



Northeast Iowa Food & Farm Coalition Minutes – March 4, 2010

The NE Iowa Food and Farm Coalition met on March 4, 2010 at noon at the Winneshiek County Extension office. Seven members present: Lyle Luzum, Mary Steen, Craig Chase, Johnice Cross, Teresa Wiemerslauge, Janette Hansen.

Financial report

- Received \$3000 from RFSWG for producer mini-grants. Leaves \$2000 per county to award for mini-grants. Have heard from Winneshiek, Fayette and Clayton counties re: being partners with the grant. Still need to contact Allamakee, Howard and Chickasaw.
 - SW Iowa gave their funding to a fledgling neighboring group to help them with their planning and organization. There was some discussion as to whether that might be an idea to get the Dubuque area foods group going. Group members expressed reservations with this concept.
- Discuss Farmers Market Promotion Program. No ideas were submitted. It was noted that NE IA RC&D was submitting an application on behalf of the area farmers markets.

REPORTS

Education Committee

- Upcoming: Workshop on March 23 for Farmers Market growers
- Upcoming: Work session on March 23 for Food Service directors
- Upcoming: Driftless Region workshop on March 18, in Prairie du Chien.
- Upcoming: RFSWG meeting, April 1 in Ames.

Farm to School Report was given. Janette shared a story of how they donated an 8 yr cow and 7 yr cow to Northland Agency on Aging, N Winn School and another institution if those places would pay for processing. The meat would be in 5# hamburger tubes.

Microloan Committee has two inquiries for funding.

Specialty Crops Grant. Teresa and Johnice shared the plan for the Specialty Crops grant and the rollout for the educational pieces.

Comments from the group:

- The group understood the concept and supported the approach presented.
- Encouraged more investigation in to the Naturally Grown and other self-certification program.
- The “Auditing” piece is separate from the Education piece. You don’t have to go through the education to pass a third-party audit.
- We are proposing a GAP-ready program. Producers who go through this program will
 - Have 20 hours of risk management education
 - Have completed a Food Safety Plan for their farm
 - Have completed a SSOP for their farm
 - Have completed an on-site visit with a GAPS coach
 - Able to produce documentation upon request: Food Safety plan, SSOP, insurance, water quality, logs and documentation.

- Branding is important, but so is just the awareness of local. Wisconsin has a program called “Something Special” from WI. There is also a “Thrive” project with grocery stores in 8 counties that are selling WI products and promoting them.
- Suggestion: spending the marketing money to help market the farmers who have gone through the training.
- Review draft of plan and focus groups

Other items:

March County Food & Fitness meetings will feature the Farm to School program

- March 11, 5:30 pm, Waukon Wellness Center
- March 11, 6 pm, ISU Extension Clayton Co.
- March 11, 6 pm, Laura Rose Lobby, Cresco Hospital
- March 17, 4 pm, Decorah City Hall
- March 18, 6 pm, ISU Extension , Fayette
- Chickasaw TBD
- Postville TBD

Reflection: Feb 23: Michael Pollan at Luther College, 7 pm

Education Committee Notes:

Preparing for Farmers Market, March 23, Dairy Center

- Preparing a Market Tool Kit bag
 - Money apron, Seed Savers catalog, FM Today magazine, ISU pubs, thermometers, RFSWG
- Registration online
- Food from Trout River Catering: BBQ pork, potato salad and coleslaw
- Mary providing coffee
- Teresa brining table service and beverages
- Direct mailing to producers. Include a flyer about FMNP trainings and the PFI webinars.

OTHER NEWS:

Marketing and Food Systems Workshop, April 1

You can [now register on-line](#) for our April 1 Leopold Center Marketing and Food Systems Workshop at Gateway Conference Center in Ames! The workshop features projects funded by the Center and the working groups of Value Chain Partnerships, and special guest speaker Anthony Flaccavento.

Biz Booster Challenge offers grants to small businesses

A business plan competition offered by Winneshiek County Development and call the Biz Booster Challenge is entering its third year of helping small businesses in Winneshiek County. Biz Booster was established to cultivate local economic development by inspiring and financially supporting local entrepreneurs. Up to \$12,000 in grant money is available to the winners of the competition.

Farmers Market Promotion Program Grant Announcement

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) announces funding of approximately \$5 million in competitive grant funds for fiscal year (FY) 2010 to increase domestic consumption of agricultural commodities by expanding direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. Applications should be received no later than April 15, 2010.