

January 15, 2008

This electronic newsletter about the NE IA Food & Fitness Initiative will be sent to team members and other interested parties. It is intended to provide current information to its readers. Items may be submitted to [wiemer@iastate.edu](mailto:wiemer@iastate.edu). Archived editions: [www.extension.iastate.edu/allamakee/info/enews.htm](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/allamakee/info/enews.htm)

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**January Planning Meeting Focus on Local Food Systems**

The discussion topic for this month is the local food system. Everyone in our community has connections to food. However, communities rarely see opportunities for development in the food and farming connections that make up their local food system. We see a globalized and industrialized food system, often leaving farmers and consumers separated by distance and understanding. Produce eaten in the Midwest travels an average of 1500 miles, and the typical consumer doesn't imagine his steak as "livestock", let alone appreciate the resources in its production.

The concept behind local food is based on one central idea: when food is grown, processed and sold locally, it is better for farmers, better for communities, better for the environment and-in both taste and nutrition-better for consumers.

County planning teams will be discussing the local food system at their meetings in January, February and March. Teams will learn the components of a local food system, they will learn about the opportunities to develop a food system in NE IA and will start planning a vision for the future.

**Local Photos Featured**

Thanks to all the FFI members who submitted photos for the FFI webpage. This month's photo features Dave Runyon and young friends enjoying the outdoors in Fayette County. A new winter photo will be featured every few weeks.

Speaking of local outdoor photography, Ellen Macdonald invites everyone to see her nature photographs at the Mezzanine Gallery of the Decorah Public Library. The exhibit, "As Seen Along Decorah Trails", will be up through January 31. An artist reception will be held on January 22 at 7:00PM.

Dames' Rocket Recorder Consort will provide live music. These photos may also be viewed online at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ellenmac/sets/7215760332738211/>

### **Congratulations!**

...To Decorah on the award of \$750,000 from the DOT for the Trout Run Trail. [Full story...](#)

...To Waukon on the opening of the Waukon Wellness Center. They have 1200 members to date.

...To Regional Team members on their interview for Farm Living magazine. [Full story...](#)

### **Food System Articles**

#### **Transition to Organic Classes Offered**

People interested in learning more about organic agriculture have the opportunity to participate in a semester long course -- "Risk Management Tools for Transitioning into Organic Production." This course will be taught by a mix of ISU faculty, ISU Extension specialists and Iowa organic producers along with organic experts from USDA and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.

The transition to organic course can be taken as a credit or non-credit course either online via Adobe Connect or through the NE IA ISU Extension county offices. It will be held each Tuesday from 6 to 9 p.m. from Jan. 15 through April 29. Attendance at all classes is not required unless this course is being taken for credit. If you are taking it as a non-credit course, you do not have to participate in all sessions and the cost is \$10 per session.

The NE IA Food & Farm Coalition is offering SCHOLARSHIPS to NE IA producers interested in any of the class sessions. Scholarships are available on a first come, first serve basis. For more information on taking this course call your county Extension office. PLEASE REGISTER for the sessions you wish to attend--offices may not be open unless attendees have registered ahead. [For topics and speakers...](#)

#### **Family meals especially important for girls: <http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/health/13514941.html>**

The survey of 2,000 Minnesota adolescents found that girls who have five or more meals a week with their families are one-third less likely to develop unhealthy eating habits. That could be anything from skipping meals to abusing diet pills to anorexia.

#### **Funding School Gardens via the 2007 Farm Bill (December 19, 2007)**

Attention supporters of school and community gardening: Here's an opportunity to raise awareness at the federal level about the myriad benefits of school gardening, and perhaps garner significant funding for gardening projects.

Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont has included an amendment in the Farm Bill to authorize \$10,000,000 to establish a pilot program for community school gardens. The Farm Bill passed the Senate by a vote of 79 to 14 on December 14, with the school garden amendment intact. The Farm Bill is now headed to conference committee where the Senate and House will determine the final version of the bill which goes to the President. <http://www.kidsgardening.org/farm-bill.asp>

#### **The 100-Mile Diet [www.100milediet.org](http://www.100milediet.org)**

When the average North American sits down to eat, each ingredient has typically travelled at least 1,500 miles—call it "the SUV diet." On the first day of spring, 2005, Alisa Smith and James MacKinnon chose to confront this unsettling statistic with a simple experiment. For one year, they would buy or gather their food and drink from within 100 miles of their apartment in Vancouver, British Columbia. Their book and

website chronicle their adventures. Since then, dozens of individuals and grassroots groups have since launched their own 100-Mile Diet adventures.

### [Wellness Policy Articles](#)

**Lighten Up Iowa** <http://www.lightenupiowa.org/>

It's not too late to find some friends or family members and sign up as a Lighten Up Iowa team. Here are some stories that we have heard:

- Governor Chet Culver sent a memo out to state employees encouraging them to form Lighten Up Iowa Teams.
- The Little Beefers group (youth K-3) of the Winneshiek Cattlemen have formed a Go the Distance team with 27 members.
- In 2007, there were 302 adult participants in the 5 county area and 84 youth participants.

### **Super Bowl Sunday Snacks**

Before long, Super Bowl Sunday will be upon us...February 3 this year. Don't let the fun day derail your food and fitness goals. Include some healthier snacks as you take in the game.

What are some snacks you can try?

- Popcorn—watch the salt and butter
- Low fat whole-grain crackers with two tablespoons tuna or chicken salad
- Whole-wheat tortillas or pita bread, stuffed with either of these meat salads or veggies
- Fruits or vegetables
- Yogurt parfaits. Buy some vanilla or plain yogurt, a variety of fruits, and some granola or Grape-Nuts-type cereal for a crunchy topping. Fruits can include strawberries, peaches, oranges, blueberries, pineapple, apples, raisins, or anything else desired. Set out the ingredients and have people layer their individual parfait & then finish them with a crunchy topping.
- Smoothies, using 100% juice, your favorite fruits, and some milk and/or ice cubes.
- An assortment of fresh veggies with a low fat, ranch dip
- [More snack recipes](#)

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**Upcoming Events:** [Click here for more](#)

Jan 16: Allamakee County Food & Fitness Planning Team, 4-6 pm, Waukon Wellness Center.

Jan 16: Winneshiek County Food & Fitness Planning Team, 4:30-6:30 pm, Hovde Lounge, Preus Library, Luther College.

Jan 17: Howard County Food & Fitness Planning Team, 6 pm, Laura Rose Lobby at the hospital in Cresco.

Jan 17: Fayette County Food & Fitness Planning Team, 4-6 pm, Fayette County Extension office.

Jan 30: Regional Team meeting, 11 am-2 pm, Baker Village Commons, Luther College

Feb 2: "Local Foods: The Next Step" The Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota's 17th Annual Conference. Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, MN. We will address the three major surrounding local foods: growing them, distributing them and cooking/eating them. There will be something for everyone! [Click here for more details.](#)

Feb 7: NE IA Food & Farm Coalition meeting, noon-1:30 pm, Winneshiek County Extension.

Feb 8-9: Women Adding Value to Agriculture Conference, The Hotel Winneshiek, Decorah