

NE Iowa Food & Farm Coalition June 8, 2006

Present: Larry Grimstad, Brenda Ranum, Charlie Baier, Teresa Steffens, Don Elsbernd, Al Peake, Jon Jensen, Liz Rog, Eric Norschow, and Dennis Hovden

The NE Iowa Food and Farm Coalition members met on June 8th at the Winneshiek County Extension Office with 10 members present. Following the approval of the May meeting minutes, the following committee reports were given:

Education Committee

- Update on Buy Fresh, Buy Local Directory – Jon Jensen
 - Teresa Wiemerslage sent an e-mail stating that Jeremy Peake and Kate Phipps are working on contacting the members on the 2004 directory to see if their information needs to be updated. Jon stated that Luther College will be able to help with the layout again once all the changes have been made. Target date for completion: June 30. If anyone knows people who would like to be added, please contact Teresa at 568-6345. Teresa has a news release available that can also be sent out to local groups in the county. It will be submitted to each of the county's newspapers. (It was suggested by the Coalition that when calling producers for updates, it may be beneficial to them if they know of new producers to add to the directory.
 - Jon will contact Teresa to see if she is willing to take over as Coordinator for the BFBL campaign. This would include being the fiscal agent for the current \$400 remaining in the account. Jon is willing to submit the grant application for the \$1,000 in state funds, but this also requires a \$1,000 match and is due before the end of the month. He will ask the state if the match can be in-kind.
 - It was determined this campaign is important to continue since the Farmer's Market Promotion Program grant that was submitted indicated the Coordinator that would be hired would work on this and other projects.
 - Discussion followed on how to raise the additional \$1,000 for the directory. This discussion was tabled until more information was received about in-kind contributions. Jon and Teresa will lead this effort.
- Update on Ken Meter Presentation on June 27th, 7 pm at Good Shepard Lutheran Church in Decorah – Liz Rog
 - Number of organizations have and are being contacted to be co-sponsors. Our NE Iowa Food & Farm Coalition, Decorah Rotary, Luther College, Winneshiek, Howard and Allamakee Co. Extension, Oneota Coop, Winn Cattlemen's Association, , Earth Changes, NE RC & D, etc. have all agreed to be co-sponsors of the event to date. Funding for Ken's visit will be covered by the remaining grant funds. Considerable time was spent discussing the purpose of Ken's discussion and the discussion to follow his presentation. The Coalition wants Ken's presentation to spark discussion but it is important that we let the community know we are working to support and grow agriculture in our region. Our purpose and mission for our Coalition needs to be shared that evening following Ken's presentation.
 - Brenda, Teresa, and Charlie will be asked to share information about the purpose and mission of the NE Food & Farm Coalition to commodity groups in their counties and ask what our NE Iowa Food and Farm Coalition can do to support them.
 - Suggestion was made to publish Ken's data and make it available on-line for others.
- Update on Presentation to the Leopold Center's Regional Food System Working Group on June 1st – Larry Grimstad and Brenda Ranum
 - The Leopold Center is very supportive of our work. They are using our NE Iowa Food & Farm Coalition and the work we are doing for our strategic plan as a model for the state. Other areas are wanting to move in the same direction we are moving to support and promote agricultural efforts in our region.

- Update by Teresa on the NE Iowa Food & Farm website located at:
 - The web site for our Coalition is located at: <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/allamakee/info/local+food.htm> Please visit this site and send your ideas, links, etc. for this web page to Teresa at wiemer@iastate.edu. Those present felt the web site was very good and should be promoted through future news releases.

- **Assessment Committee**

- A brief update on the following assessments was given.

Assessment #1: INSTITUTIONAL SURVEY - What are the current and future purchasing patterns of institutions (schools, hospitals, care centers, restaurants, etc.) within our region?

- **Sources:** Names/addresses for institutional markets for the region (To date we have received a complete list from Allamakee, Howard and Winneshiek counties. The lists from Clayton and Fayette counties still need updates.)
- **Method:**
 - ISU Extension copies 3 pg. survey (See attached survey and send suggested to changes to Craig Chase by July 15th)
 - Coalition members Hand Deliver and Gather surveys to and from institutions.
 - Allamakee:
 - Clayton:
 - Fayette:
 - Howard: Mary Steen,
 - Winneshiek:
 - Coalition members assist with data entry
 - ISU Extension's Craig Chase will analyze and summarize data for region
- **Estimated Cost: 5 counties with 100 usable surveys** – send out 250 surveys x \$.50/survey = **\$125** (printing survey and hand deliver/pick-up by Coalition) (Data entry and analysis will be completed by Coalition on a voluntary basis to keep costs down.)
- **Timeline:** Administer survey Fall 2006; Summarized data Winter 2006?
- **Benefit:** This assessment will be presented to various stakeholders (Commodity Groups, Supervisors, Lenders) to increase support for the community development process and shared with producers to help them identify potential markets.

Assessment #2: HOUSEHOLD SURVEY - What are the current and potential purchasing patterns of local food products on household consumers in our region?

- **Sources:** Survey households within the region (include questions for dairy, livestock, etc.)
- **Method:** Gather, analyze and summarize data for region

- **Estimated Cost:** - **5 counties with 500 usable surveys** – distribute 800 -1,000 surveys x \$10.00/survey = **\$8,000 - \$10,000** (post card, questionnaire with return postage, paid, postcard, and another questionnaire; cost includes printing and postage). (Data entry and analysis completed by CD-DIAL.)
 - **Who:** **CD-DIAL** will be hired to coordinate effort and works with our sub-committee to redesign SW survey and identifies institutions in region. CD-DIAL gathers, analyzes and summarizes data for region. **Kathleen Larson, CD-DIAL Research Director will be meeting with Craig Chase, Eric Norschow, Solveig Hanson, Brenda Ranum, and any other interested committee members on Thursday, June 15, 2:00 pm at the ISU Extension – Winneshiek county office to begin constructing the questionnaire and discussing analysis of the data.**
 - **Deadline:** Construct and administer survey Late Summer/Early Fall 2006; Summarized data late Fall 2006
 - **Benefit:** This assessment will be presented to various stakeholders to increase support for the community development process and share with producers to help them identify potential markets.
- **Funding Committee:**
 - Update on grant proposal submitted May 1st for *A Farmer's Market Promotion Program Grant Application* – Teresa Steffens (Still waiting to hear).
 - Leopold Center's RWFGS has verbally committed \$5,000 to be used toward gathering assessment data – Brenda will work with Rich Pirog to determine what type of written proposal they need from our Coalition and she will put this proposal together
 - At a future meeting we will need to form a committee to raise additional funds (\$3,125 - \$5,125) to complete the second assessment process.
 - Natural Resource Conservation Service grant proposal funding opportunities – Teresa Steffens
 - 1) NRCS will be opening up funding to be spent in this fiscal year within the next few weeks. If our Coalition is ready for it, we may be able to get some dollars for conservation based transition of conventional bean and corns to local foods production. But, and a big but, we need the group to identify what they would like to see EQIP incentive dollars used for. (The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) was reauthorized in the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Farm Bill) to provide a voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals. What will transitioning farmers need help with? It was recommended Don Elsbernd, Bob Hemaseth, and other corn and soybean producers be contacted to brainstorm opportunities with Lora and anyone else interested in this funding opportunity should contact Lora.
 - 2) NE Iowa RC & D has been informed that there will be a pot of state dollars for natural resource based economic development through the RC&D's. It should also be announced shortly. If our Coalition is

ready for it we may be able to capture some for this project. It will be a stronger application if the group has (again) identified the priorities that should be funded. Examples might include:

- o small grants or loans for greenhouses to lengthen our local growing season,
- o small grants or loans for new local production or expansion of local production, etc.
- o small grants or loans for related business start up or expansion - including processing, distribution etc.

They might consider any part of their plan that we haven't already submitted grants. Anticipated funding would be limited to about \$50,000 per RC&D project. It should be for on the ground action.

It was recommended that Solveig Hanson, Chris Blanchard, Al Peake, Larry Grimstad and others that would like to be involved will meet with Lora when this funding is announced.

3) RC & D will be sending information about our Coalition's efforts to Matt Russell, State Food Policy Project Coordinator at the Drake University Agriculture Law Center. He is working for the Governor's Office. He is looking for information about projects dealing with Iowa grown and processed foods. This is his first project being conducted from April through October 2006. Specifically, he's working with the Department of Corrections, the Department of Human Services, and the Veterans Home. They are also looking at other institutions like the state universities. The goals of the six month project are to:

1. Identify the current use of Iowa grown and processed food purchased by the state;
2. Understand the opportunities and challenges for increasing these purchases;
3. Encourage Iowa companies to better understand licensing, inspections requirements, purchasing processes, product needs, and marketing options involved in the state's purchasing of food;
4. Provide some strategies for increasing the use of Iowa grown and processed food in state institutions.

4) The State NRCS office has cut RC&D funding. Teresa Steffen's, Program Management Assistant position will be cut; Teresa will be transferred. This action will necessitate that NE IA RC & D drop some of the projects they have and that new policies be implemented for NE IA RC&D Projects. In the past they have not required any recognition from groups they are helping. From now on, if any group is to be an RC&D Project – including if this Coalition wants to continue to have NE Iowa RC & D's assistance- then any press releases, public reference, or recognition of the project must include reference that "This is a Northeast Iowa Resource Conservation and Development Project - or - This is a Northeast Iowa RC&D Project." Even grants written by NE Iowa RC & D for other organizations must have this by-line somewhere in the proposal. The Board is considering other actions but have not yet implemented fees for service. NE Iowa RC & D have many projects that are willing to recognize their contribution so as they decide which of the 31 project to keep, this recognition will be a factor. NE Iowa RC & D requested our Coalition's approval for this action. The RC&D Board has realized that if people don't know what RC & D is working on, continued funding for Lora's position may also be unlikely.

Our Coalition discussed that it would be appropriate to recognize the efforts of NE IA RC & D as part of our coalition and they have and will potentially assist with in the future. It was also acknowledged that other organizations in our Coalition should also be recognized for their efforts in a similar fashion since that is the purpose of a Coalition.

- o **Other Issues/Ideas:** It was discussed that summer may be a difficult time for Coalition members to meet. Considerable time can be spent revisiting issues if Coalition members are unable to attend meetings. It was decided to not meet in July. Brenda will send an e-mail out to members asking them to indicate if they can hold the August 3rd and September 7th meeting dates. If those dates work for a majority of members, we will notify members of the next meeting dates.

SEE AS ATTACHED: Institutional Survey Draft

Attached is a preliminary draft of an institutional survey. Look over and let Craig Chase (cchase@istate.edu) know what you think. Keep in mind this is a draft to be reviewed and changed based upon your input.