



Southwestern Illinois' first Regional Food Conference coming to Godfrey

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Local, Regional, State, and National Presenters Headline Event

The interest in local farmers markets, farm-to-table, CSAs, local food availability, and many other related topics is trending all over the country and Southwestern Illinois is paying attention. The Alton Area Business Development Association (AABDA) has teamed up with Lewis & Clark Community College (LCCC) to host the region's first

ever local food conference at the college on March 31, 2015 from 7:30am until 12:30pm. The cost is \$15.00 when purchased online at MarketFreshNetwork.org and \$20.00 at the door.

According to event planner, Ron Tanner of BiG iDEA Workshops, “If you’re a farmer, nutritionist, food producer, entrepreneur, restaurant owner, caterer, economic developer, food retailer, food distributor, hospital, school district, senior living institution, government official, or anyone interested in growing their business or community through local food, you should get a front row seat!”

The event, titled Opportunities in Local and Regional Foods Conference, will feature speakers from the Illinois Farm Bureau, USDA Rural Development, and other partners including Illinois-Metro East Small Business Development Center, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, Madison County Community Development, BiG iDEA Workshops, U of I Extension, Trailnet, Feast Magazine, and St. Louis Regional Chamber of Commerce. Local speakers from the Alton-Godfrey area will discuss their projects involving local food.

Attendees will learn what is happening; what could happen; how one can influence those outcomes; and where to get more information about the new economy of local foods. Refreshments are provided by LCCC Catering using fresh cheese and yogurt products from local producers Marcoot Jersey Creamery in Greenville, and Windcrest Dairy in Trenton, Illinois.

“Patrick McKeehan of the SBDC at SIUE, Cynthia Haskins of the Illinois Farm Bureau, Colleen Callahan of the USDA, and Linda and Dale Chapman of Lewis & Clark have supported this event from the beginning,” explained Tanner. “This conference may be your only occasion to participate in a comprehensive overview of local foods and the opportunities therein from the people in the know.”

Alton Area Business Development Association, the event organizer and host is a 501(c)3 non-profit economic and community development organization whose mission is to support our local economy through small business incubation, a local food hub, commercial kitchen rental, and the arts. The Great Rivers Market Fresh Network, online at MarketFreshNetwork.org, is the brand created to facilitate this mission. This Network is the emerging home to a growing community of entrepreneurs, chefs, food fans and artisans of all kinds, designers, mentors, educators and much more. It is

designed around three interconnected business development components, each sustaining the other, to incubate new and accelerate existing businesses.

You can purchase event tickets, contact, or donate to AABDA via [HYPERLINK](#)

"<http://www.MarketFreshNetwork.org>" www.MarketFreshNetwork.org, or contact Ron by email at: [HYPERLINK "mailto:altonabda2012@gmail.com"](mailto:altonabda2012@gmail.com) altonabda2012@gmail.com or phone at 618-551-5020.