

NW WISCONSIN REGIONAL FOOD NETWORK

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/barron/cnred/foodnetwork.html>

(Meeting information, web links)

NWRFN YAHOO GROUPS

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/nwrfn/>

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE #4

MARCH 2007

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AGENDA FOR MARCH 26TH 2007 MEETING

6PM – 9PM. Meeting to include another spectacular home-made dinner by ON FIRE OVENS! in Room 110 first floor of Barron County Courthouse.

From Jenny... "I will bring a hearty stew called "French Ragout", "Golden Curry" with Rice, Cornbread, and Cayuga Mud Cake for dessert."

Suggested donation \$10 for dinner; attendees also expected to assist with clean up. If you are low on cash we understand – nobody will go hungry!

Eat dinner & special thank yous and other announcements

Introductions & round table individual/group updates

Round table discussion w/Mary Hubler

Meat Survey Update

Dreaming for the Big Picture - Creating a NW WI Regional Food System cont. &

- focus in on defining region, how to interact with other groups across the region, how to build partnerships, share resources; discuss network structure, communications, documentation and public image

Plan promotional activities for 2007

- a) Begin planning fundraising activities - local foods banquet/dinner and other ideas
- b) Begin planning for "Soup Stock"
- c) *Eat Local Challenge*
- d) Other ideas

Cooperative steering committee and feasibility study update
Discuss next mtg agenda items

MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 21ST, 2006 MEETING

Boyceville Community Center
Boyceville, WI, 6:00-9:00

A brief summary of the meeting is below. Full minutes will be posted to website when they are available. Thanks.

Approximately twenty-five people were in attendance for the meeting. Another fantastic healthy and hearty meal was served by Jenny Elliot from On Fire Ovens! As a group we did some brainstorming thinking about collective events/initiatives we could pursue. Several were mentioned (not all listed) including: eat local challenge(s), fundraiser, and “soupstock.”

NEW RISK MANAGEMENT EDUCATION GRANT INFO

We have now been given official word that we can use our cluster funds to go visit projects and people to learn about new ideas as we develop the strategy reports (for example, attend a conference and network with presenters) Please OK these expenses with the cluster champions so everyone is on the same page. Some folks have asked for more information on the strategy reports – what exactly needs to be in them, etc... We have pledged through the grant to develop these strategy reports that contain at least goals, assets, and an action plan. Each cluster should develop what it feels is a good document to guide their collective work efforts now and in the future. There is no template. Hopefully, these strategy reports will help focus and guide your work. The plan is to then combine the reports into a final document that could be used by individual clusters and/or the network to pursue additional funding for implementation. Please contact Andrew (715 726 7950/715 537 6250) with any questions (or email)

FOLLOWING UP ON THE WISCONSIN LOCAL FOOD SUMMIT

From Jane Hansen....

I am writing to invite you to join a listserv created specifically for the Wisconsin Local Food Network. If you attended the Wisconsin Local Food Summit in January, 2007 or are interested in keeping informed about issues important to local food initiatives in Wisconsin please go to the following website and subscribe:

<https://lists.uwex.edu/mailman/listinfo/wilocalfoodnetwork>

This listserv will be available for all members to post information of general interest to local foods initiatives. Please post responsibly. At the Wisconsin Local Food Summit, a number of topic areas were identified and individuals with a strong interest in those specific topics have been communicating. If you would like to take part in those conversations, please contact me and I will put you in touch with members of that topic area. jane.hansen@ces.uwex.edu

Carbon Footprints

Communicating Local Food/Talking Points/Movie on Community Solutions
Direct Marketing in Columbia County
Food Policy Councils
Increase Access to Fruits/Vegetables
Institutional Food Procurement
Large Volume Distribution
Local Food in Health Field
Local Food in Schools
Regional Marketing Org
School Yard Gardens
State Sponsored Incentive Program
Sustainable Local Food Markets
Urban Local Food Systems
USDA Inspected Meat Plants
Wisconsin Local Food Network Steering Committee

FEASIBILITY PLAN FOR CO-OP STEERING COMMITTEE

Tom Quinn, Renne Soberg, Mike Brenna, Judy Moses, and Maurice Smith have all agreed to serve on the feasibility study committee. By our upcoming March 20th food network meeting we will need to have the steering committee finalized. Before the feasibility study can begin, the steering committee will meet to establish the parameters for the study. This discussion needs to take place as soon as possible - at the next food network meeting if not before. The steering committee should reflect the geography of the area the co-op will cover, be respected individuals, mixed gender, and show integrity. It's these people that will "sell" the coop to potential producers. The steering committee will also oversee the preparation of the feasibility study and the business plan (if applicable) The feasibility study will take about 3 months to completion once the study is begun. If the steering committee decides it's a "Go," then there will be 2 more months to completion of the business plan. There will be four steering committee meetings over the five months the project is occurring: two for preliminary and final reviews of the feasibility study, and two for preliminary and final reviews of the business plan. Regular email updates will be provided to the steering committee throughout the process. Anne Woods and Cooperative Development Services will be the lead consultants on this project. UW Extension will provide assistance. If you would like to serve on the committee or have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact either Andrew Dane (andrew.dane@ces.uwex.edu) or Tim Jergenson (tim.jerengson@ces.uwex.edu) or Maurice Smith (maurice@chibardun.net)

MOSES-LED ORGANIC WORKSHOPS

Several organic workshops have been scheduled for our region.

April 3 - Organic Basics- Emerging Agricultural Markets: Organic Beef - Balsam Lake, WI

Tuesday evening 6-8:30 pm, Polk County Government Center, West Conference Room
Hwy 46

April 4 - Emerging Agricultural Markets: Organic Vegetables and Fruit - Barron, WI

Wednesday afternoon, 1-3:30 pm, Barron County Courthouse Auditorium, East LaSalle Ave.

April 4 - Organic Beef Production and Certification- Organic Basics: Organic Beef - Emerging Agricultural Markets, Hayward, WI

Wednesday evening, 6-8:30 PM, Harriet Behar, MOSES organic outreach coordinator will give a comprehensive presentation on organic beef production and certification. At the Veterans Community Center Hwy 63.

Contact: Kevin Schoessow, Agriculture Development Agent- Spooner Agricultural Research Station- Sawyer County, W6646 Hwy 70, Spooner, WI 5480, Phone: 715-635-3506, FAX: 715-635-6741, Email: kevin.schoessow@ces.uwex.edu

NEWS TO SHARE

Farm fresh atlas of western wisconsin

The steering committee for the Atlas met recently to review the progress on the map and to discuss public outreach and distribution plans for this year. The atlas is on schedule to arrive in mid to late April – considerably earlier than last year. There will be approximately 70 regional farms, several sponsors, and 30 farmer’s markets listed this year. Several farmers and others have volunteered to help with distribution. If you would like to join them, please leave a message through the website at www.wifarmfresh.org Also, if you can please link to the farm fresh atlas website we would appreciate it very much.

Wisconsin Public Radio to feature food network and other local food happenings...

Mary Jo Wagner would like to do a program on local food initiatives sometime this spring. If you would be interested in talking on the program, please let Andrew Dane know via email. There is no date yet.

Wisconsin Northwest Heritage Passage

We are in the process of updating Wisconsin's Northwest Heritage Passage (WNHP) website. My records do not show that you have turned in a 2007 WNHP Business Profile. Since we must have this form on file to include your name on our website, we have removed your business listing from the site.

If you are interested in having your business listed, please go to www.heritagepassage.com and click on the Membership Form tab on the left side of the page. Then just print out a copy of the Business Profile and return it to Wisconsin's Northwest Heritage Passage, Inc., PO Box 454, Spooner, WI 54801. Your name will be added to our website as soon as we receive your business profile. WNHP membership is not required to have you business listed on our website or to have your business included

on our map. However, if you are interested in receiving the benefits of embership, which include live links on our website to your email address or website, membership is a requirement. Other benefits of membership include:

- Voting privileges at the Annual Meeting and election in October
- Open invitation to all monthly meetings
- Networking with other artists, crafters, growers, and performers in NW Wisconsin
- Being part of growing NW Wisconsin's creative economy, a benefit to everyone

We look forward to receiving your business profile soon.
If you have any questions, please contact me.

Pam Loftus
dwloftus@centurytel.net

**FDA issues final guidance for safe production of fresh-cut fruits and vegetables
12.mar.07
U.S. FDA Press Release**

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) today published a draft final guidance advising processors of fresh-cut produce how to minimize microbial food safety hazards common to the processing of most fresh-cut fruits and vegetables, which are often sold to consumers in a ready-to-eat form. The document -- *Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards of Fresh-cut Fruits and Vegetables* -- suggests that fresh-cut processors consider a state-of-the-art food safety program such as the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) system, which is designed to prevent, eliminate, or reduce to acceptable levels the microbial, chemical, and physical hazards associated with food production.

According to the document, fresh cut produce is defined as fresh-cut fruits and vegetables that have been minimally processed (e.g., no lethal kill step), and altered in form, by peeling, slicing, chopping, shredding, coring, or trimming, with or without washing or other treatment, prior to being packaged for use by the consumer or a retail establishment. Examples of fresh-cut products are shredded lettuce, sliced tomatoes, salad mixes (raw vegetable salads), peeled baby carrots, broccoli florets, cauliflower florets, cut celery stalks, shredded cabbage, cut melon, sliced pineapple, and sectioned grapefruit. Fresh-cut produce does not require additional preparation, processing, or cooking before consumption, with the possible exception of washing or the addition of salad dressing, seasoning, or other accompaniments. As the fresh-cut produce market continues to evolve, the scope of this guidance may need to be modified to address new or novel types of products.

This is not a law, but guidance for the industry. "Ensuring the safety of the American

food supply is one of this Agency's top priorities," said Andrew C. von Eschenbach, MD, Commissioner of Food and Drugs. " Americans are eating more fresh-cut produce, which we encourage as part of a healthy diet. But fresh cut-produce is one area in which we see foodborne illness occur. Offering clearer guidance to industry should aid in the reduction of health hazards that may be introduced or increased during the fresh-cut produce production process.

Dr. von Eschenbach will testify before a hearing by the Agriculture, Rural Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, which will address the processes in place and improvements being made regarding food safety, specifically the safety of fresh produce and vegetables. The hearing will take place in Madison, Wisconsin, on March 12, 2007.

Processing produce into fresh-cut product increases the risk of bacterial contamination and growth by breaking the natural exterior barrier of the produce by peeling, slicing, coring, or trimming the produce with or without washing or other treatment before the produce is packaged for consumers. Consumers can reduce their risk of illness from fresh-cut produce by following safe handling practices such as refrigerating the product after purchase; using only clean hands, utensils or dishes in preparing the product; and discarding the product when the "use by" date has expired.

The Guide complements FDA's Current Good Manufacturing Practice regulations for food (21 CFR 110) and provides a framework for identifying and implementing appropriate measures to minimize the risk of microbial contamination during the processing of fresh-cut produce. Specifically, it discusses the production and harvesting of fresh produce and provides recommendations for fresh-cut processing in the following areas: (1) personnel health and hygiene, (2) training, (3) building and equipment, (4) sanitation operations, and (5) fresh-cut produce production and processing controls from product specification to packaging, storage and transport. The Guide also provides recommendations on recordkeeping and on recalls and tracebacks.

The Guide is accessible on the FDA Website at:

<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/prodgui3.html>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Herb Exchange Seminar Saturday March 17th 10am-4pm.

The seminar will be held in River Falls at EERC Ltd
N7915 902nd St Suite B River Falls, WI 54022
www.EclecticEnergetics.com
715-425-8365

The NWRFN Herb & Flower Cluster will be hosting Leslie Gardner from the Sonoma County Herb Exchange. She will share her extensive experiences with us to assist the creation of our herb exchange. If you are an herbal grower, wildcrafter or share

an interest in other models of marketing please join us. Feel free to pass this along to anyone else you feel may be interested. Lunch will be provided & a \$5 donation for lunch is requested. Please RSVP via email or phone so Jenny can do food preparation.

About Sonoma County Herb Exchange

<http://www.altrue.net/site/scha/>

About Leslie Gardner

<http://www.cshs.com/faculty.html#LeslieGardner>

Look forward to seeing you!

Gail Behr & Renne Soberg

Meat Marketing: Some of your Business

March 24th, WITC, Rice Lake WI

<http://barron.uwex.edu/index.html>

Being organized by Andrew Dane, Judy Moses, and Kevin Schoessow. Featuring Barron farmer and entrepreneur Mary Graese. We have several exciting speakers lined up for this event: **Arlin Wasserman** is the founder and principal of Changing Tastes, a consultancy that provides business planning, brand management, product development and marketing insights to Fortune 100 and start-up food companies and trade associations as well as foundations, faith-based and nonprofit organizations working to issues of public health, food, environment and community development. **Hollis Ashman**, The Understanding & Insight Group, *Catalyst for Adaptive Growth* will speak on what makes food craveable and what makes meat craveable...how to understand consumers, how to listen to them, and what they are looking for. **Mary Graese, Northstar Bison**, will be presenting on the importance of finding your market and finding your passion for your work.

FEAST

March for Food Presentation

Thursday March 15 at 7:00pm

Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center

Learn what is happening in our region and how you can support our local food system.

Presentation

Food Systems with Becky McDowell

Food Security with Amy Syverson

Agriculture in the Chequamegon Bay with Jason Fischbach

Changes in Our Food- A panel discussion led by Joy Schelble

With panelists: Linda LeMieux, Ken Lindquist, Lori Otis, and Lee Stadnyk

After the presentation meet producers and organizations working to support our local food system while enjoying local refreshments. Sponsored by: FEAST, UW Extension, The Chequamegon Food Coop, and The Alliance for Sustainability For More

information contact feastcouncil@centurytel.net or 685-0839. Community event brochure available here: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/barron/cnred/documents/MFFtrifold.pdf>

Family Farmed Conference

End of March

Chicago conference that looks interesting...is there similar in twin cities?

<http://www.familyfarmed.org/http://cclpmidwest.org/>

“Planting Seeds for Our Future” Conference

Monday, March 26th

Exhibition Hall of the Alliant Energy Center, 8:30 AM-4 PM.

This event is an opportunity for people living and working in the Dane County region to come together to learn, strengthen collaborations, and sow the seeds for future action to create a stronger food system for everyone! Register by March 5th for the “early bird” rate. Find the registration form is at Dane County Food Council website at

<http://www.co.dane.wi.us/foodcouncil/pdf/conferenceBrochure.pdf>

Harvest of Hope Farmer’s Market

April 14th 9am – 1pm

First ELCA Lutheran

Eau Claire, WI

Sustainable Tourism – makes \$ense for businesses and communities!

April 25, 26

Don’t miss your chance to register for the 2nd Minnesota Conference on Sustainable Tourism. Attendance is limited, so don’t delay – last year’s attendance exceeded expectations and this year’s line up promises to deliver the same or better participation.

This conference will be held April 25-26 at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum in Chaska, MN. Cost of registration is \$95. Lodging is available nearby at the Country Suites in Chanhassen at a conference rate of \$82 plus tax per night if booked prior to March 25. From the opening keynote “Global Warming: Implications for Minnesota Tourism and Recreation” through the closing session “What’s Next for Minnesota” the program offers a variety of speakers over the two days. You will learn best practices from your peers and world-renown leaders. Hear about practical things that you can do in your business or community that will make \$ense. Minnesotans (and Wisconsinites!!!) recognize the need for various dimensions of sustainability in tourism: social, environmental and economic. It is critical that we offer a quality guest experience, practice good stewardship, protect our natural and cultural resources and preserve development capabilities for the future. Presenters will provide case examples and practical strategies for businesses, communities and public agencies.

Register online at www.tourism.umn.edu

Your Path to the Marketplace

A marketing workshop for artists and growers

May 5th, WITC, Rice Lake, WI

More information forthcoming...

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

2007 Ag Development and Diversification Grant

<http://www.datcp.state.wi.us/mktg/business/marketing/val-add/add/index.jsp>

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

(<http://www.rwjf.org/>) Vulnerable Populations Portfolio, Fresh Ideas: Improving the Health of Immigrant and Refugee Communities aims to give immigrants and refugees the tools and support they need to improve and maintain their own health.

USDA ANNOUNCES SECOND YEAR OF FARMERS MARKET PROMOTION PROGRAM GRANTS

WASHINGTON, Feb. 28, 2007 – Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announced USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) is accepting applications for competitive grants targeted to helping increase consumption of agricultural commodities by expanding direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. This is the second year of the grant program, the Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP), which is certified under the recently authorized amendment to the Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976.

The primary objective of FMPP grants is to help eligible entities improve and expand domestic farmers markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. Agricultural cooperatives, local governments, nonprofit corporations, public benefit corporations, economic development corporations, regional farmers' market authorities, and other entities as the Secretary may designate are eligible for FMPP funds.

Approximately \$1 million has been allocated for the FMPP program, with a maximum of \$75,000 for any one proposal. Matching funds are not required.

“Last year the Farmers Market Promotion Program proved to be a great success, helping support 20 projects across the country,” said AMS Administrator Lloyd Day. “The benefits of direct-to-consumer marketing are two-fold -- giving consumers fresh, affordable, convenient and healthy products while helping our farmers supplement their income.”

Information on how to apply for a grant was published in the Feb. 27, 2007, issue of the Federal Register, and is posted on the AMS website at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/FMPP>. Applications and proposals must be received by AMS no later than close of business on April 13, 2007. Applications received after April 13, 2007, will not be considered.

For more information contact Errol R. Bragg, Associate Deputy Administrator, Marketing Services Branch, Transportation and Marketing Programs, AMS by: mail to Room 2646-South, STOP 0269, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, D.C. 20250; phone 202/720-8317; fax 202/690-0031; or e-mail to USDAFMPP@usda.gov.

CALL TO ACTION

MARCH 27TH JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE HEARING CHIPPEWA FALLS

MARCH 28TH SENATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR THE BUY LOCAL, BUY WI PROPOSAL!!!!

From Jeanne Merrill, Michael Fields Institute

Hello everyone, I am writing to follow up on conversations about the Buy Local, Buy WI hearings. Thank you all for being willing attend the hearings and/or help get people there. As you know, the Senate Economic Development Committee hearing is Wednesday, March 28th. The meeting should start around 10:15AM. The hearing plans so far are that Senator Lassa will speak first, followed by Sec. of Agriculture, Rod Nilsestuen. Then approximately 30 minutes from the public.

It will be important to talk about the potential positive economic impacts for your area if the bill is funded - i.e. what is already happening to develop regional/local food markets, and how the bill will make it possible build on this work.

For those attending the hearing and not able to speak, they can submit a letter of support for the bill to the committee. Also we would like to work with people to set up meetings with Assembly and Senate members (if not members of the committee) to discuss the bill. If anyone is interested in doing this, just let me know and we can work on the details.

If you can let me know if the next few weeks (by the 21st if possible) how many people you anticipate attending the hearing, that would great.

In other news:

As you know, there will be Joint Finance Committee hearing on the state budget in Chippewa Falls (location TBA) on Tuesday, March 27th from 12:00 PM to 5:00 PM. Because it is first signed up, first speak, I've heard from others that it is best to show up an hour -45 minutes in advance of the hearing - so 11:00/11:15 - to sign in as a speaker.

Given the demands on this tight state budget, it will be important to have a few people at the hearing to speak about why the Buy Local, Buy

WI bill. If you or others you know, are able to go to this hearing, please let me know.

If you would like more information about the Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin initiative, please contact Jeanne Merrill with the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute at 608-256-1859 or jeannemerrill@earthlink.net

Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin

- From Jeanne Merrill, Michael Fields Agricultural Institute.

The Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin program has the following objectives:

1. Develop, expand and enhance regional food markets for Wisconsin producers and processors
2. Increase consumer awareness and access to high quality locally produced foods
3. Expand regional agricultural tourism in Wisconsin

The program's two components are 1) Regional food system development and 2) Food & culture tourism trails.

Through the program, DATCP will offer a competitive grants program to farmers, community organizations, nonprofits and businesses to develop regional food markets and food and culture tourism trails. DATCP will also provide technical assistance to help address barriers to regional food markets, including issues of marketing, processing, and distribution. Whether it is increasing access to local food in school lunches, hospital cafeterias or restaurants, Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin will provide the critical resources necessary for Wisconsin communities to expand their local food markets. The program budget is \$550,000 annually, which includes \$225,000 in competitive grant dollars.

Here are some of the reasons why people support Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin:

- Buy Local, Buy WI will meet growing consumer demand for local food.
- Buy Local, Buy WI will increase access to regional food markets for Wisconsin farmers.
- Buy Local, Buy WI will develop regional food tourism trails, building upon WI's agricultural heritage.
- Buy Local, Buy WI represents the first comprehensive approach to keep food dollars in Wisconsin communities, which will help local businesses, improve farm income, and increase consumer access to healthy food.
- Buy Local, Buy WI makes good sense for our economy and our health.

NORTHWEST WISCONSIN REGIONAL FOOD NETWORK

A grassroots group of local farmers, volunteers and agency staff working together to create a regional food system that connects consumers back to the land and provides locally produced, fresh and nutritious foods to all segments of our community while preserving the region's environment and sustaining the local economy for years to come