HALIFAX
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY

PO Box 1749
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Item No. 8.2
Halifax Regional Council
November 9, 2010
November 16, 2010

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed by

Wayne Anstey, Acting Chief Administrative Officer

Original Signed by

Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: August 5, 2010

SUBJECT: **Supporting Agriculture in Halifax Regional Municipality**

ORIGIN

August 4, 2010
Added Item 12.3 - Supporting Progress of the Local Food Movement - Councillor Watts
Motion passed that Halifax Regional Council request a brief report regarding how HRM can influence, impact and support the progress of the local food movement.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council direct staff to support Local Agriculture through means of municipal authority and jurisdiction as demonstrated in the Discussion section of this report.

BACKGROUND

Primarily, the discussion around supporting Local Agriculture through municipal authority stemmed from the July release of "Is Nova Scotia Eating Local" (Attachment One) and the media coverage following it.

Staff performed a brief review of municipal activities related to supporting local agriculture across Canada and found a number of possible best practices to examine. Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and other municipalities have adopted Food Policy Charters, Councils, and Strategies.

Examples of resources include:

Attachment Two: Vancouver Food Charter
Attachment Three: Union of British Columbia Municipalities: A Seat at the Table
Attachment Four: Planning for Healthy Food Systems, Region of Waterloo
Attachment Five: City of Toronto Food Policy (http://www.toronto.ca/health/tfpc_index.htm)

Definitions

Local Food: (also **regional food**) or the **local food movement** is a "collaborative effort to build more locally based, self-reliant food economies - one in which sustainable food production, processing, distribution, and consumption is integrated to enhance the economic, environmental and social health of a particular place" and is considered to be a part of the broader sustainability movement. It is part of the concept of local purchasing and local economies, a preference to buy locally produced goods and services.

Food Security: Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

Food Sovereignty: Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to:

- define their own food and agriculture;
- protect and regulate domestic agricultural production and trade in order to achieve sustainable development objectives;
- determine the extent to which they want to be self reliant;
- restrict the dumping of products in their markets; and
- provide local fisheries-based communities the priority in managing the use of and the rights to aquatic resources.

Food sovereignty does not negate trade, but rather, it promotes the formulation of trade policies and practices that serve the rights of peoples to safe, healthy and ecologically sustainable production.

DISCUSSION

The Regional Plan recognizes the value of the rural economy within HRM which comprises all natural resource development, including agriculture (Regional Plan, Chapter 5: 5.4.1 Rural Economy). In keeping with this intent, the Regional Plan designates a significant portion of the Musquodoboit Valley as an Agricultural designation under the generalized future land use map. This designation is designed to protect these lands for natural resource-based activities by only allowing a conservation design form of future residential development through HRM's policy for Classic Open Space Design. Through this policy, HRM requires that a minimum of 60% of the land be set aside for agriculture, forestry or conservation related uses (Regional Plan, Policy S-16, Classic Open Space Design).

The areas surrounding the urban serviced areas of HRM are designated Rural Commuter which will also allow agricultural development in various zones or in new subdivisions that have been developed through the Classic Open Space Design Policy S-16. Beyond the Rural Commuter and Agricultural designations, the remaining unserviced lands within the HRM are designated Open Space and Natural Resources. These areas also permit agricultural uses and are protected from incompatible forms of development by limiting residential development to existing roads or a maximum of eight lots on new roads that intersect with an existing local road.

An examination of our municipal opportunities to strengthen support for local agriculture can be completed using existing processes, plan reviews, and governance.

The benefits of Local Agriculture support include all areas of sustainability: Social, Economic, Cultural and Environmental.

The report - Is Nova Scotia Eating Local - outlines the following three opportunities for Municipal Government:

1. Support Farmers Market
2. Support Farmland conservation with Municipal Zoning
3. Include food sovereignty in municipal Integrated Community Sustainability Plans

Related to the reference of Integrated Community Sustainability Plans, the Halifax Regional Plan is our ICSP. The Regional Plan does contain reference to Agriculture, both in land protection and inclusion of Economic Development Strategy.

Aside from the work the Municipal may be able to do as recommended, there are a variety of organizations working towards improving support of local agriculture, these include:

- BALLE NS (Business Alliance for Local Living Economies): www.ballens.ca

- Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture: www.nsfa-fane.ca
- Select Nova Scotia: www.selectnovascotia.ca

One question that arises in discussions of Local Food movement is the difference between Urban Agriculture and Local Agriculture. For the context of this report, the definition of Urban Agriculture is the practice of cultivating, processing and cultivating food in the urban area. Staff suggest that Urban Agriculture is a small component of the Local Food issue: It enables residents in the urban area to grow their own food and generally become more connected with understanding their food system, and issues of food sovereignty and food security. When discussing the scope of Local Food, staff suggest the urban piece is very minor to the commercial local agriculture economy (fishing, farming, etc.) primarily conducted in our rural areas. Regional Council's direction to staff related to this report, will have no bearing on potential local issues related to urban poultry that may or may not be deliberated at future Community or Regional Councils.

Essentially, staff recommend using municipal authority to assist in the goal of increasing the content of Local Food in the average Nova Scotian Grocery Food Basket. The current spend is only 13% Local Content. This is the focus of the actions in this report.

Opportunities

1. Regional Plan Review: Staff are scoping the 5-year review of Regional Plan (due in 2011). With increasing public interest around local agriculture and food security, a review of municipal policy opportunities around local agriculture could be a fairly simple task for staff to perform by simply reviewing other municipal best practices.

2. Economic Development Plan: This plan is undergoing a review for the next five-year period in 2010. A review by the project team on opportunities to support rural economies could ensure that local agriculture is properly contemplated in this Plan.

3. Staff have embedded terminology in the Corporate Catering Guidelines (Attachment 6). Review of these guidelines and continued communication of these guidelines to staff requiring event catering, could further ensure opportunities for supporting local agriculture are best supported.

4. HRM staff collectively provide a variety of sustainability education to the community. Looking for opportunities to enhance food issues into this work (i.e. for example in the MindShift presentation) could help progress awareness around local agriculture.

5. HRM has collaborated with the Nova Scotia Environmental Network Community Gardening efforts, and supported local initiatives, both from staff and councillors. This work is seeing increases in the amount of community gardening happening in HRM, which increases awareness of food issues.

6. There are a variety of organizations and individuals that promote local agriculture in HRM. Maintaining open dialogue with these people can ensure that the municipality is able to support local agriculture where it is appropriate and needed.

Additionally, the Dalhousie School of Planning and the Nova Scotia Agriculture College co-hosted an Urban Agriculture symposium on September 24th and 25th. Several HRM staff attended some of the sessions to develop contacts with the community that are working on building capacity in urban agriculture and better understand how other municipalities (from Edmonton, Guelph, and Vancouver, amongst others) have increased food issues in their policy and practices. A number of potential opportunities presented themselves to staff for potential linkage to the Recommendations.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no significant budget implications to this report. The review and examinations recommended may be executed within existing budget enveloped. Further actions would present Regional Council with Budget Implications for consideration.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Project and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Project and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There has not been a community engagement related to this report. However, Council approval of the recommended directions would.

ALTERNATIVES

Council may wish to not direct staff as recommended.

Many municipalities have adopted Food Councils. This is not recommended at this time. The existing governance structure can perform the required examinations.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment One: Is Nova Scotia Eating Local?
Attachment Two: Vancouver Food Charter
Attachment Three: Union of British Columbia Municipalities: A Seat at the Table
Attachment Four: Planning for Healthy Food Systems, Region of Waterloo
Attachment Five: City of Toronto Food Policy (http://www.toronto.ca/health/tfpc_index.htm)
Attachment Six: Corporate Catering Guidelines

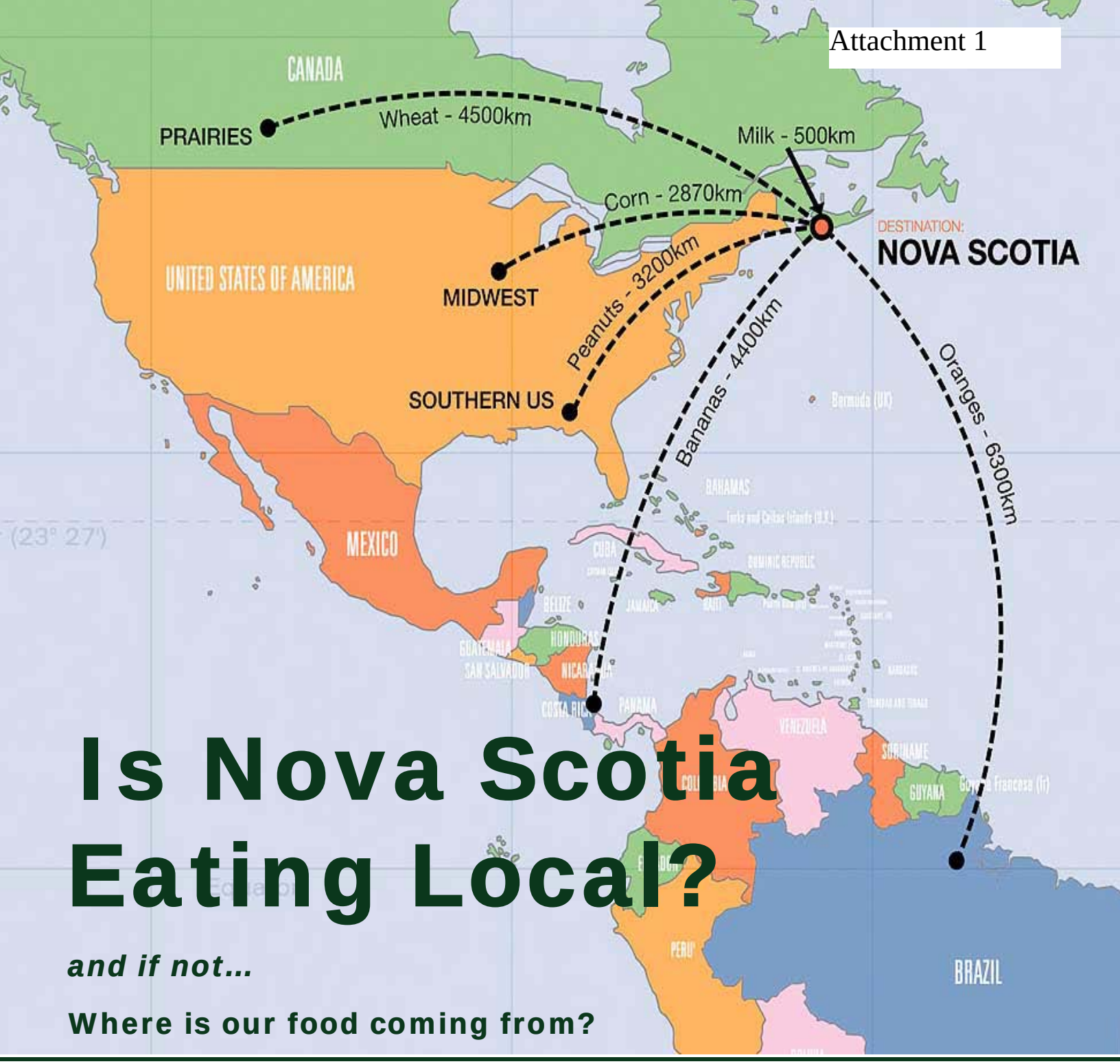
A copy of this report can be obtained online at http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/cagenda.html then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Richard MacLellan, Manager, SEMO, 490-6056

Original Signed

Report Approved by: Phillip Townsend, Director, Infrastructure and Asset Management, 490-7166

Attachment 1



Is Nova Scotia Eating Local?

and if not…

Where is our food coming from?

Ecology Action Centre

NSFA 1895 FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

Funding for the food miles project was provided through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food (ACAAF) Program. In Nova Scotia the program is delivered by Agri-Futures Nova Scotia.

Submitted by Jennifer Scott and Marla MacLeod July 2010

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Background

The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture and the Ecology Action Centre joined forces to answer two pressing questions:

- *How far is our food traveling to get from farms to food retail outlets?*

&

- *What percentage of our food is locally grown?*

With these two questions at the fore, combing through various statistics and reports; it was evident that enthusiasm for locally grown food proliferated into a movement no one had predicted. This information is in high demand: across the media spectrum, in classrooms, grocery stores and at kitchen tables. Now with the report complete the answers to those two questions have been determined in estimate.

Our food is traveling close to 8,000 km on average from farm to plate, including the delivery of inputs to the farm needed to grow the food. An extraordinary distance. But the 'distance' is more than just the number of kilometers between farmers and consumers. Chapters in this report deal with this complex issue in more detail.

While the estimates are more ball park figures and by default not exact as a result of evasive sources within the food chain locally, regionally and nationally, it can be said that some figures are "confident" estimates (ie lamb or tomatoes) however, the overall picture is vague. Case studies to frame and better pinpoint our self reliance and ability to feed ourselves focus on individual items.

We do have a pretty good idea that at most 13% of our food dollars spent in this province go back to Nova Scotia farms. Unfortunately, this percentage has dropped by 4% in the last 11 years. The good news is, at 13%, we could be eating a lot more locally-grown food than we are now – a potential boon for producers.

These estimates, if generated using the same methods, can be useful for comparisons with other provinces or states, and for tracking change over time. Now that we have a number, we can measure it every year, and set targets. Do Nova Scotians feel the benefits from farming are important enough to try to spend more on local food? Do we want to have 20% -- or even more -- of our food dollars spent on local food? There would likely be resistance to a 100% target, and that is not being advocated here. Read on for further discussion of targets, potential market opportunities, and connected benefits in the Self-Reliance chapter and the Case Study chapters.

Self-reliance is not about closing borders or shutting out all imports. Competition fosters innovation. It is about a region being largely able to provide for its own needs, and not immediately experiencing crisis if flows into the region are cut off for any reason. In a self-reliant region, flows of product, resources, people, and ideas are not only needed but welcomed. But our province should be able to meet many of its own needs, create its own identity, build on its strengths, and use all of its inherent and adopted resources in an optimal manner.

There are many reasons for food **imports.** Some areas of the world are better at producing some products than other areas. For instance, it would make no sense for Nova Scotia to try to produce pineapples. There is also the issue of price, which prompts food distributors and retail chains to source goods from wherever they can be obtained most cheaply and where farm labour is cheapest, even if there is a wide range of hidden costs associated with those imports and hidden benefits in local production that are not recognized or accounted for.

Efficiency is often cited as a key reason for increasingly high levels of food imports. Thus, it is conventionally considered more efficient to grow and process particular foods in large quantities where the factors of production are cheapest and then to transport them long distances, than to rely on smaller and more diverse production units domestically. In fact, a review of some Life Cycle Analysis studies showing the environmental and cost benefits of large scale agriculture and global sourcing of goods completely challenged our assumptions. We learn in the Energy chapter that large production units and shipping huge tanker-loads over the oceans was, in some cases, more energy-efficient per unit, and produced fewer greenhouse gas emissions than local agriculture for local consumption. But global sourcing of food may not measure up in terms of social and economic benefits for our farming communities and for our province. Check out the Economic Benefits and Social Benefits chapters for more detail.

Imports went too far. When cheap imports cause local farms to go out of business because they can't compete while adhering to higher labour and environmental standards, that is not optimizing anyone's benefits. Imports can be beneficial because they spur innovation and provide selection. But when they start putting our best farms out of business and cause our population to lose touch with our own agri culture, we need to take a really close look at externalities (costs that are generated by one party, but paid for by another) in order to make more benefit-optimizing decisions. See the Transportation chapter for more detail on how our tax dollars are helping to displace our farmers.

Do we want imported food to displace locally-produced food? Quite the opposite. Technology has changed. We can extend our growing season with non-heated greenhouses. Controlled atmosphere apple storage can keep fruit fresh all year. Hardy table grapes can store in cold rooms for months. We can grow delicious northern kiwis that don't need to be peeled. We are getting better at extending the grazing season for grass-fed livestock. We have livestock products all year (milk, eggs, meat, dairy products) and yet these things are imported. We can do a much better job of matching supply with demand.

Final Report Executive Summary

(Complete report will be made available at www.nsfa-fane.ca)

In Nova Scotia, our diet is primarily made up of foods imported from outside this province. There is nothing inherently wrong with importing food. But there are costs associated with importing *most* of our food. In particular, importing foods that we are able to produce here, like apples or beef, reduces opportunities for our producers. We don't know exactly what portion of our diet is imported. But we *do* know that *at most* 13% of the food dollars we spend are going back to Nova Scotia farmers. Our analysis shows that we could be producing and consuming significantly more Nova Scotia-grown food than we are now.

This report examines many of the costs and benefits of our present food system, and estimates the effects of increased spending on local food. We found that some of the most compelling reasons for supporting local growers are social and economic.

The average distance food travels to get to our store shelves has risen significantly in recent years as our grocery stores source more products from an increasingly global food system. One study showed that the average number of kilometers embodied in the food we eat – which includes transport of inputs like feed and machinery to farms, from farms to processors, and on through to wholesalers and stores – is an astounding 8,240 km (Weber & Matthews 2008). This does not include the extra kilometers food travels when we make shopping trips to those grocery stores.

The *National Nutritious Food Basket* is a list of foods that reflects the eating habits of Canadians, and meets their nutritional needs according to the Canada Food Guide. The average distance traveled by an item in the food basket from its origin to Halifax, NS is 3,976 km. This distance does not include farm inputs or additional kilometres for warehousing or shopping trips.

Despite the fact that our food travels great distances, on average, the transport is sometimes a minor portion of the cost and environmental impact of that food. When food is produced and processed in very large quantities, the transport impact, per unit of product, can be low. No universal statement can be made about food items and the impact of their food miles. Each item has to be assessed on its own. We have provided examples in the main report and throughout the case studies in this executive summary.

Below we examine economic and social benefits of local agriculture. Chapters on transportation and energy follow. A detailed look at our degree of self-reliance shows how much we produce relative to consumption. This is followed by the weighted average distances traveled by foods in the National Nutritious Food Basket. A chapter on local food procurement outlines options for increasing the demand for locally-produced food through government purchasing. Finally, there are case studies that get into more detail about specific products we grow here such as beef or tomatoes. At the end are conclusions and recommendations.

Economic Benefits

One of the key reasons for choosing to buy locally-produced food rather than imported food is to foster economically viable farming businesses and farming communities in Nova Scotia. The replacement of locally produced food by imports from outside a region transfers the financial benefits of that production activity to the region providing the imported product (Roberts et al 2005:2).

Nova Scotia is presently losing farms, along with the interwoven businesses that supply their inputs or process and distribute their products. Farm communities are unraveling. To keep the farms we have, encourage new farmers, and prevent the bleeding out of businesses that make up a local food system, a move to support local farms via our food dollar couldn't come fast enough.

We examine the economic benefits to Nova Scotia that flow from local agriculture (Table 1). Then we ask if buying locally-produced food actually helps farmers. A healthy food system would have benefits flowing in both directions. Even though Nova Scotia farmers are producing more product each year, their average total net income is going down, as is their share of the food dollar. These trends clearly show that to have farms in this province, food needs to be purchased in a way that ensures farmers can recoup their costs of production. If our farms disappear, we won't have the option to buy local food, which leads to higher prices for imported food, as well as a loss of food sovereignty.

One of the reasons imported food is considered to be attractive, is because it is assumed to be cheaper than locally-produced food. This is not universally true. First of all, there are costs that are not reflected in the price of imported foods. Also, having a local food system gives customers the option to buy directly from producers at a reduced price, and gives producers the option to reclaim some of the margins normally charged by retailers and wholesalers. This arrangement can be beneficial for both customer and producer. The type of food, degree of processing, convenience, and vendor usually has more effect on price than whether it is local or not. Another thing to consider is whether the price of food, whether imported or local, is too low. Farmers are often not covering the production costs for the food they produce, and the proportion of our income spent on food is going down. Most of us could stand to pay a little more for food items so that farmers can make a living. Consider the *average proportion of household expenditures spent on food*. In 1969, Canadians spent an average of 19% of household expenditures on food, and now we spend an average of 10%. We spend a lower proportion of total household expenditure on food than people in many other countries, including the USA and Australia.

Table 1: Summary Table - Economic Benefits of Local Agriculture

Nova Scotia Agriculture	Economic Benefit
Direct annual farm spending	$460 million in farm operating expenses (2008)[1]
Gross annual farm spending: direct, indirect, and induced effect of farm spending	$1.16 billion (2004 estimate)[2]
Total annual employment: direct, indirect, and induced employment from farming activity	10,281 full time equivalent jobs (2004 estimate)[3]
Total annual contribution to GDP: direct, indirect, and induced GDP	$400 million (2004 estimate)[4]
Annual contributions to Federal and Provincial Tax revenues	$154 million (2004 estimate)[5]
Eating local beef instead of imported beef	Increase annual farm cash receipts by at least $67.5 million and increase employment in the sector to 1,900 jobs
Eating local lamb instead of imported lamb	Increase annual farm cash receipts by at least $8.7 million and increase employment in the sector to 213 jobs
If Vermont substituted local production for only ten percent of the food they import	$376 million in new economic output, including $69 million in personal earnings from 3,616 new jobs (2000 estimate)[6]

Social benefits and the food community

Buying locally-produced food, especially in a way that provides a fair price to producers, generates social benefits in this province. These social benefits include nutritious food, entrepreneurial energy, work ethic, mentorship, mutual reliance, relationship-based economic activity, and maintenance of farming communities. Buying imported food generates none of these benefits.

One could argue that imported food provides a greater variety of products for less money than it would cost to grow or raise them here. The economies of scale from large agri-business in the global food system bring us unlimited supply supposedly at the cheapest price possible. But we need to distinguish between 'price' and 'value'. Does importing most of our food bring us better food value than what our own farms can provide? Does the price we pay for imported food somehow compensate us for all the social costs associated with displacing our family farms? Is the money we spend giving us vital and nutritious food, or is it going into advertising, corporate

[1] Statistics Canada, for the year 2008, adjusted to $2007 dollars.
[2] Estimate in 2004 ($2004 dollars), Roberts et al 2005.
[3] Estimate in 2004, Roberts et al 2005.
[4] Estimate in 2004 ($2004 dollars), Roberts et al 2005.
[5] Estimate in 2004 ($2004 dollars), Roberts et al 2005.
[6] Hoffer & Kahler 2000: http://www.vtlivablewage.org/JOBGAP6a.pdf

profits, transport, packaging, and preservatives? In a scenario where most of our food is produced in this region, we could still import some of our food. But we would discover the variety of foods we can grow here while at the same time supporting our farmers. The social benefits of a local food system could be the most important reason for buying locally-produced food.

Social benefits and costs are the most difficult to measure and put a value on. That is why they remain hidden. We don't notice social losses until they are gone and it is too late. We are often not aware of all the ways our spending habits affect people and community life. In cases when we *are* aware, we make much better, but seemingly 'irrational' decisions. We buy apples from the guy we know is the main organizer of the community fair because of his involvement *and* because they are great apples. It doesn't matter that his 10 lb bags cost a little more. We go to the farmers' market instead of the grocery store because we like the vendors and get gardening advice from them. Some people go to a particular u-pick because their parents and grandparents took them there as children. In cases where is a positive connection, price becomes less of an issue.

Knowing the social circumstances surrounding a product can affect our food-buying decisions, which in turn affect the social circumstances. But in many cases we don't know those circumstances. In fact, for the global food system to work effectively, it is important that we know as little as possible. It is difficult enough to go into a grocery store and figure out where products are from, let alone who is producing them and how. As the gap between consumers and producers widens, and our ignorance of food production grows, we will make poorer decisions with our food dollars, causing our communities to suffer. Table 2 outlines the social benefits of a more locally-based food system.

Table 2: Summary Table -- Social Benefits of Nova Scotia Agriculture

Benefits to rural communities	Employment
	Stability and durability
	Maintenance of rural infrastructure
Benefits for people and relationships	Farming culture
	Social capital
	Mutual reliance
	Trust
	Relationship-based economic activity (Farmers' Markets)
Province-wide benefits	Food sovereignty
	Integrity
	Variety and choice
	Eating locally-produced food makes at-home eating worth the time and effort.
	Nutritional quality and vitality of food
	Stewardship

Transportation

Transportation is only one stage in the life-cycle of a particular food item. It is important to reduce CO_2 emissions in the food supply chain as a whole, and not to reduce emissions in one area at the expense of another. As the food system becomes increasingly industrialized, and food is processed and transported in ever-larger bulk quantities, transportation becomes a smaller portion of the total energy used to get a product to the consumer. However, the transport stage is growing relative to other life-cycle stages.

Among the problems with a food system becoming more industrialized and globalized, six are identified in this report. The first is that when food is imported, the economic and social benefits of growing that food locally are foregone. Second, food and the inputs for growing that food, are being transported ever greater distances as more global sourcing occurs. More than 8,000 km is now estimated to be the average distance. Third, redundant or unnecessary trade is so common. There are reasons for importing and exporting the same items, like apples, or beef, but we should examine those reasons more carefully if we want to conserve resources and support our farmers. Fourth, food freight is shifting to less sustainable modes. More food, for instance, is being shipped by transport truck instead of train. Fifth, road transport is publicly subsidized because highways are built and maintained with taxpayers' money. We are inadvertently putting more trucks on the road and taking more farmers off the land because we are not charging the full cost of using that infrastructure. Finally, there is an increasing environmental and monetary cost of transport as climate systems are stressed from greenhouse gas emissions and our bodies are stressed from transport pollution. Table 3 summarizes the findings presented in this chapter.

Table 3: Summary of Chapter on Transportation

Average distance food travels, including farm inputs	More than 8,000 km plus 35% for food shopping
Differences in emissions between modes of travel (grams CO_2-equivalent per Tonne-km)	Rail: 17 Ship (water): 222 Road: 204 Air: 1439
Cost of greenhouse gas emissions	\$45/tonne CO_2-equivalent
Freight transport damage to highways	• *almost all* the damage done to asphalt pavements is from *heavy trucks* • single-unit trucks and combination trucks, imposes the same amount of roadway damage as 9,600 cars
Actual net public cost of freight transport by highway, NS	\$4.06 per tonne-km in 1999
Estimate of total public cost of food freight transport by highway, NS	\$551 million in 1999
Estimated pollution cost of freight transport by highway, NS	\$3.16 per tonne-km in 1999
Estimate of total public cost of pollution from food freight transport by highway, NS	\$429 million in 1999

Estimate of full costs, including financial and social costs for freight in Canada, 2008	Truck: $0.22 per tonne-km Rail: $0.024 per tonne-km Air: $0.623 per tonne-km
Estimated energy cost of vehicle manufacture	The energy consumed during vehicle manufacture can amount to a quarter of the energy consumed in the life of the vehicle
Cost of a weekly basket of food for one person, UK	$37.57 Canadian
Full cost of a weekly basket of food for one person, UK, including externalities and subsidies	$41.94 Canadian - 12% more

Energy

Determining energy use or GHG (and other) emissions in the food system help us understand where we most effectively can reduce our consumption of finite resources (such as oil or coal) and reduce our polluting emissions. Studies of energy use in the US food system show that the major energy-using phases of the system are processing and packaging (more than 20% of total energy use) or the household storage and preparation phase at 25% or 31%, depending on the source.

To effectively reduce our consumption of non-renewable fuels, and emissions of greenhouse gasses and other pollutants, the studies reviewed strongly suggest the following:

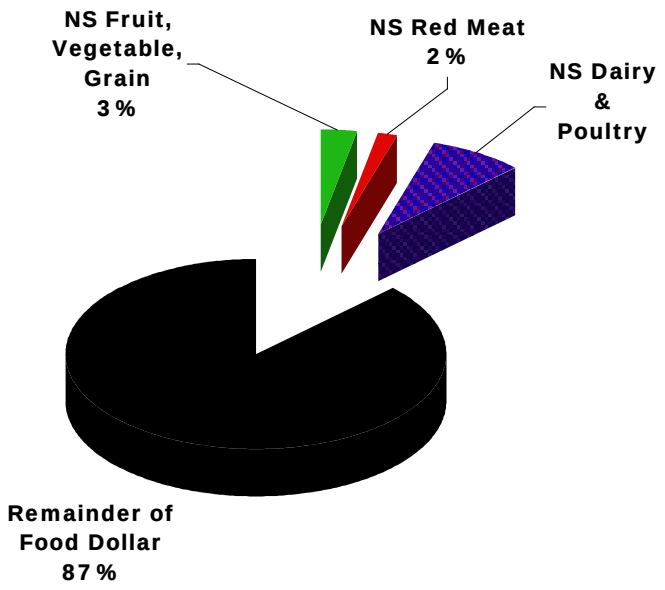
- Reduce the consumption of junk food with empty calories;
- Where possible, replace the use of synthetic fertilizer, particularly nitrogen fertilizer, with local sources of nitrogen such as cover crops and animal manures;
- Reduce dependence on refrigeration and freezing because they are very energy-intensive in the food system. These are particularly important for long-distance food transport. Low-energy alternative food storage and preservation methods can be used in a local food system;
- Reduce food waste because it accounts for one quarter of all food sold; and
- Shift diets to correspond to food available locally in season.

A conclusion from the life cycle analysis (LCA) study shows that in some cases, large-scale global food companies shipping products around the world can do so more efficiently (in terms of energy per unit product) than the local food system. The methodological problems with these studies are discussed in greater detail in the Energy chapter, but it should be recognized that economies of scale do provide some opportunities for energy efficiency.

Self-Reliance

At the national level, Statistics Canada data show that over the last four decades, food imports are rising relative to net supply. At the regional level, grocery store data show that most of the food in stores is imported from outside Atlantic Canada. At the provincial level, we know that in 2008 *at most*, 13% of the food dollar is being earned by Nova Scotia farmers (Figure 1). Over the last 11 years, this proportion has gone down. In 1997 it was 17%.

Figure 1: Food Spending Relative Farm Cash Receipts, Nova Scotia, 2008[7]



	Dollar Amount	% of Total Spending
Total NS Food Spending	$2,647,988,490	100%
NS Farm Crop Receipts	$82,165,000	3%
NS Farm Livestock Receipts	$43,637,000	2%
NS Farm Supply-Managed Receipts	$224,426,000	8%
Remainder of Food Dollar	$2,379,925,490	87%

[7] Derived by removing all non-food items such as furs, flowers, and Christmas trees from the table of Nova Scotia total farm cash receipts in Statistics Canada's Farm Cash Receipts – Agriculture Economic Statistics series. Cat. No. 21-011-X. Latest Update: May 2010.

Finally, we calculated production divided by consumption for vegetables, fruit and meat in Nova Scotia. The results can be found in Tables 4, 5, and 6.

Table 4: Nova Scotia Vegetable Self-Reliance 2008

Crop	Production divided by Fresh Consumption	Production divided by Fresh & Processed Consumption	Percentage of NS consumption that is locally produced (estimate)
Asparagus	1%	1%	
Beans	22%	10%	
Beets	45%	51%	
Cabbage	184%	-	90-100% of supply from July to April from Maritimes
Carrots	652%	476%	8 months of year all are from Maritimes Close to 100% from July to April
Cauliflower	35%[8]	32%[8]	
Celery	0%	-	No commercially produced celery in NS
Corn (sweet)	35%	13%	
Cucumbers (field only)	4%	-	
Lettuce	1%	-	
Onion (Dry)	95%	-	85% from August to June (Maritimes) 90-100% August to April from Maritimes
Parsnips	14%[9]	-	
Peas	22%	3%	
Peppers	1%[10]	-	
Potatoes	97%	42%	
Radishes	0%	-	
Rutabagas & Turnips	127%	-	All turnips from Maritimes 90-100% From July to April from Maritimes
Spinach	8%[10]	5%[10]	
Tomatoes (field only)	2%	-	
Total Tomato (incl Greenhouse)	24%[10]	6%[10]	

[8] 2003 data, as this is the most recent data available
[9] 2004 data, as this is the most recent data available
[10] 2007 data, as this is the most recent data available

Table 5: Nova Scotia Fruit Self-Reliance 2008

Crop	Production divided by fresh consumption	Production divided by fresh and processed consumption	Percentage of NS consumption that is locally produced (estimate)
Apples	390%	182%	40 - 60%
Blueberries	1832%	1104%	
Peaches	7%	4%	
Pears	23%	20%	
Plums & Prunes	14%	-	
Strawberries	38%	32%	

Table 6: Nova Scotia Livestock Self-Reliance 2007

Livestock	Production divided by Consumption (based on Stats Canada slaughter numbers)	Production divided by Consumption (based on slaughter numbers from other sources)	Percentage of NS consumption that is locally produced (estimate)
Pork	56%	52%[11]	
Chicken	117%	--	
Beef	27%	12%[12]	1-5%
Sheep & Lamb	25%	17%[13]	

Given the various calculations of self-reliance for Nova Scotia, there is a general downward trend in self-reliance (outside of supply managed commodities). However, the numbers also indicate great potential for producing more of our food – if it was economically viable to do so.

Distance Traveled and Emissions of a Food Basket

In order to calculate the distance food is traveling, we chose to use the National Nutritious Food Basket (NNFB) tool. The NNFB contains 66 food items, from 11 different food groupings which reflect the eating habits of Canadians, as well, these foods, in appropriate combinations and amounts, were designed to meet the nutritional needs of Canadians according to the 1992 Canada Food Guide.

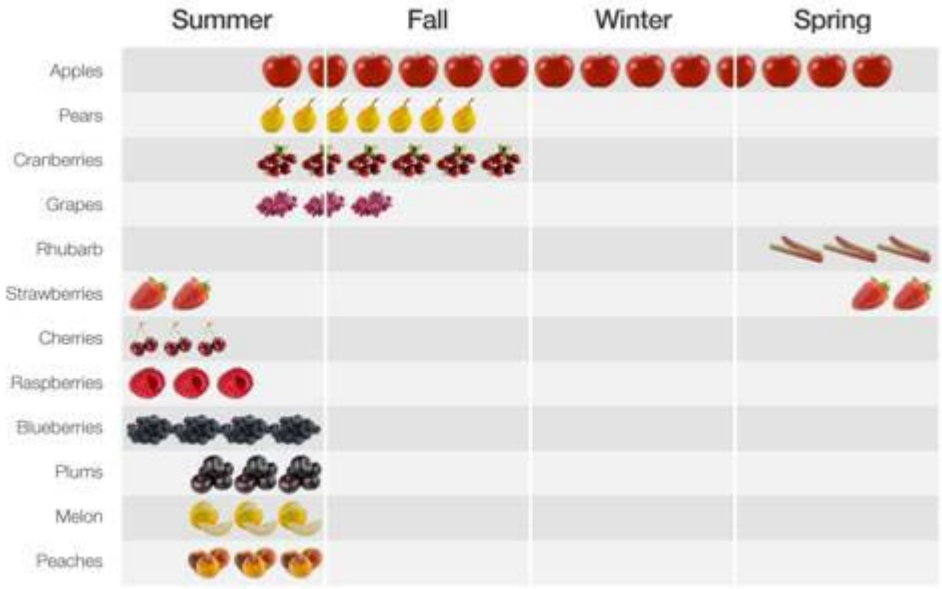
The average distance traveled by NNFB food items is 3,976 km.

[11] Production data (slaughter numbers) from Pork NS
[12] This an Atlantic figure, based on beef production in all four Atlantic provinces, divided by slaughter number from all provincially inspected plants and an estimate of slaughter at the federally inspected plant in PEI. Provincial data from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Provincial Slaughter - Annual Report (A009E). Federal data based on estimate from cattle farmer.
[13] Production data from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. 2007. Atlantic Provinces Weekly Livestock Market Report, for the week ended Dec 29, 2007.

When a weekly diet is considered, the weekly basket of goods travels a total distance of 30,666 km and emits 5.911 kg CO_2e. The distances and GHG emissions for a theoretical "all-local NNFB basket" were also calculated. To maintain continuity, we estimated 350 km for travel within the province for all local foods. The theoretical, all-local basket is approximately a sixth of the distance and emissions: 4988 km and 1.017 kg CO_2e.

There is potential for reducing transport greenhouse gas emissions by switching to more local fruits and vegetables, provided that the fruit and vegetable crops are produced by methods that are of similar or increased energy efficiency compared with imports. Though not included in the NNFB, we produce large quantities of blueberries, as well as variety of tree fruits and berries. We also produce a wide variety of horticultural crops. With low-energy season extension techniques, cold storage, processing and preserving – at both the industrial level and the household level – there is a lot of potential to increase local fruit and vegetable consumption throughout the year.

For foods that we cannot easily produce here, we should promote more energy-efficient modes of transportation, i.e. rail, or consider local alternatives, if they exist, e.g. honey and maple syrup in place of sugar.



Seasonal food chart for NS Agriculture -- Source NS

Case Studies

Case Study: Local vs. Imported Vegetables and Fruit

With the industrialization and globalization of our food system, our food habits have changed. We are now eating more processed, convenience, and junk food – loaded with sugar and preservatives. We are eating fewer vegetables and fruit than we used to, and *need* to for optimum health. According to recent Statistics Canada figures, "less than one-third (29%) of Nova Scotians over age 12 eat the recommended 5-10 servings of fruit and vegetables every day. This compares to 35% nationally" (Healthy Eating Action Group 2005: 21).

In order to relocalize our food system, our diets will need to shift. We'll need to relearn how to enjoy our own farm products, how to structure our meals according to seasonal availability, and how to store and preserve our own bounty. This shift will produce health benefits as we reduce the amount of money we spend on junk food and increase the proportion we spend on real food from our farms.

Vegetables

A surprisingly small proportion of the vegetables we eat in Nova Scotia are actually grown here. We produce roughly enough (or more) cabbage, carrots, onions, potatoes, and turnips to supply our own needs. There is logic to producing these crops here because cropping shuts down for several months every year and they can be stored for winter use. We could, however, be producing – and eating - a higher proportion of the other vegetables we produce here. Also, with season-extending unheated greenhouses, we could be producing more of the tender crops we eat so much of like tomatoes, spinach, or lettuce.

Consider tomatoes. Fresh production, with the help of season-extension, could run from July through November (5 months), so we'd need to use processed tomatoes for 7 months (or buy greenhouse tomatoes). Estimated average annual consumption of fresh and processed tomatoes in 2007 in NS is 29.18 kg/person. If tomato consumption is roughly equivalent in each month of the year, we need to process 17.02 kg of tomatoes per person for the cold months. Home freezing and canning were compared with purchasing imported tomatoes (Table 7).

Often people think that buying locally produced food is more expensive than imported food. Here is an example that clearly shows how the local option is less expensive personally and socially. When we include the real costs in a comparison of tomato buying options for the 7 months they are not available in Nova Scotia, the least expensive and most benefit-generating option is to buy local tomatoes in bulk at the peak of the season and preserve them for home use ($32.92 per person). This option also produces the fewest GHG emissions. The most expensive option is to buy imported fresh tomatoes ($95.04 per person).

Table 7: Summary Comparison of Imports with Two Ways to Preserve 7 Months of Tomatoes (17.02 kg) for each Nova Scotian[14]

	Import Fresh	**Import Canned**	**Home Freezing**	**Home Canning**
Greenhouse gas emissions (kg CO_2-e /person/ year)	16 kg (for transport)	16 kg (for transport)	35 kg (for electricity to freeze)	5 kg (for electricity to preserve the tomatoes in glass jars)
Full cost per person	$95.04 plus the cost of grocery shopping trips	$48.14 plus the cost of grocery shopping trips and the costs of manufacturing and disposing of tins	$36.57 plus the cost of a freezer and the cost of a trip to get bulk tomatoes	$32.92 plus the cost of a trip to get bulk tomatoes

Currently we eat 27.3 million kg of tomatoes, but we only produce 1.7 million kg. Therefore we import 25.6 million kg. This works out to about $56.3 million[15] in potential income to local farmers if Nova Scotians switch to better-tasting locally-grown tomatoes. Since the employment benefits per $1,000 of agricultural output is 0.0213 (Roberts et al 2005), eating 100% local tomatoes would create an estimated 1,200 jobs. In addition to the economic benefits of buying locally-produced tomatoes, there are a number of social benefits. These include connection and support to the farming community, better quality tomatoes, and possibly an injection of useful skills and social interaction if people got together in the fall to purchase and preserve tomatoes. Good-tasting local tomatoes could encourage people to eat more than they do now, which is a good thing because currently Nova Scotians are not eating enough vegetables (Healthy Eating Action Group 2005).

Fruit

Nova Scotia farmers produce a wide variety of fruit. We are historically best known for apples, and we still export apples out of province. We produce nearly twice our consumption of fresh and processed apples. Yet, we import about 50% of the apples we eat. The weighted average distance traveled by apples imported from out of province is 7,443 km. This is a prime example of redundant trade. We are importing apples, as we are simultaneously exporting them.

To estimate the cost of just *transporting* apples to Nova Scotia, the estimated total consumption of apples is multiplied by 50% (the approximate percentage of imports) to get the approximate weight of apples imported: 4,966 tonnes. This is multiplied by the average weighted distance apples are shipped (7,443 km) to get 37 million tonne-km. This is multiplied by $0.22 per tonne-km[16] to estimate the real cost of importing apples we can produce ourselves: $8 million per

[14] See text for explanation of calculations

[15] At a low price of $1/lb or $2.20/kg. Most tomatoes are sold for more, which would generate additional income for farmers.

[16] Transport Canada's total cost estimate of road freight (Transport Canada 2008). Not all apples are imported by road freight, but this is a start for estimating the real cost for transporting apples to Nova

year. To gain a full picture of the cost of redundant apple trade, the cost of shipping our apples *out* of province would have to be included. The total annual GHG emissions for importing apples is 7,961 tonnes CO_2-equivalent.

In addition to redundant trade in apples, we eat a lot of fruit that isn't grown here. Besides apples, the top fruits eaten are bananas, melons, and oranges. Although we produce some melons in Nova Scotia, we don't produce any bananas or oranges. We are well known for producing blueberries, but we also produce raspberries, strawberries, plums, pears, and peaches. There seems to be a tradition of picking and preserving strawberries when they are in season (by freezing or making jam). It is a social event. This tradition could be reclaimed for our other northern fruits. Buying directly at U-picks can provide a day out on the farm, reasonably priced fruit, and a freezer full of local fruit for smoothies all year. With such an array of locally-produced fruit available, especially in the summer and fall, it is a shame to pass it up for imported fruits all the time.

Case study: Benefits of Beef Import Replacement

Presently we import most of the beef we eat in Nova Scotia from distant sources. It is finished in feedlots with grain and other by-products. It would not make sense for us to grain-finish beef here and compete with the feedlot system established in grain-growing regions like the Prairie Provinces. We simply don't have the excess grain needed. However we are missing a great opportunity to replace those imports with locally-grown beef fed on grass and clover – something we are great at growing in Nova Scotia.

The production and consumption of beef has a bad reputation for creating environmental and health problems. Unfortunately, this poor reputation connected with feedlot beef has overshadowed the potential for raising and consuming beef in a way that contributes to agricultural sustainability and good health. People tend to associate the ill effects from industrial beef production with all beef. Actually, community-based, primarily grass-fed beef systems generate many benefits for rural Nova Scotia and for consumers, including affordable beef products.

Some of the key findings about beef in Nova Scotia are as follows:

- Nova Scotians are eating roughly 90-99% imported beef from feedlots.
- Local beef production has great potential for improving soil quality and revitalizing rural communities.
- We have underutilized land and capacity that could be used for beef production.
- If we produced all the beef we eat in this province, farm cash receipts could increase from $22.5 million to *at least* $90 million/year and full-year equivalent employment would increase from 448 jobs to about 1,774 jobs.
- On average, beef imported to Nova Scotia creates 1.14 kg of CO_2-equivalent emissions per kg of beef imported, *just for the transportation*. The full cost estimate of this unnecessary transportation is $30 million per year.

Scotia. The total cost estimate includes infrastructure capital costs, infrastructure operating costs, carrier/vehicle costs, congestion delay costs, accident costs, and environmental costs (these include GHG, noise, and air pollution).

- Grass-fed beef meat is a healthy food: Beef cattle are fed primarily grasses and clover, which makes the meat low in saturated fat, yet high in omega-3 fatty acids, beta carotene/vitamin A, vitamin E, folic acid and antioxidants.
- Animal stress is lower where livestock are grazing compared with feedlot conditions. Ruminants – cud-chewing animals such as cattle, dairy cows, goats, bison, and sheep – are designed to eat fibrous grasses, plants, and shrubs—not starchy, low-fiber grain.

Case study: Sheep in Nova Scotia

Lamb (or sheep) production in Nova Scotia is an ecological way to produce two main products: meat, and wool. The third, hidden, product they produce is excellent soil quality. Below are some of the benefits of replacing imported lamb with locally-grown lamb.

- We produce 15 - 18% of the lamb we consume in Nova Scotia, and import the rest
- Sheep production has great potential for improving soil quality
- If we produced all the lamb we eat in this province, farm cash receipts are estimated to increase from $2 million to $10.7 million/year and employment would increase from 40 full year equivalent jobs to 213 full year equivalent jobs.
- On average, lamb imported to Nova Scotia creates 4.08 kg of CO_2e emissions per kg of lamb imported.
- Lamb meat is a healthy food: lamb is fed primarily from grasses and clover, which makes the meat low in saturated fat, yet high in omega-3 fatty acids, beta carotene, vitamin E, folic acid and antioxidants.

Case Study: Marketing Lamb

In 2003, Mike Isenor was interviewed for a GPI Atlantic report on Farm Viability. The following profile was included in Scott et al (2003). It is reproduced below in its entirety, with permission, to provide the reader with a sense of the history of the co-op, and also an excellent example of how producers got together, saw an opportunity, got critical support in key places, tested the market, and held on to it with determination and a commitment to quality standards.

Northumberlamb Co-op

Mike Isenor describes the birth and day to day operation of Northumberlamb. In the late 70s there was a fairly active community of sheep producers. They came from all over the province to attend the sheep fair (a breeding stock sale). Of course, after a lot of people got into sheep, suddenly the price dropped and it was difficult to get a consistently good price for lambs at the auctions. Some weeks the price could be good, and the next week it could be devastating. Producers got together to organize something where they could control their own market and prices. One of the main driving forces behind it was Brewster Kneen. He was a great organizer and could get people enthusiastic about doing things that they thought they couldn't do. It was about 1980 when we initiated the Farmers' Market Project to see if there was a market for lamb meat in Halifax. We would get 30-35 lambs butchered and cut up and take them into the farmers' market on Saturday at 5 am. There were line-ups of people in the morning waiting to buy our lamb and we were always sold out. On the basis of that experiment, it was established that there was a demand for lamb and we should be able to organize a market for it.

Around the same time, Frank Sobey and the whole Sobey's family were great lovers of lamb. Frank had just hired a new supervisor for all his meats departments from England, Ron Young. Frank took Ron in his big car and drove him around the farms in Pictou County. He used to say to Ron "why don't we have any fresh NS lamb in our stores? I want those lambs in my stores." The timing was superb. Ron was very supportive of us. He wanted us to succeed.

Northumberlamb

- Attempt by co-op to generate better prices for producers
- Farmer's market is an incubator for new business, and test market
- Example of retailer support needed to get an initiative off the ground; retailer *wanted* the initiative to work (in the beginning)
- Purpose: to get as much money as possible and a steady, predictable price to the farmers for their lambs, not the lowest price to farmers
- Retailers later cut out direct sales to individual stores, preferring deliveries to a warehouse that supplies the region. This is problematic for meat coming from provincially inspected abattoirs which can only supply meat to stores within the province (regulations).
- Importance of having abattoir – bought it and formed another co-op.
- Customer loyalty – they wanted fresh lamb, locally produced.
- Diversity of markets and control over marketing is important.
- Have to increase the market just to remain the same size.
- Farms: small income; or do a combination of different things.
- Working together through Northumberlamb brings market stability.
- Co-op: a profit allocation goes back to farmers.

In the beginning the problem was having a year's supply. Traditionally people had their lambs in the late spring, and would go to market in late fall. No lambs were available from December until July. We had to work with the sheep producers to get a consistent year-round supply. This was the biggest challenge. As soon as we got started Ron Young gave us four of their biggest stores in Halifax. In the following weeks we'd get a few more lambs and we'd add a store until we were doing pretty well all their stores in the Halifax Metro area then Truro and New Glasgow. As soon as we had lambs available Ron would tell us where to send them.

In 1982 we officially incorporated as a co-op, so we had our 20th anniversary last fall. All the farmers own the co-op. I'm the manager, but there's no owner. Members have equal say as to how the co-op is run. Directors are selected from the membership at our annual meetings, and they make the decisions with the manager. The idea, right from the beginning was to return as much money as possible to the farmers. Our objective was to maintain a steady price that producers could count on; that they could work toward. They knew what they were going to get paid if they had lambs ready in May, for example. That only worked when you took the profit motive away. It was also a big advantage that Sobey's was so supportive in the beginning because they wanted it to work too. There wasn't a hassle with them about prices.

In the beginning when we had too many lambs in the fall, Sobey's advertised them in their flyers, and they sold them for the price basically that we charged them. They were very supportive, and that got us on our feet. Once it was seen that we could actually supply the lambs and co-ordinate and deliver, we were up and running. Within a year or so we were delivering to all the Sobey's stores in Nova Scotia. Then we started to add other stores like Dominion and IGA, and independent stores and restaurants. For a long time, though, Sobey's was the major customer.

After Ron Young left the scene, Sobey's became a large corporation, and the idea of supporting Northumberlamb was lost. David Sobey basically stuck to us, even when some of the big supervisors were thinking of doing some things differently that were counter to our best interest. But eventually they wanted everything to come through their warehouses in Debert instead of direct sales to individual stores. And they wanted more processing – pre-cut lamb instead of whole carcasses, which we did, and then they wanted it put on trays for individual portions and delivered through the warehouse. Delivering directly to the warehouse is problematic for us because stores from all over the region would pull stock out of the warehouse, and because we are provincially inspected, we are only permitted to sell within the province.

After operating for about 4 years, Northumberlamb purchased the abattoir that we were getting our lambs killed in. So we formed a new co-op. The same members formed the Brookside Abattoir Co-op. At that time we felt we had really good quality, and reputation. When Sobey's started to go to other suppliers of lamb, customers left Sobey's for the lamb and went over to the stores that were still buying directly from us. We still sold the same number of lambs. But Sobey's share of our business was down to about 25% and Superstore was up to about 50 or 60% and the independents were somewhere in between. But now Superstore is demanding central warehousing, so we are in the same challenge.

A customer goes to a grocery store and looks at the lamb from New Zealand or Ontario and its cut up and sealed in a tube package, it doesn't look appealing. They want fresh lamb from Nova Scotia that's been delivered the day before. The local lamb is far superior to imported lamb. In other parts of the world, New Zealand lamb is thought to be the best lamb, but not here. It's the flavour and the tenderness and the freshness.

Restaurants and a couple of little independent stores make up about 40% of our sales at this time. Sobey's would make up about 35% right now, and Superstore makes up 25%. Over the last few years we've been building on restaurants. We had to be in charge of marketing our own lambs, because if you leave it to someone else they're not looking after your interest. They could switch to another supplier at any time. If that happens we're back to where we started and the sheep industry wouldn't stand a chance in the province. It wouldn't exist. By being our own marketers, and by diversifying, we become more insulated from a store deciding that they're not going to buy from us. We've been vulnerable to that and we're lucky that we have not been wiped out. If they change supervisors and then say 'let's try this' then -- bingo -- we could be wiped out. If you're selling 90% of your product to one place and all of a sudden you're cut off and you're supply is ready to go, what are you going to do? You're always having to try to increase the market in order to stay the same, it shifts around so much.

Growers

We have about 100 shippers (producers of lamb) on our list, people that have sold to us in the last few years. We're usually able to accommodate most people who have lambs, or raise the kind of lambs we're looking for. As a co-op, market standards are set based on what we need. We try to let our producers know what our customers are asking for. We pay according to production that most closely fits the majority of our market demand. We try to hit the premium price for the lambs in highest demand, or lambs with the best return.

Some of our biggest producers would have 4 or 5 hundred ewes, producing 6 to 7 hundred lambs a year, down to people with 10-15 sheep selling you 20 lambs a year. The average would be people selling you about 60 – 70 lambs a year. These would be people where sheep farming is not their main income. Sheep farming is not something you'll get rich at. I don't really believe that the way things are now that you can be viable strictly on sheep farming. Even with 500 ewes. There are paper scenarios that show it can be done, and theoretically it can. But everything has to go right. I see it more as something people can do to enable them to stay where they are, and make a living along with something else. It has to be something they really like to do. There are a few people with large numbers doing it. But it's pretty darn hard, and you'd have to live on a pretty small income I would think.

Centralization and amalgamation vs. a distinct product

Most of the farming here is in competition with world prices. If you can't produce enough to put tractor-trailer loads of this product in the warehouses to distribute to all the stores, you can't sell any. Unless you go to a farmers' market or an independent store. The only way to be viable in the food industry is to be centralized with a huge market and all the raw materials at the most economical advantage. You have to have the cheapest inputs. Our inputs aren't the cheapest (in Nova Scotia). We don't have enough market. There's not enough demand for the products to ever get big enough. Northumberlamb survives because NS lamb is perceived as a distinct product by our customers. You can't replace it with Ontario lamb or NZ lamb. New Zealand prices are very low. If we were trying to sell at those prices, then all the farmers would quit raising lambs. For instance New Zealand legs of lamb often sell for $2.99/lb and ours sell for $4.99/lb in the stores.

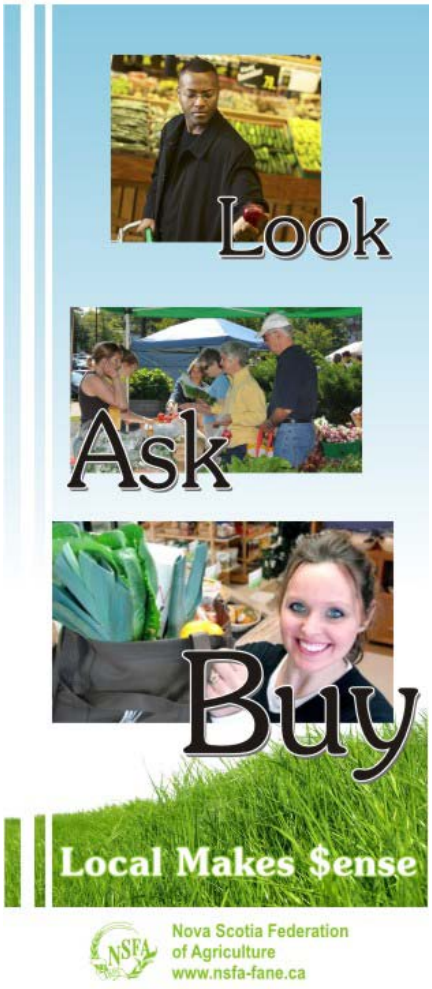
Since Northumberlamb has operated, people have received on average, a way better price than they would have without Northumberlamb. For a number of sheep producers operating independently, it's really tricky to balance your supply with the demand. Working together through Northumberlamb brings stability. At this point, there are the same number, or perhaps fewer farms raising sheep, but in the past lambs were raised up as feeders and shipped out of the province to be finished in other places, like Ontario. Now a lot more of the lambs are finished in the province.

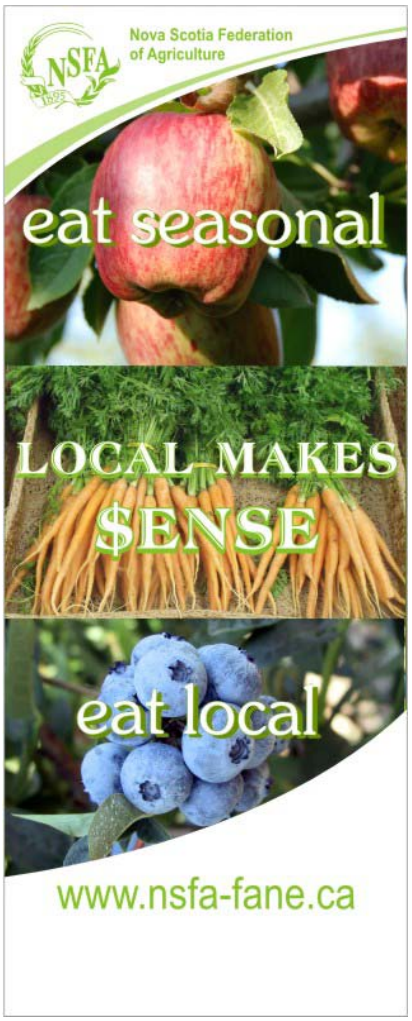
People who buy lamb are willing to pay more money for their meat because it's something they like. Probably the majority of lamb is bought buy people from other areas of the world who ate lamb prior to coming to Canada. People who are used to eating lamb can't get used to eating watery chicken.

In 2002, 5,000 lambs went through Northumberlamb. Although the price varies a bit, if we get $3.65/lb from the store, the farmer gets about $2.95. We need 65 to 70 cents a pound to operate Northumberlamb. One of the reasons why lamb has not really competed very well with other meats is that it's not very economical to process because of the small size. It's a lot more expensive to process one lamb than it is to process a cow, per pound.

The current challenge is, in the last few months, reduced sales compared to last year. Superstore decided to switch to lamb pre-cut, store it in a warehouse, and bring it in from a federal plant. They were 50-60% of our market before doing that, and now they're down to about 30%. We still sell to some of the stores because they put up a fuss that they needed our lamb for certain customers. The other supplier is out there to make a profit; their reason for being is not for the welfare of the sheep farmer, and the price to the sheep farmer will fall. That's the difference. If Northumberlamb makes a profit it's returned to the farmers. If we do make extra money we have a profit allocation that is paid back to all the farmers in accordance with how many lambs they produce. So there's no incentive for Northumberlamb to make a profit for themselves, and that's what makes us unique.

If, in the future, all meat has to be federally inspected we'd be in big trouble because there is only one federal plant in the Maritimes that will kill lambs. To be a federal plant you have to be a pretty big size, a lot bigger than we are. You have to have a lot more than lamb, and generally a Federal plant finds they are not doing enough lamb to justify the cost of keeping a line open for it so, they don't want to bother with lamb.





Conclusions & Recommendations

The main theme that emerges from this report is about making prices more 'real'. The real cost of producing food should include fair wages for farmers and their workers as well as the ability to steward the land. It should include the real price of transportation, particularly road transportation. It should not include uneven subsidies, regulations and standards, be it subsidized water in California or less stringent pesticide regulations in other countries. And we should recognize the health benefits of eating wholesome food.

When a good diet creates a positive outcome that is a positive externality. In a place with public health care, like Canada, this kind of positive externality benefits everyone. When trucking causes increased maintenance costs on highways, and trucks aren't charged for it, that is a negative externality. Pollution, greenhouse gases, and ill-health from a bad diet are all examples of negative externalities. There is little incentive to be efficient, or eat well, if we don't have to pay for the damage, health care, or climate chaos resulting from our actions. If, somehow, we can internalize the externalities, both positive and negative, we will make much better decisions, and everyone will benefit more. When Swiss trucks are charged according to use and vehicle efficiency, that is internalizing a negative externality. When Madison Community Shared Agriculture CSA customers are given a rebate for eating fresh vegetables and fruits, that is internalizing a positive externality. These are the kinds of incentives that will maximize benefits for everyone. Below you will find a list of additional recommendations.

For Consumers

- Vote with your dollar. Support farmers' markets, farm markets, community supported agriculture (CSA) operations, buying clubs, and retailers and restaurants who support local farmers.
- Ask questions at the grocery store, restaurants, and institutions. Find out where they purchase their food and ask them to improve their labeling.
- Reduce the consumption of junk food and other foods of low nutritional value;
- Use low-energy alternative food storage and preservation methods, such as canning, dehydrating, lactofermentation, and root cellars;
- Reduce your food waste. Approximately one quarter of all food sold is wasted;
- Shift diets to correspond to food available locally in season.

For Farmers

- Farmers need to work together more, figure out what they want from government and ask for it;
- Forge new, unconventional, and powerful alliances. There are linkages forming between health, environmental, social justice, and anti-poverty organizations. There are allies in arts and culture organizations, schools, restaurants, gardening groups, faith groups, immigrant organizations and more.

For Food and Farming Organizations

- Keep momentum of present enthusiasm:
    - Forge new, unconventional, and powerful alliances;
    - Teach people how to cook, preserve, store, eat seasonally;
    - Emphasize fun, social aspect of local food. Keep it positive!

    - Set very public targets with allies. Make a plan. Include incentives. Measure progress!
    - Challenge grocery stores to compete regarding the percentage of local food offered
- Organize customer groups to buy directly from farmers. For example, direct beef orders through workplaces. Combine cooking and preserve-making classes with visits to farms to buy produce.
- Follow the examples set by organizations like the Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition (MACSAC) and organize events to promote CSAs, lobby for rebates from the Department of Health for CSA subscription rebates, and encourage those who can to donate funds to help lower income families get CSA subscriptions.
- Use existing programs to further a healthy local food system and increase sphere of influence. Open farm days, 4-H, Harvest Festivals and picnics, exhibitions, and community college programs all offer possibilities for connection.

For the Private Sector

- Be transparent in the labeling of food products. It is often very difficult to figure out where food items are coming from in a retail setting. Signage is often ambiguous or non-existent. Staff are not always well-informed as to the origins of particular food items.
- Conduct an audit of the food you currently purchase. Create a local, sustainable food procurement policy, with minimum targets that increase over time.
- Seek to replace imported food items that are easily grown in NS with products from our own farms.
- Greater transparency with regard to what is being sold in the grocery stores is needed. The Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors should compile and publish what percentage of food is grown or produced in Atlantic Canada. These results should be available by food group (e.g. fruit, vegetables, dairy, meat). It is also important that the report display goods produced in Atlantic Canada separately from good processed in Atlantic Canada to display an accurate assessment of the food system.
- Reintroduce options for producers to sell directly to grocery stores. The centralized distribution systems that have developed over the last few years have made it increasingly difficult for smaller producers to supply the larger supermarkets. There is some indication that this is changing[17].
- Reduce food waste. Approximately one quarter of all food is wasted.
- Use low-energy alternative food storage and preservation methods.
- Invest in the local food movement, for example, through Slow Money.

For Government and Institutions

Procurement

- Develop and adopt local, sustainable procurement policies. Policies should include targets, with plans to increase the targets over time. Additionally, policy makers should carefully consider their definition of local, sustainable food, and extend the definition

[17] Beating the odds - Local producer suppliers being welcomed back (2009, June 3)
CBC commentary, *Donald Daigle*, *a vegetable producer in Acadieville*, *New Brunswick and chair of the Canadian Farm Business Management Council.*

beyond basic geography to include sustainable production methods, social justice, and corporate responsibility.

- Implementation of local, sustainable procurement policies also has its challenges. Consider the following recommendations to overcome common barriers:
    - **Money**. Incentives to buy local food need to be created and money for food needs to be seen as an investment in Nova Scotia agriculture. Schools and hospitals have very limited food budgets. Schools, hospitals and other institutions have or will lose a revenue stream due to the loss of pouring contracts from soft drink companies as unhealthy foods are replaced. Additionally, some schools have experienced a decrease in sales due to a lack of uptake on healthier foods.
    - **Staffing**. Funding for additional staff and staff training is needed. This is tied to the issue above. More staff are needed to prepare food items from scratch than are needed to reheat and serve pre-prepared meals.
    - **Facilities.** Ensure institutions have proper kitchen facilities and equipment. For example, many schools were not built with kitchens, thus meal preparation options are very limited.
    - **Invest in a matchmaker position**. The current food service model is heavily reliant on a small number of large suppliers. It takes additional time and resources for food service managers and farmers/small local suppliers to find one another. Additionally, some principals are now finding themselves in the position of running school cafeterias (as food service companies pull out). This becomes one more item added to their job description and principals may or may not have experience in running a cafeteria. A matchmaker would assist in connecting producers and food service managers.
    - **Amend prohibitive policies**. According to Health Canada and the Food Safety Division of the Provincial Department of Agriculture, there is no legislation preventing institutions from buying provincially inspected meat products. Yet, it seems that some food service companies are required to use federally inspected products. This appears to be an internal policy. The policy of using only federally inspected meat limits the market for provincially inspected meat to restaurants and direct markets. (The grocery stores cannot buy provincially inspected meat either, as their distribution channels require food products to cross provincial boundaries.)
    - **Foster an environment that supports a change in eating habits**. Elementary students have adapted more quickly to the healthy foods in their schools. The high school students are less receptive. Capital Health has expressed concern that people won't buy the healthier food options. Once the elementary students who are used to healthy food reach high school, it is more likely they will be more receptive to new, healthy cafeteria offerings.
    - **Reduce waste**. Food waste represents approximately a quarter of all food sold. By reducing food waste, institutions can save money – money that could be used to pay farmers a fairer price.
    - **Promote friendly competition!** Some Nova Scotia universities are tracking their local purchasing. If other universities, health care facilities and schools got on board, there could be a buy local competition.

Invest in Innovative Ideas

Money spent on local agricultural programs needs to be seen as an investment in our economy, our social fabric, our health, and our environment. In our research, we have come across innovative programs in other regions that could be implemented here, if there was financial support to do so. Here are some examples:

- **Watershed Agricultural Council** —This organization in New York State directs funds that would have been used to build water treatment facilities into supporting small farms and woodlot businesses. Their research shows that small farms and woodlots, if given funds to protect streams and wetlands, will protect the watershed more effectively than other land uses. The Council promotes the consumption of locally-produced food and wood products, and helps consumers connect the quality of their water with their support of watershed land stewards' businesses.
- **Matchmakers** – Individuals who link farmers with institutions, such as schools or universities. We met one such matchmaker in Massachusetts, Kelly Erwin, who describes herself as a 'dating service' for farmers and food service managers. She understands the needs and challenges faced by each party. She has a directory of farmers, knows what each grows and in approximately what quantity, and helps them find schools and universities on their existing delivery routes. She develops resources for food service managers, such as local food cookbooks and seasonal availability charts. Five years into this initiative, she hopes that this job will become a permanent part of the Department of Agriculture.
- **Support for CSAs** – A Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) system is one in which a farm sells "shares" at the beginning of the season. Their customers receive a weekly basket of fresh farm products. In Nova Scotia we have about a dozen CSAs – Maine has over 100! In fact, the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA) has a staff person devoted to CSAs, providing resources and support for farmers interested in this marketing approach. Similarly MACSAC in Wisconsin has successfully made CSAs part of the mainstream. Their ideas about subsidizing CSA shares are worth adopting here.
- **Support for new farmers** – Who is going to grow all the food we are now so interested in eating? An apprentice/journeyman program for new farmers put on by MOFGA is attracting interest and teaching valuable skills to up and coming farmers. Also, the Intervale in Vermont allows new farmers to gain experience and use common land and equipment without a huge investment. Once they've proven their ideas work, they move on to create their own farms.

And there are some home-grown programs that should be continued.

- **Direct Marketing Community Development Trust Fund**. http://www.gov.ns.ca/agri/prm/programs/afidf.shtml This is a Nova Scotia fund administered by the Department of Agriculture. It is definitely needed, but currently over-subscribed. The monies for the fund should be increased.
- **Select Nova Scotia :** A provincial government initiative with the goal of Select NS is to increase awareness and the consumption of Nova Scotia produced and processed agri-food products by Nova Scotians and visitors

Remove Policy Barriers

- Break down barriers related to provincial and federal meat inspection. Develop regulations and policies that promote, rather than discourage, the sale of provincially-inspected meat. Provincially inspected meat cannot cross provincial borders. This excludes provincially inspected meat from being sold in the grocery stores, as the distribution networks are set up on a Maritime basis. Certain institutions have policies that only allow them to purchase federally-inspected meat.

- Match food safety regulations to the scale of operations. Current regulations are prohibitive to smaller processors. We need diverse and decentralized food processing operations

Land Use

- Give priority to sustainable land use over non-sustainable land use when making development decisions
- Develop Working Land Conservation easements to protect farmland
- Ensure that activities in rural areas protect watersheds
- Preventative value of farm and farmland investments now

Municipal Governments

Traditionally municipal governments have not been involved in food systems, but there is growing interest and potential for municipalities to promote sustainable food systems

- Support farmers' markets.
- Support farmland conservation with municipal zoning
- Include food sovereignty in municipal plans, such as Integrated Community Sustainability Plans (ICSP)

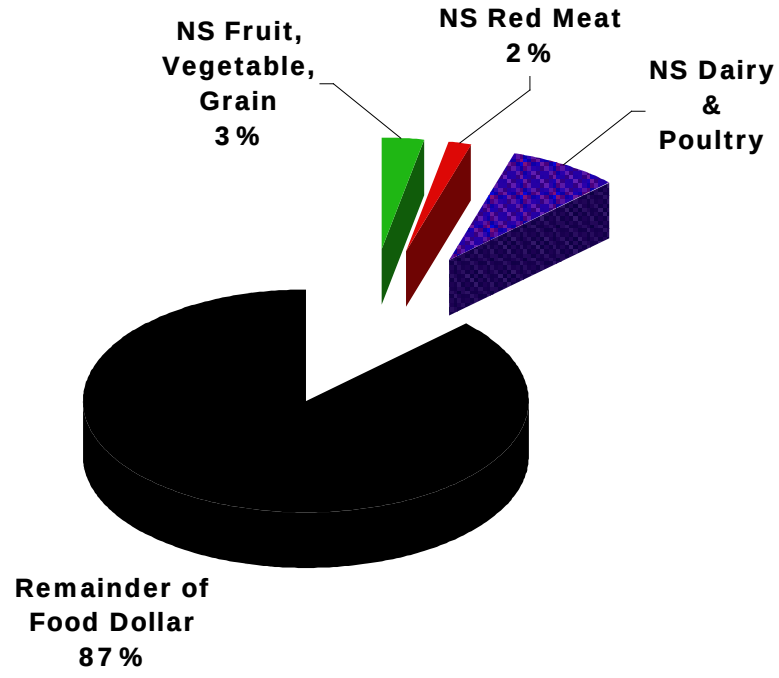
National Food Policy

Across the country, citizens in each province are facing similar challenges in creating more sustainable, locally-based food systems. There is currently no national food policy, though both the NDP and Liberal parties have conducted consultations and the Liberals have developed one.

- We recommend that the government develop a federal food policy that is based on the principles of food sovereignty.

How Much Local Food Do Nova Scotians Consume?

Figure 2: Food Spending Relative to Farm Cash Receipts, Nova Scotia, 2008[18]



	Dollar Amount	% of Total Spending
Total NS Food Spending	$2,647,988,490	100%
NS Farm Crop Receipts	$82,165,000	3%
NS Farm Livestock Receipts	$43,637,000	2%
NS Farm Supply-Managed Receipts	$224,426,000	8%
Remainder of Food Dollar	$2,379,925,490	87%

What does this estimate tell us?

Based on a survey of household spending conducted by Statistics Canada, about one million Nova Scotians spent about $2.6 billion on food in 2008. If we take the estimated amount of farm cash receipts for food, at most 13% of the Nova Scotia food dollar was received by NS farms. Eleven years earlier, farm cash receipts were 17% of the food dollar spent. To have a healthy and robust food system in this province, it would be better to have at least 50% of the provincial food dollars spent find their way back to farms. This would mean that farm income from domestic food sales would be $1.3 billion instead of the estimated $350 million. If we multiply that by the employment multiplier from Roberts et al (2005), that would generate 16,285 full time equivalent jobs.

Once spending on food flows to farms, most of it flows back out again to pay for production expenses. Between 1971 and 2008, total farm cash receipts have gone up 11% in Nova Scotia, but the graph in Figure 11 shows that over the same time, net farm income has gone down 80%.

[18] See notes for Table 10 for details of the sources and calculations used.

Even though total production has increased, farmers retain much less of that income. In 2008 farmers in Nova Scotia had *no* net income.[19]

How do we create a more locally-based food system?

The concept of a 'food mile' has captured the attention of the general public and the media, raising the profile of local agricultural issues. Our ultimate goal is to have tasty, nutritious food to eat, reasonable prices for both consumers and producers, wealth generation in rural Nova Scotia, minimal environmental impact, good relationships, and self-reliance.

The purpose of this report is to inform ourselves about the costs and benefits of our food system, and estimate changes that would happen if we increased the portion of local food in our diet. Once we are more informed, how do we act on this information? Assuming that we understand the benefits of a more local food system, recommendations for achieving it are discussed below.

The main theme that emerges from this report is about making prices more 'real'. For instance, the price of food should reflect the real cost of producing it. The supply managed dairy and poultry sectors, although not perfect, have helped to put dairy and poultry products on store shelves at a price that reflects the cost of production. They have also managed, to a certain extent, to match supply with demand. That should at least be a *goal* with the other agricultural sectors. In the case of products that can be grown here, assess supply, assess demand, and see what can be done to match the two.

The real cost of producing food should include fair wages for farmers and their workers as well as the ability to steward the land. People and the land should not be 'used up' in the process of growing food. The Local Fair Trade Initiative[20] in Wolfville touches on this desire to be fair and non-exploitive. This could be a start to a much more comprehensive move to fair prices for local farmers. If we can do it with Fair Trade coffee and chocolate, we can do it with food produced here too.

Another price that is not real is the price of transportation, particularly road transportation. Freight transport, through taxes and fees, pays only a small portion of the real cost of building and maintaining the highway network in Nova Scotia (and across North America). If freight companies were required to pay the full cost of wear and tear on roads, the greenhouse gases, pollution, accidents, and congestion, food imported by truck would likely go up in price. If we add the full cost of the fuel they use, the full cost of imported food would go up even more. Locally-produced food would be much more attractive and necessary. Switzerland has a system of charging freight trucks according to their emissions and road use. Because we are not charging these real transportation costs, our system is skewed to support products from anywhere in the world that can produce food for less. Producing food for less can sometimes be a function of efficiencies of scale, but it can also mean reducing costs at the expense of people and the environment.

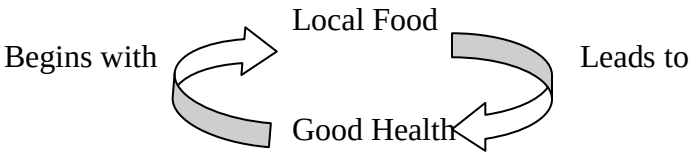
[19] Total Farm Cash Receipts and Total Net Income data are derived from Statistics Canada's *Agriculture Economic Statistics* 21-603

[20] The Fair Trade Initiative is a global movement to distinguish communities as a leaders in their commitment to supporting the principles of Fair Trade, including a fair price, respect for labour standards, environmental sustainability, and more direct and equitable trade and to improve the livelihoods of the millions of farmers and workers in the developing world who benefit from the Fair Trade Certification system.

Subsidies also skew prices so they are not real. Nova Scotia does not subsidize our farmers as much as, for example, Quebec subsidizes their farmers. As a result our farmers cannot compete with the prices Quebec farmers can charge. Similarly, US farmers are subsidized more than Canadian farmers are. Also, there are different regulations and standards throughout the world. In some places, stronger pesticides can be used, and lower wages are paid. Or in California, water for farming is subsidized. As long as we have these uneven subsidies and standards, along with transportation that is too cheap relative to its cost, our farmers will more often than not lose out. We either have to 'even the playing field' or we need to charge a lot more for transportation.

Another subsidy that many consumers are not aware of is an internal farm subsidy. Farmers often take jobs off the farm in order to pay for the farming operation. Or they are not paying themselves or their offspring for their labour. Good farming should be rewarded in the marketplace in the same way as good carpentry or good teaching.

Another price that is not real is the price for unhealthy processed food. This is beginning to be recognized as schools remove unhealthy foods from vending machines and cafeterias. The hospitals are starting to do the same. Health care providers understand that an unhealthy population is very expensive to care for, and now are starting to 'invest' in healthy food. This is a very positive trend. European countries such as Denmark are mandating that all government-funded institutions such as day cares, schools etc have organic food, mostly local. The two reasons for this are that it is good for rural economies, and it helps the population stay healthier, which saves them money. Unhealthy processed food causes increased health care costs down the road, and it is the most expensive food in terms of net energy intensity. Therefore, it should be much more expensive. There is a parallel with smoking. Addiction to sugar can be tackled the same way addiction to nicotine was addressed. By adding taxes, isolating smokers, and educating youth, fewer people smoke today. It is not as socially acceptable as it used to be.



Recognition of the health benefits of regular CSA deliveries of vegetables and fruits has come in the form of health insurance companies paying rebates for subscriptions in Madison, Wisconsin. Those who benefit from good diet are helping to pay for it.

When a good diet creates a positive outcome that is a positive externality. In a place with public health care, like Canada, this kind of positive externality benefits everyone. When trucking causes increased maintenance costs on highways, and trucks aren't charged for it, that is a negative externality. Pollution, greenhouse gases, and ill-health from a bad diet are all examples of negative externalities. There is little incentive to be efficient, or eat well, if we don't have to pay for the damage, the health care, or the climate chaos. If, somehow, we can internalize the externalities, both positive and negative, we will make much better decisions, and everyone will benefit more. When Swiss trucks are charged according to use and vehicle efficiency - that is internalizing a negative externality. When Madison CSA customers are given a rebate for eating

fresh vegetables and fruits - that is internalizing a positive externality. These are the kinds of incentives that will maximize benefits for everyone.

Final Reflections

There has been an incredible shift in awareness of the importance of local food over the past three years. This shift has taken place not only in Nova Scotia, but across Canada and the United States. When we visited New England in early 2008, many of the people we spoke with commented on the large scale shift in awareness that was taking place. It seemed that a tipping point had been reached.

When we began the Food Miles Project in 2007, our initial outreach ideas focused on how to raise awareness about the importance of local food. And while that is still important, we rapidly realized that many people were already supportive of local food systems and wanted to take action.

Meanwhile, it has become increasingly clear that the food system in Nova Scotia is in crisis. Amid the heart-breaking stories and the depressing graphs, there is a fierce passion for local food. And in the midst of crisis, there are those who see opportunity. In the last three years, we have met so many incredible, inspirational, innovative, dedicated, hard-working people. It is our hope that the groundswell of support for local agriculture will result in concrete solutions for our food system before it is too late.

Jen Scott and Marla MacLeod

VANCOUVER FOOD CHARTER

January 2007

The Vancouver Food Charter presents a vision for a food system which benefits our community and the environment. It sets out the City of Vancouver's commitment to the development of a coordinated municipal food policy, and animates our community's engagement and participation in conversations and actions related to food security in Vancouver.

VISION

The City of Vancouver is committed to a just and sustainable food system that

- contributes to the economic, ecological, and social well-being of our city and region;
- encourages personal, business and government food practices that foster local production and protect our natural and human resources;
- recognizes access to safe, sufficient, culturally appropriate and nutritious food as a basic human right for all Vancouver residents;
- reflects the dialogue between the community, government, and all sectors of the food system;
- celebrates Vancouver's multicultural food traditions.

PREAMBLE

In a food-secure community, the growing, processing and distribution of healthy, safe food is economically viable, socially just, environmentally sustainable and regionally based.

Some members of our community, particularly children, do not have reliable access to safe and nutritious food. In addition, much of the food we eat travels long distances from where it is grown and processed and is dependent on fossil fuels at every stage. Dependency on imports for our food increases our impact on the environment and our vulnerability to food shortages from natural disasters or economic set-backs. Overall food security is increasingly influenced by global factors that affect our community's ability to meet our food system goals.

Community food security needs the involvement of all members of our community, including citizens, consumers, businesses and governments. When citizens are engaged in dialogue and action around food security, and governments are responsive to their communities' concerns and recommendations, sound food policy can be developed and implemented in all sectors of the food system and the community.

In 2002, the City of Vancouver adopted sustainability as a fundamental approach for all the City's operations. The goal of a just and sustainable food system plays a significant role in achieving a "Sustainable Vancouver".

PRINCIPLES

Five principles guide our food system:

Community Economic Development
Locally-based food systems enhance Vancouver's economy. Greater reliance on local food systems strengthens our local and regional economies, creates employment, and increases food security.

Ecological Health
A whole-system approach to food protects our natural resources, reduces and redirects food waste, and contributes to the environmental stability and well-being of our local, regional, and global communities.

Social Justice
Food is a basic human right. All residents need accessible, affordable, healthy, and culturally appropriate food. Children in particular require adequate amounts of nutritious food for normal growth and learning.

Collaboration and Participation
Sustainable food systems encourage civic engagement, promote responsibility, and strengthen communities. Community food security improves when local government collaborates with community groups, businesses, and other levels of government on sound food system planning, policies and practices.

Celebration
Sharing food is a fundamental human experience. Food brings people together in celebrations of community and diversity.

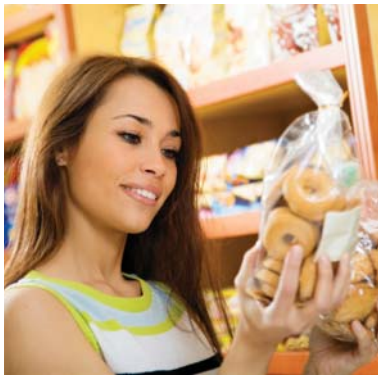
To create a just and sustainable food system, we in Vancouver can:

- Be leaders in municipal and regional food-related policies and programs
- Support regional farmers and food producers
- Expand urban agriculture and food recovery opportunities
- Promote composting and the preservation of healthy soil
- Encourage humane treatment of animals raised for food
- Support sustainable agriculture and preserve farm land resources
- Improve access to healthy and affordable foods
- Increase the health of all members of our city
- Talk together and teach each other about food
- Celebrate our city's diverse food cultures

A Seat at The Table:

Resource guide for local governments to promote food secure communities

June 2008



Provincial Health Services Authority
Province-wide solutions. Better health.

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Introduction: What's on the Table?

Local governments in BC play a unique and vital role in creating healthy and sustainable communities. They dedicate their time, resources and energy to creating sustainable economies, environmentally aware and safe places, and communities of healthy, active and engaged citizens — tasks that are becoming more challenging each day.

Food insecurity is growing, as evidenced by the increasing demand on food banks in Canada over the past decades.[1] Given Canada's rich and ready supply of food, this points to issues of poverty and inequality. BC has the highest rate of child poverty in the country — at 23 percent[2] — and at the same time, more than half of British Columbians are overweight or obese.[3] Poor diet and lack of exercise also contribute to chronic illnesses such as Type 2 Diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. Up to 30 percent of all chronic diseases are related to poor nutrition.[4]

The trends are also troubling on the production side. In Canada, net farm incomes are in decline and plunged to their lowest level in more than 25 years in 2003.[5] The number of farms and the finite amount of farmland is being eroded by development and environmental pressures. Producers are faced with rising fuel prices for farming and transporting goods. Chemicals used in the production of food are contaminating water and soil, and further threaten declining fish stocks.[6] Add to this the unpredictable impact of climate change.

This resource guide is designed to assist local governments promote food security and support food systems in BC. It showcases a sample of the wide range of innovative projects being developed or supported by local governments across the province. It includes examples that are meant to pique your curiosity and inspire you to action, whether your community is just starting out or well on its way to creating a strong and healthy food system.

Local food systems do not exist in isolation from provincial, national and international systems. Governments across Canada are working to address these issues, but it isn't easy. Food and materials are imported and

Local Food System

A food system is local when it allows farmers, food producers and their customers to interact face-to-face at the point of purchase. Regional food systems generally serve larger geographical areas, and they can often work with farmers who have larger volumes of single products to sell.[7]

exported, and in the process are affected by laws and regulations beyond local control. Yet the sustainability of the local food system can be enhanced on a local level to address critical components of the system such as production, distribution and access.

In BC, local governments are uniquely positioned to take action. Governments at the municipal and regional levels are traditionally closer to their constituents' needs, and are able to be more responsive in addressing citizen's concerns. In every step of this process, there is a role for local governments to play; supporting, facilitating or leading the changes in their communities.

Improving food security involves integrating health, economic, ecological and social factors. Action to increase food security can be seen as a continuum that ranges from providing emergency food for those in need, to building capacity and access within the community, to redesigning the local food system for sustainability.[8]

Here is a taste of some of the many tangible and intangible benefits that can be realized when a local government takes action.

- **Improve the health of the population:** Ensuring access to fresh, nutritious food is critical for maintaining a healthy population. Enabling and promoting access to healthy food can help combat rising rates of obesity and chronic illnesses that can be partially addressed by improvements to diet and exercise. Community Gardens, Sharing Farms and other examples in this guide increase healthy eating and physical activity, and contribute to the provincial goal of making BC the healthiest province in Canada by 2010.
- **Improve the local economy:** Support for local food production, and ways to connect local consumers to local suppliers, helps build a stronger and more sustainable local economy. Food dollars remain in the community to circulate from buyers to sellers and back again.
- **Improve the environment:** Closer-to-home production reduces "food miles" — the distance that food travels to reach the table — and its corresponding environmental and social impacts. It can also reduce packaging, increase composting and reduce waste going to local landfills.
- **Improve the well-being of the community:** Supporting opportunities for community members to connect around food — such as farmers' markets, community gardens or advocacy to improve access to healthy foods — creates greater awareness

Food Security

Community food security is achieved "when all citizens obtain a safe, personally acceptable, nutritious diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes healthy choices, community self-reliance and equal access for everyone."[9]

Food insecurity

The opposite of food security, food insecurity refers to limited or uncertain access to nutritious, safe foods necessary to lead a healthy lifestyle; households that experience food insecurity have reduced quality or variety of meals and may have irregular food intake. (See Glossary for more.)

About the Community Food Action Initiative

CFAI is a health promotion initiative of the provincial government aimed at increasing food security for all British Columbians. CFAI is a collaborative effort of BC's six health authorities and the BC Ministry of Health. CFAI is funded by the BC Ministry of Health, coordinated by the Provincial Health Services Authority and implemented by the Regional Health Authorities. This guide has been developed by CFAI in partnership with the Union of BC Municipalities and BC Healthy Communities.

and understanding of food-related issues, while building stronger partnerships and social networks, strengthening the very fabric of society. Addressing the local food system through food security is also a way of linking to other issues that communities grapple with, such as poverty and homelessness.

This guide provides just some examples from across the province of the many different ways local governments in BC are taking action to strengthen their local food systems. Included here are projects to support community gardens and farmers' markets, strategies to provide access to food in community planning decisions and to support local food production and examples of work being done to create capacity to help those in need. Local governments also actively support access to healthy foods by ensuring healthy choices become the easy choices in concessions and vending machines public places. And as catalysts, local governments bring people together in partnership to envision and plan for a stronger food system, formalizing their collective commitments into food policies and food charters.

Community Gardens: Growing Together

Community gardens are attractive outdoor green spaces that are growing in popularity. Rooted in history, the first community gardens in Canada (1890-1930) were known as the Railway Gardens. Designed and maintained by the CPR, these gardens were located in town stations across the country, and manifested local community spirit in the pioneering west.[10] Known as Victory Gardens during WW II, community gardens were encouraged by government to help bolster wartime food supplies.[11]

Today in BC there are at least 170 community gardens[12], with more than 60 in the Lower Mainland alone.[13] Typically, they consist of parcels of land divided into smaller plots for local residents to grow their own produce. In some communities, such as Taylor and Invermere, these gardens include greenhouses as a solution for cooler climates.

Encouraging community gardens is important in creating a sustainable local food system. They provide space and accessibility for aspiring gardeners who may have little means or resources of their own to cultivate affordable, fresh, healthy and seasonal food. The gardeners are largely responsible for organizing, maintaining and managing their own plots. They also have the option of choosing what to grow and the satisfaction of being more self-reliant and physically active, while connecting with the land.

How Communities Benefit

Gardens foster healthier, more socially responsible communities. Local governments have seen community gardens revitalize underused areas, turning them from neglected, sometimes derelict places, into spaces where beauty and a sense of community thrive. The City of Montreal's first official community garden, established in 1975, was initiated by citizens wanting to cultivate a lot left vacant after a fire. Montreal now boasts 97 community gardens, approximately 8,200 plots and more than 10,000 gardeners, with the greatest demand in rental areas with small city lots.

Local governments support community gardens as a way to increase access to nutritious food for those in need, making them less dependent on emergency food systems, and helping them become more independent. For example, the goal of some community gardens is to grow food solely for donation.

Community gardens also encourage physical activity, helping governments combat the rising rates of obesity and chronic illness so often associated with poor diet and exercise. Gardening is the number one recreational pastime of 72 per cent of Canadians[14], lending to the appeal of community gardens for all ages. As more than one-third of Canadian gardeners are aged 55 and older, community gardens help seniors stay active and independent — an important consideration given that BC's seniors' population is expected to double by 2031.[15]

Gardens can increase awareness and understanding of food-related issues and help local governments foster relationships with local community groups.

How Local Governments can take Action

- **Land-use:** Land for community gardens can come through donation or grants of unused public or private spaces. Local governments can identify suitable sites for community gardens and incorporate them into existing zoning bylaws, similar to the District of Saanich (see Community Profile).
- **Education and Promotion:** Local governments can promote community gardens on their websites, in newsletters and other public forums. The City of Ottawa runs a food security awareness and education campaign known as "Just Food," in which the Community Garden Network of Ottawa is prominent. For local governments involved in the Communities in Bloom competition, community gardens can be profiled in their applications.

  Community gardens have also been used as demonstration sites for sustainable and environmentally sound practices, such as water conservation, composting and drought-tolerant or pesticide-free gardening.
- **Partnerships:** Local governments can play a key role in supporting existing gardens, or encouraging community groups and non-profits to start-up and maintain garden programs. The City of Abbotsford's first public community garden opened in May 2008. Community volunteers and the City of Abbotsford Parks, Recreation & Culture Department formed a partnership to implement community gardens in the city. Starting with thirty 10' x 20' plots, additional plots may be added as demand warrants.[16]

Abbotsford community gardens

Community Profile: District of Saanich Official Community Plan Community Gardens

In response to the loss of significant gardening space on private land, the District of Saanich on Vancouver Island enacted a community garden policy. Saanich amended its zoning bylaw to allow community gardens as a permitted land use in all zones, except natural parks or environmental conservation areas — something few municipalities in BC have done. Saanich also included incentives in the form of bonuses to create additional community gardens for developers seeking to increase density — and potential profits — on part of a site.

The district took a further step in 2001, responding to a citizens group called the Land for Food Coalition, by purchasing an ALR property that was under development prospects. Saanich redesignated the farm from a Utility Zone to a new Rural Demonstration Farm Zone then leased the farm to the newly established Haliburton Community Organic Farm Society. This group is developing the farm as an educational site that will serve the entire community by providing a model of small-scale organic production.

"It was a brilliant move. With Saanich's administration and the use of sound planning, a collaboration with concerned citizens was formed who rallied to make it happen with the first demonstration farm zoning classification of its kind in Canada. This was a significant transaction for Saanich and the community as a whole, and continues to be a showcase of urban organic agriculture."

Kevin Weir, Director, Haliburton Community Organic Farm Society

"Haliburton Farm was acquired by Saanich Municipality through a land swap plus some additional cash paid over a period of three years. Mayor Frank Leonard was the architect of the transaction and it was a brilliant move," said Kevin Weir, who sits on the farm's Board of Directors. "With Saanich's administration and the use of sound planning, a collaboration with concerned citizens was formed who rallied to make it happen with the first demonstration farm zoning classification of its kind in Canada. This was a significant transaction for Saanich and the community as a whole, and continues to be a showcase of urban organic agriculture."

http://www.saanich.ca/business/development/plan/ocp.html

Haliburton farm tour

Farmers' Markets: Fresh, Healthy and Local

Farmers' markets operate in every type of community across BC: from Vancouver to Golden to Fort St. John.[17] Markets vary in size and sophistication, from large, sheltered public markets, such as on Granville Island in Vancouver, to a few farmers with their trucks parked in a parking lot or farm field. Typically, vendors are local and grow, make, raise or catch their own goods, and their wares often reflect the cultural diversity of the community.

With more than 100 to choose from[18], farmers' markets are gaining widespread appeal as dynamic community places where consumers can buy food directly from producers. They close the gap between the farm and the table, reducing "food miles" that affect both the quality of the products and the environment. Consumers get the freshest food available — with the romance and pleasure of eating seasonal and regional — and the satisfaction of being sustainable.

Markets typically run spring through fall and are usually open during certain hours and days of the week. A more recent trend has seen an increase in the number of year-round markets such as the new Prince George Farmers' Market now held in St. Michael's Anglican Church during the winter.

How Communities Benefit

Markets enrich a community — they are lively, vibrant places — with the atmosphere of a street festival — that offer a variety of benefits.

Local governments have found farmers' markets to be a boon for local economies, keeping money in their communities while supporting local producers. They attract people from immediate and neighbouring areas as well as tourists. These consumers also patronize nearby businesses. The Moss Street Market in the City of Victoria injects more than $700,000 annually into the local economy.

Increased access to locally grown products reduces dependence on imported foods and the global environmental impacts of shipping food. As an added bonus, markets encourage people to socialize, exercise and enjoy fresh-air, while promoting healthy eating as well as sustainable local food systems.

Markets can contribute to a local government's emergency preparedness plan by increasing local capacity and self-sufficiency. In its resolution to support urban agriculture, including farmers' markets, the City of Victoria refers to storms in 1996 and 2006, when transportation from sources off-island was inhibited and there was a scarcity of certain foods. With only five to ten per cent of the food consumed being grown on the island, the city recognized it was vulnerable and pointed to a need for action.

Markets can serve as a catalyst for other sustainable food initiatives. Relatively easy to set up, markets require little, if any, local government investment. They often support themselves with vendor fees, and do not require bricks and mortar or permanent land use. Local government leadership in this area can help generate community buy-in for other, more challenging initiatives to increase food security in the community.

How Local Governments can take Action

- **Land-use:** Local governments can designate particular sites as suitable for farmers' markets in their official community and neighbourhood plans. While typically seasonal, most markets can be held in existing public spaces such as a municipal parks, streets or parking lots. For communities wishing to develop year-round markets, permanent sites could be considered. Vancouver's Southeast False Creek Official Development Plan, for example, includes a farmers' market to support local food systems.
- **Promotion and Support:** Local governments promote farmers' markets by posting times, dates and locations on their web sites, or by investing in comprehensive awareness and education campaigns. The City of Richmond's Agricultural Viability Strategy, adopted in 2003, is attempting to boost support for regional farms with recommendations for a "Buy Local" campaign and promotion of the local farmers' market. While Richmond is generally thought of as one of BC's larger urban communities, more than 40 per cent of Richmond's land mass is used for agriculture, an important part of the local economy. Local government can also contribute resources for traffic control, set-up, tear-down and clean-up.
- **Partnerships:** Local governments can increase support for new or existing farmers' markets by building stronger relationships with community groups or non-profits, encouraging their involvement in and support for farmers' markets. In developing the Agricultural Area Plan for the Comox Valley, the regional district gathered a diverse range of stakeholders to work on improvements to the local food system. The creation of the plan was guided by the regional district and adopted as a bylaw in 2003. This plan commits organizations to be responsible for certain components, such as the Farmers Market and Direct Farm Sales Association to increase local food marketing.

Community Profile: Clearwater Farmers' Market, a Gateway to other Projects

The Clearwater Farmer's Market, 135 kms north of Kamloops,[19] has come a long way since its inception in 1998 when it was set up beside a mini-mart and had but two vendors. Today, it features 15 regular vendors and draws consumers from miles around each Saturday, May through October. "This market is successful because over the last seven years the community has supported us and allowed it to grow," said market representative Suzanne Gravelle.

The Thompson-Nicola Regional District (TNRD) offers promotional support to the market by lending its in-house production services to design and print rack cards, which regional district representatives include in trade show packages. Market pamphlets are promoted to tourists at the local chamber of commerce office.

The Clearwater Market is a good example of how one project can lead to others, as it has helped spearhead

Clearwater farmer's market

some innovative food resource initiatives. The market was instrumental in setting up a seed exchange program, partnering with the TNRD to provide information on composting and waste management.

The market has also been working with the North Thompson Valley Food Coalition to educate the public on local resources and to improve access to local sustainable foods. The North Thompson Valley Food Coalition grew out of a Food Forum in 2006 that gathered growers, cattlemen, local storeowners and citizens from the region, as well as members of the regional district, provincial government and Interior Health.

"Everyone has the right to healthy, affordable food that is easy to buy and preferably locally grown," said North Thompson Valley Food Coalition coordinator Cheryl Thomas. "There were many people who were trying to do their part. Now, it is a much more collaborative effort. People are working together from Blue River to Barriere. They don't feel so alone."

"Everyone has the right to healthy, affordable food that is easy to buy and preferably locally grown. There were many people who were trying to do their part. Now, it is a much more collaborative effort. People are working together from Blue River to Barriere. They don't feel so alone."

Cheryl Thomas, North Thompson Valley Food Coalition Coordinator

While still in its infancy, the coalition has made remarkable strides. It has put a successful gleaning program into place, which uses volunteers to harvest or collect surplus fruit and vegetables from backyard gardens and trees and distribute it to others in the various communities — particularly families and individuals in need.

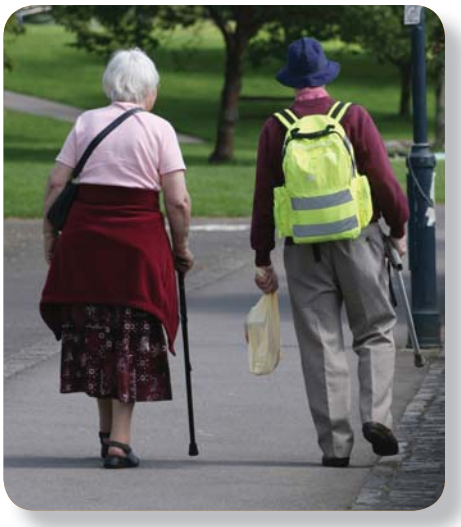
"In these more rural areas it's not just a matter of not wanting all this fresh local food to go to waste, it's also a matter of safety," said Thomas. "All these unpicked fruits and vegetables bring out the bears."

The gleaning program also taps into First Nations communities, which have shared their skills in locating and collecting wild indigenous fruits, vegetables and berries— something many people are unfamiliar with. There is a keenness to do this work with youth groups, so they grow up with the skills and take them into adulthood.

One of the more innovative initiatives was the planting of native fruit trees on publicly owned lands. "The idea behind that was to have publicly-accessible, seasonal, fresh food available for people to pick on their own. It's a much more useful way to green up a space than planting flowers or cedar trees," said Thomas. "People can go for a walk and pick a plum if they want to."

The coalition is also starting work on a regional agriculture/food plan that will support local producers by establishing and expanding regular farmers' markets and building local processing facilities. The plan is awaiting endorsement by the TNRD Board of Directors.

Neighbourhood Planning: Making Food Access Easy



Local governments play an important role in planning their citizen's easy access to food. As communities grow up and out, some neighbourhoods are at risk of becoming "food deserts" — areas devoid of grocery stores or land on which to cultivate food. Thus, the population lacks ready access to a fresh and healthy diet.

An emerging component of "smart growth"[20] planning by local governments is to include sites and supports for neighborhood food resources, be they grocery stores, community gardens or farmers' markets. One way to do this is through neighbourhood plans. When the City of Nanaimo was developing its new official community plan, it was acknowledged by council that more detailed neighbourhood plans were needed to address issues unique to each neighborhood.[21]

How Communities Benefit

Populations with fresh food sources within walking or biking distance are less dependent on public or private transportation to obtain food. Research shows that individuals also maintain a healthier weight. [22] When local governments include grocery stores in any redevelopment of inner city or lower-income areas, they increase access for low-income individuals, families and seniors, or those who lack access to reliable transportation.

Reducing travel time lessens greenhouse gas emissions, plus it encourages mobility and social interaction between neighbours, further supporting a healthy lifestyle in the community. This type of planning also creates both senior-friendly and accessible communities, an important consideration given BC's aging population.

How Local Governments can take Action

- **Planning and Land-Use:** Zoning bylaws provide front-line tools for local governments to promote aspects of food security by determining how communities will be developed. They can be used in conjunction with official community plans to establish food production, processing and retail areas. The Community Profile at the end of this section discusses how the City of Vancouver used official development plans for this purpose.

  Mapping can also help local governments assess the need to set aside land or building locations for grocery stores, community gardens and farmers' markets where they are lacking. It can also be used to ensure that transit routes provide easy accessibility, particularly for seniors and those in lower socio-economic areas.

- **Partnerships:** Local governments can work with developers, encouraging them to include food-access provisions such as container or rooftop gardening in their residential construction plans. The City of West Vancouver's Rodgers Creek Area plans call for all new-unit construction to include generous balconies for individual container food growing.

Community Profile: City of Vancouver's False Creek North and Southeast False Creek Official Development Plans

False Creek North lies on the northern shore of False Creek, just south of downtown Vancouver. The community's population is projected to increase from 9,500 (2006 census) to 14,000 once the area's new residential units are built under the existing Official Development Plan (ODP). This ODP is distinct because City of Vancouver planners recognized the need for residents to have access to food shopping within walking distance of their homes. The ODP identified the inclusion of a 2300-square-metre grocery store as a planned retail use for the area. This was an innovative move, as official development or community plans generally allow market forces to determine how retail space will be used, with mixed results.

www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/BYLAWS/odp/FCN.PDF

Southeast False Creek's ODP has also included some supportive measures that promote food accessibility, including a demonstration garden in the park near the community centre and a site for a farmers' market, though the exact location and size has not yet been determined. Additionally, building design aims to support urban agriculture through green roofs that enable on-site composting and rainwater collection. These green roofs are to be designed to provide for soil depths and load-bearing capacity sufficient to support the addition of gardens and landscaping. The plan also identifies opportunities for including edible landscaping, incorporating easy and artful access to healthy food.

www.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/bylaws/odp/SEFC.pdf

Support for Local Food Production: Home-Grown Goodness

A steady supply of fresh, healthy food, necessary for a strong local food system, depends on a healthy, thriving community of local food producers.

A large amount of food is imported into most BC communities. Today, it is estimated that the average food import in Canada travels 4,500 kilometres before being consumed.[23] But the increasing cost of oil, the loss of agricultural land due to development and erosion, and the impact of climate change all threaten long-term access to imported food.

By supporting local food producers with a strong regional distribution system for their products, a promotional campaign to educate local consumers, and a stable agricultural land base, local governments can reduce their reliance on imports and ensure their citizens have access to a sustainable supply of the freshest and most nutritional foods.

How Communities Benefit

Agricultural spaces are desirable places — they beautify communities with fields of colour and open-air landscapes. But supporting local food production also requires attention to distribution. Grocery stores and restaurants are well linked to large food distributors through convenient purchasing and delivery arrangements. Small-scale, local farms often do not produce the variety and quantity of food that is available through distributors. Linking the products from local farms together through a co-operative, for example, could reduce costs while increasing the variety of food available through one common seller.

By facilitating a stable system for distribution, supply and demand for their farmers, local governments are rewarded with a stronger economy, as more money remains at home. In BC, local agriculture generates more than $22 billion in sales from only three percent of our province's land base.[24]

How Local Governments can take Action

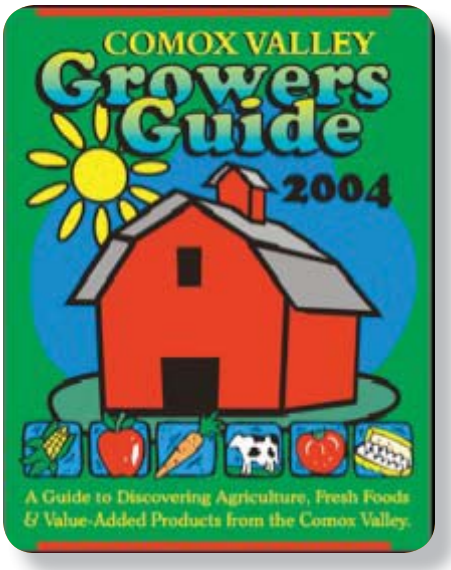
- **Education and Promotion:** Governments can support the local food system by raising awareness about the supply and demand of local food and urban agriculture, building stronger social and economic networks along the way. Increasing awareness about the variety of options available for the local consumer is a key step. Many local governments have created food directories that provide residents with handy and helpful information on where and when to buy local. The City of Prince George's Food in the City Task Force produced a guide to help consumers connect with local food suppliers, based on the feedback received at public forums held to discuss food issues. Further steps include the use of the Internet, email distribution lists and newsletters that provide up-to-date information to consumers.

  Similar to Prince George, the City of Richmond invested in a full-scale public education campaign to link producers with local buyers and to increase support for local food production — including developing a logo to brand locally produced products.

For smaller communities with fewer resources, creativity, partnership and some seed funding is all that's needed. The Village of Hazelton council had limited resources, but provided strategic direction, sought funding and helped foster a wide range of initiatives to enhance local food security. The village received funding from the Community Health Promotion Fund to gather partners who created an entire food strategy. Of their many creative activities, one awareness-building event included a village-hosted 'Iron Chef Local Food Challenge,' which took place during the annual Pioneer Days. The event was a fun and interactive way to both raise the profile of food security and build support for local food production.

Councillor Doug Donaldson and Julie Maitland (Mayor Alice Maitland's Daughter) at the Iron Chef Local Food Challenge

Supporting local food systems is also about helping to manage relationships between urban residents and rural growers. In response to complaints from urbanites moving into rural areas about noise and slow-moving vehicles in the Comox Valley area, the regional district created a series of educational booklets. The goal was to inform people and to encourage their support of local agriculture. The booklets were widely distributed through real-estate offices, the visitor information centre, the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce and the valley's economic development offices. While the first guide focused specifically on urbanites moving to the valley, the latter two addressed potential new farmers and discussed the benefits of agricultural operations such as farmers' markets and local food processing facilities.



Local governments have also promoted agritourism for years and incorporated tours of local food production areas, such as popular orchard tours, into their tourism brochures.

- **Partnerships:** Local governments often have the resources to bring together local producers and encourage them to work as one to improve distribution to local buyers and increase their own profitability. For example, the City of Kamloops is home to an innovative organization called the Heartland Food Co-op (see Community Profile).

Local governments can also work in partnership with the producers themselves, by "walking the talk"; putting purchasing policies in place to ensure their food purchases are local whenever possible, within prescribed trade agreement procurement policies.

Community Profile: Kamloops Heartland Food Co-op

The City of Kamloops played a critical role in the formation of the Heartland Food Co-op by organizing key contacts at regional committees and establishing partnerships for funding through Community Futures. This innovative project brought local producers together to explore ways of increasing access to locally produced foods and building strong networks to connect local buyers and sellers. The Heartland Co-op now offers a broad range of locally produced foods available at a single location through pre-ordered retail sales. The feasibility study to create the Heartland Food Cooperative was financed by Interior Health and the Community Futures Development Corporation of Thompson Country.

"The City of Kamloops was instrumental in creating a partnership to develop a local food economy by facilitating the process. The city strongly believes in the importance of developing a local food economy as is shown in its support for the farmers' market and the local producers' co-op."

Laura Kalina, Founding Member, Kamloops Food Policy Council

"The City of Kamloops was instrumental in creating a partnership to develop a local food economy by facilitating the process," said Laura Kalina, a founding member of the Kamloops Food Policy Council. "The city strongly believes in the importance of developing a local food economy as is shown in its support for the farmers' market and the local producers' co-op."

Founded in 2007, the Heartland Foods and Farm Tours Cooperative has already amassed fifty producers and continues to grow. It is currently planning a processing facility to preserve seasonal products throughout the year.

www.heartlandfoods.ca

Heartland Food Co-op. From left to right: Betty Peters (owner of Dominion Creek Ranch), Andrea Gunner (General Manager) Marla Ronnquist (Retail Sales Manager) and Suzen Allen (Book-keeper).

Healthy Food in Public Buildings: Providing Healthy Choices

Some startling facts:

- In 2004, nearly one-quarter of Canadian adults were obese and an additional one-third were overweight.[25]
- The numbers are just as alarming for youth, as 26 per cent of Canadian children and teens aged 2 to 17 were overweight or obese.[26]
- For many people, one-quarter of each day's calories come from foods like cookies, chocolate, candy and chips.[27]

To combat these trends, the Government of British Columbia introduced a school food nutrition policy in 2005. The following year, it extended the initiative to replace junk food with healthier food and beverage choices in vending machines in BC public buildings, including hospitals. Through the BC Healthy Living Alliance, the UBCM and BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) are partnering to ensure local governments and recreation facilities get the support they need to make changes to their food and beverage selections. With 12 million programs being run through 800 recreational facilities every year, and thousands of families visiting BC municipal buildings, these facilities are being encouraged to use the public buildings nutrition criteria which can be found at **www.brandnamefoodlist.ca**.

Local governments are already active in encouraging healthy lifestyles. The sale of healthy food and beverage alternatives is an important strategy in promoting active living and reducing illness and chronic diseases that can result from an unhealthy diet. Promoting better choices in vending machines and concessions is a natural move for this sector.

How Communities Benefit

Local governments contribute toward the cost of infrastructure and equipment for health care in their communities, and the price of inaction is steep. Direct health-care costs associated with obesity alone are $380 million per year in BC. Since unhealthy diets are a major contributing factor to the problem, replacing junk food with more nutritional options is one way for local governments to promote healthy eating that requires little or no investment.

For example, in 2008 the City of Kelowna endorsed a five-year plan to introduce healthier foods into its public facilities. The budget for the switch in year one was pegged at $58,000, mainly to cover changes to concession stands. The city recently received a one-time grant of $12,500 from the Healthy Food and Beverage Sales in Recreation Facilities and Local Government Buildings Initiative, co-lead by UBCM and

BCRPA. As well, the Healthy Food and Beverage Sales Initiative is partnering with Kelowna to implement its patron-awareness strategy and make this available to other communities across the province.

How Local Governments can take Action

- **Education:** The Municipal Recreation Food Environment Action Toolkit (MRFEAT) has been made available by the Healthy Food and Beverage Sales in Recreation Facilities and Local Government Buildings Initiative for use by local governments, individual facilities and community organizations to support HFBS planning, implementation and policy development. For more information on the toolkit, visit the BCRPA website at **www.bcrpa.bc.ca/HealthyFoodandBeverageSales.htm**.
- **Plans and Policies:** Local governments are introducing plans or policies to limit or eliminate junk food selections and provide healthier food options both in-house, or by contractors and vendors at public venues and facilities. The Food and Nutrition Policy adopted by Canoe Creek First Nation dictates that all food or beverages, coordinated or supported by the Band Council, must meet Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide at all sponsored events, within vending machines, concessions/canteens, coffee-room refrigerators and snack boxes.

  In the absence of a plan or policies, local governments can visibly demonstrate their support by serving healthy foods and beverages at public meetings and functions — focusing on local, fresh ingredients whenever possible.
- **Partnerships:** Local governments can engage community groups and/or business organizations to come up with ideas on how to increase access to healthy foods in public facilities (see Community Profile).

Community Profile: City of Kelowna Healthy Food and Beverage Sales Implementation Plan

After the City of Kelowna signed a multi-year agreement in 2003 with a soft drink company, the practice of serving sugared pop and other beverages was questioned. The discussion expanded to all food products and the need to work with food concession operators. Dialogue began between the City of Kelowna, Regional District of Central Okanagan and Interior Health, resulting in the formation of the Healthy Food and Beverage Choices Task Force.

With funding from the city and Interior Health, a task force coordinator was hired and two healthy food workshops were held for organizations and businesses contracted to provide food for concession stands and vending machines. Close to 40 people attended one or both workshops to discuss offering healthier food options, and what changes and supports were necessary.

In April 2008, the city adopted the five-year Healthy Food and Beverage Sales Implementation Plan to build awareness, switch to packaged and prepared food products that reflect the Healthy Choice Checkmark

"City parks, recreational facilities and sports programs are part of our commitment to keep our community active and healthy. It makes sense to also offer healthy food and beverage choices, especially in facilities used by children and families."

Reid Oddleifson, Development Manager, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Services, City of Kelowna

System, expand the number of vending machines providing healthy packaged food products, and develop new policies for food contracts for city-leased facilities. The outcomes will go a long way to making healthy choices easier.

Reid Oddleifson, Kelowna's development manager of recreation, parks and cultural services said support for the healthier food initiative is strong from critical stakeholders, but consultation is crucial. "In most cases, the people who run these concession stands are not-for-profit agencies, and there's always a fear that they won't support it. But that's not true. Our research indicates the operators very much supported this and that it is actually good for business. Volumes go up and profits go up."

When asked why local governments should get involved in promoting healthier eating, Oddleifson said: "City parks, recreational facilities and sports programs are part of our commitment to keep our community active and healthy. It makes sense to also offer healthy food and beverage choices, especially in facilities used by children and families."

www.kelowna.ca

NUTRITION

Kelowna eyes junk-food ban

Healthier food alternatives could get sporting chance at city-owned facilities

By Okanagan Saturday Staff

Pops, chips and french fries could soon be disappearing from snack bars and vending machines inside city-owned facilities in Kelowna.

City council will be asked Monday to endorse a five-year plan to replace junk food with healthier options at sporting venues.

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Changes would be introduced this year
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Leagues support switch to healthier snacks

By RON SEYMOUR
The Daily Courier

Kelowna to ban junk food from city-owned facilities

Junk food getting squeezed out of city-owned facilities

By RON SEYMOUR
The Daily Courier

Junk food will be squeezed out of vending machines and concession stands in city-owned facilities over the next few years, council decided Monday.

"We have record levels of obesity and childhood diabetes, which are directly connected to the eating of junk food and a lack of exercise," Hobson said.

A switch to healthier foods takes place next year at the Apple Bowl, and Elks and King

Creating Community Capacity: Food Now, and for the Future

Food security is a growing concern. Ensuring a healthy, sustainable supply of food for the entire population is a challenge, but especially for those in need. Local governments can play a key role in enhancing food security within their own communities.

British Columbia's poverty rate, at 14.2 per cent, is the highest in Canada.[28] According to the Canadian Community Health Survey (2004), 10.4 per cent of households in BC stated they were moderately or severely food insecure as a result of financial challenges. Moderately food insecure means that the quality of the food was compromised, while severely food insecure households also faced reduced quantity of food.[29] The most recent Hunger Count found that 76,514 people in BC used food banks in March 2007,[30] including 27,775 children. Yet every year in BC, an estimated 16 million tons of food goes to waste on farmers' fields.[31]

Action plans for building food security in the community need to include specific components to address the challenges of food insecurity, food availability and distribution and economic inequality.

How Communities Benefit

Proactive programs and policies, designed and delivered at the local level, can give those in need a leg-up rather than just a handout. Local governments have long been involved in supporting greater food security. Programs such as the Nanaimo Community Kitchen help train those who lack basic food preparation skills to prepare low-cost healthy meals. Workshops teaching participants how to can fruits and vegetables are also provided; further improving food security and sustainability.

Other local government-supported initiatives encourage homeowners with gardens or fruit trees to donate a portion of their produce to those in need. Many homeowners grow too much produce for themselves, or have no time, or are unable to harvest it. Volunteers can pick the produce, ensuring it goes to a worthy cause instead of the landfill. Better known as "gleaning," this is a centuries-old activity of gathering what is left behind after the harvest. Last year, for example, the Surrey Food Bank's volunteers gleaned 32,000 lbs. of fresh produce.[32]

Some garden projects encourage people to cultivate underused land and actively grow more than they require for their own use to give away to those in need. Other initiatives have an even broader scope, collecting unused food from local restaurants, grocery stores, farms and individuals, and redistributing it to people in need.

Programs such as these help build stronger communities by bringing together people of all ages, ethnicity and social backgrounds to work toward a common goal.

How Local Governments can take Action

- **Resources:** Local governments can provide land, water and/or maintenance for a community-run farm, such as the City of Richmond's volunteer-run Fruit Tree Sharing Project. Originally started in 2001, this initiative gleans unused food from the fruit trees of local homeowners. In 2005, the project expanded when the city helped secure a one-and-a-half acre permanent home called the Sharing Farm, and helped provide compost and materials for the new site. In 2007, the Fruit Tree Sharing Project donated 15,000 pounds of food to the food bank[33]. Its aim is to redistribute more than 250,000 pounds of food by 2012.

  Following a public forum geared to building more supports for families with young children, the Town of Princeton partnered with a number of groups such as Communities for Kids and Success by Six to contribute to a drop-in community kitchen initiative called Family Place. The town assisted by renovating an old building and offering one year's free rent and utilities. A council member attends Community for Kids meetings, thus strengthening the partnership that has formed and sustaining the Family Place project.

- **Education and Promotion:** Local governments can raise awareness about poverty and health issues related to food in their communities and educate residents on how they can make a difference by donating or volunteering.

  The City of North Vancouver's Edible Garden Project includes the Strong Roots initiative, which provides information and education to the community, where knowledge and skills are built around ecological food gardening, healthy eating and food preservation.

- **Partnerships:** Local governments can help launch new projects by holding key meetings and enabling discussions among stakeholders. The Edible Garden Project in the City of North Vancouver, for example, was the result of extensive community consultation to create a network between homeowners with gardens who want to donate a portion of their harvest, people who have under- or unused garden space and would like to cultivate this land for growing food, and volunteers who want to contribute to locally produced food. In 2007, the project collected 2300 pounds of fresh food from individual gardeners to be redistributed to those in need.[34]

Community Profile: The Good Food Box Program in the Bulkley-Nechako Regional District

Local governments have access to funding for food security initiatives, such as the provincially funded Community Health Promotion Fund (CHPF) administered by the UBCM. The Bulkley-Nechako Regional District received a pilot project grant from CHPF in 2007 to help address the challenges of ensuring isolated communities' access to healthy food choices. A Good Food Box Program was developed that provided an average of 95 families with boxes of healthy food each month. The program helped families, low-income community members, seniors, people with diabetes and four of the six neighbouring First Nations to make good food choices and reach the goal of at least five vegetables and fruits per day. Based on the project's success, it will continue to be administered by a local advisory committee with regional district representation, and a local sports organization taking on the program coordination as a fundraising activity.[35]

www.rdbn.bc.ca

The Bulkley-Nechako Regional District's Good Food Box program was off to a good start, with twice the expected number of orders placed in the first month. Recipient Sandy Haskett (l) is pictured here with coordinator Cindy Phair as they show off their fresh and healthy garden delights. Photo courtesy of Lakes District News.

Assessments, Charters and Policies: Pulling it All Together

Building a healthy community with a sustainable food system requires both planning and action. Planning, including understanding the current situation by conducting a Food System Assessment, helps integrate food into ongoing local government decisions, creating a systems approach to food security. Action takes this information and leverages it into food policies and food charters to provide strategic direction for the community.

Food charters help communities define what their food system should look like. They are declarations of communities' intent, and express key values and priorities for creating just and sustainable food supplies. Food policies typically focus on meeting charter goals with land-use planning, urban agriculture, emergency food distribution, food retail access, community health, waste management and economic development.

In 2005, the City of Vancouver, in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health, conducted the Vancouver Food System Assessment. The assessment provides an overview of Vancouver's food system, its relative food security, opportunities for enhancing the food-related economy in Vancouver and recommendations for increasing the sustainability of the food system.

How Communities Benefit

A community food assessment is the first step toward developing local, healthy, community-based solutions. It's a way to bring the whole community together around a single issue that matters to everyone, regardless of age, gender, economics, ethnicity or social background — food.

Food assessments give local governments the background information they need, providing a comprehensive picture of the current state of their food systems. Assessments help identify partners, community resources and opportunities for increasing food security. An assessment can be a springboard for involvement in other measures to build community food security. By getting the community involved and aware of its food choices, an assessment can motivate people to make change — to partner with farmers, to start a community kitchen, community garden or farmers' market. Finally, the data collected during an assessment will be vital in monitoring the effectiveness of food policies and food charters on the evolving food system.

Food charters and policies formalize the commitment around food, turning the vision into action. By integrating food into decision-making, local governments create broad cultural, social, economic, environmental, health and educational benefits. The City of Vancouver cites the additional benefits of applying

food-system best practices to its operations as ways to improve energy efficiency, reduce pollution, conserve water and reduce waste.

Local governments have found that charters can promote safe food, good nutrition and health, and revitalize local communities by building self-reliance and collaboration. They can foster community economic development and act as a catalyst for other food-related initiatives. The Ottawa Food Security Council (now called Just Food) grew out of community concern about food security. Provided with funding by the City of Ottawa in 2003, a variety of projects operate out of Just Food today, accessing funding from organizations as diverse as the Social Planning Council and the National Capital Commission.

The City of Toronto has a 15-year partnership with the Board of Health. City officials believe their Food Policy Charter has been instrumental in building a sustainable food system.

How Local Governments can take Action

Food Assessment: Local governments can implement their own action plans starting with food assessments in their communities. The Community Food Action Initiative, a health promotion initiative aimed at increasing food security for all British Columbians, has a handy step-by-step resource guide for conducting assessments on their web site at **www.phsa.ca**.

The City of Vancouver played a key role in securing funding and partnerships for its Food System Assessment and also provided staff support and technical assistance. Local governments can also form partnerships with other community groups working on food issues rather than take on the task themselves, and leverage their support by obtaining funding through various sources such as the Community Health Promotion Fund.

- **Food Charters and Policies:** Local governments can put food charters and policies in place that reflect their community's unique needs. Three local governments in BC — small, medium and large — have already done so with their charters. See the Community Profile at the end of this section on the this section on the Village of Kaslo, the City of Vancouver and the City of Kamloops.

  Local governments can adopt policies that make provisions for land use such as community gardens or farmers' markets, or provide funding and support for emergency food systems such as food banks. Or, like the City of Victoria, they can make declarations that recognize the connection of these community supports to regional food security. Policies can also apply to in-house purchasing such as the one set by the Canoe Creek First Nation.

- **Public Education and Awareness:** Local governments can raise awareness about food assessments, charters and policies in their newsletters, information brochures and on their websites. They can recognize efforts of groups and stakeholders and promote their campaigns, workshops and conferences. For example, one of the mandates of the Kamloops Food Policy Council, of which the City of Kamloops is a member, is to create opportunities for people to meet and act on community food issues.
- **Partnerships:** Local governments can provide a representative to sit on local community committees or work with local groups. They may also establish advisory committees, steering committees, committees of councils or the board (ad hoc or permanent), or incorporate food-action planning into existing committees. Some communities have set up food policy councils to work solely on integrating food into local government operations.

Community Profiles: Food Charters in Kaslo, Vancouver and Kamloops

In February 2008, the Village of Kaslo adopted its Food Charter, the third in BC. Three key reasons were cited for developing the Charter: one in five people in Kaslo live in poverty, there is a high dependence on food transported into the community, and there are great benefits in building a local food system. The Food Charter outlines fifteen priority areas to promote food security for land-use planning. It outlines values and commitments that the Kaslo Village Council can make to further food security and strengthen local food systems, with the goal of ensuring that every resident has access to an adequate supply of nutritious, affordable and culturally appropriate food.[36] The Charter includes supporting programs and services for children, creating partnerships and making it easier to access healthy food choices.

www.nklcss.org/foodcharter.php

In early 2007, Vancouver's mayor and council adopted the Vancouver Food Charter. This came after two years of work by the Vancouver Food Policy Council toward meeting goals identified in the City's Food Action Plan, the Food Charter being a step toward enacting the plan. The charter presents a vision for a food system that benefits the community and the environment, and states the city's commitment to coordinated municipal food policy. The charter promotes education, celebration and on-the-ground projects for a healthy economy, ecology and society through five key principles: community economic development, ecological health, social justice, collaboration/participation and celebration.

www.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/foodpolicy/tools/pdf/Van_Food_Charter_Bgrnd.pdf

The Kamloops Food Charter framework was developed in the late 1990s, and through amendments to the Kamloops Social Plan, was established as city policy in 2002. This charter envisions a just and sustainable food system that encourages systems of production, processing, distribution, consumption and recycling that protect natural resources. It provided the context for developing the Kamloops Food Action Initiative and Food Action Plan.

www.fooddemocracy.org/docs/FoodActionPlan_sept06.pdf

For More Information

Local governments are putting their many skills, resources and tools to work on building sustainable communities with strong local food systems. Using planning processes, such as bylaws and official community plans, local governments ensure ready access to grocery stores and help plan for future community gardens and farmers' markets. They support the economy by facilitating economic policies and partnerships to link local consumers with local producers. They improve access to nutritious foods in places they control, such as vending machines in public buildings, and encourage others to do the same. And local governments create and support programs and services that ensure our most vulnerable have good food to eat and opportunities to bolster their skills and become more self-reliant.

Resources local governments can access include:

Funding Sources

- British Columbia Health Living Alliance funding programs: **www.bchealthyliving.ca**
- Union of British Columbia Municipalities' (UBCM) Community Health Promotion Fund: **www.civicnet.bc.ca**

Food Policy Groups, Networks and Programs

- A Baseline for Food Policy in BC: **www.ffcf.bc.ca/baseline.html**
- BC Food Systems Network Society: **www.fooddemocracy.org/index.html**
- Community Food Security Coalition: **www.foodsecurity.org**
- Food Secure Canada: **www.foodsecurecanada.org**
- Food Share Learning Centre Library: **www.foodshare.ca/resource/index.cfm**
- Growing Green: for sustainable food systems: **www.ffcf.bc.ca/GrowingGreen.html**
- Indigenous Environmental Network Statement on the Right to Food and Food Security: **www.ipcb.org/issues/agriculture/htmls/2003/ien_food_sec.html**
- International Indian Treaty Council: **www.ipcb.org**
- Ryerson University's Centre for Studies in Food Security: **www.ryerson.ca/foodsecurity**
- The Food and Agriculture Organization's Special Program for Food Security: **www.fao.org/spfs**
- Urban Agriculture: **www.sustainweb.org/urban_index.asp**

Additional Resources

- Community Food Action Initiative at Northern Health, Interior Health, Vancouver Island Health, Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health Authorities.

- BC Healthy Communities: **www.bchealthycommunities.ca**
- BC Nutrition Guide: **www.health.gov.bc.ca/prevent/nutrition/index.html**
- BC Association of Farmers Markets: **www.bcfarmersmarket.org**
- Smart Growth BC: **www.smartgrowth.bc.ca**
- Edible Gardens: **www.ediblegardenproject.com**
- Thought about Food? A Workbook on Food Security & Policy: **www.foodthoughtful.ca/index.htm**

Community Profile Resources

1. District of Saanich

- **www.saanich.ca/business/development/plan/ocp.html**
- Saanich's Community Gardens Policy: **www.gov.saanich.bc.ca/municipal/clerks/bylaws/gardens.pdf**
- Haliburton Community Organic Farm: **www.haliburtonfarm.org**

2. Clearwater Farmer's Market and the Thompson-Nicola Regional District

- Interview with Cheryl Thomas, North Thompson Valley Food Coalition and Suzanne Gravelle, Clearwater Farmer's Market representative.

3. False Creek North and Southeast False Creek

- City of Vancouver North False Creek ODP: **www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/BYLAWS/odp/FCN.PDF**
- City of Vancouver Southeast False Creek ODP: **www.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/bylaws/odp/SEFC.pdf**
- McCann, Barbara. Community Design for Healthy Eating; how land use and transportation solutions can help. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2006: **www.rwjf.org/pdf/CommunityDesignHealthyEating**

4. Kamloops Heartland Food Co-op

- **www.heartlandfoods.ca**

5. City of Kelowna Healthy Food and Beverage Sales

- Interview with Reed Oddleifson, Development Manager, City of Kelowna Recreation, Parks and Cultural Services **www.kelowna.ca**

6. Bulkley-Nechako Regional District Good Food Box

- **www.rdbn.bc.ca**

7. Food Charters in Kaslo, Vancouver and Kamloops

- North Kootenay Lake Community Services Society, Kaslo Food Charter: **www.nklcss.org/foodcharter.php**
- City of Vancouver, Backgrounder on the Food Charter: **http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/foodpolicy/tools/pdf/Van_Food_Charter_Bgrnd.pdf**
- Kamloops Food Charter: **http://www.fooddemocracy.org/docs/FoodActionPlan_sept06.pdf**

Reports and Manuals

- Dahlberg, Kenneth, et. al.. Strategies, policy approaches, and resources for local food system planning and organizing. The Local Food System Project Team, 1997. **http://homepages.wmich.edu/~dahlberg/ResourceGuide.html**
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- Joseph, Hugh ed. Community Food Security: A Guide to Concept, Design and Implementation. Community Food Security Coalition, 1997.
- Kalina, Laura. Building Food Security in Canada: From Hunger to Sustainable Food Systems: A Community Guide, 2nd Edition. Kamloops Food Share, 2001.
- Nova Scotia Nutrition Council. A National Environmental Scan of Strategies for Influencing Policy to Build Food Security 2004. **http://www.nsnc.ca/doc/NationalEnvironmentalScan.pdf**

Glossary

Unless otherwise indicated, this glossary is adapted from "CFAI-UBCM-BCHC Local Food Resource Guide for Local Governments in BC, February, 2008".

Food bank is a broad term for an organization or entity that acquires, stores and distributes food to the needy in a community. Food banks are typically supported by community food drives and umbrella organizations, as well as grocery stores, local agriculture, food manufacturers and other distributors.

Food charters are public declarations of a community's intent toward its food system. They express key values and priorities for creating just and sustainable food systems, and are a conscious reflection of the direction and importance of food security. Food charters generally combine vision statements, principles and broad action goals pointing toward a coordinated municipal food strategy.

Food policy is defined as any decisions, programs or projects that are endorsed by a government agency, business or organization affecting how food is produced, processed, distributed, purchased, protected or disposed.

Food policy councils provide a forum for advocacy and policy development that works toward an ecologically sustainable, economically viable and socially just food system. Their primary goal is to comprehensively examine the operations of local food systems and provide ideas and policy recommendations for improvement.

Food security is a situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes self-reliance and social justice. (Hamm and Bellows, 2003). Food security also includes being able to make a living by growing and producing food in ways that protect and support both the land, sea and the food producers, and that ensures that there will be healthy food for our children's children. (Food Security Projects of the Nova Scotia Nutrition Council and the Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre, Dalhousie University)

Food insecurity is the opposite of food security. Food insecurity refers to limited or uncertain access to nutritious, safe foods necessary to lead a healthy lifestyle; households that experience food insecurity have reduced quality or variety of meals and may have irregular food intake. (United States Department of Agriculture, Life Research Office)

Food safety refers to the concept of food being free from all hazards, whether chronic or acute that makes food injurious to the health of the consumer. (World Health Organization)

Gleaning is the practice of gathering crops that would otherwise be left in the fields to rot or be plowed under after harvest. Because the food is unmarketable, growers allow gleaners to pick what is left after harvest to donate to those who are in need.[37]

Local food systems allow farmers, food producers and their customers to interact face-to-face at the point of purchase. Regional food systems generally serve larger geographical areas and they often can work with farmers who have larger volume of single products to sell.[38]

Official Community Plan (OCP) is a statement of objectives and policies to guide decisions on planning and land-use management within the area covered by the plan, respecting the purposes of local government. An OCP provides a long-term vision of the community and defines the policies, priorities and guidelines for land use.

Smart growth is a collection of land-use and development principles that aim to enhance our quality of life, preserve the natural environment, and save money over time. Smart growth principles ensure that growth is fiscally, environmentally and socially responsible, and recognizes the connections between development and quality of life. Smart growth places priority on infill, redevelopment, and green space protection.[39] (Smart Growth BC)

Sustainable agriculture is a method of farming that provides a secure living for farm families, maintains the natural environment and resources, supports the rural community, and offers respect and fair treatment to all involved — from farm workers to consumers to the animals raised for food.

Sustainable food system is a system that integrates ecological, social and economic considerations into the production, processing, distribution, selection and consumption of food. Sustainable food systems help build healthy, engaged communities and citizens.

Sources

This resource guide has been written based on the research document: CFAI-UBCM-BCHC Local Food Resource Guide for Local Governments in BC, February, 2008, written by Jason Found and Melissa Garcia-Lamarca, Sustainability Solutions Group.

Endnotes

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2 Abbotsford Community Food Bank: www.abbotsfordcommunityservices.com

3 BC Nutrition Guide: www.health.gov.bc.ca/prevent/nutrition/index.html

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5 Statistics Canada. "The Daily: New Farm Income". 27 May 27, 2004.

6 Coote, D.R. and L.J. Gregorich. The Health of Our Water: Toward Sustainable Agriculture in Canada. Ottawa: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2000.

7 Food Security Learning Centre: www.worldhungeryear.org

8 CFIA Community Food Assessment Guide: www.phsa.ca

9 Bellow, A. and Hamm, M. (2003) International effects on and inspiration for community food security policies and practices in the USA, Critical Public Health, 12 (2): 107-123

10 Urban Agriculture and Food Security Issues in Canada: www.idrc.ca

11 City Farmer: www.cityfarmer.info

12 Jamie Kumar, Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Kelowna, BC

13 City Farmer: www.cityfarmer.org

14 Go For Green: The Active Living Environment Program: www.goforgreen.ca

15 BC's Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services: www.gov.bc.ca

16 Abbotsford Launches its first Community Garden: www.abbotsford.ca

17 BC Association of Farmers Markets: www.bcfarmersmarket.org

18 Ibid

19 District of Clearwater: www.districtofclearwater.com

20 Smart Growth BC: www.smartgrowth.bc.ca

21 City of Nanaimo: www.nanaimo.ca

22 Inagami, S., Cohen, D., Finch, B., and Wing, S. (2006). You are where you shop: grocery store locations, weight and neighborhoods. American Journal of Preventive Medicine. 31, 10-17.

23 Simon Fraser University website: www.peak.sfu.ca

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25 Dietitians of Canada: www.dietitians.ca

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31 Surrey Food Bank: www.surreyfoodbank.org

32 Ibid

33 Global National's Everyday Hero: www.canada.com

34 Edible Garden Project: www.ediblegardenproject.com

35 Community Health Promotion Fund Status Report, 2007: www.civicnet.bc.ca

36 North Kootenay Lake Community Services Society: http://nklcss.org

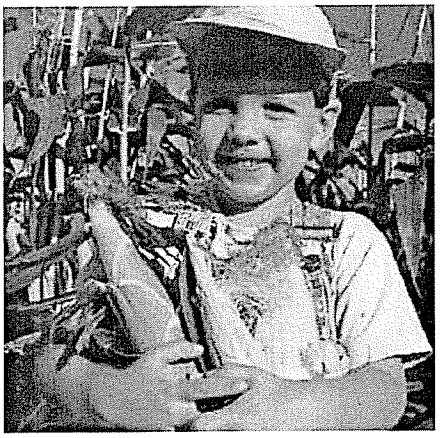
37 Society of St. Andrew: www.endhunger.org

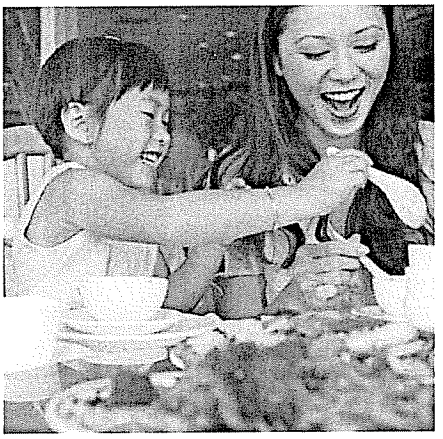
38 Food Security Learning Centre: www.worldhungeryear.org

39 Smart Growth BC: www.smartgrowth.bc.ca

Attachment 4

A HEALTHY COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEM PLAN



FOR WATERLOO REGION

GRAND BY DESIGN
Shaping Our Community

Region of Waterloo
PUBLIC HEALTH

Prepared by Judy Maan Miedema and Katherine Pigott
Health Determinants, Planning and Evaluation Division
April, 2007

Acknowledgements

This report completes a community-based process of data gathering, data synthesis, stakeholder consultations, report writing – and now – a document which charts the way to improving the health of our food system.

We would like to thank the 80 community members who attended the focus groups in 2006 and provided feedback on the strategies we proposed to improve the health of Waterloo Region's food system. Your time and energy and commitment are very much appreciated. Your involvement in this work has kept it grounded in reality and made it relevant.

We would like to acknowledge the on-going involvement of colleagues from the Planning, Housing, and Community Services Department in this process and extend special thanks to John Lubczynski for his careful review of this document. We also thank colleagues in the Social Services Department and from Purchasing Administration in the Finance Department for their ongoing interest and contribution.

Lastly, we thank Ellen Desjardins and Marc Xuereb who wrote "*Towards a Healthy Food System for Waterloo Region - Interim Report*", organized and facilitated the focus groups to gain input on this interim report, and sythesized the suggestions that came out of them.

Judy Maan Miedema and Katherine Pigott

CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary

The inter-sectoral nature of the Regional Growth Management Strategy afforded Region of Waterloo Public Health (Public Health) the opportunity to explore food issues in a very broad way. This is appropriate because the food system – all of the processes that are a part of providing food to people – is complex and influenced by the social, economic, natural, and political environment. It is increasingly understood that comprehensive food system planning provides an integrated response to the wide-ranging food-related problems that affect the public's health.

Public Health conducted several research studies to document the current state of Waterloo Region's food system and produced an interim report presenting the results in November 2005. Public Health then engaged a wide range of stakeholders to comment on the interim report and provide input into objectives and strategies which would help to reach the goal of a healthy food system. This consultation process resulted in a list of actions that could be taken to improve the health of the food system. A stakeholder forum in June 2006 confirmed some actions as priorities and mobilized community members to begin or continue to carry them out.

Progress on the actions to date has been steady. Some of the highlights of the progress are summarized here but the full report contains more detail. Public Health is facilitating the development of a Waterloo Region Food System Roundtable to enable networking to implement the actions. Public Health formed a collaborative with two community partners and has secured funding from the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation to pursue several of the other actions. Public Health is working with the Planning, Housing, and Community Services Department to ensure that agricultural policies enhance the health of the community food system.

This report makes the following recommendations to ensure the continued pursuit of the key strategies to improve the health of the food system that were supported by stakeholders at the follow-up stakeholder meeting in June 2006:

- That Public Health staff continue to provide administrative and research support to the Waterloo Region Food System Roundtable
- That Public Health staff continue to identify mechanisms to increase opportunities for enhanced supply and distribution systems for local food as a means to increase food access (such as mobile farmers' markets, community supported agriculture, and urban agriculture)
- That Public Health staff explore expanding the Region of Waterloo's Green Purchasing Program to include the purchase of local food.[1]

2. Introduction

A Healthy Community Food System Plan is one of several reports prepared by Region of Waterloo Public Health as part of the implementation of the Regional Growth Management Strategy. This report completes a key informant consultation process, presents the community food system plan that consultation process developed, and informs further Public Health action related to food system themes and the Growth Management Strategy.

Public Health, Community Food Systems, and Land Use Planning

There are a number of public health issues related to food in our communities that, at first glance, seem unrelated. For example, one problem is the increased consumption of highly-processed, low-nutrient convenience foods and the parallel increase in the incidence of obesity. The rising incidence of obesity and related diseases like Type 2 Diabetes[2] has currently been receiving a large amount of media attention. Another problem is the amount of fossil fuel energy used and the resulting greenhouse gases emitted from transporting food over long distances. A third example is the social impact of the loss of community infrastructure in rural communities following major changes in the agriculture sector. In the past, public policy tended to view these problems in isolation without examining the broader context. The concept of broad community food system planning tries to overcome this problem by providing a more integrated response to the seemingly disparate food problems affecting public health.

The term "food system" refers to all of the processes which are part of providing food to people. It includes the growing, harvesting, transporting, processing, marketing, selling, consuming, and disposing of food. The food system is influenced by the social, natural, economic, and political environment. A healthy community food system is one in which all of the processes involved in the food system are integrated to enhance the environmental, economic, social, and nutritional health of a geographic community.[3]

A community food system planning approach goes beyond looking at individual eating behaviours and providing nutrition education. It examines the broader environment in which food is produced and made available to people and attempts to enhance it in order to improve health. A food system that improves access to fresh produce and other healthy food throughout our region, decreases our dependence on long-distance food transport, and helps to support a viable local agricultural economy, is key to the health of all residents and our community as a whole.

Background to this Report

In June 2003, Regional Council approved the Regional Growth Management Strategy, a document that identifies where, when, and how residential and employment growth will be accommodated over the next forty years. The goals of the strategy are to enhance our natural environment, build vibrant urban spaces, provide greater transportation choice, and protect our countryside. Eighty implementation projects were initiated at that time across all Regional departments. One of those implementation projects was the development of a Community Food System Plan. This provided Region of Waterloo Public Health an opportunity to work with the Planning, Housing, and Community Services Department and other food system stakeholders to explore food system issues in a very broad way.

In January 2005, Public Health established an advisory group involving producers, retailers, consultants, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs, the Waterloo Federation of Agriculture, and others to guide the development of this Community Food System Plan. With their guidance, Public Health conducted research to assess the Waterloo Region Food System.

A timeline and summary of the activities follows on page 4.

Timeline and Summary of Activities

Date	Action
January 2005	Advisory Group convened by Public Health to guide development of Community Food System Plan.
November 2005	*Towards a Healthy Community Food System for Waterloo Region* Interim Report released.
February 2006	Public Health convened 11 focus groups with over 80 participants from nine sectors in the food system to provide feedback on the interim reports' suggested strategies.
Spring 2006	Public Health used feedback from focus groups to design 26 actions to address interim reports' suggested strategies; six of these actions were then short listed by Public Health as suggested priorities.
June 2006	Focus group participants met as a group and endorsed five priority actions and added an additional priority action.
April 2007	A Healthy Community Food System Plan for Waterloo Region released with three recommendations for Public Health to continue in its role of facilitating change to improve the health of the food system.

In November 2005, Public Health released an interim report entitled *Towards a Healthy Community Food System for Waterloo Region*[4] which described the current state of our food system. It proposed that **the goal of a healthy community food system be that all residents have access to, and can afford to buy safe, nutritious, and culturally-acceptable food that has been produced in an environmentally sustainable way and that sustains our rural communities**. It proposed seven objectives and several strategies to pursue a healthy community food system.

When the report was released, staff was directed by Regional Council to engage key informants in a consultation. In February 2006, 11 focus group meetings were held with key players in the Waterloo Region Food System. Over 80 people attended. Focus groups were held with each of these sectors:

- Technical Advisory Group
- Land use planners (2 groups)
- Restaurants
- Institutional purchasers
- Interested individuals (2 groups)
- Producers
- Old Order Mennonite producers
- Manufacturers and distributors
- Food retailers

The purpose of the focus groups was to obtain feedback on the objectives and strategies proposed in the interim report. Public Health staff used the feedback from the focus groups to design 26 actions to address all of the strategies given in the Interim Report. Based on a set of evaluation criteria, six of these actions were short listed as suggested priorities.

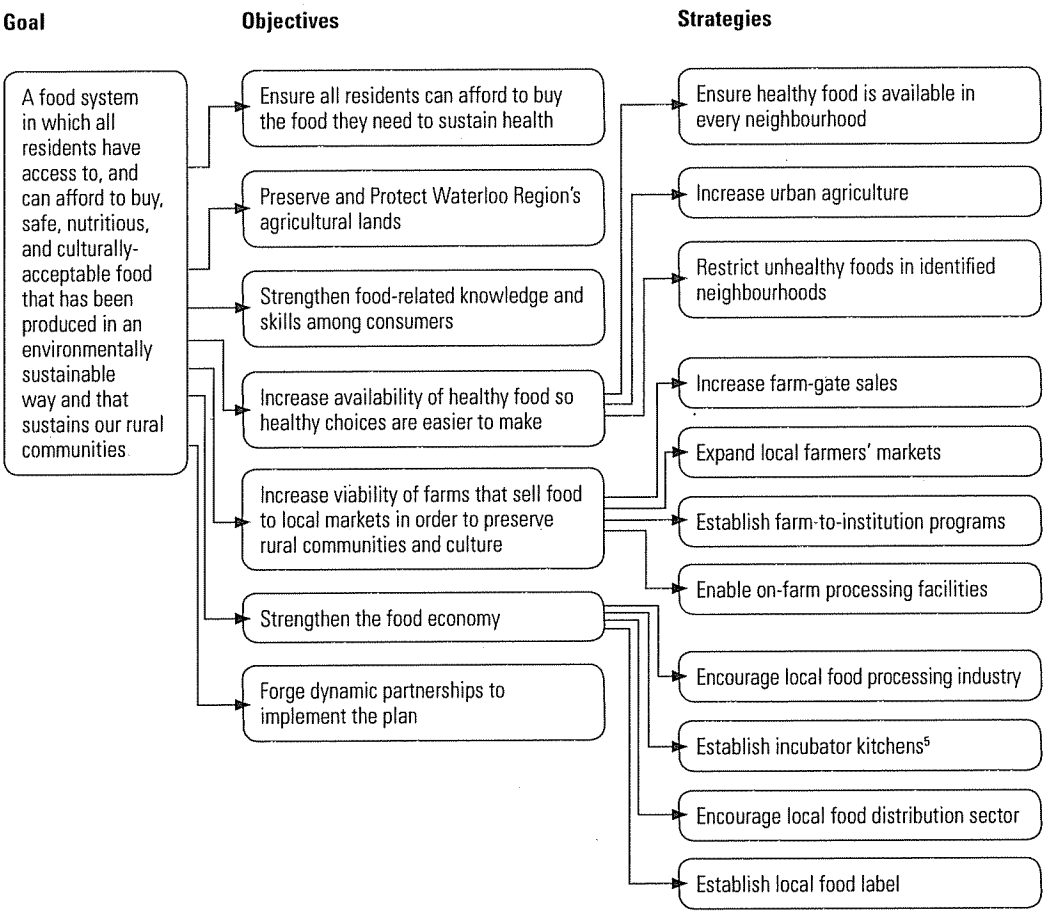
In June 2006, Public Health organized a follow-up forum for all of those who had been involved in the focus groups. The purpose of this forum was to present back to all of the focus group participants the feedback they had collectively given, and to suggest the six priority actions as a way to move the planning process forward. During this follow-up meeting, the group affirmed five of the six suggested priority actions and added one more.

This report – *A Healthy Community Food System Plan for Waterloo Region* – presents the results of the key informant consultation, which consisted of the focus groups and the follow-up stakeholder meeting. It describes the progress by various actors on several priority actions as well as others that came out of the consultation process and makes action recommendations for Public Health.

3. The Key Informant Consultation Process

The Interim Report of November 2005 proposed a goal for achieving a healthy food system and several objectives and strategies for reaching that goal. The following diagram shows these objectives and strategies. These objectives and strategies were presented to each focus group. The first three objectives – ensuring that all residents can afford to buy the food they need to sustain health, protecting our agricultural lands, and strengthening food-related knowledge and skills among consumers – were already being pursued by other agencies in Waterloo Region. The interim report provides details about these agencies and initiatives. Since these objectives were already being pursued, no specific strategies were proposed and the facilitators encouraged the focus group participants to concentrate on the last four objectives and the strategies to make them happen. It is important to note that although the focus of the consultation was on the last four objectives, the first three are equally as important in achieving a healthy community food system.

Each participant was asked to comment on which of the strategies addressing the last four objectives most closely aligned with how they were currently involved in the food system. Each group was asked to determine the three or four strategies that were most important to them and to discuss what would need to happen to make these strategies become reality. A summary of participant input in the focus groups is contained in the Appendix.



4. From Comments to Possible Actions

Public Health staff summarized the comments heard at the focus groups and developed a list of possible actions for each strategy. The actions are shown in Table 1. Each of the 26 possible actions was subjected to the following evaluation criteria:

- The financial resources required
- The potential capacity to achieve significant food system change
- Local community support or readiness for this activity
- Ease of implementation
- Number of known community partners involved or planning involvement

Based on these criteria, Public Health staff suggested six actions to be regarded as possible priorities for citizens and organizations interested in working toward the goal of a healthy community food system in Waterloo Region. These actions are presented in Section 5.

Table 1: Actions Developed Based on Focus Group Participant Feedback

Objectives	Strategies	Actions
Ensure all residents can afford to buy the food they need to sustain health		1. Advocate for higher minimum wage, social assistance rates, affordable housing etc.
Preserve and protect Waterloo Region's agricultural lands		2. Support Region's efforts to establish and maintain proposed countryside line
		3. Review rationale for prohibition of farms smaller than 40 hectares
Strengthen food-related knowledge and skills among consumers		4. Advocate for curriculum changes in schools to include food system issues
		5. Establish focused social marketing campaign
		6. Establish education/training campaign focusing on seasonal eating, preserving, and cooking
		7. Develop a media strategy to promote local food and strategies listed in the interim report
Increase availability of healthy food so healthy choices are easier to make	Ensure healthy food is available in every neighbourhood	8. Map food retail along the central transit corridor with a view to identifying opportunities for additional food retail
		9. Conduct a feasibility study for mobile farmers' markets
		10. Investigate street vendor licenses
	Increase urban agriculture	11. Conduct inventory of all fruit and nut trees and bushes in the Region and identify which are available for public harvesting – have education program along with it
		12. Advocate for funding for paid community garden coordinators: students could work with schools to establish gardens, work with teachers and then recruit others to garden throughout the summer
		13. Advocate to have municipalities provide support to community gardens: e.g. land access, water, compost, woodchips, rototiller, etc.
	Restrict unhealthy foods in identified neighbourhoods	14. Implement zoning changes to restrict unhealthy food stores within radius of identified areas (e.g. high schools)

continued on page 7

Table 1: Actions Developed Based on Focus Group Participant Feedback continued from page 6

Objectives	Strategies	Actions
Increase viability of farms that sell food to local markets in order to preserve rural communities and culture	Increase farm-gate sales	15. Advocate for sign by-laws to give farmers more flexibility to attract consumers to farm-gate sales, e.g. program to establish uniform Regional highway signs for farms on *Buy Local! Buy Fresh!* (BL!BF!) Map
		16. Work proactively with tourism boards to promote countryside as a destination with specific info on farms through BL!BF! Map
	Expand local farmers' markets	17. Require all farmers' market vendors to prominently label origin of all products for sale
	Establish farm-to-institution programs	18. Assemble package of information on farm-to-institution programs for Waterloo Region, using resources already produced by Local Flavour Plus, Foodlink, and Canadian Organic Growers
		19. Approach universities, the Region, hospitals, school boards, etc. to establish farm-to-institution programs
	Enable on-farm processing facilities	20. Work with Region and Townships to influence wording of goals and policies in next Regional Official Plan
Strengthen the food economy	Encourage local food processing industry	21. Investigate possibilities of subsidies or support programs for smaller food processors (including incubator kitchens) to address the barriers posed by food safety and other regulatory requirements
	Establish incubator kitchens	22. Conduct a feasibility study for incubator kitchens in Waterloo Region
		23. Identify commercial kitchens with excess capacity and share information with producers and retailers seeking to process local produce for local markets
	Encourage local food distribution sector	24. Advocate for a support program for new local food business
	Establish local food label	25. Establish a local food label
Forge dynamic partnerships to implement the plan		26. Establish a food systems roundtable for Waterloo Region that would involve representatives of different sectors of the food system in overseeing food system and recommending interventions

5. Follow-up Stakeholder Forum

In June 2006 a follow-up forum was organized for all those who had participated in the focus group meetings. The purpose of the forum was to present a summary of the feedback received and to have participants discuss and vote on the suggested list of six priority actions. Thirty-six participants returned for the forum.

Public Health staff presented a more detailed version of the previous chart to the group. The following prioritized list of actions resulted from the discussion and voting process. The number in brackets refers to the number given to the action in Table 1.

a) Approach universities, the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, hospitals, school boards, and other institutions to establish farm-to-institution programs (19)

b) Continue social marketing efforts to promote buying local food (5)

c) Work with the planning department to address agricultural policy issues (added by the stakeholders)

d) Conduct a feasibility study for mobile farmers' markets (9)

e) Continue pursuing a local food label (25)

f) Conduct a feasibility study for incubator kitchens in Waterloo Region (22)

At one point in the discussion a participant suggested that one of the six priority actions Public Health staff had suggested – the creation of a body to oversee the food system and recommend interventions – was of paramount importance if the current momentum for achieving a healthy community food system was to be maintained. At this point, Public Health committed staff to begin the process of establishing a Waterloo Region Food System Roundtable (26). This action was then removed from the list of suggested priority actions on which participants were asked to vote.

6. Current Progress on Actions

The following section describes progress that has been made to date on the identified objectives. A complete list of strategies and numbered actions related to each objective is found in Table 1. The action numbers refer to those in Table 1. It is recognized that many other initiatives to improve the local food system in Waterloo Region are taking place which contribute to these objectives as well.

Forge a dynamic partnership to implement the Community Food System Plan (Action 26)

In various Canadian and U.S. jurisdictions, multi-sectoral community-based networks are providing guidance to and championing the development of healthy local food systems. Some of the stakeholders who were involved in this key informant consultation process have met and are in the process of establishing such a network – the Waterloo Region Food System Roundtable. Its terms of reference are still being discussed, but generally there is commitment to a network that would:

- Lever community resources to support a healthy community food system
- Establish benchmarks and targets for achievement of mission/goals
- Identify and prioritize food system needs and support the creation and implementation of initiatives
- Build new partnerships and enhance networking between existing food system stakeholders

In October 2006, The Lyle S. Hallman Foundation funded a project entitled Advancing the Healthy Community Food Systems Plan in the amount of $200,000 over two years. The project represents a collaboration among Public Health, Foodlink Waterloo Region, and Canadian Organic Growers. The project will continue to strengthen the local food system through several actions. (See report to the Community Services Committee of Regional Council PH-07-099.)

Local food system stakeholders who attended the first meeting of the initial Waterloo Region Food System Roundtable. Left to right: Dan Flanagan, Martha Gay Scroggins, Ellen Desjardins, Marc Xuereb, Gary Hallam, Peter Katona.

Strengthen food-related knowledge and skills among consumers (Actions 5, 7)

Through its obesity prevention strategy, Public Health is playing a role in the social marketing of healthy food choices and working to ensure that healthy food choices are readily available. The strategy, launched in October 2006, is taking a broad and inter-sectoral approach to obesity prevention. Along with public education, this strategy will also include social marketing, community engagement, and policy development initiatives. As an example of policy development, Public Health is looking to provide assistance with the development and implementation of institutional (i.e. school) policies that stimulate access to healthy food and healthy eating practices.

Foodlink Waterloo Region also continues its work of educating the public about the many benefits of eating local food through its newsletter -- *Local Harvest*.

Work with the planning department to address agricultural policy issues

The Region of Waterloo's Planning, Housing, and Community Services Department held two workshops to gather input into various areas of agricultural policy as part of the preparation of the new Regional Official Plan. The first workshop, held in August 2006, gathered input from local farmers and other stakeholders on the topic of farm viability. The second workshop, held in October, dealt with minimizing urban-rural land use conflicts to further support local farmers. The third workshop on the subject of urban agriculture will be held in 2007.

Increase the availability of healthy food (Actions 9, 10, 12)

The Waterloo Region Community Garden Council, Opportunities Waterloo Region and Public Health are collaborating to ensure the 600 community garden plots in Waterloo Region remain active and to build capacity for the addition of 200 plots over three years. Additional funding is being sought for this work.

With the Lyle S. Hallman funding, Public Health will pilot 5 community mobile farmers' markets over two years to increase the availability of fresh produce in urban areas. These markets will run weekly (on different days than the current farmers' markets) and sell locally grown fruit and vegetables and provide information on the health, social, economic, and environmental benefits of local food. The University of Waterloo connected with the Elmira Produce Auction Cooperative and held a local farm market on campus as a pilot venture in 2006.

Strengthen the local food economy (Actions 22, 23, 25)

A working group (including Public Health and other interested stakeholders) is exploring the development of an incubator kitchen. It is currently doing an inventory of best practices in other areas and of underutilized facilities within Waterloo Region.

Foodlink Waterloo Region has received funding from the CanAdvance program and the Lyle S. Hallman foundation to pursue a regional food label. Foodlink also promotes farm-gate sales through the production and distribution of the *Buy Local! Buy Fresh!* Map and it promotes local food through sponsorship of the annual Taste Local Taste Fresh Event.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

Achieving a healthy community food system – where everyone has access to and can afford to buy safe, nutritious, and culturally-acceptable food that has been produced in an environmentally-sustainable way and that sustains our rural communities – is a task that requires the collaborative effort of many different types of stakeholders. The key informant consultation process described in this report has initiated collaboration among many different sectors involved in the food system. The process also identified some recommendations for Public Health's continued involvement:

- That Public Health staff continue to provide administrative and research support to inform and facilitate the operation of the Waterloo Region Food Systems Roundtable
- That Public Health staff continue to identify mechanisms to increase opportunities for enhanced supply and distribution systems for local food as a means to increase food access (such as mobile farmers' markets, community supported agriculture, and urban agriculture)
- That Public Health staff explore expanding the Region of Waterloo's Green Purchasing Program to include the purchase of local food.[6]

8. Appendix

Focus Group Comments Related to Objectives and Strategies

This appendix briefly describes the context and some rationale for each objective and strategy (more detail is available in the interim report) and then summarizes the comments that were made in the focus groups about each. Even though participants were encouraged to focus on the last four objectives, comments were made about the first three as well and are recorded here.

Objective 1: Ensure all residents can afford to buy the food they need to sustain health

A healthy food system exists when everyone has income sufficient to buy food that supports health, at prices which support the continued viability of farming. Given the inadequacy of income support mechanisms in Canada, it is estimated that 5.9% of the population of Waterloo Region is food insecure.[7]

What we heard:

There was agreement among participants that this objective is not intended to put more pressure on local farmers to lower the price of their food products as a way to increase access to healthy food. It is already difficult to make a living at certain types of farming with current high-input costs and low-commodity prices. To address the root causes of this problem, public policy should seek to increase the amount of money a household has available for healthy food through income support programs, improve the supply of affordable housing, increase opportunities for community gardening and urban agriculture, and foster a strong and diversified economy. It was noted that even if all the other strategies listed in the report are implemented and there is no action regarding income available to buy food, we still will not have a healthy food system for all.

Objective 2: Preserve and protect Waterloo Region's agricultural land

A healthy food system requires that a sufficient land base exists to produce the foods required to support the health of local populations. Waterloo Region already has some of the strongest farmland protection policies in the province. The current Regional Official Policies Plan sets out urban/rural boundaries which area municipalities must respect within their own Official Plans. In addition to protecting the farmland from development, farmers need to be able to make a viable income from farming and the land needs to be farmed in a way that will enable it to continue to be used to produce food for future generations.

What we heard:

Focus group participants suggested that the policies which have been put in place to protect farmland at times conflict with producers desires to make their livelihood viable. At the focus group meetings for land use planners, participating planners talked about the difficulties in zoning for on-farm businesses. In general, planners want to provide the opportunity for on-farm diversification while protecting agricultural land from potential non-farm uses that could undermine the agricultural community. More of this discussion is captured in the strategy dealing with on-farm processing.

Another topic discussed with these planners was the minimum size farm policy in the Regional Official Policies Plan (ROPP). Currently, the ROPP does not permit the creation of farms less than 40 hectares unless the proposal can be properly justified. There was an acknowledgement that this policy, while designed to discourage farm fragmentation and the creation of hobby farms, may work against the supply of smaller-scale farms that focus on Community Supported Agriculture schemes or producing higher value cash crops such as culinary herbs. Farming less than 40 hectares is particularly viable if someone is considering vegetable or fruit production.

From these discussions, the idea emerged of finding ways to make subtle changes to official plans and zoning by-laws which allow them to maintain their original intent to protect farmland and discourage farm fragmentation but also enable some of the healthy local food system objectives outlined in this report (e.g. strengthening the local food economy and increasing the viability of farms that sell food to local markets) to be pursued.

Objective 3: Strengthen food-related knowledge and skills among consumers

Education must play a key role in encouraging residents to eat a more nutritious diet. Public Health has always had a strong mandate for food and nutrition education and has carried out this mandate through the programming listed in the interim report. However, research is showing that diet related diseases such as diabetes are proving resistant to traditional educational approaches.[8] Ensuring that healthy food is easily available in every neighbourhood is equally as important as providing nutritional education. (A study by the University of North Carolina showed that the more supermarkets a neighbourhood has, the more fruits and vegetables its residents eat.)[9] Educating about the health disadvantages of highly-processed, low-nutrient convenience foods is not useful when those types of foods have more marketing resources used to promote them and are more widely available than healthy food options.

What we heard:

This objective received the highest number of comments in the focus groups. Participants pointed out that consumers want fast and prepared foods, give their children junk food to take to school, and consistently choose cheaper over healthier options. They suggested many ideas for trying to change consumer behaviour including:

- Incorporating education about healthy foods and the food system into elementary school curriculum – this one was stressed by many participants, usually on the premise that children are eager to learn and can influence family purchasing habits
- Re-introducing family studies programs into high schools to familiarize students with food preparation and preserving skills – many participants recognized the funding and infrastructure required to do this and advocated for their provision
- Building food system and nutrition education into culinary arts programs at colleges so that food service workers will bring the ideas and knowledge to their workplaces
- Media campaigns involving celebrities to make eating healthy and local food more attractive to more people
- Focused social marketing strategies to identify the most likely market segments to switch from occasional eating of healthy foods to consistent healthy eating habits
- Focused campaign on foods that are in season when, and how to preserve foods for eating in off-season
- Having institutional food providers educate their own clients about the healthier choices available on their menus (e.g. table tents, posters of farm families, stickers, etc.)

Many participants stressed the need to educate the public about the benefits of eating local food, and pointed out that until consumers demand it and are willing to pay for it, the market will not supply it. Participants felt that food consumers are responsible for our existing food environment because of their demands.

Objective 4: Increase availability of healthy food so that healthy choices are easier to make

One aspect of a healthy food system is that nutritious choices are easy to identify and more convenient to find, while less healthy choices are limited in their availability. The following strategies were discussed:

Strategy 4.1: Ensure healthy food is available in every neighbourhood

Retailers supplying healthy food options need to exist in each neighbourhood. Increasing the availability of healthy food in neighbourhoods can be done in different ways. One way is for municipal governments to develop zoning and/or financial incentives to attract retail operations which focus on healthy foods to locations in which retailers offering healthy food are scarce. Another way is for mobile farmers' markets to be established to bring fresh local produce to different neighbourhoods on different days of the week. Another possibility is for street vendors to venture beyond traditional hot dog fare and to offer more healthy choices.

What we heard:

There were strong expressions of support from many participants from different sectors for the idea of finding ways to make healthy food more available in urban neighbourhoods. Participants talked about wanting to be able to walk to fruit and vegetable stands. A Good Food Box program (a program in which people pool their resources to purchase produce in bulk and in turn receive a regular box of fresh fruit and vegetables delivered either to their home or to a central depot) was also mentioned as another way to ensure people have access to healthy food. There was some recognition that the municipal by-law regarding street vendor licensing might be a barrier to having fruit and vegetable stands in the streets.

Participants noted that finding farmers interested in staffing urban fruit and vegetable stands would be a challenge. It was suggested that it might be more feasible to have other entrepreneurs operate the stand and source produce from local farmers, perhaps through the Elmira Produce Auction Cooperative. (The Elmira Produce Auction Cooperative is a place where wholesalers can go to purchase large quantities of local fresh produce in season. It was started by local farmers three years ago.)

Participants also talked about improving the health of food offered in cafeterias as being related to this strategy. They felt that healthy choices should be more readily available, especially for children in schools.

One participant noted that in a survey of people accessing emergency food sources, participants expressed interest in being able to walk to buy food in their neighbourhoods. Other participants warned that supply of fresh produce may be only part of the solution and urged that education about the benefits of eating healthy food accompany supply-side solutions (as discussed in the section on Objective 3).

Strategy 4.2: Increase urban agriculture

Urban agriculture, whether it is a backyard garden, rooftop garden, community garden, or green roof (not meant for food production but for runoff retention), contributes to the quality of life and the health of individuals, families, and the community as a whole. The numerous benefits pertain to many different areas of health such as community health (e.g. increased social interaction), economic health (e.g. increased local food production), and environmental health (e.g. improved air quality, less storm water runoff).[10]

What we heard:

Two focus groups spent significant periods of time discussing urban agriculture, mostly focused on community gardens. It was felt that gardening is difficult enough to motivate people to do (e.g. "hard to get off the couch," people spend time in own gardens but don't grow food, having to walk to community garden, lack of gardening skills) without the additional barriers of lack of access to water, land, compost, rototillers, and paid coordinators.

The groups suggested the following ways to support urban agriculture:

- $/in-kind support from municipalities for water, land, compost (an example from Winnipeg was cited)
- Funding for coordinators
- Program to encourage school gardens (would need $ for coordinators to work with teachers, neighbours over summer)
- Fruit/nut tree/bush inventory (an example in Portland, Oregon was cited)
- Marketing campaign to encourage "edible landscaping"
- Program to encourage institutional gardens (apartment buildings, seniors' homes, hospitals, etc.)
- Document stories of successful gardens

Strategy 4.3: Restrict unhealthy foods in identified neighbourhoods

Some jurisdictions in North America are attempting to limit the proliferation of high-energy, low-nutrient convenience foods in the immediate vicinity of schools.[11] The rationale is that dietary habits formed in childhood and adolescence are often maintained for life, and that helping children and youth form good dietary habits will help prevent chronic disease.

What we heard:

In the focus groups there was a mixed response to this idea. Some people strongly supported the idea of banning highly-processed, low-nutrient convenience foods in specific places, especially around schools. Others felt it much more positive to find ways to make healthy foods more available and attractive.

Objective 5: Increase the viability of farms that sell food to local markets in order to preserve rural communities and culture

The future health of Waterloo Region's food system and its rural communities is dependent on farmers' ability to earn a reasonable living from agriculture. Agriculture in Waterloo Region is more diversified and farms are smaller than the Ontario average.[12] Strengthening the viability of farms that sell food locally takes advantage of this unique mixed, small-farm profile evident in Waterloo Region.

Strategy 5.1: Increase farm-gate sales

Waterloo Region has a rich tradition of farm-gate sales of fresh produce. The *Buy Local! Buy Fresh!* Map, which locates food producers in Waterloo Region who sell their produce at their farm, has made this tradition more visible to residents, and has begun to have a positive impact on participating farms.

What we heard:

Though there was broad support for increasing farm-gate sales, there were not many ideas suggested of how to do it. Some concern was expressed that farm-gate sales mostly rely on drive-by traffic, so unless more effort is made to make the countryside a destination, there is not likely to be increases in farm-gate sales except on major thoroughfares like Regional roads.

Farm-gate sales are affected by zoning regulations. Township planners are grappling with issues of how to regulate the location of roadside stands. Some of the issues raised were:

- Municipal staff have concerns about traffic impediments and roadside signs
- Stands need to abide by requirements for how far they are set back from the road
- Should multiple farmers be allowed to sell at one farm-gate stand?

Strategy 5.2: Expand local farmers' markets

Farmers' markets can be a way of supporting local farmers and the local economy. Currently farmers' markets are made up of a mixture of farmer vendors who sell only items from their own farms, farmer vendors who supplement their own farm produce, and those who are not farmers and are selling the produce they have bought elsewhere (resellers). Vendors may be selling locally grown or imported produce. Despite the success of Waterloo Region's farmers' markets, the availability of imported produce during peak local season remains a challenge for local producers.

What we heard:

Participants in six focus groups had at least some comment on this strategy and participants in two focus groups spent a lot of energy discussing it. There was significant support for the idea of expanding farmers' markets by establishing mobile farm stands – possibly along higher-volume transit routes, at community centres, and/or on university or college campuses. One of the existing markets considered this idea, but found no interest among existing vendors. This raised the question of farmer interest in selling directly through markets. Market managers claim declining interest among farmers in staffing market stalls.

Participants felt that the dominant public perception was that farmers' markets are made up of local farmers selling food from their farms. Many participants felt it important to address this perception by, at very least, having vendors label what has been grown locally and what has not.

Overall, participants wanted to find ways of making local produce more available in cities through some type of market or produce stand.

Strategy 5.3: Establish farm-to-institution programs

Farm-to-institution programs, in which farms or groups of farms provide food for local hospitals, universities, nursing homes etc., allow these institutions to improve the quality of the food they provide. When farmers have partnered with schools to provide food for their cafeterias, the health of the children who eat there has been shown to improve.[13] The demand these programs create for local produce helps to strengthen the viability of local farms. Institutions are captive audiences which can be persuaded to pay higher prices for local foods. Local food will, ironically, cost more. Subsidies, technological advancements, and increased competition from low-cost foreign producers are all factors in making imported produce less expensive than produce grown on a smaller scale locally.[14] A consequence of these downward pressures on prices has been that the local infrastructure to process and distribute locally grown food has been slowly dismantled through the consolidation of the food system.

What we heard:

"We have a responsibility as public institutions to advocate for this and promote it to our employees, students, or patients."

This quote from one participant indicates the strength of the support for this strategy. This strategy was seen as an excellent first step toward overcoming barriers to other strategies. The barrier mentioned most frequently by participants was that local producers cannot supply or charge a fair price unless the consumer demands it or is willing to buy it. Since institutions may be willing to pay higher prices to purchase local foods, the contracts they make will be large and will provide producers with a fair price.

Institutions are able to modify the conditions of their food service contracts to require that a certain percentage be sourced locally. Participants were aware of this occurring at the University of Toronto through the organization Local Flavour Plus. This organization promotes local sustainable agriculture by certifying local farmers and processors who meet certain sustainability criteria and then linking them with local purchasers.

If the institutions to be involved were schools, the participants suggested combining the farm-to-school program with related curriculum (e.g. Family Studies) or with community gardens.

Strategy 5.4: Enable on-farm processing facilities

On-farm processing refers to transforming fruits and vegetables grown on the farm into another form through canning, freezing, or washing and peeling at the same location. It was proposed as a strategy since it would be one way to allow producers to benefit from the value added to their products through processing. Currently, land zoned for agriculture pays a lower rate of tax than land zoned for commercial or industrial uses. Farmers seeking to build a processing facility on their land face the prospect of engaging in a process to have a portion of their land re-zoned and paying a higher rate of tax on that land.

What we heard:

The discussion of on-farm processing overlapped with the discussion of encouraging the local food processing industry in general (see Strategy 6.1). Planners and producers agreed on the benefits of encouraging local processing.

Farmers did not express any preference for on-farm processing versus local processing generally. None of the participants defended the need to have processing facilities on-farm versus in areas currently zoned for processing activities.

Township Planners explained many issues related to the approval of zoning changes to permit on-farm processing. First, according to the Regional Official Policies Plan, on-farm business activities must be secondary to farm operations. One planner thought on-farm processing rarely remained secondary for long because it usually needs to expand for reasons of economy of scale. It then reaches a point where processing revenues move beyond revenues from farming operations.

Planners appreciated the importance of a processing facility's close proximity to the farm community. They would prefer to see industrial and commercial activity happen in rural settlement areas and have agricultural land preserved for farming. Planners felt the need to be cautious not to set precedents by granting exemptions that would then be difficult to deny to other landowners wishing to engage in non-agricultural on-farm activities.

Objective 6: Strengthen the local food economy

To help make it more economically viable for farms to sell to local markets, certain gaps in our local food economy need to be addressed. Retailers (including restaurants, institutions, and grocery stores) who might be interested in serving local food have very few sources that meet their criteria in terms of volume, quality, and amount of processing. The local infrastructure which used to support the processing and distributing of local food has gradually been eroded due to consolidation of the food system.

Strategy 6.1: Encourage the local food processing industry

There is a market for fresh, unprocessed fruits and vegetables. However, our climate requires that food products undergo a certain degree of processing to make them available for more of the year. Food that is processed locally allows the local economy to benefit from the larger market share these products capture. Municipal and private partners need to come together to identify ways to stimulate entrepreneurial development in this area.

What we heard:

There was widespread support for more local processing to increase the supply of local food to local markets. At least two producers indicated that they could produce more or use more of what they grow if they knew of opportunities to process product locally. Many participants expressed frustration that small processors must meet the same food safety and other regulatory requirements as large competitors, and felt this made small-scale processing not viable because of the high costs involved in certification. The following quote expresses this frustration:

"There would be more small-scale processing in this area, but the rules make it almost impossible."

The rules the participants referred to were food safety and certification regulations. Food safety regulations are the same no matter what the size of a processing facility and so it is much easier for large-scale processors to have the capital to comply. The costs involved in certification are very high and were seen to discourage small processing.

Another barrier was the difficulty in determining what is required to begin small-scale processing. All three levels of government have some role in food safety regulation and inspection and this makes it difficult for those who want to start processing facilities to know where to begin in addressing the regulations.

Many participants suggested programs which support small processors as a way to encourage local food entrepreneurs to establish processing facilities in this area. Others suggested more cooperation between producers to make better use of existing facilities. One farmers' market manager suggested there was a big opportunity for prepared and value-added foods at markets.

There was recognition among many participants, including farmers, that some element of scale would be required to make local processing viable. It may necessitate co-operation among many producers to process at the same facility.

Strategy 6.2: Establish incubator kitchens

Incubator kitchens are places to nurture small food businesses. They are shared-use commercial kitchens where local food entrepreneurs can prepare their food products in a fully licensed and certified kitchen. Incubator kitchens usually offer technical assistance in food processing and general business management skills. They also create the opportunity for people to work collectively to purchase bulk supplies as well as market and distribute their products. Incubator kitchens can be useful for preparing locally-sourced food for use in farm-to-institution programs.

What we heard:

This idea generated a lot of interest among participants. They liked the idea that incubator kitchens might make institutional purchasing of local produce more convenient, as produce could be washed/peeled/cut or otherwise prepared.

The participants identified a number of existing commercial kitchens that operate below capacity and that could possibly provide opportunities to new businesses wanting to make use of them. One facility mentioned that they do not rent out their kitchen because of damage concerns and said that keeping staff on to supervise renters was not viable.

Some of the same regulatory concerns expressed around local processing came up for incubator kitchens as well. Participants felt that the new federal requirement to provide nutritional facts on the label of any food product that has been packaged would need to be addressed. Larger businesses with larger volumes would be able to cover the cost of this labelling more easily than smaller businesses starting out in an incubator kitchen. There is a phase-in period for smaller operations to comply with this new legislation.

Strategy 6.3: Encourage local food distribution sector

In addition to building an infrastructure for processing local foods, a healthy community food system requires distributors who focus on local produce. Farmers need a distributor to which they can sell their farm produce and retailers need a distributor that will supply all of the local produce they need for their businesses. The Elmira Produce Auction Co-operative is a promising start in this direction, as it provides one location where distributors can purchase wholesale quantities of fresh produce. Similar initiatives could expand into other areas of the Region and/or expand into preserved or processed local foods in the off-season.

What we heard:

A wide variety of participants spoke of the need for food distribution companies to carry local produce. Participants suggested that major food distribution companies buy food from wherever they can get it for the cheapest possible price. They felt that consumers want fresh produce year-round and also demand the lowest possible price. They recognized that distribution companies need large volumes of produce to make distribution economically viable.

Several participants expressed the need for consumer demand to drive the supply of local produce on local shelves. Food distribution companies confirmed the difficulties in getting new products (e.g. local produce) onto their lists, and said they have to see evidence of adequate demand for it before they will take a new product on.

Participants who were distributors emphasized the need for quality produce. Consumers will not accept local produce that does not have the same quality to which they have become accustomed. Distributors and some institutional buyers confirmed that the price of local will need to be competitive, as some may be willing to pay a premium for local but not all. That said, distributors said that if local produce was available, of similar quality, and competitively priced, they would choose local produce. At least two food retailers said their clients are demanding local produce, and that they are having problems finding a local distributor who will supply it.

Some participants suggested subsidies or start-up loans to distributors willing to focus on local produce. Another suggestion was to focus local distribution efforts on institutions, since one contract might generate enough demand.

Strategy 6.4: Establish a local food label

A 2003 survey of Waterloo Region residents found that 71 3 percent said that they would buy more local food if it was labelled as such.[15] Pursuing a local food label would make Waterloo Region grown or processed food more readily recognizable at various distribution points – including retail outlets and restaurants.

What we heard:

There was strong support for the idea of establishing a local food label for fresh produce and eventually for a wider range of local food products. Two focus groups spent a significant amount of time discussing how to make a label happen. Many felt this strategy was key to the success of several other strategies. One participant called the label the crucial "pull" factor in generating demand for local food that can stimulate increases in supply. It also has the potential to give retailers a quality assurance if the label guarantees a certain level of quality.

Some issues that surfaced related to the label are:

- Definition of what is local may be problematic – certain radius? Waterloo Region? Ontario?
- Foodland Ontario already exists, but only for produce – some participants didn't want to compete against it, others did
- Foodlink plans to develop Buy Local! Buy Fresh! logo into a brand; Local Flavours Plus also seeking to promote its brand
- Should label also incorporate certain environmental standards or other issues like ethical animal treatment?
- Who will police use of the logo – government? contracts between owner of logo and user?

Objective 7: Forge a dynamic partnership to implement the community food system plan

The goal of achieving a healthy food system for Waterloo Region will require that many different organizations endorse the plan and co-operate in pursuing its aims. A body comprised of diverse stakeholders in Waterloo Region's food system, such as Regional and area municipal planners, Foodlink Waterloo Region, Waterloo Federation of Agriculture, economic development departments, food system entrepreneurs, and others will be necessary to advance the strategies and policy options developed through this consultation process.

What we heard:

Many comments were made suggesting the need for more cooperation among players in the food system to build demand and supply for local food together. Some suggested that if there were more talking and networking amongst different sectors with interest in promoting local food, this would facilitate increasing the demand and the supply.

Producer cooperatives were commonly mentioned examples of partnerships. Several producers said they would need help to make a cooperative work and could learn from existing successful models elsewhere. The Elmira Produce Auction Cooperative was mentioned as an example of such a cooperative, one which is having economic spin offs within Waterloo Region.

Participants felt that gathering together as a group of interested stakeholders to network and encourage momentum was necessary if any progress was going to be made in advancing the Community Food System Plan.

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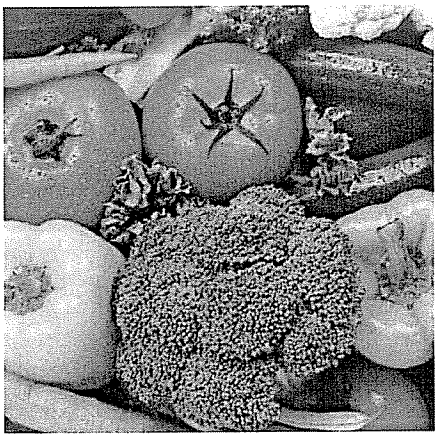

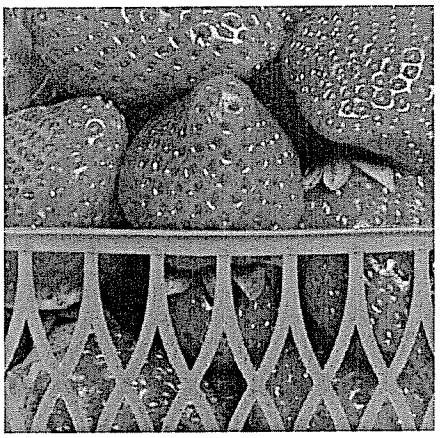

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Corporate Guidelines: Greening our Meeting and Catering Requirements

As a community leader in sustainability, Halifax Regional Municipality recognizes the opportunities that are available in making environmental and sustainable choices in organizing our corporate meeting, training, and catering requirements. With these opportunities in mind, staff is expected to follow these Guidelines for Greening our Meetings and Catering Requirements.

Greening our Meetings

Whether organizing a small departmental meeting, or a large event for community consultation, there are a number of elements to consider for the meeting planner:

Planning

- Maximize utilization of electronic notices, agenda distribution, publication, using www.halifax.ca, HRM Intranet, e-mail and other electronic resources as appropriate
- Provide phone or e-mail registration as opposed to facsimile or mail-in
- Minimize your distribution or catering requirements by knowing the number of participants
- If there are handouts or printing requirements, ensure it is double sided. And for larger event requirements, please utilize our Printing Centre – as they provide the most sustainable and minimal impact printing services in the organization
- Strive to deliver a paperless event. Offer attendees presentations, minutes, or agendas via e-mail or posting them on the internet or intranet
- Tell vendors or other organizers that you are organizing a green meeting and request they follow these guidelines

Location

- Organize the meeting in a location that minimizes travel requirements and has Metro Transit service availability
- When possible, select locations that offer the most sustainable facility (for example, several of HRM's newest building facilities are LEED certified and require minimal heating or power to support meetings)
- If using a Hotel either for the meeting or for out of town accommodations for attendees, consider using Green Leaf rated facilities

Meeting Room Set Up

- Ensure that the room offers the appropriate waste resource management receptacles, including compost bins, recycling bins for bottles and paper; And, notify attendees that they are available
- Request white boards be placed in the room in lieu of flip charts and request no odour markers
- Request that the facility does not set out pens and note pads

Corporate Guidelines:
Greening our Meeting
and
Catering Requirements

Greening our Catering or Food and Beverage Requirements

- # Where possible select caterers who offer local and / or organic foods
- # Order fair trade coffee, tea and sugar
- # Ask attendees to bring their own coffee mug or water canteen
- # Juice and water should be provided in pitchers rather than single serving bottles
- # Request cloth napkins or Ecologo certified paper napkins
- # Use re-useable mugs, glasses, plates and cutlery. If not available, select compostable paper plates. Please note that despite claims, currently a paper cup is not available that is properly compostable
- # Ask for glass or porcelain bowls for sugar, cream and food condiments rather than single serving packages
- # Provide compost bins and recycling receptacles
- # Again, know your requirements and do not over order food
- # At the end of the meeting, invite guests to take any left over food / beverage home.
- # If providing snacks or desert, select healthy and nutritious options such as fruits and vegetable trays
- # No Styrofoam!

Note on bottled water: Halifax Regional Municipality has one of the highest quality water systems in the world managed by the Halifax Regional Water Commission. Many bottled water brands simply bottle water from their respective municipal supplies. Bottled water has a high environmental cost, including the resources required to make the plastic bottles, transportation emissions, and the waste from bottled water consumption is overwhelming North American solid waste management strategies.