

Northeast Iowa Food & Farm Coalition

The NIFF Coalition met on November 6, 2008 at noon at the Winneshiek County Extension office. Present: Dan Burkhart, Gordon Murray-John, Don Arendt, Al Peake, Johnice Cross, Kyle Holthaus, Lyle Luzum, Amanda Blagsvedt, Karla Organist, Randy Uhl, Craig Chase, Eric Nordschow, Larry Grimstad, Robert Wolf, Ann Bushman, Brianne Sparrgrove, Bonnie Lapke, Chris Askelson, George DeVault, Stacy Bryant, Carolyn Corbin, Charlie Baier, Teresa Wiemerslage.

Welcome and Introductions – Tell about one person or group you have talked about local foods

- Shared with Fayette Co Farm Bureau – one of the policies of FCFB this year is to promote more locally grown food (policy change).
- Over 200 people attended the farm tour at Peake orchard in Sept.
- Getting ready to start planning for GROWN Locally. Looking for new growers.
- Annie's Gardens and Greens have been building their shares.
- Met with Dan from Sen. Harkin's office to learn more about NIFF and FFI.
- GROWN Locally is optimistic for 2009. Had a good year in sales.
- Dave Lawsteun from NICC Dairy program is very interested in NIFF work for his students.
- Fayette Co Entrepreneurs Club met for first time—some local producers attended.
- Producer grant reports are coming in.
- Investigating blueberry production. Planning for WAVA conference.
- Iowa Food Policy council is being resurrected. A local food policy council would make a lot of sense.
- Economic crisis could be a benefit to local economies including local food. There is a lot to gain from this environment.
- Produced a 4-county book on the development of local food.
- Learning all about SeedSavers and NE IA
- Shares from CSA are growing—using coupons and newsletter for marketing

Approved minutes from October 2 meeting

Old Business

- Producer Mini-grant reports are coming in. Still need reports from Colleen Ohrt, Jennifer Kohlmeyer. A summary report will be ready for Dec meeting.
- Farm to School Pre-Proposal: The Leopold proposal is due Monday. The project is a 2 year project. Requesting \$30,000 from Leopold and total project of \$72,000. Will involve working directly with school representatives to increase purchases of local foods. Goals of increasing local markets for producers, improving nutrition and understanding of food systems among school staff and students. We also sent in a proposal last week to the Iowa Dept of Ag and Land Stewardship for the same project. Request was \$5,000.

New Business

- Food & Fitness Initiative teams are reviewing the Strategies and Draft Tactics at their county meetings this month. Please attend if available. This is the draft of the Community Action Plan that will be submitted to the WKKF.
 - Allamakee - Nov 20, 4:30-6 pm, Waukon Wellness Center (Date change)

- Clayton - Nov 13, 6-8 pm, Clayton Ext. office
- Fayette - Nov 20, 4-6 pm, Fayette Co Extension
- Howard - Nov 19, 6-8 pm, Featherlite Bldg - Howard Co. Fair Grounds
- Winneshiek - Nov 19, 4:30-6 pm, Decorah City Hall
- Family Farmed Expo on Nov 21-23. Several NIFF members are attending.
- Teresa shared a website from the Iowa Wine Growers Association. They have developed a site where producers can advertise their product, equipment, etc.
<https://iowawinegrowers.org/content/category/12/37/76/> NIFF Coalition members reviewed and brainstormed possible uses for this type of site for our area. The website developer said this type of site is possible for NIFF, but would require some labor to approve posts. Overall the group felt it would be worth trying. Comments:
 - Would be another way to connect buyers and producers and processors
 - Could be a way to advertise extra storage or storage needed
 - Need to develop categories for easy searching between products
 - Start small as a pilot program with sponsors and then expand to membership owned
 - This is a hybrid between MarketMaker and the Nebraska Food Coop
 - Keep sponsorship ads the same size as on other pages, so that minimal work is needed to add their sponsorship to the page
 - Would be a good way for schools to find local producers
 - Craig, Karla, Larry, Johnice and Teresa volunteered to develop some criteria for the site.
- Steering Committee – Volunteers needed to begin discussing and sequencing draft activities to activate the Vision, Strategies and Draft Tactics for the work of NIFF. Meeting date TBD.
- Education Committee . NIFF members brainstormed ideas for possible programs for 2008-09.

Program Ideas

- Local Food Expo—Networking
- Equipment Sharing
- Equipment for Small Farms
- Labor Sharing
- What is our capacity—planned growing
- Seed buying pool
- Post Harvest Handling and Food Safety workshop
- Distribution and Temp Controlled Transport
- BFBL Planning for Promotional Events for 2009
- Beginning Farmer—or Farm Transition Workshops
- Use of high tunnels in vegetable production (Koehn's ?)
- Extending the season
- Develop a white paper on various topics (Steering Committee)
- Teach people how to do transplants (seed to trays to field)
- Construction of cold frames—high tunnel
- Identify people experience in construction of greenhouses
- Market analysis—what should we grow? What is the market?
- Consumer education—recipes, etc; Tasting Nights; How to use the whole chicken
- Seminar on consumer demand vs. opportunity; commodity vs. specialty. Where are the trends?
- Farm to School—school gardens or Food /Garden daycamps
- Panel Discussion: Luther, Oneota Coop, schools, hospital
- For restaurants: How to Use Local Foods FAQ.

- For producers: How to price your product
- Education on Slowfood
- Cooking demonstrations—regional event—with chefs
- Cheapest solution isn't always the best solution
- Goal: create a white paper for each workshop
- Chefs in schools—visit about prep and nutrition
- Food Tastings

Teresa will send out a survey for members to vote to prioritize the work this year. The Ed committee is meeting at the Dairy Center on Nov 10 at 11 am.

Meeting adjourned at 1:40 pm.

Next Meetings: Thursday, December 4, 2008, Noon – 1:30 pm
January TBD

Recorded by Teresa Wiemerslage