

AN ACT concerning agriculture.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Illinois Food, Farms, and Jobs Act.

Section 5. Legislative findings.

Illinois should be the Midwest leader in local and organic food and fiber production.

One thousand five hundred miles is the average travel distance for food items now consumed in this State, and agricultural products sold directly for human consumption comprise less than 0.2% of Illinois farm sales.

Ninety-five percent of organic food sold in this State is grown and processed outside of the State, resulting in food dollars being exported.

Illinois ranks fifth in the nation in loss of farmland.

The market for locally grown foods and for organic food is expanding rapidly.

Consumers would benefit from additional local food outlets that make fresh and affordable Illinois grown foods more accessible in both rural and urban communities.

Communities are experiencing significant problems of obesity and nutrition, including lack of daily access to fresh

fruits and vegetables.

Low-income communities that are currently "food deserts" lacking sufficient markets selling fresh fruits and vegetables would benefit from local food distribution systems.

The State's urban communities are showing renewed interest in growing food in urban areas.

Rural communities would be revitalized by increasing the number of families in the State that live on small properties and by providing fresh high-value local food.

Farmers who wish to transition from conventional agriculture to local and organic food would benefit from training and support to diversify their farming operations.

Food consumers, farmers, and entrepreneurs would benefit from an expanded infrastructure for processing, storing, and distributing locally grown foods.

The capture of existing food dollars within the State would help to revitalize the State's treasury by creating a broad range of new in-state jobs and business opportunities within both rural and urban communities.

For the purposes of this Act and for the retention of the greatest benefit from every food dollar spent in this State, support for local food means capturing in Illinois the greatest portion of food production, processing, storing, and distribution possible.

Section 10. Illinois Local and Organic Food and Farm Task

Force. The Illinois Local and Organic Food and Farm Task Force ("the Task Force") shall be appointed by the Governor within 60 days after the effective date of this Act. The Task Force shall be convened by the Department of Agriculture and shall include the following Illinois-based members:

(a) one representative each from the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and Human Services;

(b) four organic farmers, representing different dairy, meat, vegetable, and grains sectors;

(c) four specialty crop producers, representing different flower, fruit, viticulture, aquaculture, fiber, vegetable, and ornamental sectors;

(d) two organic processors;

(e) one organic distributor and one non-organic distributor;

(f) three representatives of not-for-profit educational organizations;

(g) one organic certifier;

(h) one consumer representative;

(i) two representatives of farm organizations;

(j) one university agricultural specialist;

(k) one philanthropic organization representative;

(l) one food retailer representative;

(m) two municipal representatives from different communities in the State;

(n) four representatives from community-based organizations focusing on food access, to include at least 3 minority members; and

(o) one chef specializing in the preparation of locally grown organic foods.

All members of the Task Force shall be appointed for a 2-year term.

Section 15. Illinois Local and Organic Food and Farm Plan. The Task Force shall develop a plan containing policy and funding recommendations for expanding and supporting a State local and organic food system and for assessing and overcoming obstacles to an increase in locally grown food and local organic food production. The Task Force shall prepare and submit its plan in a report to the General Assembly by September 30, 2008, for consideration of its recommendations in the 96th General Assembly. The Plan, among other matters, shall:

(a) identify land preservation and acquisition opportunities for local and organic agriculture in rural, suburban, and urban areas;

(b) identify farmer training and development, as necessary, by expanding training programs such as Farm Beginnings, incubator projects such as Prairie Crossing Farm, urban agriculture training programs, farmer-to-farmer learning opportunities, or other programs;

(c) identify financial incentives, technical support, and training necessary to help Illinois farmers to transition to local, organic, and specialty crop production by minimizing their financial losses during the 3-year transition period required under USDA standards and to help with recordkeeping requirements;

(d) identify strategies and funding needs to make fresh and affordable Illinois-grown foods more accessible, both in rural and urban communities, with an emphasis on creating new food outlets in communities that need them;

(e) identify the financial and technical support necessary to build connections between landowners, farmers, buyers, and consumers;

(f) identify the financial and technical support necessary to build a local food infrastructure of processing, storage, and distribution;

(g) identify the financial and technical support necessary to develop new food and agriculture-related businesses for local food and organic food production and distribution, such as on-farm processing, micro-markets, incubator kitchens, and marketing and communications businesses;

(h) identify the financial and technical support necessary to expand the development of farmers markets, roadside markets, and local grocery stores in unserved and underserved areas, as well as the creation of year-round public markets in Chicago and other large communities;

(i) research, identify, and coordinate best practices and opportunities for the development of local food and organic food production;

(j) identify opportunities to educate the public and producers about the benefits of local foods systems and about the development opportunities provided through this Act; and

(k) identify legal impediments to local food and organic food production, and develop recommendations for a remedy.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.