June 2014 E-Newsletter

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Summer is steaming up, but before you go thinking you want the cold back, here's a little reminder of what February looked like this year. Brrrr, just peaking at that picture should be enough to cool you right down. Despite the sure very few of us would wish to repeat those last, long cold months of 2014. Unless you're a maple sirup producer that is, because if you're a producer, there's nothing better than spring to keep that tree sap flowing. That better than Mike and Debbie Funk, 5 generation farmers and maple sirup producers at Funk's Grove, just off of Old Route 6. Bloomington.

It all started way back in 1894 when Isaac Funk, settled on the 160 acres now known as Funk's Grove. In the family would tap the grove of trees and boil the sap into sirup and went on to become a state Senator day-to-day farming operation to his sons. In 1891, Isaac's grandson, Arthur, opened up the first commercial sirup farm on Funk's Grove, and later, in the 1920s, Arthur's cousin Hazel was handed the reins to the family farming operation. Hazel, in her will, arranged for the timber and farmland to be protected by a trust, ensuring that future generations would continue to enjoy the "sweet stuff" produced in Funks Grove. It was also Hazel who wished that sirup be spelled with an "i"--a spelling that has been honored by the maple sirup producers of Funk's Grove.

Today, it is Debbie and Mike Funk who continue the long-standing maple sirup tradition. Mike has been producing maple sirup at Funk's Grove ever since their marriage in 1974 when they entered into partnership with Mike's father, Stephen Funk. When Stephen retired, Mike and Debbie took over the business and added partners of their own, their son Jonathon and nephew Sean, who will continue to keep Funk's Grove a family tradition.

Every year, between mid-February and mid-March, the Funks drill about 6,500 taps into the surrounding sugar maple trees. According to the Funk's Grove website, "During the winter, the sap is stored in a tree's roots. Once the weather turns warmer, a freezing-thawing cycle begins in which temperatures rise above the freezing point during the day and drop below freezing at night. During this cycle, sap flows up to the tree's branches during the day to nourish the developing leaf buds, then returns to the roots when the temperature drops at night. It is during this flow that sirup producers are able to capture the sap."

Most trees at Funk's Grove have between 1 and 2 taps. It takes a sugar maple about 40 years to
Pouring sap into the gathering tank

mature enough to be tapped, as it needs to be 14 inches in diameter. A second tap cannot be added until the tree grows to 20 inches in diameter. This insures that the tree will continue to grow and thrive. "There are usually no more than 2 taps per tree so that only a small percentage of sap is taken and it doesn't shorten the life of the tree," says Debbie, "I always compare it to donating blood; we can spare so much, and the trees can spare so much as well."

Read More

Local Flavors Events Coming to a Restaurant Near You!

Now you can find farm-fresh meals at your favorite restaurants during Local Flavors 2014! Participating restaurants across Central Illinois will prepare a fresh, seasonal meal with produce sourced from local farmers. Fresh, Healthy, Delicious, Good for you, Good for the Community, and Good for the Environment. Mark your calendars today and spread the word! And to stay updated about upcoming menus for each restaurant, sign up for the Buy Fresh Buy Local enewsletter.
Local Flavors 2014 Schedule

Sow a little, Grow a lot: ISA Membership Drive
It's our 40th birthday, and to celebrate, the McKnight foundation has generously offered to match every dollar from new memberships and donations this year. That means you can do double the good. When you become a member for $25 dollars, it really means $50 for our organization. When you donate $50 dollars, you are actually giving $100.

Help us continue to advocate for policies that will support local food programs that will help grow the local food movement, create legislation that will help grow the local food movement, and to develop programs that will continue to promote the importance of growing our local food systems and that connect more consumers to fresh, seasonal, local food. We will continue to be movers and shakers and change-makers for local food, and we'd love you to join us. Become a member or donate today.

Summer Shindig: Save the Date

Illinois Stewardship Alliance is throwing you a party. Yep, just for you! As a thank you to all of our members for your dedicated support throughout the year, ISA will be hosting a Summer Shindig at Family Vineyards. With free food, music, local libations, and of course, excellent company, what more could you ask for? Mark your calendars because this will be one event you won't want to miss. Not an ISA member and want to miss out on the fun? Don't worry! Non-members can join us for just $10 or become a member of Illinois Stewardship Alliance today. Membership starts at just $15. Join Now!
New Policies, Programs, and Funding for 2014

By: Wes King

It's been a busy spring when it comes to local food and sustainable agriculture policy, both on the state and federal level, with a lot of exciting and noteworthy developments on all fronts. Below you will find a number of policy and program updates both pertaining to state and federal food and farm policy.

State Policy:

With just a couple weeks left of the Spring 2014 legislative session for the Illinois General Assembly, electoral politics, budget issues and revenue discussions are now front and center. And while it seems like much of what happens at the Illinois General Assembly gets mired in partisan debates, local food and farm policy continues to be a bright spot where bipartisanship is still alive; a testament to the continued growth in the local food and sustainable agriculture movement. Here are several highlights:

- **HB5657** - Smarter Rules for Farmers Markets - sponsored by Republican Senator Mike Tryon and Democratic Senator David Koehler has passed both the House and Senate. After that it's on to the Governor's desk for his final approval. HB5657 makes a number of changes designed to create consistent, streamlined and more appropriate rules and regulations for farmers markets. To read more about HB5657
- **SB3438** - Growing the Cooperative Grocery Industry - sponsored by Democratic Senator Don Harmon and Republican Barbara Wheeler passed the Senate unanimously and is now waiting for a final vote on the full floor of the House where it is expected to pass without issue. After that it's on to the Governor's desk for his...
SB3438 is a simple but important bill that makes updates to the law governing grocery type cooperatives, a law that dates back to 1915 and has not been updated since. SB3438 raises the grocery type cooperative membership investment cap from $500 - $10,000 providing new and proposed cooperative grocery stores with additional flexibility in raising the financial resources they need to get successful. Raising the investment cap will help to create more marketplaces for local farmers and entrepreneurs to sell their products to while expanding consumer access to local and sustainable food and farm products.

- HR1093 a new resolution that was recently introduced by Representative Robyn Gabel seeks to raise awareness about the unifying role food plays in all of our lives and initiate the development of a strategy for leveraging inter-agency and NGO expertise and resources around issues of food access and hunger. To learn more about the resolution and its goals click here.

Finally, as always to view a complete list of food and farm related legislation that Illinois Stewardship Alliance has been tracking click here.

**Federal Policy, Programs and Funding:**

A lot has been happening over the past week to a month regarding federal farm policy. In particular with the 2014 Farm Bill signed into law at the beginning of the year the implementation of the Farm Bill is starting to get into full swing with a number of funding opportunities (both Farm Bill and other programs) being announced over the last week to a month. Below you will find a number of key updates regarding the Food Safety Modernization Act and local food, rural development and sustainable agriculture funding and policy announcements:

- **The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)** - One of the victories that came out of last year's campaign to ensure that the produce and preventative controls rule proposed by the FDA under the federal Food Safety Modernization Act was an agreement by the FDA to re-write and extend the public comment period a number of key pieces to the rules that would have substantially impacted specialty crop farms of all sizes and as well as value-added local food business. FDA has submitted the Produce Rule to the White House Office of Management and Budget, which means the interagency review process is now underway. It’s hard to know how long it will be at OMB. Technically, the interagency review is supposed to last no longer than 90 days, but that deadline is rarely enforced. Nevertheless, this is an important step in getting the re-proposal out the door for public comment, and means we could see the re-proposal in June. If you don't know what the Food Safety Modernization Act is or would like a refresher, click here.

- **Farmers Market and Local Food Promotion Program (FMLFPP)** - USDA released this RFA split into two funding halves last week. $15 million is available in grants for direct-to-consumer markets, community supported agriculture, pick your owns, agritourism, and other forms of direct marketing; another $15 million will be available in grants for local and regional food enterprises that are not direct farmer-to-consumer markets, including food hubs, food aggregators, food processors, and other value-added production enterprises, such as shared-use kitchen or kitchen incubator operations. Get details on eligibility and types of projects, click here.

- **Risk Management Education Funding Available** - The Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC), operating through the Risk Management Agency (RMA), has announced available funds totaling approximately $2 million for the Risk Management Education Partnerships Program. The deadline for applications is June 30, 2014, read more here.

- **Rural Energy for America Program (REAP)** - USDA released $12.4 million for grants for guaranteed loans under REAP, which helps farmers and other small businesses develop renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvement projects. There is more funding to come later this year. Get details on the funding and eligibility by clicking here.

- **Whole Farm Revenue Insurance is on its way!** The policy in development has been held up though we have yet to see the final version. It will be available for the 2015 insurance ye
FDA Food Safety Outreach Program - FDA is making $2.5 million available through the Food Safety Outreach Program in 2014 - an announcement on this is anticipated in the near future.

Grassfed Beef Label - USDA recently announced a new grass-fed certification option for small beef producers. This expands our earlier work several years ago to establish a robust grass-fed beef label to make it easier for very small producers to capitalize on the market for grass-fed beef. Learn more about the USDA Grassfed Beef label by clicking here.

B&I Guaranteed Loans - Last week the USDA announced the availability of federal loan guarantees through the Local and Regional Food Enterprise provision of the Business and Industry (B&I) Guaranteed Loan Program. Thanks to changes in the new farm bill the set-asides under this provision are now accessible to food hubs and other food enterprises seeking to bridge rural and urban communities and improve food access. Learn more about the new changes to the program and funding availability by clicking here.

Rural Cooperative Development Grants (RCDG) - $5.8 million in grants are now available to nonprofit corporations or higher education institutions for the purpose of establishing or enhancing centers for training in cooperative development. More information can be found by clicking here.

Small Socially-Disadvantaged Producer Grants (SSDPG) - $3 million in competitive grant funds are available for the Small Socially-Disadvantaged Producer Grants (SSDPG) program. Like RCDG grants (above), eligible applicants include cooperatives and groups of cooperatives, cooperative development centers who will provide technical assistance to small, socially-disadvantaged agricultural producers in rural areas. Learn more about this opportunity by clicking here.

Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL) - New changes to the FSFL program will help growers build infrastructure like cold storage and packing sheds. Learn more by clicking here.

Central Illinois Farm Beginnings Class

The Land Connection is pleased to announce that registration for the 2015 Central Illinois Farm Beginnings class is now open. CIFB is a year-long, farmer-led program for those with a strong commitment to creating a sustainable farm business. If you're planning to apply, or would like more information, check out their website. Applications are due by September 1, and in order to be considered for a scholarship, you must apply by August 1.

Resources to Join the Growing Local Food Movement

The local food movement is more than a trend among many consumers - it is becoming a way of life, presenting farmers with new business opportunities. But the know-how and infrastructure to get food to local markets is not always readily available. Now, you can use SARE's new topic room, Farm to Table: Building Local and Regional Food Systems, to find the materials you need to join the movement.

Bookmark and share today: www.sare.org/local-food

The Building Local and Regional Food Systems topic room is a free, online collection of practical resources. This information, which is gleaned from SARE-funded research by real farmers, ent
researchers and educators, comes as the public investment in local food continues to grow: The USDA a historic $78 million to fund grants and loans that support local food projects.

For example, find:

- **Farm to school resources** for Extension agents on topics such as food safety, evaluation, lo and much more, developed by Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Program (ASAP).
- The **Guide to Designing a Small Red Meat Plant**, which helps producers think through imp when building, expanding or upgrading a locker-type meat plant.
- **Plain language guides** for new and underserved producers interested in learning about far accessing government programs, harvest practices and marketing.
- The **Direct Marketing for Farmers and Ranchers video**, which shows how the Imperial Sto SARE grant to successfully add value to their existing livestock operation by producing and wool products.

Resources compiled in the topic room are grouped into the following categories:

- Business Issues | Marketing and Markets | Distribution and Aggregation | Food Safety | Food F Communities | Training Resources for Practitioners

Check out **Farm to Table: Building Local and Regional Food Systems** to find the information you successful in your local food endeavors.

**Grassroots Policy Committee**
Calling all policy wonks, farmers and advocates interested in legislation and policy that support sustainable agriculture. Join ISA's **Grassroots Policy Committee**, learn more [here](#) or email Wes King at [wes@ilstewards.org](mailto:wes@ilstewards.org) for more information.

**Local Food News**

**Golden Beet Award: Call for Applicants**
We're looking for innovative farmers, teachers, citizens, restaurants, organizations, and institu making a difference when it comes to local food. Growing the local food movement and streng communities is an effort that deserves to be recognized. Know some one that should be honore Beet Award? Help them get the recognition they deserve and [complete the brief Golden Beet](#).
Recipe of the Month: Maple Syrup Pie
From: Kitchen Vignettes Blog
When my dad is making syrup, the intoxicating smell of maple infiltrates every corner of the house. That’s why I love to make this pie each spring. It also makes the whole house smell amazing and it reminds me of my dad’s place. I like the taste of a maple syrup pie; it may just be my all-time favorite dessert (aside from Rhum of course!).

In Québec, maple syrup pie is very traditional and there are many different ways to prepare it. Some people add sugar to the filling, but to me, this is like cheating a little bit. I like my pie to be made exclusively with maple syrup for a purely decadent experience. You can use any grade of maple syrup for this recipe, so long as it is true maple syrup (no sugary imitation syrups). I recommend certified organic maple syrup because it has to adhere to stricter regulations and the use of chemicals such as defoaming agents are banned. Bon appétit!

Ingredients

- **For the All-Butter Pie Crust:**
  - 1 1/4 cup unbleached white or spelt flour
  - 1 stick (1/2 cup) cold butter
  - 1/4 tsp. salt
  - About 3 to 5 Tbsp. ice water

- **For the Maple Pie Filling:**
  - 1 1/2 cups pure maple syrup
  - 6 Tbsp. butter
  - 1/2 cup whipping (35%) cream
  - 1 Tbsp unbleached white flour
  - 1/4 tsp salt
  - 2 eggs

Directions

1. Cube the cold butter into small pieces and then incorporate it into the flour and salt, using a pastry blender or a food processor, until it is the size of tiny peas. Add the ice cold water, a tablespoon at a time, until the dough comes into a ball. Be careful not over-handle the dough which will result in a tough pie crust. Flatten the ball of dough into a disc, wrap in parchment paper or plastic and let it rest in the refrigerator for about an hour.

2. In a heavy saucepan over medium heat, bring the maple syrup just to a boil. Cook the syrup at a gentle bubble, reducing the heat if necessary, for 5 minutes. Remove the saucepan from the heat and stir in the butter until melted. Add the cream and stir. Transfer about 1/2-cup of the mixture to a small bowl; whisk in the flour and salt and then whisk this back into the mixture in the saucepan. Beat the eggs in a small bowl and then whisk them into the mixture in the saucepan. Mix together briefly, until the mixture is smooth and even.
3. Roll out the pie dough and place it in a 9-inch pie plate. Pour the warm filling into the pie preheated 350°F oven, on a rack positioned in the middle of the oven, for about 50 to 60 minutes or until the centre is golden brown and bubbly, and relatively firm when lightly jiggled back and forth (it will be a bit wobbly and that's ok).

4. The pie should ideally be allowed to cool completely before slicing, a minimum of 1 to 2 hours.

Grow your Garden: What to do in May

June is finally here and we're getting swing of things. Farmers markets are filled with fresh greens, asparagus and spring onions, and hopefully, gardens. Aside from the obvious watering and weeding, here are a few more tips to keep things bustling along smoothly for the next month.

- Stop harvesting rhubarb and allow foliage to develop and store food reserves for next year's harvest.
- When crops like squash & cucumbers are planted in a circle or hill, plant a stick upright in the middle of the circle & leave it there. Later on you'll know where to water the main...
• Crawling ants on your vegetables may be a sign of aphids. Some ants protect aphids, moving them plant to plant or even taking them underground into the anthill for overnight safety. They ensure a supply of honeydew, a sugary substance that aphids secrete and ants feed on.
• Install soaker hoses, if possible, to be able to provide moisture without spraying foliage. Install several vegetable crops and are spread by water on the leaves.
• Mulch under tomatoes with straw or other light colored mulch to retain water but slow water evaporation. Wait until after a warm spell when soil temperatures are optimal for the heat-loving plants.
• Harvest peas when the peas have filled out the pods but before they start to dry out. If you harvest before the peas swell into the walls of the pod for a sweeter taste. Peas will burn out by the end of the month and you can plant a new crop for fall harvesting.

Tip Source: Chicagoland Gardening Magazine

Conservation News

IDOA Schedules Clean Sweep Collection of Unwanted Agrichemicals

Residents of eight central Illinois counties can dispose of unwanted agrichemicals for free this year through the Illinois Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Pesticide Clean Sweep program. A Clean Sweep collection has been scheduled in late summer for Tazewell, Mason, Menard, Sangamon, DeWitt, Macon and Piatt counties, the department announced today. The collection, which rotates among Illinois counties, is open to farmers, retired farmers, nursery owners, private pesticide applicators, structural pest control applicators and landowners who inherited unwanted agricultural pesticides with their property.

"There are two, big reasons to take advantage of this program," Warren Goetsch, Bureau Chief of Environmental Programs, said. "First, it’s free. If individuals were to properly dispose of agrichemicals on their own, the cost would be expensive. But the department is able to provide the service free of charge thanks to a grant it obtained from the U.S. EPA. Second, the state of Illinois, not the program participant, will assume liability for the proper disposal of unwanted agrichemicals."
Participants must register the products they plan to dispose of by July 14. Registration is required to give the waste disposal contractor time to prepare for the different kinds of materials that will need to be handled. Completed forms should be mailed or faxed to the Illinois Department of Agriculture. The mail address is: Clean Sweep Program, Illinois Department of Agriculture, State Fairgrounds, P.O. Box 192 62794-9281. The fax number is 217- 524-4882.

Participants then will be sent a reservation card indicating the date, time and location of their collection.

Learn More

Upcoming Events

6/5 - Foodie Wine Trip of Sustainable Farms and Vineyards - Springfield, IL - 8:30am-3:30pm
Join us for our upcoming Foodies/Wine Trip - Local, Sustainable! Includes tour of local farms as well as lunch and a wine blending experience captured in your very own take-home bottle! [http://www.llcc.edu/commed/CommunityEducation/tabid/989/Default.aspx](http://www.llcc.edu/commed/CommunityEducation/tabid/989/Default.aspx)

6/8 - Westside Farmers' Market Opening Day- Springfield, IL- 11am-2pm
The new Westside Farmers' Market will be held every Sunday 11am-2pm from June 8th- September 14 at the Knights of Columbus Parking Lot on 2200 Meadowbrook, at the corner of Isles and Meadowbrook.

6/9 - Good Agricultural Practices Webinar - 6pm-8pm
The U of I Extension will be hosting the Good Agricultural Practices Webinar Series every Monday from June 2- June 23, 2014 from 6pm-8pm. The webinar is designed to provide information to growers on how to keep produce safe from production to the market. [https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=9627](https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=9627)

6/16 - Good Agricultural Practices Webinar - 6pm-8pm
The U of I Extension will be hosting the Good Agricultural Practices Webinar Series every Monday from June 2- June 23, 2014 from 6pm-8pm. The webinar is designed to provide information to growers on how to keep produce safe from production to the market. [https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=9627](https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=9627)

6/19 - Local Flavors Dinners!
It's the kickoff of the first Local Flavors Dinners. Enjoy farm-fresh fare from your favorite restaurants in Central Illinois by visiting the following restaurants for dinner on June 3rd: American Harvest in Springfield, Lancasters in Bloomington-Normal, The Creek in Peoria, and Escobar's in Champaign-Urbana.
Local Flavors is a farm-to-table series connecting Illinois growers and producers with local restaurants. The series opens new markets for local growers, gives restaurants an opportunity to work with local growers while receiving high quality products, and gives diners a taste of Central Illinois. [http://www.ilstewards.org/local-food-promotion/local-flavors/](http://www.ilstewards.org/local-food-promotion/local-flavors/)

6/21 - ISA Tabling at Peoria Riverfront Market - 7am-12pm
Come see ISA at Peoria's Riverfront Market! We will be there from 7am-12pm providing information to residents and selling ISA T-shirts and cookbooks for $20! [http://www.peoriariverfront.com/?section=15](http://www.peoriariverfront.com/?section=15)

6/22 - ISA Summer Shindig - New Berlin, IL - 3pm-6pm
We love our members. We do! And as a token of appreciation for all their dedication and support, we're throwing a Summer Shindig! Join us at Danenberger Family Vineyards for an evening of local food and land great company. The event is FREE for members and $10 for non-members, so grab your party hats and meet us there! Register at http://www.ilstewards.org/youre-invited-summer-

**6/22** - Logan Ag. Flavors - Taste of Logan County Ag farmers - Lincoln, IL - 2pm-Come out and try various products of Logan County Farmers at the Farm Bureau Building in I McLean Street.

**6/23** - Agritourism Intensive Workshop - Champaign, IL - Mon-Wed - 9am-2pm Join us at Prairie Fruits Farm and Creamery in Champaign, IL to explore the practices, marketing, and legal issues surrounding agritourism in a three-day intensive training event. A limited number of spots on the Tuesday farm tour day will be open to the general public.
http://thelandconnection.org/farmers/farmer-training-intensives/agritourism

**6/23** - Good Agricultural Practices Webinar - 6pm-8pm The U of I Extension will be hosting the Good Agricultural Practices Webinar Series every Monday from June 2-23, 2014 from 6pm-8pm. The webinar is designed to provide information to growers on how to keep produce safe from production to the market.
https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=9627

**6/26** Herb Gardening Workshop-Lincoln Land Community College- 9am-12pm The workshop is being held in the Workforce Careers Center at the LLCC-Springfield campus, 5250 Shepherd Road. The hands-on workshop is designed for individuals looking for ideas, inspiration, and practical strategies to design and plant an herb garden. Workshop instructor Deborah Lee, owner of Four Winds Farm and former president of the Illinois Herb Association, will focus on a variety of herbs grown for culinary and healthful applications.
http://www.llcc.edu/greencenter

**6/27-28** Springfield Civic Garden Club Standard Flower Show Held at the Trutter Museum, Lincoln Land Community College. Friday: noon-5pm and Saturday 9am-12pm

**6/29** - Sugar Grove Family Farms Tour - Greenview, IL - 10am-2pm Sugar Grove Family Farms is a fourth generation family farm. Chase Sanert, the youngest generation, is in his second year of operating the farm using beyond USDA Organic standards. The farm raises 100% grass-fed and finished beef, and heritage pork and pastured chicken on grass with supplemented GMO-free environments for happy, healthy animals.
http://slowfoodspringfield.org/?ai1ec_event=673&instance_id

**6/29** - Soil in the City Conference - Chicago, IL - Mon-Wed - 7am-6pm The theme of this conference is "restoring our available urban land and optimizing local resources for environmental and human health and enhancing socio-cultural dialogue." The conference will feature three themes: (i) Urban Gardening, (ii) Green Infrastructures, and (iii) Greening Brownfields.
http://www.iweasite.org/Conferences/SoilCity.html

Have an event that should be included on our event lineup? Email Molly at molly@ilstewards.org.

Get Involved
Donate
ISA is a non-profit organization. Your donations help us to continue our work in promoting local foods, fair policies, and conservation agriculture. Donate Now

Become a Member
Be part of an Alliance of consumers, farmers and other local food system stakeholders working to increase production and consumption of local foods in Illinois Learn More

Spread the word!
When you send this like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, or connect you are helping to about local food community. Be a part and spread the wo