



Greetings IFC Members!

A lot has happened since our March board update! This newsletter review will get you up to date.

IFC Annual Meeting

Mark your calendars! Board member Eileen Wuebker has been working on our 2022 Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner. This is always a great opportunity to mingle with your fellow IFC members and share a meal.

The event will be held on January 22, 2022, from 4-7PM at the Franklin Jr. High School in Beaverdale. If you would like to volunteer to help out please contact Eileen at crescentiafarms@gmail.com. See you there!

IFC Food Donation System

The IFC works to provide high quality fresh local foods to lower income consumers. This is done via a donation system that IFC members contribute to during regular shopping cycles.

Donated funds are used to help offset costs for people using EBT vouchers (previously called “food stamps”), and also to

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purchase locally grown fresh fruit and vegetables that are in turn donated to local food pantries. Last year we donated \$11,896!

You can contribute to this project via the IFC shopping cart, just go to “Iowa Food Co-op Shop” → Community giving. Donations are accepted in \$5 increments.

You can also contribute to this effort via the Iowa Food Foundation (see page 3), which is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization so your donations are tax-deductible.

TerraCycle Recycling Option

Return packaging from IFC purchases for recycling!

The plastic produce bags, clamshells, zipper bags, and other containers that your co-op products arrive in may now be recycled via TerraCycle! Just drop empty packaging from previous IFC purchases in the TerraCycle box at the Franklin location. Please rinse the package and remove labels.

TerraCycle is a service that turns otherwise unrecyclable plastic products into raw material that can be used to make recycled containers, park benches, and other repurposed goods.

We are excited about the opportunity to close the loop on the plastic packaging that many of our producers are required to use in order to comply with food safety regulations (especially during the pandemic). Currently, because of cost, use of the TerraCycle collection box will be limited to packaging

originating from the IFC, and is accepted at our Franklin site only.

Note, it's important to return only clean IFC packaging! There have been some issues with uncleaned items being deposited in the TerraCycle box.

For more information about TerraCycle see www.Terracycle.com

IFC Compost Collection

Another novel opportunity the IFC now offers to members is a kitchen compostables collection option. Here's how it works: Interested members pay \$5 for two 13 gallon compostable bags. The first purchase includes a reference card listing what can and cannot be included in the bags. Once a participant's bag is full it can be dropped off in the "Compost Ninja" recycling bin at the Franklin Plaza site. When that bin is full it is taken to a commercial composting facility.

A wide range of compostables are accepted: the usual coffee grounds, fruit peels and vegetable trimmings, but also all other food scraps (yes, meat, cooked food, expired food), food-contaminated paper (pizza boxes, butter wrappers, fast-food bags etc.) and genuinely compostable plastic. Unacceptable items include: anything actually recyclable, paper products that have a shiny coating (often found in single-use paper cups), styrofoam products, plastic items that say "biodegradable" but are not BPI Certified Compostable or labeled ASTM D6400 or D6868.

If you want to give this a try, find it on the shopping cart site under "Iowa Food Co-op Shop → Sustainability + Composting Service → Composting Service Starter Kit.

Producers Accepting Returns of Used Product Containers

Some of our producers accept returns of their containers. Just drop off the containers when you pick up a new order or during shopping hours. What a great way to avoid the issue of non-recyclable packaging!

The producers include:

Agri-cultured
Better Butter Bureau
Elements of Rejuvenation
Hannah Valley Protein
Jeremiah Coñejo Farm
Joygrow LLC
Meadow Blazing Star
Prairie Landscapes LLC

Producers Using Some or All Compostable Packaging

It's a struggle for producers of all types to avoid plastic and single-use packaging. Those listed below have been working to transition to compostable packaging:

Clover Valley Farm
Fresh Wheatgrass Girl
Heaven on Earth
Nourished
Rosebud Botanicals

Iowa Food Foundation

A complementary organization to the IFC has been established as a 501(c)(3) non-profit group. This Iowa Food Foundation (IFF) will do outreach and promotional work supporting the IFC and other local foods-related entities.

An exciting first step for IFF has been

successfully applying for a USDA grant to evaluate and improve the new IFC shopping cart system. This will be part of a larger project to make the new shopping cart software open source, so other groups might use it to create IFC-like food distribution systems elsewhere.

The IFF website is up and running, and accepting donations. Donations to the IFC EBT program (see page 1) that helps lower income families get access to high quality fresh local foods can be made through the IFF. Because the IFF is a non-profit your donations will be tax deductible. Go to the IFF website listed below and click the donate button!

Currently Lisa Bean is president with a board consisting of Brant Kassel, Inger Lamb, Jessica Mazour, Mel Sadeghpour, and Angela Tedesco. For more information:

<https://iowafoodfoundation.org>

Staffing Changes

In the last few months we have had several changes to our IFC staff roster. Co-directors Jenn Miller and Kate Dohmen have both decided to pursue other options, and Susan Ekstrom stepped down from the IFC Board President position. Additionally, account specialist Emily Bowser and board member Robin Wright West have moved on after many years of service to the IFC. We thank all these people for their much-appreciated work for the IFC!

Karen Davis has taken on the role of General Manager, and Jason Jones has replaced Susan as IFC Board President. In addition Michaela Denlinger has joined iFC as Marketing Director.

Current IFC Board of Directors

Consumer Directors

Lisa Bean

Carrie Cook (Treasurer)

Susan Ekstrom (VP for Consumers)

Emilia Gaps (Board Website)

Brant Kassel (Secretary)

Katie Niday

Producer Directors

Beth Jackson (Nourished)

Jason Jones (Star Grass Farm,
President)

Inger Lamb (Prairie Landscapes LLC,
newsletter)

Catherine Rihm / Andy Joseph

(Meadow Blazingstar Honey, VP
for Producers)

Janine Robertson (Knob Hill Farm)

Eileen Wuebker (Crescentia Farms)

(more info: <https://ifcboard.com>)

IFC Board Committees

The board is developing several committees, including Budget, Communications and Outreach, Black Lives Matter, Strategic Planning, Software/Website, Volunteer, and Producer Care. This newsletter is a product of the Communications and Outreach committee.

Changes and Updates!

Extended Shopping Cart Hours:

Beginning with the sales cycle that closes November 14 we are going to extend shopping cart hours to midnight Sunday. Please let us know if you have any thoughts

about this, pro or con! Email Inger at ingerlamb@gmail.com

Franklin Site: The Franklin headquarters has been rearranged extensively to increase efficiency anywhere possible. The new shopping cart system brought in a whole new way of storing inventory and delivery-day protocols that have helped efficiency and reduced mistakes during distribution. The onsite shopping displays have also been rearranged for better visibility and accessibility. Stop in and check it out!

Franklin Plaza hours:

Franklin Distribution Days:

Fridays Noon-7PM

Saturdays 10:30 - 2

Franklin Walk-in Shopping:

Tuesdays 4 - 6PM

Fridays 4 - 6PM

Satellite distribution hours vary with each site; check online for the current schedules

New Shopping Cart System: Over time the online shopping cart system that was used by the IFC for over a decade became unworkable. To address this situation a new shopping cart was developed specific to the IFC ordering and distribution system. This new software has been in place now since late June. We are very pleased with both the layout and the user interface. Nevertheless, we will be examining the user experience over time to determine what improvements to implement. If you have any problems, comments or suggestions about your experience using the app please don't hesitate to contact Lisa Bean (515.210.4866, Lisa@iowafood.coop) or Inger Lamb (515.250.1693, ingerlamb@gmail.com).

Website Upgrades: Many of you will have seen the new public-facing IFC website, which got a major update in 2020. We also have an IFC Board website (ifcboard.com) where you can find information about board members, minutes from past meetings, by-laws and related items. We thank new board member Emilia Gaps who generously volunteered her time to put the site together for us.

Black Lives Matter

The Iowa Food Cooperative (IFC) Board of Directors started a committee to study and improve the coop in regards to racial equity. The Iowa Food Coop believes that black lives matter and we are beginning a challenging new step to address areas where we may be falling short. We've done some positive things already but there is much to be done. Here's a brief outline of what we have done and what we hope to achieve.

Online discussion with Seeta Mangra-Stubbs of Whole Damn Woman on racial equity, how to talk about it, and ways to move forward as an organization. Attended by staff and board members, this was a great talk with lots of good information

Connected with a local community fridge in an underserved area. IFC then uses EBT donations to purchase local food to fill the fridge. We love this direct action and hope to be able to do more in the future

We've reached out to other groups to start discussions and will continue to explore new opportunities.

We also will begin to evaluate our systems, policies, and procedures to look for ways we can be more equitable and inclusive.