

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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For the program companion website, visit [pbs.org/independentlens/kingcorn](http://pbs.org/independentlens/kingcorn)

**“KING CORN,”  
ENTERTAINING AND ENLIGHTENING FILM ABOUT THE ODYSSEY OF ONE ACRE OF CORN  
FROM FARM TO FOOD SUPPLY**

*Film to Premiere on the PBS Series Independent Lens on  
Tuesday, April 15, 2008*

*“As relevant as *Super-Size Me* and as important as *An Inconvenient Truth*.”  
—The Austin Chronicle*

(San Francisco, CA)—**KING CORN** is a feature documentary about two friends, one acre of corn and the subsidized crop that drives our fast-food nation. Ian Cheney and Curt Ellis, best friends from college, move to the heartland town that was once home to their great-grandfathers. With the help of friendly neighbors, genetically modified seeds, nitrogen fertilizers and powerful herbicides, they plant and grow a bumper crop of America’s most-productive, most-subsidized grain on one acre of Iowa soil. But when they try to follow their pile of corn into the food system, what they find is that the fat of the land is fattening us up, and their journey raises troubling questions about how we eat—and how we farm. **KING CORN** will have its television premiere as part of the sixth season of the Emmy® Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens*, hosted by Terrence Howard, on Tuesday, April 15, at 10:00 PM (check local listings).

Behind America’s \$1 hamburgers, 72-ounce sodas and ubiquitous snack foods is the key ingredient that quietly fuels our fast-food nation: corn. In **KING CORN**, the filmmakers tend their small field the way a big farmer would: applying for government subsidies, injecting ammonia fertilizer, planting genetically modified seeds and applying herbicide from a giant tractor. By summer, their modern farm is thriving, and the Corn Belt is steaming toward a record harvest: 11 billion bushels of corn.

With their crop head-high, Cheney and Ellis leave the farm to see where America’s abundance of corn ends up. But as they enter America’s industrial kitchen, they are forced to confront the realities of their corn’s future: sweetening the sodas of a diabetes-plagued neighborhood in Brooklyn and fattening the feed trough of a 100,000-head cattle feedlot in Colorado. The filmmakers are increasingly troubled by what they find: the abundance of corn is helping to make fast food cheap and consumers sick; it’s driving animals into confinement and farmers off the land. They confront Earl Butz, the original architect of modern subsidies, and then return to Iowa to watch their 10,000-pound harvest fill the combine’s hopper and make its way into America’s food. Their acre, they realize, shouldn’t be planted in corn again—if they can help it.

*-More-*



To learn more about the film and the issues, visit the companion website for **KING CORN**. Get detailed information on the film, watch preview clips, read an interview with the filmmakers, and explore the subject in depth with links and resources. The site also features a Talkback section for viewers to share their ideas and opinions. The **KING CORN** companion website launches March 4, 2008 at [pbs.org/independentlens/kingcorn](http://pbs.org/independentlens/kingcorn).

**KING CORN** is the featured film in March 2008 for ITVS COMMUNITY CINEMA, *Independent Lens*'s national Community Cinema program, the monthly screening series that brings together local public television stations and leading community organizations to hold monthly screenings in more than 40 markets across the country, connecting communities with organizations, information and the opportunity to get involved around the topics presented in the films. For more information, visit [pbs.org/independentlens/getinvolved](http://pbs.org/independentlens/getinvolved).

### **About the Filmmakers**

#### **Aaron Woolf, Producer / Director / Writer**

Aaron Woolf earned a master's degree in film at the University of Iowa, but got the bulk of his education working in the field in Lima, Mexico City, Los Angeles and New York. In 2000, Woolf directed the WNET / ITVS co-production *Greener Grass: Cuba, Baseball and the United States*, which aired nationally on PBS and was honored with a Rockie Award. In 2003, he directed *Dying to Leave: The Global Face of Human Trafficking and Smuggling*, which won an Australian Logie Award and was nominated for a Rockie. *Dying to Leave* aired on the PBS series *Wide Angle* and was presented at the State Department and the United Nations. Woolf's films have also been broadcast on the Sundance Channel, ARTE, RAI and SBS and presented at Stanford University, UCLA and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. Woolf is the founder of Mosaic Films Incorporated and is an avid mountaineer.

#### **Curt Ellis, Co-producer / Writer**

Curt Ellis grew up in Oregon and studied American history at Yale College. Ellis has worked in construction and politics, but was assisting on the sets of fast-food commercials when he started work on **KING CORN**. In 2005, Ellis collaborated with Ian Cheney to create the short film *Two-Buckets* for WGBH, and he is currently releasing *The Greening of Southie*, a film about the first residential green building in Boston.

#### **Ian Cheney, Co-producer / Writer**

Ian Cheney grew up in Boston and Maine and attended Yale College and the Yale School of Forestry. Prior to starting work on **KING CORN**, Cheney worked for a food distribution company and studied food markets in West Africa. In 2005, he and Curt Ellis collaborated on the short film *Two-Buckets*. Cheney is currently releasing *The Greening of Southie*, a documentary about the first residential green building in Boston.

### **About *Independent Lens***

*Independent Lens* is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing Tuesday nights at 10:00 PM on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement and unflinching visions of their independent producers. *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts. The series producer is Lois Vossen. Further information about the series is available at [pbs.org/independentlens](http://pbs.org/independentlens).

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