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**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
FIRST IN THE UNITED STATES TO MANDATE
PURCHASE OF LOCALLY GROWN ORGANIC FOOD**

*Local Food Purchase Policy Supports Local Farmers, Generates a Localized Economy,
Encourages Schools, Institutions, And Restaurants To Buy Locally Produced Farm Products, And Promotes
Community Spirit, Health, And Economic Development*

SIoux CITY, IA – January 10, 2006 – The Woodbury County Board of Supervisors today took another bold step to revitalize the county’s rural communities by adopting the ‘Local Food Purchase Policy’; a resolution to mandate the purchase of locally grown organic food, through its food service contractor, when departments of Woodbury County serves food in its usual course of business. The resolution has the potential of shifting \$281,000 in annual food purchases to a local farmer-operated cooperative, thus increasing local demand that will spur increased production and processing. “The Local Food Purchase Policy will create local jobs in the food sector and expose our producers, who produce organic and non-organic farm products, to markets outside of the immediate area,” said Rob Marqusee, Director of Rural Economic Development for Woodbury County.

“We look forward to working with Woodbury County on this innovative program. We are always looking to develop local suppliers for our many clients who purchase millions of dollars in food goods every year,” said Marlin Sejnoha, President of CBM Food Service, located in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The Local Food Purchase policy defines “local” as that food which is grown and processed within 100 miles of Sioux City, Iowa, and the limitation may be extended if there is not a supplier within that radius. “Woodbury County is taking a regional approach to economic development because our county benefits when dollars are circulated within the region,” said Rob Marqusee.

The policy supports the Organics Conversion Policy that was adopted by the Woodbury County Board of Supervisors on June 28, 2005; the Local Food Purchase Policy provides a market for those farmers that convert to organic production of certain items needed for the Woodbury County facilities. Transitional crops are included in the mandatory sections of this policy. “We support innovative ways to spur economic development at the county level; this policy has the real possibility of generating economic activity in Woodbury County, and we do not want to pass up an opportunity to help our local producers,” said Larry Clausen, Chairman of the Woodbury County Board of Supervisors.

As the first county in the nation to mandate local purchase of organic food products, the policy enumerates price provisions that protect the county from significant increased costs that may result from this policy. “This is not a subsidy of local farmers. It is expected that, with the savings from reduced transportation costs, and bulk sales of local food, the price will remain competitive with historic costs for these food items. If the price of the food materially increases, or if those increases defeat the net benefit to the county of buying locally produced food, Woodbury County can opt out of the agreement,” said Rob Marqusee.

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Because the availability of supply of locally grown organic food will not meet demand, the policy gives a strong preference for local non-organic food production to meet unmet demand. “We want to support all of our farmers through this policy; while organic products are given preference through a single-point-of-contact broker cooperative, individual non-organic farmers can participate through listing their products with the county,” said Rob Marqusee.

“This policy will provide an opportunity for the Leopold Center to assess the impact of local food commerce on the regional economy”, said Rich Pirog, Marketing & Food Systems Program Leader at the Leopold Center, Iowa State University. “This is an innovative policy, and as such coming from the American heartland is a very exciting development that bodes well for our future. As far as we know, this is a first,” said Bob Scowcroft, Executive Director of the Organic Farming Research Foundation, Santa Cruz, California.

“It is our hope that our school systems, and other institutional consumers of food products, look to locally produced food as a means to improve the health of our young and elderly population alike. It is encouraged that local restaurants and supermarkets look to our quality farmers for a portion of their product when making purchasing decisions. We are a community that supports our businesses and workers. In the end, we anticipate a quality local food brand emerging from the increased economic activity in our area,” said Rob Marqusee.

The text of the policy may be found at: www.woodburyiowa.com/departments/economicdevelopment.

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