

Ancient Grain Flours: The Future is in the Past

Browse & Grass Farmer Association of Downing, Wisconsin received \$94,724 to develop a market for locally grown ancient grains and flours to provide consumers with authentic and/or gluten-free food products, and to provide local and immigrant income opportunities. Funds were used to purchase needed equipment and supplies and to develop an educational curriculum to partner with East African producers.

[Final Report FY09](#)

COVER SHEET
FMPP FINAL REPORT

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Dec 27, 2011

Browse and Grass Farmer Association
(Name changed to Browse and Grass Growers Cooperative)
Ancient Grain Flours: the future is in the past
WI 047 2009
Downing, WI

Attached is the final report, Federal form 425 and a summary of the deliverables. The deliverables include a series of photographs documenting the project and an outline of the curriculum. The full curriculum and supporting materials is being submitted by mail on a flash drive along with signed copies.

We have learned a great deal during the past 2 years and appreciate the opportunity to fulfill this project's goals and objectives.

Sincerely,

Judy Moses
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Project Summary:

The goal of this project was to increase opportunities and profits for producers through structured collaboration with East African food entrepreneurs. The value added production of ancient grains (e.g. teff, millet, chia, kamut, quinoa, amaranth flours) was explored. Products included bulk flours, injera flat breads, muufo and sambusas (fried flour and meat bread pastry) and were sold to chefs, caterers, small food market entrepreneurs and participants of community events. In addition, a training curriculum was developed and piloted to encourage entrepreneurial focused partnerships among culturally diverse groups. The University of Wisconsin Food Science and Economic Development Departments and Dr. Joe Regenstein, Professor of Food Science consultant from the University of Cornell provided training, technical support and product analysis.

Project Approach:

The wide range of traditional needs and values of culturally and economically diverse families requires the use of a variety of appropriate marketing methods that include both traditional and alternative (community-based) marketing strategies and tools. Our approach included methods that encouraged the development of community partnerships and interdependencies to stimulate small business activity.

Community-based marketing is based on relationships and is (in our experience) the most effective method to reach culturally and linguistically diverse families. While structured word-of-mouth marketing strategies are increasingly used in mainstream marketing, these methods are particularly useful to reach relatively closed communities. Traditional marketing strategies and tools are less effective when language or cultural barriers exist.

The benefits for producers using a community-based marketing approach are: 1) Provides an alternative to the traditional distribution channels, which may be closed to small food producers: 2) Allows tight control over the size of the potential market, thus limiting risks of substantial shortages, particularly during the start-up period: 3) Provides immediate and direct feedback about the market potential and acceptance: 4) Minimizes marketing costs during the start-up period.

Objectives and Outcomes:

Objective 1: Provide culturally diverse marketing training and technical support for producer group.

Objective 2. Enhance product value and production efficiencies resulting in increased revenue.

Objective 3. Develop curriculum to address effective collaboration among culturally diverse groups

Outcomes:

A producer cooperative, registered in Wisconsin, was organized and formed.

In collaboration with the University of Wisconsin Food Science Department the production of a commercial injera flat bread product and other flat breads and pastries were completed and test marketed at local restaurants (see attachment). Simultaneously the value added production of ancient grains (e.g. teff, millet, chia, kamut, quinoa, amaranth flours) was explored. Products included bulk flours, injera flat breads, muufo and sambusas (fried flour and meat bread pastry) and were sold to chefs, caterers, small food market entrepreneurs and participants of community events.

Trainings on food safety, packaging, labeling, and quality control were provided through the University of Wisconsin and Cornell University collaboration. Production standards were developed. Some deterioration of product due to faulty packaging and storage was experienced and corrected.

A training curriculum was developed with the consulting support of Dr. Joe Regenstein and piloted to encourage entrepreneurial focused partnerships among culturally diverse groups. The curriculum consisted of 3 main topics with a structured networking period during the lunch hour (see attachment for example). It was organized and piloted in June, 2011. Sixty-two participants attended and fifty-four evaluations were collected. Follow up phone interviews were completed in August.

Cultural Competency Curriculum: Issues and Strategies

Introduction

Section 1: Cultivating Cross-Cultural Competence: working with diverse individuals, families and communities.

Section 2: The Muslim Perspective: working with followers of the Islam religion.

Section 3: The Implementation of Cross-Cultural Strategies.

Wrap Up—Questions

References

Lessons Learned:

Tef is a popular grain especially for Eastern African cuisine but it was also the grain that was the most difficult to grow successfully. Tef production in our environment was just not reliable and proved expensive to purchase and source in quantity either as seed or as flour. Two producers with the support of a local agriculture extension consultant experimented entirely with tef under controlled conditions including the monitoring of soil temperatures before planting. One of the producers has family that grows tef in Ethiopia and a family member visited and provided additional guidance. Still, the results, even when adjusted for unseasonably cool weather conditions, were not economically feasible.

Sorghum showed the most promise both as a single grain and mixed with other grains including tef in the production of injera. Although sorghum lowered the costs of injera production the added grain was not valued by the community. Other grains mixed with tef produced an inferior injera product but do have potential for other flat breads and pastries. Disappointingly, the injera flat bread product was difficult to produce and required more exacting techniques. Multi-purpose white flour mixed with a small amount of tef is preferred due to its ease of producing a reliable (though low nutrient) injera. This resulted in the community's continued use of multi-purpose flour with a minimal amount of commercially sourced tef added.

Collaborations on value-added grain based products were effective for many of the small businesses and producers involved. Sambusas and muufos (see attachment) were successful at community events and for caterers. Several grains are similar to tef in the fact that they are either low gluten or gluten free and resulted in more successful production levels. These additional grains expanded the market beyond the East African entrepreneur, to the natural food consumer who prefers gluten free options. Producers discovered that specialty grains have more economical value in our region when marketed to customers interested in low gluten or gluten-free food products.

Conference participants' comments and discussion summaries:

Intergenerational tensions are pervasive in new refugee families, compounded by the exhaustion of long work hours and constant financial worries.

A lot of new refugee parents who work hard and long hours frequently remind their children that they left their home to provide better opportunities for them. It is a refrain that is repeated by the majority of Somali's first generation immigrants. The youth feel a great deal of responsibility to live up to this expectation. This includes the obligation of earning enough money as soon as possible to allow for sending regular payments to extended family still in Somalia or refugee camps.

The Quran says that Allah puts us on trial and sees how much we can take as a test. From this perspective difficulty is a challenge—even a privilege.

Tendency to describe psychiatric problems in physical terms is common and can obscure diagnosis and complicate treatment. There is no word for depression in the Somali language. There are a lot of refugees who've been worked up the wazoo for headaches by neurologists when they were really suffering from depression.

Somali's don't view it as a sickness or an illness, but as a family curse. They try to take care of it themselves. This includes poverty, a history of trauma that often drove them to leave war-ravaged homelands, an inability to speak English, long and often inflexible work hours that make it hard to keep appointments, and a lack of practitioners who speak their language or understand their culture.

Early intervention is rare. More typical are treatment delays of months—or years—resulting in a long festering problem that has spiraled into a full-blown crisis requiring immediate hospitalization. Often there isn't even a concept that a problem is a mental illness, the shame, stigma and silence surrounding mental health treatment.

Many parents encourage marriage as a cure for mental illness

Additional Information:

See attachment for project pictures and curriculum summary.

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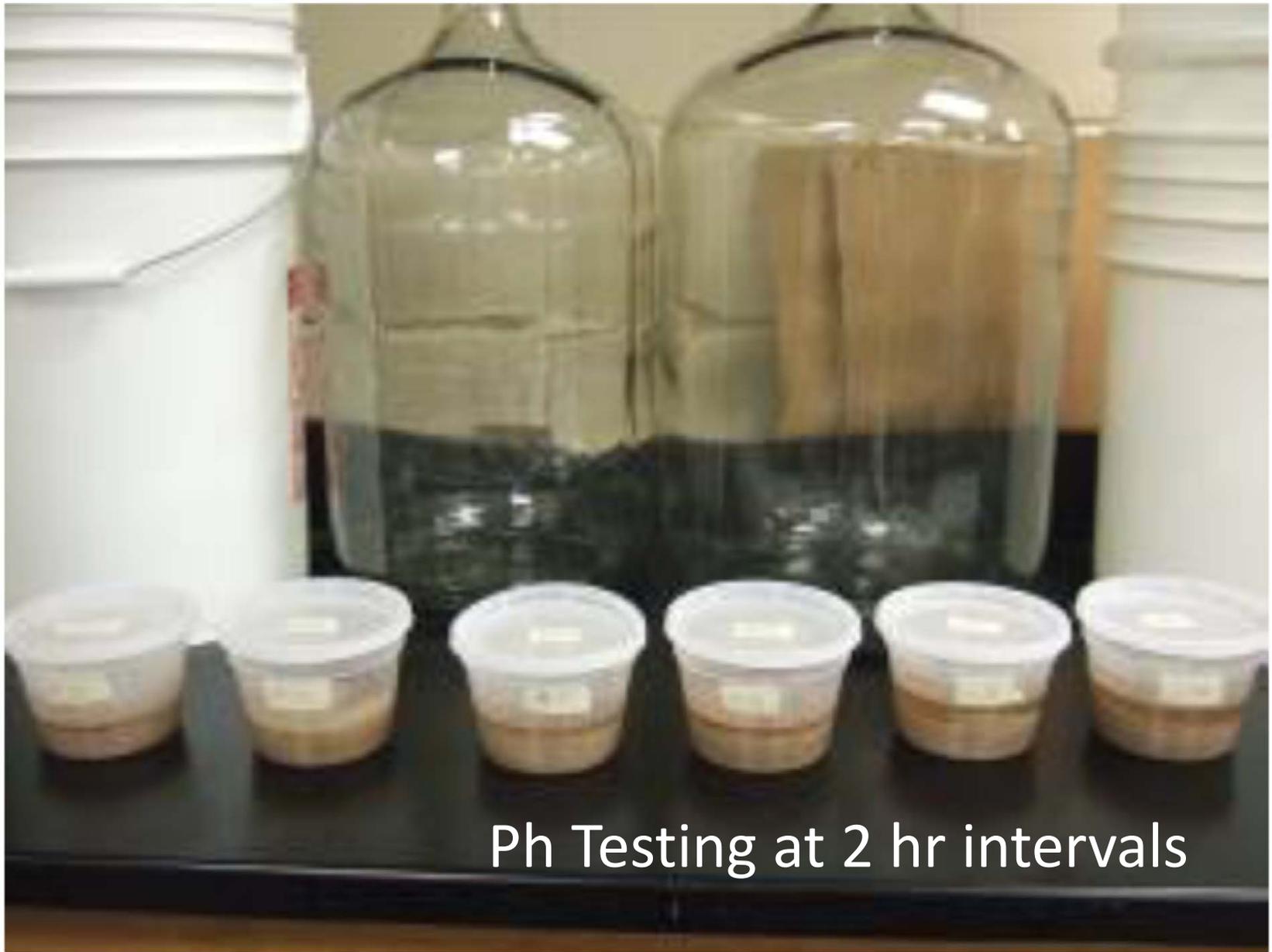
Ancient Grains:

The future is in the past

Browse and Grass Farmer Association
Downing, WI

Injera recipe development





Ph Testing at 2 hr intervals







Consistency of eye development important for quality





**Production
of muufo,
a fried
bread**













**Production of Sambusa: a
fried meat filled pastry**













Finished Sambusas



Preparing the filling



**Community
gathering
and food
sampling**





**Community
teacher
and recipe
developer**





Collaborating chef and caterers



Cultural Competency:

Issues and Strategies

Browse and Grass Farmer Association
Downing, WI

Introduction

While an approach to working with culturally diverse individuals, families and communities can be similar across states and organizations each region has different populations that require specific strategies.

The following discussion on cultural inclusion in no way attempts to lay out a roadmap for the “most successful” or “best” approaches. Instead, we offer a general discussion on building a foundation to increase participation with diverse communities, guidance that we have found helpful working with followers of the Islam religion and several kinds of strategies – those that can be utilized by a small group or a large organization as they develop culturally diverse goals and initiatives.

We hope that this discussion of working with diverse communities is seen as a starting point for developing a grassroots local initiative, and not as a comprehensive blueprint. Above all, it is our hope that each of us succeeds, in our own unique and distinct way to increase services and supports to culturally diverse individuals, families and communities.

Contents

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Section 1: Cultivating Cross-Cultural Competence: working with diverse individuals, families and communities.

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Wrap Up

- Cultural competency is not so much a knowledge or skill set requiring mastery as it is an important set of attitudes and actions. In many ways, competency may better be described as a package of skills and practices that a service provider uses to help guide cross-cultural interactions and outcomes. The key skills are paying close attention, skillful listening, and respectful questioning, along with the ability to find ways forward. An analyst might be able to see, describe, and measure all the complex obstacles, but that person becomes a culture broker only by successfully guiding people on each side past some of the obstacles and finding appropriate ways to help them meet one another on a basis of mutual respect (Raghavan, Waseem, Small, & Newell, 2007)
- Even those who have studied another culture in depth cannot always predict the responses of a client from the culture because of individual variations and circumstances. When the culture is as diverse as the “Muslim culture,” brokers encounter extra layers of complexity. The critical skill therefore is not mastery of all the subtleties of a culture, but instead knowing what questions to ask and being open to asking those questions and truly listening to the responses (Kleinman, 2006).
- Perhaps as important as the larger community issues are the differences among Muslim individuals and families. As is true of any culture, Muslim families are not all structured in the same way. Their needs and circumstances may differ. They may interpret the same situations differently. They can vary greatly in their cultural heritages and religious practices. Their patterns of immigration and migration will vary, and they may have vastly different attitudes and perceptions about their country of origin or about the U.S. and the particular communities in which they have settled.

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