

Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative
Winneshiek County Planning Team
March 19, 2008
Meeting Minutes

PRESENT: Dan and Tom Beard, Brenda Balk, David Cavagnaro, Johnice Cross, Dean Darling, Donella Darrington, Richard Edwards, Lindsay Erdman, Karen Foster, Josie Boyle, Cindy Ernst, Janett Hansen, Manney Haylan, Stephanie Hughes, Elizabeth Kane, Jenn Kuehner, Lyle & Sue Luzum, Ellen Macdonald, Ann Mansfield, Alison Mclain, Eric Nordschow, Marissa Nordschow, Janelle Pavlovec, Betty Ransom, Brenda Ranum, Liz Rog, and Julie Wurtzel

SHARING: During introductions and sharing the following food and fitness related items were mentioned:

- ❖ Improved vending machine choices have been implemented in various schools
- ❖ Cattleman's group continues to do research – recently 300 people took a food and fitness related survey, results will be shared soon
- ❖ Many people talked about their discussions at the Aquatic/Community Center focus groups
- ❖ More talk of a community garden
- ❖ T-bocks was mentioned as a local restaurant promoting local producers on their menu

REGIONAL TEAM: This group is working hard to establish working groups. So far they've formed groups including: Minority/Low Income, Built Environment, Youth Planning, NIFF Coalition, and Communications Group. Some progress was made on a mission statement but the message is so large that it has become a difficult task. The group mentioned creating cards for people to carry around that include basic information about the entire initiative. This would allow all committee members and interested parties to be sharing correct information with others. The Youth Group is still working on summarizing their results from the concession stand survey they took this fall.

WEBCAST: "Building a Local Food System, Part 3 - Planning for Our Future"
Participants viewed a web cast about the local foods system. The video stated results have shown people do want to buy food close to home, but there may be barriers to break down first. But there are many benefits too. See below.

Challenges include: business planning, marketing, infrastructure, logistics, policy environment, and seasonality, among others.

Benefits include: increased food quality, support local economy, positive community outlook, healthier environment, food awareness, better sense of place and added pride.

Four main strategies were mentioned to overcome challenges: Direct Consumption, Indirect Consumption, Education, and Policy & Advocacy.

WEBCASE DISCUSSION: The following comments were made by the group after discussing web cast questions.

- 1) What would it take to make NE IA a unique place where residents and guests of every age experience, promote and celebrate healthy, locally grown food every day?
 - ❖ Getting restaurants on board with the idea of having local foods on their menu
 - ❖ Local food available all year round
 - ❖ Locally grown “showcase” in Fall/Spring
 - ❖ Distribution/Marketing/Retail structure
 - ❖ Continue to promote food celebrations (Sweet Corn Days, Taste of Postville etc.)
 - ❖ Legislative awareness
 - ❖ Support for a community kitchen
 - ❖ Gardening

- 2) If our success was completely guaranteed, what bold steps might we choose to grow the food, make it accessible, and promote consumption of the local foods?
 - ❖ Remove barriers in schools
 - ❖ Improve senior meal programs
 - ❖ Improving processing and packaging
 - ❖ Farm-to-school program
 - ❖ Create demand for local food
 - ❖ Gardening

- 3) What conversations can you take to others that will help create new possibilities around healthy foods for our future?
 - ❖ Conversations with local restaurants
 - ❖ Indoor, year round farmers markets
 - ❖ Require labeling in all stores regarding production methods
 - ❖ Kids visiting farms for school programs
 - ❖ Info cards to hand out about food & fitness program might be helpful
 - ❖ WIC program for kids under age 8
 - ❖ Discourage soda consumption
 - ❖ Messaging – food industry makes big money on creating products and marketing them to people’s natural desire for salt, sugar and fat