



April 3, 2008

Dear Nutritionist/Food Service Personnel:

By purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables from farmers within your community, you not only offer your residents fresher fruits and vegetables; you also provide a boost to the local economy. The Center for Disease Control defines healthy communities in its [Designing and Building Healthy Places](#) page as "A community that is continuously creating and improving those physical and social environments and expanding those community resources that enable people to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life and in developing to their maximum potential."

You can feel good about the additional health benefits you provide to your residents when you purchase local foods, as these foods will generally be fresher and the fresher the products, the more nutrients they contain. Many of the varieties of fruits and vegetables offered through local supermarkets and vending sources are selected for the ability to harvest and transport them, and neither for their flavor nor nutrient content.

**We have been working with the Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA), Division of Health Facilities to obtain clarification regarding the ability of nursing homes and hospitals to purchase fruits and vegetables from local farmers. The following statement is from DIA "All practices related to the safe procurement, storage, preparation and service of any food in a health care facility would also apply to locally grown fruits and vegetables."**

The document, from the Division of Health Facilities is attached for your reference. Please post this document or keep a copy available for your procurement and food preparation personnel. I hope you will make every effort to support your local farmer and treat your residents to the goodness local foods offer.

If you need help locating local growers, you can utilize one of the many on-line directories such as that offered by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship or you may contact Tammy Stotts at [tammy.stotts@idals.state.ia.us](mailto:tammy.stotts@idals.state.ia.us) or by phone 515-281-7657. You may access our directory through our website at: <http://www.iowaagriculture.gov/agDiversification.asp>.

Thank you for all that you do for the people you serve.

Sincerely,

Tammy Stotts  
Marketing Specialist  
Agricultural Diversification and Market Development Bureau