



Healthy people, environments, and economies start with Extension. Read about some of the ways ISU Extension meets local needs, improves quality of life, and helps make Iowa a better place to live.
You'll be amazed at what we do.

2010 Stakeholder Report



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COUNTY EXTENSION COUNCIL

Every Iowa county has an elected Extension Council that guides local educational programming by partnering with staff. From needs assessment through program implementation and evaluation of outcomes, the council represents the issues and people of the county.

KEY ISSUES:

We identified these priorities for current and future programming in this region . . .

- Childhood obesity
- Local healthy food system
- Food safety
- Entrepreneurialism



Dr. Sam Beattie, ISU Extension Food Safety Specialist (left) visits with Larry Reiling of Clermont (right) and several other local vegetable producers to discuss food safety standards and to review their packing facilities.

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS AND PEOPLE

Food safety is everyone's responsibility—from farmer to consumer. Northeast Iowa fruit and vegetable farmers take that responsibility seriously. This summer, ISU Extension collaborated with the Northeast Iowa Food and Farm Coalition, Cornell University, and the USDA to offer the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) program to teach farmers how to prevent food crop contamination. Growers learned handling practices that minimize the risks of food-borne pathogens in finished products. Farmers and distributors learned how to document proper procedures, making it possible to prove steps they have taken to ensure a safer product. Farmers then created farm safety plans and participated in a USDA GAP audit. Thirteen farms are now GAP certified and have gained access to new markets.

Food safety doesn't stop at the farm gate. Area restaurant and food service staff—including forty-one school cooks—learned about safe food handling during ISU Extension ServSafe™ and SafeFood trainings. Such training increases consumer confidence, and reduces the incidence of food borne illness and associated health care costs.



A high school student leads a discussion with second graders on the differences between a locally grown tomato and one from the west coast.

FARM TO SCHOOL
BRINGS ALL THESE
PIECES TOGETHER.



Mike Bollinger (center) from Four Season Tools of Decorah talks to thirty farmers about high tunnel construction at a workshop hosted by ISU Extension.

...and justice for all
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HEALTHY PEOPLE

Youth lead the charge for healthy change in northeast Iowa school districts; teenagers are on the front line to change the way people think about their food. The Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative, funded in part with a three year grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, has partnered with ISU Extension and the 4-H Youth Development program to coordinate Food and Fitness teams at 18 high schools. More than 200 youth are working with teachers, food service staff, parents, and community members to get healthier food options in the schools and to create ways for students to be more active. The teens lead the charge with nutrition education in schools. The 4-H'ers have been trained to be "cross-age teachers" who visit second grade students in their school once a month. They bring lessons and local food into the classrooms and talk about the benefits of fresh food and how the foods are grown in Iowa.

HEALTHY ECONOMIES

Over \$1.2 million in food and fiber infrastructure and resources for the region have been leveraged by an initial \$20,000 grant provided by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture. In 2006 when the Northeast Iowa Food and Farm Coalition (NIFF) was named the first Regional Food System Working Group pilot community. Led by ISU Extension and other community partners, NIFF initial goals were to provide an opportunity for existing and new producers to diversify, to explore development of regional processing and storage facilities, and to increase the consumption and sale of locally grown crops.

Since that time, NIFF has made investments in greenhouses, fruit trees and vineyards, poultry and garden expansions, farm stand marketing, construction of packing sheds, and much more. By tracking the purchases of institutions in the region, the NIFF coalition has revealed more than \$832,000 in local food purchases. Farmers report over \$1.5 million in local food sales in 2009-10. While this is a \$1 million dollar increase from the previous year, the amount is still less than one percent of total food sales.

FUTURE PLANS

Farm to School brings all these pieces together as their goals reflect the vision of ISU Extension for creating healthier communities. Northeast Iowa's Farm to School project focuses on three interdependent components – education, food service, and school gardens, and it integrates Extension agriculture, families, youth, communities, and business resources. In the first year, six school districts in northeast Iowa were Farm to School pilot sites. Several other schools have incorporated farm to school components like gardens, food samples, and nutrition education.

The Farm to School program also focuses on the importance of purchasing foods locally in order to support local jobs, producers, and communities. All participants in the Farm to School program will strengthen their knowledge about agriculture, their food, nutrition, and the environment.