

March 24, 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. Archived editions: www.extension.iastate.edu/allamakee/info/enews.htm

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County Planning Meetings Focus on Local Food Systems

The County Planning Team meetings in 2008 have focused on the local food system. Some really great conversations have occurred around ideas to increase the consumption, production and accessibility of local food. Be sure to read the minutes from these meetings for more info.

Over 160 people attend the NIFF Producer meetings in Feb

In addition to the county planning team meetings, over 160 existing and potential food producers and lenders attended meetings in the area to learn more about the initiative and to gather more information on the needs for our area. When asked about the opportunities producers around local food production in NE Iowa, here are some of the answers.

- Extending the growing season with infrastructure
- Community people growing food and more community gardens
- Need education for younger people to farm. Reach beginner farmers at high school level.
- Need an advisory group for businesses that includes legal advice, financial support, marketing
- Mentor system for beginning farmers with mentors for business and production assistance
- Need to collect and distribute resources for assistance, ie. MarketMaker
- Storage for fresh produce needed
- Local Processing --Regional Canning, Freezing, and Dehydrating
- Year-round Farmer's Markets
- Need more publicity/promotion of producers (where, who, what-how to contact) in newspapers-news releases, cable access, Billboards, BFBL directory, county or area website, marketing includes visitors, stores, restaurants, online
- Need 3rd party to bridge communication b/w producers/buyers (brokers)
- Develop a regional label—NE IA grown or Iowa Grown
- Education – all the way around!

KWWL featured the Clayton County meeting. Watch the story here:

<http://www.kwwl.com/News/index.php?ID=22259>

Local Food Consultant Visits NE IA

After the two days of discussion with Hal Schroer, a consultant on food systems from the Twin Cities, we realized we have two types of producer groups and strategies/environments we need to support as we work to develop a local food system in NE Iowa.

Our first strategy may be to create supportive environments for groups of producers that want to sell primarily to local consumers. However, Hal Schroer indicated this should not be our only strategy. He's concerned that we do not have a large enough population in our five county region that can pay the higher margins needed for our producers to sell their first product stream. If we have a certain percentage of people willing and able to pay a higher margin for the first products, then producers can sell their second products to institutions.

Our second strategy may be to create supportive environments for groups of producers that want to sell primarily to urban markets in Minneapolis, Madison and Chicago. We seem to have farmers interested in this opportunity as well. Farmers would need to come together around product and then they may also be able to develop a brand that they could sell to urban regions. Hal recommends they have a product that is differentiated in some way so they could market this to the urban areas where they could sell their 1st product stream and get a higher margin.

Members of the NIFF Coalition and Regional Planning Team will be taking these recommendations into consideration as they develop an Action Plan for our area.

Consumer Understanding of Buying Local

The Hartman Group, 2/27/08. Like organic products in the late 1990s, the fervor for all things "local" seemingly has hit its stride here in the early part of the 21st century. Local is not just about the community farmers' market or roadside fruit or veggie stand; there is a much broader cultural curiosity for locally sourced goods and services that extends well beyond the world of food consumption. [Read more.](#)

Lack of Time to be Healthy?

A common excuse for not getting more physical activity and making better nutritional choices is the lack of time. "In research examining barriers to making healthy behavior change, individuals frequently mention lack of time," says Ruth Litchfield, Iowa State University Extension nutrition specialist. "What many don't realize is that physical activity includes things such as shoveling the snow. And as tired as many of us are of the white stuff, it does provide the opportunity for additional physical activity," she said.

"Many individuals are under the assumption that to increase physical activity they have to go to the gym, fitness center or attend an aerobics or step class. However, there are a number of opportunities to increase physical activity that don't involve a structured place or time," according to Litchfield.

Below is a list of opportunities to increase daily physical activity (based on a 150- to 170-pound person):

- Shoveling snow (typically December–March) -- 5-10 calories per minute
- Parking at the end of the parking lot at work/shopping -- 6-7 calories per minute
- Using the stairs rather than the elevator -- 7-9 calories per minute
- Light housework/cleaning -- 4-5 calories per minute
- Gardening (typically May–September) -- 8-10 calories per minute