

Northeast Iowa Food & Farm Coalition
Agenda for Sept 11, 2008

Welcome and Introductions – What is new and good with you?

Teresa Wiemerslage, Liz Rog, Carolyn Corbin, Dan Burkhart, Gordon Murrey-John, Lyle Luzum, Ann Bushman, Charie Baier, Eric Nordschow, Mary Steen, Karla Organist, Brianne Sparrgrove, Johnice Cross, Randy Uhl, Caleb Mattison, Don Dwyer, Rachel Gooder, Glenda Plozay, Keith Koch, Mark Storlie, Chris Askelson.

The minutes from August 7 meeting were approved.

The Financial Report was approved.

Old Business:

- Submitted Farm to School proposal to Leopold Center
- Submitted Annual Local Food Purchases and Sales Report to Leopold Center
- Completed the Year End Activity Report for the NIFF Coalition
- Review messages from the TAP team. Who are the main audiences around local food that need to be targeted to push our work forward? *Policymakers, Institutions, Producers, Children, Food Purchasers.*

New Business:

- Review the draft strategies developed for FFI Community Action Plan.
- Discuss Collaborative Proposal from Leopold Center
 - *Don says this type of work is imperative to our work as we move forward. Issues the collaboration will help with include greenhouse development, food safety, and preservation of local identity.*
- We have received \$400 to send people to the Family Farmed Expo in Chicago, Nov 17-19. It is a great opportunity for local leaders to see how real the demand is for local food, and would attendees an opportunity meet with food businesses and other farmers. *Glenda Plotzay and Plantpeddler have indicated interest in attending.*
- Shared local food reports from Wisconsin. The reports reinforce many of the concepts identified in our Consumer Household survey.

Upcoming Events:

- Sunday, September 14 – Village Creek Farm, 3:00 pm (Allamakee)
- Sunday, September 28 – Peake Orchards Farm Tour, 2:00-3:30 pm (Allamakee)
- Sunday, September 21 – Tir na n'og, 3 pm (Clayton)
- RFSWG, Sept 22, Near Ames. Attending: Brenda, Teresa, Mike, Stacy
- September 23 – Training in Organic Agriculture
<http://www.henrywallacecenter.com/index.html>
- Ninth Annual Iowa Venture Capital and Entrepreneur Conference. Wednesday, October 15, 2008, Polk County Convention Complex, Des Moines, Iowa.
Conference Registration: Registration information will be announced shortly and will be available at www.iowalifechanging.com/register.

FFI Planning Teams will be reviewing the first draft of strategies for the FFI Community Action Plan at their September meetings.

Oneota Coop is hosting **Eat Local America Challenge** inviting you to consume 80% of your diet from food grown or produced locally. Try it for a meal, a day or a week—you choose! Over 40 people have signed up.

Reviewed Aug 27: Presentation by Mike Gooder & Don Dwyer – Fruit & Vegetable Growing & Marketing Opportunities in NE Iowa; What are the next steps?

Comments:

- We need to work together under a common structure.
- One problem identified was the loss of personal relationships with consumers. Some producers are turned off by this idea.
- Remember that we are not choosing one type of production over another. This is a BOTH-AND situation. For producers who want to have the personal relationships, we need to work at opportunities for those relationships to develop. For other producers, the relationships aren't as important as market access and we need to work at opportunities for those people.
- Don talked about a greenhouse brand and criteria examples to participate in that branding program.
- We need to identify the needs of greenhouses, tunnelhouses, organic producers and open field producers in the area.
- We need to do assessments and surveys –
 - Who wants to participate?
 - What do they require for infrastructure, marketing, etc?
 - If we have 500# of beans in week 46—where do we sell it?
- We need to define NE IA's production capacity
- We need to develop a distribution plan
- We need to help bring producers up to the level they want to participate. If a farm has certain inefficiencies, what can we do to make them more efficient to contribute to the system?

The discussion turned to product branding.

- How do you package correctly?
- Branding can limit our marketing options
- What group determines the requirements? There is not one answer—there is not one group.
- When does a brand start to lose power/value?
- www.letsgrow.com software –has growing data online. “LetsGrow allows you to compare all data required to further improve your crop online, with a few simple mouse clicks. You compare these with your other crops. With historical information. But also with crops by your fellow growers. LetsGrow therefore forms the platform for international horticulture. You receive better insights into and control over those factors which eventually determine costs, yields, work schedules and quality of your crop.”

The next meeting is scheduled for Oct 2 from noon-1:30 pm at the Winneshiek County Extension office. Draft tactics from the Food & Fitness Initiative will be reviewed.