

**NIFF Coalition Update**  
**March 2 , 2010**

Spring is in the air! Can you feel it!

**Next NIFF Coalition meeting is March 4 at noon at the Winneshiek County Extension office.**

- [Driftless Region meeting](#) in Prairie du Chien, Mar 18. What kind of food system do you want to see in the Driftless Region?
- Mar 23, Farmers Market workshop in Calmar
- Update on Food Safety grant and focus groups
- County Food & Fitness meetings will feature the Farm to School work in each county
- Possible grant ideas for the Farmers Market Promotion Program
- \$3000 funding from Regional Food System Working group
- April 1, Marketing and Food Systems Workshop, Ames. Carpool plans.

**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. Anthony will share the story of the grower network organized by Appalachian Sustainable Development. Please note: there is no registration fee but you must register to attend. Registration by March 24 will guarantee a lunch ticket.

**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. The competition is open to existing small businesses or prospective businesses in Winneshiek County. Two of the contest winners in 2009 were local food producers. Business plans entered into Biz Booster Challenge must be submitted to the WCDI office by 5 pm on April 2. For more info, contact Randy Uhl at 563-382-6061 or [wcdi@alpinecom.net](mailto:wcdi@alpinecom.net).

**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. Examples of direct producer-to-consumer market [opportunities include new farmers' markets, roadside stands, community supported agriculture programs, agri-tourism activities, and other direct producer-to-consumer infrastructures.](#) AMS hereby requests proposals from eligible entities from the following categories: an agricultural cooperative or a producer network or association, local governments, nonprofit corporations, public benefit corporations, economic development corporations, regional farmers' market authorities, and Tribal governments. The minimum award per grant is \$2,500 and the maximum award per grant is \$100,000. No matching funds are required. Applications should be received at the address below and must be postmarked not later than April 15, 2010.

### **Annual INCA Meeting on March 13**

Iowa Network for Community Agriculture (**INCA**) to host “**Growing Our Roots**” gathering, potluck and annual membership meeting, March 13, 2010, 9:00am to 3:00pm at the Town/Craft Center, 1122 Willis Avenue, Perry, IA 50220. The Gathering is free and open to the public. Memberships are not required but will be available for \$35. INCA has traditionally used its annual local food conference as a planning tool to encourage the development of an area’s local food system. This year’s smaller gathering will kick off a full year of planning for the 2011 Local Food Conference to be held in Perry. Members from across Iowa and participants in the Growing Food and Profit groups are encouraged to take this opportunity to reconnect with the INCA community and share ideas in a community mapping session. [Read more.](#)

### **ISU researchers help farmers earn more, waste less**

[I-FARM](#), a free online tool developed by ISU software experts, helps farmers make better-informed operational decisions.