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# GRIST FOR THE MILL

Dear Reader:

Thanks for bringing issue two of *Edible Iowa River Valley* to your table; Iowa's only publication solely dedicated to this state's local food and artisanal producers. The overwhelming response to *Edible* confirmed that Iowa is hungry for knowledge, insight and information about tasty local eats. Hope we can help you learn more and feed your interest in Iowa's artisanal food scene.

This season, we feature a cover pig. We chose this funny face for this issue of *Edible* because pork, and meat in general, are among Iowa's most important industries. While winter is not a time of tall corn in Iowa, it is a great time to learn more about artisanal meat producers and their products. Inside this issue of *Edible*, you will find a story about Herb and Kathy Eckhouse of Norwalk and their La Quercia prosciutto, an exceptional cured ham that has worked its way, whole hog, onto the finest meat counters in the country. You'll also hear from Leah Wilson, who demystifies meat lockers and guides you on how to use them to buy directly from small vendors, while meeting master butchers.

Sue Futrell looks at Iowa's indigenous roamers, elk and bison, and introduces you to some ranchers who are bringing these breeds back.

Even if meat isn't your game, there is still much food for thought inside. You'll learn about The Harvest of Hope winter market program that travels around the state, giving you an opportunity to support farmers directly all year long, while sustaining an emergency fund for farmers in need. Jennifer Hemmingsen gets into seed buying early enough to get a head start at spring salad mix, and Eugenia E. Gratto will walk you through the benefits of Community Supported Agriculture programs (CSAs) and tell you how enrolling now can help farmers later while providing you with great produce, flowers and other local products all warm season long.

There are some returning favorites in issue number two as well. Rob Cline goes *Behind the Closed Doors* to raid the fridge of Z102.9 DJs Schulte and Swann, and our *Edible Imbibables* column cheers on the blessing of the Bock, a special beer available only in early spring, and only after it's been spiked by a red hot loggerhead. Criss Roberts goes on an edible daytrip through southeast Iowa—from Keokuk to Burlington—eating local all the way.

Mark your calendars as *Edible Iowa River Valley* comes out four times annually, on a seasonal cycle. Our next issue will be full of spring cheer in May. *Edible Iowa River Valley* will always be free at distribution points all over Central and Eastern Iowa, but you can beat the seasonal rush by getting a subscription to have *Edible* delivered directly to your door. More information about subscriptions and where to find *Edible Iowa River Valley* is on our website at [www.EdibleIowaRiverValley.com](http://www.EdibleIowaRiverValley.com). And, if you subscribe now, we will give a donation to Local Foods Connection, a small non-profit that is providing CSA shares to those who can't afford them. Local Foods Connection is featured in this issue's *Edible Endeavors* column.

In the meantime, sit back, relax, and read away. And if you are out and about, make sure to drop in at one of our advertising partners to tell them you saw them in *Edible*. That would make their day, and ours.

*Enjoy!*

Wendy Wasserman, *Publisher*  
Kurt Michael Friese, *Editor-In-Chief*



Photos by Carole Topalian

