Food and Farm Initiative

Community Food Assessment
Food and Farm Economy Report
Gleaning

www.kickapoovsn.org
Community Food Assessment for Vernon County

Community Food Assessment:
“A collaborative process that examines a broad range of food related issues and resources related in order to improve the local food system.”
Community Food Security Coalition

Food and Farm Economy Report by Ken Meter:
Monroe, Vernon, Richland & Crawford Counties
“Local Foods May be the Best Path Towards Economic Recovery”
Crossroads Resource Center
FINDINGS

Food Assessment Needs for Vernon County:

- Farmland Preservation Initiatives
- Food Distribution, Marketing and Storage Facility
- Community Food Processing/Incubator Kitchen
- More Farmer’s Markets and More Market Days
- Farm to Institution Purchasing Program
- Community Gleaning Projects
- Improve Cold Storage Capacity

Economy Report:

SW Wisconsin Farmers & Ranchers lose $33 million / year

SW Wisconsin Consumers spend $231 million/ year on Food

If Consumers spent 25% on local = $33 million
Kickapoo Harvest: Gleaning

- **2,886** pounds of local produce
- **158** boxes
- **40** volunteers
- **42** residents of Park View Manor
- **8** farmers
- **4** months
- **3** chefs

- Able to showcase quality of seconds
- Recipes and cooking demos promoted seasonality
- Harvest exceeded our capacity
- No Cold Storage!
- Kitchen, Processing & Distributing needs
2010 Gleaning Plans

- Building Capacity through Churches & Community Groups

- Education for community on food security, seasons, cooking and storage

- Keeping it simple and manageable

- Tracking of harvest and wash/pack times
Local Foods Initiative

Develop a Multi Stakeholder Cooperative of:
Producers, Processors, Buyers, Distributors

5 counties: La Crosse, Monroe, Vernon, Richland and Crawford

Sell vegetables, fruits, meats, dairy products & value added products to institutional buyers
Co-op Functions

- Aggregate produce from member farmers
- Software to track & maintain inventory
- One person to receive orders and provide customer service to buyers
- Develop consistent packaging, delivery and invoicing to buyers
- Provide training and support to small and medium size farmers
- Provide marketing and educational resources for point of purchase and consumer education on buying and eating locally
NCR Building

- Provide space for cold storage for coop
- Kitchen facilities for value added processing including:
  - cut, pack and freeze
  - frozen baked goods
- Hire a Coordinator & staff for on site processing, storage and inventory control
- Possible Delivery service
Resources

- 2 year BLBW grant to pay Coordinator to set up relationships with buyers and farmers
- Margaret Bau USDA Cooperative Specialist
- Bob Haugen Local Food Networks Software Development
- Ken Meter Crossroads Resource Center
- Grant Partners who will become co-op members - generating capital.
- Grants, co op loans and sweat equity
1.5 Months Into the Project!

- Buy Local Coordinator & Project Manager

- Co op Formation Steering Committee:
  2-5 producers and producer groups
  2 processors
  2 distributors
  3 institutions
  retail co op manager
  community volunteers
  county extension
  software developer
  USDA co op specialist
  grant writer
  economist
  farmer co op manager
Supply Chain Infrastructure

- Multi-stakeholder co op gets the whole chain at the table

- NCR building provides space for missing infrastructure
  - For Kitchen processing of fresh products
  - Also co processing for Value Added Products
Capital

- Co op memberships and transaction fees
- Grants and loans to co ops specific
- Option for producers to contribute to co op operations
- Leveraging existing NCR building
- BLBW grant is initial capital
Capacity Development

- UW Lacrosse
  - has 8 week meal rotations to accommodate seasonality
  - Composts wastes
- Vernon Farm to School
  - 5th Season Harvest Project
  - Training other kitchen personnel with Monique Hooker
Information Flow & Transparency

- Co op will serve as communication link between buyers and farmers
- Co op’s goal to provide information sharing opportunities for producers
- Co op works with Institutions to provide point of sale marketing materials
Product Quality and Consistency

- Software developed by Bob Haugen will provide product traceability

Goals

- Co op will require food safety training
- Continued training and certification coordination with farmers
Seasonality

- Co op provides education material for end consumers
- NCR building will provide processing and cold storage capacity
- Making Seasonality and Local Value Added!
Food Origins & Product Differentiation

- Co op membership will include small scale growers and producer groups

- Institutions will have tastings, meet the farmer out reach to end consumers

- Co op will provide marketing materials with stories about all co op members and co op itself including sustainability
Matching Supply & Demand

- Goal for 2011: buyers inform growers of products they would like to purchase in February
  - DEMAND DRIVEN

- Software will generate weekly availability to buyers through 2011
  - SUPPLY DRIVEN

- NCR cold storage for all cooperative farmers and non-members

- Co op provides transportation and logistics for all members of co op
It’s a work in progress!

To get involved:
• **Nicole Penick**
  ◦ Buy Local Development Coordinator
  ◦ [vsnnicole@gmail.com](mailto:vsnnicole@gmail.com)
  ◦ 608-637-3615

Questions about NCR building
• **Sue Noble**
  ◦ Vernon Economic Development Director
  ◦ [snoble@veda-wi.org](mailto:snoble@veda-wi.org)
  ◦ 608-637-5396