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**WOODBURY COUNTY, IOWA ANNOUNCES ITS GREEN CHALLENGE
ENTITLED – “SAVE ROB 09 CAMPAIGN”
TO BRING AWARENESS OF THE SHORTAGE OF FARMERS, FOOD SECURITY,
AND TO HIGHLIGHT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL IN FARMING**

*The Challenge of Eating Only Foods Grown Within 100 Miles (And No Meat) Will Be Undertaken
By the Director of Rural Economic Development, Rob Marqusee, For the Month of June 2009.
Local Farmers Will Supply Food and Local Restaurants Will Sponsor Challenge
A Journal of the Challenge Will Be Updated Daily At www.woodburyorganics.com*

SIoux CITY, IA – April 28, 2009 – The Woodbury County Board of Supervisors today supported a personal challenge by its Director of Rural Economic Development, Rob Marqusee, to eat only foods grown within 100 miles of the Woodbury County Courthouse. The challenge is to raise public awareness of the many issues that confront how we eat and where we get our food: the increasing shortage of farmers who grow our food, the lack of food security, and our increasing dependence on a food system that ignores our greatest economic asset – rich farmland.

“California has its beautiful ocean coastline and National Parks, Colorado has its mountains and trendy ski resorts, yet Iowa refuses to recognize quality small scale food production as an economic development activity. It would be a sad irony that Iowans would starve if there were a disruption in the national food system,” said George Boykin, of the Woodbury County Board of Supervisors.

Farmers have already begun to supply two local restaurants with its produce in support of the “Save Rob 09 Campaign”: the oldest family style restaurant in Sioux City, Green Gables, located at 1800 Pierce Street, and the Gardner Café, located in the Sioux City Art Center at 225 Nebraska Street. “We would like to locally source as much of the food we serve our customers as possible. When the restaurant opened in 1929, most of the food we served was from local growers. Today, continuing that tradition is quite a challenge. People have a choice of going to a restaurant that is committed to serving local traditional family meals, or going to chain restaurants that serve food prepared thousands of miles away,” said Jennifer Vollmer, owner of the Green Gables Restaurant.

“The Gardner Café has been serving food produced by such local producers as Thankful Harvest of Holstein, B&B Poultry of Hospers, Cornucopia of Sioux Center, C. Brown of Hinton, Elaine Knudson CSA of Sergeant Bluff, and from many more producers when produce becomes available,” said Paul Seaman of the Gardner Café.

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There is an annual two billion dollar food market within 100 miles of the Woodbury County Courthouse that includes Omaha, Nebraska and Sioux Falls, South Dakota. In 1790, 90% of the population farmed; in 1850, 64% of the population farmed; in 1950, 12.2% of the population farmed, and in 1990, 2.6% of the population farmed. In 1940, there were 6,102,000 farms; in 1990, there were 2,143,150 farms. While the number of farms have significantly decreased, our population has significantly increased.

Although farms have been getting bigger, farmers themselves have seen a seismic decrease in income from the consumer dollar due to the industrial farming system we have today. This trend in farming translates to other industries across the board; with large economies of scale, outsourcing, and consolidations, relatively fewer people have enjoyed the growth (and wealth) that has occurred over the last 40 years in almost all other industries. These trends have led to the current economic condition we face today.

The “Save Rob 09 Campaign” is designed to raise public awareness of what is and what is not produced in our region. The diet will exclude any ingredient that is not physically raised and/or processed within 100 miles of the Woodbury County Courthouse. It is anticipated that there is no wheat or wheat flour produced within 100 miles, there is no coffee or tea grown, no salt or sugar, no soda, and not many of the food items that we take advantage of every day. The diet will also exclude meat since cattle and chickens typically eat feed not identified as produced in the area, or are injected with substances not produced in the area. “I think there is a lot of food, including daily staples, that we eat that could be raised in the area, but is not,” said Rob Marqusee, Director of Rural Economic Development for Woodbury County.

“As human beings, we all share the need to eat. ‘We’ are a guaranteed market. Food production should be our core business here in Iowa – but it is not supported by government policies. It would be like Colorado not supporting the ski industry in sole favor of mining interests. Without the ski industry, towns would not have gift shops, quality restaurants, boutiques, and individual entrepreneurs of all types (i.e., economic vitality). We, in Iowa, have a similar resource but have ignored small food production as key to rural and urban economic development. This ‘Save Rob 09’ challenge is meant to make people think about the opportunity in front of their face, what they eat, and where they get their food,” said Marqusee.

The “Save Rob 09 Campaign” will be chronicled on a daily basis, beginning June 1, 2009, at www.woodburyorganics.com. On April 28, 2009, a copy of the Woodbury Letter will be sent to all small family food producers within 100 miles requesting that they supply food directly to Rob and to Green Gables Restaurant and The Gardner Café. A listing of all foods that meet the criteria of the challenge, and the farmers (if they want publicity) that produce that food, will be made public on the said website. “I think that people, including myself, will be surprised by what may (or may not) be produced in the area – the people can then support these hard working farmers through their food purchasing decisions. I hope that our citizens go to the website and keep updated on my progress,” said Marqusee.

Woodbury County policies and press releases may be found at: www.woodburyorganics.com.

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