

## ILLINOIS FOOD, FARMS, AND JOBS ACT OF 2007

### Task Force Members Biographies

**Erika Allen, Growing Power.** Chicago Projects & National Outreach Manager. Co-chairs Chicago Food Policy Advisory Council, active in City of Chicago's Organic Initiative, established four urban agriculture and food systems projects in Chicago.

**Keith Bolin.** Diversified specialty grower, livestock, soybeans, corn. President of American Corn Growers Association. Former board member, Bureau County Farm Bureau. Past president, Young Farmers Committee (Bureau County Farm Bureau).

**Jim Braun, co-founder, Illinois Farmer-Consumer Coalition.** Former hog farmer on multi-generation Iowa farm. Innovator of confinement hog technology. Formerly in Iowa: board member, Farm Bureau (Franklin County), board member, Pork Producers (Franklin County), member, Iowa Environmental Protection Commission. Co-founder, Rural Advocacy.

**Mary Ellen Caron, Commissioner, Dept. of Children and Youth Services, City of Chicago.** Summer Nutrition Program serves thousands of children through hundreds of agencies (day camps, parks, community- and faith-based organizations) at 300 host sites. Funded by U.S. Department of Agriculture, administered by Illinois State Board of Education.

**Greg Christian, Greg Christian Catering, Get me Greg's, Greg Christian Organics, Organic School Project.** Sixteen years in Chicago finding new and innovative ways to serve fresh, healthy foods to various consumer sectors on a large scale.

**Johari Cole, Iyabo Farms.** Farms 45 acres of diversified vegetables. The land is currently in the process of becoming certified organic. Iyabo Farms is part of the Pembroke Farmers' Cooperative and the Pembroke Farming Family. Pembroke Township, located within Kankakee County, has a long African-American agricultural history.

**Dean Craine, Manager, Agri-Energy Resources.** Agri-Energy develops and distributes organic fertilizers, doing research on 240 acres of farmland.

**Leslie Duram, School Nutrition Action Committee, Carbondale School District 95.** Working to implement a farm-to-school program. Professor and Chair of Dept. of Geography and Environmental Resources, Southern Illinois University. Numerous articles and conference presentations. Book (2005): *Good Growing: Why Organic Farming Works*.

**Chris Eckert, President, Eckerts Orchards.** Large, long-time fruit and other specialty crop grower. Three retail markets, plus some wholesale. Active consumer outreach, including agritourism, pick-your-own, website.

**Carrie Edgar, Director, U. of Illinois Extension (Adams/Brown Unit).** Long-time advocate for locally grown foods, initiating locally grown food fests, dinners, newsletter, food policy council, farmers market activities in the Quincy area.

**Jack Erisman, Goldmine Farms.** Long-time organic grain and livestock farmer, largest organic farm in Illinois (2200 acres). Active in SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education) and C-FAR (Illinois Council on Food and Agricultural Research), as well as many other organizations.

**Tom Grant, Manager, Neighborhood Services Division, City of Carbondale.** Responsible for maintenance and control of city land. Experience with aligning local food projects with county health departments. Small organic farmer, member of Shawnee Ecological Farming Association.

**Debbie Hillman, Network for Evanston's Future.** Co-founder, Evanston Food Policy Council, first bringing farm and food issues to Rep. Julie Hamos. Co-founder The Talking Farm, urban farm and educational center under development. President of the Board, The Land Connection. Former organic ornamental gardener.

**Bridget Holcomb, Agricultural Policy Coordinator, Illinois Stewardship Alliance.** . Works to promote local food systems within Illinois, with a particular interest in rebuilding infrastructure for local produce, livestock, and value-added products. Registered lobbyist with experience on state and federal levels promoting local agriculture.

**Wes Jarrell, Prairie Fruits Farm.** Fruit and cheese farmer/processor. Former head, Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, Univ. of Illinois (Agroecology & Sustainable Agriculture Program). Six-year member of Univ. of California Task Force on Sustainable Agriculture., helping to start SARE program at UC Davis. Expertise in soil science, plant ecology, food crop systems.

**Gerry Kettler, Consumer Affairs Manager, Niemann Foods.** Niemann Foods is a 90-year old independent retail grocery chain (60 stores). Active in promoting local foods in Quincy and throughout company.

**Warren King, General Manager, Goodness Greeness.** Large organic produce distributor. Experience on various non-profit boards, including Sustain and Seven Generations Ahead.

**Donna Lehrer, Lamb of God Farm.** Fiber and vegetable farm, Fiber Arts Studio. Formed Illinois Green Pastures Fiber Cooperative. Formed Direct Marketers/Specialty Growers Committee of Kane County Farm Bureau.

**Bill Olthoff, Illinois Farm Bureau.** Board of Directors, District 6, Illinois Farm Bureau. Commodity, seed, and onion set farmer, president of Dutch Valley Growers, Inc. (marketing cooperative). Member of U.S. Grains Council and Illinois Grain Insurance Corporation.

**Chuck Paprocki, Managing Director, Dayempur Farm: Center for Sustainable Living.** Diversified farm and learning center, researching energy systems. Executive Director, Shawnee Ecological Farming Association whose mission is to promote sustainable agriculture, create local markets, and provide farmers the opportunity to transition to organic.

**Vicky Ranney, Chairman, Liberty Prairie Foundation.** Co-founder, Prairie Crossing, a conservation community, combining open space, farming, green housing, charter school. Many civic affairs activities, including public-private efforts to promote positive change.

**Stan Schutte, Organic Crop Improvement Assn.** Organic farmer and direct marketer. Developing a cooperatively owned, multi-species organic processing plant. Member of various boards including Lumpkin Foundation Environmental Committee, Illinois Stewardship Alliance, Agriculture Committee for Shelby County Extension.

**Allan Sexton, Prairie Trace Farm.** Certified organic pasture, livestock, dairy. Long-time large-animal veterinarian (one of the few in the country). Has done much research on animal and human nutrition.

**Bryan Sharp, President, Illinois Farmers Union.** Large commodity farmer.

**Jim Slama, President, Sustain.** Promotes local and organic foods through annual expos, website, Family Farmed.org label, newsletter, reports. Founder/former editor of Conscious Choice magazine.

**Tom Spaulding, Executive Director, Angelic Organics Learning Center.** Founding and Executive Director of learning center based on \_\_\_-acre farm providing organic food through one of the largest CSAs in the country. Farmer training, building urban-rural partnerships around local food systems, food access.

**June Tanoue, America's Second Harvest.** Team Leader, Child Hunger Programs. 20+ years in food access through food banks. Facilitates peaceful group communication.

**John Vanek, Organics Business Director, Harvest Food Group, Inc.** Large processor and distributor of organic and conventional foods. Vocal proponent of sourcing more produce within Illinois for their line of frozen products.

**Kim Wasserman-Nieto, Coordinator, Little Village Environmental Justice Organization.** Environmental health and justice issues in Latino neighborhood. Works with neighborhood gardeners, looking to create urban agriculture opportunities, including skill training and enterprise development.