

**Organic Farming Research Foundation  
Marketing and Food Systems Initiative  
Final Report  
February 2010**

## **Project Summary**

This OFRF project was to plan and implement a bilingual organic farmer training and mentorship program at Marshalltown Community College (MCC) located in Central Iowa. In the fall of 2008 planning and scheduling of the bilingual beginning farm class was completed. The class was offered through the Continuing Education division of the Iowa Valley Community College District (of which MCC is a part). In planning, we drew from and translated existing resources to create a bilingual curriculum. The Spanish language materials are now available for others to use (<http://sites.google.com/site/comidamtwon/home>). The *Start Your Own Farm/Empezar Su Propia Granja* (SYOF/ESPG) classes were conducted January-March 2009 and again in 2010. The class began with ten farm teams (students), each consisting of one or two people. The group was diverse in terms of age, ethnicity, and previous farming experience (see Appendix A for photographs). Thirteen instructors, including area farmers, Extension Small Farm Specialists, and MCC professors, taught classes in farm and business planning with the aim to teach the participants the basics including guidelines for growing organic crops in the temperate climate of the Midwest and explaining the workings of securing an agricultural loan. One objective of the SYOF/ESPG class was to launch beginning farmers using the MCC organic farm. After completion of the class, six farm teams planted and produced at the MCC farm. The SYOF/ESPG graduates were provided access to greenhouse space for seed starting, assistance with soil preparation, equipment, inputs, and ongoing technical assistance throughout the growing season. These beginning farmers succeeded in marketing their products the first year. One farm team marketed to an organic grocery in Ames, Iowa, four farm teams sold their produce at the Des Moines Farmers' Market and another three farm teams participated in other markets. One farm team produced white corn for tortillas which was sold through local outlets. These accomplishments demonstrate the effectiveness of the SYOF/ESPG classes in developing the capacity and structure for beginning farmers to launch a successful business. In January 2010 the course was offered again with 22 students. Several participants from the 2009 class returned to act as mentors to the new students.

## **Introduction to Topic**

Central Iowa is home to a large number of new immigrants, most of whom are Latino. Many of these people come from farming backgrounds in their country of origin and wish to practice farming in Iowa. A study of Latino immigrants with farm backgrounds revealed that the majority would like to farm in Iowa and would prefer to practice small scale, diversified farming.<sup>1</sup> To accommodate these immigrant farmers and to assist new farmers of any background, we established the *Start Your Own Diversified Farm* class.

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<sup>1</sup> This study, "Assessing needs and fostering agricultural entrepreneurship among immigrants in several Iowa communities" by Hannah Lewis (funded by the Leopold Center), can be viewed at <http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/research/grants/2008/M2006-07.pdf>.

Marshalltown Community College (MCC) established a two year degree program in Entrepreneurial and Diversified Agriculture in 2003. As part of this endeavor, the college also began the transition of farmland adjacent to the campus from conventional agriculture to certified organic. The long-term goal was to use the organic farm as a farm business incubator. At about the same time Iowa State University (ISU) launched its graduate program in sustainable agriculture. Collaborations between the MCC and ISU programs were natural. ISU students studying rural sociology and sustainable agriculture offered to work with those in Marshalltown with the aim of assisting immigrants become organic farmers. As we learned more we came to realize that many of these prospective farmers would be better served by a non-credit class that was offered in Spanish. As part of that effort the Marshall County Food System Leadership Team (FSLT) formed at the beginning of 2008 to coordinate the expansion of farmer development and food system leadership opportunities to the Latino community. The efforts of the FSLT culminated in the development of the *Start Your Own Farm/Empiece Su Propia Granja* classes.

## Objectives Statement

The objectives for this project were threefold; first to develop the curriculum for the farmer training and the instructor team; second to implement the class series in the winter of 2009 to prepare beginning farmers to use the MCC organic farm as starting place for their farming enterprises the following spring and summer; and third to develop a bicultural organic and sustainable farmer-to-farmer mentor program. We were largely successful in developing and implementing the beginning farmer curriculum but were not successful in developing the mentoring relationships in the direct farmer-to-farmer manner that we had anticipated. It became clear as the farming season progressed that the new farmers (and potential mentor farmers) were immersed in their own production and marketing endeavors. In addition, the person responsible for organizing these relationships backed out of the project because of limits on his own time (he took a new job).

## Materials and Methods

The project began by developing the Start Your Own Farm training curriculum and assembling the instruction team. Using the FSLT, we developed guidelines for instructors and guest farmers and a course syllabus (see Appendix B). The curriculum was largely adapted from the nationally available SARE funded publication, **“Building a Sustainable Business a Guide to Developing a Business Plan for Farms and Rural Businesses”**

The instruction team included local sustainable farmers, ISU students from the Graduate Program in Sustainable Agriculture, MCC Faculty, and ISU Extension Specialists, and others. We exceeded our original outcome goals of 10 instructors by recruiting 13 to provide instruction for the SYOF/ESPG class. For a complete list see Appendix C. In addition to using the provided curriculum, the individual farmers and instructors prepared their own lecture materials and developed printed material pertaining to their particular topic (see Appendix D). Some

instructors were able to present in both Spanish and English. Translators were present during presentations by those instructors that were not bilingual. Each week's lesson was moderated by a trained instructor along with a farmer experienced in the topic being covered. They worked together to develop the content of the lesson and the presentation of that content.

The end goal of our instruction was to provide basic knowledge and resources. To do this, we covered the following topics:

- Goals (and how to prioritize them)
- Identifying Resources (skills, personnel, equipment, land)
- Business Plan (and why it is important)
- Marketing concepts (assessing market opportunities, market research, competitor analysis)
- Production (seasonality, inputs needed, equipment and seed sources, food safety and handling)
- Recordkeeping (cash and income, budgeting, credit opportunities)

Many of our target students are employed at a local meat packing plant. Some work second or third shifts. This made the meeting time of the class very important. To accommodate this we chose to meet for three to four hours on Sunday afternoons typically meeting from 2:00 until 5:00 pm. We projected that four to six Latino farmers would enroll in class. We recruited using the local Catholic church, with posters at soccer games, and through personal invitations. We also invited students through an announcement on the Practical Farmers of Iowa listserv and at the Iowa Fruit and Vegetable conference. In order to make attending the classes more feasible for whole families we also provided childcare for children from two to ten years of age. Older children were encouraged to join their families as part of their farm team.

The class was offered for \$299 per farm team, well below the cost of operation. Scholarships were also made available to those that could not afford the cost.

To develop a bicultural organic and sustainable farmer-to-farmer mentor program we invited a local foods advocate to coordinate the mentor program. His role was to act as "matchmaker" for new farmers and more experienced farmers (mentors).

## **Project Results**

A total of seventeen farmers were enrolled in the class. These students ranged from novices in production and marketing to those who were very knowledgeable in most areas. For example, most of the Hispanic farmers had extensive knowledge of small-farm operation in a semi-tropical environment but little knowledge of marketing or of farming in a temperate environment. Some students had been raised on a farm but had little practical knowledge of farm operations.

We found that the students learned not only from our written materials, but also, later in the season, from other members of the class while they were farming adjacent plots of land on the college farm. We also found that the book learning was not enough. The experience of doing

the work was the most important part of our program. Having farm plots available on the college property was an indispensable part of the program.

Another very useful part of the curriculum was to provide separate educational opportunities for the children during the adult class. An average of six children (with a total of fifteen different children) attended the related “children’s classes” offered during the adult class times. These children’s classes offered math and science concepts with a farm theme.

The spring following completion of the class, ten farm units were formed. In the 2009 growing season, six of them produced food on the college land and three produced on their own farms. Occasional informal meetings were called to discuss growing problems, marketing opportunities, etc. In 2010, five intend to farm, three are enrolled in the Entrepreneurial and Diversified Agriculture program at MCC, one is working for the Native American settlement in Tama, and one works for the Practical Farmers of Iowa organization.

There were many difficulties with the crop production part of the project. The spring turned cold and rainy in May and continued cold for the rest of the summer. Planting was delayed in many cases, and harvest was hampered by rainy weather and an early frost.

Over \$3500 of vegetables were marketed from the farm plots. (This is not counting the white corn which was sold for tortilla flour, nor the produce grown for home use.) Most of the marketing was done at the Des Moines Farmer’s Market. Others markets included the Marshalltown Farmer’s Market and a local grocery store. Production and financial data from farmers not on the MCC farm are not available.

As addressed earlier, a formal mentorship program was not established. However, the farmers that graduated from the SYOF/ESPG class in 2009 were invited back to attend the 2010 class as mentors. This served to help the 2009 graduates revisit and apply the information they heard/learned the first year and to serve the new students with both success stories and cautionary tales. Those cautionary tales included the dangers of growing what you’re not prepared to market and not heeding the “last frost date” when planting tender annuals.

## **Conclusions and Discussion**

This project proved to be useful both to the participants and the instructors. As instructors, we learned that food was invaluable for cross-cultural communication. Members of the FSLT team and students signed up to participate in bringing food to share at each class meeting. Taking a break from the class to share food allowed people to get to know each other. Food was a terrific common denominator. For the last class everyone participated in a potluck dinner.

We learned to provide childcare on a regular basis and that parents will bring their children, eventually. Initially we had very few parents take advantage of the childcare but in the end it provided the kind of family atmosphere that allowed everyone to be part of the family’s new endeavor.

We also found that it was more difficult to communicate the need for a written business plan and other record keeping issues to the older adults (especially the Latino farmers) than the college-age students who were familiar with book-related duties. The students could see the usefulness of the crop production information but had trouble seeing how useful paperwork could be.

The practical experience provided valuable lessons. For example, people rushed to produce and didn't want to learn about marketing. Some had much more production than they knew how to sell (a hard lesson but a common one). This has shown us that a second-year class is critical because those students now want to learn that material.

Benefits to the new farmers also include one, or for some two, years of cropping history. After three they will be eligible for many agricultural loans. While it is harder to measure, one benefit included the formation of a strong network, these new farmers now have peers. Peers can commiserate, cooperate, and share information. Some have begun a selling cooperatively as a way to provide a greater quantity and variety of products in their direct marketing.

If we were to repeat this project we believe that it would be beneficial to offer a second course to build on the experiences of the first year farming. It is too much to think that one can learn enough to farm from eight sessions of three or four hours of training. Another long term issue is financing such a project. Our target audience, whether Latino or Anglo, does not typically have access to resources to pay the full cost of such an offering. Without continued support of organizations like the Organic Farming Research Foundation we will be unable to continue such efforts. Finally it should be noted that it was the deep commitment of the ISU graduate students, their faculty advisor, MCC faculty and staff to social and environmental justice that made this project a reality.

## ***Outreach***

This project has been successful at outreach through a field day, presentations and through many media outlets. On September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009 the college hosted a field day sponsored by the Practical Farmers of Iowa (free to the public) showcasing the efforts of new farmers and a white corn field trial at the MCC farm. Several new student contacts were made at that event.

The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, one of our sponsoring organizations, invited our staff to make a presentation to the Regional Food Systems Working Group which widened our network to the Sustainable Agriculture program participants (and to the world, through the Center's website).

We have had over 30 news articles or opportunities to speak to outside groups (including 3 radio spots). The World Food Prize sent a delegation to tour the facilities, and recently AARP. A local food group, "Harvest from the Heart of Iowa," has formed from the FSLT and is now working to use our student successes in building a local food system. Our staff is also working with the Iowa Falls area to launch a similar local food system in that region. And they are consulting with relief organizations in the Des Moines area to help refugee immigrants return to farming.

We've received an amazing amount of good press. Some examples are:

- The *Des Moines Register* carried a feature-length article on the front of the agriculture section (See Appendix E).
- The local *Times Republican* has published numerous articles on our students, our new ag building, and our activities.
- *The Iowan Magazine* did a two-page story on the project.
- *National Public Radio* featured an interview of Linda Barnes, the initiator of the project.
- We were the only non-conventional group asked to participate in a public forum with the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack.

## References

Materials used in the initial study and development of the project:

*"Assessing needs and fostering agricultural entrepreneurship among immigrants in several Iowa communities"* by Hannah Lewis (funded by the Leopold Center)  
<http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/research/grants/2008/M2006-07.pdf> .

*"Building a Sustainable Business: A Guide to Developing a Business Plan for Farms and Rural Businesses."* This was developed by the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture  
<http://www.misa.umn.edu/Publications/BuildingaSustainableBusiness/index.htm> .

Materials used to provide additional information for specific topics and or to provide resources seen as helpful to new farmers:

The Iowa State University Value-Added Agriculture program and the ISU Extension Service ([www.extension.iastate.edu/valueaddedag](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/valueaddedag) )

Practical Farmers of Iowa, nonprofit farmer organization whose mission is to research, develop and promote profitable, ecologically sound and community-enhancing approaches to agriculture.  
[www.practicalfarmers.org](http://www.practicalfarmers.org)

Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture is a research and education center with statewide programs to develop sustainable agricultural practices that are both profitable and conserve natural resources.  
<http://www.leopold.iastate.edu>

New England Small Farm Institute is an organization whose mission it is to promote small farm development by providing information and training for aspiring, beginning and transitioning farmers.  
[http://www.smallfarm.org/main/for\\_new\\_farmers/resources\\_by\\_topic/](http://www.smallfarm.org/main/for_new_farmers/resources_by_topic/)

The Rodale Institute is a nonprofit dedicated to pioneering organic farming through research and outreach. [http://www.rodaleinstitute.org/new\\_farm](http://www.rodaleinstitute.org/new_farm)

## Appendix A

Photos from the Start Your Own Farm class.



*Juana and Jaime*



*Yolanda, Claudia, and Joseph*





*Luis and Claudia*



*Mark with an egg  
carton from TJ Farms*





*Start Your Small  
Farm students*



*Start Your Small Farm students*



*Child Care  
instruction was  
available for ages  
2 through 10*



*The instruction  
continued into the  
spring*





*The Lopez boys on the tractor*

## Appendix B

### Course Instructor Guide and Syllabus

#### Start Your Own Diversified Farm Continuing Education Course at the Marshalltown Education and Training Center

##### *Course Overview for Instructors*

#### COURSE IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

- **A bilingual classroom.** We hope to have in class students who speak Spanish, English or both, as well as Arabic/Nuer-speaking students from Sudan. The method for teaching in a bi/trilingual classroom (based on the approach of Minnesota Food Association's New Immigrant Agriculture Program) is for the teachers to speak in English, for the topics and main points of the discussion to be projected on a screen in the front of class in Spanish, and for bilingual interpreters to sit with non-English speakers and provide simultaneous interpretation. We will have one Sudanese interpreter and one Spanish interpreter in each class.
- **Curriculum materials.** A wealth of materials on sustainable farming and small-scale entrepreneurship exists and we draw upon many sources for this course. Our foundational materials, however, are the curriculum developed by the Minnesota Food Association (MFA) for its New Immigrant Agriculture Program (NIAP). Each instructor will receive a set of suggested materials to use in developing a lesson plan, including the appropriate unit from the NIAP curriculum and supplemental materials. Instructors are encouraged to keep their lesson plans as simple as possible, focusing primarily on teaching to the learning objectives for each class. It may be possible in some cases to use little or nothing more than what is included in the NIAP curriculum, although instructors are welcome to use other sources as needed.
- **Assessment.** Each class period will conclude with a half-hour discussion, led by the course facilitator (the EDA program manager). Discussion questions:
  - 1.) What did you learn today?
  - 2.) What do you still have questions about?Class responses will be recorded and compared with the learning objectives for the class. Unresolved questions will be addressed at the beginning of the following class period.
- **Continuity between classes.** Although the instructorship will rotate from class period to class period, the course facilitator will maintain continuity by leading the assessment period at the end of each class and communicating key points raised in those discussions each week to the other instructors. An email list of instructors will be created to keep everybody informed through the duration of the course.
- **Participatory environment.** Many of the students in the class will be coming from farming backgrounds and will have a lot of knowledge to share with others.
- **Emphasis on discussion and participation.** Instructors are encouraged to integrate discussion and activities into the lesson as much as possible. Straight lecture should be kept to a minimum.
- **The importance of concrete, usable information.** In our experience, immigrant farmers want information that they can apply, and they will go home and do it right away. In follow-up discussions after a couple of farm tours we led this fall, one participant told us that based on what he learned, he went home and planted garlic in his yard to over-winter. Another changed his rotation strategy after visiting a sustainable livestock farm.
- **Have fun!** Remember that one of the course objectives is to create an environment of collaboration and mutual support among new and established farmers. That means we get to be part of creating a friendly, fun environment.

- **Compensation.** The planners of this course are very grateful to each person who is dedicating time preparation and teaching of this course. We received a grant from the Organic Farming Research Foundation to be able to pay travel expenses and a small stipend to instructors.

**Course objectives:**

- 1.) To familiarize students with the conditions necessary for success in starting and operating a diversified farm business
- 2.) To guide students through writing a farm business plan
- 3.) To provide information and guidelines about using MCC farmland to start a farm operation in the 2009 growing season
- 4.) To create an environment of collaboration and mutual support among new, established and transitioning farmers

CLASS PERIOD STRUCTURE

2 – 2:15 Review of previous week class  
2:30 – 4:30 Lesson including discussion and hands-on activity  
4:30 – 5 Assessment discussion

SYLLABUS

**January 18: Introduction and goals**

Learning objectives:

- Welcome and introduction -- Become familiar with the course objectives and syllabus, how that relates to the incubator farm, and understand the goals of the MCEA program
- Discuss (farm business) goals and why they are important
- Learn to distinguish between short and long-term goals
- Develop a list of goals for their farm (and prioritize them)

Materials NIAP Unit 1, Lesson 1

Instructor: Linda Barnes (introduction), Andy Larson, Gary Guthrie

Interpreters: Claudia Prado and Diego Thompson

**January 25: What resources to we have to work with?**

**Pertains to CVC micro-credit application: Section 4 b-f; Section 5 m; Section 8**

Learning objectives:

- Identify the members of their farm team, assess individual skills and amount of time available to can devote to farming
- Become familiar with family living expense categories and record keeping resources
- Estimate family living expenses sources of income for the coming year
- Set minimum farm income goals based on all of the above
- Identify how much in household cash/assets are available to invest in business?
- Identify credit opportunities (Ron)
- Learn what a business plan is and why it is important (Ron)

Materials: NIAP Unit 1, Lesson 2

Instructor: Andy Larson, Gary Guthrie, Ron Prescott

Interpreters: Juana Alcantar? Karina?

**February 1: Marketing planning**

**Pertains to CVC micro-credit application: Section 6 a-h**

Learning objectives:

- Understand the importance of “selling it before you sow it”
- Identify existing market opportunities for non-commodity crops (CSA, farmers’ market, etc.)

- Research customer needs and wants
- Research competition and market prices
- Begin to develop list of what to produce (based on above)

Materials: NIAP Unit 2, Lesson 1 and BSB Task 4, pp. 103-133

Instructor: Andy Larson, Connie and Mark Tjelmeland

Interpreters: Claudia Prado

### **February 8: Production overview**

Learning objectives:

- Be able to describe the key differences among conventional, sustainable and organic practices (for vegetables and livestock)
- Understand seasonality (what grows when) and season extension strategies
- Compile a preliminary list of enterprises for their businesses
- Research production requirements and input needs for each enterprise
- Identify resource acquisition options (seed catalogs, equipment, information)

Materials: NIAP Unit 2, Lesson 2, pp. 30-47)

Co-instructors: Linda Barnes, Sarah Carlson, Barney Bahrenfuse

Interpreters: Claudia Prado

### **February 15: Marketing Implementation and distribution**

**Pertains to micro-credit application: Section 6 a-h, Section 4 h**

Learning objectives:

- Identify one or more markets for products
- List what is being sold in those markets, for how much, and how it is presented (by farmers)
- Determine a price range for their products
- Identify a possible strategy for getting the product to market
- Identify what processing is needed (if any) and what packaging
- Be aware of guidelines/requirements for food safety and handling

Materials: ATTRA Spanish cartoon sheet on distribution, Rich's handling book, BSB???

Co-instructors: Penny Brown Huber, grocery or restaurant owner/manager

Interpreters: Claudia Prado

### **February 22: Production and plot planning**

**Pertains to micro-credit application: Section 5**

Learning objectives:

- Write brief crop (and livestock) management plans
- Pricing (how much do I need to earn to make it worthwhile) –
- Create farm and plot maps
- Develop production and marketing schedules

Materials: NIAP Unit 2, Lesson 3; Extension template enterprise budgets

Co-instructors: Linda Barnes, Norman McCoy

Interpreters: Claudia Prado

### **March 1: Record keeping**

**Pertains to micro-credit application: Section 4 g; Section 6 i-j; Section 7**

Learning objectives:

- Understand record keeping and why records are needed
- Become familiar with record-keeping concepts and tools
- Become familiar with how to pay taxes (for a sole proprietorship)
- Identify a record keeping system for their businesses
- Develop hands-on record keeping experience

Materials: NIAP Unit 4 (plus any additional record-keeping worksheets... income and expenses (with FSA/Schedule F codes), productivity, sales volume, cash flow projections for next year), USAID/USDA (Romania) materials



Co-instructors: Andy Herringshaw and Karina Crosignani  
Interpreter: Claudia Prado

**March 8: Financing**

**Pertains to entire micro-credit application**

Learning objectives:

- Understand how record keeping relates to financing
- Become familiar with the financing options available

Materials: Building a Sustainable Business

Co-instructors: Ron Prescott

Interpreters: Claudia Prado

## Appendix C

Course instructors and a brief explanation of their expertise

- Penny Brown-Huber teaches the class, “Grow Your Small Market Farm Business Planning Program,” and lives on a small vegetable farm in central Iowa.
- Sarah Carlson is a staff member with Practical Farmers of Iowa, which funds on-farm research and stimulates local food production in the state.
- Karina Crosignani is in the Business Administration graduate school at Iowa State University. She is enrolled in a new program which pairs the Business College with the Sustainable Agriculture graduate program and the College of Agriculture to receive an MBA with a minor in Sustainable Agriculture.
- Andy Herringshaw is enrolled in the Sustainable Agriculture Graduate Program and is performing economic analyses for the Iowa Learning Farm project, which seeks to build a Culture of Conservation through on-farm research and demonstration of tillage practices, water quality modeling, outreach, and education.
- Andy Larson is an Iowa State University Extension Specialist in Small Farm Sustainability, charged with increasing the viability of Iowa’s smaller-scale, entrepreneurial farm enterprises with diversified markets and production systems. He is also serving as coordinator of the Grass-Based Livestock Working Group for the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, as well as transitioning into the role of Iowa state sustainable agriculture coordinator for the SARE Professional Development Program.
- Norman McCoy is the farm manager for the Marshalltown Community Farm. He coordinates the class, “Start Your Small Diversified Farm.”
- Claudia M. Prado-Meza has her first degree in economics from the University of Colima, Mexico. She obtained her Masters, and is now pursuing her Ph.D. in Sustainable Agriculture, at Iowa State University (ISU). Her research is on changes in local food systems in two transnational communities: Marshalltown, Iowa, and Villachuato, Michoacan, Mexico.
- Ron Prescott is a program coordinator for the ISU Community Vitality Center and specializes in microlending and system design. Before joining the CVC team he co-directed the ISU Center for International Agricultural Finance (CIAF), where he conducted 29 Schools of Agricultural Banking Credit and Finance for microlending organizations.
- Linda Barnes is the Program Coordinator for the Entrepreneurial and Diversified Agriculture program and Faculty at Marshalltown Community College. She is also

co-owner/operator of High Hopes Gardens and small diversified farm business that sells flowers, eggs, chicken, lamb, and fruit.

- Barney Bahrenfuse and Suzanne Castellow operate a diversified farm near Grinnell, IA. They raise livestock (cattle, pigs, sheep, chickens), grains, and pasture. They sell direct to the customer and also to Eden Natural meat company.
- Gary Guthrie farms near Ames, IA, and raises over 40 varieties of vegetables, but he is known in town for his carrots.
- John Sherman is the produce manager of the local Hy-Vee Grocery Store. Hy-Vee has been very eager to source locally-grown vegetables.
- Mark and Connie Tjelmeland farm near McCallsburg, IA. They raise conventional and organic grains, prairie seed, and sell eggs from over 700 laying hens a year.

## Appendix D

### *Examples of Printed Material made available to students*

#### **ISU Extension Website:**

There is a website that has lots of good information about growing vegetables --- and it is in Spanish! It is published by the Iowa State University Extension Agency, which was created by ISU to provide research results to the people of the state. Most of these are free to download onto your computer. <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/store/ListItems.aspx?CategoryID=25>

#### **Extension websites in Spanish**

Vegetable/ Horticulture information: There are some things on file, some things that can be ordered, and some are PDF files that can be downloaded from the internet. The Spanish speaking publications are listed there as well or on the right hand side. You can search through the publications printed in Spanish.

Gardening Fruit

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/store/ListItems.aspx?CategoryID=52>

Gardening Vegetables and Herbs

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/store/ListItems.aspx?CategoryID=55>

There is a lot of information on specialty crops at: <http://www.agmrc.org/>

Esto es un buen listado de artículos en Español, incluyendo información en muchas cosechas. (The following is a great list of Spanish-language articles, including info on many crops:)

<http://www.aces.edu/urban/spanish/horticulture.html>

## FARM SAFETY Websites

**Gran lista de artículos españoles (Great list of Spanish articles):** many, many crops and more  
<http://www.aces.edu/urban/spanish/horticulture.html>

Español Farm Safety Pubs from Extension  
<http://extensionenespanol.net/publications.cfm?catid=1>

From our Extension site, several that would be good:  
<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/store/>

Suggestions for farm safety would be:  
PM1265B – know your livestock  
PM1563H – livestock – human disease transmission (farm biosecurity)  
PM1563K and PM1518L – how to respond to farm injuries  
PM0632 – Employer’s guide to teaching proper equipment safety  
EDC 0306 – Agricultural injuries  
EDC 0326- Livestock and Machinery safety

*Angie Nelson*  
*ISU Extension Education Director*  
*Marshall County*  
*641-752-1551*

## Seed Catalogs

There is a website for rating seed companies which you should check out. It is [www.davesgarden.com](http://www.davesgarden.com) and is useful for info on seed companies, videos on how to start seeds, how to identify plants, weeds, pests, etc. If you have any questions, this is a good place to ask them.

The table below is a list of their top 30 seed companies. To go straight to their ratings for the seed companies, click on <http://davesgarden.com/products/gwd/>

## Sand Hill Preservation Center

If you are looking for heritage or rare varieties of vegetables or rare breeds of livestock, the Sand Hill Preservation Center is a great resource. It is located here in Iowa. They are sending us a box of catalogs for our class members. They don’t operate on the internet or by phone, so all transactions must be by mail.

Sand Hill Preservation Center  
1878 230th St  
Calamus, [Iowa](#) 52729-9659

Phone: (563) 246-2299  
Paper Catalog Cost: Free

### Johnny's Seeds

A good source for organic seeds is Johnny's Seeds, at the website <http://www.johnnyseeds.com/>  
You might want to try their website for Commercial Growers.

### ISU Extension Website:

There is a website that has lots of good information about growing vegetables --- and it is in Spanish! It is published by the Iowa State University Extension Agency, which was created by ISU to provide research results to the people of the state. Most of these are free to download onto your computer.

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/store/ListItems.aspx?CategoryID=25>

### Extension websites in Spanish

Vegetable/ Horticulture information: There is a ton of information available. We will get a feeling of what people would want info on and I could get it to them for you the last two weeks, March 1 and 8.

There are some things on file, some things that can be ordered, and some are PDF files that can be downloaded from the internet. The Spanish speaking publications are listed there as well or on the right hand side. You can search through the publications printed in Spanish.

### For general growing information on horticulture items we have:

Gardening Fruit

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/store/ListItems.aspx?CategoryID=52>

Gardening Vegetables and Herbs

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/store/ListItems.aspx?CategoryID=55>

There is a lot of information on specialty crops at: <http://www.agmrc.org/>

Some ISU people that are useful:

### Horticultural Crops Expert:

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Name: NONNECKE GAIL R  
Office Phone: 515-294-0037  
Email: [nonnecke@iastate.edu](mailto:nonnecke@iastate.edu)  
Title: UNIV PROF  
Office Address: 105 HORT  
City/State: AMES, IA 50011-1100  
Dept/Maj/Curr: HORTICULTURE  
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### Organic Crops Expert:

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Name: DELATE KATHLEEN  
Office Phone: 515-294-7069  
Email: [kdelate@iastate.edu](mailto:kdelate@iastate.edu)  
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[www.practicalfarmers.org](http://www.practicalfarmers.org)

Other good websites are:

[http://www.smallfarm.org/main/for\\_new\\_farmers/resources\\_by\\_topic/](http://www.smallfarm.org/main/for_new_farmers/resources_by_topic/)

[http://www.rodaleinstitute.org/new\\_farm](http://www.rodaleinstitute.org/new_farm)

## Appendix E

Sample of the press generated from SYOF/ESPG

### **Des Moines Register Article *Latino Farmers Remember Their Roots***

By MIKE KILEN  
mkilen@dmreg.com

Benigno Lopez smoothly swings the machete and, whoosh, tall grasses are laid flat on the garden's border. He takes another fluid swing and another, until his wife grows impatient.

Ramona Lopez yells and whoops in the distance to summon visitors to her side.

"Come look at my peppers!"

"Look, jalapeños."

"Habaneros."

"And look at these!"

"Chilies!"

"Most of the time, I'm not as happy as my husband. But this year, when I come and see my peppers ...," she calls out, finishing the sentence with a look of adoration.

Benigno, who people call Bernie, and Ramona grew up in Jalisco, Mexico, but left behind farm life 13 years ago to move to the United States.

They worked in the meat-packing plant in Marshalltown, became citizens and hoped to one day grow food again.

Now they have a plot of land and are harvesting, thanks to a continuing education program to develop new farmers that heavily taps into Marshalltown's Latino population.

"Take it," Ramona says, shoving a green tube of something-or-another at the visitor. "Take it!"

OK, but what is it?

A Mexican yellow squash called a calabacita. Slice it, put it on the grill with a little seasoned salt, she said. Oh, the taste!

Just the day before, as August waned and the vegetables hung ripe with promise, she had a party and served them. It was a special evening in a season of growth.

Years ago, the couple planted a peach tree in their yard and others said it wouldn't grow. But fruit appeared, not every year, but enough to maintain hope that new ideas, new people, could prosper here.

Bernie's father and grandfather grew peaches, mangos, oranges and avocados on their farm.

"Bernie is very happy to work outside. Works 10, 12 hours a day," Ramona said.

Ramona works at Iowa Home Care, visiting the sick and elderly in their homes, then comes out to see her peppers, which grow on plots at Marshalltown Community College.

Its Entrepreneurial and Diversified Agriculture Program (EDA) led an adult education class last winter, "Start Your Own Diversified Farm," whose goal is to help people learn to farm and contribute to the local food economy.

In looking for farmers in Marshalltown, a town long populated with Latino immigrants, it made sense to tap into their willingness and expertise.

A survey of 111 Mexican and Central American immigrants in Marshalltown and Denison by Iowa State's Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, which paid tuition for the class, discovered that 83 percent grew up on farms and 93 percent wanted to farm, although buying or leasing land was an obstacle.

A third of the 18 students in the eight-week bilingual class were Latino, joining Anglos, American Indians and Sudanese.

"We always ate. It seemed important that we eat together to help us integrate," said Linda Barnes, the EDA program coordinator. "The thing we learned is so much of it is about relationships. The reason that is true is we are talking about food."

Bernie and Ramona helped recruit Latinos, earned certificates from the class in March and joined a dozen who planted plots in the spring.

Some grew excited on the first warm April day and made the mistake of planting early.

Bernie waited until May 5. He had experience, working on a ranch in Mexico. "Never with a tractor but with an ox," he says. "Old fashioned."

"He use a tiller here," his wife adds. "I'm happy for Bernie to use a tiller."

Just then Norm McCoy, the farm manager of the college's 80 acres, suggests Bernie may benefit from a weed eater to tackle his chore.

He smiles. New Iowans with unusual ideas like peach trees wisely take some advice from the natives.

It's a longtime dream. While working at the packing plant, a job she didn't like, Ramona began attending farmer's meetings.

“I would go home and look in dictionary what they say. I realized the problems same for farmers everywhere,” she said.

The main challenge for new farmers is money to buy land. But students can establish three years of growing history here, which most lenders require to buy land.

All they want is a few acres, just enough to grow fruits and vegetables and raise a few cows, chickens and sheep to sell to local customers and restaurants.

Claudia Prado-Meza saw the same hunger while talking to traditional Iowa farmers.

“They miss growing food that they know where it goes,” said the Iowa State graduate student in sustainable agriculture, who helps the Marshalltown farmers. “But they are trapped inside subsidized systems.”

Latino farmers remember their farming roots.

“To hear (Ramona) gush about the potential for growing vegetables is like the embodiment of the American dream,” said John Paulin of Prairie Rivers Resource Conservation and Development.

“But the institutional knowledge of growing truck crops has disappeared.”

Paulin hopes the college program, which became part of an effort carrying the acronym for food in Spanish – COMIDA (County Of Marshall Investing in Diversified Agriculture) – helps connect local farmers and buyers.

Only one-tenth of a percent of Marshall County residents get food directly from farmers, a fourth of the national average. If consumers bought 15 percent, according to a study by Ken Meter of the Crossroads Resource Center in Minnesota, \$8 million of new farm income would be generated in the county.

So they are trying to grow farmers in Marshall County, dreamers like Ramona and Bernie.

Ramona steers her truck past the rows of white corn for tortillas, tomato plants and twisting vines of melons.

It hasn't been an easy growing summer with early cool weather and college land that hasn't built up enough organic materials yet. Still, the group gathers enough produce to sell at the Downtown Farmers Market in Des Moines, in McCoy's Pine Crest Farm stand.

She is chomping on a just-picked cucumber and had few complaints.

“This place is the future for new people,” she says. “We raise seven kids here, three still at home. Marshalltown open the doors to us. We need to do something to give back to the community.”

Adept at translating, Ramona helps recruit immigrants interested in farming while working to save money to buy land.

Her husband, she says, is never so happy as when he can stop to donate garden items at Helping Hands Temporary Services for the less privileged.

She pulls her truck up to the plot of Jorge Ibarra, a 35-year-old construction worker and father of five who learned to farm from his grandfather in Mexico.

“I like to be farmer,” he says. “I lived on a farm. I like the life.”

He begins filling up boxes of his sweet corn to give away.

Like Ramona, he wants to return something.

As the Iowa sun sets over the standing corn, visitors take home the corn and calabacita to put on the grill, as Ramona instructed.

She also cooked the squash the day before at a party for her daughter Jacqueline, the first in her family to ever leave for college. They ate it near the peach tree in Iowa.