

## Northeast Iowa Food & Farm Coalition

The NE IA Food & Farm Coalition met on January 9, 2009 at noon at the Winneshiek County Extension office. Present: Craig Chase, Larry Grimstad, Karla Organist, Dan Burkhart, Gordon Murray-John, Johnice Cross, Dan Lane, Don Arendt, Brenda Ranum, Eric Nordschow, Mary Steen, Ann Bushman.

The minutes from December meeting were approved.

### Financial Report

- Rich Pirog has indicated that if funds become available to the Leopold Center through the Wallace Foundation, they have plans to allocate \$8,000 - \$10,000 to the NIFF Coalition in 2009. He originally thought the funds could be available by summer 2009.
- Submitted a grant proposal to the Community Vitality Center to hire a Technical Assistance Coordinator to plan educational activities as part of starting a *Local Food Entrepreneurial Network in Northeast Iowa*. This grant, if funded would begin in Sept. 09.
- Submitted a grant proposal to the Leopold Center for a variety of items to begin a Farm-To-School program with NE Iowa Schools.

### TIPS of the Month:

- **US Food Market Estimator 2.0** Last month we looked at the tool. This month, the Leopold Center has created maps of crops to illustrate the market. These are posted on the FFI Slideshare website: <http://www.slideshare.net/iowafoodandfitness> . [Direct Link](#) to maps.
- **Reminder -- Sensitive Crops Directory:** Iowa Department of Agriculture (IDALS) is sending out renewal forms to farms in the sensitive crops directory. The Sensitive Crops Directory provides pesticide applicators with the locations of those crops that are most susceptible to pesticide drift damage. The intended crops for inclusion in the registry are vineyards, orchards, certified organic crops, and fruit and vegetable crops. [Go here](#) to learn more.
- **Iowa Food Coop:** The IFC unites Iowa producers and consumers to facilitate the direct sale of Iowa-grown food and other Iowa-made products. We value and cultivate farmer-consumer relationships, environmental stewardship, and enhanced rural sustainability. The IFC strives to be a business that is financially viable, environmentally sustainable and socially just. <http://www.iowafood.org/>

### Old Business

- November: NIFF On-line [Classifieds](#): Go to [www.iowafoodandfitness.org](http://www.iowafoodandfitness.org) click on Food & Farm Classifieds. Free service open to all producers and buyers. Group thought this would be useful. Need to make sure it gets marketed well.
- Producer Mini-grant report included in packet. There is \$1005 left to spend. Group decided to open the grants up to the 5 counties in one pool. \$500 maximum per application. Requires 90% match. Post the info on the Classifieds site.
- Update from Luther College meeting. Over 40 people attended on a snowy Dec 18. Luther shared several publications: Product specifications and quantities, Guidelines for producers/growers, Food Safety guidelines, Grower Contact form. They shared their

barriers/challenges: Increased labor to process food, Storage, Seasonality, Price to source local foods: 35-50% more than distributor costs (before labor).

- Report from RFSWG meeting on Dec 15. There are now 6 groups in the state. Talked about distribution, what is “local”, and messages. Learned about a new financing model, L3C.
- Report from Storage Committee (LEFSA) from Bill Pardee
  1. Some local producers have expressed concern that this effort NOT compete with the year round farmers’ market. It is the committee’s belief that large scale storage, much larger than envisioned within that new Farmers’ Market, is essential to make a major expansion in the availability of local food.
  2. Group talked about canning and other processing. Crystal Ice in Waterloo might be a business model to investigate (rent own space—product on pallets).
- Report on Year Round Farmers Market. See attached news article from Gazette.
- Grad Student Assistance
  1. The Leopold Center will provide funds for a new class offered this winter-spring semester at Iowa State University. SusAg 546 - Organizational Strategies for Diversified Food And Farming Systems. Taught by Betty Wells - ISU sociologist, and a graduate student TA.
  2. Students in the class have the opportunity to do group projects based on needs of the local RFSWG groups. IF you decide to participate, you and others you involve at the local level will provide some mentoring in return for the time and effort of these students adaptive and experiential learning. Group identified potential projects to send to campus.
- Report from Education Committee. Are working on 2 local breakfasts—West Union and Decorah in Feb and Mar. March 13 will be grower workshop talking about pricing. More details will be coming. Midwest Dairy School will be March 26 in Calmar.
- Report from Microloan Committee. Committee continues to meet and make plans to offer this service in our area.

### **New Business**

- Iowa Cattlemen Policy. Last week at the Iowa Cattlemen's Annual Policy meeting, Winneshiek County Cattlemen motioned to move the 1 year directive on local food systems (initiated and included in policy in 2008) to a full 3 year resolution which enjoys the support from a unanimous vote and also the oversight of paid lobbyist Jill Alltriger for watching Iowa legislative initiatives that are in favor of or against the resolution policy. The policy is identical to last year’s in all respects. This is as complete as ICA can make a policy. All are reviewed and re-voted on in a three year from implementation time.

### **Food & Fitness (FFI) Update**

- January meetings will focus on Rising Energy and Food Prices: Effects on Families. We are expecting discussions around community gardens, food pantries, etc. Visit [www.iowafoodandfitness.org](http://www.iowafoodandfitness.org) for meeting details. A [special webpage](#) has been developed with a collection of links and resources on project ideas for gardens, food banks, CSAs and farmers markets.

- The NIFF Strategic Planning Committee is going to meet with Matt Russell on 1/20 to review our tactics for the coming year and brainstorm activities that might help us activate those tactics, as well as influence policy and system change.
- The WKKF has reserved 10 slots for the NE Iowa FFI to send 10 people to their Food and Society meeting in April in California. FFI has funds to pay for air fare and transportation for people to attend and WKKF will cover the costs of the Food & Society meeting. This could be a great leadership training opportunity for our NIFF members. A nomination process will be used to select attendees. Looking for people to attend who could bring information back to the FFI and to provide leadership in the five county region through NIFF.

#### Additional Handouts

- Loan Guarantee program
- 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Marketing and Food Systems Workshop, Ames
- Decorah Group Discusses Market Building
- Pounds of Fresh Broccoli Production Needed Annually.
- How Many Acres of Vegetable Production are Needed?
- What is the L3C?
- WAVA Conference flyer
- Mini-grant summary
- Building Brand Loyalty: Food Product Case-Studies. By Mary Swalla Holmes, ISU Extension Value Added Ag [http://www.valuechains.org/rfswg/Branding\\_Case\\_Studies\\_MarySwallaHolmes1-09.pdf](http://www.valuechains.org/rfswg/Branding_Case_Studies_MarySwallaHolmes1-09.pdf)