

Northeast Iowa Food & Farm Coalition Minutes

May 14, 2009

The NIFF Coalition met on May 14, 2009 at noon at the Winneshiek County Extension office. Present: Chris Askelson, Lyle Luzum, Craig Chase, Eric Nordschow, Randy Uhl, Troy Bond, Mark Storlie, Mary Steen, Teresa Wiemerslage.

TIP of the Month:

Lanesboro Local. www.lanesborolocal.com. Check out what our neighbors to the north are doing around local food and economic development and tourism. Coordinators for this project have been invited to present at a future NIFF Coalition meeting.

Lanesboro Local connects local growers, producers and artisans with consumers and businesses who value the extra special care and creativity that go into producing our local bounty. We hope you enjoy the selection of fresh, nutritious foods and handcrafted items that invite consumers from near and far to "live local" and live well.

Old Business

- Report from Education Committee.
 1. June 7, noon- 4 pm. Open house tours of four farms in Winneshiek county to feature greenhouse and hoophouse options. Check out www.niffcoalition.org for more information.
 2. June 5, Meat & Greet at the Oneota Coop.
 3. August 8, Plantpeddler Open House.
 4. Dig In Decorah <http://www.digindecorah.com>. digIN" -- August 21-23 2009 -- is Decorah's newest annual event. Our goal is to share with visitors just how passionate Decorah is about sustainability and green initiatives. Our efforts stand out in our region, and it is time to celebrate and educate. This 3-day weekend will include a variety of fun activities, including farm tours; off-the-grid home tours; live entertainment brought in by Benji Nichols; dining in local restaurants featuring locally produced foods; educational seminars; and tours at Luther College featuring their fleet of hybrid vehicles, their biodiesel production facility, and the new LEED-certified Sampson-Hoffland Science Laboratory; plus much more.
 5. Please send your food related events to wiemer@iastate.edu to be added to www.iowafoodandfitness.org and www.iowafreshfood.com.
- Report from Farm to School Committee
 1. Received \$30,000 from the Leopold Center to do some planning with schools. Here is the outline of steps.
 1. First meetings with 17 regional school districts to explain the project. Fourteen sign on. (Completed)
 2. Initiate baseline survey. Continue monthly meetings of the Regional School Planning Committee. (In progress) 28 surveys will mailed out on May 4. 8 schools have responded to date. The schools who replied by May 15 will be

entered into a drawing to receive \$250 to use toward equipment for fruits and vegetables (5 awards will be given).

3. Survey information is incorporated into planning and strategies for upcoming meetings. (In progress)
 4. Build connections between schools and local producers. Develop a strategies for education and pilot projects. (April – Dec 09)
 5. Initial planning is complete with pilot projects identified. (Dec 09)
 6. Implement pilot projects. Implement education programs. Continue to build relationships between schools and growers. (Jan 2010)
 7. Follow-up survey. (Dec 2010)
- NE IA has been accepted to be a chapter of the Iowa Farm to School program. We have received \$5000 to help collect the survey information and to offer incentives to schools.
 - WKKF sending 5 people attending the Food & Society meeting in San Jose, CA in April: Joe and Karla Organist, Lyle Luzum, Dan Lane.
 1. Lyle reported. Official name is Food & Society Gathering for Good Food. We are fortunate to be who we are. We have a unique perspective (rural). We are not burdened by the politics of other regions which can be crippling. They are battling the war of dividing out the pie. What we are doing in NE IA is not logical to them. They don't understand how/why things are working here. In rural areas, we come to meeting with an assumption of trust. In urban areas, they come to the meeting with an assumption of distrust. Kellogg's definition of good food is food that is fair, healthy, green, affordable. In urban areas, the main problem is access and affordability of food. In our area, NIFF is more concerned about the "fair" and "green" of good food. Kellogg announced their new direction of access to vulnerable populations and people of color. This will pose a challenge to us as we move forward. We have a unique perspective. Where in the food system do we see unfairness?
 - Local Food Directory. 51 members for this year. Over \$2165 raised to print the directory and to give members point-of-purchase materials. The completion of the directory has been postponed due to the ISU restructuring (see below).
 - There is a new Farmers Market starting in Marquette/McGregor.
 - Discussed the emerging RFAs in the FFI. The process in its infancy. 52 applications were received requested over \$1.2 million. The April FFI Work group report was shared and a brief description of the emerging Activities was discussed.

New Business

- Beef and Pork Whole Animal Buying Guide –Hot off the press
This full-color, coil-bound consumer-oriented guide explains buying pork and beef as whole animals (or portions thereof). Includes marketing terms and information on storage and handling, meat inspection and meat weight, and common retail pork and beef cuts. Sturdy, coated card stock meant for regular use. Color version available for \$6.50 from ISU Extension, BW version for \$1.00. Downloadable for free from this website:
<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/store/ItemDetail.aspx?ProductID=13056&SeriesCode=&CategoryID=&Keyword=PM%202076>

- Nordschow moved to approve the following mini-grants Approve NIFF mini-grants received so far. Another batch of grants will be approved at the June meeting. Motion approved.
 - Winneshiek: 7 applications received, 3 nominated for funding.
 - David Sliwa, \$200 to assist in providing refrigerated storage for pears, plums and apples.
 - Kyle & Mari Holthaus, \$200 to assist in keeping eggs produced by the 400 hens more sanitary. (Rollaway nest boxes and washable plastic trays.)
 - Lori Lechtenberg, \$200 to assist in construction of a hoop house where several varieties of tomatoes and peppers will be grown. Product sold at the Ossian Farmer's Market as well as CSA for Annie's Gardens..
 - Allamakee --4 applications received. 2 nominated for funding.
 - Michael Schulte, Waukon. Expanding a market garden as part of FFA Supervised Ag Experience project to 120x 300 feet. Will also have a farm stand at Waukon Pamida on W, F, Sat in addition to selling at the Waukon Farmers Market. Will purchase a state-certified produce scale and canopy. Request \$300 for a \$3000 project.
 - Terisa Stieber, Lansing. Currently distributing USDA licensed chemical/antibiotic free eggs to consumers. Would like to expand the product line and purchase larger cooling units and update the processing facility to handle a larger volume. Also looking to expand orchard to include more varieties of apples, pears, cherries and plums. Request \$300 for a \$4500 project.
 - Howard – 1 application received. Steve Jensson, Riceville. To purchase grow tubes for 250 grape vines. Request \$300 for a \$1350 project.
 - Fayette – 1 application received. Hope Onken, Elgin. \$300 toward start-up costs for a new produce farm. Funds used to prepare ground, buy seed and equipment and for marketing materials.

Clayton County is reviewing applications on May 18.

Wiemerslage told the group about the ISU Extension restructuring. The process will affect the work of NIFF and FFI because the proposed structure is eliminating the county extension education directors (Brenda, Teresa, Dan B, Dan L and Charlie). County Extension Councils will have the opportunity to use their county tax dollars to hire program specialists. This will be an opportunity for councils to hire people specifically for local food system work. A timeline for this process has not been announced. Here is website for more information: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/restructuring.htm>

Next meeting: June 4, noon-1:30 pm.

Upcoming Events-- Check out www.iowafoodandfitness.org . Click on the Upcoming Events link for more info.

NIFF Education Committee Minutes

5/14/09

Present: Teresa Wiemerslage, Mary Steen, Karla Organist, Chris Askelson

Absent: Dan Burkhart, Johnice Cross

Old Business

Growing The Carrot Part II

High Tunnel Open House

Sunday, June 7, 2009

12:00 – 4:00pm

Karla designed the brochure for Growing the Carrot and will mail (about 200) from Fayette Ec Dev. Chris and Teresa have additional photos to use in completing the brochure. Will add the Food and Farm logo to the brochure.

THANKS Karla!!

Fact sheets (Teresa) will include a few questions answered by the tour hosts and some general information on their operation:

- First Planting Date in the hoop building

- Vegetables/fruits grown

- Future plantings

- Projected 1st harvest

No RSVP for the event. Each host will have \$50 to help provide light refreshments for the participants.

New Business

August Tasting the Carrot part III

We started discussion on this Harvest Event. Possibly having each county host a public event.

Didn't get to far on this discussion.

Plantpeddlar will have an Open House with speakers on August 8th.

Practical Farmers of Iowa will have an on farm storage event at Eric Sessions.

At this time, we were informed of the massive structural changes that ISUE will be experiencing June 30th. Teresa said that ISUE will be presenting its decision to the public on Monday May 18th at the Winn county Fairgrounds. Many stated their intention of attending.

Next date: Thursday, June 4, 2009 10:30am