

# break bread

Illinois Community Action Association  
Food Security & Advocacy News

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2004

## Where is the Closest Summer Food Site to You?

Source: <http://www.fns.usda.gov>

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), in conjunction with anti-hunger advocates, is making a concerted effort to feed more children during the summer months when access to school meals is limited. Although the National School Lunch Program serves more than 12 million poor children daily during the school year, only two million of those children get summer meals annually through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). To facilitate more meal sites and the participation of more SFSP sponsors, the USDA offers waivers for school districts as well



*see SUMMER on page 9*

## Selling to Poor, WIC-Only Stores Bill U.S. for Top Prices

Source: New York Times, June, 5 2004

Federal and state officials are expressing alarm about the proliferation of food stores that cater to low-income people but charge more than other grocery stores, thus driving up the cost of a major federal nutrition program. The program, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, or W.I.C., helps feed 7.7 million people each month by providing vouchers for infant formula, juice, eggs, milk, cheese, cereal and dried beans. Now a growing number of stores are selling only to W.I.C. families, accepting only the government vouchers, not cash, for payment.

About 47 percent of all babies born in the United States each year participate in the program. "The rise in W.I.C.-only stores is a fairly recent phenomenon," said Eric M. Bost, under secretary of the Agriculture Department, which runs the program. Analysis of food costs in California and Texas shows that "W.I.C.-only stores in these

*see WIC-ONLY on page 2*

### Page 2

Public Policy Spotlight

### Page 3

What's Going On Locally

### Page 4

What's Going On Nationally

### Page 6

What's Going On Internationally

### Page 8

More Information

### Page 10

Upcoming Events

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# Public Policy Spotlight

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## Child Nutrition Reauthorization Passed

Source: Food Research & Action Center, June 24, 2004

On June 24, 2004, the Senate and House each unanimously passed identical child nutrition reauthorization bills, S. 2507 and H.R. 3873. The legislation will expand the availability of nutritious meals and snacks to more children in school, in outside school hours programs, and in child care, and will improve the quality of food in schools. Some of the provisions that relate to irradiated food include:

- the bill requires that irradiated food only be made available at the request of state and local school systems — it cannot be mandated by USDA;
- the bill requires irradiated foods distributed to federal meal programs to be labeled as irradiated. (This measure ensures that school food service employees know that the food is irradiated. It does not require the school to pass the labeling on to students.)
- the bill prohibits the co-mingling of irradiated and non-irradiated foods.

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Kids, a “one-stop W.I.C. shop” in Virginia Beach, is tucked into a small shopping center, next to a state health clinic that issues W.I.C. vouchers. Every item in the store meets the specification of the program, said the manager, Tracy Wynne. By contrast, Ms. Wynne said, at supermarkets, “it’s often a hassle finding the right products and dealing with cashiers.”

State officials say the prices at W.I.C. specialty stores are typically 10 percent to 20 percent higher than those at supermarkets and other retail grocers. Linnea E. Sallack, director of the W.I.C. program in the California Department of Health Services, said: “We consistently find that prices charged in W.I.C.-only stores are higher, on average, than in other stores. If food prices are high, for whatever reason, it means that our federal grant cannot go as far and cannot serve as many people.”

## If Your School Does Not Offer Breakfast, It May Now

Source: Illinois General Assembly, June 14, 2004

The Childhood Hunger Relief Act will amend the Illinois School Breakfast and Lunch Program Act. It will require the certain school districts to utilize available federal funding to establish a School Breakfast Program. It also provides that the Department of Human Services shall work with the Illinois State Board of Education to certify all children that are eligible for participation. The legislation has passed both Chambers and the Senate is currently reviewing the House amendments. Upon the Senate’s approval of those amendments, the legislation will be submitted to the Governor for his signature.

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*WIC-ONLY continued*

states have higher prices, on average, than other authorized retailers,” Mr. Bost said.

The stores have found a niche in the market that Congress did not anticipate. Proprietors said the stores had become popular because they offer convenient locations and superior service. Healthy

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# What's Going On

a local perspective

Just outside Chicago....

....there's a place called STELLE!

Source: Organic Food Network

Stelle is a sleepy little town off the beaten path —an intentional community founded in the early 70's as a model for human development and sustainable living. All it really offered was a quiet life not too far from the hectic pace of Chicago and the boisterous lifestyles of nearby college towns. For over 30 years, Stelle has attracted people interested in living in community with like-minded others in a way that is harmonious with the Earth and modern life.

Yes, modern life! This is no Amish town! Over the years, Stelle has found ways to be in sync with technology and sustainability. A windmill turns complacently in the breeze generating electricity for the water treatment plant and telephone company also offering high speed internet service. (On its website, Stelle Telephone claims to be the first solar-powered telephone switches in North America totally independent from the electric grid.). Most of the homes boast of solar panels as Stelle houses the Midwest office of Sunwize, a pioneering solar engineering company. A little closer to the ground, many families share in the work and harvest of a community organic garden and orchard. Community activities include Earth Day and other seasonal celebrations as well as school, lunch and dinner co-ops.



*a Stelle straw bail solar powered home*



*a arial shot of Stelle, Illinois*

Located about 30 miles southwest of Kankakee, halfway between interstates 55 and 57, there is no way to get to Stelle without weaving through picturesque fields of corn and soybeans. Entering Stelle is like turning into a well-kept subdivision of mostly ranch style homes with neat lawns and perennial flowers waving everywhere. At first the windmill and gleaming solar panels are your only clues that something is different about this country community. For more information, please visit <http://www.stellecommunity.com/>.

*WIC-ONLY continued*

Congress is considering legislation to limit prices at W.I.C.-only stores, but it does not want to drive them out of the program. In recent weeks, the W.I.C.-only stores have retained a team of lobbyists to press their case on Capitol Hill. A lobbyist retained by the W.I.C.-only stores, John W. Bode, said the W.I.C.-only stores were “modestly more expensive than large supermarkets, in part because they have higher product costs and cannot negotiate directly with manufacturers, as major retailers like Wal-Mart and Safeway do.” Customers of W.I.C.-only stores say they avoid the possible stigma and embarrassment of using W.I.C. vouchers at a supermarket. Filling out vouchers and separating W.I.C. items from the rest of a customer's order can slow the checkout line in a regular grocery store.

## Soda's Raise Cancer Risk, U.S. Study Finds

Source: Reuters, Ltd., May 17, 2004



Carbonated drinks may raise the risk of esophageal cancer, a usually fatal disease, researchers reported on May 17, 2004. Several studies presented at a meeting of cancer and gastrointestinal experts in New Orleans showed that what people eat and drink could affect a range of cancers. "This research supports the widespread medical recommendations for healthy eating," said Dr. Lee Kaplan of Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School in Boston.

A team at Tata Memorial Hospital in India found a strong correlation between the rise in per capita consumption of carbonated soft drinks in the past 50 years and a documented increase in rates of esophageal cancer in the United States. Team members studied U.S. Department of Agriculture data to find that per capita consumption of carbonated drinks rose

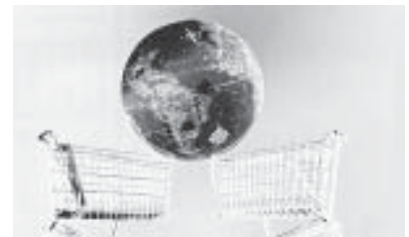
*see SODA on page 8*

## New Blueprint to End Hunger Announced on Hunger Awareness Day

Source: www.frac.org, June 2004

Washington, D.C., June 3, 2004 – On this

annual National Hunger Awareness Day, 13 organizations that comprise the National Anti-Hunger Organizations (NAHO) unveiled



a new "Blueprint to End Hunger in America." More than 34 million Americans—1.3 million of them from Illinois—are going hungry or living on the very edge of hunger, according to official federal government data.

The NAHO Blueprint recommends programmatic investments and improvements in the national nutrition safety net to halve hunger and food insecurity in the US by 2010 and to end both by 2015. It outlines strategies to

*see BLUEPRINT on page 9*

## Warning: Food Might Be Addictive

Source: Boston Globe, June 23, 2004

Those who object to comparisons of junk food with tobacco are quick to point out that smoking tobacco is addictive, while as far as we know, eating junk food is not. That may no longer be true. A recent study involving brain scans showed that when people saw and smelled their favorite foods, their brains lit up in a manner similar to reactions seen in cocaine addicts. When subjects



*see WARNING on page 7*

## Federal Regulation of Junk Food Marketing

Source: Community Food Security Coalition, June 3, 2004



Concerned that junk food faces increasing scrutiny by lawmakers, the National Advertising Review Council has prepared a paper outlining the role of industry self-regulation for food ads aimed at adults and children. Called

“Guidance for Food Advertising Self-Regulation,” the study includes all the major decisions NARC has made regarding food ads, and cites examples from more than 900 cases. NARC is the industry’s self-regulatory arm for ads.

Advertising lobby groups have grown increasingly concerned that Congress may seek to regulate junk food ads. In April, at the American Association of Advertising Agencies’ management conference, Surgeon General Richard Carmona said obesity-related diseases are now second to tobacco-related illnesses and called on the agency community to help combat the trend.

“Clearly, there is no single cause for the rising incidence of childhood obesity and no simple solution,” the study says. “Many factors are involved including, but not limited to, the severe reduction in physical education programs in schools, the replacement of outdoor activities with sedentary activities and the over-consumption of food.” The study said *see JUNK on page 9*

## How Much Does Walmart Cost You?

Source: <http://edworkforce.house.gov> June 2004

Every Wal-Mart store employee cost the American taxpayer \$2,103 per year in benefits because of the poverty level wages they pay their employees. The workers at a typical 200-employee Wal-Mart are paid so poorly that they are eligible to



collectively cost taxpayers an estimated \$420,750 per year in federal subsidies. For more information, please go to: <http://edworkforce.house.gov/democrats/WALMARTREPORT.pdf>

## Victory Elusive for War on Poverty, 40 Years Later

Source: Washington Post, May 20, 2004

President Johnson, in introducing his War on Poverty in May 1964 in western Maryland, said being poor means “waiting in a surplus food line rather than in a supermarket checkout.” Forty years later, families and working families, are still relying on food pantries. In Lonaconing, Maryland, the food line “stretches from the social hall of the Assembly of God church to the railroad tracks.” In line are residents of all ages: men, girls, young mothers, and grandmothers. Average earnings for production workers are lower in real dollars than 40 years ago, according to Sheldon Danziger of the University of Michigan. Almost three-quarters of U.S. families with incomes below twice the federal poverty level experience at least one serious financial hardship in an area such as food, rent or mortgage payment, health care, or child care, according to the Economic Policy Institute.

# What's Going On ..... an international perspective

## Resolution on Right to Food Passes UN With One Nation Opposed; Guess Who?

Source: The Ag Business Examiner, May 2004

United Nations: In a resolution (E/CN.4/2004/L.24) on the right to food, adopted as orally amended and by a roll-call vote of 51 in favor and one opposed, with one abstention, the Commission considered it intolerable that there were around 840 million undernourished people in the world and that every seven seconds a child under the age of 10 died, directly or indirectly, of hunger somewhere in the world when, according to the Food and Agriculture



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*see GUESS on page 11*

## Canada Rules in Favor of Monsanto Over Seed Saving Farmer

Source: Globe and Mail, May 21, 2004

The Supreme Court of Canada made biotechnology history May 21<sup>st</sup> with a 5-4 ruling that a Saskatchewan farmer violated a patent Monsanto Canada Inc. held on genes of genetically engineered canola seeds. The ruling is considered to have global importance to the biotechnology industry, farmers, health care and any other field where genetic engineering has made inroads. With the ruling, Canada follows the U.S. Supreme Court in deciding on patent issues involving plants and seed genes.



At the centre of the litigation was a gene that Monsanto invented, patented and introduced into canola. Created in 1996 and known as Roundup Ready, it makes canola plants resistant to a common weed-control herbicide that the company markets under the name of Roundup.

The litigation commenced in 1997, when Monsanto found its genetically engineered canola plant growing on Percy Schmeiser's farm. Mr. Schmeiser contended that since a plant is a higher life form and cannot be patented, he had done nothing wrong. However, Monsanto did not claim protection for the genetically modified plant itself, but rather for the genes and the modified cells it is composed of.

Mr. Schmeiser, 74, has steadfastly insisted that the seed somehow blew onto his fields from passing trucks or from neighboring farms, which had paid Monsanto Canada Inc. the licensing fee of \$15 an acre to use it. He said he was astonished to discover that a great deal of the canola in those areas survived his spraying, suggesting that had somehow acquired a resistance to the herbicide. He used portions of the seed from those areas for his crop the following year.

Although Monsanto disputed Mr. Schmeiser's version of events, the company's main contention was simply that Mr. Schmeiser reaped and reused the herbicide-resistant seed without authorization.

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## Unique Study Urges People to Avoid All Pesticides

Source: Globe and Mail, April 24, 2004

The link between common household pesticides and fetal defects, neurological damage and the most deadly cancers is strong enough that family doctors in Ontario are urging citizens to avoid the chemicals in any form. The frightening message came April 23, 2004, when the Ontario College of Family Physicians released the most comprehensive study ever done in Canada on the chronic effects of pesticide exposure at home, in the garden and at work.

“The review found consistent evidence of the health risks to patients with exposure to pesticides,” the study said, naming brain cancer, prostate cancer, kidney cancer, pancreatic cancer and leukemia among many other acute illnesses. As well, the college found consistent links between parents’ exposure to certain agricultural pesticides at their jobs and effects on a growing fetus ranging from damage to death.

The risks, they concluded, can come even from residue on food, ant spray and the tick collar on the family cat. The researchers also found that children are far more vulnerable to the effects of pesticides than adults because their bodies are growing, they have a greater skin surface in proportion to their size than adults, they ingest more food for their size than adults and they often have less-developed systems to excrete chemicals.

The massive scientific literature review comes as many cities across Canada are trying to ban the use of pesticides to make gardens and lawns pest-free and as efforts increase to get rid of mosquito larvae before West Nile season. Quebec has already banned the most common lawn and garden pesticides across the province starting next year.

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### *WARNING continued*

were presented with foods such as cheeseburgers, pizza, fried chicken, ice cream, and chocolate cake, brain metabolism increased significantly in those areas of the brain known to be associated with addiction.



Meanwhile, officials at the Food and Drug Administration are considering placing warning labels on packages of unhealthy foods. According to an interview in the Boston Globe, the acting commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, Lester M. Crawford, said that food labels could be transformed “from providing information into providing warnings.” The bold idea is still only under discussion among high-level government officials.

Any such effort could take years to enact, especially given the loud opposition the idea is likely to garner from the industry. But someday, we may find out that warning labels on food are just about as effective as they are on cigarettes.

# More ..... Information

## Small Bites

Diversity on the planet is on the wane: Just a dozen species of animals provide 90 percent of the animal protein consumed worldwide and just four crop species contribute half of the plant-based calories in the human diet, according to the

United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization.

Source: Community Nutrition Institute



Those lakes are great! The Great Lakes (Erie, Huron, Michigan, Ontario, and Superior) of the upper Midwest contain over 90 percent of the fresh water surfaces in the U.S. and 20 percent of the world's fresh water.

Source: Community Nutrition Institute

Great plains are great, too! The Great Plains states produce 95 percent of the nation's sunflowers, 84 percent of it sorghum, 73 percent of the wheat, 55 percent of dry beans, 42 percent of the cotton, and 35 percent of sugar beets. The region also grows much of the corn, soybeans, potatoes, and alfalfa used nationwide.

Source: Community Nutrition Institute

Burger bites: The average American consumes about 30 pounds of hamburger annually.

Source: Community Nutrition Institute

A berry-intensive crop pattern: California produces over 80 percent of the strawberries grown in the U.S. Based on average production of 21 tons of strawberries per acre, California grows about one billion pounds per year.

Source: Community Nutrition Institute

### *SODA continued*

by more than 450 percent, from 10.8 gallons (49 litres) on average in 1946 to 49.2 gallons (224 litres) in 2000.

And over the past 25 years, the incidence rates of esophageal cancer have risen by more than 570 percent in white American men. Esophageal cancer affected 13,900 U.S. men and women in 2003 — more than 10,000 men — and killed almost all of them, according to the American Cancer Society.

The number of esophageal cancer cases clearly followed the rise in intake of carbonated soft drinks, the researchers found. That could be coincidence, but they also found research that showed a possible biological basis for the effect. Carbonated soft drinks cause the stomach to distend, which in turn causes the gastric reflux associated with esophageal cancer.

The researchers found similar trends worldwide. Countries with per capita annual consumption of more than 20

gallons of fizzy soft drinks also had rising rates of esophageal cancer. "The surprisingly strong correlation demonstrates the impact of diet patterns on health trends," Dr. Mohandas Mallath, who led the study, said in a statement.

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*JUNK continued*

marketers have responded to the problem with product innovations and educational programs such as adding nutritional information to menus.

Robert Liodice, president and CEO of the Association of National Advertisers, applauded the study. “The NARC paper demonstrates that our industry is hard at work, through self-regulation, at addressing major societal concerns such as obesity,” Liodice said in a statement. “We reiterate our longstanding position that there is absolutely no need for new restriction on advertising to children.”



*SUMMER continued*

as advance and start-up payments, in addition to regular reimbursements for operational and administrative costs. **To supplement the available financial resources, the Illinois Community Action Association intends to provide five start-up grants to its member agencies to either initiate a SFSP site or partner with a local organization that is willing to do so. For more information please contact Holly Copeland-Lasley at 217-789-0125 or see the USDA web site at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov>**

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*BLUEPRINT continued*

improve benefit adequacy and access in the Food Stamp, child nutrition, WIC and emergency feeding programs.

“Our nation has the tools and resources to end hunger. Our Blueprint offers a realistic plan for achieving that goal,” said NAHO Chairperson H. Eric Schockman. “Our Blueprint outlines practical action steps for federal, state and local governments, industry, labor, faith-based, community, and other non-profit groups, and individuals to take to

end hunger,” said Robert Forney, President of America’s Second Harvest. “Everyone in our nation has a stake in ending hunger, and all of us can advocate for the Blueprint’s prescriptions to end it.”

NAHO groups will seek broad bipartisan support for the Blueprint recommendations. For more than 30 years bipartisan support has been pivotal in securing improvements to many public nutrition programs, most recently in the Food Stamp Program in 2002.

The Blueprint is a companion piece to the December 2003 NAHO Declaration to End Hunger, which discusses the root causes of hunger and poverty and presents a vision for action. The full text of the Declaration and Blueprint are available on the FRAC web site ([www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org)).

# U P coming Events

## Youth to Lead a Nation-Wide Food Revolution

Source: Northwest Youth Garden Network, May 25, 2004

Youth from the Northwest Youth Garden Network (NWYGN) are hard at work planning the 6th annual Rooted In Community (RIC) Conference. This year's national conference will be held at the Evergreen State College in Olympia, WA from July 15-18. Conference organizers expect more than 200 youth and adults from across the country to attend. The goal of the RIC Conference and the RIC Network is to develop youth leadership by building an organized, informed and empowered movement of youth and adults who are committed to growing healthy, safe and accessible food on a local and national level. For more information please contact Ginger Stevens at 206.525.1213 x3131



## Permaculture Design Certification Course

Source: Organic Food Network

July 17 - Aug. 1, 2004



This is the first time a Permaculture Course of this magnitude has been offered in the Midwest and it will be hosted in Stelle, Illinois. Over a half dozen experts in Permaculture design and sustainable agriculture will be teaching this powerful 15 day certification course. The organizers of the conference would like to do what they can to re-invent the way we do agriculture, care for the land and look at community design in America. For more information please visit [www.CenterForSustainableCommunity.org](http://www.CenterForSustainableCommunity.org)



*GUESS continued*

Organization, the world produced more than enough food to feed its entire population.

The resolution stressed the need to make efforts to mobilize and optimize the allocation and utilization of technical and financial resources from all sources, including external debt relief for developing countries, to reinforce national actions to implement sustainable food security policies; recognized that the promises made at the World Food Summit in 1996 to halve the number of malnourished persons were not being fulfilled; encouraged all States to take steps with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the right to food; and encouraged the Special Reporter on the right to food to continue mainstreaming a gender perspective in the fulfillment of his mandate.

The result of the vote was as follows:

In favor (51): Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Bahrain, Bhutan, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chile, China, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, France, Gabon, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mauritania, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Togo, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and Zimbabwe.

Against (1): United States.

Abstentions (1): Australia.

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If someone you know has an interest in food assistance programs or nutrition advocacy, we would be happy to add them to our mailing list.

The *break bread* staff would like to thank the USDA's midwest region, food and nutrition service for the inspiration for this newsletter. Their newsletter, *insight...out*, focuses on nutrition news and can be obtained by contacting [kathleen.fiorito@fns.usda.gov](mailto:kathleen.fiorito@fns.usda.gov).

## ICAA's Mission Statement

The Illinois Community Action Association is a membership organization which serves as the network for Illinois' not-for-profit corporations and units of government which strive to raise the health, education and economic standards of the low income population in every county within the State of Illinois. The Illinois Community Action Association serves the collective interests of its members by: advocating public policies, promoting the value of the Association, providing information on issues relevant to the membership, and building partnerships that advance the community action network.

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**Dalitso Sulamoyo, CCAP, MA, MPA**

Illinois Community Action Association

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