

## **Northeast Iowa Food & Farm Coalition Meeting Thursday, November 2, 2006**

The NIFF Coalition met on Thursday, November 2, 2006 at noon at the Winneshiek County Extension office. Attended: Teresa Wiemerslage, Liz Rog, Brenda Ranum, Eric Nordschow, Mary Jane Keppler, Charlie Baier, Ann Mansfield, Jacque Hahn, Bonnie Lapke, Gary Steinlage, Randy Uhl, Jon Jensen, Dennis Hovden, Dan Burkhart, Don Arendt, Craig Chase, Rick Burras, Larry & Diane Grimstad, Lora Friest, Solveig Hanson, Mary Steen, Linda Long.

As the work for the Kellogg grant continues, Brenda shared 4 priorities for projects as identified by Kellogg.

- Are we looking at HEALTHY FOODS?
- Are you GREEN? (environmentally conscious, sustainable, stewardship)
- Are you ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY? Are we creating policies and practices to keep the farmers on the land?
- Are the foods are growing affordable?

### **1. Education Committee Update:**

- Liz reported on the Oneota Co-op's Expansion and Oct. 26 community event, "Local Harvest."

Twelve local producers were present with samples; 250 people attended. Teresa was there to talk about NIFF. The coop has recently signed an agreement to buy the Latham Furniture building. 11,000 sq feet (triple the space). They are looking at expanding the deli and other areas, however there will be no processing or distribution areas.

- Eric N. and Larry and Diane G. attended the GROWN Locally's producer member dinner and speaker About 80 people attended. Speaker got people thinking.
- Gary S. shared his thoughts on the information presented at the Northeast Iowa RC&D's "Iowa League for State RC&D Conference" on October 12-13. There was a nice variety of topics (GROWN Locally, Organic Valley, NIFF) Brenda shared that this program could be repeated for communities if desired.
- Other presentations included one to the Decorah Area Chamber on Oct. 30 and to the Waukon Chamber on Oct 17. The Talking Points handout is posted to the web.
- Upcoming NIFF Presentations
  1. Leopold Center's Marketing Initiative Workshop in Ames on November 6<sup>th</sup> - (Brenda, Lora, Eric and Ann, Mary) 160 people registered to attend this state-wide event.
  2. Added Value Conference in Red Wing, MN on January 27<sup>th</sup> - (Craig, Brenda, and anyone else). This Conference has been going on for 10 years. Most of the people who attend are producers. They look at things from producer and community perspective. How can producers get communities involved? Website will be posted to the NIFF webpage.
- Report on Small Grants to Producers - Lora has worked with the five county economic development directors to help them promote through a news release that the NIFF Coalition has matching grant dollars available through the economic development directors for producers looking to start-up or expand food and fiber enterprises in our five county region (\$600 per county - maximum grant size \$250). The information will be posted to the web. County dev. Groups will select and send nominations to NIFF for final approval.
  1. Clayton Co was wondering about having a \$500 grant if they have more than one recipient. The consensus was to split the matching funds so that more than one person is getting the NIFF funds. i.e. \$250 from NIFF + \$250 from Farm Bureau = \$500 grant.
  2. There is a form that needs to be completed for individual producers for Leopold Center.

3. There may be some more money from the CVC \$1000. Grants need to be done by June 1. A committee of Rick Burras and Larry Grimstad will review the grant nominations from the counties for final approval. (Economic Development Directors--Please keep the applications or forward all to Winn. Co. Ext).
  - Teresa shared some of the updates for the Web Site. [www.niffcoalition.org](http://www.niffcoalition.org). Check it out! Send suggestions for the site to [wiemer@iastate.edu](mailto:wiemer@iastate.edu).
  - The coalition discussed the Buy Fresh/Buy Local Campaign
    1. The fall meeting for the Iowa campaigns will be Nov 17 and Teresa is planning to attend.
    2. The group discussed the directory. Teresa shared the estimated costs for the project. After a draft is created, a letter should be sent to those listed and ask for donation to help cover expenses. Several levels could be created and in return, the producer could get a BFBL marketing packet. Gary and Darla will help find producers for Fayette and Clayton Co.
      - Taste of Agriculture Event with Decorah Area Chamber—March (Rick, Eric, Brenda, Mary)
  - Reminder to all to submit photos for Slide Show – bring photos to Lora—Gary and Bonnie get the award for the first submission!!

## 2. Assessment Committee Update:

- Counties reported on the progress of the Institutional Surveys. Feedback from many is that safety is a factor in using local food. There is also some confusion as to what inspectors are telling restaurant owners. Howard County has talked to a few chain stores and found out that corporate policy dictates what food they use. Surveys are due Nov 30. Send them to Winn Co as you get them.
- Craig reported on a group through the state that wants to help local lockers and processors to expand. Dale Turnmeier (retired Cresco locker owner) might be a resource.
- **Household Consumer Survey Update**– To identify current and potential purchasing patterns of local food products on household consumers in our region.) **COMMENTS NEED TO BE SUBMITTED BY Nov10 to Brenda** ([ranum@iastate.edu](mailto:ranum@iastate.edu)) LAST CHANCE!!!. Want 25 surveys to take out and pilot the survey in December. Lora will work on translating to Spanish (30). Other Hispanic populations include: Strawberry Point, Cresco, Decorah.
- **Economic Analysis** – Craig presented some assumptions for the analysis. People to make decision=Craig, Eric, Mary. If there is anyone else, email [cchase@iastate.edu](mailto:cchase@iastate.edu).

## 3. Financial Committee Update—The updated Leopold Center Assistance Plan is posted on the website.

- **4. Policy Committee** - – Randy, Larry, Rick and Eric
  1. Explore membership policy/plan for future as we continue to grow and develop
    - Robert's Rules of Order; Officers, Committee Structure, Policies, etc.
    - Tie in with Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative Committee Structure
  - What kind of things to we want to do with policy change? i.e. Woodbury county—county institutions have to purchase food locally/organic. Tax abatement for producers who are looking at change from conventional system to organic system. Incentives from production, processor, consumer standpoint. May invite some to a special meeting to brainstorm some policy changes. i.e. Portland, OR; Iowa Food Policy Council, Matt Russel @ governor's office

**5. Update on W.K. Kellogg Foundation Food & Fitness Initiative** – We received an Invitation to submit a Full Proposal – due December 11, 2006 (See Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative Communication and Planning Structure)

- Local Stakeholders are to nominate more people to our Coalition by November 8<sup>th</sup>
- Meeting again on Nov 15
- The Planning and Structure will be revised because of conversations with Kellogg. They talked about getting NIFF members into the other community conversations—don't keep them separate.

It was reported about a meeting in Des Moines in June called “Moving beyond the Choir”. Investors will be coming from across the country. They want to invest in local food systems. NIFF has been chosen to present to this group in June. These are venture capitalists and they only invest in sustainable projects. More details to come!!!!

**Next Meetings:**            **Thursday, December 7, 2006, Noon – 2:00 pm**  
                                  **Thursday, January 4, 2007, Noon – 2:00 pm**  
                                  **Thursday, February 1, 2007, Noon – 2:00 pm**