

# Supporting New Small Scale Farmers in Abbotsford



Feasibility Study

March, 2010

# AFACT



Abbotsford Food and Agriculture Connection Table

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[www.bchealthyliving.ca](http://www.bchealthyliving.ca)



ActNowBC



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Cover Photo by Amy Suess; vegetables grown on Barrowtown Farm

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**Abbotsford Food and Agriculture Connection Table (AFACT)** The purpose of AFACT is to enhance life in Abbotsford by connecting city and country through food and agriculture.

Abbotsford, the 'city in the country,' is home to very fertile and productive agricultural land, and has a history of providing a great array of healthy foods and other agricultural products to its residents. Producers come from diverse ethnic and agricultural backgrounds and are some of the most knowledgeable and wise farmers in British Columbia.

Food and agriculture bring us all together: physically, spiritually, emotionally, and culturally. We all have to eat and we all have the need to be active. It is time to CELEBRATE our local food and agricultural heritage. We believe that everyone in Abbotsford should play a dignified role in a healthy, safe, community food and agriculture system. Those who produce the foods and those who consume them should be healthy and well nourished; and the system should be resilient to changes in economy, ecology, population, and politics.

We believe that through positive, meaningful connections between city and country, the lives of all in Abbotsford will be greatly and continually enhanced.

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## Executive Summary

“How can an interested person begin a farm operation?” Often, this is a multi-million dollar question. However, assuming that we are not speaking of a person who is inheriting a family farm or a person who has considerable financial assets to purchase a current farm operation, many people consider starting a new farm operation on a small budget to be outside the realm of possibility. This study examines why it is important to assist new farmers, barriers to farming, costs involved in farm start-ups, viability and potential for new farm operations, and ways that new farm operations can be encouraged and supported.

This study examines small scale agriculture in the Abbotsford area in order to evaluate and answer the question of how small scale agriculture can be successful. The scope of this paper does not include commodity agriculture which often requires a large economy of scale and high production volumes to reduce costs and maximize efficiencies. This study instead focuses on boutique agriculture operations who seek to lower their carbon footprint and reduce costs by minimizing inputs such as pesticides and fertilizers and using small land plots more intensively. The study finds that there is strong potential for small agricultural operations, provided that they supply artisan or value added products to specialized or boutique markets such as the recent trend towards localized diet.

Small agricultural enterprises provide many benefits to community including cultural, employment, local healthy food, agricultural diversity and resilience, and the responsible use and protection of agricultural land. In respect to identifying and connecting with the new farmer group, this study concludes that there are only a small number of people who are actively intent on becoming farmers. To access or reach those who may be interested but not actively seeking farm

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opportunities, recruiting and advertising will need to be done to create a larger pool of potential farmers.

This paper looks at the challenges of accessing land, as well as suggesting some options available for potential farmers. Small parcels of land, typically less than two acres, often do not have a significant market value for commercial use or lease, and are therefore readily available and relatively easy to find at little to no cost to interested new farmers. As properties increase in size, they become more highly sought out for agricultural purposes, and therefore their value increases and they tend to be tied up in leases or currently utilized for agriculture.

This paper examines the barriers and constraints that are facing new farmers as well as opportunities and resources currently available. The greatest barriers facing new farmers include difficulty in accessing land, start up costs, lack of peer support, and lack of experience and knowledge. After comparing best practices in other regions to the resources available to new farmers in this region, farm business incubator programs are identified as a gap which is not currently being offered.

We then propose an incubator program as an effective means to create opportunities, supports and resources to enable potential farmers create and develop specialized, value added farm operations which capitalize on the local food market trend and cater to artisan or boutique markets. We envision six components to this program including a linking service between farmers and land, a mentoring network, an incubator farm, an educational and training program, a website for marketing and information, and a peer support network.

From this point, we outline potential partnerships and outline some of the costs associated with this type of program. It is believed that this program can be launched for approximately \$400, 000.

## Introduction: why is agriculture important?

A local agriculture industry contributes to the health of British Columbians. Locally produced food is picked riper and sold fresher, meaning that it has better taste and higher nutritional value than the same food that has been transported over hundreds or even thousands of miles, often taking days or even weeks before it reaches the consumer. This also reduces the need for chemical preservatives or other means to extend the shelf life of the food. Touted as “the new organic”, local food is recognized to carry the advantage of increased freshness and therefore better nutritional quality. Furthermore, as a rule, local food is more traceable, meaning it is easier to locate the source of where it was grown or produced. Local food production can (and is) regulated by policies which restrict or prohibit the use of herbicides, pesticides, growth hormones or penicillin or genetic modification. Food which has been grown in other areas is not required to comply with the same standards. In addition, there is a sense of psychological wellbeing which comes from connection with the local food producers and growers.

Agricultural practices also bring forth various impacts on our environment. While agriculture has the potential to cause a great deal of harm to the environment, farming can also be part of the solution to climate change. Farmers in BC are encouraged to foster sustainable farm practices and management through programs such as the Environmental Farm Plan<sup>1</sup>. Farmers are trained in responsible use of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, and appropriate management of soil, wildlife and water. Furthermore, increasing local production decreases our food imports, reducing the pollution associated with the transportation of food from exotic destinations. Finally, supporting local agriculture ensures that our green spaces are protected, reducing carbon dioxide and greenhouse gasses and increasing aesthetic appeal.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.ardcorp.ca/index.php?page\\_id=14](http://www.ardcorp.ca/index.php?page_id=14)

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Agriculture is also an important part of our BC economy, bringing in over two billion dollars annually to BC farmers<sup>2</sup>. Impacts balloon when factoring in the whole industry including farm supply, transportation, producers, and retail. In total, agriculture creates revenues in the range of four to six billion dollars annually. In Abbotsford, annual farm gate sales are over half a billion dollars, with total economic impacts nearing \$2 billion dollars and over 11, 000 jobs created directly through agriculture. In fact, 1/5 jobs in Abbotsford are directly related to farming.

## Growing Farms and Declining Farmers

The average age of farmers is rising year after year. In 2001, the average age of farm operators in the Fraser valley was 48.8. In 2006, the average age had risen to 50.7<sup>3</sup>. This trend is almost universal across North America and is due to a number of challenges for farmers, primarily the cost of land and other inputs, and low profit margins. It should be noted that this statistic may be somewhat misleading, however, in the sense that there is a tendency amongst farmers to hold onto land and continue reporting income from a farm operation for tax purposes well beyond the ages that people retire from other careers. However, the fact that there is need for a new generation of farmers is undisputed, as farm succession remains a difficult issue and challenge for many farmers today.

BC is not alone in its struggle to attract new farmers. This is an almost universal trend across North America. According to one study<sup>4</sup> there are prevailing negative perceptions in our society which are currently deterring people from seeking careers in agriculture. With an average annual full time salary of \$25,586

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<sup>2</sup> Based on a 2008 study funded by the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce "The Economic Impact of Agriculture in Abbotsford (Market Based Goods and Services)"

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada 2006 Census of Agriculture

<sup>4</sup> In 2005, a steering committee for what was to become The Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council commissioned "Environmental Scan and Literature Search of Agricultural Human Resource Issues"



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in BC, attracting people to farming is not an easy task. Many types of farming are seasonal, which means that income does not come year round but comes primarily during harvest season. Each spring requires a heavy investment of labour and inputs, prior to receiving any income. Furthermore, for many farmers, taking a vacation during the warm summer months is not even an option. Generally smaller farms require more manual labour, especially if they are organic or use little to no herbicides and pesticides. Even if specialized equipment is available for seeding or harvesting, smaller farms often do not earn enough money to justify the costs of automation. Finally, entry into farming requires a great deal of technical knowledge in a wide variety of areas including business management, marketing, plant or animal sciences, policy, etc.

In addition to the challenges facing the industry as a whole, new farmers face additional barriers in the areas of accessing training, education and technical assistance, land, capital and credit, and markets.

A corresponding trend to the aging of farm operators is the decrease in number of farms, and the increase in size of farms. This results from farms being bought out from other farmers rather than being transferred to new farm operators. According to data from the 2006 Census of Agriculture, the number of farms in BC declined 10.9% to 5410 farms over the five-year period between 2001 and 2006. While the revenues of large farms increase, profitability of small farms is decreasing. Corresponding with less farms comes an increase in the average size of a BC farm from 315 acres to 353 acres.

**Benefits of smaller farms\*:**

Interact more with the public through farmers' markets, etc.  
Provide a buffer zone between residential property and the ALR  
Create a place for families  
Use land more intensively (higher yield)  
Use less agro-chemicals  
Are resilient/adaptable to change  
Retain money in the local community  
Create satisfying employment  
Connect consumers to their food  
Foster diversity  
Benefit the environment  
Emphasize quality over quantity

\*Please note that these statements are generalized and exceptions may be common

This trend of decreasing farm numbers and increasing farm size has been a continuous trend over the last century, as the population has steadily migrated from the rural countryside to urban centers. In the early 1900's, agriculture was very labour intensive; relying heavily on human or animal labour. Due to the high input of labour required to maintain a farm, most family run farms were small, between 5 and 40 acres, depending on the crops and type of land<sup>5</sup>.

Prices were reflective of the high inputs required to produce food. Therefore, a family could make a relatively comfortable

living from a small 5 acre farm. For example, according to this report, in 1919 a family could earn an average daily wage by the sale of a mere 10 dozen eggs. Over time, mechanization began to transform agriculture in the Fraser Valley. Horses were replaced with tractors, and families became capable of managing larger farms. With improved transportation came the benefits of new markets further abroad, but also brought food from other areas that could be produced more cheaply or efficiently.

As our economy has developed, we have witnessed the population transition from approximately 40% of the population earning their living directly from the

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<sup>5</sup> The role of Small Lot Agriculture in the South Coastal Region  
[http://www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/publications/For\\_Web\\_Small\\_Lot\\_Agric\\_in\\_South\\_Coastal\\_Region.pdf](http://www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/publications/For_Web_Small_Lot_Agric_in_South_Coastal_Region.pdf)

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agriculture, to approximately 1% today. This change has led to a lack of connection between agriculture and the general population, and has resulted in a need to educate our children and the population as a whole about where our food comes from. Today, agriculture and the concerns with the future of agriculture have taken a back seat to healthcare, crime and other politically hot topics. However, our ability to support our farms and produce our food is directly connected to the security and safety of our food system. As such, the future of agriculture and our farm operators continue to be of primary importance to the health and wellbeing of the people of BC.

Over the past 50 years, consumers have become accustomed to lower and lower food costs. By becoming more efficient, we have been able to produce food at very low cost relative to average income. Efficiencies have included high specialization, producing food in the most suitable locations, and using fertilizers and pesticides to reduce labour. In this way, the agriculture industry has created many of the problems that it faces by embracing unsustainable farming methods and practices.

While our society enjoys advantages such as convenience and inexpensive food, there are several drawbacks to the current specialization we experience. First of all, our food system is highly dependant on low energy prices to produce and transport our food. Therefore the cost of our food is highly related to the cost of energy; if energy prices rise significantly it will no longer be economical to produce and transport food for long distances. As such, our food supply is worryingly vulnerable to increases in energy costs, a reality that is becoming increasingly likely. The 2008 World Energy Outlook<sup>6</sup> states “while market

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.worldenergyoutlook.org/docs/weo2008/WEO2008\\_es\\_english.pdf](http://www.worldenergyoutlook.org/docs/weo2008/WEO2008_es_english.pdf) The World Energy Outlook is an annual publication of the International Energy Agency, is considered the most reputable source for energy analysis and information by governments and industries around the globe.

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imbalances could temporarily cause prices to fall back, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the era of cheap oil is over”.

Sectors of Fraser Valley agriculture which have targeted export markets have been vulnerable to boom and bust cycles. Over the past several decades, the farming community has invested billions of dollars converting farms to supply a hot market. Yet time and again we have seen a cycle of market strength followed by saturation and a concomitant drop in prices which have put farms out of business or necessitated yet another conversion, at times even before the previous crops have even reached maturity. Examples of such trends have included hops, ginseng, cranberries, and more recently, blueberries. Although much of this is due to oversupply on a global scale, this boom and bust phenomenon can be mitigated by relying less on export markets and more on local markets.

A diversified agricultural industry which produces a wide variety of food creates resiliency. Specialization of production in geographical areas creates a concentrated amount of stock which is vulnerable to epidemic and disease. For example, in 2004 an outbreak of avian influenza precipitated the destruction of all poultry flocks in the Fraser Valley. To date, increased biosecurity practices have successfully prevented a recurrence, yet the proximity and concentration of poultry farms in an area elevates the probability of similar outbreaks. Diversification of food production is one way of limiting the damages and spread of diseases that are ultimately extremely costly to our agriculture industry.

## Challenges and barriers

Agriculture as a whole faces many major challenges. Some of these challenges will be briefly highlighted to illustrate the challenges that new farmers face.

Agriculture in BC is incredibly diverse, and as such, an analysis of the challenges faced by farmers is also broad and diverse. For example, many farmers in BC have earned large surplus profits which have been re-invested into other businesses, while many other farmers depend on other businesses or occupations to support their farms.

Perhaps the greatest threat to farming and profitability of farms in BC is global competition. Free trade has opened up the BC marketplace to global competitors who enjoy lower input costs, better climates and greater economies of scale. These competitors push down food prices, making farming in BC less profitable. Related to this, our local grocery stores rely on supply chains which are managed at a national or international level making them inaccessible for smaller local producers. This means that a farm operation has to reach a certain size before it is able to access mainstream markets, even if it is able to produce a product at a competitive price.

Costs of inputs such as land, labour and energy are continually rising, making it increasingly hard for producers to remain profitable and compete globally. As other sectors of our economy grow, competition for critical resources becomes even more acute and drives up prices of labour, energy, and land. An aging workforce and lack of affordable land make recruiting and retaining skilled labour increasingly difficult.

Urbanization brings a number of challenges to agriculture. As populations grow, pressure on the land base for non-agricultural development intensifies. Growing urban centres require more and more land for industrial and commercial

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development as well as residential areas. Furthermore, agricultural land is highly sought after as country estates. In many cases large homes are being placed in the centre of agricultural lots, compromising the properties' suitability for agriculture. Complaints against farmers are increasing as people who have little experience with agriculture move into farmland and are surprised by the smells, noise or activities necessary to farming operations.

Farmers are also contending with natural forces such as weather or disease outbreaks. By diversifying our agricultural production, independent producers can become more insulated from disease outbreak. In addition, the agricultural base as a whole becomes more insulated from the effects of a particular disease or weather pattern, thus making our agricultural sector as a whole far more resilient.

Policy and regulation can also present huge barriers and challenges to farmers. While regulation and traceability is absolutely necessary to protect the health and safety of the public, it is imperative that policies accomplish this without jeopardizing the viability of farms, becoming unnecessarily restrictive, or eroding what are already often too small profit margins.

In spite of these and other challenges, farming is a rewarding and satisfying career. Farmers have demonstrated their strength by adapting and overcoming adversity and challenge. Farming provides a lifestyle which many careers cannot match. Recognizing the challenges facing farms today is not meant to deter new farmers, but is reason to support new farmers who are committed to providing food to our population.

## Accessing Land:

The cost of agricultural land throughout BC, and especially in the Lower Mainland is considered one of the greatest barriers for new farm operations. With less than four percent of the province's land base deemed suitable for agriculture, farmland is at a premium. Agriculture competes with residential, industrial, commercial and recreational interests for this prime land, with competition being greatest near urban centres.

As land becomes less available within urban centres, home properties become increasingly expensive. For example, the average price of a detached home in the Fraser Valley is nearing \$500,000. At this price point, it becomes increasingly attractive for many buyers to spend a little more to purchase a small acreage in the Agricultural Land Reserve. To some extent, rising urban prices cascade into the agricultural market, especially driving up the prices of smaller acreages of 10 acres or less.

According to Farm Credit Canada, while prices have decreased slightly in the last year, overall BC farmland has risen 76% in value between 2001 and 2008<sup>7</sup>. This varies greatly from region to region in BC, however it is safe to say that the Fraser Valley and Okanagan have experienced some of the greatest increases in value of agricultural land in the province.

A wide variety of factors affect real estate, creating a corresponding variance in prices from one property to another. As well, property values fluctuate over time. One of the most consistent variables influencing the cost of farmland per acre is the size of property: a small property (5 acres or less) will often be several times higher per acre than a large acreage. Property values also range based on

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<sup>7</sup> Farm Credit Canada [cited in Penner, D. Land Prices Outstrip Economics of Farming. Vancouver Sun, 24 May 2008

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agricultural suitability or use. Properties in the uplands tend to have less top soil and may be interspersed with bands of gravel, clay, or rock. These properties will have little agricultural value and will be much more affordable than prime valley bottom land with sandy soil and good drainage. Property values are also influenced by the homes and other buildings located on the property, proximity to urban centres, access, and numerous other factors.

Abbotsford consists of several regions, each with different soil types and suitability. Generally speaking, Sumas Prairie supports many dairy operations as well as cold cropping such as cauliflower or broccoli. The majority of blueberry farms are located on Matsqui Prairie, whereas the raspberries prefer drier soils around Huntingdon Road (Abbotsford Airport). Bradner and Mt. Lehman areas constitute the uplands, with rolling hills and more trees.

Because of this variety, it is nearly impossible to produce an accurate picture of how much it costs to purchase or rent farmland in the Fraser valley.

Sales of bare agricultural land are uncommon in the Fraser Valley; most properties come with a home of some sort. However, to give an indication of prices, included are 3 sales of bare land on Sumas prairie in the last 3 years:

4 acres – \$92,500 per acre

12.68 acres \$66,246 per acre

44.83 acres \$39,390 per acre

To put this in perspective for annual income required, payments on a 25 year mortgage on \$100 000 at 5% interest rate would be \$581.61 per month, or \$6,979.32 per year. Even with Abbotsford's average farm gate sales average of \$7,410.00, this will barely cover a mortgage, let alone cost of inputs or labour. While intensively farmed organic producers can earn considerably more per acre



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than the regional average, it still is plain to see that for most new farmers, purchasing land is not an economically viable option.

For many people, land ownership is a cultural value that is an important part of the attraction of farming. However, as ownership becomes less and less viable for farmers, it is becoming less realistic to expect to own farmland. In fact, it may be far more practical for farmers to consider other land tenure arrangements. This understanding has led many organizations across North America, including Farm Folk / City Folk in BC to explore and document creative and practical ways that farms and farmland can be used or transferred to willing and capable new farmers<sup>8</sup>.

Lease rates, much like sales, are also directly related to intended use, and therefore vary widely. In 2009, the following rates are an approximation of lease rates for various agriculture uses.

- less arable "horseland" can be leased for pasture for as low as \$150 / acre
- vegetables growing land varies between \$500 - \$600 for average land to \$900 - \$1000 for high quality
- floodplain dairy forage is \$450 - \$500 per year year
- berry land is \$1000 - \$1300 per year (raspberries; blue berries are almost never rented due to long plant life and high input cost).

Sometimes unique arrangements are made for a share of crop or profit which will lower the base rental rates.

Per acre lease rates tend to be lower for large parcels, and higher for smaller properties. Houses, barns, etc. will also increase prices. On a more encouraging note, if landowners care about how the land is cared for, they will often be

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<sup>8</sup> See Farm Folk / City Folk's guide to land access agreements at <http://ffcf.bc.ca/programs/farm/cf/laa.html>

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willing to lease for a lower rate to someone who will replenish the soil and practice responsible agriculture techniques.

Short term leases or agreements are beneficial when one or both parties are not seeking a long term commitment. For example a short term lease can be beneficial for a new farmer who is looking to experiment with farming or to determine whether or not farming is personally suitable. A short term lease can benefit a land owner who has long term plans for the land, or does not feel comfortable committing the land to a long term lease. Furthermore, a short term lease can present a trial period to build the trust and relationship necessary for a long term lease.

A long term lease allows for long range planning on the part of the farmer. This allows the farmer to work different crop rotations and invest in the property and the business with the assurance that the land base will remain accessible for the long term. Long term leases provide increased security and peace of mind for a farmer.

Leasing can provide significant benefit for a land owner: an income from the land, enjoyment and satisfaction of the land being used for agriculture, satisfaction of helping a new farmer, a reduction in care and work associated with the land, and significant tax benefits. At the time of writing, land in BC located outside of the ALR must be at least 2 acres in order to receive farm status. Inside the ALR, land less than 2 acres must gross more than \$10,000 annually. Less than 10 acres must earn at least \$2500 annually, where land greater than 10 acres must earn \$2500 for the first 10 acres plus 5% of the regulated farmland value for remaining land. However, it should be noted that this is currently being reviewed and changes to this legislation are being recommended.

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It is important to highlight that in the case of leasing, the income requirements apply to farm gate sales, and not the value of the leases. Land can be leased for as little as \$1 and still receive farm status if the land owner and tenant can prove that the agricultural enterprise is generating the minimum revenue as required. In this way, a lease can provide a significant tax savings to the land owner and yet can be made available to a farmer very inexpensively. Leases can also involve crop shares, profit percentages, and in-kind services that help the land owner share the risk and can reduce costs to the tenants.

Leasing land can be a barrier to accessing financing and capital because it is not an asset (collateral). However, a long term lease is preferable to a short term lease from the perspective of a lending institution because it shows long term commitment and stability on the part of the farmer. Lease costs are also not recoverable, and do not contribute to the overall equity position of the farmer.

Because of the low profit margins in farming today, retiring farmers are being forced to sell their land in order to support themselves in their retirement. Unfortunately, though they may be interested in transferring the farm to an interested new farmer, the retiring farmer cannot afford to offer the farm on terms that a new farmer can typically manage. Thus, traditional land use rental agreements are often insufficient to meet the needs of either incoming or retiring farmers.

In some instances, a path to ownership agreement may be beneficial, as it is a tool to transfer ownership in an affordable manner which allows the new farmer to build equity while deferring mortgage payments. This type of arrangement can be an excellent tool to enable a successful, gradual transfer which can give both parties substantial financial advantages while allowing the owner to mentor the successor. This can be accomplished either with a lease with an option to purchase, or a land contract. A land contract allows the successor to make

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payments and have control and possession while the title for the property remains with the seller until payment is complete. A lease with the option to purchase will detail the terms of final sale, but defer the actual sale for the length of time specified in the lease agreement<sup>9</sup>.

Land trusts can be a powerful tool to assist both retiring farmers and new farm start-ups. While traditionally land trusts have been geared towards protection and conservation of land, community land trusts are geared towards the utilization of land for those who could not otherwise afford it<sup>10</sup>. A land trust can purchase or inherit land and can negotiate a long term lease or lease to own agreement with a new farmer. While the Fraser Valley Conservancy is a local land trust and the Land Conservancy of BC is a provincial trust, these organizations are both geared towards the protection of land from development or environmental harm. In contrast to this, a local land trust has at its heart a primary goal of securing farmland for lease or transfer to new farmers.

Precedents exist elsewhere for large scale land trusts in the public interest. Why not establish a Trust and Foundation for BC Lands? A specific umbrella trust for agriculture could be developed so that a percentage of the billions of dollars of intergenerational wealth in the province could be put to good use as a support for "beginning" farmers and for innovation. The mission of such a proposed Trust and Foundation would be to "bring to the public and private sectors one agenda for the preservation and conservation of valued settlement and natural assets of lands in BC".\* Land or money that might flow under the agriculture umbrella could be used to support new farmers by allowing a land leasing arrangement

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<sup>9</sup> [http://growingnewfarmers.org/uploads/uploads/Files/Access\\_to\\_Land\\_TNF\\_article.pdf](http://growingnewfarmers.org/uploads/uploads/Files/Access_to_Land_TNF_article.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> For more information, see <http://www.cedworks.com/files/pdf/free/P203FSS01.pdf>

\* Concept Paper, Trust for BC Lands and Trust for the BC Lands Foundation, Draft Two. 1994. Prepared by Tim Pringle for the Minister of Environment, Lands and Parks.

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and a stipend to get started. This process could begin with the leasing of existing crown land in the ALR.

This fund should also be available to people who have ideas about new projects or better ways to do something that might benefit agriculture. This could involve a variety of partners (private, non-profit and governmental) who might come together with a project. These funds would be targeted to people who are extending the business of agriculture through connecting it to other resource uses or business or entrepreneurial opportunities.

Moura Qualye – Stakes in the Ground<sup>11</sup>

Municipal or public lands can also be utilized by farmers by way of short or long term licences. Such arrangements can be mutually beneficial, as the land is maintained at no cost to the municipality or tax payers while a farmer can reap all the benefits of a secure tenure arrangement.

Community farms, including co-ops, are a model which allows multiple farmers to work together on a farm enterprise. The land is leased or owned cooperatively by the group of farmers, or a larger group of shareholders, or an altogether separate community. There are numerous benefits to a community farm including sharing of costs and risks, sharing of labour, knowledge and experience, and (obviously) a sense of community. However, there is also an increased complexity involved in management and decision making as well as start-up. Still, the community farm is one of the most viable and affordable ways for new farmers to begin farming. Farm Folk / City Folk has recently teamed up with The Land Conservancy of British Columbia to launch a community farm

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/polleg/quayle/stakes.htm>

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program to support and encourage the community farm as a means of supporting and developing farms<sup>12</sup>.

Farm co-ops can take on a wide variety of purposes or structures in BC. Farm co-ops can have independent farms as members which join together for one or more of the purposes including marketing, processing, sharing supplies or equipment, or individuals can form a co-op for ownership of land or a complete farm operation. Farm co-operatives are a legally recognized business structure which has a membership and a Board of Directors which are owned and managed democratically. With their shared resources and increased competitive advantages, co-operatives provide an innovative and useful opportunity for new farmers to be able to create farm enterprises.

### **Land in Abbotsford**

A number of residents, farmers, and businesses who had land were solicited to determine what considerations must be taken into account as well as where the best sources of land would be. Businesses are not typically the best source of land. Most businesses are not located within the agricultural land reserve and are not typically suited for agricultural purposes. The few businesses that are located on agricultural land are typically doing farm related business operations, and therefore are typically utilizing the land for their business. One exception may be gravel pit reclamation projects, which are now required of harvesting companies to return land to a state of agricultural suitability once the site is no longer being harvested. Sites and businesses will have to be examined on a case by case basis.

Residences are a second source of land that was examined. Rural lifestyle is highly prized by many people, creating a high demand for acreages and rural

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.communityfarms.ca/>

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estates. Not all of the inhabitants of these rural homes or farms are interested in maintaining farm operations. In some instances, they are spending more than they are profiting by having some cattle grazing in the pasture, but the net benefits of tax savings via farm status is sufficient incentive to continue.

However, in some cases the opportunity of a reduced work load will be incentive enough to allow a new farmer access to the land in order. In this way, the land owner can reduce the costs and labour involved with farming, and yet maintains the financial benefit of farm status.

Existing farms are perhaps one of the best methods of accessing land. The aging population of Abbotsford farm operators necessitates the transfer of business and farm assets to new ownership. Many retiring farmers have dedicated a lifetime to building their family farm. While many have family or other relatives to transfer their farm to, it is not uncommon for retiring farmers to be seeking a suitable successor for their farm. In some cases children may gratefully accept the land and assets but are not interested in operating the business. Others may be looking to sell the entire property, but wish to see it continue to be operated in much the same manor as it is currently being utilized. This represents a great opportunity for the right person to enter into a relationship with a retiring farmer, perhaps receive some mentorship and training, and to establish a somewhat flexible agreement of transfer of assets. Although the logistics on such a relationship are complex, it is not unheard of to facilitate such a transfer.

The common denominator in all of these scenarios is the need for a matchmaker agency which can connect people who are interested in becoming farmers with those who have land and desire to provide access to new farmers. This agency should provide the expertise to answer common questions, provide leasing templates, and facilitate more complex succession planning and transfer agreements.

## Attracting new farmers

The lack of new farmers is not an easy issue to address. However, it is important to create as many supports and resources as possible to encourage, inspire and enable those who do have an interest in farming to succeed. There are some who would sacrifice opportunities for better paying careers to work in a job that is personally rewarding, important, and enjoyable. **Over a one year period, the Community Futures South Fraser office in Abbotsford consulted with at least ten individuals who are not currently farming or part of a farming family but are interested in transitioning into farming as a career.**

Recruiting new farmers should include a variety of traditional advertising through media, newspapers, and other venues, as well as directed advertising to all the training programs listed in Appendix A including the UBC farm, SOIL program, Woofers, all university and college programs including Kwantlen, UBC, and UFV, and community based organizations or programs such as Farm Folk / City Folk, Abbotsford Soil Conservancy, and the Chamber Agriculture Council.

Understanding young people (generation Y) is important to help create and foster a culture that will support these new farmers. For example, this group tends to enjoy working in teams and is quite sociable. They are tech savvy, and value a healthy work / life balance. Therefore a successful recruitment program will likely use social media and other technology, will offer a social component where new farmers will have peers that they can fit in and socialize with, and, as much as possible, won't expect new farmers to put in long hours to succeed.

Over the course of this feasibility study we have conducted several forums to engage people in the topic of agriculture. Through our discussions and questions, we have arrived at the following conclusions.



## Supporting New Farmers

It is important to be aware that those interested in becoming farmers may have a wide range of previous experience, from being raised on a family farm, having completed apprenticeships, where some will have had no experience at all. Some flexibility in programming needs and content may be required to make the program relevant and useful for a broad range of folks whose common thread is an interest in becoming farmers.

There are many reasons why people would like to become farmers. Probably the greatest driver is to be self employed. Most also are drawn to the idea of producing and eating local food. Many view farming as a desirable lifestyle and way to raise their family. People find farming a meaningful and satisfying way to contribute to society.

Interestingly, in our research, lack of viability or low profits was not generally viewed as a deterrent, although high start-up costs were. Many people also mentioned the hard work and long hours required as a significant deterrent. A number of people also mentioned the lack of peers in the same age group who were interested in farming. Another significant downside to farming for some is the negative connotations associated with farmers and farming.

By far the greatest barriers to farming are financial; both in start up costs and long range sustainability. People interested in farming generally have very little confidence that they will be able to start and maintain a profitable farming operations. Other significant barriers cited are lack of knowledge and access to land.

From our conversations with people, many felt that a small (under five acres) parcel of land would be sufficient to start farming. As for supports, they viewed community support and mentorships to be the greatest needs.

## Viability of small scale Agriculture:

While it is true that agriculture is already a massive economic contributor, there is still a tremendous potential for growth. It is estimated<sup>13</sup> that BC farmers produce 48% of **all** foods consumed in BC and produce 56% of foods consumed that can be economically grown in B.C. When projections of population increase (estimated at 20% over the next 15 years) are factored in, the need for increased food production becomes even more emphatic.

The Fraser Valley is one of the best regions in Canada for agriculture. Boasting one of the longest frost free growing seasons in Canada, an average of over 1500mm of rain annually, an abundance of some of the most fertile soils in Canada, excellent topography and proximity to supply and market, Abbotsford is in many ways an ideal place for new farmers to meet the growing demand for local food.

Although it is acknowledged that only a small portion of land in BC is considered arable, and even a smaller fraction is top quality farmland, we are not nearing the potential for food production in BC. While much of Abbotsford is farmed intensively, yet there is a significant amount of land which is not being used as efficiently as it could be if at all for food production.

In recent years, Vancouver has become a leader in the local food movement. The 100 Mile Diet<sup>14</sup> was originally inspired by concerns over the environmental impacts a typical North American diet carries. Typically, ingredients travel thousands or even tens of thousands of miles to reach our plates. As consumers become more aware of the benefits of local food, demand is increasing. In fact,

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<sup>13</sup> "BC's Food Self Reliance: Can BC's farmers feed our growing population?" A 2006 study by BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands.

<sup>14</sup> <http://100milediet.org/book> Smith, Alysa and J.B. Mackinnon. The 100-Mile Diet: A year of Local Eating 2007 Random House Canada

## Supporting New Farmers

in 2009, several farmers' markets in the Fraser Valley have reported growth rates of up to 100%. Abbotsford's farmers' market has also experienced an amazing growth, with 2009 annual vendor sales exceeding \$250,000, a 30% increase over the previous year.

### Ten Reasons to Eat Local

- supports our local economy
- fresh food is more nutritious
- fresh food tastes better.
- less preservatives required
- healthy for our environment
- eat with the seasons
- connect us to the land
- create a safer food system
- encourage variety in our diets
- support responsible land development

With a population of over 2 million in metro Vancouver, there is nearly unlimited market potential for farm producers from Abbotsford. Perhaps one of the best marketing methods available to the local producer is the CSA, or Community Supported Agriculture. This method has enormous potential for smaller farms, and to date has hardly been developed in the greater Vancouver marketplace.

While it is true that local agriculture is forced to compete with imported foods, it should be noted that agriculture throughout North America is facing many of the same challenges of competition for inputs such as water, land, labour, and fuel that our local farmers face. These pressures may very well drive up food costs as we have experienced in 2008 when a spike in the price of oil drove up manufacturing and transportation costs. Such increases favour local farmers who are ordinarily unable to compete with cheap imported foods by driving up the price of imported foods and making local foods much more competitive.

## Market potential for small scale agriculture

There are numerous distribution channels for small farms operating within the Lower Mainland because of Abbotsford's expansive agriculture industry. The following practices have been considered and evaluated based upon primary research from informational interviews, and secondary research collected from research papers

### **Community Supported Agriculture (CSA):**

CSAs are a relatively new model for farming distribution, in which customers buy shares for a season by paying a fee in advance. In return, they receive a weekly basket of food. The amount of produce that the consumer receives varies with the performance of the crop. Thus, CSAs provide an ideal start-up farm model, in which capital is received before the growing season and risk is distributed evenly between the customers and farmer. Another benefit is that the CSA model eliminates the middle-man, increasing the profit margin per vegetable, which allows a smaller farm to be financially viable. CSA farms are growing in popularity in the Lower Mainland, with new CSAs sprouting up every year. Recently, a new grain CSA in Agassiz, BC, sold out its shares in its first year of operation.

Local farmers from Glen Valley Organic Farm Co-operative, Glorious Organics and Yarrow EcoVillage reiterated that CSAs are the best model for young beginner farmers. However, they all agreed that the CSA model should be supplemented with a retail operation at local farmers' markets to ensure any excess produce is sold and to diversify distribution. Together, these two distribution channels should become profitable after the initial capital investment of starting a new farm is recouped.

## Supporting New Farmers

However, CSAs can present some difficulties for new farmers and a solid knowledge of farming is needed to operate successfully. Since shares usually consist of many types of produce, they can require a farmer to grow up to 60 different varieties during the course of the growing season. Another common mistake made by new CSA farms is providing too much food in each share, which was the most common reason for customers to leave a CSA program, and contributed to a 37% turnover rate found in the Washington and California.

### **Farmers' Markets**

Farmers' markets are a growing trend in the Lower Mainland, with a new market started in Abbotsford in 2004 and plans to build an \$8 million permanent farmers' market in Vancouver. Currently both of the Vancouver's main farmers' markets are at full capacity with an excess of demand from local customers. Vancouver's farmers' markets have been growing at a rate of 30 per cent year and are becoming a popular alternative to typical grocery stores. The same trend can be noticed in Abbotsford, where the local farmers' market is gaining popularity. Many farms within the Fraser Valley have retail operations at numerous markets, with some farms selling at up to 9 markets per week.

Many farms are turning to farmers' markets because of their stress free nature, where you have more flexibility in the quality and volume of your produce. Farmers only sell what they have available and do not have to worry about meeting specific growing quotas. Farmers' markets are a great way for new farmers to hone their craft and gain confidence in their abilities.

Farmers' markets also provide an excellent medium for marketing activities directed towards the public and are ideal for creating or expanding a customer base. Customers can purchase the farm's produce to ensure its quality is satisfactory, before they commit to a CSA share or other distribution method.

## Supporting New Farmers

Farmers' markets are a great way to create relationships and credibility with local customers.

### **Retail**

Informational interviews were conducted with 8 major grocery stores in the Abbotsford. The produce department in each store was surveyed to learn more about their suppliers and if they carry local produce. It was found 100% of the sampled grocery stores sell local produce, with local produce comprising on average 21.25% of their entire produce selection. There was a general consensus between the managers that they try to buy local when possible, but the short growing season in BC is a deterrent. The stores look to warmer climates for produce supply, with 100% of grocers importing produce from California and 37.5% from Mexico.

The survey indicated that 100% of grocery stores in Abbotsford would be willingly to try new suppliers, and all the managers agreed that a small local farm could become a supplier for their stores. However, becoming a supplier is a difficult process, which involves dealing with a head office buyer for 6 of Abbotsford's grocery stores. The other 2 grocers were open to farms approaching the manager or owner to become a supplier. While only 1 manager had heard of the "eat local" movement, all were aware of the increasing demand for local, seasonal food.

### **Restaurant**

Many of the surveyed farms directly sold to restaurants or sold to restaurant distributors within the Fraser Valley. The farmers expanded to include restaurant sales, once they had established their farms and were confident that they could provide the volume required. Glorious Organics Farm has created a hybrid system in which they sell CSA shares to local restaurants, which provides more variety and an ever-changing menu for the restaurant. Glorious Organic Farm

## Supporting New Farmers

also expressed the importance of farms being resilient and adaptive to market conditions. They stated that they frequently change their distribution according to demand. At times their farm has sold majority of their crop at farmers' markets and at other times they have only sold to restaurants. Glorious Organics has proved that most distribution channels are profitable and that diversifying your distribution is the best way to stabilize sales during changing economies.

### **Schools and Institutions**

Schools and post-secondary institutions are abundant in Abbotsford, with 47 elementary schools, 3 post-secondary institutions, and 5 career colleges. A good portion of these facilities have cooking facilities or a functioning cafeteria used to prepare food for staff and students. This is a massive untapped market, where affordable local produce could make a dramatic impact.

### **Farm Stands**

Of the farms interviewed in Abbotsford not one utilized a roadside farm stand for revenue. This realization is most likely a result of the increased popularity of farmers' markets, which provide a centralized location for purchasing local produce.

### **Rent-a-Row / U-Pick**

Rent-a-Row is a relatively new model where customers can rent a section of arable land from a farmer and grow the crops of their choosing. Rent-a-Row farms typically have additional farming operations and use a Rent-a-Row system if they have an excess of farmland. U-Pick or Pick-Your-Own farms grow fruit and vegetables to be harvested by customers. The job of harvesting the crop, one of the most expensive costs of growing produce, is passed on to customers. U-picks are a popular attraction in Abbotsford, because of the freshness and quality of

## Supporting New Farmers

our produce. However, the increased foot-traffic on the farm can damage crops and equipment.



## Scan of supports for new farmers

### International

Following is a scan of existing North American programs geared towards encouraging and supporting new farmers in order to gain best practices and trends. While there are other programs and best practices, this scan is limited to the programs which are summarized in greater detail in Appendix B. Our scan reveals a wide range of approaches or methods to support new farmers, including:

- face to face workshops and teaching programs
- incubator farms
- farm link matchmaker services
- market link type programs
- business planning assistance
- sharing and publication of information and resources online
- ongoing research and development
- social networking
- publicity and awareness building
- apprenticeship and mentoring programs

Some organizations choose to use several or all of these approaches, while other organizations choose to specialize in just one or two methods.

### **Online Resources:**

Many organizations have developed websites which host reports, research, or tools for new farmers. Often these are free for anyone to use, but some also have nominal fees attached. Due to the relatively low cost and broad effect of this method of aiding new farmers, this has become one of the most available resources for new farmers. Examples include Intervale, Greenhorns guidebook, Rodale, US Department of Agriculture (ATTRA), Beginning Farmers, USDA

## Supporting New Farmers

Alternative Farming Systems Info Center, Sustainable Farmer, Integrated Pest Management Program, and New England Small Farm Institute (NESFI).

### **Teaching / Workshops:**

Probably one of the most important supports for new farmers is training. This is also one of the most common offerings (next to online resources) that organizations offered. The most common offering are specific workshops rather than full scale programs. New England Small Farm Institute has developed a course titled "Exploring the small farm dream" which consists of four sessions aimed at helping individuals decide if they wish to pursue a career in Agriculture. The course is currently offered numerous locations in the United States as well as in Manitoba, Ontario and Nova Scotia. Other agencies offering workshops and training include Rodale, Farmstart, Intervale, Beginning Farmer Center, Cornell – New York, Beginning Farmer Project, NESFI, Future Farmer Program

### **Incubator Farms:**

The concept of an Incubator farm was pioneered by Intervale in Vermont. The concept of an incubator farm is to host new farm businesses who share equipment and resources as they test out their business plan, establish a customer base and gain experience in farming. Then, once their businesses are viable, they move their farm businesses onto a more permanent location. The Farmstart program in Ontario is the most established example of an incubator program in Canada.

Linking programs are often connected with incubator farmer in order to help new farmers connect with land, retiring farmers, or customers. These programs are done either formally or informally, with the most developed versions being automated online services such as FarmStart's web based FarmLINK. With this program new farmers, existing farmers and farm owners fill out a profile that is added to an online database of farmers or landowners who can provide

## Supporting New Farmers

opportunities for accessing land, succession planning, mentorships and other opportunities. New farmer's profiles are also available for viewing. Examples of incubator farm programs include Farmstart, Intervale, and NESFI

### **Business Planning:**

The first crucial step in establishing a viable farm operation is developing a realistic and appropriate business plan. Intervale has a 2 year, 1 on 1 business planning program that helps approximately a dozen new farmers (annually) plan and operate their new farm businesses. There are also many other business planning tools available to starting farmers. Several examples are Intervale, USDA Library Rural Info Center, Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE), U. Minnesota Ag Plan.

### **Research:**

Several organizations such as devote themselves to using research to support or advance small lot agriculture practice and policy. Examples are Rodale, Farmlasts, and the Guelph new farmer project

### **Publicity / Awareness:**

Realizing the need for peers support and networking, as well as the importance of educating the public and changing negative perceptions of farming or farmers, the Greenhorns and Farmers for the Future are examples of organizations that have dedicated a great deal of resources towards public education and awareness.

### **Social Networking**

One of the needs of a new generation of farmers is to utilize networking for social and learning reasons. New farmers want to feel supported and encouraged by other new farmers. They are utilizing different means including social media such as facebook, blogs, as well as webinars, face to face meetings, and other

## Supporting New Farmers

tools to create networks. The organization that is leading the way in this capacity is the Greenhorns.

### **Apprentice and Mentor Programs**

Mentor programs are a cost-effective way to provide specialized training and experience to new or prospective farmers. A mentorship program involves matching the experience of farmers with a new farmer to provide answers to questions and advice in how to run an existing farm operation. An apprenticeship differs from this in that a prospective farmer will work on an established farm to gain experience and training. Examples of mentor or apprenticeship programs include those of InterVale, Craft Ontario, Woofers, and Farm On.

## British Columbia

Current options for people interested in becoming farmers in BC include university and college programs, apprenticeships, employment on farms, gardening or hobby farms including Small Plot INTensive (SPIN), and community farm programs. Youth programs such as Agriculture in the Classroom and 4H provide excellent training and education for youth up to age 21.

Although education is readily available for students, supports and training specifically targeting new farm businesses is underrepresented. Currently, people who are interested in starting farming have options available to them including enrolling in agriculture programs at universities and colleges in the province. Alternatively they could seek to gain experience on a farm or in aspects of farm marketing in an apprenticeship, such as World-Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF), Stewards of Irreplaceable Land (S.O.I.L.) Internships and the Sowing Seeds for the Future: Organic Farming Apprenticeship Program at UBC Farm. Industry trade associations also provide workshops and seminars.

## Supporting New Farmers

While these opportunities provide some training in agriculture they are not targeting new farm business start ups. Abbotsford does have an Agriculture Mentorship Program through the Fraser Valley Farm Direct Marketing Association, but this program is currently scaled back due to lack of funding.

For a more comprehensive list of training resources and programs in BC, please view appendix A.

## **Filling the Gap: an incubator program for Abbotsford**

Our scan of opportunities, available resources, and farmers needs concludes that new farmers in Abbotsford (and BC) would significantly benefit from an incubator program modeled on similar programs in eastern Canada and the United States.

Agriculture today is threatened by shortages of new farmers who are starting a career in farming. The average age of farmers is continually rising, while barriers such as cost of land, quota, and competition from other occupations are increasing. On the other hand, there is a growing unmet demand for local food in BC which any new farming operation can tap into. For example, farmers markets are in constant need of new farmers and product to keep up with consumer demands, local chefs and restaurants are reaching out to develop relationships with local farmers to provide speciality product, and food distribution companies are creating 'buy-local' programs to supply their restaurants with the product they are demanding.

The problem of aging farmers is a complicated one. While it is driven primarily by economics, it extends far beyond these issues. For example, even within the relatively profitable supply managed sectors, the issue of farm succession and aging farm operators persists. Undeniably this is in large part due to the high cost of start-up, with the expense of quota being above the costs of land and equipment and other expenses. Having said this, young people are often dissuaded by family members, friends, or society from pursuing careers in agriculture.

People interested in becoming farmers face five major barriers; start up costs, access to land, market viability, lack of peer support, and the need for education

## Supporting New Farmers

and training. An effective program must address all of these issues in one way or another.

Current training programs generally provide some training in agriculture and perhaps business but do not usually provide support for new farm businesses at the time of start up. Often land and resources must be sourced by the new farmer and often require outside funding. Currently there is limited concerted effort to help new farmers make the transition to starting and successfully operating a farm business.

An incubator farm program is perhaps one of the most practical ways to support and enable new farmers to gain hands experience in the many different nuances of starting and running a farm business without the same level of risk and cost of doing this independently. Not only do farmers gain experience in the actual operation of their farm, but they also develop skills in marketing, purchasing, equipment, finances, etc. Furthermore, at the end of the program, participants leave not only with skills, but with a viable, operating business. While it would be great to see an incubator program in every community in BC, currently there are very few (if any) programs of this nature operating in the province.

Ontario currently boasts a highly successful program called "Farmstart" which has been instrumental in helping numerous farmers to start farming. The Farmstart program includes an "incubator" farm with over 13 new farmers, a business development program graduation 10 people per year, workshops and seminars, and a Farmlink program profiling 50 farms and 80 interested new farmers. Modelled on the Ontario Farmstart program, a similar BC program would provide comprehensive supports for new farmers including access to land, training, equipment, mentorships and peer support. This project would create a support structure that will address many of the barriers which are preventing new farmers from launching their own businesses.

## Supporting New Farmers

Expensive and scarce land places more and more pressure on farmers to wring as much production as possible from the land. However, this necessity actually favours small lot agriculture, which operations tend to average higher profit per acre than larger farms. In fact, there is a growing body of evidence which supports the idea that, contrary to popular belief, organic farming methods are as effective as conventional practices and are equally or more profitable, especially for smaller lot agriculture<sup>15</sup>.

In order to connect with a new generation of farmers, we need to promote the message that food can be produced in a safe, ecologically responsible, and viable manner. Models such as Tourne-sol in Quebec, Saanich Organics on Vancouver Island, and locally Fraser Commons Farm, Glenn Valley Organics, and Friesen Farms all demonstrate that small scale farming, when done well, works

### **Barrowtown Incubator Farm**

Based on the successful modelling of programs such as Farmstart, Intervale, and New England Small Farm Institute, other incubator farms are being founded across North America. In Abbotsford, an initiative called Barrowtown provides an example of the benefit of an incubator farm. In spring of 2009, AFACT became aware of a 14 parcel of municipal land which sitting vacant. This land presented a fantastic opportunity to become one of the first operating incubator farms in the province of BC. In order to make this possible, a society was formed (called the Barrowtown Agricultural Development Society) and three new farmers, Hannah Cavendish-Palmer, Jamie Scoular, and Amy Suess were recruited to bring the land into production. The three young entrepreneurs developed a business plan, hired contractors to prepare the fields, and planted over 30 varieties of seeds, including cole crops, cucumbers, zucchini and squashes, corn, beans, peas, fresh herbs, potatoes, flowers and other greens.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.sare.org/publications/explore/explore.pdf>,  
[http://www.rodaleinstitute.org/transition\\_fact\\_sheet](http://www.rodaleinstitute.org/transition_fact_sheet)



## Supporting New Farmers

The new business marketed under the name Skeeter Farm to friends and family through a veggie box program, online through their blog<sup>16</sup>, e-mail, and Craigslist, and at the local farmers' market in Abbotsford. Due to initial investments in infrastructure such as an irrigation system and site upgrades, the group has not fully recouped their initial investment, but it is hoped that the society will be able to attract funding that will cover the capital costs. It is anticipated that the next growing season will see the group expand its market and turn a mild profit.

The experience gained in a short period of time at an incubator farm such as Barrowtown cannot be reproduced in any other educational model. A classroom setting or even a mentorship do not provide the same extent of hands on experience in planning and executing one's own farm operation. Experience includes sourcing inputs, finding and developing markets, accounting and record keeping, equipment maintenance, and of course crop (or livestock) management. In addition to gaining experience in all aspects of operating a business, participants in an incubator program come away with a viable farm business and an established market.

### **Primary goals:**

1. Create new, economically viable and sustainable farming operations
2. Create long term employment with long term benefits to local communities
3. Proliferate ecological farming practices and enhance the food security of the region
4. Create a model that may be expanded in the future to include other regions
5. Operate across segments to explore niche markets and inspire innovation
6. Provide centralized access to existing and new resources for new farmers

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<sup>16</sup> <http://skeeterfarm.blogspot.com/>

## Supporting New Farmers

### **Components:**

1. A matching service that will match farmers who need land to start or expand their operation with available, suitable farmland from private land owners who would like their land farmed. The basics of a matching program have informally been developed throughout the course of this study by developing a database of prospective farmers and available land. A land link program would be extremely beneficial in providing opportunities for lease, purchase, or other means of tenure. An agricultural land trust may also be a way of assisting new farmers to access land.

2. Incubator Farms where is land provided with some shared equipment and mentoring opportunities while new farmer implements business plan and builds farming skills. Barrowtown represents the first of such farm plots. Once a business completes a 3 to 5 year term on an incubator farm, it would be ready to progress to the next step, which should include long range tenure of land,

3. Development of a mentoring network that links provincial mentoring and internship opportunities such as the Fraser Valley Farm Direct Marketing Association Mentoring Program, S.O.I.L. Internships, Farm Folk/City Folk's Community Farms Network, and the Sowing Seeds for the Future: Organic Farming Apprenticeship Program at UBC Farm.

4. An Agriculture Employment program will utilize a multifaceted approach that provides access to land, equipment, business workshops, practical farming knowledge, mentorships and peer support. The program envisages a three stage structure:

Stage 1 – Intake and initial research – Applicants will attend an orientation workshop and a business planning session. From there, they will be supported as they create a preliminary business plan.

## Supporting New Farmers

Stage 2 - Training - Sessions will include crop planning, financial record keeping, marketing and value-added processing, environmental farming concepts (soil stewardship, high efficiency water use, enhancing biodiversity on the farm) and extra workshops covering current topics and innovation

Stage 3 - Implementation - New farmers who complete the program will come away with a farm business plan and the skills necessary to start and run their business. They will then have at their disposal several options tailored to their individual needs, in order to launch their business including placement on an incubator farm, through the matching service, or situating on their own land with access to mentoring.

5. The project should be interfaced by a public website which houses the matching service and other resources such as a guidebook for starting new farm enterprises to be developed by the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. As a secondary function, the website should promote the growing new farmer movement within BC communities. It will be a resource for prospective new farmers, established farmers, local governments, and the general public.

6. New farmers need to feel that they have a support network that they can access as they make the transition from their previous life into that of an agriculturalist. The project will host special social events and encourage knowledge sharing through a user managed website for new farmers. A networks of new farmers in Abbotsford has recently been established, in part due to the contacts which have been made through this study.

### **Stakeholders:**

Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce

Abbotsford Farm and Country Market

Barrowtown Agricultural Development Society

BC Farm and Ranch

## Supporting New Farmers

BC Healthy Living Alliance

BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands

City of Abbotsford

Community Futures South Fraser

Farm Credit Canada

Fraser Health Authority

MCC Employment and Community Development

### **Resources:**

BC Agriculture Council – human resource strategy (growing forward)

BC Food Systems Network

BC Young Farmers

Canadian youth business foundation

Farm Folk / City Folk

Fraser Valley Farm Direct Marketing Association

Fraser Valley Food Network

Kwantlen Polytechnic University

Metro Vancouver

Redi BC

Small Scale Food processor association

Sowing Seeds for the Future: Organic Farming Apprenticeship Program at UBC

University of the Fraser Valley

VanCity

### **General Budget Elements :**

The following budget elements are roughly estimated 2 year start up costs, including 2 full time staff.

#### Expenses

Staff	\$235, 000
Infrastructure	\$50,000

## Supporting New Farmers

Website	\$20,000
Education	\$20,000
Marketing	\$20,000
Administration	\$30,000
Land lease	\$25,000
	<hr/>
	\$400,000

### **Specialized focus:**

Two keys to addressing market viability are niche markets and value chains. A niche market may consist of a specialty product which is not available elsewhere, or it could be a more standard product with specialty properties. For example, an example of a specialty product would be a particular type of cheese which might not be readily available in the marketplace, a standard product with specialty properties might be a more common variety of cheese which is locally produced and contains no preservatives or chemical additives.

A value chain describes a special relationship between a retailer and the producer, including all the intermediaries such as a processor, a distributor, etc. A value chain encourages greater communication and can result in a better product for consumers as well as greater cooperation and loyalty between the various members of the value chain.

Promoting the concepts of niche markets and value chains are keys to growing profitable businesses in agriculture. These ideas can be promoted along with stories of innovation and creativity to once again help make agriculture and farming an appealing and rewarding career option.

## Appendix A: BC Training and Resources:

### Government Links

- [Ministry of Agriculture and Lands](#)
- [British Columbia Farm Industry Review Board](#)
- [Provincial Agriculture Land Commission](#)
- [Canadian Food Inspection Agency](#)
- [Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada](#)
- [British Columbia InfoBasket](#)

### Industry Organizations Links

- [Investment Agriculture Foundation](#)
- [British Columbia Agriculture Council](#)
- [British Columbia Food Processors Association](#)
- [British Columbia Council of Marketing Boards](#)
- [British Columbia Cattlemen's Association](#)
- [British Columbia Wine Institute](#)
- [British Columbia Fruit Growers Association](#)
- [British Columbia Greenhouse Growers Association](#)
- [Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia](#)
- [British Columbia Dairy Foundation](#)
- [First Nations Agriculture Lending Association](#)
- [Canadian Federation of Agriculture](#)
- [British Columbia Milk Producers Association](#)
- [British Columbia Dairy Council](#)
- [British Columbia Association of Farmers' Markets](#)
- [The Small Scale Food Processors Association](#)
- <http://www.bcfarmfresh.com/>

### Research and Educational Links

- [British Columbia Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation](#)
- [UBC Faculty of Land and Food Systems](#)
- [FarmFolk/CityFolk Society](#)
- [Farm and Ranch Safety and Health Association](#)
- [British Columbia 4-H](#)
- [Pacific Agri-Food Research Centre](#)
- [Farmwest.com](#)
- [British Columbia Farm Women's Network](#)
- [British Columbia Sustainable Poultry Farming Group](#)
- [Soil Conservation Council of Canada](#)
- [British Columbia Outstanding Young Farmer Program](#)

## Supporting New Farmers

- [British Columbia Association of Agriculture Fairs & Exhibitions](#)
- [The Canadian Association of Farm Advisors](#)
- [Farmcentre.com](http://Farmcentre.com)
- [Farmchoices.ca](http://Farmchoices.ca)
- Thompson Rivers University
- [UFV - Chilliwack Campus](#)
- [Westgen](#)
- [Gaia College](#)
- [Kwantlen](#)
- [Horticulture Centre of the Pacific](#)
- [www.earthwisesociety.bc.ca](http://www.earthwisesociety.bc.ca)
- [Organic Farming Institute of BC](#)
- [Horticulture Centre of the Pacific](#)
- [Linnaea Farm](#)

## Appendix B: Best Practices- International Programs

### **FarmStart**

[www.farmstart.ca](http://www.farmstart.ca)

FarmStart is an Ontario based non-profit organization that is trying to “support and encourage a new generation of farmers to develop locally based, ecologically sound and economically viable agricultural enterprises”. FarmStart has been instrumental in helping numerous people to start farming. They specifically target young people with a farming background, young people new to farming, second career Canadians and new Canadian farmers. They teach ecological farming practices that emphasize a holistic approach to agriculture which consider the biological and social impacts of farming. FarmStart not only teaches students how to farm, but also cover the business topics relevant to operating a farm successfully. This comprehensive and multi-faceted approach has sparked massive demand with over 80 interested new farmers trying to get into the program. Currently, FarmStart has 13 new farmers divided between their two “incubator” farms, which provide access to land, infrastructure and equipment needed to grow, process, and market their products. Farmers pay a reasonable fee for the use of land and equipment, and can stay as long as 5 years.

This program provides the ideal tool for new farmers to grow their business to begin generating profit, before they have to make major investments in land and equipment. As the farmers gain experience they will move through the programs three stages: Start-up Farms, Enterprise Farms and Mentor Farms. The tiered system is geared to encourage long-term sustainability and promotes innovative and alternative business practices. Also, FarmStart has worked extensively to create a network of 50 new farms within the Ontario region with their FarmLINK program, which matches new farmers to available farmland or mentorship opportunities. FarmStart has also created another program called MarketLINK which conducts research into new market opportunities for farmers in Ontario.

### **Intervale Farms Program**

<http://www.intervale.org/>

Intervale Center is a Vermont based non-profit organization that created Intervale Farms Program in 1990 to counter aging farmer demographics. The Intervale Farms Program pioneered the “incubator” farm model currently being used by FarmStart in Ontario. The program divides 120 acres between 13 farms and employs over 60 full-time and seasonal employees. The Farms Program leases the land, equipment and facilities to the farmers based on an agreement



## Supporting New Farmers

to only farm organically. Since some of the farms are in their infancy, Intervale offers a full gamut of marketing and business planning resources for the new farmers. Intervale's Farms Program eliminates start-up barriers that usually challenge new farmers including: access to training, land, capital, and markets. The recent rise in demand for locally grown, fresh, organic food has dramatically increased the demand and relevance of the Farms Program. Intervale has had major success with the program, because of the cooperative spirit of the farmers, where they provide mentoring and support for their peers.

Once an incubator farm has existed for three years and proven its viability, it will transition into Enterprise Farm status. Enterprise farms can extend their lease, but the fee increases to cover full operating costs of the services. Six farmers have graduated from the Farms Program to move onto farms in the Vermont area, while others continue to farm in Intervale and may become Mentor Farms. Mentor Farms must have been in operation for at least 5 years, and are given the added responsibility of mentoring incubator farms.

### **The Greenhorns**

<http://thegreenhorns.net>

"The Greenhorns" is a movement of young farmers across the United States, Ireland and Canada. Their goal is to create awareness about America's reliance on foreign agriculture and to encourage more young people to farm. The film promotes the nutritional and economical benefits of growing produce domestically by demonstrating how foreign dependence has harmed the American farmer and consumer. They have produced a documentary outlining fifteen new farmers who have taken up sustainable and alternative farming practices to try to support America's ailing agriculture industry. The documentary focuses on the farmers' hardships, innovation and path to agriculture. The film promotes their cause and illustrates how small farms can provide food security for their local community.

The Greenhorns movement has since evolved into a medium through which young farmers can find inspiration and the resources required to successfully operate a farm. In their efforts to provide support for young farmers, a thirty page guidebook has been compiled called "The Greenhorns Guide for Beginning Farmers". The guidebook provides information on all the aspects of operating a farm and even covers alternative subject areas like urban agriculture and community based agriculture. The Greenhorns movement can be closely followed by accessing their blog (<http://thegreenhorns.wordpress.com>), which provides an up to date following of their grassroots movement, success stories and additional resources for young farmers.

**Rodale Institute**

<http://www.rodaleinstitute.org/>

The Rodale Institute, based out of Kutztown, Pennsylvania, was founded in 1947 as the Soil and Health Foundation. Currently, it is one of the foremost leaders in organic agriculture research and conduct the majority of their research trials on their 333-acre farm. The Rodale Institute has pursued the advancement of organic farming since their creation, pioneering new organic farming techniques that are now common-practice in the agriculture industry. Their research has proven that organic farming methods are as effective as conventional practices and outperform conventional farming during droughts.

The Institute promotes “economically viable sustainable farming techniques” that provide health and environmental benefits for society. The Rodale Institute provides numerous programs and resources for new farmers directly through their farm and website. The online Organic Transition Course (funded by the USDA’s Risk Management Agency) explains the process of converting a conventional farm into an organic farm. The Organic Price Report is a weekly report accessible on their website, which compares organic and non-organic wholesale pricing at various locations throughout the United States. The New Farm webzine is composed of farmer success stories and articles summarizing recent agriculture research. Their website also offers current news and research focusing on how organic farming could reduce global warming, fight worldwide hunger and improve the nutritional value of food.

**FarmLASTS**

[www.FarmLASTS.org](http://www.FarmLASTS.org)

The FarmLASTS project at the University of Vermont is funded by the National Research Initiative of the USDA. The project’s purpose is to rejuvenate the United States’ aging agriculture industry by encouraging new generations to farm. FarmLASTS will address the lack of affordable land for new farmers through education, research and outreach. The project intends to improve the ways in which “land is acquired, stewarded and passed on”.

Over 80 percent of U.S. agricultural land is controlled by small to medium sized farms, so access and transfer of farmland will be very important in upcoming years. It is estimated that 70 percent of farmland in the United States will change ownership in the next twenty years. It is FarmLASTS priority to mitigate the risk of agriculture land being consumed by urban sprawl and to provide new farmers with a means of acquiring land.

## Supporting New Farmers

From [www.FarmLASTS.org](http://www.FarmLASTS.org):

There are multiple challenges in farm entry, exit, tenure relationships and transfer. The purpose of this project is to discover and share new approaches, models and strategies that foster farm entry, succession and stewardship.

- Investigate how farmland is acquired and held by farm entrants, and how new land tenure and transfer approaches can improve farm viability and land stewardship.
- Conduct research in farmland access and tenure, farm succession, and environmental impacts of tenure arrangements, working with university researchers, non-profit professionals, and beginning and exiting farmers.
- Develop and pilot two educational modules that will be disseminated to academic institutions and non-academic farmer teaching programs.
- Conduct outreach activities at regional and national levels. We will produce written materials including an Extension manual, conduct training events, organize and host a national conference, and place articles in popular farm and rural media.
- Explore the public policy implications of these land access, tenure and stewardship issues and make policy recommendations

### **The New Farmer Project**

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/~claws/newfarmers/index.html>

The New Farmer Project is the progeny of the University of Guelph's Centre for Land and Water Stewardship (CLAWS). The Project is a response to the influx of new immigrants in the Greater Toronto Area that wish to farm, but have no connections to the farming community. Many immigrants don't have the any access to farmland or contact with experienced farmers. It is this disconnect, which the New Farmer Project is trying to address.

The New Farmers Project is partnered with FarmStart, who provides agricultural and business training. FarmLINK provides new immigrants with connections to farmland available for lease or purchase, MarketLINK provides information on new market opportunities and MentorLINK connects young farmers to experienced farmers through a mentorship program. However, the New Farmer Project differs from FarmStart, by specifically tailoring its program to new immigrants. The Project has begun to research Toronto's demand for ethnic crops, and the possibility of growing them in Southern Ontario.

### **ATTRA - Sustainable Farming Internships and Apprenticeships**

<http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/internships/index.php>

[http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/farm\\_energy/index.php](http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/farm_energy/index.php)

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ATTRA, formerly known as the Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas project, but now is more recognized as the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service. ATTRA is based out of the United States and provides one of the largest online compilations of sustainable farming publications and resources. Publications are available in the following topics: horticulture crops, field crops, soils and compost, farm energy, water management, pest management, organic farming, livestock, marketing, business and risk management, and education. ATTRA also publishes a weekly newsletter with industry news and research updates.

One of ATTRA's most useful features is the Sustainable Farming Internships and Apprenticeships directory, which can search any region in the United States or Canada for farming internships or apprenticeship openings. The directory has been published since 1989 and has become an instrumental tool for new farmers trying to find work experience.

### **Farmers for the Future: Social Networking**

<http://farmersforthefuture.ning.com/>

Farmers for the Future is a social networking website created by Agriculture Online to give new farmers a medium to connect and consult with other farmer's with similar experiences. With over 1,500 members and growing, the website provides farmers with a sense of camaraderie and support, in a competitive and isolating industry. The most useful feature is the forum, which allows members to post questions, news or advice to their peers.

### **Local Harvest**

<http://www.localharvest.org/>

Local Harvest is an American database of small farms, farmers' markets and other food sources. The database allows for customers to locate the closest place to purchase fresh produce and for farmers to locate places to sell their produce. The website also has a search engine of CSA subscriptions, allowing customers to find the CSA nearest them. Another innovative feature of the website is an online marketplace, where produce can be purchased directly from the farms through e-commerce. Local Harvest's database has over 17,000 members with 20 new members joining every day.

### **Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training in Ontario (CRAFT Ontario)** <http://www.craftontario.ca/>

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CRAFT Ontario is a network of farms offering training opportunities in the province of Ontario. Potential apprentices have to go through a formal application process, facilitated by CRAFT Ontario, to the various farms. CRAFT Ontario has many farms which offer mentorship every year, and even more apprentice applicants. Updates on the apprentices are available through their website, which publishes tips and advice for potential apprentices.

### **Beginning Farmers**

<http://beginningfarmers.org/>

Beginning Farmers is a web-based resource created by the Michigan State University to compile a list of the major new farming initiatives in the United States. It provides links to programs concerning all the major topics in starting a new farm such as, business planning, marketing, financing, farm training, employment, internships, production, and land. The website also publishes farming related news and links to the major farming forums for new farmers to ask questions and give opinions.

### **USDA Alternative Farming Systems Information Center Educational and Training Opportunities in Sustainable Agriculture**

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/edtr/EDTR2008.shtml>

The USDA's National Agriculture Library operates the "Educational and Training Opportunities in Sustainable Agriculture" which keeps an up-to-date list of colleges, universities, associations and organizations that offer agriculture education or training. The database is filtered on a state level basis, which allows new farmers to easily locate to programs in their area.

### **USDA National Agricultural Library's Rural Information Center**

[http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/small\\_farm\\_funding.htm](http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/small_farm_funding.htm)

The USDA National Agriculture Library's Rural Information Center has compiled a comprehensive list of business plan writing, financial planning, and funding assistance resources. The resources are targeting new farmers who are operating small farms.

### **Sustainable Farmer**

[sustainablefarmer.org](http://sustainablefarmer.org)

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Sustainable Farmer offers a great selection of resources pertaining to sustainable farming practices that are conscientious of the environment. Sustainable Farmer also has assembled a large number of multimedia packages, which offer useful summaries of the latest research in sustainable farming.

### **SARE - Building a Sustainable Business: A Guide to Developing a Business Plan for Farms and Rural Businesses**

<http://www.sare.org/publications/business.htm>

A research paper created by the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture which gives a 280 page guide for writing a business plan for farms. The paper contains some example business plans, which provide some very practical agriculture business advice.

### **Integrated Pest Management Program - Organic Vegetable Production Guides**

[http://nysipm.cornell.edu/organic\\_guide](http://nysipm.cornell.edu/organic_guide)

Cornell University in New York Integrated Pest Management Program has compiled a list of production guides for vegetables, fruit and livestock that teach the proper pest management. These guides demonstrate the proper techniques and substances to use for specific crops to successfully and safely manage pests.

### **International Farm Transition Network (IFTN)**

<http://www.farmtransition.org/>

The International Farm Transition Network is run by Iowa State University "to support programs that foster the next generation of farmers". The main focus of this network is to create programs that facilitate the transition of older farmers off farmland and the entry of new farmers onto their land. The program works to reduce the barriers to farm entry, preserve farmland and to promote mentorship through the transition process.

### **University of Minnesota AgPlan**

<http://agplan.umn.edu/>

The University of Minnesota has put together an online business plan writing website called AgPlan. The website provides an online word processor, business plan template, and free online consultants and advisors, who review and edit your business plan. AgPlan also supplies business plan examples, resources and tips for writing a realistic plan. AgPlan has created this website to service new

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commodity farms, value added farms, rural small businesses, and commercial fishing operations.

### **Beginning Farmer Center, Iowa State University**

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/bfc/>

The Beginning Farmer Center created by Iowa State University Extension runs several programs geared towards increasing the number of new farmers in their state. FarmOn is a program which matches retiring farmers with new farmers to create mentorship and apprenticeship opportunities. FarmOn also helps to transition the ownership of the land to the new farmer. Another program that the Beginning Farmer Center offers is Ag Link. Ag Link is an educational outreach program, which gives seminars to college students intending on returning to their family's farm.

### **The New York Beginning Farmer Project - Cornell University**

<http://www.nybeginningfarmers.org/>

The New York Beginning Farmer Project, created by Cornell University, is one of the premiere farm training programs in the United States. The program offers an online course on basic farm operation, training in business plan and marketing plan writing. The NY Beginning Farm Project also gives its members access to financing, grant, and production resources. The most unique aspect of this project is the video documentation of recent graduates, who give new farmers advice and inspiration through their success stories.

### **The Rainbow Farmer's Cooperative – The Food Project**

[http://www.growingpower.org/rainbow\\_farmers\\_coop.htm](http://www.growingpower.org/rainbow_farmers_coop.htm)

The Rainbow Cooperative is a large farm cooperative in the Eastern United States that represents over 300 farmers. The Food Project is an initiative of the Rainbow Farmer's Cooperative, which attempts to train new, small farm operators in the best practices of business and farm operation.

### **New England Small Farm Institute**

<http://www.smallfarm.org/>

<http://growingnewfarmers.org/>

The New England Small Farm Institute operates a 416 acres training farm in Massachusetts, which is heavily used by their Farm-On Mentor program. The

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NESFI also offers seminars to see “if farming is right for you” aimed at potential new farmers. The new farmer program also teaches farming practices and business plan writing to ensure program graduates have an extensive knowledge base and long term goals. Program participants also get access to a large resource collection, composed of numerous agriculture publications.

### **Agricultural Marketing - Pennsylvania State**

<http://agmarketing.extension.psu.edu/siteMapR.html>

Pennsylvania State University has compiled “Agricultural Marketing” directory on their website, which specifically targets new farmers. Topics covered include: Alternate Production Practices, Cooperative Arrangements for Equipment Sharing, Farm Succession Strategies, Innovative Marketing Strategies, New Generation Cooperatives, On Farm Diversification Strategies, Using the Internet to Market Products, Business Management, and General Marketing Strategies. Each topic has multiple guides, which were written with new farmers as the audience.

### **Future Farmer Program**

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/af/agweb/index.php3?number=1003085&lang=E>

The Future Farmer Program created and operated by the Government of Prince Edward Island’s Department of Agriculture is one of the most complete training programs in Canada. It provides new farmers with apprenticeship opportunities, financial aid, business writing workshops and land-use opportunities. The program experienced tremendous success in its early years and has been renewed until 2013. However, the program has strict admission requirements and is very difficult to get into.



## Appendix C: Farm Survey Responses

### Farm 1

When did you start your CSA program?

-2003, but they are winding down their farm operations

Has it been successful?

-Overall the farm was not profitable, so it was hard to tell

Did you have farming experience prior to opening a CSA? If so, how many years?

-3years

How many acres of land do you use for your CSA?

-total farm land of 3 acres

How long is your CSA program open, each year?

-20weeks

How much do shares cost? Approx. how many lbs of food will one share provide?

-\$80 every 2 weeks or \$150 for a double share every 2 weeks

How do you deal with the winter months?

Only offered CSA during 20week growing season

Does what you grow, depend on the season?

-Yes, grew seasonally

How many different varieties of Fruits and Vegetables do you offer throughout a year?

-30 types

Do you grow organic food? Is it certified organic?

-Yes/yes

How many members do you have?

-12

Do you offer half-shares or varying sizes of shares?

Yes

Do you allow for customization in you shares?

## Supporting New Farmers

Yes-customers got to pick from a menu and the remaining vegetables were sold at the farmer's market

Do you allow customer participation in the farming?

Yes, it was allowed but participation was minimal

How many people work on you farm (staff)?

1 for CSA

Approximately, what is your customer retention rate?

80-90%

Have you had troubles with customers leaving? Why do you think?

-No, only if they were moving.

Have customers complained about their being too much food?

-Yes, but they addressed it by selling varying share sizes

Do you sell shares to any retail/restaurant customers?

-No

Do you use the CSA as your only means of selling produce?

-No- farmer's market

What % of revenue is generated by your CSA program?

-10%

What other means of distribution do you use?

-Farmer's market

Do customers pickup at the farm or do you have drop-off points?

-Both

What forms of advertising/marketing do you use?

-Word of Mouth, pamphlets at the farmer's market, website

Do you think a newly trained farmer could successfully run a CSA as a start-up farm if they had received good training?

-Yes, if they have the proper support and are very organized. Furthermore, they are

needed because of the aging demographics of farmers in the valley. "Very good way to start if they have support, maybe a network of farms"...it would be the ideal and most profitable model for small farm start-ups. Thinks that the teaching farm could be a CSA in which young farmers come to intern on.

## Supporting New Farmers

Do you have any tips or advice for starting a new farm or what to avoid?

-The CSA was the most profitable section of their farm and it would have been the centerpiece. They farmed for 7 years and were not profitable. In their start-up years all labour was volunteer, then they began to pay \$5/hr, \$8/hr and eventually \$10/hr. The main barrier to being profitable in the Fraser Valley on a small farm is the overhead: the price of land, labour and equipment is extremely high. They had interns on their farm for 1 year, and it was hard to explain everything to them, because they were so eager to "get at it" and get their hands in the dirt. It was only after the first growing season that they realized that the pests, weather, and logistics of farming were hard to control—began to listen. Recommends Glen Valley and Fraser Common Farm as good CSA models. Glen Valley was only profitable after 10 years, and both these farms have extra land in which they could just plug interns onto their farms.

## Supporting New Farmers

### **Farm 2**

When did you start your CSA program?

-A year ago.

Has it been successful?

-Yes, it supplements their other revenue

Did you have farming experience prior to opening a CSA? If so, how many years?

-1 year of farm experience, 5 years in a greenhouse. Prior to starting farm at Glen Valley.

How many acres of land do you use for your CSA?

-12 acres

How long is your CSA program open, each year?

-51 weeks

How much do shares cost? Approx. how many lbs of grains will one share provide?

-Operate through a buying club in Vancouver, they get \$25 per share, but they sell for \$32 per share / week. 30% markup is because the buying club already has a strong customer base.

How do you deal with the winter months?

-N/A, farm 51 weeks a year through storage crops.

Does what you grow depend on the season?

-Yes

How many different varieties of Fruits and Vegetables do you offer throughout a year?

-50-60 per year

Do you grow organic food? Is it certified organic?

-Yes, certified.

How many members do you have?

-24 CSA share members

Do you offer half-shares or varying sizes of shares?

-No

## Supporting New Farmers

Do you allow for customization in you shares?

-No

Do you allow customer participation in the farming?

-Yes it would be allowed, but it hasn't happened.

How many people work on you farm (staff)?

2 business operators (Jeremy and Chris), 3 laborers work all year and 2 summer labourers.

Approximately, what is your customer retention rate? (might not apply)

-100% (first year)

Have you had troubles with customers leaving? Why do you think?

-N/A

Have customers complained about their being too much food?

-No

Do you sell shares to any retail/restaurant customers?

-No, not CSA shares.

Do you use the CSA as your only means of selling produce?

-No

What % of your farm's total revenue is generated by your CSA program?

-3 or 4%

What other means of distribution do you use?

-Retail at markets (9 per week), 1 restaurant directly, and 1 restaurant wholesaler

Do customers pickup at the farm or do you have drop-off points?

-N/A, use buying club

What forms of advertising/marketing do you use?

N/A, buying club has its own customer base and advertising.

Do you think a newly trained farmer could successfully run a CSA as a start-up farm if they had received good training?

-No, unless they supplemented it with sales at a market. The best format for a new farmer would be farmer's markets because you only sell what you have and what people want. "They are more flexible in volume and quality". You don't have to force produce on customers like in a CSA, where the variability in crops is stressful. However, a hybrid with a CSA and the market would be ideal.

## Supporting New Farmers

Do you have any tips or advice for starting a new farm or what to avoid?

- Glen Valley Co-op had a good system where a senior farmer mentored young farmers. Young farmers should start at the farmer's market and then evolve into a hybrid system with a CSA once they feel confident they can fulfill the CSA's required production. A young farmer with a market operation and a CSA program with 10-20 members would be lucky to bring in \$50,000-\$60,000 in revenue (not profit). The Glen Valley Co-op system is ideal because they don't have to buy the land, instead they get to lease it for a reasonable price.

-The biggest mistake with young farmers is that they get too ambitious and plant too much, which means the weeds get out of control and become a major cost (organic farms only). Farming alone can be dangerous, and it's a much better idea to have a partner. For a similar setup to Glen Valley to teach/lease, 2-3 acres per person would be appropriate. Jeremy said that his farm is profitable and he makes a great living off of it. Furthermore, he highly recommends the Glen Valley Co-op model and would even consider taking on a third partner.

## Supporting New Farmers

### **Farm 3**

When did you start your CSA program?

-Have had two CSA programs. Current one is in 3<sup>rd</sup> year, Former program lasted 5 years in the late 1990's.

Has it been successful?

-Yes, it has been profitable.

Did you have farming experience prior to opening a CSA? If so, how many years?

-Yes, 10 years

How many acres of land do you use for your CSA?

- 7 acres total

How long is your CSA program open, each year?

-20 weeks

How much do shares cost? Approx. how many lbs of grains will one share provide?

-\$500/ 20weeks (\$25/week)

How do you deal with the winter months?

-Only farm 20 weeks per year, April to November

Does what you grow depend on the season?

-Yes, only grow for the 20 weeks

How many different varieties of Fruits and Vegetables do you offer throughout a year?

-Don't know. Offer a salad each week, plus 4-6 different vegetables.

Do you grow organic food? Is it certified organic?

-Yes, certified

How many members do you have?

-30 members

Do you offer half-shares or varying sizes of shares?

-No

Do you allow for customization in you shares?

-No

## Supporting New Farmers

Do you allow customer participation in the farming?

Yes encouraged, but doesn't occur.

How many people work on you farm (staff)?

-15 → equivalent of 7 full time works

Approximately, what is your customer retention rate? (might not apply)

-75%

Have you had troubles with customers leaving? Why do you think?

-Yes, disappointed they didn't offer fruit, and that the vegetables weren't clean enough

Have customers complained about their being too much food?

-No

Do you sell shares to any retail/restaurant customers?

-Yes, Bishops restaurant has a CSA share.

Do you use the CSA as your only means of selling produce?

-No.

What % of your farm's total revenue is generated by your CSA program?

-20%

What other means of distribution do you use?

-Also sell at 3 farmer's markets weekly, to 10-12 restaurants directly and to a restaurant food distributor

Do customers pickup at the farm or do you have drop-off points?

-3 drop-off places, and pickup

What forms of advertising/marketing do you use?

-Word of mouth, customer referrals, farmer's markets

Do you think a newly trained farmer could successfully run a CSA as a start-up farm if they had received good training?

-Yes, have to have marketing experience and farming experience. The CSA would be successful based on the farmer's experience and ambition. Although, you have to be resilient in farming, regardless of what method you use to distribute. They typical which distribution channel they use depending on the market. At some points they have sold all 100% of their produce to restaurants, or have sold only at farmer's markets. The key point is that you need to adjust to market conditions. The CSA is a great model, but it works best with a farmer's market for supplemental sales.



## Supporting New Farmers

Do you have any tips or advice for starting a new farm or what to avoid?

-A co-op is the best business structure for operating a farm, where you have 3 or more equal shareholders. Typically couples are a bad idea, because farming is stressful and can cause people to split-up and cause the demise of the farm. You should look into "Community Farm Alliance" through farm folk/ city folk and TLC.

## Appendix D: Land availability questionnaires

- Business
  - Residence
  - Farmer
  - Retired Farmer
- 

Would you be interested in helping a new farmer by providing a portion of your land? Why not? Yes – we are community-minded; wish to give back.

How much land available? 1 – 2 acres

How long would the land be available? i.e.: 1, 2, 5, 10 years... indefinitely?  
Possibly indefinitely – depends on the relationship w/young farmer.

What concerns, fears or reservations would you have?

Holistic approach to land and farming

Biodiversity

Pesticide free

Crop beneficial to bees

We want a viable product and receipt of this viable crop

We use drip irrigation

Farmer does not create more work than able to handle by self

If farmer, would you be interested in any mentoring / training of young farmers?

Absolutely. We are beekeepers. We are well-connected in the community; we have developed markets and networks to share. We are involved in research for farming / beekeeping.

What would you expect / want in return? Property development

Cover crops for healthy bees

That the farmer would develop skills – want to see progress

Liability insurance

Can we contact you for an update in a few months' time?

Contact info:

Can you refer us to anyone that we should be speaking to? n/a

## Supporting New Farmers

- Business
  - Residence
  - Farmer
  - Retired Farmer
- 

Would you be interested in helping a new farmer by providing a portion of your land? Why not? Yes.

How much land available? 1 acre – more if the relationship is a healthy one..

How long would the land be available? i.e.: 1, 2, 5, 10 years... indefinitely?  
Indefinitely

What concerns, fears or reservations would you have? What will the land be used for. Only want crops, not animal farming.

If farmer, would you be interested in any mentoring / training of young farmers?  
n/a

What would you expect / want in return? Hands on involvement in all of the affairs as we wish to develop a work experience project for our clients.

Can we contact you for an update in a few months' time?  
Contact info:  
Please do.

Can you refer us to anyone that we should be speaking to?  
I will forward this information to my neighbours who also have parcels of land and if they are interested, they will contact you directly.

## Supporting New Farmers

- Business
  - Residence
  - Farmer
  - Retired Farmer
- 

Would you be interested in helping a new farmer by providing a portion of your land? Why not?

Unsure; will discuss with my husband.

How much land available? n/a

How long would the land be available? i.e.: 1, 2, 5, 10 years... indefinitely?  
n/a

What concerns, fears or reservations would you have? House broken into, insurance – if new farmer was injured on the property, mess in yard, tools damaged, water / irrigation, electricity / power supply

We would have liability issues – insurance etc.

What would be produced on the land and our interest in this would be dependant on the product grown / land usage.

If farmer, would you be interested in any mentoring / training of young farmers?  
Possibly

What would you expect / want in return? money, food / produce, labour, help  
We are the type of people that are not motivated by money but rather stewardship of the land. If we were to partner with a farmer they would have to be responsible with the scope of caring for the land, and farming practices that are noble.

Can we contact you for an update in a few months' time?

Contact info:

No.

Can you refer us to anyone that we should be speaking to?

n/a

## Supporting New Farmers

- Business
  - Residence
  - Farmer
  - Retired Farmer
- 

Would you be interested in helping a new farmer by providing a portion of your land? Why not?

Yes – we have some land available that is not in use.

How much land available? 4 parcels – totaling approximately 23 acres

How long would the land be available? i.e.: 1, 2, 5, 10 years... indefinitely?  
Initially to try for one year; if the relationship is good, then longer.

What concerns, fears or reservations would you have? House broken into, insurance – if new farmer was injured on the property, mess in yard, tools damaged, water / irrigation, electricity / power supply

We are desiring to reduce the taxes on the land.

What will the farmer be doing on the land – no animals.

If farmer, would you be interested in any mentoring / training of young farmers?

N / a – we are not farmers.

What would you expect / want in return? money, food / produce, labour, help  
We would want a lease payment for the land. Also, looking to reduce the taxes on the land. We want to see that the land is producing an income so that we can obtain the tax reduction on this land.

Can we contact you for an update in a few months' time?

Contact info:

Can you refer us to anyone that we should be speaking to? No

## Supporting New Farmers

- Business
  - Residence
  - Farmer
  - Retired Farmer
- 

Would you be interested in helping a new farmer by providing a portion of your land? Why not?

Land in question is zoned industrial – I do not believe it could be worked temporarily however I am unsure.

How much land available? One field – approx 2 acres.

How long would the land be available? i.e.: 1, 2, 5, 10 years... indefinitely?  
n/a

What concerns, fears or reservations would you have?

Looking for alternative revenue to recoup taxes on the property at this time.

If farmer, would you be interested in any mentoring / training of young farmers?  
N/a

What would you expect / want in return? money, food / produce, labour, help  
N/a

Can we contact you for an update in a few months' time?  
Contact info:

Can you refer us to anyone that we should be speaking to?  
n/a

## Supporting New Farmers

- Business
  - Residence
  - Farmer
  - Retired Farmer
- 

Would you be interested in helping a new farmer by providing a portion of your land? Why not? Possibly

How much land available? Potentially more than one acre but that is the amount we would start with.

How long would the land be available? i.e.: 1, 2, 5, 10 years... indefinitely?  
On a trial basis? One year to see how it went.

What concerns, fears or reservations would you have?

Farmer would have to use organic methods

The farmer would have to be the right fit – not contrast with our mission and vision for ourselves. We are a public retreat centre and a community co-op of residents.

If farmer, would you be interested in any mentoring / training of young farmers?  
n/a

What would you expect / want in return?

Produce – definitely expect the farmer to put in an herb garden for our kitchen!!

Can we contact you for an update in a few months' time?

Contact info:

Can you refer us to anyone that we should be speaking to?

## Supporting New Farmers

- Business
  - Residence
  - Farmer
  - Retired Farmer
- 

Would you be interested in helping a new farmer by providing a portion of your land? Why not? Yes. Young people aren't inclined with access to land.

How much land available? n/a

How long would the land be available? i.e.: 1, 2, 5, 10 years... indefinitely?  
n/a

What concerns, fears or reservations would you have?

I wouldn't want the land taken from me.

I have a concern for taxes payable – they would have to be covered, not my liability.

If farmer, would you be interested in any mentoring / training of young farmers?

I would

What would you expect / want in return?

Taxes would have to be paid.

Can we contact you for an update in a few months' time?

Contact info:

No

Can you refer us to anyone that we should be speaking to?



## Supporting New Farmers

- Business
  - Residence
  - Farmer
  - Retired Farmer
- 

Would you be interested in helping a new farmer by providing a portion of your land? Why not?

No. The land is full of gravel and is zoned industrial.

How much land available?

N/a

How long would the land be available? i.e.: 1, 2, 5, 10 years... indefinitely?

n/a

What concerns, fears or reservations would you have?

n/a

If farmer, would you be interested in any mentoring / training of young farmers?

n/a

What would you expect / want in return?

n/a

Can we contact you for an update in a few months' time?

Contact info:

Not interested.

Can you refer us to anyone that we should be speaking to?

n/a

## Supporting New Farmers

- Business
  - Residence
  - Farmer
  - Retired Farmer
- 

Would you be interested in helping a new farmer by providing a portion of your land? Why not? We found a use for the land, so I am not considering young farmers.

How much land available?

n/a

How long would the land be available? i.e.: 1, 2, 5, 10 years... indefinitely?

n/a

What concerns, fears or reservations would you have?

If farmer, would you be interested in any mentoring / training of young farmers?

Not interested

What would you expect / want in return?

n/a

Can we contact you for an update in a few months' time?

Contact info:

Can you refer us to anyone that we should be speaking to?

Will ask any of my associates if they would be willing and will forward your contact information to them.

## Supporting New Farmers

- Business
  - Residence
  - Farmer
  - Retired Farmer
- 

Would you be interested in helping a new farmer by providing a portion of your land? Why not? No – we are a hatchery and have a biosecurity assessment. Access to land under this is limited and the only farming permitted would be by ourselves.

How much land available? n/a

How long would the land be available? i.e.: 1, 2, 5, 10 years... indefinitely?  
n/a

What concerns, fears or reservations would you have?  
n/a

If farmer, would you be interested in any mentoring / training of young farmers?  
n/a

What would you expect / want in return?  
n/a

Can we contact you for an update in a few months' time?  
Contact info:

n/a

Can you refer us to anyone that we should be speaking to?  
We don't know anyone that could fit your project.

## Supporting New Farmers

- Business
- Residence
- Farmer
- Retired Farmer

Would you be interested in helping a new farmer by providing a portion of your land? Why or why not? I'm not interested as the land I have I rent out and none is available.

How much land available? n/a

How long would the land be available? i.e.: 1, 2, 5, 10 years... indefinitely? n/a

What concerns, fears or reservations would you have? That the farmer that came onto the land had some previous experience and would be able to stand on their own two feet. Farming is difficult and it's a way of life.

I would also have concerns about damage to equipment as that is simply to be expected with a new young farmer. They are on a learning curve and will make mistakes but who will cover the cost? That is my concern.

Also, that on a smaller parcel the young farmer would grow something that could provide them with a return. They will not be able to compete with large farming operations. They would need to put in a specialty type of crop to survive and to turn a profit.

If farmer, would you be interested in any mentoring / training of young farmers? No, I would want them to stand on their own two feet.

What would you expect / want in return? Cost of the value of the rent of the land.

Can we contact you for an update in a few months' time? Contact info

Can you refer us to anyone that we should be speaking to? I will think about it and get back to you if I find someone.

## Supporting New Farmers

- Business
- Residence
- Farmer
- Retired Farmer

Would you be interested in helping a new farmer by providing a portion of your land? Why not?

If it is possible. Not sure we have enough land.

How much land available?

We only own 10 acres. About 1/2 is in pasture etc. for horses. The other 1/2 is lawn, and fallow. There is a red line stream in this area.

How long would the land be available? i.e.: 1, 2, 5, 10 years... indefinitely?

As long as all is working out, at least 10 years. Then I will probably be considering selling and buying a nice little condo. on the ocean!!!!

What concerns, fears or reservations would you have?

Co-operation between us all and what will be happening to the land etc. Need to be sure it is not interfering with my horses.

If farmer, would you be interested in any mentoring / training of young farmers?

What would you expect / want in return?

I would like to somehow claim farm status by getting the \$2500 annual income. Horse boarding does not count!

Can we contact you for an update in a few months' time

Sure.

Contact info:

Can you refer us to anyone that we should be speaking to?

Just us I guess

## Appendix E: New farmer questionnaire

AFACT has developed this questionnaire to help us gain a better understanding of the issues, challenges and barriers facing people interested in becoming farmers. Your answers to these questions will help us develop supports or resources to overcome some of these barriers and create opportunities for more people to begin farming. Please be as specific as possible!

1. What is your level of interest or involvement with farming (circle whatever applies):
  - a. I am currently working on a farm—1
  - b. I am operating my own farm—6
  - c. I am hoping to some day operate my own farm—4
  - d. I am interested in supporting others who are farming—8
  - e. Other (please explain) —5

*The responses for other included: marketing work for farms, have a full time job but started a small farm part-time, student interested in farming as a career option, and a small garden that is considering expanding.*

2. What experience (if any) have you had with food and/or agriculture? For example, formal education, mentoring programs or family farming background.

*Seven stated having a formal farming education ranging from Farming Classes, and a Diploma in Agriculture, to a MSc. Agriculture in Rural Economics. One person has been involved in mentoring programs. Nine people grew up working on their family farms or are operating their own farm now. One person manages a farmer's market. One person worked on a farm in their youth. Two people have no experience.*

3. What appeals to you about farming?

*Seven people stated that they wanted to be self sufficient on their crops. Five people like the concept of eating locally growing food everyday. Two people want to start a family as a family business to teach their children agriculture. Three people like the idea of contributing to society in a positive and real way. Four people would enjoy the lifestyle of living on a farm. Four people would like to work outdoors. Two people want to be their own boss. One person thinks they'd find the hard work rewarding.*

- Lifestyle and Land stewardship

## Supporting New Farmers

- Around urban centres there is unused Ag land that is speculated upon – thus any land that is being used for farming, is land stewardship
- People appreciate what you do
- The connection to where food comes from
- The satisfaction from an end of a hard days work and fulfilling the most basic human need
- People get unhappy when they are unable to farm
- Being self reliant
- Being my own boss and being outside

### 4. What are the downsides of farming in your opinion (if any)?

*Six people cited the cost of start-up (i.e. land and equipment) as the main downsides of farming. Three people show concern of a lack of peers around the same age. Five responses indicated that the hard-work was a deterrent. Two people said that farming is too unpredictable. One person was concerned about the risk of food safety with regards to public consumption. One person felt a downside was the amount of machinery knowledge required to operate a farm. One person cited the weather as a negative factor. Only one person said that the financial benefits were a downside. Three people think that the negative connotations of farmers are the main downside. Two people said the long hours were off-putting and one person thought the isolation would be a negative factor.*

### 5. What type of farming most strongly interests you? (Some examples may include field vegetable, greenhouse, poultry, dairy, mixed, etc)

*Twelve people cited field vegetables as a farming method of strong interest. Seven people said that a poultry operation would be desired. Two People would like to grow fruit. Two people specified that they want to grow organically. Two people said they would like to use a CSA model. One person was interested in goats and sheep for wool. Three people said they would like to have a dairy farm. Four people would like to use a greenhouse to farm. One person is interested in cash crops. One person is interested in farming flowers and a total of thirteen people would like to have a mixed operation.*  
opportunities being in close proximity to an urban centre

### 6. What do you view as the greatest barriers to starting or continuing to farm?

*One person though city interference in their operations could be a problem. One person thought relationships or friends would be a barrier. One person thought that the weather would be a major problem. Thirteen people said that money or financial issues were the biggest barrier. Three people said that the knowledge and know-how of running a farm could be a barrier. Three people stated that*

## Supporting New Farmers

*access to farming land in the Fraser Valley would be an issue. One person said that getting up early and the lack of travel opportunities could become difficult.*

- time and time management especially when you are farming on the side
- lack of knowledge
- cost of equipment
- no wealthy parents
- how to get started
- price of land
- indecisiveness, not knowing what to do when you're young
- marketing direction
- capital costs
- labour, manpower
- the idea that you need a lot of land
- finding models that go beyond owning land – what is equity if you don't own land?

7. What would be the **minimum** resource requirements needed to start farming? For example, what would be the minimum amount of land, equipment, and start up loan that would enable you to start farming?

*1 acre – two  
2-5 acres – five  
5-8 acres – one*

*\$10,000 or less – two  
\$10,000-20,000 – one  
\$30,000-\$40,000 – three (ex. land lease, tractor)*

*Three people said that they would need community support or mentorship to start farming. One person said that they would start farming in their yard to avoid large start-up costs. One person said that they would need a business partner. Two people don't know what they'd need to start farming.*

8. What training or supports for capacity building with you or other new comers or young farmers would be useful to move you towards operating a farm

*Four people think that mentorship would be the most useful support. One person would like to know what can be grown in our climate. One person would like the risk of farming to be reduced. One person would like business planning training to supplement their farm training. One person would like training on how to operate a CSA. One person would like to see more local programs, because Vancouver already has a lot of programs.*



## Supporting New Farmers

- how to find more new farmers?
- Creating a culture for new farmers
- BC outstanding young farmers – potential to match new farmers with these farmers as mentors
- Having educational events or farm visits to give some people an idea
- Agriculture as a definition of a business has to include education.  
Broadening the concept of agriculture

Our mission is to connect people interested in farming with land and other resources to help them start. If you are interested in knowing more, please provide your contact information:

Name:

Mailing Address:

Telephone contact(s):

E-mail:

This project has been made possible by the BC Healthy Living Alliance:

AN INITIATIVE OF THE BC HEALTHY LIVING ALLIANCE, LED BY THE CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY



## Appendix F: Produce Vendors- Responses

### **Retailer 1**

1. Do you sell local produce? *Yes*
2. What percentage of the produce that you sell is grown locally? *Summer 30%, Winter 5%*
3. Where are your suppliers for fruit and vegetables? *California, BC*
4. Do you ever deal directly with a farm for produce supply? *No*
5. Are you open to new suppliers? *Probably*
6. Do you think that small farms could become suppliers? *Probably*
7. What is the process to become a supplier of produce? *Through head office buyer.*
8. Which produce items are in high demand? *Seasonal produce.*
9. Have you heard of the "local eat" movement? Have you done anything to accommodate this new trend? *No.*
10. Annual Sales? *N/A*

## Supporting New Farmers

### **Retailer 2**

1. Do you sell local produce? *Yes*
2. What percentage of the produce that you sell is grown locally? *Aprox. 5-10%*
3. Where are your suppliers for fruit and vegetables? *Mainly California, some in the Fraser Valley*
4. Do you ever deal directly with a farm for produce supply? *Yes*
5. Are you open to new suppliers? *Yes*
6. Do you think that small farms could become suppliers? *Yes- but they must have good quality produce and can meet their demand*
7. What is the process to become a supplier of produce? *Talk to manager/owner. You need to be reliable.*
8. Which produce items are in high demand? *Berries and Corn*
9. Have you heard of the "local eat" movement? Have you done anything to accommodate this new trend? *No*
10. Annual Sales? *\$1-5 million*

## Supporting New Farmers

### **Retailer 3**

1. Do you sell local produce? *Yes*
2. What percentage of the produce that you sell is grown locally? *30% in the summer*
3. Where are your suppliers for fruit and vegetables? *California, BC, Mexico*
4. Do you ever deal directly with a farm for produce supply? *No, done through corporate buyer*
5. Are you open to new suppliers? *Yes*
6. Do you think that small farms could become suppliers? *Depends on what the head office says.*
7. What is the process to become a supplier of produce? *Must go through head office buyer.*
8. Which produce items are in high demand? *Soft Fruit, Nectarines, Peaches, Cherries*
9. Have you heard of the "local eat" movement? Have you done anything to accommodate this new trend? *No*
10. Annual Sales? *\$10-20 Million*

## Supporting New Farmers

### **Retailer 4**

1. Do you sell local produce? *Yes*
2. What percentage of the produce that you sell is grown locally? *20%*
3. Where are your suppliers for fruit and vegetables? *Mainly California*
4. Do you ever deal directly with a farm for produce supply? *Yes, in the summer season usually.*
5. Are you open to new suppliers? *Yes*
6. Do you think that small farms could become suppliers? *Yes, for example they get their red peppers from Chilliwack.*
7. What is the process to become a supplier of produce? *Must go through head office buyer.*
8. Which produce items are in high demand? *Nothing is short-supplied, but berries are selling fast.*
9. Have you heard of the "local eat" movement? Have you done anything to accommodate this new trend? *No*
10. Annual Sales? *N/A*

## Supporting New Farmers

### **Retailer 5**

1. Do you sell local produce? *Yes*
2. What percentage of the produce that you sell is grown locally? *Summer 20%, Winter 2%*
3. Where are your suppliers for fruit and vegetables? Locally: Surrey; Internationally: California, Chili, Australia, Mexico
4. Do you ever deal directly with a farm for produce supply? *No*
5. Are you open to new suppliers? *Yes*
6. Do you think that small farms could become suppliers? *Yes*
7. What is the process to become a supplier of produce? *Go through head office buyer.*
8. Which produce items are in high demand? *Seasonal fruit*
9. Have you heard of the "local eat" movement? Have you done anything to accommodate this new trend? *No*
10. Annual Sales? *\$20-50 million*

## Supporting New Farmers

### **Retailer 6**

1. Do you sell local produce? *Yes, tomatoes etc.*
2. What percentage of the produce that you sell is grown locally? *10%*
3. Where are your suppliers for fruit and vegetables? *California, USA*
4. Do you ever deal directly with a farm for produce supply? *Not Sure*
5. Are you open to new suppliers? *Not Sure*
6. Do you think that small farms could become suppliers? *Yes.*
7. What is the process to become a supplier of produce? *Through head office buyer*
8. Which produce items are in high demand? *Nothing notable.*
9. Have you heard of the "local eat" movement? Have you done anything to accommodate this new trend? *No*
10. Annual Sales? *\$20-50 million*

## Supporting New Farmers

### **Retailer 7**

1. Do you sell local produce? *Yes, when available*
2. What percentage of the produce that you sell is grown locally? Winter 0%, Summer 30%
3. Where are your suppliers for fruit and vegetables? California, BC
4. Do you ever deal directly with a farm for produce supply? *Yes*
5. Are you open to new suppliers? *Yes*
6. Do you think that small farms could become suppliers? *Yes, if they have a high quality product and are reliable.*
7. What is the process to become a supplier of produce? *Approach owner and manager.*
8. Which produce items are in high demand? *Green peas, strawberries, cherries*
9. Have you heard of the "local eat" movement? Have you done anything to accommodate this new trend? *No*
10. Annual Sales? N/A



## Supporting New Farmers

### **Retailer 8**

1. Do you sell local produce? *Yes*
2. What percentage of the produce that you sell is grown locally? *10-20% in the summer*
3. Where are your suppliers for fruit and vegetables? *California, BC, Mexico*
4. Do you ever deal directly with a farm for produce supply? *No, everything goes through food warehouses, except corn.*
5. Are you open to new suppliers? *Yes*
6. Do you think that small farms could become suppliers? *Yes*
7. What is the process to become a supplier of produce? *Through head office in Calgary.*
8. Which produce items are in high demand? *Anything seasonal.*
9. Have you heard of the "local eat" movement? Have you done anything to accommodate this new trend? *Yes*
10. Annual Sales? *\$10-20 million*