award

The IFC has created a new award for the member who has purchased the most in the past year. The first recipient of the award is Karen Hunter, who is shown in the adjacent picture holding the award next to distribution coordinator Deb Edmondson. Congratulations, Karen! We also want to thank the 21 members who purchased at least \$1,000 worth of products, plus the 54 members purchased from between \$500 and \$1,000. These are our core buyers, and their willingness to support our cooperative with their purchases is helping us be financially viable.



Manager's Report: Growing the IFC

Greetings. I need to let you know that the IFC is a partner in a project being conducted by the University of Nebraska. They are going to interview consumers, producers, and managers in cooperatives like ours to identify common issues. These phone interviews will happen over the next three months. The person in charge is Dr. Steven Pharr. Please consider participating. To volunteer, email him at spharr2@unl.edu to arrange a time for a telephone interview. Include our name, the member group you represent (consumer, producer, or management), and your phone number.

A quick note on the P&L Statement on page 3. We now include numbers from the previous fiscal year for comparison purposes. It shows significantly higher revenues, but a net loss of almost \$4,000. Part of the reason is it includes our liability insurance for the entire year, plus we invested in equipment needed to add the WDM drop off site. But the main reason is we are now paying for tasks that were done on a volunteer basis last year. More specifically, Deb Edmondson is being paid to be our distribution coordinator and I'm being paid to be the IFC's General Manager. The board sees this investment as an important step to being a business that is run on a solid footing. They will also continue to closely monitor revenues and expenses to make sure the business is well operated.

The board and staff have begun to devote more attention to ways to grow sales to become financially sustainable. In the past year we've focused mostly on adding new members. We are now looking at how to help our current members increase their purchases. We know we need to continue to add producers with products that are in short supply, such as fresh produce or dairy products. We also need to address other issues

that may stand in the way of increasing purchases by members.

To help on this topic, we did some data analysis this fall. We first looked at the percent of our membership who purchased each order cycle. When we launched in Nov. 2008, 45% of consumer members bought product. We hit 50% in Jan. 2009, and then stayed in the 40% range until June 2009 when it was 37%. It then ranged from 30% to 42% over the next year, but dropped to 21% in July 2010. It continued to hover just above 20% through Sept., which means about one in five members were making purchases. We would like to see this percentage increase back up to the 40% range.

We also looked at how many times each member bought product. Fifty-seven consumer members bought product over 80% of time, which is great. Another 107 bought product from between 50 and 80% of the time, which is good. However, 67 members had never bought product, and another 104 bought less than 30% of times they could. Thus, 171 IFC members were not very active buyers of product.

We then surveyed members who had at least five chances to shop, but who had shopped less than 30% of these opportunities. We gave them nine reasons for not shopping and asked them to rate each on a five-point scale. The results of responses from 38 members are shown in the adjacent chart. We were pleased to see that people were not having major issues with the accessing and using the website. We also discussed options to address issues we felt we could do something about.

For the most important reason (other options to purchase similar products), we need to highlight ways the IFC is different from other options, like being able to buy directly from farmers, the flexibility of being able to shop or not depending

on schedules and needs, and the fact that members are owners of the business.

For the next most important reason (too busy to remember to shop), there may be things we can do (like send more email reminders, which we are hesitant to do), but helping people have more time may be beyond what we can do.

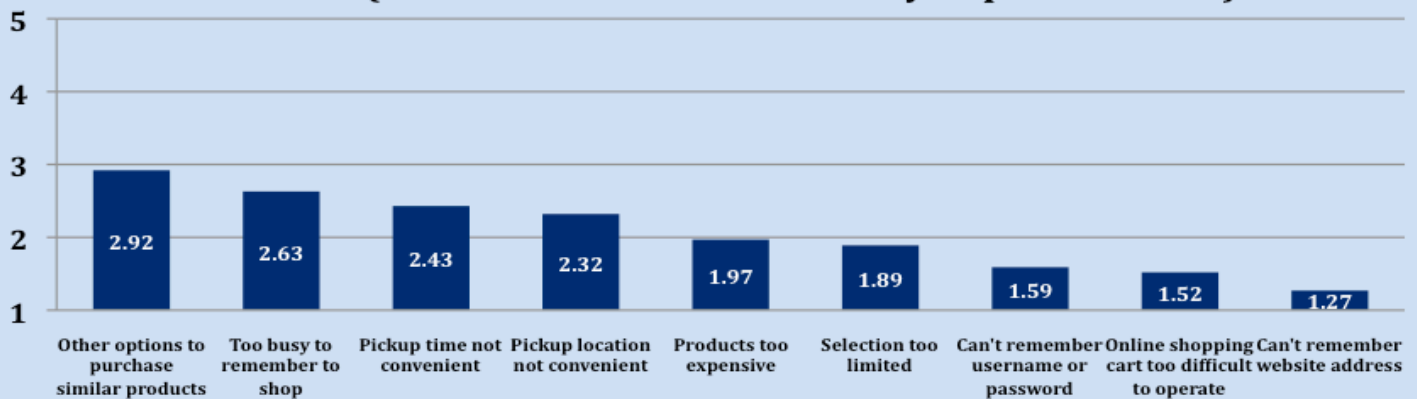
The third and fourth reasons – inconvenient pickup time and location - were where we felt we could do probably do the most to help increase sales. Here are our current ideas on how we can address these barriers:

- Highlight our alternative pick-up time (4 to 5 pm on Saturdays at MHM). This alternative time can be used if needed (like if you have a conflict on Thursday), but we to know ahead of time.
- Add more drop off sites. Our current thinking is Ankeny and somewhere on the east side (perhaps in the East Village). Key needs are 1) suitable locations, 2) volunteers to help sort and transport products, plus be there during pick up, and 3) more effective use of our current space at MHM to allow for segregating products by delivery sites.
- Find someone who could offer a new "product" online to members, which would be a home delivery service (this is done in Nebraska).
- Encourage members who live close to each other or who work together to share in the duties of picking up products.

We welcome your feedback on these ideas and suggestions of other options to help us grow. You can send these to gary@iowafood.org, or to the entire board by using boardmembers@iowafood.org.

By Gary Huber

Importance of Issues Limiting Purchasing (N=38) (1=not an issue to 5=extremely important issue)



“My Year of Meats,” a shocking, strong novel by Ruth L. Ozeki, gives its readers even more reasons to think organic – and to thank their local cattle farmers for the hard work they do to keep antibiotics and hormones out of their beef.

Set in both Japan and the United States, the novel follows the story of two women, Akiko and Jane. Jane is a filmmaker hired to produce documentaries for Japanese television. Her show, “My American Wife,” is funded by the American meat export industry in hopes of selling meat to the people in Japan. Each show Jane directs features what her boss considers to be a fun, wholesome American family with the wife cooking a recipe featuring meat; the producer lives by the phrase “pork is possible, but beef is best.”

When Jane catches her big break at the beginning of the book, she follows her producers orders by only filming the “most normal” families she can find while cooking with beef. Very quickly, Jane begins to branch out, must to her producers dismay. She begins filming families that are large with children that have been adopted from all around the world; she even features a vegetarian couple on the show about beef.

While Jane is filming, Akiko (wife of the Jane's Japanese producer) watches the show religiously and prepares the meals for her husband. He forces Akiko to eat the meat in hopes that she will gain some weight and improve her fertility. As the novel progresses, Akiko's husband becomes more and more abusive. Watching from half way across the world, the eclectic families shown on television give Akiko the inspiration she needs in order to escape the abuse she endures.

While traveling around to different ranchers and farms in the United States, Jane begins to look into the American beef industry. She learns about the use of DES to fatten cattle and chickens. Jane has struggled many years with not being able to get pregnant and finally understands why – she was a DES daughter. DES is a synthetic form of estrogen that was used to help with pregnant women with certain pregnancy complications. Studies now show that DES interferes with the reproductive system of a fetus. The health effects of DES through meat consumption and exposure to contaminated cattle feed begin to weave into the story.

For those who aren't familiar,

certain hormones can make young animals gain weight faster, reducing the amount of feed and time needed for the animal to spend of the farm before slaughter. Synthetic steroid hormones have been found to increase cancer risk. The big question that is left with the reader after the book is “Am I being exposed to these hormones through the meat I eat?” And is it going to affect my health?

The novel is an easy read (I finished the book in four days). It's so compelling and interesting that it is hard to put down. The information is stunning, and I was unaware of much of the information Jane was struggling with. The author has done her research and even gives a list of resources at the end of the novel. There are compelling scenes all throughout the novel that paint a chilling picture of a side of the industry that hasn't been seen by many. The novel is a nice reminder that the extra work that goes into keeping cattle hormone and even antibiotic free is worth it. Not only is it much safer for human consumption, it also gives the cattle a better life.

By Amy Johnson

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER FEATURED RECIPE

Turkey or Chicken Pot Pie

By Diana Rattray for About.com

Serves 6

- 1 ½ c. peas & carrots
- 5 T. butter
- 5 T. all purpose flour
- ¼ c. chopped onion
- ½ t. salt
- ¼ t. pepper
- 1 ¾ c. turkey or chicken broth
- ⅔ c. milk
- 2 ½ - 3 c. diced cooked turkey or chicken
- Pastry for 9-inch two crust pie

Drain peas and carrots; set aside. Heat butter in 2-quart saucepan over low heat until melted. Stir in flour, onion, salt and pepper. Cook, stirring

constantly, until mixture is bubbly; remove from heat then stir in broth and milk. Place back on heat; heat to boiling, stirring constantly. Boil and stir 1 minute. Stir in turkey and vegetables.

Prepare pastry. Roll 2/3 of the pastry into a 13-inch square; ease into ungreased 9-inch square pan. Pour turkey mixture into the pastry-lined pan. Roll remaining pastry into 11-inch square; cut out designs with small cookie cutter. Place square over filling; turn edges under and crimp. Bake in 425° oven until golden brown, about 35 min.



MEET THE NEW IFC BOARD MEMBERS...

Contact Us

info@iowafood.org

This is the general email for the cooperative and good to use when you need general information about our services.

membership@iowafood.org

This is the email address to use when you have questions regarding your membership, activation, gift memberships, and other set-up questions.

volunteer@iowafood.org

This address should be used for responses to volunteer schedules, scheduling your volunteer activity and/or volunteer related questions.

boardmembers@iowafood.org

If you need to express your opinions to the board, we're here to listen.

problems@iowafood.org

Use this address when you have a problem with your order or you have a missing/damaged item.

news@iowafood.org

Producers and members - please submit any "news" you may have that's related to food production, agriculture, local arts & crafts, etc. to this address. Some submissions will be selected for the newsletters.

Two new board members were elected at the IFC annual meeting to replace outgoing board members Linda Gobberdiel and Chris Lerch. Both Linda and Chris have been important assets to the IFC during their tenure on the board. We will miss them, but we also look forward to welcoming our new board members

Kelly Tagtow is the new consumer representative, joining David Couch, Amy Miller, and Carolyn Ross as consumers on the board. He comes to us from Meredith Corporation where he has an extensive background in data analysis and project management related to marketing topics. He and his wife, Angie, live on about 12 acres of land in rural NE Polk County where they have established almost 9 acres of reconstructed prairie, plus additional wildlife habitat and a significant garden. Kelly enjoys providing their own food by baking products from scratch and preserving the summer harvests by freezing and canning produce. They have also committed themselves to spend at least 50% of their total grocery dollars on local foods. He is looking forward to providing more consistent analysis that will aid in several of the board initiatives - increasing member purchases, growing the membership base, and improving the operating efficiency of the co-op.

Peter Woltz is the new producer representative, joining Jason Jones, Ben Saunders, and Stacy Hartmann as producers on the board. Pete and his wife, Cindy, operate Timber Ridge Cattle Company on their farm near Osceola. They have been involved in owning and growing small businesses throughout their business careers. Among these was the Cumming Orchard, which they bought in the early 1990's and subsequently expanded and built into a successful destination market. Then in 2006 they developed the Timber Ridge meat products which are currently sold through the IFC. Running these businesses have taught them the value of quality products, organization, and hard work. Pete also believes that "The IFC is without question the most effective and efficient means of distributing high quality locally grown foods in our market. It makes good sense for producers and consumers alike."



Kelly Tagtow



Peter Woltz