

## Purpose and Organization

There is a resurgence of vegetable and fruit production, processing and marketing in the midwestern United States. Operations of all sizes are starting up, and small-scale operations are growing. The Fruit and Vegetable Working Group formed to address issues limiting the growth of these businesses and their ability to deliver products to our local and regional markets. Challenges exist within the chain of business, from production to business management, processing, and wholesale and retail marketing. Working group members identify and prioritize the most important issues for focus. Topics identified by members include: beginning farmers; recruiting, managing and retaining good employees; postharvest handling; and improving marketing.

## Support and Cooperation

We are working to further develop relationships with key partners organizations:

- Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association
- ISU Department of Horticulture
- Iowa Network for Community Agriculture
- Practical Farmers of Iowa
- ISU Value Added Agriculture

## Contact Information

### Margaret Smith

*ISU Extension Value Added Agriculture*  
(515) 294-0087  
mrgsmith@iastate.edu

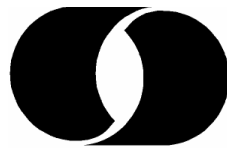
### Malcolm Robertson

*Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture*  
(515) 294-1166  
malcolmr@iastate.edu

### Rich Pirog

*Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture*  
*VCP coordinator*  
(515) 294-1854  
rspirog@iastate.edu

# FRUIT & VEGETABLE WORKING GROUP



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Value Chain Partnerships  
209 Curtiss Hall, Iowa State University  
Ames, IA 50011-1050  
(515) 294-8530  
www.valuechains.org  
valuechains@iastate.edu

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*Photos contributed by Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture staff and Fruit and Vegetable Working Group participants.*

## Statement of Purpose

*The Fruit and Vegetable Working Group works with partners to help build the production, handling, and marketing capacity for Iowa's fruit and vegetable industries.*

Value Chain  
  
Partnerships

*An Iowa-Based Network for Food  
and Agriculture Working Groups*



# FRUIT & VEGETABLE WORKING GROUP

## Who Are We?

- Farmers: current and potential
- Buyers: retailers, wholesalers, others
- Research and development: academic, consultants, others

## What Do We Do?

- Convene members to address joint interests in the industry
- Conduct farm and food business tours
- Coordinate research and development



## Development Projects

### *For new vegetable growers:*

- Information gathered and summarized by the Fruit and Vegetable Working Group (FVWG) from Midwestern vegetable growers in their first five years of operation will help provide needed input for business planning by new growers. Information includes capital purchases, operating costs, sales and profits for early years.
- The FVWG has funded development of a prototype shared postharvest handling system for small-scale, start-up vegetable farms.

### *For current fruit and vegetable growers:*

- Working with a consultant, FVWG has developed a tool to help vegetable growers develop an optimum postharvest handling system to improve the processing line.
- For both farmers and buyers, the FVWG is developing a summary of best practices and lessons learned from fruit and vegetable processing, marketing, and distribution cooperatives across the U.S.

## Background and History

The FVWG is part of Value Chain Partnerships led by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture with partners from Iowa State University and Practical Farmers of Iowa. Value Chain Partnerships supports farmer-led food and fiber enterprises that follow sustainable practices.

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