

## Northeast Iowa Food & Farm Coalition Minutes

The NIFF Coalition met on March 5, 2009 at noon at the Winneshiek County Extension office. Present: Teresa Wiemerslage, Andy Larson, Nick McCann, Bernard Obaa, Betty Wells, Stacy Bryant, Dan Lane, Johnice Cross, Ann Bushman, Chris Askelson, Dave Runyon, Karla Organist, Dan Burkhart, Randy Uhl, Don Arendt, Francis Martin.

Group approved minutes from February meeting.

### Financial Report

- Submitted a grant proposal to the Leopold Center for a variety of items to begin a Farm-To-School program with NE Iowa Schools. Summary is posted on the website.

### TIP of the Month:

Where do your fresh fruit and vegetables come from?

<http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/resources/fruitveg/fruitveg.php>

Leopold Center Events pages: <http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/news/events.htm>

Other Events -- <http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/news/otherevents.htm>

Social Bookmarking site for FFI – Over 450 links of items of interest to NIFF and FFI

[http://delicious.com/iowafood\\_fitness](http://delicious.com/iowafood_fitness)

### Old Business

- Report from Education Committee. (Notes are available at the end of this doc)
  1. March 4 and 24 Local Food Breakfasts info online
  2. March 13 Grower Symposium, over 30 registered so far
  3. Planning a greenhouse field day in June
  4. Planning BFBL events for consumers in summer (salsa contest, progressive dinner, bike fresh, bike local ride)
- Report from INCA conference. Good to hear from other groups. They are discussing the same issues around distribution and aggregation that we are.
- Report from Community Kitchen Workshop in WI. Ann, Bernard and Nick attended. Presenters from Door Co, WI and LaCrosse, WI. Shared a Needs Assessment tool. The presentation is posted at the FFI Slideshare site. <http://www.slideshare.com/iowafoodandfitness>
- Pepperfield Project and SSE are offering gardening classes for homeowners. Posted to webpage.
- WKKF sending 5 people attending the Food & Society meeting in San Jose, CA in April: Joe and Karla Organist, Lyle Luzum, Dan Lane and Craig Chase
- WKKF sending 3 people attending the National Farm to Cafeteria conference in Portland, OR in March: Johnice Cross, Teresa Wiemerslage, Brenda Ranum

### New Business

- Marketing and Food Systems Workshop: Ann Bushman, Johnice Cross, Teresa Wiemerslage, Brenda Ranum attending  
[http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/research/marketing\\_files/workshop09/index.html](http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/research/marketing_files/workshop09/index.html)

- Plans for Local Food Directory. Budget

Proposed Expenses	Proposed Income
\$1000 for 5000 color directories	\$250 carryover
\$500 membership fee to state	\$2700 fundraising goal
\$500 for marketing materials	--Need 54 memberships @ \$50
\$1000 for events and mailings	--19 paid memberships in 2008 @ \$30-50
\$3000 total	--add consumer donations @ \$20

Group decided to stop free registrations. A 3-line ad will be \$15. Full ad with website listing will be \$50. Business card ads will be \$75. Teresa will check on ability to have a banner ad on the new website to also help with revenue. Might be able to charge up to \$200 annually for a banner ad to link to a grower website.

Teresa will email local chambers to see if any businesses would like to help sponsor the directory.

- Steering Committee Update, Feb 10. Group is working on ideas for the RFA.
- Request for Activity process for FFI at [www.iowafoodandfitness.org](http://www.iowafoodandfitness.org). Heard about potential RFAs around local food for the following projects. This list is not complete. If you have other ideas, please forward to [wiemer@iastate.edu](mailto:wiemer@iastate.edu).
  - Feasibility to create Local Food Hubs to link farmers markets and other sites in region to help with storage, processing, distribution, etc. (Study models of aggregation sites in rural regions that allow for aggregation of product)
  - Feasibility of small scale processing (targeting larger scale food products being used in school institutions, where seconds could be processed to be used in schools. May start with on-farm small scale processing with option leading to larger scale processing. Include study of kitchen models.)
  - Updates to school greenhouses to grow food
  - Farm to School development and education
  - Summer community gardens (includes youth gardening programs)
  - Planning assistance for Decorah Farmers Market structure
  - Funding for continued NIFF planning and outreach (education, networking, tours, etc)
  - Mini-grants for producers
  - Support for Iowa Microloan affiliate
  - Support for regional entrepreneur program

- Expansion of an econ develop revolving loan/business plan competition (each county) for small Ag opportunities
- Program to organize connection between potential waste (overripe) foods from the increasing local growers to link with the food pantries and more importantly a method to then provide short notice to the disadvantaged that such foods have become available.
- Grad Student project: research case studies on processing models. Andy Larson, Nick McCann, Bernard Obaa and Betty Wells introduced themselves. Andy is the small farms specialist for ISU Extension. Nick and Bernard will be research processing options for NE IA as part of a Sustainable Ag class. Coalition members shared their thoughts and concerns with Nick and Bernard. Some items to note from the discussion.
  - Chris Blanchard has experience with packaging and labeling and would be a good resource for local growers.
  - Farm Bureau also has someone at the state level that can assist with packaging.
  - Ray Hanson at ISU does feasibility studies.

**Next meeting: April 2, noon-1:30 pm.**

**Notes from the Education Committee meeting on March 5 at 10:30 am.**

Present: Karla Organist, Dan Burkhart, Johnice Cross, Chris Askelson, Teresa Wiemerslage.

- Reviewed plans for Local food breakfasts and March 13 symposium
  - Need to invite the FFA teachers/students to March 13
  - Need to add grocery stores to the invite list
  - Teresa will post the institution brochure. Personal invites will be important.
- Chris will talk to SSE, Eric Sessions and Chris Blanchard on a field day for greenhouses in June
- Have a Farm Planting Demonstration Day where people can see equipment being used. Similar to Hay Expo.
- Talked about events to link growers and producers this summer. Would be nice to have an event in each county. Suggestions.
  - Fayette: Event at Corn Maze
  - Allamakee: Corn days or Pumpkin days
  - Bike Fresh, Bike Local event
  - Have a local food potluck
  - Host a salsa contest
  - What does Winn Co Fair do for prizes for their local food contest?
  - Offer a progressive dinner. Buy a ticket for \$25 and stop at 5 places for LF sample
  - Host an event at one location where many restaurants can have a table. Add a screening of King Corn or other movie.
- Dan is hosting an ISU student over spring break. Would like to involve her with local foods.
  - She can visit farms and help register for Marketmaker
  - Sensitive Crops directory
  - Local Food Directory registration
  - Farmer bios
  - Photos