



## LGG Seeks New Director

The Local Growers Guild is seeking a new director to replace Maggie Sullivan, who will step down at the end of July. The Director oversees all activities of the Local Growers Guild, working closely with the Board of Directors to set an annual budget and outline of events. The director serves as communication hub of the Guild by communicating with members, managing the website, speaking at local events, and attending meetings with other organizations to coordinate joint projects.

This is a part-time position of 10-15 hours per week with pay starting at \$10/hour. Work schedule is flexible and can be partly completed from home. The ideal candidate will be self-motivated, have excellent communication skills, have experience managing multiple projects, and be excited about promoting local food. For a more detailed job description, please visit the LGG website.

Interested applicants can send a resume, cover letter, and three references to [localgrowers@localgrowers.org](mailto:localgrowers@localgrowers.org) or by mail to PO Box 2553, Bloomington, IN 47402.

Want to help choose the new LGG Director? Become a part of the hiring committee and spend approximately 10 hours during the first two weeks of June to review applications and interview candidates. Contact Bobbi Boos at 812-272-3656 or [bobbiboos@gmail.com](mailto:bobbiboos@gmail.com).

## LGG Plans Annual Meeting

We may still be in the rainy days of spring but summer is just around the corner which means it's time to start planning for our 2009 Local Growers Guild Annual Meeting! We had a great time last year at Schacht Farm and are looking forward to another fun afternoon of food, conversation, and exploring a member farm.

The Board of Directors has suggested holding the Annual Meeting on either Sunday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> or Sunday, August 9<sup>th</sup>. We still need to find a location and are looking for a farmer willing to host. Duties of the host are simple – coordinate parking and a potluck area for about 50 people, provide bathroom facilities, and give a short tour of your farm. Interested? Please contact Maggie at 812-345-1592 or [localgrowers@localgrowers.org](mailto:localgrowers@localgrowers.org) by June 1<sup>st</sup>. Thanks!

## Indiana Farmers Network to go Online this Summer

The Local Growers Guild has been working with the Southern Indiana Rural Development Group to develop a new website that will help farmers connect with each other more effectively. One major feature of the site is an online forum where farmers can post questions, advertisements, and announcements similar to how our Classifieds work. The difference is that other farmers can respond immediately by posting a reply or comment online. The site will also feature profiles of all participating farms with the hope of connecting farmers who have a similar interest (e.g. grass-fed beef) and also inspiring new farmers who are looking for a niche (e.g. heirloom tomatoes) and would appreciate some mentoring.

We will be holding training sessions on the new website this summer and fall with additional sessions planned for the slower winter season. This website will also help improve the content of the LGG newsletter and e-newsletter.

## Volunteers Needed for Gleaning

Hoosier Hills Food Bank (serving Monroe, Martin, Owen, Orange, Brown, and Lawrence Counties) is looking for some folks to help out with their gleaning program collecting food from area farms. Volunteers will travel to farms in its service area to glean excess produce not harvested from the fields. There will be consistent, weekly days to assist with harvests at local farms and one-time, last-minute gleaning opportunities at the end of harvest seasons.

They are also looking for farms who want to participate in the gleaning program as well as folks interested in helping grow food at the Food Bank and at area farms. Contact Kim at [volunteer@hhfoodbank.org](mailto:volunteer@hhfoodbank.org) to receive updates on Gleaning Project opportunities and volunteer call-outs.

## Farm Tour Season Opens

Summer is the time for farm tours and there is no shortage of options this year! The LGG has partnered with the City of Bloomington and Slow Food to offer three tours this year – a spring family tour to Schacht Farm; a summer gourmand tour (with dinner) to LIFE, Hunter's Honey, and Harvest Moon Flower Farm; and a fall

relaxing tour (with light dinner) to Olde Lane Orchard and Graber's Produce. There are also several organizations around Bloomington such as Mother Hubbard's Cupboard that are offering tours, as well as individual farms themselves. See the calendar in this newsletter and on the LGG website for more details and let us know if your farm is having a tour!



*A chicken wrangler at Maple Valley Farm*

## Farm to Cafeteria Opportunities

The Monroe County Community School Corporation (MCCSC) is interested in bringing local food into the K-12 school system. We are currently working with the food services director to explore possible ways to introduce local food during the next school year. Some possibilities include adding local fresh fruits and vegetables to the salad bar or sub bar at some schools (to keep the scale more accessible for growers), using local fruits and vegetables for a school snack program, and having farmers come to do presentations in certain schools that tie into special meals in the cafeteria. If you are interested in working with the school system in any of these capacities, please contact Maggie Sullivan at 812-345-1592 or [localgrowers@localgrowers.org](mailto:localgrowers@localgrowers.org) to talk about details.

The LGG has also been working with Indiana University in Bloomington. The university is very interested in local food but requires large quantities, works on a low bid system, and has stringent vendor requirements that include extensive insurance. IU has suggested that local farmers might be best off working through a wholesaler who can provide some assistance with insurance and delivery. The wholesaler Troyer/Beasley works closely with IU and is interested in the idea as well. The LGG will be publishing guidelines next week about how to sell to IU or Troyer.

## Local Food Distribution Survey Results *by Maggie Sullivan*

Thank you to the forty-two growers who participated in our grower distribution survey in March. (If you haven't yet participated, the survey is still available online through the LGG website.) We've done a preliminary analysis and were very interested to see the variety of responses from everyone. Here are some of the take-away messages.

One of the things we wanted to measure was potential for local farms to expand, especially identifying obstacles. Only a few farms (10%) said they are not interested in expanding. The biggest obstacles to expansion were identified as **inadequate storage facilities** and **insufficient capacity for post-harvest handling**. Most farms reported that they currently wash, grade, and pack product at the farm. More work is needed to determine precisely what storage facilities and handling equipment are needed and whether those needs could be met with a shared facility or if each farm is interested in developing its own on-site facilities.

Other notable concerns were the **apparent high cost of marketing** (34%), **lack of equipment** (31%), and **concerns about red tape such as insurance requirements for alternate markets** (28%). The Guild is definitely interested in helping farmers find new markets and keep their marketing costs low. We are in the process of gathering information about insurance and certification requirements that can make it difficult to access wholesale or other markets.

As part of this distribution feasibility study, the Guild has been researching the idea of shared facilities and services that would allow farmers to outsource some of the steps between the harvest and the end consumer. These include things like washing, packaging, storage, and transportation. The advantage is that farmers can spend more time on the farm; the disadvantage is that farmers would have to pay for the services.

Twelve farms (28%) said they would be interested in **shared, fee-based refrigerated space** and ten farms said they would be interested in shared, fee-based **root crop storage** but no one could provide details about how much

space would be used since they were all talking about future expansion. The next step for this process will be to gather all the farms and start talking about details – where would it be located, how much space is really needed, how much would farmers be willing to pay, etc.

Likewise, sixteen farms (38%) expressed an interest in the idea of a paying to use a **centralized warehouse** where farmers could drop off their goods and the warehouse would provide transportation to the end consumer. This is a project with a considerable amount of overhead expense but it could be a great way to increase local food distribution.

Eighteen farms (38%) expressed an interest in **buying packaging in bulk**, a project the Guild attempted in 2007 but had difficulty organizing. Perhaps it's time to try again? The key is identifying a concise list of items that multiple farmers desire; it gets complicated when each farmer has his/her own favorite brand, size, and color.

One of the other big questions for this survey was finding out how farmers are interested in selling their products – retail markets (direct to consumer), sales to small restaurants and groceries, or sales to wholesale accounts.

The survey confirmed our general idea that farmers are **very interested in developing retail outlets**, somewhat interested in sales to restaurants, and minimally interested in sales to wholesalers or distributors. This also reflects the anticipated price difference between the three markets with retail sales providing the highest prices, then restaurants, then wholesale accounts.

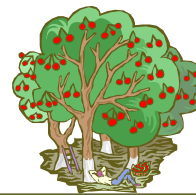
However, selling directly to the consumer generally requires more effort from the farmer per volume of product sold (as compared to selling large quantities to a store or wholesaler) and also requires a way to connect with consumers. What does it take to develop more farmers' markets and how many can the area support? What about CSA's or farm stands? Are farmers willing to put in the time developing new farmers' markets or CSA programs? Would it also be wise to pursue additional markets, such as small restaurants?

The survey also included a list of potential ways the Guild could assist farmers in marketing and distribution with a request for farmers to rank them. The two most popular were "**A cooperative marketing effort that would help farms connect with more restaurants and grocery stores**" and "**A farmers' cooperative that would buy up surplus and sell it, taking care of all the marketing and distribution.**" The former is something we have talked about but not yet figured out how to do effectively. The latter is a project that would require someone with a talent for logistics and a passion for selling local food.

Other popular ideas were to create a web-based store for local farms, create a storage facility, open new farmers' markets (Martinsville, Brown County, Odon, mid-week in Bloomington), have the LGG act as a distributor allowing farmers to stay on the farm, and help create cooperative CSAs. Of course, we gave a lot of options so I guess it's not too surprising that we got a lot of answers!

The Guild feels it is important to create new market opportunities for growers in all three market levels (direct to consumers, small restaurants and groceries, wholesale) in order to truly strengthen the local food economy and to help meet consumer demand for local food. We feel that it's important for growers to learn more about wholesale markets and consider them, even if they ultimately determine it's not a good match.

The next step for the distribution study will be a **focus group on Saturday, May 30<sup>th</sup>** from 1:30 to 3:30 at the Caldwell Center in Bloomington (323 S. Walnut Street). We will provide **free lunch** to those who pre-register. Can't attend but want to share your opinions? Call or e-mail to put in your vote. Our goal is to select 1-2 distribution-related projects to pursue over the next year. The Guild is also planning educational workshops on organic certification, wholesale marketing, and CSA development as a result of this survey. Thanks in advance for participating!



## Upcoming Events

### Homegrown Indiana Spring Tour

Sunday, May 17, 1-3:30pm  
\$8/person, free for children age 2 yrs. and under

Visit the many animals living at Schacht Farm and enjoy snacks and children's activities.

### Local Growers' Guide 2009

Our new guide will be available after Memorial Day! Members will get a copy in the mail; if you'd like extras to distribute, please let us know.

### Local Food Focus Group

Bloomington – Caldwell Center  
Saturday, May 30, 1:30-3:00 pm

Come speak your mind about how the LGG can best improve local food distribution in southern Indiana. The conversation will focus on information gathered through the recent grower survey. Lunch will be provided for those who pre-register at 812-345-1592 or [localgrowers@localgrowers.org](mailto:localgrowers@localgrowers.org) by May 27<sup>th</sup>.

### LGG Board Meeting (June)

Bloomington – Caldwell Center  
Tuesday, June 2, 7-9 pm

All are welcome; please RSVP to Maggie at 812-345-1592.

### Organic Garden Walk

Bloomington – multiple locations  
Saturday, June 13, 10am-2pm

Visit several organic gardens and urban farms in Bloomington, sponsored by the Bloomington Organic Gardening Association. Details to be announced at [www.simplycsl.org](http://www.simplycsl.org).

### Homegrown Indiana Summer Tour

Bloomington departure  
Sunday, July 19, 1-9 p.m.  
\$60/person includes tour, dinner, and transportation.

Tour LIFE Farm, Hunter's Honey and Harvest Moon Flower Farm. In the evening, enjoy the fruits of farmers' labors with dinner made by Gregg "Rags" Rago from Nick's English Hut and Jeff Finch from Finch's Brasserie. Register by 7/13 through the City of Bloomington website.

July is **Eat Local America** month!  
Look around for many local food special events!

### MHC Evening Farm Tour

Bloomington departure  
Monday, Jul 20, 6pm-7:30pm  
By donation.

Join Mother Hubbard's Cupboard for an evening touring Meadlowlark Organic Farm, located in the rolling hills of western Brown County near the north fork of Salt Creek. Meet at MHC parking lot to car-pool - we will depart MHC at 5:25. Donations suggested if possible. To register for this tour contact 812-355-6943 or [Stephanie@mhcfoodpantry.org](mailto:Stephanie@mhcfoodpantry.org).

### LGG Board Meeting (July)

Bloomington – Caldwell Center  
Tuesday, July 7, 7-9 pm

All are welcome; please RSVP to Maggie at 812-345-1592.

### LGG Annual Meeting/Celebration

Farm Location To Be Determined  
Date To Be Determined  
(August 2 or August 9)

Would you like to host the 2009 annual celebration? We will have a potluck, a short business meeting, and time to tour the hosting farm. If you'd like to host, please contact Maggie at 812-345-1592 by Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup>.

### MHC Urban Farm Tour

Bloomington  
Saturday, August 22nd 10:30-noon  
By donation.

Join Mother Hubbard's Cupboard for a tour of Grown in Town Farmstead, part of an urban farm in Bloomington that features a mini-orchard, berry patches, and extensive garden beds. Meet at MHC parking lot to carpool - we will depart MHC at 10:15am. Donations suggested if possible. To register for this tour contact Stephanie at [stephanie@mhcfoodpantry.org](mailto:stephanie@mhcfoodpantry.org) or 355-6843.

Future events...

### Homegrown Indiana Fall Tour

Sunday, October 4, 1:15-7:30 p.m.  
\$14/person, free for children age 2 yrs. and under

Visit Olde Lane Orchard and Graber's Produce. Enjoy a simple dinner including soup made with local ingredients by Middle Way Food Works. Register by 9/28 through the City of Bloomington website.

## New EQIP Funding for Conservation Projects on Organic Farms

The Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) has created a special \$50 million pool of funding for a new Organic Initiative under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The Initiative will provide payments and technical assistance to transitioning and existing organic farmers who adopt NRCS conservation practices used in organic production systems.

This program is available to farmers who are transitioning to organic production, who are already certified organic and want to adopt additional conservation measures, and farmers who sell less than \$5,000 in agricultural products and are thus exempt from formal certification.

Sign up begins at county NRCS offices on Monday, May 11th and continues through May 29th. Payment limit is \$20,000 per year (\$80,000 over 6 years)

to implement conservation projects on the farm, including the opportunity for transitioning growers to develop a "conservation activity plan" as part of their EQIP Organic Initiative contract. A conservation activity plan will be needed to meet National Organic Program certification requirements and is an important step toward certification. Contact your local NRCS office for more information.



## Classifieds

Hay from certified organic seed available at \$4/bale. Please contact Tom Gallagher at 812 333-5252 or [tgallagh52@gmail.com](mailto:tgallagh52@gmail.com).

Thank you to all who participated in the distribution survey! Here are the prize winners selected from a random drawing (each gets a \$40 gift certificate):

- **Chris Gonso, Gonso Farm**
- **Tracy Hunter, Hunter's Honey Farm**
- **Molly Mendota, Open Circle Gardens**
- **Linda Chapman, Harvest Moon Flower Farm**
- **Marcia Veldman, Meadowlark Farm**

A small salvage grocery store in Ellettsville is seeking local products – vegetables, fruits, honey, and dairy products. Eventually, we will have freezers and will be interested in frozen meat as well.

We will not need large quantities of food. It is even possible that we could work with farmers' leftovers from the weekly farmers' markets too. If interested, please contact Tammy Carson at [swinneysgrocery@yahoo.com](mailto:swinneysgrocery@yahoo.com).

Classified ads are free to members and \$5 for non-members with a 30-word maximum. Entries can be sent by e-mail to [localgrowers@localgrowers.org](mailto:localgrowers@localgrowers.org) or contact Maggie Sullivan by phone at 812-345-1592 by June 15.

## Some Quotes from the Distribution Survey

There were a lot of interesting comments from the distribution survey that give a feel for the diversity of farms that we work with. Here are some quotes from the open comment section, with a response from the LGG Director. What do you think?

*I remain unconvinced that mass producing for wholesale nets higher income for my farm but am open-minded to information either way.*

*Very difficult for small-scale grower. Better to get produce DIRECT to user. I am not sure a small grower can make a living selling wholesale?*

**[Director's Response: Many of the successful farm models we have seen combine retail and wholesale markets to maximize income from a small to medium sized farm.]**

*I think [storage and distribution is] much needed. I just grow on a very small scale and do not plan to expand.*

**We know there will always be growers who prefer to stay at a very small scale and do their own sales and distribution; however, as demand grows there are opportunities for farms to expand and we want to find ways to make that effective.**

*I like it [the idea of wholesaling]. I am surprised you did not mention anything about third party audits for food safety; it's kind of a big thing now.*

**We are doing a lot of research into food safety audits and insurance requirements right now but did not think to ask about it in the survey.**

*Sounds good in theory but we are concerned about putting so much energy into one crop as we farm intensively on a small space. Would like to explore the possibilities, especially with herbs.*

*Need help finding customers for our products. We would grow more but haven't found enough buyers to justify the time and energy.*

*I am interested/intrigued by the coop CSA approach. Am also somewhat interested in cooperative marketing or cooperative secondary processing, given a good business plan and professional managers.*

*I am considering bicycle delivery within a few miles.*



**LOCAL GROWERS GUILD**

P.O. Box 2553  
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### ***About Our Organization***

This newsletter is a publication of the Local Growers Guild, a cooperative of farms, retailers, and community members dedicated to strengthening the local food economy in southern Indiana through education, direct support, and market connections.