

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/>

(Discussion, documents, etc....)

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE #8

OCTOBER 2007

OCTOBER 24TH MTG TO BE HELD AT ROOM 110

BARRON COUNTY COURTHOUSE, BARRON, WI

([HTTP://WWW.UWEX.EDU/CES/CTY/BARRON/MAP.HTML](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/barron/map.html))

6PM - ?

ANOTHER WONDERFUL MEAL WILL BE PREPARED BY:

JENNY ELLIOTT

ON FIRE OVENS!

\$10 SUGGESTED DONATION OR

GIVE WHAT YOU CAN...NOBODY WILL GO HUNGRY!!!

OCTOBER 24TH 2007 MEETING AGENDA

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENIN'

CLUSTER UPDATES

INTERESTING STUFF

EVENTS

NEWS

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

OCTOBER 24TH 2007 MEETING AGENDA

SOUPSTOCK WRAP-UP

VEGETABLE GROWERS 08 PLANNING

RISK MGMT CLUSTER NEXT STEPS & WRAP-UP

REVIEW NWRFN SURVEY

FUTURE GOALS: GETTING LOCAL

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENIN'

It has been a busy summer with lots of local food events and happenings. The NWRFN played a key role organizing the statewide Eat Local Challenge in September and also organized a successful Soup Stock event at Hunt Hill Audubon Center.

The feasibility steering committee for the marketing/distribution business and Cooperative Development Services wrapped up the feasibility study and held two presentations for interested participants. There are approximately 15-20 farmers

interested in pursuing this opportunity. Email andrew.dane@co.barron.wi.us or call 715 726 7950 for more information. The study is also posted on the NWRFN web page.

Members of the NWRFN are busy planning the upcoming Midwest Value-Added Conference and Local Food Summit II in Eau Claire January. Visit website for more information <http://www.rivercountryrfd.org/valad.htm>

CLUSTER UPDATES

The North Central Risk Management Education Center at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln provided a \$24,760 grant to Barron County to support self-directed learning and strategizing among six peer learning groups of producers – “cluster groups.” The overall goal of the project is to reduce financial risk for diversified farmers. The period of funding is July 1, 2006 through December 31st, 2007.

The following clusters were formed in fall 2006: Ethnic Meats, Vegetables/Fruit, Healthy Meats, Agri-tourism, Apples, and Herbs/Flowers. Grant-related activities include:

- Participants attended a 10am-2:30pm kick-off event on October 25th, 2006 at WITC in Rice Lake. Participants learned about the peer learning process, and about successful peer learning agricultural initiatives around the world.
- Clusters met 4-6 times within their cluster groups over a period of 6-12 months to compile a Strategy Report. The final reports will contain Goals, Community Assets, Strategies and Action Plans.
- Clusters will present their cluster group Strategy Reports at a special end-of-grant forum attended by cluster group participants and invited guests.

Please read below for updates related to each of the Cluster groups. For more information please contact tmofle@yahoo.com or andrew.dane@co.barron.wi.us

Healthy Meats Cluster

The cluster gathered up information and raised awareness about the federally inspected meat processing issue for NW Wisconsin. They also raised awareness through efforts to launch and promote the statewide Eat Local Challenge. Additional activities include organizing the Soup Stock Event for Sep 22-23 at Hunt Hill as well as organizing a community forum on sustainable food systems with guest speaker John Ikerd in Rice Lake, WI. Cluster members include: Mike Brenna, John Bruncilik, Jody Padgham, and Tracey Mofle

Ethnic Meats Cluster

This cluster is spearheaded by Judy Moses and Larry Jacoby. Activities and progress to date include the development of a Direct Marketing meat conference in March 2007.

This cluster has made new business connections through contacts via the Farm Fresh Atlas project (www.wifarmfresh.org) resulting in new sales at Twin Cities food co-ops and restaurants. The cluster has also recently received some additional funding to continue working with the Somalian community in Barron, WI on micro-enterprise development.

Agri-tourism Cluster

This cluster has completed their strategy report detailing future plans to reduce financial risk through expanding agri-tourism opportunities in the region. These strategies include: using the Farm Fresh Atlas and network of participants; developing a logo; promoting day tours and events; promoting agri-tourism to local communities and governments, tourism groups; encouraging involvement from other key businesses, identifying resources; and sharing opportunities identified by other clusters. The cluster has also made connections with area ag agents and has been involved in planning an agri-tourism educational workshop as well as Soup Stock which includes a farm tour component. Members of this cluster include: Rose Bruncilik, Linda Zillmer, Tracey Mofle, Aaron Ellinger, Ann Woods, Dari McDonald.

Vegetables/Fruit Cluster

This group acquired additional funds to do a feasibility study of a marketing/distribution business for local food products. A steering committee including representation from the ethnic, herbs/flowers, and healthy meats clusters was formed to oversee a professional feasibility study. Grant funded activities included visiting two successful vegetable marketing groups in the region – Grown Locally Co-Op in Iowa and Harmony Valley in Vernon County. Following completion of the study, two presentations were made to potential coop/LLC members highlighting key findings from the study. Members of the feasibility study steering committee included: Maurice Smith, Tony Webber, Mike Brenna, Ann Woods, Tom Quinn, Judy Moses, Andrew Dane

Herb/Flower Cluster

The cluster brought in Leslie Garnder from the Sonoma County, CA Herb Exchange to share ideas and stimulate thinking. They have met several times and have discussed formation of a co-op to provide herbs/flowers into the medicinal market. Members of this cluster include: Paula Lugar, Renne Soberg, Gail Behr, Jane Anderson, Ken Sequine, Jenny Elliot, and Patti Gmeiner.



Apple Cluster

This cluster represents a group of apple growers in Chippewa County that have been working on integrated pest management over the past 1.5 yrs and are now interested in working together on some cooperative marketing. The cluster is meeting in November and December to develop agri-tourism strategies and action plans in conjunction with

Susan Futrell – a marketing consultant that has worked extensively with the Eco-Apple program and Red Tomato. <http://www.redtomato.org/>

INTERESTING STUFF

The wonderful folks over in **Price County** have updated their regulation fact sheets covering direct market sales. They can be downloaded here:

-  [Institution Food Regulation Overview](#) (1 page, 21 KB) - for use by restaurants, groceries and other food purchasing institutions
-  [Producer Food Regulation Overview](#) (3 pages, 31 KB) - for use by food producers (farmers, ranchers, market gardeners, etc.)

Government calls for climate labels on food

Published: 3rd October 2007 11:48 CET

Online: <http://www.thelocal.se/8676/>

The government is calling for foods sold in Swedish stores to be marked with information detailing the effects of production on the global climate. Government representatives were meeting with food industry and food labeling organizations on Wednesday morning to discuss the matter. Minister for the Environment Andreas Carlgren said he was keen for the climate effects of food production on to be displayed on product packaging.

"We want to see clear labelling for the benefit of the consumer, although we would prefer not to have to legislate," said the minister's press secretary, Tomas Uddin. Read the rest of the article here: <http://www.thelocal.se/8676/20071003/>

EVENTS

Nov 13 Food Marketing Essentials

Accessing Local Markets & Buyer/Seller Connections

A fast paced workshop offering you the keys to direct marketing to grocery stores, restaurants, and wholesale markets

Date: Tuesday, Nov. 13, 2007

Time: 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Location: Native Bay Restaurant, Chippewa Falls, WI

Cost: \$20 – Pre Registration Required

Includes local foods lunch prepared by Chef Nathan Berg

Who should attend?

Farmers and growers in Northwest Wisconsin interested in selling local foods to grocery stores.

What will you gain?

Local food consultants spent the summer surveying grocery stores across the state and developed an in-depth report providing insight on grocery store product & delivery needs, quality & pricing issues, timing needs of buyers and their local foods philosophy. This Food Buyer report will be shared with all participants. In addition, you'll develop an action plan to implement what you learn at the seminar when you get home.

Who are the speakers?

- Jeanne Carpenter, Local Foods Consultant. Jeanne has interviewed numerous grocery stores and developed a Food Buyer report. She will present her findings to participants.
- Loretta Norris, Local Foods Retail Consultant. Loretta served 15 years as produce manager at Willy Street Co-Op in Madison, working with as many as 30 local farmers. Today, she consults with cooperatives and retail markets around the nation in establishing sustainable local agreements with area farmers. She will share information on how to successfully enter the retail market.
- Local Food Producers will share their success stories & challenges pertaining to selling product in local grocery stores.

How do I sign up?

Complete the registration form and pre-workshop survey available at <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/barron/cnred/foodnetwork.html>

Registration is due by Nov. 6, 2007. For more information, call Jeanne Carpenter, 608-358-7837 or email Jeanne@wordartisanllc.com

Dec 7th Greenhouse Energy Workshop

Are you interested in talking energy conservation and renewable energy for greenhouses? If so, join us for a December 7th workshop at the WITC conference center in Rice Lake. Contact andrew.dane@co.barron.wi.us for more information.

NEWS TO SHARE

Soup Stock celebrates community offerings

BY FRANK ZUFALL

Spooner Advocate

Clothing. Lisa Pisa of Brill raises her own sheep and spins the wool into yarn which she uses to make clothing.

For those who attended the first Soup Stock festival at Hunt Hill Audubon Sanctuary in Sarona over the weekend, two resounding messages underlined every presentation, product offering, live entertainment, and even dining experience – spend your dollars on

your local providers, especially local farmers, and make your environmental footprint smaller ... both prescriptions advocated for living within a healthy, vibrant, growing community.

The event was organized by Northwest Wisconsin Regional Food Network (NWRFN) and Friends of Hunt Hill.

NWRFN is a grassroots group of local farmers, volunteers, and agencies working to create a regional food system that connects consumers to their local farmers to provide nutritious food to the community while preserving the region's environment and sustaining the local economy.

Describing the growth of the local food movement, Crispin Pierce, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire professor in the environmental public health department, said the demand for organically grown foods, which are often the same foods sold at farmers markets and community-supported agriculture (where people contract to receive food directly from farmers), is growing by 20 percent a year while non-organic agriculture is growing by 4 percent.

Soup Stock emphasized local food. All meals served during Saturday evening's banquet and fundraiser for Hunt Hill and the three meals on Sunday were all created from local crops and prepared by local cooks.

As the food, so was everything at Soup Stock – all Northwestern Wisconsin all the time, all about raising the stature of "local" community. Even the preaching. Pastor Shelly Schultz of Long Lake Lutheran Church, during the 11 a.m. joint ecumenical worship, spoke about how God gave the land of Israel to the Jewish people not to own, as a possession, but to pass on to future generations, as stewards of the land. She said God's purpose was never fulfilled because people identified the land as their personal possession, the "our or mine" attitude versus the steward who is passing on and caring for the resource for another generation.

"We shouldn't be trusting in our stuff, but in God's grace," she said. "We can give everything we have so there is nobody in need." Several people at Soup Stock discussed sustaining local resources wisely.

Rick Schneider of the solid waste department for Washburn and Burnett counties, under a presenters' tents, said his office had received a grant to offer seminars in Washburn and Burnett counties on moving toward sustainable development in the two counties, looking at minimizing the impact of environmental problems. For those wanting to minimize their environmental footprint, several

people talked about geothermal and solar heating as an alternate to fossil fuels, and Sue Menzel, manager of the Arpin Dam for North American Hydro, demonstrated how she had made several small adjustments in her life to have less of an environmental impact, such as using renewable batteries, a cloth grocery bag, and solar radios and lights.

Again and again, the nature of one's environmental footprint and using local products were tied together: Food bought locally requires less transportation ...

Local arts were seen in crafts and entertainment, and six regional writers read their works.

"We celebrated local, local food, and we tried to show what is in our backyard, local resources right here," said Tracey Mofle of Haugen, one of the organizers of Soup Stock. "We had people here from Sawyer, Washburn, Polk, Barron, St. Croix, Pierce, and Dunn counties."

Linda Zillmer said it was "wonderful" how the event highlighted all that is available in the area. She said Soup Stock is unique because it brought people interested in distinct issues together around the bigger issues of community and the environment, people recognized the interconnectedness of their interests, and it helped them value what is in the communities.

Are you interested in building connections between your school and local farms while helping to improve nutrition in children? If so read on....

The WI Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection (DATCP), the WI Department of Public Instruction (DPI), the WI Department of Health & Family Services (DHFS), WI Rural Challenge, and the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS) are partnering to solicit grant funds and volunteer support from the AmeriCorps program to improve childhood nutrition through bringing healthy, locally grown foods to 20 partner schools.

If the application is successful, the program would begin by September, 2008. Partner sites can be managed by schools, school organizations or non school organizations, but each site must specifically outline the school(s) that they will serve and have a letter of support from those school(s).

Since the needs of each community will vary, flexibility in the number of volunteers and how the AmeriCorps volunteers are structured is allowable. One suggested structure would be to use one half time AmeriCorps volunteer for local food sourcing and another half time AmeriCorps volunteer to assist with community outreach, education and nutrition. For more information, please see the attached Request for Partnership form.

If you are interested in nominating your school as a partner in this program or if you have any questions, please contact Amy Bruner Zimmerman: phone 608-224-5017; email amy.brunerzimmerman@wisconsin.gov.

Applications are due to DATCP by October 22nd. Please contact andrew.dane@co.barron.wi.us or tmofle@yahoo.com for more information. We are trying to pull together an application for our region and need your support.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Scroll down to the bottom of the Ag Innovation Center's resource page for links to several different grant and loan programs.

[HTTP://AIC.UWEX.EDU/RESOURCES/INDEX.CFM#GRANTS](http://aic.uwex.edu/resources/index.cfm#grants)

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