



Squamish-Lillooet Food Project

Advancing a more sustainable regional food system

Best Practices

November 2017

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Introduction

This document brings together a number of best practices in creating a sustainable regional food system. The examples are from outside the Squamish Lillooet region and can be considered as opportunities that could be applied to gaps that currently exist in SL communities. The best practices were chosen based on the SL Food System Project Gap and SWOT documents, therefore not all potential best practices are covered – only those that address key gaps in the SL system. The report is presented based on the following components of the regional food system:

1. Production and land availability;
2. Processing and storage;
3. Marketing, branding, and education;
4. Distribution;
5. Retail access and community food centres;
6. Consumption in the community
7. Resource recovery; and
8. Capacity and governance.

Food Production and Land Availability

Co-operative and Collaborative Production

A co-operative is an organization owned by members who use its services or are employed there. Co-operatives can provide virtually any product or service. Agricultural co-operatives have a long and successful tradition both in BC and Canada, and have proven to be amazingly flexible in meeting a wide variety of needs. Since most co-ops are community and regionally based, the investment in the co-op along with the surplus revenue generated from the co-op stays within the local community. In co-operative farming, the farmland may be purchased or leased co-operatively by a group of farmers or a larger group of shareholders. A society or co-operative group usually governs and administers the land use agreements. Co-operative farming is one of the most viable and affordable ways for new farmers to get into farming. Benefits include: sharing of costs and risks, labour, knowledge, and experience¹.

Example: Fraser Common Farm/Glorious Organics Co-op (<http://www.frasercommonfarm.com/>)

Fraser Common Farm is located in Aldergrove, BC, and consists of two cooperative farming ventures. Fraser Common Farm Co-op is a group of shareholder members who own the land, while Glorious Organics Co-op farm the land and run it as a Community Farm. Some of the shareholders live on the land, while others are residing elsewhere. Glorious Organics Co-op markets the products through local farmers markets and a CSA program.



¹ Young Agrarians Land Access Guide 2.0 http://www.refbc.com/sites/default/files/YoungAgrarians_LandAccessGuide5.0.pdf

Example: Gibsons Farm Collective (<http://gibsonsfarmcollective.com/>)

The Sunshine Coast also has a cooperative farming model called the Gibsons Farm Collective. This Collective consists of eight farms. The farmers involved in the Collective work together to grow a variety of products and cooperatively market through an email distribution and ordering interface. Farmers can apply to be a part of the Collective and undergo a screening process by fellow members to ensure sustainable farming practices and organic principles are followed.



Example: Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Nation (TteS)/Kamloops Indian Band: <http://bighornhops.com>



In 2015, the Kamloops Indian Band began a collaborative endeavor growing hops on the Tk'emlups Reserve. They established Big Horn Hops farm in 2016, and it is fully owned and operated by the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Nation (TteS). The farm includes a land base of 165 acres along the North Thompson River on the TteS reserve². Hops farming is labour intensive and employs members of the band while also reintroducing agriculture into the community, a vision that the Kamloops Band has had for some

time. The business operation began as a collaboration between the founder of Hops Canada, Joey Bedard, who owned 33% of the operation, while the remaining 66% belonged to the Kamloops Indian Band. The operation start-up costs were approximately \$6 million in 2015. The Band has since bought out Bedard's share of the farm to become 100% First Nations owned under their new name of Big Horn Hops.

Farmland Trusts

Farmland trusts manage multiple properties in trust under one umbrella organization by placing a covenant or easement on the land to ensure its farm use in perpetuity. Agricultural land trusts are not-for-profit and their mandate is to hold and manage farmland and ranchland for the purpose of protecting the agricultural value of the land and making that land accessible to farmers. The goal to have the farmland be productive is prioritized over and above the protection of natural features and sensitive ecosystems. Trusts can be managed by government agencies or non-governmental organizations.

Example: Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust Society: <http://www.ssifarmlandtrust.org/>



The SSI Farmland Trust Society has a mission to protect farmland for farming. By building infrastructure for food storage and processing, the Society is actively working to bring more of Salt Spring's rich, arable farmland into food production. The Society was incorporated in 2009 and received charitable status in 2011. To date, they hold one 60-acre parcel of land that includes a number of farm businesses operating on it. They are working towards creating a food hub called "The Root." The Root will be a centrally-located food processing, distribution and

² Kamloops Indian Band hops farm: <http://cfjctoday.com/article/526698/high-hops> ; <http://bighornhops.com/about/>

storage facility; it will operate on a break-even basis as an incubator for increased local food production.

Example: Foodlands Cooperative of BC: <http://www.bcfarmlandtrust.ca/>

Foodlands is a province-wide land trust, whose mandate is to “secure, protect and steward land that is to be used for the promotion of sustainable agriculture and local food provisioning for the benefit of communities in British Columbia, while recognizing, respecting and including indigenous food systems.”



One of their objectives is to aid regional networks to create their own organizations to manage lands secured within the Cooperative. For example, land could be donated to the Foodlands Cooperative where it would be secured in perpetuity but the regional organization would manage the day to day use of the land. This Cooperative was established in 2017 and is awaiting charitable status. As they are a newly forming organization they are currently unable to take parcels of land “officially” into trust; once the legal components are in place, land will be acquired (e.g. through purchase or donation) by the Cooperative.

Incubator Food Production Systems

The success of new farms is critical to our region’s working landscape, economy and communities. But many new farmers struggle to enter the agriculture industry because of barriers to accessing land, equipment, capital, and mentorship. Incubator farm programs support new farm enterprises by offering access to land, equipment, and infrastructure at reasonable rates, along with business planning support, technical training, mentorship, and experience with ecological and emerging farming methods. Transition off-site at the end of the incubator term is challenging for farmers and requires appropriate levels of support from the program.

Example: The Intervale Center: <https://www.intervale.org/farms-incubation/>

Founded in 1990, the Farms Program is one of the oldest incubator farm programs in the United States. The incubator farm program is located on 135 acres of the 300 acre-site. The land was originally held privately and then was bequeathed to the Intervale organization. Management fees are offset by farmland leases, consulting work, and other fee-for-service activities. The incubator program helps to remove start-up barriers that typically challenge new farmers such as access to land, infrastructure, business planning assistance, and markets; access to a community of knowledgeable growers; and isolation.



The Intervale Center leases land, equipment, greenhouses, irrigation and storage facilities to small independent farmers. For the first year, farmers fees are subsidized, but for the remaining two years they pay the full cost of the land and water leases. Each year, these farms produce fresh produce, eggs, meat, and flowers. One and three new farm businesses join the program as new entrants annually, receiving subsidized rental rates, business planning support and mentorship from established growers. The Intervale Center also leases land to mentor farms, which serve as established businesses that provide mentorship to the incubator farms.

Example: Central Okanagan Community Farm Society: <https://kelowna.cioc.ca/record/KNA2063>

The Central Okanagan Community Farm Society (COCF) started an incubator farm initiative for new farmers in the greater Kelowna area in 2015. The land is made available for 1-3 years to new farmers so

that they can gain the skills required to transition onto their own land³. In 2017, the COCF was granted \$25,000 through the B.C. Government's Grow Local program⁴ to begin their "50,000 Pounds – 50,000 Smiles" project. The project intends to grow 25,000 pounds of produce per year, for two years, for the social service agencies of the Central Okanagan through a community farm, and the training of five to 12 farmers of small-lot incubator farm plots.

Participants who work in the gardens will be educated through hands-on instruction at community farms, through field days and seminars, participation at fairs and public events, and through social media. The project offers the Society's volunteers the opportunity to explore growing food on a larger scale, and as a profession, without having to commit to substantial capital costs. The Society also partners with Kelowna area community organizations to share the project's harvests, including the Lake Country Food Assistance Society, and the Central Okanagan Food Bank.



Support for Young Farmers and New Entrants to Farming

This is needed given that Canada's farming population is shrinking, reaching a historic low in 2006, according to Statistics Canada figures: while one in three (33%) Canadians used to live on a farm in 1931; that number has plummeted to one in 46 (less than 2%).

Example: Young Agrarians Programs:

<http://youngagrarians.org/about/>

Young Agrarians (YA) is a network for new and young ecological and organic farmers. Since we started January 2012, the network has grown across Canada from coast to coast. YA is both an on-line and off-line community building project. ONLINE: YA aggregates data for the ecological farm sector across Canada (UMAP), posts opportunities and content on our farmer blog, and works to engage an inspiring network of new and young farmers, food growers, homesteaders and farm lovers. OFFLINE: In B.C., we offer and on and off-



farm events series, business mentorships, and land access programming. Events range from farm tours and potlucks to one to two day mixers, small-scale farming workshops and more. We are currently offering a Business Mentorship program that pairs up new farms in start-up with experienced mentors; and are piloting Quebec's successful land matching program (Banque de terres agricoles) in the Fraser Valley / Metro Vancouver region.

Food Processing and Storage

Local Meat Processing

In 2007, the province of BC changed the meat processing regulations such that licensing and certification was more costly and involved administrative oversight. These changes resulted in part to more than 300 abattoirs closing throughout the province over the last 10 years. Each link in the local meat supply chain is vital - a local abattoir allows farmers to get their animals processed easily and in a timely manner, and cut and wrap shops allow farmers to transform their meats into cuts appropriate for the market. Successful

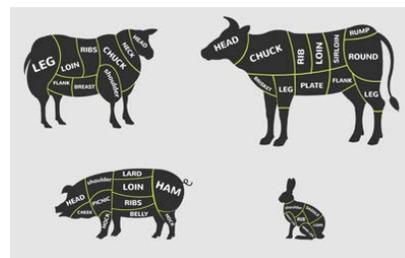
³ Central Okanagan Community Farm Society. <http://youngagrarians.org/a-head-start-for-new-farmers-in-the-central-okanagan/>

⁴ https://archive.news.gov.bc.ca/releases/news_releases_2013-2017/2017AGRI0015-000184.htm

local abattoirs have developed business cases that include total cost accounting; are able to match maneuverability vs. workflow limitations; and have invested in producer-processor relationships to build trust through education and celebrate successes. While there may never be one simple solution for something as complex as the meat sector, some relatively small investments in the local infrastructure, the links in the local meat chain can be stabilized, provide enhanced income streams for area farmers and employment opportunities for area residents.

Example: The Salt Spring Island Abattoir Society: <http://www.saltspringabattoir.ca>

The Salt Spring Island (SSI) Agricultural Alliance is an incorporated non-profit society that was developed in 2008 to oversee the implementation of the SSI Area Farm Plan. The members of the organization represent interests in agriculture, food production, and sustainable economic development. The Agricultural Alliance also acts as an advocacy organization by representing agricultural interests to all levels of government and works to find secure funding to support agriculture and agricultural infrastructure on SSI.



In 2012, an abattoir was opened for slaughter of poultry and lamb. A separate organization was created (Salt Spring Abattoir Society) to manage the facility, but the Agricultural Alliance was instrumental in pulling together funding for the facility through grassroots efforts and support from the Vancity Envirofund grant. The initial capital budget to build the abattoir was approximately \$350,000. Renovations were made in 2016 so that the abattoir could accommodate beef processing. The abattoir is usually open two days a week and customers can book space through an online ordering form. The cost of processing is volume-related with chickens costing approximately \$5 per bird. Cut and wrap costs are extra. Initial slaughter volumes included 750 lambs, 30 hogs, 30 cows, 3,000 chickens, and 150 turkeys. This volume varies somewhat year-to-year but is generally increasing. The abattoir is typically closed January and February.

Example: Campbell Farm on Saturna Island: <http://bcabattoirs.org/member/campbell-farm/>



Located on Saturna Island, the Campbell Farm has been producing beef since 1945 and lamb since 1960. The farm constructed an abattoir in 1959 to meet the meat inspection regulations at the time.

It has since been upgraded to meet current regulations and operates as a Class A facility. The farm mainly raises its own animals for processing, and custom cut and wrap of beef and lamb. Products are marketed primarily to local businesses on Saturna, including the café and the Saturna General Store. The annual Saturna Lamb Barbeque also provides an opportunity for Campbell Farm, and other Gulf Island lamb producers, to market and process a significant quantity of lamb. The abattoir also provides some custom lamb and beef slaughter services for producers on Mayne, Galiano, and Pender Islands. The abattoir is a member of the BC Association of Abattoirs and the farm is a member of the BC Sheep Federation.

Community Processing Infrastructure

Increasing consumer awareness of the benefits of eating locally is increasing the demand for fresh and processed local food products. Community-based processing infrastructure allows small and medium scale farm operators to access equipment on a rental or membership basis, thereby foregoing the need to invest large sums to acquire the necessary tools to transform raw products into value-added goods. The range of goods being developed in community processing centres can include artisan dairy products,

meats and sausage, produce, honey, jams and preserves. There is also a market for frozen produce such as frozen berries and pie fillings.

Example: Commissary Connect in Vancouver: <https://commissaryconnect.com>

Commissary Connect offers professionally run, shared-use commercial kitchen space. The kitchens are fully food-safety certified by Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) and offer scale-



COMMISSARYCONNECT
connecting local food

up opportunities and mentorship to encourage growth in local food businesses. This model works on the basis of progressive food entrepreneurs working together in a non-competitive, collaborative environment to encourage innovation and partnerships. The kitchens are equipped with well-maintained commercial food processing equipment. Membership includes 24 hour access to clean, food safe environment and dry/cold storage. Commissary Connect's kitchen network continues to grow; by the end of 2017, they expect to have three kitchens operating in Vancouver. Commissary Connect is creating powerful food incubators that nurture growth and enable local food producers.

Example: Nelson Farms at Morrisville State College, NY: <http://www.nelsonfarms.org/index.aspx>

Nelson Farms is located at Morrisville State College in New York and provides a place for entrepreneurial agri-business opportunities for specialty food processors, farmers, growers, and producers. Nelson Farms includes a small-scale, FDA inspected, food processing incubator that provides entrepreneurial agri-business opportunities for specialty food processors, farmers, growers, and producers. The Nelson Farms Country Store is also located on site and offers specialty food products produced in the kitchens of Nelson Farms (pancake, muffin and other mixes, syrups, jams and jellies, BBQ sauces, salsas, salad dressing, chocolates, etc.). Educational training is also offered in food safety for food processors.



Example: Heiltsuk First Nation Fish Processing Plant

In 2012, Heiltsuk First Nation, a remote coastal community in Bella Bella re-opened a community fish processing plant that has been profit-generating and a main driver for the economy in the community since. The Heiltsuk Economic Development Corp. undertook a feasibility study in 2010 that revealed new market strategies that could make the operation a financial success. Today, the town's fishermen run Spawn on Kelp (SOK) every year and sell a large portion to Japan as the main buyer. Sea urchins and other types of sea food are also harvested, processed and sold to the market. The community had support from the Northern Development Initiative Trust to hire consultants to develop food safety systems, human resource manuals, operating procedures and a marketing plan to ensure a successful startup.



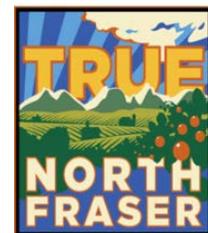
Food Messaging: Marketing, Branding, Education

Cohesive Regional Brand

Marketing on an individual basis can be costly in terms of time and resources, but efforts can be pooled and leveraged to create gains collectively. A cohesive regional marketing, branding, and education strategy could include in-store advertising, online and social media (Apps, websites, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook), and a regional or sub-regional logo (such as Lillooet Grown) to allow for immediate recognition by local consumers as well as visitors. Marketing the regional food system and linking it to tourism and/or customers living outside the community is key to overall success. The Sea-to-Sky and Lillooet area has benefitted from many agricultural marketing successes including small-scale, organic, beef, flowers, poultry, sheep, potatoes and other vegetables, orchards, hops, and wineries.

Example: True North Fraser: <http://www.thinkpittmeadows.ca/truenorthfraser.html>

In 2009, a North Fraser economic partnership formed between Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, and Mission. In 2013 these partners aligned with BC Jobs Plan objectives to leverage funding towards an initiative called *Invest North Fraser*. The initiative provided marketing and branding for agri-tourism, agricultural education (farm school and technology sectors), and agri-business investment. The brand was used at the Haney Farmers Market, through Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows Tourism, Invest



North Fraser materials, and was promoted around the North Fraser through road signs. The True North brand was intended to promote the following⁵:

- A place to find quality agricultural products, adventure, natural beauty and culture;
- A region where some of BC's best food comes from;
- Where restaurants, retailers, and epicureans look for the freshest agricultural products;

Example: Kootenay Mountain Grown: <http://www.klasociety.org/kmg/>



Kootenay Mountain Grown (KMG) is a certification system designed to foster a thriving, sustainable, local food supply between the Boundary, West, Central, East Kootenay communities. It was formed by farmers, food activists, and local food buyers to respond to an increasing focus on locally grown food, and to have a locally recognized certification process that is more affordable for small farmers. KMG farms are regenerative, diverse, ecological, and focused on soil building, water protection, animal welfare, plant health, local genetics, reducing waste, and social responsibility, with no use of herbicides, pesticides, GMOs, or chemical fertilizers. Kootenay

Mountain Grown is “rooted in love for the earth, healthy communities, and wholesome delicious food.” KMG farms are inspected by other KMG farmers and this peer-to-peer system keeps costs down. KMG fills the niche for small organic farmers who only sell locally within the Kootenay region, but who want their sustainable practices to be recognized and certified at a reasonable cost.

Example: Alberni Clayoquot “What’s On Your Fork” campaign:

<http://www.alberniavalleynews.com/news/25k-for-acrd-to-grow-local/>

“What’s On Your Fork” is a branding campaign that was initiated by the Agricultural Support Committee for the 2011 Alberni Valley Agricultural Plan. The mission for the regional brand is to increase and promote support for the local food system within the Alberni Valley and neighbouring coastal communities. It encompasses the entire Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, connecting residents and visitors with local producers and businesses through an easily identifiable brand. The branding aligns closely with First Nations communities in the area, aiming to build a stronger foundation of community awareness and appreciation for First Nations traditional food knowledge and practices. In 2017 the “What’s On Your Fork” campaign was a recipient of a \$25,000 grant from the BC Grow Local Program. They have held recent events under the “What’s On Your Fork” Brand such as workshops on gardening, rainwater harvesting, farmers’ potluck, farmer meet-up, etc. They have an active Facebook page promoting events.



⁵ True North Fraser Brand Website - <http://www.thinkpittmeadows.ca/truenorthfraser.html>

Agri-Tourism

Agri-tourism attracts and captures a sector of the tourism market with experiences related to food, agriculture. Activities may include bike tours, farm-based tastings, culinary festivals, farm stays, and other food-related celebrations. One way to raise the profile of agriculture amongst visitors and residents alike is to promote agricultural signage. Installing signage along major highways and key sideroads helps remind drivers that they are visiting, or traveling through, active farming areas. These signs can facilitate food system education and awareness and can reflect farm practices in a positive light. The most effective agri-tourism programs use positive messaging and a logo or other recognition symbol is often included in the event marketing. By increasing the visibility of agriculture to non-farming community members, the value of the land being use for agricultural purposes is strengthened.

Example: West Kelowna’s Westside Wine Loop and Farm Loop:

<https://westsidefarmloop.wordpress.com/>

The Westside Farm Loop was developed “to promote awareness of farming in the community, increase visitation and sales and build an appreciation for the bounty of goods produced in West Kelowna.” It consists of more than 15 agricultural experiences that visitors can take part in from u-picks and fruit stands, to a farmers’ market, to farm-to-table dining and horseback riding. Signs have been erected throughout the farming community to lead visitors to each destination and raise awareness that they are traveling through farmland. Maps are provided at participating farms, local hotels, and the Visitor Centre, or can be downloaded from the website. All tours are self-guided and touring tips have been created to further increase awareness and understanding.



Example: T’Sou-ke Nation Pacific Coast Wasabi and Oysters Tourism



T’SOU-KE FIRST NATION

The T’Sou-ke Nation operates a 82-hectare oyster farm that produces 3 million oysters per harvest (with capacity to grow up to 24 million oysters per harvest). In addition to oyster farming⁶, the band produces over 15,000 wasabi plants per harvest in three large greenhouses near Nanoose Bay on Vancouver Island. The wasabi and oyster farming is done in conjunction with a solar micro-grid and a large-scale wind project. The entire project is marketed as a tourism enterprise. Over 2,000 people visit the community every year to learn about the agriculture and aquaculture operations and to take part in solar energy workshops. The community has used profits from its tourism operation to expand an existing 70-hectare organic community garden. The wasabi is being served at local restaurants and hotels and some is exported.

School Partnerships

Strong connections between farms and schools help to bring healthy, local and sustainable food into schools, provide students with hands-on learning opportunities that foster food literacy, strengthens the local food system and enhances school and community connectedness. Food literacy is an important

⁶ T’Sou-ke First Nations references: <http://www.wasabia.com>; <http://www.douglasmagazine.com/first-nations-at-the-forefront/>; <http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/tsou-ke-nation-green-energy-leaders-1.4067833>

component of sustainable food systems. Students learn about food through school gardens, greenhouses, kitchen activities, lunchrooms and classrooms. They may also participate in field trips to local farms, forests and shores. The most successful and sustainable programs are built upon strong relationships established between schools and farmers, community members, and support organizations, tapping into local knowledge passion, skills and resources.

Example: Growing Schools, Victoria BC: <http://lifecyclesproject.ca/our-projects/growing-schools/>



LifeCycles' Growing Schools Program provides integrated school garden support across the Capital Region. The program helps school communities integrate native plants and cultivated food crops into outdoor classrooms and playgrounds. LifeCycles offers a variety of services to educators (K-12) in the Capital

Region, including: consultation, garden design, garden installation, professional development and curriculum linked classroom workshop facilitation. Program Managers are supported by volunteer educators help schools connect food, community and health in a meaningful way. LifeCycles has been operating Growing Schools with elementary school children in Victoria for over 20 years, sharing knowledge and hands-on experience with the next generation of agricultural enthusiasts. The program vision is to have a garden in every school where children, teachers, parents and community members gather to learn and grow together.

Example: Farm to School BC: <https://farmtoschoolbc.ca>

Farm to School BC is a program developed for K – 12 schools (including public, First Nations, and independent schools) interested in strengthening connections to the broader community and local farms, with a goal to ensure that children have access to fresh, local and sustainable foods while at school. Funds are made available through an application process to purchase cooking equipment, operate a salad bar, establish or expand a school garden, coordinate farm field trips, and other food system initiatives.



Food Moving: Distribution

Regional Distribution System

There is a gap in coordinated distribution services for small-scale producers who are interested in selling products beyond the farm gate or the farmers market, but do not have the capacity or resources to distribute goods to regional communities (e.g. Whistler, Squamish), Vancouver, and beyond. Local products are currently distributed through a variety of means by producers within the Squamish Lillooet region. Individual farmers may send their products to a wholesale distributor, bring their products to sell at the local farmers market, deliver orders directly with their own vehicles, sell at the farm gate in order to bypass distribution completely, or use a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) box model.

Example: Blue Moon Organics, Maple Ridge, BC: <http://www.bluemoonorganics.com>



Blue Moon Organics delivers fresh fruits and vegetables directly to consumers. Blue Moon is based in Maple Ridge and has been operated as a family business since 1997. The delivery service uses an online ordering platform for individuals to place their orders. Bulk food is then picked up from individual farms and wholesalers in Vancouver and the orders are assembled in a small storage building into Rubbermaid containers. Deliveries are made twice a week to customers around the Lower Mainland, including Anmore, Burnaby, Belcarra, Coquitlam, Langley, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Pitt Meadows, New Westminster, Maple Ridge and Mission and East Surrey. The company requires very little overhead, with most of the operations being coordinated out of the Boros' home. In fact, the delivery van is a simple minivan as the timeliness of the deliveries means that they do not require refrigeration.

Example: Cherry Capital Foods, Michigan: <http://cherrycapitalfoods.com>

Established in 2007, Cherry Capital Foods distributes Michigan-sourced product throughout Michigan's lower peninsula, concentrating on an area within a 100-mile radius of its home in Traverse City. Serving as both distributor and product representative, the company connects regional growers and buyers, coordinates orders and deliveries, and provides suppliers with growing, packing, and handling guidance. Cherry Capital Foods was launched in response to a growing number of requests for



locally sourced products from a variety of regional wholesale customers. Some of these wholesalers then fill local restaurant and retail orders with these local products. The company now sources directly from more than 50 Michigan producers whose scale of production ranges from half-acre gardens to large contract farms. Wholesale orders are placed online, by email, or by phone. Deliveries are made twice per week in a fleet of four refrigerated vehicles. Orders placed within Traverse City are delivered the following day and deliveries to other destinations vary seasonally with a minimum of one haul to each location every week. Transportation is carefully coordinated to ensure that all trucks back-haul product on return trips. All producers must be GAP (Good Agriculture Practices) certified and all products retain farm of origin labels. By focusing on local and Michigan sources, Cherry Foods aims to encourage the growing focus on regional food sheds as well as support for the Michigan economy and the environment.

Example: Tofino Ucluelet Culinary Guild (TUCG): <http://www.tucg.ca>



The Tofino Ucluelet Culinary Guild (TUCG) is a social enterprise with a goal of providing healthy food sourcing and distribution services to the communities of Tofino and Ucluelet. Customers include restaurants, families, and businesses. TUCG manages orders and provides pick and distribution logistics from farmers, fishers, and foragers on Vancouver Island. The organization operates through a group buying and shipping model in order to ensure service affordability. Customers can order a pre-arranged box of produce or create a personalized order.

Regional Food Hub

The specifics of each particular food hub vary, but most provide a shared, coordinated and centralized distribution logistics small and medium scale producers. While the primary goal is to fill the distribution gap, brick & mortar hubs often offer alternative retail opportunities as well. The overarching goal is to strengthen the local agricultural community by sharing facilities (a “food hub”) and customers. Some may include shared staff time, vehicles, and equipment to lessen the overhead and other associated costs among a group of local farmers.

Example: The Local Food Hub, Charlottesville, VA: <http://localfoodhub.org/>



The Local Food Hub grew out of a community-supported discussion that identified a need for greater linkages between small family farms and institutions seeking local food. Farmers were being locked out of the institutional market due to missing infrastructure, delivery minimums, insurance requirements, and time. Institutions found it challenging to access a consistent supply of local produce, and were looking for one number to call to source locally. Start-up funding came from a combination of county-level economic development sources, local foundations, and an individual donor campaign. Local Food Hub received 3,500 square feet of warehouse space in Ivy, Virginia as in-kind support. Locally sourced food is now accessible to school kids and seniors, hospitals and universities, and restaurants and retailers.

Example: South Central Ontario Region Food Hub: <http://www.scorregion.com>

This Food Hub is a project initiated by the South Central Ontario Region (SCOR) Economic Development Corporation. SCOR encompasses the Counties of Norfolk, Brant, Oxford, Middlesex, and Elgin. Farm producers benefit from the marketing, selling, and delivering of their produce, meats, cheeses, and prepared foods. Locally grown and produced food are delivered to the buyer, in a cost-effective manner, on a weekly basis. The SCOR FoodHub recognizes the need to provide small to mid-sized producers with alternative market outlets in order for them to have access to larger contracts which they would otherwise not have access to. The SCOR FoodHub focuses primarily on the broader public sector (BPS), which is a desirable target for the structure of this food hub since it allows producers to have access to larger, more consistent and more predictable contracts in the region. Currently, the SCOR FoodHub supplies long-term care facilities, school snack programs, hospitals and university cafeterias. The SCOR FoodHub is currently finishing up its first year of funding from the Trillium Foundation, which will wrap up in December of 2017.



Example: Wolfville Farmers’ Market to Go, Nova Scotia: <https://www.wolfvillefarmersmarket.ca/wfm2go/>

The Wolfville Farmers’ Market started in 1992 with three vendors in a parking lot. It is now a year-round market on Saturdays with over 60 farmers, chefs and artisan vendors and a Wednesday Market from May until Christmas. The Wolfville Farmers’ Market operates as a not-for-profit cooperative. Members (vendors) work collectively to benefit from their shared resources. The central market location is a 9,000 sq ft turn of the century apple warehouse that was transformed into a market in 2010. Over a thousand people attend the Saturday market every week for food, live music, and a sense of community. The Wednesday



Community Markets take place from May until December and feature a Market Supper, live music and community celebrations. WFM2Go is the new online version of the market. This online store and delivery service brings the quality and variety of fresh local products into the community. Customers can customize orders from a list of available WFM products online and have them delivered to one of several drop off locations on a weekly basis.

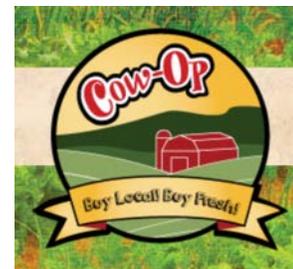
Food Access: Retail Markets, Community Food Centres and School Programs

Retail Markets

Buying local food currently involves some inconvenience for the consumer. Farmers markets may be open only one or two days a week, specialty stores that sell local food may not offer one-stop-shopping for all the other items people buy along with their groceries, and farm gate options may require a lot of travel for only a few items. Translating awareness of local food into routine purchasing actions and habitual behaviour is a long-term process that requires easy access to local food. Therefore, improving access to local food has the potential to redirect purchasing power so that the local economy is enhanced and the financial benefits of local agriculture remain within the community. It helps producers get their product to market, which in turn helps build demand, and supports producers by providing them with additional methods to market and sell their products.

Example: Cowichan Valley Co-operative Market: <http://www.cow-op.ca>

The Cowichan Valley Cooperative Marketplace (CVCM) in partnership with Cowichan Green Community established the Cow-op.ca. The CVCM is a non-profit cooperative made up of local farmers, business owners, and community partners. As part of the development of a Food Hub in the region, it was decided that an online marketplace would be a good first step to promote food sustainability, farm viability, and consumer access to local food in the Cowichan region. The Cow-op marketplace features a variety of produce, meat, eggs, seafood, cheeses, honey and more that are grown and produced throughout Cowichan. The online marketplace is open to anyone, including retailers and wholesalers. In order to become a seller through the site you must submit an application and web listing payment and become a member of the CVCM. Guidelines have been established as well to help streamline the system. The market opens every Friday at noon and closes Tuesday at midnight. The orders are emailed to the farmers on Wednesday morning and delivered to the pick-up location on Thursday morning. Any orders that are not picked up are donated to the local Food Bank or Soup Kitchen.



Example: FoodRoots, Victoria, BC: <http://foodroots.ca>

FoodRoots is a not for profit co-op distributor of local certified organic and naturally grown produce and foods processed in the Victoria region. FoodRoots operates with a unique model: community groups or sponsor organizations provide a location and the insurance, and FoodRoots brings the market. FoodRoots is also developing a 'Mobile Market', which will include a tent, table, tablecloths, cashbox, scales, etc., and will be available to community groups and organizations using a deposit system. FoodRoots has



also created an online Pocket Market Toolkit that groups can use to guide the development of their operations. The toolkit explores regulatory and operational issues, and encourages a goal of covering the cost of staff, produce and supplies by the six-week mark. FoodRoots suggests most markets need a minimum of about \$400-\$450 in sales for them to be viable.

Example: Nashville Mobile Market, Nashville, TN: <https://www.facebook.com/mobilemarket/>

The Nashville Mobile Market is a non-profit organization that has been in operation since February 2011 as a successful business, generating profits that get reinvested back into the organization. The program is run as a partnership between local food activists and the Vanderbilt University. The Nashville Mobile Market operates with a business license, insurance, state trailer registration, and health department certification⁷. The market has not had to obtain permits for street vending. The Nashville Mobile Market uses two trucks (similar in size to street vendor food trucks) carrying basic produce, meat, dairy, and non-perishable products, and is complete with shelving and refrigeration capabilities. In a typical month, the Nashville Mobile Market will make 49 stops with over a dozen different partner agencies. At each stop, local residents have access to nutritious food items, ranging from seasonal fruits and veggies, cheese, meat, and other pantry staples.



Community Food Centres

Community food centres aim to increase access to healthy food in a manner that maintains dignity, builds health and community, and challenges inequality. They provide dignified, innovative programs that provide access to healthy food; build skills; improve health and community; and confront the underlying issues that lead to poverty and hunger. Food centre programs may include drop-in meals, community kitchens and gardens, prenatal programs, and family support, civic engagement, and children and youth engagement.

Example: The Stop Community Food Centre, Toronto, ON: <http://www.thestop.org/>

Since 1882, the Stop has been providing access to healthy food for the community through two different locations. One location offers emergency food relief services such as a drop-in centre, a food bank, parenting programs, community action program, bake ovens, markets, community cooking options, advocacy, education and residential agriculture options. The other location, the Green Barn, is a sustainable food production and education centre and houses a greenhouse, food education programs, gardens, and compost demonstration centre.



Example: Save-On-Foods: <https://www.saveonfoods.com/community-support/>

⁷ Nashville Mobile Market, Nashville. <http://www.communityfoodadvocates.org/nashville-mobile-market.html>

Save-On-Foods provides support to local food banks through fundraising campaigns, donation collections at checkouts, and the donation of goods from the stores directly. In a typical year, Save-On-Foods donate approximately \$3 million in funds & goods to local Food Banks in BC and Alberta. The retail chain has also donated food to those in need during emergency events, such as the Fort McMurray wildfires in 2016 and the BC wildfires in 2017.



School Food Programs

School food programs have traditionally aimed to provide snacks and lunches to children in need, but have been expanded to achieve a number of other objectives, including: enhanced educational opportunities, improved connections between children and food/agriculture, improved health and understanding of healthy food choices, and an appreciation for the natural environment and its health.

Farm to School BC: <https://farmtoschoolbc.ca/>

Farm to School programs bring healthy, local and sustainable food into schools and provide students with hands-on learning opportunities that foster food literacy, all while strengthening the local food system and enhancing school and community connectedness. The Public Health Association of BC (PHABC) has been the fiscal and administrative sponsor for the Farm to School BC Network since its inception in 2007. PHABC is a voluntary, non-profit, non-government, member driven organization that provides leadership to promote health, well-being and social equity. In addition to championing the Farm to School BC Network and movement, PHABC works on a number of other food security related projects with partners across the province including the BC Food Security Gateway and the Island Community Food Atlas.

Oliver Elementary Farm to School Program: <https://farmtoschoolbc.ca/homegrown-success-students-in-oliver-learning-to-love-local/>

Oliver Elementary has been running its Farm to School program since 2008 and today the program not only sustains itself, but also turns a small profit. The school's activities (which are facilitated by paid coordinator Natalie Wolfe, whose salary comes from program profits) include a popular unlimited \$3.00 salad bar with five vegetables and three fruit options as well as a hot portion with carbohydrates, dairy and protein. Over 67 per cent of the students participate in the salad bar. As much as possible the menu is built around what's available locally. Two dollars and seventy-five cents goes to pay the caterer, with the remaining 25 cents being funneled back into the program. If kids can't afford the lunch, community sponsors have stepped in to help.

Food Eating: Consumption in the Community

Local Food Procurement Policy

Food procurement can be simply described as "how and from whom food is purchased". There is an opportunity for the public sector to harness its purchasing power to support local food producers who have historically been unable to access large institutional markets. Public institutions and government agencies are major purchasers of food and food services and have significant flexibility in developing regulations and policies around procurement of these goods and services. Local food procurement policies ensure that tenders to provide food for institutional (e.g. government, schools, hospitals) needs

or for institutional-owned space for food concessions, include language that require proponents to identify the local sourcing component of their proposal. This information is then used in evaluating successful proponents. A number of local procurement policies and programs have been enacted over the last few years within BC and across Canada, and the USA. It is estimated that 37 states have laws that require some or all state and local agencies to allow geographic preference for purchasing locally grown food.

Example: District of Saanich Procurement Policy:

<http://www.saanich.ca/assets/Local~Government/Documents/Bylaws~and~Policies/local-food-procurement-policy.pdf>

In 2012, District of Saanich council adopted a *Local Food Procurement Policy*. The policy states that all District of Saanich Divisions engaged in the purchase of food for operational needs, or engaged in leasing Saanich owned space to operators of food concessions, will ensure that when practical, both operationally and economically, 40% of purchases shall be local. In this case, “local” is defined as food that is grown on Vancouver Island. The purposes of the policy are to support local producers, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, provide healthier food choices at municipal events, and increase awareness of food that is grown locally.



Example: Ryerson University:

http://sustainontario.com/greenhouse/custom/uploads/2016/09/Toolkit_Final25-11.pdf



Ryerson has an established a baseline of 25% of annual food purchases (food cost) to be sourced from local and sustainable growers. Ryerson University’s procurement policy ensures that it is committed to purchasing healthy, culturally appropriate, sustainable local food for students. This commitment is demonstrated in their RFP process for food management services. Successful suppliers must “operate the food service outlet(s) consistent with highest quality offerings which will include healthy, local, organic, wholesome product choices made from scratch with skill & care.”

Food Waste Management: Resource Recovery

Connections between Retailers and Food Banks

Food recovery, the process of preventing safe, quality food from going into the waste stream, can help reduce food waste and help feed people in need. Quality food from businesses that have excess product, or have product that is safe yet can no longer be sold, can be transferred to food banks and other food access emergency organizations. For large scales of food recovery, pallet-sized quantities of shelf-stable or perishable food is obtained from industry, wholesalers and retailers and brought to food banks. Small scale recovery efforts include prepared and perishable food donated from restaurants, hotels and cafeterias that is inspected and picked up by delivery agencies and brought to food banks.

Example: Quebec's Supermarket Recovery Program: <http://www.banquesalimentaires.org/en/our-actions/supermarket-recovery-program/>

Supermarkets across Quebec provide leftover produce to Food Banks of Quebec through the province-wide Supermarket Recovery Program (SRP). The program was first established as a pilot project around Montreal and Quebec City in 2013 as a way to bring unsold meat products to food banks. The original pilot project had 177 participating supermarkets, raising 2.5 million kilograms of food worth almost \$20 million. Food is collected from stores on a scheduled basis, taken to a central distribution point and then taken to food banks. That proof of concept was enough for Food Banks of Quebec to roll it out for the whole province. The program now includes 611 participating grocery stores and over 14 million kilograms of food per year. The program is funded by the provincial government at the cost of approximately \$400,000. Partnering grocery chains include Provigo, Maxi, Metro, Super C and IGA stores.



Example: Lupii Café Vancouver: <http://lupii cafe.com>

Lupii Café is a vegan food provider operating within a zero waste model. The café does not use anything disposable – everything is either recycled or upcycle, or reused. The food is served in a buffet-styel and includes soups, chili, curries, breads, and drinks. During the last hour of each weekday the food that is left over is offered for free, in order to reduce food waste. The store also offers a weekly delivery box of fruits, vegetables soup, and preserves. They also provide a catering service.



Food Capacity: Governance, Staffing, Financial Resources

Succession Planning

Agricultural succession planning ensures that the farm remains in a farmer's hands. Succession planning is an ongoing challenge across BC and Canada, as the average farmer age continues to rise. The BC Ministry of Agriculture has compiled a variety of documents that outline strategies and options for current farmers who wish to pass on their business to younger generations, as well as recommendations for expanding farm operations. They include: *Estate Planning for the BC Farmer*, *BC Farm Business Advisory Services*:

Taking Stock and Specialized Business Planning, and Growing Your Farm Enterprise. These documents, available on the Ministry's website, provide many suggestions on items to be completed to achieve a desired result.

Example: Saanich Leasing Success Story: <http://saanichorganics.com/about/>

A longtime farmer in Metchosin, Bob Mitchell, approached succession planning with creativity, by converting his business into a model that could accommodate a new farmer running the operation. He had founded a corporation to oversee the management of his 10-acre farm in perpetuity⁸. However, his children were not interested in taking over the farm and therefore he sought out a new farmer to lead the operation. Robin Tunnicliffe had been farming organic vegetables for 15 years on leased land on small parcels in the Metchosin region. She agreed to move her operations to Bob's land and manage the land for him.



Although this arrangement means that she does not own the land she does have stability with the corporation so long as the farm can sustain itself financially. She receives a wage and resides on the property. Bob draws a monthly "pension" from the farm's earnings, which enables him to keep his money invested in the farm infrastructure and land.

Example: McCoubrey's Succession: <http://bcorganicgrower.ca/2016/09/passing-on-the-farm/>

Bob and Sharon McCoubrey's succession plan involved transferring ownership of their farm over to non-family members. Their farm, which had been in operation for over 35 years in Lake Country, is a certified organic fruit orchard. A young couple, Molly Bannerman and Matt Thurston, expressed interest in the farm but lacked the resources to purchase the land outright. The McCoubreys initially leased out the farm and a small house on the property for a few years to Molly and Matt, in order to test out the arrangement. The sale of the farm was financed by the McCoubreys acquiring 30% of the sale in cash (through the younger couple's mortgage arrangement) and the remaining 70% was financed through a second mortgage held by the McCoubreys, with payments by the Bannerman-Thurston's of only the interest. The interest payments are slightly higher than what the McCoubreys would get from a low risk investment, but lower than what the Bannerman-Thurston's would secure from an open market second mortgage. The arrangement was made such that half of the second mortgage was to be paid down after 4 years. Now, after five years into the agreement, the payments have already been made ahead of schedule.



Regional Food Policy Charter

Food charters define a common vision for a just and sustainable food system. A food charter is a statement of values and principles intended to guide a community's food policy as well as community organizations and residents toward a unified vision for a healthy food system. The overall goal is to link community action with policy. Food charters can be developed by community groups, food councils/roundtables, regional public health departments and health units. A regional food charter can provide a platform for connecting existing projects in each community. When a food charter is adopted

⁸ Source: Young Agrarians BC: Farm Access Guide (2014). <http://youngagrarians.org>

by the local council or regional district board, it becomes a public document to help guide decision-making. They provide a reference for managing food system issues on a system-wide basis. In the Squamish Lillooet region a food charters exist for the community of Squamish, however a cohesive regional charter is lacking.

Example: Cowichan Food Charter: <https://cowichangreencommunity.org/resource/cowichan-food-charter/>

The Cowichan Food Charter (the Charter), was developed in 2007 by the Cowichan Food Security Plan's original Steering Committee and updated in 2009 with input from the community. The City of Duncan became the first organization in the



Cowichan Region to officially adopt the Cowichan Food Charter. Several of the region's governing bodies and organizations subsequently signed onto the charter including: Cowichan Valley Regional District; District of North Cowichan; Town of Lake Cowichan; Town of Ladysmith; Malahat First Nation; Cowichan Agricultural Society; Cittaslow Cowichan Bay; and The Community Farm Store. To sign the Charter is to firmly state that food, health, and the environment are connected, and that they are integral to the wellbeing of the whole community. The Charter identifies that food security exists when all members of the community have access to enough nutritious, safe, ecologically sustainable, and culturally appropriate food at all times.

Regional Food System Partnerships

Regional food system partnerships are cross-sector community groups or initiatives working together to make change in their food system. The partnerships focus on broad community-wide input and create an opportunity for farmers, ranchers, local planners, food bank managers, parents, teachers, health practitioners, and others to come together. The objective is often to develop a complete picture of the community's food system and to establish a foundation for long-term collaboration. Expanding working relationships and learning other perspectives in the community allow for creativity and a deepened understanding of the real issues and the systemic impact of policies and programs. Developing these relationships creates invaluable opportunities for ideas to emerge.

Example: Community Food Strategies, North Carolina:
<https://communityfoodstrategies.com/2016/09/08/partnerships-to-food-policy/>



Community Food Strategies (CFS) is a North Carolina-based organization working to empower local food councils with knowledge and organizational capacity to positively impact the local food and farm economy. It is a

multi-organizational initiative with a purpose of reflecting a collaborative approach and highlighting the wealth that emerges in partnerships. CFS is in a partnership with Plate of the Union, a national campaign to charge the President with championing food system change and to bring greater awareness of food and farm issues at local, regional, and national levels. The partnership includes the Center for Environmental Farming Systems, the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association, Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project, Care Share Health Alliance, and Carolina Common Enterprise, as well as several local food councils across NC. This partnership builds local capacity and engagement by helping local food councils with event planning, media strategy, and policy expertise.

Example: Gitxaala First Nation Community Agri-Food Plan

Gitxaala is a remote First Nations community of around 450 community members on the North Coast of BC. In 2014, Gitxaala Nation formulated a “Community Agri-Food Plan⁹” that outlined the current status of food in the community and goals for the immediate and long-term future.

From this plan, Gitxaala Nation initiated a community garden and greenhouse program along with a program called “Food of Our Own” aimed at facilitating traditional food harvesting, preparation while creating job opportunities and a source of revenue. In 2016, Gitxaala Nation received financial support from the Port of Prince Rupert's Community Investment Fund to purchase an industrial-scale greenhouse in an effort to expand the growing season of the garden. Today, with support from funding through Gitxaala Health Centre, Gitxaala’s community garden employs a garden caretaker and two youth to work in the garden with CSA-style produce boxes distributed to Elders and pre-natal women in community throughout the growing season. In addition, food preserving workshops are held during the fall, utilizing the summer’s harvest of rhubarb and strawberries. The Gitxaala Community Garden is also used by Lach Klan School for experiential education opportunities.



⁹ The Gitxaala Agri-Food plan was developed with funding from the Remote First Nations Food Systems Project (2012-2014) led by the Heart & Stroke Foundation in collaboration with Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture and funded by Provincial Health Services Authority of BC.