



SE Iowa Progress Report

June 8, 2007

Capacity Building

- Held two meetings with Ken Meter (30 at first meeting, 65 at second meeting)
- Secured additional people to work on visioning and planning activities for the area
- New partners to note: Fairfield Entrepreneurial Association, Fairfield Convention and Visitors Bureau

Market Maker

- Entries are increased by 8%
- Entries are predominantly businesses
- Seeking assistance from Marsha Laux (Ag Marketing Resource Center) to increase marketing of the program and increase number of producers entered

Matching Grants

\$500 awarded in each of the three counties (total of 7 grants given ranging from \$150—\$500)

- One beehive expansion
- Two greenhouse construction
- One apple orchard expansion
- One organic beef start up
- One vitaculture expansion
- One raspberry expansion

Observations

- SE Iowa Food Network efforts have been validated by the community overall
- SE Iowa Food Network is aware of interest to join local food with other health and wellness efforts (new hospital in Fairfield, promote wellness in partnership with extensive trail system, healthier eating initiatives in public schools)

Next Steps

Bring in a facilitator to assist with visioning process.

Continue work toward a sustainable workgroup model by strengthening partnerships

Other Activities Occurring

- Major local food event at Fairfield's First Friday Artwalk in September
- Held a food safety workshop for producers which received very positive reviews
- Applied for funding to assist the 9 farmers markets in Pathfinders RC&D area (6 counties)
- Working to expand direct marketing of Amish produce auction items to local food businesses
- Exploring the economic viability of a food distribution center to service the small independent and co-ops in the region
- A healthy food initiative has been implemented in the middle and high schools in Fairfield
- An education program is starting in one elementary school this fall