



Fayette County Team June 17, 2010

The Fayette County Food and Fitness team held a farm tour on June 17, 2010. There were 23 people attending: Vi Anderson, Pat Korzendorfer, Jerry Korzendorfer, Ann Bushman, Bruce Baker, Barb Ashby, Bonnie Smola, Donna Story, Kit Klepinger, Hope Kline, Michelle Stedman, Nicole Lenius, Heather Ramsdale, Becky Suarez, Ben Lewis, Joe Organist, Dave Burrack, Sue Burrack, Heather Gamm, Ann Mansfield, Ann's mother, Steve Story, Teresa Wiemerslage.

First stop was Koehn's Berries & Produce 13814 220 St., West Union, Iowa. Teresa Wiemerslage gave a brief presentation about NIFF and distributed the newest By Fresh By Local Food pamphlet. Randy Koehn described his production of strawberries. He has approximately 6 acres of strawberries. The berries are sold by either 'pick your own' or from the shelf (picked by others). Randy does not have a way to irrigate his berries, he depends upon natural rain fall. Mr. Koehn emphasized that he does not grow organic berries. He described how the Tarnished Plant Bugs could destroy a crop. If he sees the Tarnish Plant Bug he uses spray to 'save his crop'. Shredded corn stocks are used as mulch. Randy reminded the group of the late frost when the strawberries were in bloom. He told about having an army of friends cover all of the plants the day the frost was expected and uncovering the plants the next day. The group was offered small tomatoes to sample and were shown a small cucumber that was wrapped in plastic and sold for \$1.75. The cucumber was a variety that wilts fast unless it is wrapped in the plastic. Many participants walked into the strawberry fields and noted the weed free environment and mud free walk ways between the rows of strawberries.

Next stop was Annie's Gardens and Greens 30975 Lincoln Rd, Ft. Atkinson. In addition to the greenhouses and road side sales Annie has a Green Grocery store at 117 E. Main, Calmar, Iowa.. Annie's has fresh vegetables and fruits grown in Iowa when in season year round. "GreenGrocery" is not a fully stocked grocery store. It could be thought of as an outlet for the surplus of what is left from our CSA shares and extra garden produce. Besides fresh vegetables and fruits, the store carries milk, butter, cheese, organic eggs, individually wrapped frozen meats, fresh bread, native wines, herbal blends, herbal dips, herb teas, pop corn, spiced nuts, baked goods, honey, and sorghum all in 177 square feet! The store is also her CSA drop site for her Community Shared Agriculture in the Calmar area every Friday. Annie said the problem she had was getting people to realize that the store is open daily during the summer hours when produce is readily available and limited hours during the non-productive season. The group toured a new green house where Annie was experimenting with growing different types of crops. The greenhouse was warm and Annie told about the temperature difference with an addition of a 'shade cloth'.

The third and last stop was at Fairfield Farm On the Great River Road. This farm produces locally grown potatoes and onions. The group viewed a potato planting machine and learned how the potatoes are planted. Fairfield Farms grow 4 types of Russet potatoes - one red potato variety - and the golden Yukon potato. The potatoes are harvested and then kept in storage in a cool 18 wheel truck body. The potato harvesting machine was on hand for viewing and an explanation of how the machine works to harvest potatoes. Participants

climbed on the machine to view all parts of the machine's operations. One building was being converted into a place to process organic food. The group were given a tour of the building and told of the requirements necessary for the building to meet the organic processing requirements. Returning to the Extension build at Fayette the group enjoyed a meal of: Rotisserie Beef – with or without barbeque sauce Home-made whole wheat dinner rolls Potato salad Fresh greens Milk – tea Angle food cake with strawberries and whipped cream.

Submitted by Donna Story.