



## Work Group Reports Year 3: 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Aug -- Sept -- Oct 2012

### Active Living/SRTS

- Met on Aug 3 and Sept 28
- Walking School Bus Work- Targeting 6 communities:
  - Elkader
  - Decorah- Communication with neighborhood families and RSVP
  - New Hampton
  - Postville- 2 Walking School Buses up and running
  - Waukon- Communication with FFI 4-H Youth Team Leader
  - West Union- Meeting planned with community members, FFI representatives and Resource Contact
- I-WALK/Safe Routes to School Project Through Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)
  - Leading project in Postville
  - Assisting project in Oelwein
- Conferences and Trainings
  - Cross-Age Teacher Training with FFI 4-H Youth Teams (Sept 5)
  - IDPH Complete Streets Walkability Training (Sept 11)
  - University of Iowa School of Public Health Childhood Obesity Conference (Sept 13)
  - Iowa Association of Regional Councils Retreat Workshop on MAP-21 (Oct 18)
  - Iowa Department of Transportation Local Agency Safety Workshop (Oct 25)
- Presentations
  - St. Joseph Teacher In-service Walking School Bus Scavenger Hunt (August 14)
  - Upper Explorerland September Board Meeting (Sept 6)
  - Oelwein Wings Park Elementary School staff (Sept 25)
  - Waukon WeCARE Parent/Teacher Group (Oct 11)
  - I-WALK Community Coalition in Oelwein (Oct 17)
- Events
  - School Registration in Postville (Aug 1 and 2)
  - Park-It Community-wide Event in Postville (Aug 15)
  - Riceville Walking Wednesday (Sept 5)
  - Tour de Allamakee County in Postville (Sept 15)
  - Allamakee Substance Abuse Prevention Family Day in Postville (Sept 24)
  - International Walk to School Day (Oct 3 and 5)
  - Parent-Teacher Conferences in Postville (Oct 22)

### School Outreach

- 4 AmeriCorps and 2 FoodCorps members are serving as school Resource Contacts (RC) for this school year. Staffers and RCs meet weekly. Read school stories on the blog.

- In November, we will be designing school profiles for the Superintendents meeting in February
- We have made great headway in the schools this fall. I attribute this to really getting ahead of the game with focused training in the few weeks before starting in schools. In addition, our work is becoming clearer and schools are more likely to recognize us as a consistent presence when RC are in the district one day a week.
- Headway specifics:
  - Howard-Winn, Waukon, Riceville, St. Joes, Decorah, North Fayette each had all staff presentation on RC's role in schools and Why Wellness Matters.
  - We are focusing on policy more this year, with 6 of the 18 schools working on re-writing their wellness policies, including: Turkey Valley, Howard-Winn, MFL, Decorah, Valley and Postville. We are hoping to use the Iowa Association of School Boards Primer Policy as a start, and add in new policies on local food, including defining local and the % increase of food cost allowed for local preference.
  - Four schools are working on parent outreach events, including Postville, Decorah, Oelwein and North Fayette.
  - Our nutrition outreach efforts continue to grow in schools, mainly with early elementary students

### **Community Health/Early Childhood**

- NICC joined NE Iowa FFI as a core partner and is hosting Halesia Johnson to do this work (Sept 4).
- The Community Health WG is transitioning to Early Childhood Learning Community
- FFI Early Childhood is integrating the messaging campaign at NICC and in other EC areas
- Looking at NICC healthy lifestyle direction and how FFI can play a role in it
- NICHQ – Healthy Weight Collaborative- continue to work on messaging plan
- University of Iowa School of Public Health – Nutrition Center /Dr. Linda Snetselaar and Dr. Katie Tharp to explore interest in collaboration in early childhood and possible grant opportunity

### **Youth Engagement Work Group**

- Melanie Stewart (FoodCorps Service Member), Sam Iverson (Decorah FFI 4-H'er) and Pedro Lopez-Vega (Postville FFI 4-H'er) represented NE Iowa FFI in Boston at the W.K. Kellogg Youth Gathering in July.
- Melanie Stewart and Lynette Houser are working together to strengthen FFI 4-H Youth Engagement work, communications and outcomes. They meet bi-monthly for progress. Bringing Melanie in as a partner for Youth Engagement planning has increased communication efforts for the work, created a catalyst for youth connections in schools and opened up a team approach.
- Farm to School Cross-Age Teacher Trainings were held September 5, 6 & 7th with 6 schools participating and over 100 FFI 4-H'ers teaching lessons in elementary classrooms. Farm to School t-shirts were distributed to youth completing the training.

- Iowa Dairy Story is a field trip experience for area schools. Hosted 3 day this fall: October 3, 12 & 17.
  - Integrated local food - Country View Yogurt & WW Homestead Milk integrated into Nutrition Lesson and served with lunch.
  - The program reaches over 700 youth in grades 3 - 5 in NE Iowa each year.
- FFI 4-H Regional Leadership Team met on October 18 with 15 schools represented and 64 students and adults.
- FFI 4-H Enrollment Forms have been distributed and we have one school officially complete on November 1. ISUEO Region 4 Extension Councils have all provide funds to offset the enrollment fee to these youth members.
- FEEST Mini-Grants have been distributed to FFI 4-H Youth teams. Postville and North Fayette are continuing with new youth leaders and additional grants written to support efforts.
- Take & Teach lessons are being discussed with RC's for schools not currently Farm to School sites but with an interest in impacting nutrition & physical activity in the elementary grade levels.
- FFI Regional Council Youth Representatives
  - Sam Iverson, Decorah FFI 4-H Youth Team member
  - Pedro Lopez-Vega, Postville FFI 4-H Youth Team member
  - Lindsay Gaul, Chickasaw County FFI 4-H Youth Team member
- FFI 4-H Youth Team/Coach Meetings
  - September 25 - Postville Farm to School Lesson Visit
  - September 28 - Oelwein FFI Engagement Meeting
  - October 9 - Decorah FFI Youth Coach Meeting - Johanna Bergan
  - October 25 - Maynard with youth team, Katie Lay & Michele Kelly
  - October 31 - South Winn with Erika Randall & Sherry Poshusta
  - November 27 - Next RLT Youth/Coach meeting

### **Coordinator / Administration**

- The last Regional Team meeting was held Aug. 22. Transitioning to new Leadership Council to meet in November. Recruitment of team members.
- Completed FFI Cross-site evaluation.
- Submitted proposal to WKKF for extended funding for 4 more years.
- Submitted pre-proposal to Wellmark Foundation for parent outreach. Not funded.
- Sept. 13: Panel presentation University of Iowa School of Public Health – Conference on Childhood Obesity: Overview of FFI – School Wellness Capacity building

### **Communications**

- Proposal for Technical Assistance for communications was approved. Conduct interviews and surveys about FFI communications and outreach activities.
- FFI blog launched to collect stories: [www.iowafoodandfitness.org/wegrow](http://www.iowafoodandfitness.org/wegrow)

- School newsletter will be combined with monthly initiative newsletter. Provide print version as well as online version.
- New Early Childhood Coordinator position to continue messaging, parent outreach in early childhood.
- Operations team to be coordinating review and submission of news releases.
- FFI featured in Edible Iowa River Valley for food systems work

### **NE IA Funder's Network**

- Met October 18, 2012.
- Submitted application for Convergence Innovation fund. The proposal calls for funds to support a regional food hub to test and define emerging markets.
- Members reviewed a grant-funded staffing model (follows these minutes) for philanthropic advisors to serve financial advisors and ag leaders; and approved a grant of \$3K to CFGD for Allamakee and Clayton Counties and \$3K to CFNEI to serve Winneshiek and Fayette Counties. These grants will be matched dollar for dollar by the host foundations.

### **NE Iowa Food & Farm Coalition (NIFF)**

- No general meetings of the coalition during this time. Sub-committees only.

### **PROJECT UPDATES**

#### Food Safety Outreach

- Mock audits on 2 Amish farms in preparation for GAP audit.
- 6 NE IA farms went through their USDA GAP audits and passed.
- Trained New Hampton FFA class in GAP.
- Trained the RCs in GAP and Post-Harvest Handling.
- Completed the final grant report for a Specialty Crop Block Grant, re: GAP Cost-share and Coaches
- Wrote and secured a new Specialty Crop Block grant for 2 more years of GAP Cost-share, \$15,750.

#### Networking

- Aug. 14: Driftless Regional meeting in Gays Mills. Focus on storytelling.
- Sept. 13: Quarterly Regional Food System Working Group meeting
- Sept 19-21: Wallace Center/W.K. Kellogg trip Vermont and Massachusetts. The Vermont Livestock Slaughter and Processing Facility in Ferrisburg, VT. They use culled cows and hogs to lower the price for product for the Burlington School District. Custom Foods/NPC Processing, Inc. takes the grind and flavors it and processes it into meatballs for the schools. Burlington Schools pays for the meat and labor and the Reinhart holds the product for them and delivers on an as needed basis. Vermont Food Venture Center in Hardwick, VT processes local vegetables. They have 3 shared use spaces, bakery, raw pack and wet pack. Franklin County CDC. in Greenfield, MA rent space to entrepreneurs and also processes vegetables for schools– mostly peppers, broccoli and carrots.

### Food Hub Planning

- Planning meetings: Aug 8, Oct 10.
- Allamakee New Beginnings is a 501c3 non-profit that identified local food and farmers markets as a priority area. They are sponsoring the Worksite Food Box and grocery store pilot projects.
  - Three grocery stores are distributing local NE Iowa produced products in NE Iowa as part of a grocery store pilot project. We are further developing replenishment retail strategies that are proving to be very effective in increasing margins and overall sales.
  - We have started a new Food Box sales program at worksites in NE Iowa. This program delivers locally produced and processed foods to work places. Thus far, the program has been able to run itself with cash proceeds from the programs itself. We are currently at ~\$4,000/month of sales for all locally grown and processed products.

### Farm to School Activities

- NIFF Coalition members were part of the first regional School Youth team meeting this school year. Youth toured Rolling Hills Greenhouse and brought back hydroponic lettuce for lunch. Youth also prepared lunch using fresh, local ingredients (FEEST model).
- Home Grown School Lunch week was Oct 15-19, 2012. 16 schools participated by buying and serving at least \$300 worth of local food.
- Cross-Age Teaching
  - Launched the 4th year of cross-age teaching. This is the first time the fall lessons in this set are being delivered since we started cross-age teaching with January lessons the first year.
  - Hosted Cross-Age teacher trainings Sept. 4-6. RCs attended the trainings with their schools. One FoodCorps member was part of the training team.
  - Schools sampled raspberries and cabbage this quarter.
- Cycle Menu Pilot project
  - Subcontracted with UNI to hire Jacque Bilyeu-Holmes to assist food service directors with the new nutrition requirements. Seven schools are piloting a regional cycle menu. JBH has been visiting school food service to talk with staff.
  - The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 went in to effect July 1, 2012. In addition to the new nutrition requirements, school FSD were consumed with their applications for the additional 6 cents per meal offered through the federal legislation. The state provided several trainings and FFI provided additional support to submit the paperwork. FFI has been assisting schools with their paperwork to certify their menus. Six cents per meal for the pilot schools means an additional \$71,291 in revenue each year.
  - Recipes for school food need to be analyzed for calories, fat and sodium using an approved nutrient analysis program. FFI learned that none of our schools had access to this expensive program. FFI funds were used to purchase the NutriKids software to use to analyze the cycle menu as well as other school recipes for schools as they create their menus.

- Submitted a grant application to the USDA Farm to School grant for the cycle menu project, but it was not funded.
- Nutrition Education
  - Pick A Better Snack nutrition education and parent outreach will be offered at Postville (Laurie Smith) and Oelwein (Elizabeth Makarewicz) schools this year to grades K-3. The Project director and educators attended a state training in October.

### Farm to Institution

- Aug. 16: Meeting hosted by Luther College for institutional buyers.
- Luther College gardeners hosted a basil give-away where bags of basil and pesto recipes were given away to interested members of the campus community to increase connections to the campus edible landscapes.
- Coffee from Bean Roasters in Calmar Iowa introduced to Sunnyside Café this fall with the hope of soon expanding locally roasted coffee to other campus dining locations.
- Upper Iowa University discussing ways to incorporate local product into their dining services program.
- NICC considering the purchase of local products for use in the campus café and early childhood center.
- Luther students led walks from campus to downtown every Wednesday afternoon and Saturday morning in September and October to introduce other students to local producers at the Winneshiek County farmer's market.
- Luther Gardeners gave away samples, recipes and over 700 pounds of butternut squash to faculty, staff, students and campus visitors in celebration of the harvest and Food Day.
- Presentation given to Associated Colleges of the Midwest Business Officers about Luther's local food purchasers, CSA reimbursement program, college farm and why buying local matters.
- As of October 20, Luther was at 53% local food to date with the goal of achieving 35% by May

### EVIDENCE OF SYSTEM CHANGE

- ISUEO hosted professional development training for state and county staff on local foods (Sept 11-13). One staff person from each county was invited. SARE funds were used for scholarships. TW was a member of the planning committee. The objectives of the professional development training are:
  - Build awareness among extension staff of the extensive pieces and players within the Iowa Local Food System
  - Develop leadership and partnership opportunities to implement policies identified in the Iowa Local Food and Farm Plan
  - Increase awareness of and involvement in the Regional Food Systems Working Groups
- ISUEO team members for ANR (Agriculture and Natural Resources) meet once a month to plan educational efforts in greater NE Iowa. Each ANR team across the state was challenged to identify priority program areas. The NE IA ANR team selected "local

foods” and “beginning farmers” as their priorities. Using systems thinking tools used by FFI for their strategic planning, the ANR team was led through a process where they identified their vision, strategies, tactics, activities and desired impacts for the beginning farmer project. They adopted FFI’s vision, strategies, tactics and impacts for the local food project.

- Using NIFF’s process for data collection. The Regional Food System Working Group is working on a process to develop common indicators to track changes as a result of the work they are doing. As part of this, we are identifying indicators, developing surveys, and writing a data collection manual to help all 16 regional food groups collect the same data in the same way in early 2013 so we can combine the data to reveal a picture of statewide change. We have decided to focus on collecting economic data, namely,
  - Food sales from farmers
  - Food purchases from institutions
  - Job creation, retention, and expansion related to regional food systems work, and
  - Dollars/salaries leveraged by each of your groups.

Collecting data was a condition for receiving Leopold Center funding for each regional food group and is a condition for the RFSWG statewide group for receiving Leopold Center support through the competitive grants program.

#### PARTNER PERIPHERY

- Drought Response. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach takes on food and environmental challenges, including the slowly unfolding crisis of the drought. In 2012 more than 6,000 Iowans participated in ISU Extension and Outreach meetings and webinars and called our hotlines and specialists for updates on crop, livestock, and horticulture issues. Our drought response will continue in 2013 as we anticipate Iowans’ needs for their farms, families, businesses, and communities.
- Program Showcase. Since the reorganization in 2009, ISUEO hosts a regional program showcase for Extension council members, staff and stakeholders to learn about programs available in the counties. FFI is a priority program for Region 4 ISUEO and was well represented. Two youth FFI 4-H members were the greeters at the door.
- The NE Iowa Business Network (NIBN) hosted Ben Winchester, a rural sociologist and research fellow with the University of Minnesota Extension Center for Community Vitality. His research describes the obvious occurrence of "brain drain" in rural areas. This occurs when young people aged 18 to 25 leave home for college and broader horizons. But at the same time, there is a more subtle --and often unnoticed-- migration of people back into those areas (brain gain) for quality of life benefits. NIBN has asked FFI to partner with them on a website project to attract new families and businesses to the region.
- Northeast Iowa RC&D is terminating the RCDI Local Food Regional Project contract with Luther College. Although this is a two-year project, during the first year RC&D saw unexpected changes at the state level with administration and project implementation criteria. They feel these changes force them to alter the way they implement this

project. Mallory Marlatt will be working to ensure that the Northeast Iowa Regional Food System Plan and related funding plan are completed.

- NIBN developed the Dream Big Grow Here contest for business development – developed marketing materials, rules, etc. – Contest started in September and four local winners have been selected. One winner will receive \$5,000, that winner will go into a state-wide contest for another \$10,000. Two of the four winners were local food businesses.
- NIBN Received \$45,000 in RBEG funds for workshops and business counseling – started working on a schedule for counselors and developing workshops needed. Workshop list coming soon. Worked with FFI to include specific Ag workshops.

#### ACHIEVEMENTS

- FFI was recognized at the 2012 Iowa Nourish Awards given by the Iowa Food System Council.
- ISUEO staff involved with FFI were recognized with the Team Achievement Award at the 2012 ISU Extension and Outreach Annual Conference.