

The History of the Salt Spring Abattoir

Supporting small-scale agriculture and local food production on Salt Spring Island

2004: BC Meat regulation required meat sold for human consumption to be processed in licensed slaughterhouses. SSI farmers had to transport live animals off island and make a return trip to pick up meat. Livestock surveys conducted in 2004 and again in 2008 showed significant declines in livestock production, (sheep & cattle 44%; chicken 54%)



2007: Community dialogues on the future of farming on SSI resulted in the SSI Area Farm Plan (2008) which recommended establishment of key community facilities to support expansion of agricultural activities - an abattoir, a central composting facility and a cold storage & produce processing facility.



2010: A proposal for a community owned Abattoir was prepared by a committee under the auspices of the **Salt Spring Island Agricultural Alliance**. Fundraising started in the fall.

2011: Farmer offered to lease land for abattoir location; designs finalized; BC Centre for Disease Control approved plans; Temporary Use permit obtained from Islands Trust for site; construction manager was hired and the site serviced.



2012: Construction started in January. Original budget \$350,000 but ended up spending \$452,000 with required upgrade to meet seismic building codes. \$150,000 rec'd from BC government, the remainder from community donations and fundraising events. SSI Agricultural Alliance leases the land and owns the facility

Salt Spring Abattoir Society (a not-for profit society) was set up to manage operations

Class B license obtained for poultry

28 September 2012 – 1st day of operations just in time for Thanksgiving turkeys

January 2013- a Class A license was obtained for processing lambs.



2013: April Open house to show facility to the community

The business of providing slaughter service to island farms is seasonal with average 2 kill days a week from May to November.



2014: Facility certified for organic meat processing and packaging by IOPA

2016: \$30,000 invested to upgrade for Beef & Pork - strengthened corrals & doubled size of kill floor. With help of SSI Farmers Institute purchased 2nd hand combination hog scalding/dehairer in June and 1st pigs processed.



2017: 2nd Visit from Lieutenant Governor; all female poultry crew; 1st beef processed in October



2018: Added rabbits to list of species processed; purchased brand new meat saw.

2019: Operates with 7 part time staff; and volunteer management.



Annual community events – selling lamb burgers at SSI Fall Fair and Abattoir Birthday Bash, continue to support operations and facility upgrades.

