

Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative (NIFF)
Fayette County Planning Team
February 21, 2008 Minutes

The monthly meeting of the Fayette County Planning Team took place on February 21, 2008 from 4:00 pm – 6:15pm at the ISU extension office in Fayette. A meal was served sponsored by Heartland Pride, a division of Iowa Healthy Meats, LLC, and distributed by Iowa Healthy Edge Meats, LLC of West Union, IA. The meal consisted of grain fed chevon (meat goat), broccoli and red potatoes.

Present: Dan Burkhart, Rod Marlette, Barbara Ashby, Sheryl Struthers, Maureen Johnson, Brenda Ranum, Deb Kahler, Gale Bishop, Alice Moeller, Roxanne Lenz, Mr. Lenz, Jennifer Ranheim, Christie Dennis, Donna Story, Sue Burrack, Karen Keele Kober, Scot Michelson, Ron Okonos, Dave Runyan, Richard Witt, Oelwein, Meghan Powers, Joe Organist,

The meeting was called to order by ISU Fayette County Extension Agent Dan Burkhart at approximately 4:00 pm. Dan gave a brief description of the Food and Farm Coalition meeting to be held on Feb. 27 at the Fayette ISU Extension office bringing producers and lenders to the table to give them information on

Introductions were completed around the room focusing on a short description of a project, grant, work related or personal experience that could be related to the Food and Fitness Initiative over the last month. Following are short descriptions of those introductions:

- County has received a donation of land by a development south of Elgin to be used for a city park. The Conservation Board is working on a grant proposal that might be used to purchase playground equipment for that park.
- Preparing a history of the FFI initiative and has done some research of articles that have appeared in the Elgin Echo and Fayette Leader about the initiative. Contacted local grocery store to ask about including and marking local foods that were carried in the store – perhaps with the buy fresh, buy local insignia. Shared a survey of locally grown foods from the 1920's to show what was grown in this area at that time.
- Presented to the Clermont City Council about the initiative.
- Personally more aware of health and nutrition increased commitment to make the changes to a more healthy lifestyle.
- Drawn up a prospectus to construct a micro-distillery to produce rye whiskey.
- Shared news coverage in the Fayette Leader regarding the FFI initiative
- A group in Oelwein has also discussed developing a community garden. Talked to a local entrepreneur who is looking into the possibility of a hydroponic lettuce facility.
- Annual Wellness Fair held at UIU on Feb. 14. Printed copies of the FFI flyer and set them on the information table and many of them were taken by individuals attending the fair.
- Will be participating in RAGBRAI.
- City of Fayette is collecting bids for DOT for a trail project that included a bridge and possible future trail expansion.
- Provided a healthy snack for a children's tutoring group Disappointed that a group that met just prior to theirs that had a snack of brownies.
- Shared information on FFI with a colleague at the statewide meeting of the DNR.
- Found out that it was possible to place local food into the school lunch program. Shared a local foods failure of a Talapia Fish farm some years ago.
- Talk to legislators about health related issues to their local legislators.
- Talked to Amish to bring them to the table
- Spoke with owners of Hub City Brewery about the initiative and they were interested.
- More information about the community garden project is online and said that many young people are interested in this. The local newspaper is open to more stories about local foods and fitness whenever we can provide them.
- Made a collage of short stories from around the county supporting local, healthy and organic foods.

Brenda reported on the barriers to using local foods that institutions in the area had believed were in place regarding inspections. She says this problem had now been straightened out and institutions were now being advised that this barrier issue had been resolved and local foods were able to be used as long as the source of the food was known.

Sue Burrack gave her report on the Jan. 9 and Jan. 30 Regional Planning Team meetings as follows:

The group decided that perhaps it would be a good idea to move the meeting around since it had always been held in Decorah. The next meeting on Feb. 27 will be held at Garbee Hall at ISU from 11:00am – 2:00pm

She also mentioned that 5 of the youth leaders from the Regional group would be attending a Youth Leadership Network Meeting in AZ in March. Trent Moeller and Clint Klepper both from Fayette County and three others from northeast Iowa will be attending the meeting. The youth are also conducting concession stand surveys related to offering healthy foods at the concession stands.

The WKKG action plan for year 2 was reviewed and the wrap-up of year 1. Sue underscored our need to reach out to minority and underserved populations. Safe routes to schools plans have been approved at the state level and will now move to federal level for funding approval. There seems to be a good chance the plan will be approved and this applies to all school districts in the region.

Richard Witt asked if the Mennonite group near Hawkeye had been contacted. Dan said that members of the group will be represented at the NIFF coalition meeting next week.

Sue gave three options for speakers at the conference to be held in June. The options include: sharing assessments, sharing the vision, or breakout speakers on specific topics.

Brenda mentioned that making this decision has been a problem since we're still unsure what our strategies for implementation will be. We're still collecting data to make our decisions. We do know that the food system will be an important part of it because of our unique situation.

A short presentation was given by Bonnie Lapke on the meal that was going to be served. She said that the goat meat was lower in calories, fat and cholesterol than traditional meats. She stressed that the chevon their group produced was considered premium quality and had received good support from both area grocers and restaurants.

After a break for the luncheon, the webcast: "Building a Local Food System, Part 2" was shown.

The group worked together to answer the webcast questions;

Question 1 – What did you learn from this information?

- Thought it was interesting that the number given from the survey showed 51% of respondents said they had confidence local foods were safe. Why this number would be so low. It was thought that perhaps this had something to do with the way the question might have been posed. It was believed that it could not be necessarily determined by the reported results that 49% of respondents did not believe local food was safe.
- Surprised how many dairies there were in this area.
- Only 1% consumption of local foods in this area. It was suggested that infrastructure needed to be expanded to allow growth and the potential for growth was extremely large.

Question 2 – What are the assets and strengths for our area toward developing a local food system?

- Good base of farm markets
- Topography of area lends itself to smaller farms and more potential for fruit and vegetable production.
- Oneota Coop and possibility for more cooperative efforts in the area.
- Impressed that people would be willing to spend 12% more to purchase local foods.
- How important education was to teach people the real value of local and healthy foods.

Question 3 – Are we missing any information in this picture?

- Consensus thought that education was a major factor. The public needs to be more aware.
- Others thought more infrastructure was needed. The Beef Council was trying to promote products that could be created to make preparation less time consuming because that is what consumers want. They don't have the time to make meals. The need for quick food would be difficult to change and we would need to take that into consideration.

Next topic for a webcast would be looking into the future of our local food system.

Reminder: All webcasts available through www.iowafoodandfitness.org

Next meeting date set for Thursday, March 20 at Fayette County Extension at 4:00pm – 6:00pm.