



North Dakota Farm to School Profile

# Jamestown supports farm to school purchases

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By Sue B. Balcom

Shelly Mack refers to “her farmer” in a very endearing way. This Jamestown Public Schools food service director, who is also a dietician, shuffles through the stacks and stacks of paper on her desk while talking until she finds a piece of paper.

She holds it up.

It looks like a notice you would find in an elementary student’s backpack. The type resembles handwriting and there are pictures of vegetables below the title. The paper lists the price of cucumbers, cantaloupe, honeydew, green bell peppers, tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, strawberries and watermelon. It is an invoice from Kountry Kids Fresh Produce and grower Gwen DuBord, who has been selling fresh produce to Mack for about three years.

“She’s a pretty good partner,” Mack said.

Introducing fresh vegetables to Jamestown students started with a letter from the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction detailing new geographic preference laws and giving Mack the green light to purchase from local growers. With



Gwen DuBord (left) and Shelly Mack.





support of the principal and the school board, Mack found a way to make it work.

The first year was very basic, just tomatoes and cukes. Signs on the salad bar told the students “This was grown in your backyard.” Local products are identified on the menus and the cooks and cashiers also promote local foods items as children pass through the lines.

Support for fresh food also comes from education in the schools.

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## The North Dakota Department of Agriculture

600 East Blvd. Ave., #602  
Bismarck, ND 58505-0020  
701-328-2231  
800-242-7535

[www.agdepartment.com](http://www.agdepartment.com)  
[www.goinglocalnd.ning.com](http://www.goinglocalnd.ning.com)

LOCAL NEWS  
A North Dakota Department of Agriculture Initiative  Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring



# Podall family is deeply rooted

Book Review By Sue B. Balcom

When your way of life becomes the topic of coffee klatches, someone eventually writes a book about it. It's a good book.

**Deeply Rooted: Unconventional Farmers in the Age of Agribusiness** is about farmers who have yet to let go of the way things used to be. Last, but not least, of the tales is about the Podalls, who author Lisa Hamilton refers to as modern pioneers. They are indeed today's pioneers of garden varieties. They save seed through natural selection for a company called Seeds of Change on the web at [www.seedsofchange.com/](http://www.seedsofchange.com/). This company sells certified organic seed and supplies. The Podalls are also members of the Seed Savers Exchange at [www.seedsavers.org/](http://www.seedsavers.org/).

If you asked the Podalls, they'd probably say there's nothing unusual about the way they garden, farm or raise children near Fullerton. They've been doing it for years on the family farm.

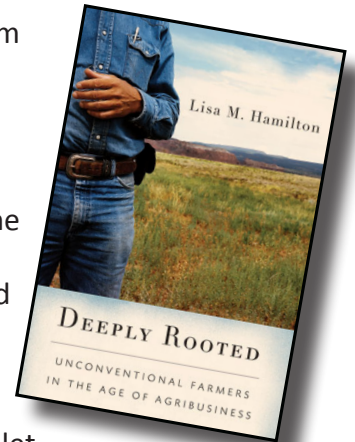
Gardens have become the thing to do. The first lady planted an organic garden on the White House lawn last year. Grandpa would have laughed at the

idea that an old-fashioned farm like the one that Dwight and Ginger and Dan and Theresa Podall occupy could be the subject of a book. But it is.

According to the book, the Podalls save seed from fruits and vegetables that taste good to them. They say they are ultimately gardeners before farmers, even if they do have a tractor and plant organic millet as well as other small grains.

The Podalls' tale is told in an endearing way right down to the description of Theresa setting up the farmers market in Lamoure, more for love than money.

That's a common thread in all three of the stories in the book. It's a good read and was given to me by someone who asked me to pass it along. If you are interested, please email [suebalcom@nd.gov](mailto:suebalcom@nd.gov), and I will put it in the mail if you promise to pass it along.



## Mack says schools use 25 percent local food

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Luella Morehouse, an NDSU Extension nutrition education assistant, offers curriculum to teachers. The school also uses the USDA Fruits and Vegetables Galore handbook available at [www.fns.usda.gov/tn/resources/fv\\_galore.html](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/resources/fv_galore.html).

Teachers and principals lead by example and eat lunch with the students. "The principals are the best examples, they are really accepting of this," Mack said.

Mack meets with Dubord in January or February to plan the year. She's always thinking, "What other ways can we use produce on the menu?" This year she's adding green and yellow zucchini and snap peas for the salad bar. The broccoli will be served with cheese sauce.

Mack has been massaging the budget to equip each kitchen in each of the district's seven schools to handle fresh produce. Comparison shopping between Walmart and the school's food distributor revealed DuBord's prices for produce were competitive.



If other growers have product, they can contact Mack; but be warned – she's pretty picky about her produce. Before she buys, she wants to see both the produce and the farm. If possible, she wants the students to visit the farm.

Eventually, the school may have to look at more training for new cooks in use of fresh vegetables and fruits. Every year, Mack adds more local foods to her program and says the schools are sourcing around 25 percent local.

"Little by little," Mack said about the progress. "Pretty soon they won't remember they didn't do it this way."

# Gardening in small spaces

*Kay Kringlie of Valley City, a retired Valley City State University professor, gardens on her patio.*

*Her son designed and built these boxes for her and the entire family enjoys the produce.*

*Kringlie's four grandchildren are school age and often help her with the garden.*





## Tiny bites

### Opening soon — cargo space to promote distribution of local products

AggregateND - The Online Carpool for ND Produce - was named one of the top 20 finalists in the statewide Innovate ND business innovation contest. Final judging takes place in Fargo on May 18, with a showcase open to the public.

The brain child of Kirsten Moseng of Bottineau, AggregateND.com is a website that will soon connect local foods and recyclables with empty cargo space to expand producers' markets, creating fresh supply opportunities for member institutions and grocers. Moseng hopes it will be "growing soon" to neighboring states.

The online search and listing functions are free to the public, allowing producers, distributors (anyone with empty cargo space, whether in the back seat, trunk, pickup, etc.), and aggregators (those with temporary en-route storage space, such as under a front counter) to make their own mutually beneficial shipping arrangements, and all services are also available by toll-free phone for those without Internet.

Rural grocers, corner stores, food co-ops, and CSAs seeking wider varieties of fresh produce can join as paid members, allowing them the ability to request bids (in more appropriately-sized quantities than those available from traditional distributors) from all AggregateND producers, with a second tier of membership available for larger stores, chains, and institutions. For more information call (888) 724-4748 or email: [contactus@aggregatend.com](mailto:contactus@aggregatend.com).

You can check out all of the Innovate ND finalists and vote for your favorite - daily through May 17 - at [www.innovatendpeopleschoice.com](http://www.innovatendpeopleschoice.com) (People's Choice Awards).

### Delivering more: scaling up farm to school programs booklet available

by Kristen Markley, Marion Kalb, and Loren Gustafson; April 2010, 45 pages

This booklet looks at the work of the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) with four farm-to-school programs to explain how these programs can reach more students and more schools.

Beginning in 2007, CFSC worked with City Harvest in New York City, Farm to Table in New Mexico, the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project in North Carolina and the Center for Food & Justice in California on strategic planning related to distribution capacity. The booklet profiles each program's planning efforts, describes the related work of the Farm to School Distribution Learning Community, and explores the implications of the results.

The booklet can be downloaded at [http://foodsecurity.org/pub/Delivering\\_More-Scaling\\_up\\_Farm\\_to\\_School.pdf](http://foodsecurity.org/pub/Delivering_More-Scaling_up_Farm_to_School.pdf) or purchased at [www.foodsecurity.org/memberinfo.html#pubs](http://www.foodsecurity.org/memberinfo.html#pubs).

### Thought Leader:

Leopold Center Distinguished Fellow Fred Kirschenmann received the 2010 "Growing Green Thought Leader Award" from the Natural Resources Defense Council *for his leadership at the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture, a New York nonprofit that operates as a sustainable farm, kitchen and teaching campus for urban New York residents*. Other awards went to California walnut farmer Russ Leston for energy efficiency; Benziger Winery for water recycling, and Karl Kupers, co-founder of Shepherd's Grain, a grower-owned processor of flour and flour products.

### Some Things Are Priceless:

That's the topic for Kirschenmann's commentary in the Spring 2010 issue of *The Leopold Letter*. You also can read about grazing and water quality, cover crops and challenges for new farmers. Read it all at: [www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubs/nwl/currentletter.htm](http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubs/nwl/currentletter.htm)

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## Is your community planning a local foods event?

Send your information to [suebalcom@nd.gov](mailto:suebalcom@nd.gov)  
or list your event on our networking site at <http://goinglocalnd.ning.com>