



Local News

A North Dakota Department of Agriculture initiative

April 1, 2009

Volume 2, No. 4

Capitol campaign raises local food awareness

It was a celebration of food.

March 4 – the day the Capitol Café served more than double what it usually does at lunch time to the employees of the state, the legislators, lobbyists and their guests.

After a recent news story about local foods appeared in a Sunday edition of the Bismarck Tribune, another story appeared announcing a local foods day at the Capitol. People called to find out if anyone could come to the North Dakota State Capitol for “Local Foods Day.” And, come they did.

Menus were planned with local foods by North Dakota companies. Legislators were invited to “know where their lunch came from” on that Wednesday with a special treat bag. Brown paper lunch bags were filled with a invitation to eat at the Capitol

Menus that were distributed naming the companies that produced the food for the Capitol Cafe Local Foods lunch.



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Agriculture Commissioner Roger Johnson served up local foods on March 4 at the Local Foods lunch at the Capitol Cafe. To the right are KFYP-TV's Retha Colclasure and Capitol Cafe employee Wendy Moore.

Updates on local foods projects in
North Dakota communities

Localmotion

Fargo supports local foods with community gardens

A movement is developing in the Fargo Moorhead area to more fully use existing community gardens and to establish new ones to help build community and to make healthy foods more available. Several community organizations and faith groups are currently taking steps to do just that. Fifty people showed for an organizational meeting, 40 attended a follow up and available land has been identified. The greatest challenge will be mobilizing groups to make a serious commitment. Many are interested. Many want to be part of this outreach but don't want to become responsible if support wanes through the season.

Olivet Lutheran church is offering mentoring opportunities with their existing community garden to help build confidence and to help build the necessary skills during this growing season.

Our goal is to add one acre of productive land to the metropolitan area this growing season.

Bowdon organizes two new farmer markets for local foods

Community members of Bowdon have formed the Bowdon Farmers Market at two locations under the Wells County Local Foods Initiative.

Beginning mid-July and continuing through September, area growers, crafters and bakers can market their produce and homemade products at two new markets.

The Junction 52 Market, located at the corner of Highways 52 and 200, will be held from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Sundays. The City Market will be held in Bowdon from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesdays. The Wednesday evening market will become an destination event with possible food vendors, entertainment, and a flea market. Plans are still in the works.

Market bylaws have been adopted and a board has been elected. Membership in the market is \$25 per year.

Inquiries may be sent to Linda Widicker at lindawidicker@daktel.com or by calling 701-962-3736.



Help...

Volunteers needed to complete community assessments

It's been more than six months since the Department of Agriculture began its local foods campaign.

A critical ingredient for any local foods initiative would be information collected from the 10 community assessment surveys found on the department's web site at www.agdepartment.com.

Grant County has finished its assessments and created a handy little booklet with the names and contact information of producers and the institutions, schools, restaurants and stores willing to purchase local foods.

There are at least two other communities working on assessments - Bowdon and Grand Forks. It would be wonderful if the state could meet the requirements of its grant and have at a minimum 10 communities with completed assessments.

Many questions about who would be willing to purchase local foods in schools, hospitals and nursing homes would be easily answered with completed surveys.

If you need the forms, or advice on getting organized please call us at 701-328-4763.

If anyone has an idea of a group or groups in a community that would be willing to work with us on getting those surveys done it would be greatly appreciated.

Contact the ag department at the above number or e-mail suebalcom@nd.gov.

Permaculture group looking to form in Bismarck-Mandan area

Anyone interested in joining/starting a new local permaculture group in Bismarck/Mandan? Permaculture is a design process that helps us to create more sustainable and edible landscapes, on any scale from the back yard to the back forty, by imitating the cycles found in natural ecosystems. We're hoping to bring together people wanting to learn about it with people actually practicing it, to share resources, experiences and inspiration. If you're interested, please email us at vortenjou@bis.midco.net.

North Dakota Farmers Market and Growers Association announce availability of funds

The North Dakota Farmers Market and Growers Association will be administering a farmers market incentive grant program offered through the North Dakota Department of Agriculture.

Farmers markets meeting qualifications of membership, organized with by-laws and officers, are eligible to receive up to a \$500 grant for event activities that promote and aid their market. *Markets do not need to be members of the NDFMGA to apply for the grant.*

Grants can be used for, but are not limited to, advertising, banners, fliers, billboards, posters, in-market entertainment, point of sale promotional materials and radio advertisements.

Individual farmers market vendors will not qualify for the grant program.

The grants will be awarded on a first-come first-served basis to the full amount of available funds.

Deadline for expenditures is November 2009 and copies of receipts must be submitted to the association.

For applications or more information, call Holly Mawby at 701-228-4032 or email: hollyrose.mawby@msub.nodak.edu.

Farm to market handbook

The North Dakota Department of Agriculture is working with several state agencies to create a handbook for people who wish to direct market their local food products.

The booklet will contain information about selling produce, meat, eggs, baked goods and arts and crafts. Tax information, registering business names and marketing tips will also be included. The booklet should be available after May 1.

Hopefully, this information will clear up misconceptions about selling or donating produce to schools or food banks; who can or cannot purchase produce from farmers markets for

restaurants; and other questions about local health codes as pertaining to farm to plate sales. Contact names and numbers, emails and websites will be available for questions that cannot be answered simply.

A press release will be

issued once the information is available to the public. It will include contact information for web-based booklets and print copies. Keep checking the local foods page of the ag department web site at www.agdepartment.com for new information.



Morton County Extension Agent Jackie Buckley assists with registration at the community garden meeting in Mandan. About 15 interested gardeners showed up to talk about organizing a garden in Mandan. The group will appear before the April 13 meeting of the Mandan Park Board.

USDA farmer market grant deadline approaching at the end of April

The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service invites proposals for the 2009 Farmers Market Promotion Program grant program. The Notice of Funds Available for the FMPP was published in the Federal Register on March 13. This is the fourth year of the FMPP grant program, which is authorized under the recently amended Farmer-to-Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976.

AMS will award approximately \$5 million in competitive funds for FMPP in Fiscal Year 2009. FMPP grants are available at levels not less than \$2,500 and not more than \$100,000; no matching funds are required. Proposal submitted for funding should be designed to assist in promoting, expanding, and improving domestic farmers markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agritourism activities, and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities.

Eligible entities for the 2009 FMPP grants include agricultural cooperatives, producer networks, producer associations, local governments, nonprofit organizations, public benefit corporations, economic development corporations, regional farmers' market authorities, and Tribal governments to consider developing proposals for this grant program. Eligible entities must be owned, operated, and located within one or more of the 50 United States and the District of Columbia. Individuals are not eligible to apply.

Applications must be submitted to AMS and postmarked by April 27. For information on applying for FMPP grant funds, please visit our website: www.ams.usda.gov/fmpp.

Faces of Local photographs connect lunch entrees to neighbors

(Continued from page one)

Café plus information on local foods, the café menu, the companies that produced the food items, a Sunbutter snack bag and some information from www.eatwellguide.org. On the outside of the bag was the “Going Local North Dakota” logo sticker as well as the North Dakota Department of Agriculture logo.

Ag Commissioner Roger Johnson donned a chef’s hat, and served until nearly everything on the menu that day had been replaced to the point it could not be replaced any more. He ended up with a bowl of tomato soup for his valiant serving efforts when all was said and done and the wave of patrons filed back to their respective jobs.

Companies that Aviand’s Café manager Curt Wellington regularly purchases from though his distributors were identified that day and will be “starred” on his menus from this point forward. Derek Sage, the district manager for Aviand’s, flew in from Minnesota to witness the event.

This campaign featured foods from the following companies –

M & W Beef Packers in Mandan processes the steak for the sellout Steak, Cheese and Mushroom sandwich. Moore’s parents, now retired from the business, had lunch at the café that day. M & W is one of the original Pride of Dakota Businesses and produce hundreds of beef products totaling 300,000 pounds annually.

Cloverdale Foods in Mandan made the sausage served with kraut, mashed potatoes and broccoli.

Buns came from Baker Boy in Dickinson.

The breakfast entrée was purchased from Dean’s Food which owns our local Land ‘O Lakes company and fluid dairy in Bismarck.

Dakota Growers Pasta was also featured in the macaroni and ham dinner.

Another big event is planned for the summer when fresh produce becomes available at farmers markets.

Topping off the meal were kuchen slices from Lapp’s Bakery in Hebron. Owners Myron and Betty Lapp were also in attendance that day. Cloverdale Foods was represented by Lacey Wahl.

Table toppers provided information about local foods and pointed attention to the “Faces of Local Foods” display in the hall way of the cafeteria. The photos showed working employees of the companies featured that day.

It was a good day.

If you would like to host a local foods day in your cafeteria and need some assistance with ideas, or other marketing tools such as the ones used for the Capitol Café event, please contact the ag department at 701-328-4763 or 800-242-7535.



Above - Faces of Local photographs lined one of the cafeteria hallways. To the left, the invitation and below is the table topper used to educate diners on local foods.

(More photos on page 6)

Calendar of upcoming events and opportunities

ONGOING Growing Power workshop series

“Growing Your Community Food System from the Ground Up” workshop series held in Milwaukee, Wis., continues through May.

These hands-on workshops assist farmers in learning how to develop, operate and sustain community food project. Topics include bee keeping, community project design, living biological growing systems, hoop house construction, year round production and marketing, animal health and aquaculture/aquaponics.

Dates for the remaining workshops are:

- April 18 and 19 (special training date April 17)
- May 16 and 17 (special training date May 15)

Cost is \$325 per person and includes five meals

For more information e-mail katie@growingpower.org.

April 23-24

National Small Food Manufacturers Conference

With the Food Processing Center – University of Nebraska Lincoln
Holiday Inn, downtown Lincoln, Neb.

This is the first national conference designed specifically for micro and small food manufacturers throughout the country. It includes current topics and industry recognized national speakers which will educate and motivate participants.

Attendees will:

- Learn from national industry respected, knowledgeable speakers
- Learn how to expand and grow their businesses
- Participate in interactive sessions
- Explore new opportunities
- Network with peers and industry experts

For more information contact Jill Gifford by e-mail at jgifford1@unl.edu or call 402-472-2819.

Western North Dakota's Premier Gardening Event

April 25 Dakota Garden Expo

Set for the Mandan Middle School, this event is sponsored by NDSU Extension Service and the Bismarck-Mandan Garden Club. From 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., gardeners will be able to chose from eight different topics during the three sessions. Keynote speaker will be Sara Williams, author of many popular gardening books. Registration is \$25 before April 21, \$30 afterwards.

To register send check to

NDSU Extension Service Burleigh County

Attn: Dakota Garden Expo

3715 E. Bismarck Expressway,

Bismarck, ND 58501.

Participants may also register online at www.dakotagardener.com.

Is your community planning a local foods meeting or event?

Send your information to suebalcom@nd.gov or go to <http://goinglocalnd.ning.com/> and add your information to the calendar of events.

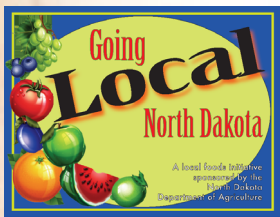


More local faces...



*Lacey Wahl from
Cloverdale Foods.*

*Steve Moore and
his parents enjoying
lunch made with M
& W Beef Packers
steak.*



*Curt Wellington, manager of
the Capitol Cafe.*



*Betty and Myron Lapp from Lapp's Bakery in Hebron -
with their famous kuchen.*

Need some assistance organizing your community's local food initiative?
Need some tools to begin promoting your own local foods events?
Need some advice about local foods topics?

The North Dakota Department of Agriculture can help!

Call 328-4763

or

800-242-7535

or e-mail Sue Balcom at
suebalcom@nd.gov

Local light

Social networking across the nation...

April 1, and the joke's on us. Every time we think winter has passed, it just keeps coming back. I love the snow, however, I was not too fond of the call we received from the Morton County Emergency Manager's office one Friday morning warning us about possible flooding. We have been fortunate so far and have remained dry, although everything that was once stored in the crawl space under our bedroom now adorns the entire main floor of the house. Better safe than sorry.

And, my heart goes out to all the people who had flooding. It's no fun to try and clean the silt out of the cracks in your basement.

I missed half the month of March in lieu of attending two conferences. I had the privilege of attending the Farm to Cafeteria conference in Portland, Ore., and another one-day event in Ames, Iowa, on my birthday.

I was really hoping to get some articles written about what I learned on those two trips, mostly to get it all out of my head. It's overflowing with new research, ideas and the wonderful people I met.

In Ames, I had dinner with Ken Meter, from Crossroads. The next day at the conference sponsored by the Iowa State Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, his name was mentioned in nearly every class I took. It seems his research kicked off many a local food initiative. He is available to speak to us and it may be a good thing for not only local foods supporters but also the policy and decision makers in our state.

Iowa has done some amazing things with local foods over the past 10 years. They now have research to back up claims about the economics of local foods. Meter's presentations are all about how the current food system is not sustainable. He presented at the Farm to Cafeteria conference also.

That conference was amazing. Those folks have done wonderful things to provide ways to connect farms to school lunch programs. More than 600 like-minded people gathered in Portland for three days of workshops and good local food.

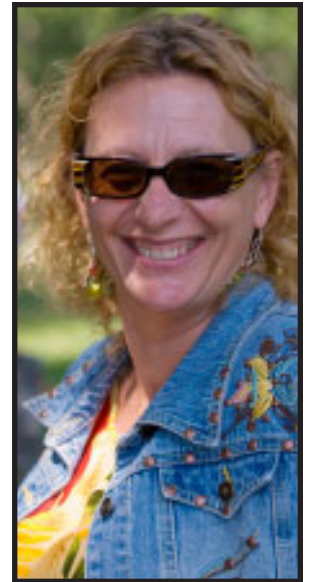
Not being one to pass up a good book, I purchased "This Organic Life" by Joan Dye Gussow. She just happened to be the key note speaker on our final evening together. Her book is awesome and she has been growing her own food since 1974.

That's right, local food is not new, but it is a hot topic across the country.

So, in the near future, I hope to report on those two events and what I learned. I also gained some new resources to share with our ongoing local foods initiatives.

Lastly, if you are not connected to other local foods people through our www.goinglocalnd.ning.com site, now's the time. We are currently at 139 members. There are photos, blogs, conversations, links to other sites, videos and upcoming events across the state.

There's nothing to it...



*A personal column
By Sue B. Balcom*

All you have to do is log on to the site and become a member. You will be asked to provide your birthdate and a password.

You can do it. It has become a site of useful information. It calls attention to top news stories around the country. You can make friends and ask questions. Or, you can just sit back and watch others communicate. You have a choice of receiving an email every time someone blogs, or joins. You have a choice of not receiving any emails at all. The site has been up and running since last fall and we have only had one incidence of a spammer joining. After being alerted to that person, it was an easy thing to ban her from the site.

If you have questions, call me at 701-328-4763, I can help talk you through things. Once you have done it, it becomes easier all the time.

And, for inspiration, let me tell you this.

My brother called one day and said he bought my parents a computer. Wow? Are you sure you want to do that?

Now my mom emails all her children and grandchildren and we can send photos and keep in touch from anywhere. My dad called and said he wished they would have gotten a computer sooner because everybody's talking to them. I guess they didn't realize how much easier it is to keep in touch by email than by writing a letter. The bottom line - if my 79-year-old mother can do it, so can you.

So get connected, stay connected and watch for some upcoming information about Farm to Cafeteria programs and Iowa's regional efforts.

My photo of the month is this rabbit that was scared up by a pheasant in our front yard. The pheasant got away.

