



SALT SPRING ISLAND AREA FARM PLAN

PUBLIC CONSULTATION SUMMARY

JANUARY 2008

Prepared by:



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Community Dialogues	5
Community Dialogue # 1 - Issues	5
Community Dialogue # 1 - Summary	11
Community Dialogue # 2 - Opportunities	33
Community Dialogue # 2 - Summary	41
Community Dialogue # 3 - Vision.....	75
Community Dialogue # 3 - Summary	85
Community Dialogue Participant Survey & Evaluation	115
Response Form	123
Public Responses	125
November 29th, 2007 Meeting Summary	131
December 12th, 2007 Meeting Summary	135

INTRODUCTION

Community involvement was an important part of the Salt Spring Island Area Farm Plan process and understanding is necessary to achieve the mission and goals of. Involvement was achieved through three linked Community Dialogues sessions held early on in the planning process on three Saturday afternoons (January 20th, February 17th, and March 10th, 2007) to identify and discuss issues, assets, opportunities, strategies and the overall vision for the Plan and to establish a common base of knowledge and understanding. During these facilitated discussions, participants were asked to discuss the opportunities for agriculture on Salt Spring and collectively articulate a future vision for food and agriculture on the island.

Individuals and groups with an interest in the future of food and agriculture on Salt Spring Island were invited to participate. There was a strong desire to attract a diverse group of community members who would reflect the many people who currently benefit from the island's agriculture, such as: farmers, food processors, retailers, environmentalists, restaurateurs, tourism operators, farmers' market customers, and satisfied eaters.

The Dialogues were interactive, reflective sessions where community members were asked to discuss agriculture and food-related issues together. Each meeting consisted of a brief presentation followed by focused small-group discussions, led by a skilled facilitator. A background document was distributed prior to each meeting allowing participants to prepare in advance for the meetings. Within days after each session, participants were provided with outcome summaries from each discussion group.

Participants attending the final Community Dialogue on March 10th, 2007 were asked to complete a short survey and evaluation form. 60 people submitted completed forms. A copy of the form and a summary of responses is provided in this document.

In November 2007 a copy of the draft plan was sent electronically to Community Dialogue participants, interested members of the public, and Ministry of Agriculture and Lands staff for their review and feedback. A response form accompanied the draft plan providing reviewers with a way to record and submit their feedback. A total of 9 response forms were returned (8 are included in this document). On November 29th and December 12th, 2007 members of the Steering Committee met with farmers to receive additional feedback. Comments received during November and December 2007, were used to further refine and in some cases correct the final draft of the Area Farm Plan.

This document serves as a record of the Salt Spring Island Area Farm Plan public consultation process.



Community Dialogue #1: Issues - BACKGROUND PAPER

I. INTRODUCTION

Plan to Farm: Setting the Table for Food & Agriculture on Salt Spring is an area farm planning process initiated by the Islands Farmers Institute and the Island Natural Growers in collaboration with the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and Islands Trust. Additional funding has been provided by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of British Columbia and Capital Regional District.

An area farm plan looks ahead and considers a community's agricultural situation in order to identify practical solutions to current issues, identify opportunities to strengthen farming and contribute to the long-term sustainability of agriculture.

The planning process works toward securing the long-term viability of a community's food and agricultural activities by opening up the discussion to consider a wide variety of issues beyond farmland preservation. *Plan to Farm* is Salt Spring Island's unique expression of an area farm plan.

Plan to Farm's Steering Committee has identified two primary goals for the process:

- Re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority on the island, and
- Facilitate the growth of associated farming activities.

Salt Spring Island Area Farm Plan - The Process

At the end of the *Plan to Farm* process, the Salt Spring Island community will have collaborated on a plan that describes the current food and agricultural issues, explores opportunities, and recommends innovative policy and strategic approaches.

Community participation is critical to the success of the process.

The *Plan to Farm* process will involve the:

- Collection and analysis of background information;
- Identification of issues affecting or influencing agriculture;
- Identification of opportunities for agriculture;
- Articulation of a future vision for food and agriculture;
- Development of action oriented strategies and recommendations;
- Submission of recommendations to the Official Community Plan (OCP) review process;
- Consideration of implementation procedures; and
- Identification of implementation responsibilities.

Process Timeline

	Fall 2006	Jan. 2007	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Ag. Land Use Inventory													
Community Dialogues: #1 Issues													
#2 Opportunities													
#3 Vision													
Plan Development													
Review of Draft Plan													
Begin Implementation Plan													→

Community Dialogue Sessions

Given that community participation is critical to achieving the goals of *Plan to Farm*, three linked community dialogues will be held at the start of the planning process. The primary purpose of the dialogues is to establish a common base of knowledge and understanding of the issues. Participants will discuss the opportunities for agriculture on Salt Spring and collectively articulate a future vision for food and agriculture on the island. These three initial discussions are structured to build on each other. They will establish an important foundation on which the area farm plan will be built and realized.

The dialogues are designed as fun, reflective sessions where community members can discuss topics together. Each meeting will consist of a brief presentation followed by focused small-group discussions, led by a skilled facilitator. A background paper, such as this one, will be distributed prior to each meeting so that participants can prepare in advance for the meetings. We would like the meetings to be as productive and efficient as possible - preparation is key to achieving these goals.

Light refreshments will be provided at each meeting.

The following meetings are planned:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Community Dialogue Session #1: Issues
Gulf Islands Secondary School, Multipurpose Room | Saturday, January 20, 2007
1:30 - 4:30 pm |
| 2. Community Dialogue Session #2: Opportunities
Location: TBA | Saturday, February 17, 2007
Time: TBA |
| 3. Community Dialogue Session #3: Vision
Location: TBA | Saturday, March 10, 2007
Time: TBA |

Participation in the Community Dialogue

All individuals and groups with an interest in the future of food and agriculture on Salt Spring Island are invited to participate. We are hoping for a diverse group of community members who will reflect the many people who benefit from the island's agriculture including: farmers, food processors, retailers, environmentalists, restauranteurs, tourism operators, farmers' market customers, and satisfied eaters.

Because each dialogue session is designed to build on the next we hope that most participants will be able to attend all three sessions. Participants are asked to respect the following guidelines:

1. Participants are strongly encouraged to attend all three community dialogues.
2. Registration is required for each meeting (please see details provided below).
3. Participants are welcome to join the process at any time, but must register beforehand. Background documents will be provided to inform new participants of the process up to that point.

II. CONTEXT

The history of food production and agriculture on Salt Spring Island is rich and varied. In order to understand the options for the present, it is helpful to understand how past activities have shaped today's food and agricultural systems.

Agricultural History

Pre European Contact

Salt Spring Island is part of the traditional territory of the Saanich, Cowichan, and Chemainus First Nations. Aboriginal activities on the island date back thousands of years. First Nations relationships with the island's marine and land ecosystems evolved slowly over time resulting in a culturally modified land and seascape that satisfied most of their needs. Foods were harvested, gathered, cultivated and preserved in quantities that sustained their communities and met their spiritual, ceremonial, social and trade requirements. These aboriginal communities are the closest example of sustainability ever achieved on Salt Spring Island.

Mid to Late 1800s

Victoria's population was rapidly increasing prompting Governor James Douglas to promote Salt Spring Island as a food-producing hinterland for Victoria. So in 1859 the first non-Native settlers arrived on SSI to begin farming. By 1880 many of the best-located farms were established and orchards planted. Ruckle Farm, established in 1872, is the oldest remaining example of these first farms and the oldest family farm still in operation in BC.

Early settlers used the mountainous areas of the island to graze livestock. The introduction of grazing animals marked the beginning of a number of agriculturally induced changes to the island ecosystem including the introduction of non-native forage plants, the extirpation of large predators such as wolves and bear, and the clearing of large areas for forage production. By the 1890s Salt Spring Island was exporting its first specialty crop - fruit - by boat and rail to markets in Eastern Canada. Dairy farming and poultry production had been identified as economically viable specialties.

Early 1900s

By the early 1900s Salt Spring Island was self-sufficient in forage for local livestock and started exporting feed to Victoria and other Gulf Islands. In addition, with other Southern Gulf Islands, it was renowned for its large harvests of fruit. Dairying was important and the butter produced by the Salt Spring Island Creamery, largely exported to Victoria, supported dairying on Salt Spring and in the Southern Gulf Islands. Poultry and sheep farming had also become important economic activities.

Mid 1900s

After WWII agricultural activities on Salt Spring steadily declined due to rising costs of feed and shipping coupled with the growth of more profitable farming locations in other areas of the Province. This decline was marked by the close of the Salt Spring Island Creamery in 1957.

Mid to Late 1900s

A revival of agriculture on Salt Spring was realized through the reestablishment of the Salt Spring Island Fall Fair in 1976, the acquisition of the current Islands Farmers Institute Fair Grounds on Rainbow Road in 1979 and the completion of the exhibition hall on the grounds in 1982. This period was also noted for the growth of small-scale, value-added (often organic) agricultural enterprises that catered to increasing numbers of tourists and seasonal residents.

Current Situation

According to the Salt Spring Island Local Produce Study (2005) approximately 4400 ha are currently being farmed on the island. Thirty-six percent of this land is not located in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). Just over 20% of Salt Spring Island or 2930 ha is in the ALR. Approximately 60% of the ALR is currently farmed.

The 1996 and 2001 Statistics Canada data for Salt Spring indicate a slight decline in agricultural activity and output. Once available, the 2006 agricultural land use inventory data for Salt Spring will provide a better understanding of the current situation.

Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture	1996	2001
Total number of farms	207	172
Total farm area	4108 ha	3519 ha
Total gross farm receipts	\$2.47 mil	\$3.24 mil
Total operating expenses	\$3.16 mil	\$3.77 mil

III. IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES

A number of issues that face or affect the success of agriculture and agriculture-related activities on Salt Spring Island have received attention in a number of Salt Spring-focused reports (Growing Green Farmland Trust Study, Gulf Islands Livestock Processing Feasibility Study, Salt Spring Island Local produce Study, and Salt Spring Island Food Security Discussion and Planning Paper). The following list highlights some of the key issues drawn from this research. This is by no means an exhaustive list of issues; rather, it is a place to begin a discussion of the challenges facing agriculture on Salt Spring Island

Popularity

The beauty and benign environment of SSI increasingly attracts non-agricultural buyers who are eager and able to purchase farm properties for luxury home sites and estates.

Increasing Land Prices

The average price of non-waterfront property on the Gulf Islands exceeded the average price paid for land in Victoria. Land prices have escalated far above values based on farm incomes. These high land prices:

- Make it nearly impossible for new or young farmers to buy land to get started;
- Reduce the opportunity for existing farmers to purchase additional farmland;
- Reduce the ability of farm families to transfer property to the next generation as they are forced or enticed to consider their properties as assets and/or potential retirement income thereby reducing the possibility of 'passing on' these properties through inheritance or donation.

Shrinking Farming Community

Viable farming communities require a critical number of farms to sustain supporting infrastructure (processing facilities, feed stores, veterinarians, etc.). Each time a farm is taken out of production, the viability of every other agricultural operation on the island is threatened. The reduction in the Gulf Islands' farm population reduces the ability of farmers and their associated organizations to provide and secure support for their members.

Economic Viability

In spite of property tax incentives, increasing land, transportation, and agricultural input costs, and limited access to skilled seasonal labourers is making it difficult for farmers to maintain economically viable farm operations. The limited size of local markets makes it that

much more challenging for farmers to succeed. As a result most Salt Spring Island farmers rely on off-farm incomes.

Farming on the Edge

Rural development is affecting the continuation of certain farm practices. The uncertainty that accompanies farming at the edge of the sprawling and increasingly urbanized Capital Regional District may be contributing to declining agricultural investment, productivity, and income. While farms located within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) are protected by "Right to Farm" legislation, farms located outside the ALR are subjected to zoning and bylaw restrictions that may not support farming practices. The effect of these 'restrictions' can negatively affect the economic viability of a farm operation.

Local Support

Local economic support for agriculture is undermined through increased availability of cheaper foods sourced from outside of the community and the belief that locally grown food is more expensive. There can be a perception that economically viable farm operations are noisy, smelly and polluting - that they make poor neighbours and negatively impact property values. When this perception exists within the minds of the public and government, it can negatively affect agricultural land use decisions.

Limited Federal and Provincial Government Support

As a result of policy, budget decisions and staffing cutbacks small farmers receive very little in the way of government assistance or support. What little support farmers receive can be undermined through the introduction of regulations and policies brought in to address issues and concerns associated with large farms and food processing facilities. The effect of these policies and regulations on small rural farms and farmers is often overlooked or ignored.

Federal and Provincial Regulations

Government regulations geared toward large, commercial agricultural and food production facilities make it increasingly difficult for small island food producers and processors to continue. These regulations also inhibit the continuation and development of high-value artisanal production and processing initiatives, which were behind Salt Spring's most recent agricultural revival.

Farm Practices

With increasing environmental regulations and a growing market demand for organically produced food, farming practices on Salt Spring are increasingly becoming more environmentally sensitive. However, there is currently no established overall approach or direction for island farming practices. In addition, there has been limited support available to encourage farmers to adopt more environmentally considerate farm practices

Meeting Local Food Needs

Salt Spring's farms do not meet the current food needs of the island's residents. As a consequence the island is now almost entirely reliant on distant, off-island food sources. In addition, most livestock feed now comes from off-island. This has contributed to a significant reduction in commercial meat production.

All of these issues combine to make it difficult for the continued economic survival of small farm operations on Salt Spring Island.

IV. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE JANUARY 20TH, 2007 COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

Please come to the Community Dialogue prepared to discuss the following questions:

1. *In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing agriculture on Salt Spring Island?*
2. *What are the most valuable local assets for agriculture on Salt Spring Island?*
3. *Given this context what is your reaction to the goal of this process, "To re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority?"*

Registration

In order to assist with event coordination and planning invited and interested participants are asked to register via email or phone for the first Community Dialogue Session by **January 15, 2007**.

To register please contact:

Anne Macey
Plan to Farm Project Manager
(250) 537.5511
macey@saltspring.com



January 23, 2007

Dear *Plan to Farm* Participants,

We would like to thank all of you who were able to attend the Community Dialogue on January 20th, 2007 as part of the Salt Spring Island *Plan to Farm* process. The large number of enthusiastic and committed participants made this a very positive beginning. We thank you for your valuable input.

Attached are the summary notes from the small group discussions. We ask that you review the summary of your group's discussion to ensure that it reflects the ideas and comments that were shared. If you would like to clarify points or add some new ideas, ***please send your comments via email or mail by Friday, January 26, 2007.***

Emailed comments can be sent to plantofarm@gmail.com.

Written or typed comments can be mailed or delivered to Anne Macey, 106 Old Scott Road, Salt Spring Island BC, V8K 2L6

Please feel free to share these notes with those who were not at the meeting. We would invite further comments on any of the discussion questions.

Next meeting...

The next Community Dialogue will be held Saturday, February 17 from 1:30-4:30 pm. The location will be confirmed shortly. The focus of this session is OPPORTUNITIES, and will involve a lively discussion about possible strategies and approaches for the future of agriculture on Salt Spring. New participants are welcome.

Please confirm your attendance by Friday, February 9th, 2007 by emailing macey@saltspring.com or by phoning 537.5511.

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'D.M.' with a period at the end.

Derek Masselink P.Ag.
Principal, Masselink Environmental Design

Community Dialogue #1 Group Notes

This document contains a summary notes for all 9 groups. Please locate your group from the list below and find the corresponding page. Review the summary and send any comments or corrections to plantofarm@gmail.com by January 26th, 2007.

Group 1, Andrea Gillman
Group 2, Bev Suderman
Group 3, Erica Crawford Boettcher
Group 4, Ian Scott
Group 5, Kaitlin Kazmierowski
Group 6, Kristi Tatebe
Group 7, Kristina Bouris
Group 8, Matt Thompson
Group 9, Tamsin Mills

Page: 2
Page: 4
Page: 6
Page: 8
Page: 11
Page: 13
Page: 15
Page: 17
Page: 19

Participants:

Group 1: Pat Reichert; Marcus Dowrich, Jana Roerick, Dan Jason; Colin Byron, Natasha Wille, Georgina; Zelly Taylor; Suzanne Schroder, Tim Marchant; Conrad Pilon, Ron Puhky
Group 2: Brian Swanson, Mary Laucks, Michael Weisner, Ron Weisner, Charlie Eagle, Judy Eagle, Brie Eagle, Delaine Faulkner, Deborah Miller, Ty Cameron, Susan Grace, Elizabeth Cooper, Adam Gold, Stephan Pigeon
Group 3: Lokesh Green, Don Lester, Janis Gouthier, Christine Torgrimson, Marion Pape, Maxime Leichter, Nancy van Patten, Lucille Lamarche, Susan Evan
Group 4: Eric Booth, Donn Tarris; Rollie Cook, Marguerite Lee, Scott Nyuli, Bob McGinn, Sally Dailly, Melanie Platz, Garnet Lee, Dave Walls, Lorraine Lowry, John Lammers, John Wilcox

Group 5: Tanya Lester, Kim Hunter, Caroline Hickman, Mike Garside, Peter Lamb, Steve Hunt, Melissa Roberts, Kathryn Hebdige, Sebastian Moffatt, Ray Hatch, Deanna Ziraldo
Group 6: Craig Seedhouse, Marsha Goldberg, Ben Luna, Murray Hunter, Diane Roberts, Darren & Vanessa Farias, Wendy McEachern, Elizabeth White, Leezee Porter
Group 7: Di Sutterfield, Lois Sprague, Marion Hargrove, Kathy Weisner, Tony Bruce, Helen Bruce, Ken Strike, Gwyn Strike, Wendi Gilsen, Ramona Scott, Margaret Thomson
Group 8: George Laundry; Ted Harrison; Tony Kennedy, Mike Larmour, George Ehring, Cam Robinson, Vera Robinson, Ron Pither, Julia Grace, Mataji Ishaya, Jim Lemaistre.
Group 9: Liz Armour, Jim Scott, Jane Squier, Jim Maurice, JoAnn Tymchuk, Mark Whitear, Rob Weeden, Roger Middleton, Gay Alkoff, Marcel Kauer

Plan to Farm: Setting the Table for Food & Agriculture on Salt Spring Island

SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

GROUP 1: Facilitator’s Name - Andrea Gillman

Group Members’ Names: Pat Reichert; Marcus Dowrich, Jana Roerick, Dan Jason; Colin Byron, Natasha Wille, Georgina; Zelly Taylor; Suzanne Schroder, Tim Marchant; Conrad Pilon, Ron Puhky

1. **Top 3 Challenges:** *The regulations and costs in relation to the lack of abattoir facilities on island, the costs of using land for farming vs. developing the land for any other purpose- the capital cost difference makes it nearly impossible for farming, public policy which is actively working against farmers- with respect to seed and patenting*
2. **Top 3 Assets:** *The passion of the people on SSL, 2 highly active agricultural organizations on the island, SSL as a model for sustainability*
3. **Brief summary of Question 3:** *The majority of the group agreed with this statement, using words such as ‘heartening’, ‘optimistic’, and ‘excitement’ to describe their reaction. Given the fabulous turn out at Community Dialogue #1, many feel they are headed in the right direction with this plan. There is a need to contextualize this statement with the ‘How and Why’.*

<p><i>In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing agriculture on Salt Spring Island</i></p>	<p><i>What are the most valuable local assets for agriculture on Salt Spring Island?</i></p>	<p><i>Given this context what is your reaction to the goal of this process, “To re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority?”</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The land-growing hay as feed for animals on the island • Profitability of farming • The general perception of small farms, their ‘legitimacy’ is questioned • Regulations and costs in relation to lack of abattoir facilities on island • The feasibility of building such a facility on island • The availability of local meats • Agri-business farms hurting local business • Individual ‘Seed Reproduction’-restrictions and closing of the border • Labour costs vs. profit earned • Regulations pertaining to transient labour-unable to build housing for them etc. • Difficulty in hiring both skilled and unskilled labour • Lack of agricultural education in the school system • The cost of using land for farming vs. the cost of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The people • The passion of the people on SSL • The ‘wholesome’ image of the farm • The farmer as a healer • Agricultural history • History of food production • Wealth of traditional knowledge as a result of farming through the generations • Tremendous number of years of farming experience and skill • Complete knowledge from the soil and beyond • Climate • Quality of soil • The populations understanding of and gravitation towards organic foods • The market for natural organic foods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging to hear of this goal and process • An ambitious goal, heartening, need to keep this goal alive • An extremely important goal, strongly believe in it • Well stated goal • Given the incredible turnout today, strong indication we will move in this direction • Hopeful and optimistic about this • Much money is going to infrastructure projects libraries etc. what about a portion of this money going into a local food store etc. Where are our priorities? • This is a great start given the positive response today and the numbers here • Very excited to learn about this, and the chance to move from a hobby to a full business one

SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

<p>developing the land for any other use—the capital cost differences between these 2 uses make it nearly impossible for farming land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working full time to finance labour costs makes expansion difficult • From a business perspective the cost effectiveness of using local goods/ingredients • The need to pay more for our food-quality verses quantity • Low costs set by imported foods • Competitiveness of local farms to get in to retail market • The subsidy (in the form of infrastructure and support) for industry rather than local business • Lack of consumer understanding around the true costs of local vs. imported • Availability of local supply • The absence of models or examples for community agriculture • The restrictive regulations for community agriculture • Can't use park land for community agriculture • Lack of government understanding of security in local farms and lack of security in international food sources • Lack of national food policy • Increase in numbers wanting to live on SSI, but not wanting to deal with farms as neighbours • Lack of government and public awareness and support for sustainable agriculture • Public policy which is actively working against farmers with respect to seed and patenting • Cost of energy ex. Fuel • Invasive plants and weeds and their disposal • Incorporation of agro-tourism into local business • Introduction of disease and invasive species from off island • Increasing ferry costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The unmet market for organics • Local food retailers receptive to local foods and local meats ex. GVM, Thrifty's, Nature Works • The profile of Salt Spring Island off island, known for products such as Salt Spring Island Roasting • Tourists • Island nature forces us to look in to local options (sooner than in other geographic locations) • Salt Spring Island as a model for sustainability • Geographic locale-accessibility for tourism • Existence of and expertise in seed sanctuary • 2 highly active agricultural organizations on the island • Saturday and Tuesday Farmers Markets • Fall Fair • Ruckle Park 	<p>which will help feed the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to increase focus on involving young people in the agriculture scene • Excitement in seeing this process, need to bring together those leasing land and those with the farming expertise • Farming is a very respectable skill • A well stated goal, needs to set the context with the how and why, there is more to it that just farming
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SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

GROUP 2: Facilitator’s Name - Bev Suderman

Group Members’ Names: Brian Swanson, Mary Laucks, Michael Weisner, Ron Weisner, Charlie Eagle, Judy Eagle, Brie Eagle, Delaine Faulkner, Deborah Miller, Ty Cameron, Susan Grace, Elizabeth Cooper, Adam Gold, Stephan Pigeon

- 1. Top 3 Challenges:** Disincentives to farm - (NOTE: members of this group committed to providing more specific information on this item in the feedback process by responding to these notes) roadblocks, government restrictions i.e. animal processing, taxation and related costs, input costs, land costs; Lack of processing and storage infrastructure; Labour shortages, i.e. shortage of skilled labour.
- 2. Top 3 Assets:** Salt Spring Island community: Educated market for product, willing/able to pay, restaurants and stores support, cohesive farm community, Farmers Institute and other organizations; Biophysical advantages: climate/microclimates, cleared land, herbicide/pesticide free land; Culture/Heritage of agriculture: history, heritage seeds, heritage trees.
- 3. Brief summary of Question 3:** This group generally agreed (with provisions) with the goal of this process because they are committed to the production of local quality food, their concern to protect what currently exists (the assets they have to work with), and their concern for food security.

<i>In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing agriculture on Salt Spring Island?</i>	<i>What are the most valuable local assets for agriculture on Salt Spring Island?</i>	<i>Given this context what is your reaction to the goal of this process, “To re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority?”</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil amendment availability on the island: manure, compost, general nutrients – not enough available locally, although some is being wasted through current practices, like burning plant materials • On non-ALR lands: OCP restrictions, tax issues, developing a farm plan that makes economic sense • Disincentives to farm, which is a labour of love – the biggest challenge is to remove roadblocks, i.e. government restrictions re animal processing for example, or tax structures that increase operating costs • Space restrictions – we live on an island • Labour shortage/shortage of skilled labour • Access to product (for the consumer) and access to market (for the producer) – there are barriers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity of backgrounds / ideas • Knowledgeable market in the community that is willing/able to pay more, and is not yet saturated with SSI products – this market includes tourists • Biophysical: climate, cleared land, water availability (some parts of the island), herbicide & pesticide-free land! • Farms & orchards established long-term (heritage) • Strong supports from restaurants, grocery & health stores • Captive market of consumers • Close proximity to larger markets (Vancouver) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After discussion of the group’s reservations about the stated goal, a quick show of hands indicated 13 in favour & 0 opposed to the goal. • Concerns included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to qualify the statement to balance impacts on the natural environment (wildlife, forests) of agricultural activity. Need to find a “sustainable agriculture balance” to protect the ecology of the region. Does re-establish agriculture mean increase its land base to the detriment of other values? • A related concern is that the OCP, tax assessment procedures, and other

SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product is going to waste (apples / nuts) • Land is going to waste, i.e. not being used, due to labour shortages, etc. • Cost of producing food makes it hard to compete – locally grown food costs more than imports • Lack of processing and storage infrastructure Required support from consumers • Availability & costs for farm inputs, like animal feed, tools, materials, and supplies (including manure and other soil amendments) – transportation doubles costs – lots of things are not produced on Salt Spring Island • Rural/urban values clash re noise (some people have vacation expectations about living in a rural area) or lot sizes (long narrow strip lots with very close proximity to neighbours aggravates impacts) • Zoning-related challenges • Undervalued state of food impacts – low wages in the agricultural sector; food deserves higher value • Water shortages are a constraint on farming – in metred systems, the cost of water increases farming costs • Potential for agricultural activity to pollute – we need to discuss the kind of agriculture we desire to have on the Island “Just say NO to industrial activity”, i.e. high concentrations of animals in small feed lots, etc. • Cost of land prohibitive barrier to entry into farming – also makes the land attractive to subdivide – leads to loss of prime farm land • Lack of subsidies (federal and provincial) to allow successful competition with US product, which is highly subsidized • Looking ahead in medium to long term, i.e. trends in energy costs; climate change – how can we be ready to face these changes? • Secure prime agricultural land for agricultural use – NOTE: This one is a recommendation • Assaults on ALR zoning and all agricultural lands • Maintaining diversity in agriculture, i.e. protecting seeds / stock diversity; diversity in ways of growing food, i.e. permaculture vs obtrusive, monoculture • Low support for mid-week market from local government • Manure availability 	<p>Island, Vancouver)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohesive farm community: cooperative, supportive, willing to work together • We’re here and thinking ahead • Involved community • Core foundation to meet future challenges • Supply of heritage nuts, apple trees, together with seed conservation initiatives • Community appreciation of pesticide-free food (organic, certified organic, etc.) • Labour – really fine people are working to support agriculture (just not enough of them) • Proximity – community connection • Diversity of microclimates – can raise lots of different things; can grow things all year round (2 dots) • Farmers Institute • Salt Spring currency 	<p>regulations/policies create disincentives to protect natural areas because all land is taxed as rural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to include agricultural product marketing, not just production, in the goal
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SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

GROUP 3: Facilitator’s Name - Erica Crawford Boettcher

Group Members’ Names: Lokesh Green, Don Lester, Janis Gouthier, Christine Torgrimson, Marion Pape, Maxime Leichter, Nancy van Patten, Lucille Lamarche, Susan Evans

1. **Top 3 Challenges:** *Price of land, Availability of skilled labour, Lack of an organization working for farmland protection*
2. **Top 3 Assets:** *year-round growing season/climate, easily informed/receptive public, commitment to organic practices, SSI brand*
3. **Brief summary of Question 3:** *The group was generally in agreement with the statement, subject to some revision. Our group felt the goal should be aimed at the local, encompassing sustainability and environmental priorities as well. There was concern that agriculture might be defined too narrowly, focusing the goal on commodity agriculture. There was general agreement that the term “re-establish” was inappropriate, and could be replaced by “re-invigorate,” for example. There was also a desire for more specific and measurable goals. For example, the goal could be stated in such terms as: “that x% of local food needs are provided for locally.”*

<i>In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing agriculture on Salt Spring Island?</i>	<i>What are the most valuable local assets for agriculture on Salt Spring Island?</i>	<i>Given this context what is your reaction to the goal of this process, “To re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority?”</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water shortage/supply • Diminishing healthy groundwater • Pollution of lakes • Price of land to purchase (transition to farming, and further acquisition) • High cost of living • Availability of skilled labour (linked to high cost of living) • Access to locally grown food • Access to information on local resources and products • Access for young people (to take up farming) • Tenure • Land use policy • current focus on niche goods over staples (lack of support for growing staple foods on-island) • limited land base, and hence potential production (can the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate, year-round growing season • Rural residential acreages, and their contribution to food production • Mixes of natural growth and agricultural uses • Easily informed and receptive public; educated, early adapters • Political will • Huge interest: diversity of active groups • Innovators/talent/creativity of local people • Cooperation • Commitment to organic practices • Captive population • Expertise in sustainability • SSI “brand,” visibility, international recognition • Regionalism (CRD, SGI, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven people agreed; one disagreed and one said that the statement was not disagreeable • All agreements were subject to revisions/provisions, as listed below. • “Agriculture” should be replaced with “sustainable local food supply” • This is too focused on commodity agriculture • Should focus on local needs, capitalize on the local context • “Re-establish” should be something like “re-invigorate” (agriculture is still alive and well) • Climate change underscores the need for

SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

<p>population of SSI have a self-sustaining food supply?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low intensity use of arable land • this is encouraged by current tax structure • alternative uses of arable land • climate change • economic change/upheaval (global) • year-round farming is not valued locally • local produce is not valued locally • lack of education on value of local production • insufficient infrastructure (small size of individual and community operations) • lack of equipment and technology • regulations that encourage certain activities to leave the island (eg: slaughter, eggs, poultry) • conflicts and a lack of incentives between multiple uses of property (eg: conservation and agricultural uses) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - due to policies and regulations • lack of local understanding of how agriculture links to energy/environmental/global issues • lack of understanding of implications of local purchasing (paying more for local food has other benefits) • cost of inputs compared with revenues • regulations • cost of hay and other off-island inputs • lack of networking, capacity building and planning for agriculture on SSI • lack of action, coordination, leadership, prioritization • lack of zoning for farmland protection • suitability of local diets to the local environment/conditions (eg: what is SSI good at producing, vs. what do people choose to eat) • land isn't being put to best use, for greatest or most suitable production (what are the soils/climate of SSI best at producing? How to capitalize on local assets) • Lack of an organization to work for farmland protection • ALR should be expanded • (low) priority on agricultural use (regulations/policy) • Settlement patterns • density, ideas of conservation and sustainability • transportation, distance to markets • lack of housing for farmworkers • incentive to sell farms rather than transfer to the next generation (loss of farmland) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses and associated infrastructure • Access to resources (human, networking, infrastructure, expertise) • Wealth and capital • Media is supportive and available • Presence of processing, packaging, value-added products • Huge market (proximity to large populations/markets in southern BC) • Everything we grow sells • Technological knowledge, potential of the internet • SSI energy strategy website/blog (see Marion Pape) • Retired people (pool of knowledge, time, volunteers, resources) • Seed sanctuary • Healthy soil • Organic soil • Community infrastructure (halls, buildings, etc) • Teaching capacity • Heritage crops • Apples, plums, pears, potatoes (crops that grow well here) • Sale at local grocery stores • Supportive environmental/sustainability focused businesses. eg: Soyanova; Natureworks (fair prices, distribution) • Local organizations: I-SEA (coordinating efforts, supports community initiatives); Farmers Institute, Island Natural Growers; etc • Wild food forage • Water catchment potential (in winter especially) • Healthy groundwater • Home gardens (production for personal consumption). Note: this is not in the official inventories. • Environmentally conscious community • Tourism • Awareness of climate change • Innovative farm practices 	<p>this to be a priority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed, provided that there is not an encroachment on waterways or forests, and that this is in harmony with the OCP • Agreed, however this is not a suitable goal statement. It should be measurable (eg: to provide for X% of local food needs) • Need a more specific goal • Should be a focus on local food needs and growing assets • A priority should be placed on being the sustainable, local and protecting the environment • Desirable goal, but need to clarify the vision/goals. Where does this fit into the bigger picture on SSI? • Terms are vague—need to be clarified • What time scale are we talking about?
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SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

Group 4: Facilitator’s Name - Ian Scott

Group Members’ Names: Eric Booth, Donn Tarris; Rollie Cook, Marguerite Lee, Scott Nyuli, Bob McGinn, Sally Dailly, Melanie Platz, Garnet Lee, Dave Walls, Lorraine Lowry, John Lammers, John Wilcox

1. **Top 3 Challenges:** *Price of land and availability of water, regulations that limit construction of buildings to attract labourers (tied to definition of farm family that is not multigenerational), input costs higher on Salt Spring than elsewhere.*
2. **Top 3 Assets:** *Good climate, high degree of social/environmental awareness amongst Salt Spring residents, farmland trust initiative has begun.*
3. **Brief summary of Question 3:** *Generally this group agreed with the statement. Some went so far as to describe it has an imperative. The term “agriculture” was seen as too narrow for some, with suggestions for other elements - “community agriculture”, “food security” or “agroforestry” that need to be infused into the goal. Some felt the goal was maybe unrealistic as the economics of agriculture just don’t work on Salt Spring - which leads to the conclusion that the economic component of the goal should be maybe held as a higher priority.*

<i>In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing agriculture on Salt Spring Island</i>	<i>What are the most valuable local assets for agriculture on Salt Spring Island?</i>	<i>Given this context what is your reaction to the goal of this process, “To re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority?”</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land price • Availability of water (and price) • Debt based monetary system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Farmers can’t get small loans from institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Huge interest costs for purchase of land • Limited opportunity to buy local products • Identifying local in shops can be difficult • Unwillingness of people to pay more for local food • People don’t recognize true cost of local food • Can’t find good, trained labour • Input costs are very high – higher than elsewhere (feed, machinery, ferry, fuel) • Need more farmers – young people not interested, farming is not an easy life • People’s lack of understanding of issues associated with local and organic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Islands Trust – local body we can work with • Good climate • Doubling population in summer – easy to sell products • Strong willed, independent residents • A lot of knowledge • Long-time farming history • High degree of social/environmental awareness • Strong sense of community – being an islander • Cachet to “Salt Spring” brand • Strong presence of farmer institutions • Farming community cooperative • Ability to model things – as an island (petri dish) • Farmland trust initiative as begun on Salt Spring • Strong local currency initiative • Local retail outlets will take SSI produce • Restaurants take local produce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes – as a package • Imperative for the supply of food • Makes me nervous – economics are difficult and people can get stuck. Economics are a bigger priority, than the other components. • Yes – if everyone gets involved • It is doable • Good change of success – shame not to. • Yes • Should be broader than simply “agriculture” • Better term would be “actively promote” than “re-establish” • Unrealistic because of economics of farming • Should not just be “agriculture”, but maybe “community agriculture”, should also include food security and agroforestry • Off-farm income needed to make agriculture work

SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordability of housing for farm labor (seasonal and year round) • Affordability of housing for new farmers • Competition for farmland with non-farmers • Regulations impacting farmers - particularly on the ALR • Need to go off island to slaughter animals – high dollar and time costs, energy • Regulations that stipulates need to have separate food safe building • No support from government to help farmers meet new regulations • Practical challenges of compiling with rules • Government acting without a vision • People used to getting all types of food all the time • Government not supportive of small farmers – focused instead on corporate farmers. • Local government demeans small scale farmers with their policies. • Ignorance for the need to tackle these issues holistically • Demise of the family farm • New farmers do not have access to enough capital • Farmers can't pay the higher wages that are demanded by labourers on Salt Spring • Regulations limiting construction of buildings that are necessary to attract labour (regulations definition of farm family, which does not recognize a multigenerational definition, is part of the problem here) • Farmers no recourse to complain about regs – question of who Farm Practices Act serves • Islands Trust has not developed farm buildings regulations adequately • Growing food is a lot of work – there is a lack of education for new farmers • Need greater participation from farmers at local “farmers market” • Trailers not a solution to farm housing – farm labourers deserve a high quality of life which means need to build more permanent structures • Salt Spring becoming Whistler • Too much restricting growth by IT rather than 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have two farmer's markets • Developing agri-tourism, people interested in experiencing food and agriculture • Detailed information base (e.g. LUI and other) • Some farms making money • New agriculture markets provide new opportunities – changing demands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need a critical density for it to work • Where are there examples of agriculture successfully being a “social, cultural and economic priority.” • We all have to eat, why import? • Agriculture is a lot of work. • Need a certain population, critical mass for it to be feasible.
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SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

<p>planning for growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulations don't promote farming • Lack of people getting up, speaking out and participating in local political and advocacy process • Farmers are aging • Young people not adequately being educated in farming • No good mechanism exists for rewarding current farmers financially for their land (ALR) • How to sell land as a "farm" – not gentrified • Moving to estates not farms. 		
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SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

GROUP 5: Facilitator’s Name - Kaitlin Kazmierowski

Group Members’ Names: Tanya Lester, Kim Hunter, Caroline Hickman, Mike Garside, Peter Lamb, Steve Hunt, Melissa Roberts, Kathryn Hebdige, Sebastian Moffatt, Ray Hatch, Deanna Ziraldo

1. **Top 3 Challenges:** *Decreasing affordability of farming lifestyle, Increasing real estate prices, Lack of government support*
2. **Top 3 Assets:** *Local retail outlets that promote local products, People/ community itself (the growing community, active citizens), Climate (extended growing season)*
3. **Brief summary of Question 3:** *The group generally agreed with this goal, however there was a sense that asking this type of question was somewhat redundant and a waste of time. Group members agreed with the need to focus on the social, cultural and economic prioritization of agriculture on SSI, but also felt that the goal should include a focus on the environment (including sustainable practices, land preservation and land regeneration), education and youth engagement. The group is enthusiastic and hopes that realistic targets can be set, so that the outcome of this process will be progressive, timely and more than a wish list.*

<p><i>In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing agriculture on Salt Spring Island</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water scarcity, quality, competition of usage with development. • General efficiency of production • Lack of sharing of ideas/ infrastructure/ production • Rising costs for meat producers (including lack of on-island abattoir facilities) • Producers are not getting a deserved price for local products. • Lack of matching productivity with marketing • Lack of true farming culture • Lack of recognition of the valuable functions of local agriculture (in terms of social/ community ties, the environment, sustainable practices, habitat creation etc) and the lack of returns (financial and others) that should come from these practices. 	<p><i>What are the most valuable local assets for agriculture on Salt Spring Island?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People, community consciousness- including customers, and specialty customers which generate opportunities • The growing community • Local restaurants, B & B's • SSI's agricultural land base • BC ferries- isolation allows local people to buy local products • Islands Trust Act- the use of SSI's exceptional status • Climate- long growing season • Heritage/ traditions through farmsteads- a strong historical base for re-creating agriculture • Diversity of foods produced, often unexpected products • Proximity to GVRD, CRD- proximity to a diverse 	<p><i>Given this context what is your reaction to the goal of this process, “To re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority?”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General agreement from all members, however specifics outlined below: • Opportunity for the community and benefits for farmers • Vital because farming is the most important lifestyle: its in peoples' blood • Excitement surrounding this process (community turn-out); potential for a huge impact • Economic priority is needed most • This question is perhaps a waste of peoples' time; need more focus, make better use of peoples' time • Needs structure and quick delivery • Needs a discussion paper • Needs to be progressive, substantive, a discrete
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SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of date definition of farming (omits diversity, mixing of uses, sustainability) • Lack of focus of small farms in terms of regulations- overreaching regulations do not consider small farms. • Under-use of ALR on SSI • Lack of skilled labour and the finances to hire such labour • Lack of zoning which promotes agricultural uses; decreasing agricultural land base • Increasing real estate prices • Local produce costs more for consumers • Increasing cost of fuel • General lack of public education regarding the benefits of local food- a disconnect • Competition with subsidized produce • Imported foods dominate local market • Overall challenge of year-round production. • Demographic shift away from local farming, youth leaving the island • Decreasing affordability of farming lifestyle • Overall difficulty of farming and food production (including climatic conditions) • Lack of set goals for local farming to draw from (e.g. land preservation/ regeneration) • Forestry/ woodlot management not considered as part of agricultural income • Lack of support from Fed/ Prov government for agriculture (unlike for sustainable forestry practices). 	<p>agricultural industry, expertise and history</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to Plant Health facility (research farm) • Farmer's Institute and various local organizations • Past help from government for woodlot management • Great climatic conditions for woodlot growth- high value of forestry • Local retail outlets that promote local products • Markets support local products • Strong potential for co-ops • Local activists are politically aware- strong lobby support • Local expertise: skills, marketing, supporting each other 	<p>set of goals by the next session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timing of sessions should correspond better with agricultural schedules (concern that April is too late for report delivery) • A silly question • Focus on social ramifications • Order of community dialogues; perhaps vision should be discussed first rather than last • Goal does not address the environment; need a strong environmental focus which builds it into this vision • Need to acknowledge farming as a means of land preservation/ protection • Goal needs to include education, government lobbying and continuity of the farm • Integration of farming into curriculum (where does food come from?) • Social and cultural aspects are key, need to unify these with the environment in terms of practices and methods • Goal must be reachable, realistic, feasible; not just a wish list- this type of goal is possible • Need for challenging yet realistic/ feasible targets • Increase involvement of land and people: education and hands-on learning is vital • Keeping youth on the island
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SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

GROUP 6: Facilitator’s Name - Kristi Tatebe

Group Members’ Names: Craig Seedhouse, Marsha Goldberg, Ben Luna, Murray Hunter, Diane Roberts, Darren & Vanessa Farias, Wendy McEachern, Elizabeth White, Leezee Porter

1. **Top 3 Challenges:** Economic challenges (viability for producers as well as consumer willingness to pay), Regulatory challenges, Marketing of local product
2. **Top 3 Assets:** Social assets (local expertise, reputation), Economic assets: Saturday market, Natureworks
3. **Brief summary of Question 3:** Generally agreed but reservations with “re-establish”

<i>In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing agriculture on Salt Spring Island</i>	<i>What are the most valuable local assets for agriculture on Salt Spring Island?</i>	<i>Given this context what is your reaction to the goal of this process, “To re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority?”</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic -Local producers cannot be competitive with commercial off-island producers due to high cost of labour, & subsidies of off-island food by government -Lack of economic incentives to farm • Marketing - Marketing of local food difficult as producers don't have time to market -Lack of coordination among growers for marketing - Poor location of Tuesday market - Lack of local commercial opportunity (restaurants) - Perceptions of unreliable nature of local food - Consumer desire for consistency - Seasonality of local food - Most consumers unwilling to pay more for local food • Regulatory Challenges - Government regulations do not support small-scale local agriculture (e.g. egg & meat regulations) - Large amounts of paperwork for tax credits etc. - CRD & Island's Trust regulations - Lack of proper production facilities • Other - Water - Population growth - Consumers need education re: local food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate • Fertile soil • Availability of land area • Geographical location close to major market of Victoria • Expendable income (retiree population) • Thriving Saturday market • Reputation (& associated marketing potential) • Tourists • Natureworks store • Cooking program at school • ALR tax credits • People (consciousness) • Diversity of experience • Local character • Cohesive community • History of farming • Local organizations (Island Farmer's Institute, Island Natural Growers, 4-H club) • Previous research (Food Security report, produce report etc.) • High quality of local food • High commitment to organics • Desirability • Year-round economy • Opportunity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reservations with “re-establish” - Sounds as though agriculture doesn't currently exist - Would prefer “support, protect, enhance & encourage” • Specify local agriculture as the priority • Define “priority” • Define “agriculture” as food-related. • How about targets? • All agree with goal in general.

SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Non-agricultural farm uses- Aging farming population- Transient summer population- Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Passion	
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SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

GROUP 7: Facilitator’s Name - Kristina Bouris

Group Members’ Names: Di Sutterfield, Lois Sprague, Marion Hargrove, Kathy Weisner, Tony Bruce, Helen Bruce, Ken Strike, Gwyn Strike, Wendi Gilson, Ramona Scott, Margaret Thomson

1. **Top 3 Challenges:** *land cost, livestock, bureaucratic mindset that bigger farms are better*
2. **Top 3 Assets (4):** *strong environmental interest, wealth of agricultural experience, benign climate, big demand for local products*
3. **Brief summary of Question 3:** *The group generally agreed. SSI could be the center of a resurgence of agriculture. There is the feeling that we have no choice, that our health and future depend on it, that it is important for our children. There is a concern that agriculture needs to be defined, the goal needs to be measurable, that it needs to trickle down to action, and that it may not be a desirable goal for the whole community.*

<p>In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing agriculture on Salt Spring Island</p>	<p>What are the most valuable local assets for agriculture on Salt Spring Island?</p>	<p>Given this context what is your reaction to the goal of this process, “To re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority?”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land cost • Bureaucratic mindset that supports bigger farms as better • Water quality (too salty) • Competition with residential development • Urban/rural interface • Lack of cheap housing for farm labour • Government regulations that impact butchering, transportation etc of livestock • Lack of understanding and respect (shown through attitude and language) of ordinary people towards small farms • Lack of understanding of economics of small farms • Customers lack an understanding of the seasonal nature • Lack of understanding of organic methods • Retiring farmers = loss of expertise • Lack of support for new farmers (“not cool”, no status) • Lack of training for new farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are a community • benign climate (normally!) • wealth of agricultural experience, there is always somebody to ask • well-educated and hard-working volunteers • strong food consciousness • strong, renowned cultural history of food and ag • people are adventurous consumers- people will try new things. • more interest in organics • strong environmental interest • not many people like to eat at McD’s • good soil – in pockets only • available water there is enough that falls • there is still land available for agriculture on SSI • lots of backyard gardeners (increase total ag production) • agritourism, seasonal tourism • big demand for local products • schools are on-board (Fernwood Garden) • connection between local food and service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree: SSI could become a center of the agricultural resurgence. It is essential to rely less on imported foods and goods • AGREE: it is an easy goal for groups and individuals already supportive, but on a community-level, it is hard for tourism, transient community, etc. This goal is a good one for an active and viable segment of the community but maybe not realistic or desirable for all. • Agree: Over the next 20 years, there will be no choice but to re-establish agriculture (global warming, etc) • Agree: But needs to be more precise and measurable • Agree: a good goal, very good for children, good goal culturally and socially • Agree: but concern that the goal won’t trickle down to practical solutions. Needs to be implemented at all levels and not just stay on the flipchart. • Agree: Essential for survival. Agriculture needs to

SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenure is difficult • Undervaluing of food- it is too cheap • No regulations or legislation to allow parts of the ALR (or any land) to be leased with tenure- there is no protection, no long-term planning • Landowners letting others farm land do not want to lose control • Loss of equity when farmers lose access to land • Regulations and policy need to make room for all farm types • High cost of local products • Loss of high school agriculture program • Consumer buying habits- want "one-stop shopping", everything in one store, advertising reinforces this • Markets: challenging to park, access is difficult for seniors due to long walk • No long term cold storage for local farmers/retails wishing to buy local products • Real estate agents have no appreciation for agriculture • Price of gas increases prices for farmers, for everyone at every level • No distribution system for local producers: retailer have to deal with individual farmers- no coordination • Water collection and retention is a challenge • No institutional buying policies 	<p>organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local restaurants, Nature Works want to feature local food • SSI is a brand (smoked salmon, coffee, tea, wine, lamb, tofu, cheese) • Difficulty in transportation and isolation is good thing for local food • Interest and promotion of genetic diversity – apples, poultry, seeds • Lots of willingness • GE free zone • Highest concentration of brainpower- educated/intelligent people on the island • Wealthy segment of population, generous with sharing wealth • Awareness of global warming is good for local food • Community organization such as 4-H, farmers institute, grow-a-row, fall fair and many others. 	<p>be defined.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree: speaks to the connection between people and the soil. We need to provide the opportunity for building skills and experience. • Agree: "In sustainable agriculture is the preservation of the world". We're losing touch, we're losing our health. Our species survival depends on sustainable agriculture. We need a common memory of healthy food. Need to add "environmental" to the goal.
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SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

GROUP 8: Facilitator’s Name - Matt Thomson

Group Members’ Names: George Laundry; Ted Harrison; Tony Kennedy, Mike Larmour, George Ehring, Cam Robinson, Vera Robinson, Ron Pither, Julia Grace, Mataji Ishaya, Jim Lemaistre.

1. **Top 3 Challenges:** *operating costs exceed profits; farming demands lots of infrastructure (e.g. transportation, abattoirs, processing facilities etc.); taxation is too high; government subsidies and incentives don't benefit small farms*
2. **Top 3 Assets:** *climate; SSI is organic capital of Canada; community concern for each other; Islands Trust Act; best food in the world!*
3. **Brief summary of Question 3:** *This goal represents an important element in maintaining balance, both within communities and with nature. Our group felt some concerns regarding both the urgency in making this a reality and the feasibility of implementing this goal.*

<p>In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing agriculture on Salt Spring Island</p>	<p>What are the most valuable local assets for agriculture on Salt Spring Island?</p>	<p>Given this context what is your reaction to the goal of this process, “To re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority?”</p>
<p>Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficult to make a profit • cost of land • operating costs exceed profits • difficult to make commercial agriculture viable • making agriculture support/help support households financially • lots of infrastructure demands • big business influences government • younger generation will likely not inherit farms • our assets may not provide opportunities <p>Cultural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we are part of the problem with buying choices • not training all age groups and sectors • issues with farm tenure • problems with capital costs, operating costs, energy costs • high input/low output and low quality • food in store doesn't reflect cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on farming resources from 30 years ago (available from Mike Larmour) • climate • being an island • knowing your market • huge amount of investment capital available (to take advantage of visible, ethical investments) • community concern for each other • SSI is organic capital of Canada (specialized products available and desirable) • Thrifty's buys local • Natureworks buys local • community is gather (e.g. Today) • Islands Trust/Islands Trust Act (to preserve and protect) • upcoming OCP review • best food in the world available • people are prepared to pay more for quality food • diversity of food products • diversity of interested groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture keeps connection to the earth • even 1st three words would be enough • agriculture (as a social cultural and economic priority) preserves a balance with communities and natural systems • this promotes being proactive in inter-generational continuity of farming • important to pursue this goal (for many reasons, e.g. Food security, preservation of greenspace) • emotional reactions: some see the primary goal as establishing gov't process that truly represents us; without this we may not succeed in implementing this goal • optimism and enthusiasm vs. a fear that we are close to an ecological tipping point

SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • government regulations • inter-generational transfer (legal, regulatory, policy framework limitations) • no collective educational resources <p>Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pastures and watersheds overlapping • use of pesticides/GMOs <p>Government Involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taxes • regulations built for agri-business • incentives/subsidies that don't benefit small farms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • water on the south end • multiple microclimates (e.g. Hot on the north end) • the Island's growers (lots relative to size) • Agricultural Land Reserve • Fall Fair
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SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

GROUP 9: Facilitator’s Name - Tamsin Mills

Group Members’ Names: Liz Armour, Jim Scott, Jane Squier, Jim Maurice, JoAnn Maurice, Mark Whitear, Rob Weeden, Roger Middleton, Gay Alkoff, Marcel Kauer

1. **Top 3 Challenges:** *Economic viability, Water demand and availability, Lack of cooperation among farmers*
2. **Top 3 Assets:** *People, Island life, Organizations (see below for expanded bullets)*
3. **Brief summary of Question 3:** *General agreement with the goal of the process. We would like to replace the historical reference represented by “re-establish agriculture” to the phrase “establish new agriculture”. This change represents the idea of making agriculture work within the constraints and realities of today while realistically looking toward the future. We believe this goal drives a timely process, one that will lay the groundwork for the future by organizing community cooperation focused on agriculture and stressing the importance of focusing locally when it comes to food. The goal is imperative for the health and survival of the community in the long term.*

In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges facing agriculture on Salt Spring Island	What are the most valuable local assets for agriculture on Salt Spring Island?	Given this context what is your reaction to the goal of this process, “To re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority?”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Viability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expensive labour ○ Expensive feed / fuel ○ Increased costs / decreased revenue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Low equivalent income (\$1/hr) • Water Availability and demand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Future costs and sources • Lack of cooperation among farmers • Lack of facilities for processing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ i.e. Livestock industry • Land away from agriculture for development • Unavailability of land <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Challenge of sharing land • Lack of education in following areas: (especially children and youth) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Food preservation ○ Why buy local ○ Growing own food ○ Food system ○ Trades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Local knowledge ○ Local support ○ Local Participation ○ Willing population • Island <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Small scale ○ Finite ○ Keep out GMOs ○ Less available discount foods • Organizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 4H ○ TLC ○ NGOs ○ Natural Growers ○ Farmers Institute ○ Good climate • Variety of microclimates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Allow for staggering crops • SSI Monetary Foundation 	<p>Given this context what is your reaction to the goal of this process, “To re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instead of “re-establish agriculture” use “establish new agriculture” The idea of “new agriculture” replacing the historical reference and embodying how different the situation in which we farm today is from that in the past. Constraints today relative to when farming was established on Saltspring include expensive land and labour, specialization in farming activities and a compromised natural resource base. • Need to shift to focus locally • Timely goal as agriculture is vital for sustainability and survival of the human race • People need to grow their own food • Need for infrastructure to support farmers • Farmers must have food system organized and be organized themselves as people will look to them in coming times of crisis • This goal won’t essentially be realized until the pressure from the unsustainable course that humans are charting is felt in time of crisis • Need to add “on Saltspring Island” at the end of

SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of education on how to make small parcels productive • Challenge to be prepared for eventual breakdown in food system • Unaffordable to employ labourers • Housing too expensive and none available for labourers • Access to local experts • Government policy • To grow a product acceptable to urban consumers (quality, taste) • To maintain consistent supply for retailers • Lack of local support from retailers • Deterioration of relationship between farmers and retailers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lack of knowledge and educational opportunities for retailers • Communications between restaurants/retail and farms • Return on farming is so low people doing it on the sidelines • Constraints on using forestry to bolster farm income <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Important income source to make farm work ◦ Tax policy challenge here • Lack of complimentary currency to help debt load and young farmers • Cannot lease part of a parcel of land • Barriers to independent community decision-making • Incentive for stewardship • Corporate versus community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Laws don't favour local food production • Lack of government support by extension workers • Quotas on egg production • Public apathy • Lack of skills in community • Multiple negative externalities of aquaculture • Garden club not officially here <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ They have ability share knowledge on backyard food production • Challenge when urban and farm exist next to each other in terms of pollution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Widespread use of homeowner pesticides and household chemicals which affect farms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSI Seed Foundation • Diversity of farming due to diversity of soil conditions • Simple lifestyle attracts likeminded such as WWOOFers • Great place to live • SSI Name Brand / marketing • There is support for local food distribution • Lots of rain = possibility of rain water storage • Relatively undamaged natural environment • Dan Jason Seed Company • Tuesday and Saturday Markets • Farm Gate sales • Fall Fair – challenges people to grow food and educates • Local restaurants use local product <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Tourists have brand recognition • High ratio of land relative to population 	<p>the goal phrase</p>
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SUMMARY NOTES: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #1

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health of watershed• Some soils not suited to agriculture• Intergenerational gap<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Challenge of intergenerational transfer of farms due to low economic viability of farms and high land prices (these are the people with expertise)◦ Demographic shift - many farmers retiring or retired who will be next farmers?• Isolation of island• Large (unmanaged) deer population and the need for better fencing• Climate change<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Lack of widespread education or understanding		
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Community Dialogue #2: Opportunities - BACKGROUND PAPER

I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This paper will provide an overview of the Plan to Farm process, summarize Community Dialogue #1 and, most importantly, outline your homework for Community Dialogue #2 to be held on Saturday, February 17, 2007.

Plan to Farm Process

Plan to Farm: Setting the Table for Food & Agriculture on Salt Spring is an area farm planning process initiated by the Islands Farmers Institute and the Island Natural Growers in collaboration with the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, and Islands Trust. Additional funding has been provided by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of British Columbia, and the Capital Regional District.

Plan to Farm's Steering Committee has identified two primary goals for the process:

- Re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority on the island; and
- Facilitate the growth of associated farming activities.

Community Dialogues

Community participation is an important foundation on which Salt Spring Island's area farm plan will be built and implemented. Three linked community dialogues have been organized to start the planning process. The purpose of the dialogues is to establish a common base of knowledge and understanding of the issues facing farming on our island. Participants have an opportunity to discuss agriculture on Salt Spring and collectively articulate a vision for the future of food and agriculture on the island. The three community dialogues have been structured to build on each other.

Approximately 120 people from a wide variety of backgrounds attended the first community dialogue session held at the Gulf Islands Secondary School on the afternoon of Saturday January 20th, 2007. Those in attendance spent over an hour in small groups identifying issues and assets for farming on Salt Spring Island. In addition, participants were asked to comment on the identified goals of the *Plan to Farm* process.

Community Dialogue Session #1: Issues	Saturday, January 20, 2007
Community Dialogue Session #2: Opportunities	Saturday, February 17, 2007 Gulf Islands' Secondary School 1:30 - 4:30pm
Community Dialogue Session #3: Vision	Saturday, March 10, 2007

Registration

Everyone - including participants of Community Dialogue #1 - is asked to register for Community Dialogue #2 in order to help us with event coordination and planning.

To register please contact: Anne Macey, *Plan to Farm* Project Manager
(250) 537.5511 or email: macey@saltspring.com

By **Monday, February 12, 2007**

COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #2: OPPORTUNITIES

Purpose

The purpose of Community Dialogue #2 is to identify opportunities for local action that maintain, improve and re-establish agriculture as a priority on Salt Spring Island. The session will focus on developing strategies that address specific issues or challenges - a strategy can be an activity, a program, a project, a network, a policy, a regulation, an initiative or another form of action. Community Dialogue Session #2 is your opportunity to suggest strategies that address the identified challenges and that also take advantage of the local assets.

Question for discussion

Given the challenges and assets that were identified in Community Dialogue #1, what strategies can be implemented by residents, community organizations and local government that would better support agriculture on Salt Spring Island?

Your homework

We ask that you do the following to prepare for Community Dialogue #2:

1. Review the list of challenges and assets in Section II and III.
2. Using the Worksheet (page 7 and 8), suggest some specific strategies that will help solve some of the challenges. If possible, provide examples, websites, articles or stories of where these strategies are happening on the ground.
3. In the Worksheet, try to identify the challenges that each strategy addresses and the assets it builds upon.

For this dialogue session - **be creative!** We want you to focus on what *could* or *should* be done - **not** on *how* or *who* will do it.

Helpful information

As you think about some possible strategies, please consider the following:

- A strategy can be an activity, program, project, network, policy, regulation or initiative - it is an action to solve a specific problem(s);
- Consider new ideas as well as existing activities that could be improved upon or expanded;
- A strategy should try to solve a specific problem (challenge)- keep the list of challenges in mind as you work;
- An effective strategy will take advantage of a community's strengths (assets) - again, keep the list of assets in mind; and
- A strategy is most effective when it addresses multiple challenges and takes advantage of multiple assets at the same time.

To assist participants in their preparation for the second Community Dialogue we have provided a summary of the first dialogue session (see section II and III of this paper). This list of challenges and assets identified during Community Dialogue #1 has not been prioritized. As the *Plan to Farm* process unfolds it is expected that new challenges and assets will be identified. This initial summary is a starting point that will help guide our discussion on the opportunities that exist for agriculture on Salt Spring Island.

An unedited version of the notes from Community Dialogue #1 is available on request.

II. IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES

Not listed in order of priority.

1. Availability of Water

The availability of good quality water throughout the growing season is a constraint for many Salt Spring Island farm operations. There is a limited (and possibly diminishing) supply of quality groundwater and growing competition from non-farming uses. Other issues include the acquisition and distribution of water, and water collection and retention.

2. Conflicts with New Neighbours

As non-farmers and other new residents move into farming areas, there is an increased potential for conflict between farmers and residential property owners over such issues as noise, water use, water quality and smells. The NIMBY principle (not in my back yard) is expanding.

3. Critical Infrastructure Gaps

A number of important agriculture-supporting infrastructure elements are not available or in short supply on Salt Spring Island. These include: on-island meat processing and storage facilities; long-term cold storage facilities; adequate food processing facilities; and certain farm equipment and technology. Some of these gaps are a direct result of problematic provincial and federal government regulations. However, local government bylaws and lack of coordination or cooperation amongst producers and processors may also be contributing factors.

4. Environmental Impacts of Farming

There is a wide range of farming practices occurring on Salt Spring. While a large percentage of farmers and food producers are interested in organic or ecological practices there are concerns about the continued use of pesticides and fertilizers on the island and the potential for unintended consequences such as ground and water system contamination, introduction or use of genetically modified organisms, and negative environmental and health effects. Additional environmental concerns include the introduction of disease and release of invasive plants, pollution of watersheds by livestock and overgrazing, aquaculture operations, the excessive use of water, and waste disposal.

5. Farmland Not Being Farmed

As a consequence of increased development pressure, there is a feeling that increasingly farm properties are being bought and developed as residential estates and not being farmed. Retiring farmers have few options if they want to sell their land as “farmland”. While lease arrangements are possible, various roadblocks exist including landowner perceptions of a loss of control over their property, and regulatory restrictions on multiple lease arrangements within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). Local government is pressured to consider the siting of community service facilities on ALR land without an offer of compensation or local replacement for the ALR land lost.

6. High Cost of Land

The beauty and climate of the West Coast and Salt Spring Island coupled with a strong real estate market is resulting in an increasing demand for residential island properties. The interest in island living has resulted in substantial increases in the price of all island properties, including farmland. As a result, the price of agricultural land is prohibitive for new farmers.

7. Inability to Achieve Local Food Security

Salt Spring Island farmers are currently unable to produce and process enough food on the Island to achieve a reasonable level of local food security. There is a general feeling that

farmland is not being used to its full agricultural potential. There is also concern that environmental issues, limited water availability during the growing season, soil fertility issues and a declining number of farms and farmers will not allow Salt Spring Island to achieve food security for its current population.

8. Labour & Housing Shortages

Salt Spring farmers struggle to find consistent, reliable, affordably priced skilled and unskilled labour. This challenge is compounded by the lack of affordable housing for farm labourers and new farmers. Current land use regulations that limit the construction of permanent, on-farm housing and prevent farmers from offering permanent, good quality housing to farm labourers. As a consequence, farmers are unable to offer affordable on-site housing to recruit potential farm workers.

9. Lack of New Farmers

There appears not to be enough younger farmers to replace farmers who are retiring or leaving. Younger people are not interested in farming due to the high cost of land, the poor financial outlook, the lack of training opportunities and the lack of interest in the farming lifestyle.

10. Lack of Skills Training

Currently there are not enough local formal opportunities for people to learn the skills and knowledge necessary for farming. There are very limited training opportunities for young farmers or educational support for existing farmers. Educational programs in schools and educational opportunities elsewhere about the importance and challenges of local food production are either not present or extremely limited. Farming is no longer promoted as a viable or attractive vocation. Local residents lack courses to learn basic skills such as food preserving or gardening.

11. Lack of Profitability

There is an overwhelming agreement that farming on Salt Spring is generally no longer a financially profitable business. Many reasons for this were provided including: higher input and operating costs - directly a result of increased transportation costs; the high cost for labour and lack of housing on Salt Spring; higher capital costs and resulting debt loads. These costs make it difficult to compete with off-Island producers that have lower costs and/or supportive subsidies. The retail price for local food on Salt Spring often does not reflect the true cost of production. There may be a reluctance or lack of understanding or reluctance amongst local consumers to pay the higher prices necessary to give Salt Island farmers an adequate return for their services and products.

12. Lack of Provincial & Federal Support for Small Farms

Federal and provincial agriculture and food policy is perceived to be unsupportive of the small-scale farming operations typical on Salt Spring Island. The focus of federal and provincial agricultural policy and financial subsidies is visibly centered on the demands and interests of large-scale agri-business.

13. Loss of Farming Culture

Even with a rich and understood agricultural history, Salt Spring Island is having difficulty maintaining a true farming culture - one that continues the wisdom and knowledge passed down from previous generations of farmers. There are very few multigenerational farm families remaining on the island that can see their children continuing to farm. This lack of continuity and connection with the land and with farms is a significant issue, as the associated knowledge required to properly steward these farms cannot be maintained. The result is new farmers and farm practices that are often not in harmony with the land.

14. *Poor Understanding of Local Farming & Food Production Issues*

The public at-large may not have a sufficient understanding of many of the issues associated with farming and local food production. This includes such aspects as people not recognizing the true cost of producing food locally, customers' unwillingness to pay more for local food, a lack of understanding of the economic plight of small farms, the public not appreciating the multiple benefits (social, community, environmental) of local food production, consumer buying habits and expectations of all foodstuffs being available year-round, and lack of concern about how global environmental and economic changes may impact local systems.

15. *Restrictive Local Government Regulations & Policies*

There is a general feeling that smaller-scale agriculture and the production of local food are not high priority issues amongst local governments. This is reflected in policies and specific regulations that are not always sensitive to the challenges faced by island farmers who are trying to maintain local, smaller-scale farm and processing operations. Regulations and policies that are problematic for small farmers include: restrictions on such activities as the construction of on-farm buildings; the pursuit of community agriculture activities within publicly-owned lands; food processing regulations; the structure of current zoning bylaws; and local tax policies. Island farmers and food producers feel they do not have a way to effectively air their concerns about these regulations and policies, and that existing agricultural organizations are not working or not being heard. There may also not be enough assistance provided by local government to help them comply with these rules and regulations.

III. RECOGNIZED ASSETS

Not listed in order of priority.

1. *Environmental & Social Values*

As a population, Salt Spring Islanders have strong environmental and social values. There is significant local expertise in sustainability, with interest and awareness on a broad range of associated issues that include affordable housing, energy, water, agriculture and local food production. There is a strong and growing demand for local, organic and natural foods causing many to refer to Salt Spring Island as the unofficial "organic capital of Canada".

2. *Existing Community Financial Support*

Salt Spring Island's "financially secure" segment of the population is growing and can be generous and ethical in their capital investments, and support of local foundations and charities. The Salt Spring Island Monetary Foundation and the Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust initiative are existing community-based financial organizations.

3. *Farming History & Expertise*

Salt Spring Island has a strong agricultural history. This history has resulted in a diversity and wealth of farming knowledge and skill that exists with current and retired farmers and their families and is visibly expressed through the many remaining heritage farms, fruit orchards and nut trees. There are a number of on-island initiatives that are focused on maintaining agricultural heritage and traditions including a seed sanctuary, apple, fibre and garlic festivals and historical archives. The annual Fall Fair at the Islands Farmers Institute grounds is the seminal community event on the island. Salt Spring Island's history and involvement in agriculture extends into the broader community and is expressed through the local passion and knowledge of food, and the tradition of community groups taking an active role researching important food and agriculture issues.

4. High Quality Land Base

Salt Spring Island has an excellent land base for agriculture and food production. It has healthy, high quality soils, a mild climate that provides year-round growing opportunities, a diversity of microclimates that allow for the production of a wide range of products, and reasonable water availability in many areas. A significant portion of Salt Spring Island is in the Agriculture Land Reserve and many agricultural opportunities exist outside the ALR due to the relatively Island's relatively rural character. Many residents actively maintain home gardens that have a high potential for food production.

5. Living on an Island

Being an "Islander" is a source of pride for Salt Spring residents and helps build a strong sense of community. Salt Spring's island situation forces the community to consider local options first. As an island community interested in reducing its dependency on off-island inputs, Salt Spring could become an important model for sustainability.

6. Social Capital

Salt Spring Islanders are a passionate, diverse, committed, informed, strong-willed, well-educated and creative group of people who are actively involved in their community. This innovative and cooperative spirit extends into the farming community and fosters a willingness to work together to find solutions to community problems. There is also a strong activist and politically orientated tradition amongst many Islanders.

7. Strong Local Markets for Local Food

Local farmers and food producers have no difficulty selling their products. Island residents are often willing to pay more for high quality, locally produced food. The summer Saturday and Tuesday farmer's markets, Thrifty Foods, Ganges Village Market, Natureworks, farm gate sales, Island B&Bs and restaurants currently provide opportunities for selling agricultural products on island. The proximity to the large markets of the Lower Mainland and southern Vancouver Island also represent an important marketing opportunity.

8. Salt Spring Island Brand

"Salt Spring Island" is a well-known brand used to market a range of high quality farm-produced specialty food items. Salt Spring products are easily recognized and command top prices. The brand invokes images of health, wholesomeness, sustainability and craftsmanship.

9. Supportive Local Institutions

There is a diversity of community organizations and local institutions working on issues related to agriculture and local food production on Salt Spring. They include the Islands Farmers' Institute, Island Natural Growers, Salt Spring Island EcoVillage Education and Development Society, Salt Spring Island Monetary Foundation, The Land Conservancy, and the Salt Spring Island Community Energy Strategy, and the Local Trust Council's Agricultural Advisory Committee. Youth are connected to food and agriculture through the local 4-H Club, the Gulf Islands Secondary School's cooking programs, and the Fernwood Garden. Government agencies such as the Islands Trust, the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and the Agricultural Land Commission also provide important guidance and support.

10. Tourism

Salt Spring Island is a popular tourist destination. The farming tradition and scenic agrarian landscapes are an important aspect of Salt Spring Island's rural character. Visitors and seasonal residents effectively double the Island's population during the summer and escalate the already high demand for local farm products. There is growing interest in agri-tourism, which already has become economically important activity for a number of Island farms.

WORKSHEET

Suggested Strategies to Better Support Agriculture on Salt Spring Island

1. Review the list of challenges and assets in Section II and III. Please feel free to add additional ones that weren't described.
2. Think about some specific strategies that will help address some of the challenges. Note these below. If possible, provide examples, websites, articles or stories of where these strategies are happening on the ground. See the examples provided below.
3. In the Worksheet, identify the challenges that each strategy addresses and the assets it builds upon.

Given the challenges & assets that were identified in Community Dialogue #1, what strategies can be implemented by residents, community organizations & local government that would better support agriculture on Salt Spring Island?

Suggested Strategy		Challenges Addressed	Assets Utilized
<i>Strategy: Provide a brief description that outlines your suggested strategy.</i>		<i>What key challenge(s) does the strategy address? (Please refer to Section II)</i>	<i>What key asset(s) does this strategy utilize (Please refer to Section III)</i>
<i>Case Study: If possible, list an example community, website, article, etc.</i>			
EXAMPLE 1:	Farmland trust - community-owned land leased to farmers under various arrangements. Certain conditions or farm practices can be required of the lessee. Case Study: Indian Line Farm, MA - www.smallisbeautiful.org/clts/indian.html	Lack of profitability High cost of land Farmland not being farmed Aging farmers	Environmental & social ethic Supportive local institutions Existing financial institutions
EXAMPLE 2:	On-farm apprentice training program for young farmers. Case Study: A successful Ontario program - www.craftontario.ca/	Aging farmers Lack of skills training Loss of farming culture	Farming history/expertise Social capital Supportive local institutions
EXAMPLE 3:	Institutional buying policy for Islands Trust office - policy to buy and serve locally grown food products in their local office and at their meetings. Case Study: Woodbury, IA - www.woodburyiowa.com/departments/economicdevelopment/organic.asp	Lack of profitability Farmland not being farmed Poor understanding of local farming & food production issues	Strong local markets for food Supportive local institutions Environmental & social ethic
EXAMPLE 4:	Local farm practices code - a well-defined set of practices and principles - either voluntary or regulated - which local farmers commit to. Case Study: California Wine Institute - www.wineinstitute.org/programs/swp/	Environmental impacts Poor public understanding Conflict with new neighbours	Salt Spring Island Brand Environmental & social ethic Tourism Farming history & expertise Supportive local institutions

YOUR TURN...

Suggested Strategy	Challenges Addressed	Assets Utilized
<p>Strategy: Provide a one-sentence description that describes the principle feature of the strategy.</p> <p>Case Study: If possible, list an example community, website, article, etc.</p> <p>YOUR SUGGESTED STRATEGY:</p>	<p>List the key challenges this strategy addresses. (Please refer to Section II)</p>	<p>List the key assets this strategy utilizes. (Please refer to Section III)</p>
<p>Case Study:</p> <p>YOUR SUGGESTED STRATEGY:</p>		
<p>Case Study:</p> <p>YOUR SUGGESTED STRATEGY:</p>		
<p>Case Study:</p> <p>YOUR SUGGESTED STRATEGY:</p>		
<p>Case Study:</p> <p>YOUR SUGGESTED STRATEGY:</p>		

February 21, 2007

Dear *Plan to Farm* Participants,

We would like to thank all of you who were able to attend the second Community Dialogue on February 17th for the Salt Spring Island *Plan to Farm* process. This meeting built on the valuable feedback received at the first Dialogue. We thank you for contributing your excellent suggestions for strategies to strengthen agriculture. Your commitment, enthusiasm and creativity made for a very successful meeting.

Attached are the summary notes from the small group discussions. We ask that you review the summary of your group's discussion to ensure that it reflects the ideas and comments that were shared. If you would like to clarify points or add some new strategies, ***please send your comments via email or mail by Monday, February 26th, 2007.***

Emailed comments can be sent to ***plantofarm@gmail.com***.

Written or typed comments can be mailed or delivered to Anne Macey,
106 Old Scott Road, Salt Spring Island BC, V8K 2L6

Please feel free to share these notes with those who were not at the meeting. We would invite further comments and suggested strategies.

Next meeting...

The third Community Dialogue will be held on Saturday, March 10th, 2007 from 1:30 - 4:30 pm at the Gulf Islands Secondary School. The third meeting will focus on implementing the VISION. What can or should be implemented in order to reach the goal of *re-establishing agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority of Salt Spring*? What is possible? What is practical? New participants are welcome to join.

To help with the organization of the event please confirm your attendance by Friday, March 2nd, 2007 by emailing ***macey@saltspring.com*** or by phone at 537-5511.

Thank you again!



Derek Masselink P.Ag.
Principal, Masselink Environmental Design

Community Dialogue #1 Group Notes

This document contains a summary notes for all 9 groups. Please locate your group from the list below and find the corresponding page. Review the summary and send any comments or corrections to plantofarm@gmail.com by February 26th.

- Group 1. Kristina Bouris
- Group 2. Andrea Gillman
- Group 3. Bev Suderman
- Group 4. Matt Thomson
- Group 5. Erica Crawford- Boettcher
- Group 6. Ian Scott
- Group 7. Kaitlin Kazmierowski
- Group 8. Kristi Tatebe
- Group 9. Tamsin Mills

- Page: 1
- Page: 5
- Page: 9
- Page: 13
- Page: 15
- Page: 19
- Page: 22
- Page: 27
- Page: 30

Participants:

Group 1: Roger Middleton, Lois Sprague, Marion Hargrove, Tony Bruce, Helen Bruce, Kathy Weisner, Margaret Thomas

Group 2: Ellen Taylor, Gary Holmoen, Peter Lamb, Maxine Lecher, Murray Reiss, Don Tarries, Kim Hunter, Marion Pope, Likes Green

Group 3: Melanie Platz, Kerry Lee, Lorraine Lowry, Zelly Taylor, Brian Swanson, Mary Laucks, Michael Weisner, Ron Weisner, John Wilcox, Jim LeMaistre

Group 4: Tamar Griggs, Ted Olsen, Jim Maurice, Elizabeth White, Marsha Goldberg, Craig Seedhouse, Denis Hoddinott

Group 5: Melissa Roberts, Tony Threlfall, Marguerite Lee, Michael Nickels, Mark Whitear, Stephane Pigeon, Matajji, Suzanne Schroeder, Ian Kyle, Paul Reynolds

Group 6: Elizabeth Cooper, Scott Nyuli, George Ehring, George Landry, Allison Fox, Mike Romaine, Ted Harrison, Delaine Faulkner, Bob McGinn, Rebecah

Group 7: Ty Cameron, Charlie Eagle, Judi Eagle, Brandon Bauer, Daniel Courteau, Martin Counsell, Ben Luna, Vanessa Farias

Group 8: Jane Squier, Wendy McEachern, Donna Vanderwacken, Murray Hunter, Diane Roberts, Raven Hume, Auguste Mann, Paula Johnson

Group 9: Gwyn Strike, Jane Barry, Jim Barry, Lucille Lamarche, Alice Richards, Jim Erickson, Susan Evans, Conrad Pilon, Douglas Carnegie

GROUP #1 - Facilitator's Name: Kristina Bouris

Group Members: Roger Middleton, Lois Sprague, Marion Hargrove, Tony Bruce, Helen Bruce, Kathy Weisner, Margaret Thomas

EDUCATION	
1.	<p>STRATEGY: Skills sharing/Education meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of expertise with new farmers • e.g. raising chickens, soil-building
2.	<p>STRATEGY: Support for school programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support/initiation of school gardens/projects - start at elementary level working up to high school <p>Case Study: Fernwood School Garden Project</p>
3.	<p>STRATEGY: Gulf Islands Institute of Agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses in skills/knowledge for young farmers, youth • Focus on organic production • Government-supported
4.	<p>STRATEGY: Middle/High School courses on Agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin Sustainable agriculture courses in middle school continuing into high school leading to mentorship and internships on local farms
5.	<p>STRATEGY: Establish satellite campuses for university sustainable development classes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSI could host programs/centre for UBC or SFU and offer agriculture, environmental studies and other related classes on-island • Students would billet with local families to provide more income/ information-sharing • SSI resort has been interested in agriculture students • Government would be involved as funder
6.	<p>STRATEGY: Integrated Educational Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Series / program of skills-building courses aimed at producers (eg. Soil building)
7.	<p>STRATEGY: Update University/College curricula</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curricula of agriculture and forestry programs do not reflect the interest of youth in sustainable methods
PROPAGANDA/COMMUNITY OUTREACH/PUBLIC EDUCATION	
8.	<p>STRATEGY: Propaganda/Broadsheet on Agricultural Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a broadsheet with weekly activities/process/events related to agriculture • Could be available on its own, in magazine or as an insert in Driftwood • Available to locals, visitors and new residents • Would provide information what is occurring during local decision making processes, too (like this one)
9.	<p>STRATEGY: Agricultural information for new residents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have information about local agricultural activities/practices/processes/regulations available to new residents • Would be available through Welcome Wagon, Emergency Preparedness, Building Permit office, Real estate agents
10.	<p>STRATEGY: Mandatory hand-out to new residents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information about what you can expect as a resident of SSI with respect to agricultural practices • Would provide information about the decisions that have been made by community (e.g. through Plan to Farm)
11.	<p>STRATEGY: Outreach to Real Estate Agents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform real estate agents about agricultural practices/processes • Could provide handouts to clients
12.	<p>STRATEGY: Promotion of SSI products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSI products advertised to new residents and visitors • Highlighted in Welcome Wagon (samples) and other services for new residents

<p>13. STRATEGY: Farm Survivor TV Series</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High profile TV series- which team can build that chicken coop the fastest? • Would popularize farming in pop culture and prime time • SSI already has video/TV group <p>Case Study: Pioneer challenge on history channel - based on early Manitoba farming</p>
<p>14. STRATEGY: Working Farm Experience Holiday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feature SSI farms <p>Case Study: Working ranch holidays in BC interior</p>
<p>CODE OF PRACTICE</p>
<p>15. STRATEGY: Manifesto for SSI farming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw up a manifesto or guidelines for SSI farming standards, stressing organic/no chemical techniques <p>Case Study: Slow Food Manifesto from Italy</p>
<p>INFRASTRUCTURE</p>
<p>16. STRATEGY: Shared refrigerated transport for meat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting in September, you won't be able to transport animals/meat in your car • Essential if for the sale of meat
<p>17. STRATEGY: Co-op Freezer and Freezing storage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified facility for meat once it is butchered, would need only one for the whole island • Equipped with flash-freezing capabilities • Provincial money available through MTAP for "community solutions" ?
<p>18. STRATEGY: Common storage facility for food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For vegetables and animals • Must be available to all sectors of the community • Should be a community-initiative (linked to need for finance corp.)
<p>19. STRATEGY: Local Mobile Slaughter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For poultry and red meat • Would need community investor (linked to need for finance corporation) <p>Case Study: San Juan Islands, Peace Country</p>
<p>20. STRATEGY: Increase greenhouse production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly productive, would increase ability of SSI to meet food needs
<p>WATER CONSERVATION</p>
<p>21. STRATEGY: Subsidized Rain water Catchment and Low-Use Fixtures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government subsidized catchment equipment and low use fixtures (including bidets) and water meters on wells
<p>22. STRATEGY: Water Catchment in Building Code</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement at a building code level the requirements for all new homes to have a catchment system tied into a home water system <p>Case Study: Ecohome Tour featured reservoir/catchment system</p>
<p>23. STRATEGY: Assessment of ground waters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local trust hire a groundwater assessment team to map ground water. • Would provide knowledge of run-off patterns for downstream neighbours • Would alert neighbours to pesticide run-off, erosion, other consequences of factory farming

ALLOTMENT GARDENS
<p>24. STRATEGY: Rental Allotments on Unfarmed Land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracts of land on unfarmed land available for rent to individuals/ families • Water would also need to be available <p>Case Study: England -allotments. Winnipeg, Victoria</p> <p>25. STRATEGY: Support for more community gardens on SSI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On public, private and land trust land
FINANCING/ TAX REFORM
<p>26. STRATEGY: Form SSI Development Finance Corporation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration of government, community donors, private sectors • Funding for SSI agricultural initiatives- low-interest loans, assistance in getting started • Needs a clear-cut sense of where the \$ will go towards- part of a strategic plan <p>27. STRATEGY: Tax incentives for rural-residential agricultural properties (not ALR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in property taxes for the percentage of property that is in production • “Bonus” for those involved in subsistence agricultural production but who don’t make enough \$ (or don’t want to sell off farm) to qualify for agricultural tax exemption <p>28. STRATEGY: Tax Relief for Leased Agricultural Land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement at CRD-level tax relief for landowners based on their long-term leases of potential farmland to landless farmers. • Facilitate with local “no interest” loans for lessees. <p>Case Study: Conservancy-related tax relief for land covenants.</p> <p>29. STRATEGY: Tax Breaks for Agricultural Covenants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covenant property to produced farm products for “x” years and receive tax breaks <p>Case Study: similar to Natural Areas Program Tax Exemption Program http://www.islandstrustfund.bc.ca/howtoprotectlands/naptep/naptep01.htm</p> <p>30. STRATEGY: Provincial Subsidy for Sustainable agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby provincial government through Ministry of Agriculture for increased subsidy for local farmers following sustainable agriculture practices • Starts using current government global warming prevention policies <p>Case Study: European government support for organic agriculture</p>
ALTERNATE TENURE
<p>31. STRATEGY: Farmland Trust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accumulate land for young farmers • Could be just for SSI or all Gulf Islands <p>32. STRATEGY: Linking Lands and Future Farmers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links landowners with surplus land to those looking for land to farm • Invite LLAFF to establish SSI office • Educate newcomers about LLAFF <p>33. STRATEGY: Land leases</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine the pros and cons
OTHERS
<p>34. STRATEGY: Community and Government Supported Seed Bank</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current seed bank does not have the capacity to preserve all types (eg bi-annuals) • Need government support, this is too important to leave to just one person (Dan Jasen) • Needed in case of wide-scale disaster or disease outbreak

<p>35. STRATEGY: Ban lawns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would eliminate water waste, fertilizers, herbicides • Foxglove sells most of its NPK fertilizer for lawns • Golf course uses lots of fertilizer • “We have a collective memory of how things were done in an organic way” • “We need to become Born-Again Gardeners”
<p>36. STRATEGY: Continue Dialogue process through implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to make sure that community (not just those at Plan to Farm) understand where the ideas have come from • Would minimize risk of “I wasn’t involved, I’m not going to support this initiative” mentality • Dialogue process should be followed for each initiative that will be implemented through the Plan to Farm process
<p>37. STRATEGY: Promote backyard heritage poultry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can produce lots of food in a small area

GROUP #2- Facilitator’s Name: Andrea Gillman

Group Members: Ellen Taylor, Gary Holmoen, Peter Lamb, Maxine Lecher, Murray Reiss, Don Tarries, Kim Hunter, Marion Pope, Likes Green

WATER
<p>1. STRATEGY: Government subsidized water storage facility (cisterns)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government regulation of wells • Low cost water available to residents
<p>2. STRATEGY: Water catchment assistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ex. Bulk buys for tanks, workshops • Water audits (similar to energy audits) • Greywater use as well • Possible regulation tied into use, cages(?) requiring augmentation • Encouragement or possibly requirement of above
<p>3. STRATEGY: Island wide ‘non-destructive’ water catchment system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adequate supply of water is ‘reserved’ for existing and protected future agricultural demands
<p>4. STRATEGY: Sustainable Water Yield Model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will address availability of water • Island Natural Growers has the knowledge on the agricultural sector for this model <p>Case Study: Gabriola Island model-- http://faculty.arch.utah.edu/fastertransfers/transfer.html</p>
<p>5. STRATEGY: Sewage treatment water redistribution</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Redistribute water to irrigation projects around Ganges
<p>6. STRATEGY: Building Farm Ponds</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Lot of opportunity on island to build for winter storage and summer usage 3. Permaculture teaches us how to build home ponds with recycled materials 4. Use of greywater
<p>7. STRATEGY: Training programs on drip irrigation methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction on farm techniques to conserve water • Agricultural demand needs to be reflected in water plan • How much water are we using ex. From cistern, groundwater for gardening?
<p>8. STRATEGY: Reintroduce native plants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requiring low water usage—no irrigation or fertilizer • Many native plants we could learn to use and enjoy <p>Case Study: Permaculture movement and literature</p>
<p>9. STRATEGY: Incentives for protecting environmental values on farm land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planting hedgerows • Protecting riparian areas and watersheds with a buffer between intensive farming activities <p>Case Study: Tsawwassen/Ladner Farmland Trust: set aside rows for wildlife values</p>

EDUCATION
<p>10. STRATEGY: Education and Implementation of composting toilets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To feed into water catchment system
<p>11. STRATEGY: Establishment of an all ages farming school by Farmers Institute</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could teach high school students about important regulations, leading to informed decisions later on Could teach all facets of farming and farm life 'Farm Camp' could include bottling/canning clubs or classes Also classes for visitors—to get people here on the off-season Bring in speakers to community; open up smaller talks already taking place to wider community. eg. Speaker-Michael Ableman <p>Case Study: Nanaimo Green Community- food processing</p>
<p>12. STRATEGY: Educate about the definition of Agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education on food production from home gardening to farming for profit <p>Case Study: Topia School of Sustainability on Shawnigan Lake, LifeCycles Victoria, Haliburton Farm</p>
<p>13. STRATEGY: Training facility for students and the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize the land and farm area across from the high school <p>Case Study: Family Education Model (Chatagua)</p>
<p>14. STRATEGY: Create an Agricultural Theme School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricultural projects one/month/class Ex. Mason bee nest tubes
<p>15. STRATEGY: Establish a working farm museum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would offer workshops and demonstrations Classes on food: growing, preserving, preparing <p>Case Study: Washington, DC</p>
<p>1. STRATEGY: Farms tours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Studio tours open every weekend Agrotourism and eco-home tour on 3 special weekends (seasonal) <p>Case Study: Okanagan Wine Route hlobc.com/Okanagan/wineries</p>
COMMUNITY FOOD PROGRAMS/LOCAL FOOD
<p>16. STRATEGY: Establish Collective kitchens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collective (community) kitchens to look at the how and why of using local foods <p>Case Study: Quebec: collective kitchens</p>
<p>17. STRATEGY: Education on Local food Harvesting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We can harvest maple sap here Hold wild food group potlucks <p>Case Study: Cowichan monthly wild food potluck</p>
<p>18. STRATEGY: Label local produce section in store</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GVM and Thrifty's to put locally grown food in a separate section with name of grower

<p>19. STRATEGY: Establish Community Allotment Gardens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could be done in village core • Establishment of demo site • Could hire community garden resource people • Link gardeners to available land through workshops • Could also grow large quantities of basic crops for storage-residents could purchase and dry or bottle for winter ex. Squash, beans, garlic. <p>Case Study: Swan Lake Nature Preserve</p>
<p>COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND INFO SHARING</p>
<p>20. STRATEGY: Set-up Community Composting Facility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidized by grants and commercial users • Provide organic inputs • Composting of liquid waste-use of Ganges sewer plant reclaimed water <p>Case Study: Composting Council 703-739-2401 (Seattle), Intervale Compost Project 802-660-4949</p>
<p>21. STRATEGY: Establish a co-operative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To include a community tool library, farm equipment and vehicles & community wood chipper • Also commercial roasters • Co-op brewing of spray formulas i.e. alternatives to harmful chemicals • Share in marketing, transportation, training, cold storage and processing <p>Case Study: Talcana(?) Park Tool Library</p>
<p>22. STRATEGY: Set up agriculture and other lobby groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on common ground on island issues
<p>23. STRATEGY: Increase information sharing and education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up SSI wiki, or interactive website • Info on food production and food consumption • Will address poor public understanding and utilize social capital
<p>24. STRATEGY: Shared use of farmland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify good farmland and facilitate its use by non-owners ex. Youth • Also use of public or non-profit land for food production • Through tax-incentives and establishment of new by-laws • Farming of land in exchange for produce/portion of crop • Develop capacity of community org to manage farmland for private owners <p>Case Study: Yoga Studio land being farmed</p>
<p>25. STRATEGY: Increase Networking with BioRegional Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring together groups with similar interests ex. Lifecycles, farm folk/city folk, our eco-village, Nanaimo green community, providence farm.
<p>26. STRATEGY: Increase partnerships to facilitate community-wide problem solving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't just leave it to farmers, establish a standing task force • Partnerships between: community, local gov't, farmers, businesses, education services. • On SSI, work together to hammer out joint priorities and strategies to address. SSI Foundation to assist • Develop a 3-5 year strategic plan with timeline and monitoring.
<p>27. STRATEGY: Meat Processing Plant and Cold Storage at Farmers Institute</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To address local infrastructure gaps <p>Case Study: Cowichan Bay Farm-own meat processing plant</p>

REGULATION AND OTHER
<p>28. STRATEGY: Salt Spring Certification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will recognize good local practices among farmers • Does not have to be organic certification, similar structure
<p>29. STRATEGY: Regulation to Ensure best use of land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would require land to be put into production
<p>30. STRATEGY: Create a comprehensive development zone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cluster housing, covenants on land, preservation of water areas • Innovative zoning to provide increased use of subdividable lands without subdividing • Zoning to encourage affordable housing on farms <p>Case Study: Cowichan Regional District By-law, O.U.R. Eco-village model</p>
<p>31. STRATEGY: Create SSI Housing Agency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look after both seasonal and permanent housing for farm workers • Control waitlist for workers and housing • Will monitor ‘farm worker housing agreement’
<p>32. STRATEGY: Creation of agricultural labour pool</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated by a non-profit organization—links need to be available to seasonal workers
<p>33. STRATEGY: Work for food program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentive for homeless, providing local labour in exchange for food at no or low-cost.
<p>34. STRATEGY: Creation of a no net-loss policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preservation of the ALR • Ties in to idea of putting land back into ALR with tax-incentives; applications could be done on a yearly basis with all properties handled together to minimize admin work. • Creation of a map showing where new ALR could go, also provide info to those purchasing beside ALR land of possible smells etc.
<p>35. STRATEGY: Agricultural chemical by-law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide guidance on alternatives to pesticide/fertilizers • Restriction of harmful products <p>Case Study: Mulch (?) Bank</p>
<p>36. STRATEGY: Establish land trust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable young and financially challenged to build equity in the community
<p>37. STRATEGY: Increase Public Awareness of Food Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address lack of public awareness of food security through different food security initiatives <p>Case Study: Food Security Alberta</p>
<p>38. STRATEGY: Redistribution of Tree fruit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid fruit going to waste through gleanings <p>Case Study: Vancouver Fruit Tree Project</p>
<p>39. STRATEGY: Work with conservations groups to protect farmland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lease back to farmers <p>Case Study: National Trust in UK</p>
<p>40. STRATEGY: Implement monetary system backed by island production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would tie in to local production and consumption in place of Canadian dollar, gold and silver

GROUP #3 - Facilitator's Name: Bev Suderman

Group Members: Melanie Platz, Small Earth Organic Farm, Kerry Lee, Falcon Farm (beef, vegetables, hay), Lorraine Lowry, Wave Hill Farm, Zelly Taylor, Community member at large, Brian Swanson, Laughing Apple Farm (Apples, hay, etc.), Mary Laucks, Laughing Apple Farm (Apples, hay, etc.), Michael Weisner, Orchard/Garden, Ron Weisner, Orchard/Garden, John Wilcox, Duck Creek Farm (Steering Ctte member), Jim LeMaistre, BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (Observer)

PROTECTION OF COMMUNITY LAND FOR AGRICULTURE	
2.	STRATEGY: Develop a “farm class matrix” to realistically identify who farmers are, and what properties are farms, for local government use - not simply following the BC Assessment classification. This would develop a better understanding of how land is being used, and what the needs of farmers are. e.g. use Island Monetary Fund to back credit and land bank. Case study: Slow money community investment; Landschaft-like bond issues
3.	Strategy: Create farm credit and mortgage options that make farming more affordable, i.e. create alternative to conventional lending system, e.g. use Island Monetary Fund to back credit and land bank. Case study: Slow money community investment; Landschaft-like bond issues
4.	Strategy: Create bond issue farm mortgage options.
5.	Strategy: Create farm credit system for startup and small farms.
6.	Strategy: Create a registry of those land owners willing to rent or lease arable land and land seekers wishing to rent land for farming. Case study: Linking Land & Future Farmers (Victoria), started by the organic farming community in the Greater Victoria area, contact LifeCycles in Victoria for more information (www.lifecyclesproject.ca); Sharing Back Yards (Victoria)
7.	Strategy: Create a farmland trust to protect farmland through gifts, purchases, conservation easements, leases, exchanges and cooperative ventures with government agencies. Case study: Peconic Land Trust, New York, www.peconiclandtrust.org (see model for Quail Hill Preserve) Case study 2: The Land Conservancy (TLC) www.conservancy.bc.ca
8.	Strategy: Encourage farmers to covenant their properties to produce farm products for x number of years, and receive tax breaks Case study: Similar to Natural Areas Protection Tax Exemption Program (NAPTEP) of Islands Trust.
9.	Strategy: Encourage, promote and create personal, shared, and community gardens (offered from the perspective of enhancing food security by broadening food production beyond farmers) Case study: Sharing Backyards program & youth skills development programs through non-profit group LifeCycles in Victoria, www.lifecyclesproject.ca
10.	Strategy: Encourage community shared agriculture arrangements (to spread the risk between consumers and producers, by having the consumers by into the product at the beginning of the season)
11.	Strategy: Develop a community farmland bank and extend affordable tenures to defined farmers using purchased, donated, and existing freehold property - bringing back registered lease by Agricultural Land Commission's explanatory plan. Case Study: National Trust (Britain) - although no examples yet of takings (?) on freehold.
GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS (PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS)	
12.	Strategy: Lobby/Unionize to address regulations that affect small farms.
13.	Strategy: Create an acceptable home-made “food safe protocol” for eggs, livestock and produce processing as an alternate to imposing regressive provincial and federal standards designed for industrial farming - address issues of building standards for farms also
14.	Strategy: Lobby for government regulations that encourage “good” farming , with good defined as family farm, pesticide free, environmentally friendly
15.	Strategy: Develop government regulations that address the needs of small farmers.
16.	Strategy: Avoid subdivision of potential farmland (change government policy)
17.	Strategy: Mandate a population/ALR land ratio , via the OCP
18.	Strategy: Get local government to abide by and adopt guides for bylaw development in farming areas. Use this to draft an enactment bylaw for the Area Farm Plan that fixes LUB 355, e.g. redefine water body.

19. Strategy: Define water body and agricultural land. Correct LUB 355 with a new farm by-law.
20. Strategy: Create stand-alone farm bylaw for agroforestry, which corrects LUB 355.
21. Strategy: Turn on FPPA Section 918 of the Local Government Act.
GOVERNMENT REGULATORY ACTION - WATER
22. Strategy: Make rainwater collection systems mandatory on all new developments. Encourage retrofits of existing development. Case study: Mayne Island Integrated Water Systems Society is lobbying CRD for this. Case study 2: The Gulf Island Rainwater Connection, Thetis Island (rainwater collection and harvesting systems) www.rainwaterconnection.com/index.htm
23. Strategy: Encourage the digging of ponds to collect rainwater. (Requires definition of water body, or could become self-defeating)
FARM EDUCATION/FARM HELP
24. Strategy: Involve students in farming as part of school curriculum. Create linkages between farmers/agriculture and the school system. Case study: Fernwood Elementary School has school garden project. The SSI High School used to have an agriculture program. Case study 2: Students for farming program of Just Food organization in Ottawa www.spcottawa.on.ca/ofsc/en/index.asp
25. Strategy: Create farm experience holidays as a form of tourism to Salt Spring Island, as well as a potential source of revenue for farmers. Case study: Working Ranch holidays in the interior of BC
26. Strategy: Find a way to attract free labour.
27. Strategy: Create an island-based SOIL Apprenticeship chapter and program. (Would need to address housing of apprentices, since there is an affordable housing issue on SSI, as well as restrictions on housing on ALR lands) Case study: www.soilapprenticeships.org
28. Strategy: Participate in Farmer Exchange programs with other areas of the world (Europe, Latin America) where small-scale farmers face similar challenges. Case study: John Wilcox participated in such an experience.
29. Strategy: Encourage volunteer farm help in exchange for room and board. Case study: World-Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (www.wwoof.org) Case study 2: www.helpexchange.net (on-line listing of organic & conventional host farms)
EDUCATION - MEDIA
30. Strategy: Develop a Salt Spring Island “farm experience” reality TV show. Case study: “Pioneer challenge” show on History channel, based on early Manitoba farming
31. Strategy: Develop better public understanding of the realities of farming through regular features of food and agriculture news in the <i>Driftwood</i> .
COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS
32. Strategy: Set up local bartering infrastructure on Salt Spring Island
33. Strategy: Set up a community transportation system to facilitate bulk purchase of farm supplies. Could be internet-facilitated. To address problem of everybody making individual trips to nearest supply depot and making individual purchases, with associated gas costs, ferry fees, etc.
34. Strategy: Employ fully the terms of the Farmers and Womens Institute Act & Regulations.
35. Strategy: Compensate farmers for public interest stewardship.
36. Strategy: Develop communal processing facilities.
37. Strategy: Form a cooperative to deal with infrastructure gap (i.e. processing facilities, etc.) Case study: Local Exchange and Trading System (LETS) barter system (Ontario) http://www.letshamilton.on.ca/
38. Strategy: Create cooperative permit options to access quota for sharing island production of supply managed commodities that are otherwise not available to growers.
ACCESS TO LOCAL MARKETS
39. Strategy: Create permanent SSI produce market (Ganges Vegetable Market)
40. Strategy: Limit imported food

OTHER IDEAS	
41.	Strategy: Develop community support for a meat processing facility.
42.	Strategy: Understand and address the interactions between affordable housing shortages on SSI and farm labour housing.
43.	Strategy: Seek alternative housing solutions.
44.	Strategy: Address the questions of relationship between farms and communities, and food production as a vital part of healthy communities. Case study: Fairview Gardens in California (Michael Ableman)
45.	Strategy: Develop environmental action plans for farms through environmental farm planning workshops. Case study: BC Agriculture Council (www.bcac.bc.ca/efp_programs.htm)
46.	Strategy: Develop a local food campaign to encourage restaurants, schools, hospitals, hotels, etc. to promote quality food using local produce Case study: Tavistock Eatwise - Eat Local Campaign http://www.tavistockforward.org.uk/ew%20index.htm

GROUP #4 - Facilitator's Name: Matt Thomson

Group Members: Tamar Griggs—interested in a sustainable food supply, Ted Olsen—potential producer, Jim Maurice—interested in sustainable living, Elizabeth White—Energy Strategy Task Force, Community Housing, Canadian Organic Growers, Marsha Goldberg—Seed Savers and consultant, Craig Seedhouse—Natureworks, small-scale producer, Denis Hoddinott—small organic farm (winter veggies)

MARKETING	
1.	<p>STRATEGY: Agricultural Ecotourism for Saltspring Island</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market Salt Spring Island as agricultural tourist destination • This would generate income for farmers and provide an opportunity to educate people about local agriculture <p>Case Study: Aldor Acres, Fort Langley; http://www.aldoracres.com/</p>
2.	<p>STRATEGY: Local Branding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate and expose SS Islanders to local agriculture through events, tastings, tours, etc.
1.	<p>STRATEGY: Promote SSI as Producer of winter vegetables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capitalize on SSI's mild climate and promote and develop capacity for winter vegetables • This would fill the growing gap when many other vegetables are not available and fit in with particularity of SSI brand
2.	<p>STRATEGY: Brand SSI agriculture through energy efficiency and cooperatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use sustainable agriculture and energy practices in combination w/the community economic development movement of co-ops as part of SSI's branding strategy
3.	<p>STRATEGY: Link potential availability of local produce with markets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a marketing strategy to target local markets (SSI, Gulf Islands, Vancouver Island) to create links between producers and consumers • This would involve SSI branding, but also build agricultural capacity through increased popularity of SSI produce in local markets
4.	<p>STRATEGY: Pesticide free island</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop pesticide free island as part of branding strategy
5.	<p>STRATEGY: Agricultural eco-exposure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use commercial vehicles such as farms, B&Bs, etc. to expose visitors/community members to SSI agriculture
EDUCATION/OUTREACH	
6.	<p>STRATEGY: Educate community members about farming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute farm school program in elementary and high school • Educate community about farming/gardening • Educate newcomers/real-estate agents about agriculture <p>Case Study: Linnaea Farm Elementary School</p>
7.	<p>STRATEGY: Imagine you're a tomato seed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An exercise for SSI children: imagine you're a tomato seed growing on Saltspring: what is your life like? (not sure if this is a contest, an in-class exercise, etc.) <p>Case Study: Lifecycles Growing Schools Program, Victoria (food miles)</p>
8.	<p>STRATEGY: Youth training education centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource centre for youth to develop agriculture-related skills <p>Case Study: Linnaea Farm Garden Program</p>
9.	<p>STRATEGY: Outreach programs in schools for agriculture and sustainable farming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools as a vehicle for increased awareness <p>Case Study: Lifecycles Growing Schools Program, Victoria</p>

<p>10. STRATEGY: Local Resource Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place to report problems, share information, strategies, share cost of inputs, <p>Case Study: Small Farm Resource and Training Center, Fresno; http://news.ucanr.org/newsstorymain.cfm?story=389</p>
<p>11. STRATEGY: Skills training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On island skills training for would-be or practicing farmers and youth
<p>12. STRATEGY: Public dreams celebration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to celebrate and educate people on SSI about agriculture/local food <p>Case Study: Public Dreams, Vancouver; http://www.publicdreams.org/</p>
<p>13. STRATEGY: Research sustainable communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand challenges and triumphs of other communities striving for sustainability
<p>14. STRATEGY: Linking with other local communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find what other local communities (Gulf Islands, Vancouver Island) are doing, share strategies, resources Don't reinvent the wheel when others around you have already done it!
<p>FINANCING - ORGANIZATIONS, TAXES, GRANTS AND INCENTIVES</p>
<p>15. STRATEGY: Local Investment Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization designed to fund future developments with community vision in mind <p>Case Study: CCEC Credit Union, Vancouver; http://www.ccec.bc.ca/default.aspx?PageID=1007</p>
<p>16. STRATEGY: Land Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer start-up/purchasing incentives to local growers
<p>17. STRATEGY: Implement fees on all goods imported</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goods transported from outside regional economic zone would face tariffs (Vancouver, gulf islands, Vancouver Island are exempt) Part of a local branding strategy
<p>18. STRATEGY: Create dialogue w/MPs and MLAs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore what kind of incentives prov. and fed. gov'ts would offer for small-scale/organic growers
<p>19. STRATEGY: Share land between owners/growers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program to connect interested growers with owners <p>Case Study: Linking Land and Future Farmers</p>
<p>20. STRATEGY: Land Trusts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect farmland through covenants/trusts
<p>INFRASTRUCTURE</p>
<p>21. STRATEGY: CRD-assisted central composting facility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used for horse farms, local tofu operation, and coffee output—systematically composted—donated or sold cheaply back to local growers for use as input
<p>22. STRATEGY: Require permaculture gardens on all new developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All public and private developments would be required through development permits
<p>23. STRATEGY: Implement rainwater catchment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require both surface catchment (ponds) and tanks to collect and store rainwater for agriculture use and as part of building/rezoning process
<p>24. STRATEGY: Alternative energy applications for farmers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use strategies such as solar hot water, wind power, to mitigate environmental impacts of farming (potential part of branding?)
<p>INFRASTRUCTURE/LABOUR</p>
<p>25. STRATEGY: Housing and training for farm workers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attract labour through on-island training and housing strategies Build housing for on-island homeless

<p>26. STRATEGY: Press for farm worker housing on ALR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use covenants to ensure that farm worker housing is built and stays affordable on ALR land • Relax ALR laws to allow this to happen
<p>LABOUR</p>
<p>27. STRATEGY: WWOOF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote willing workers on organic farms program on island • This deals with challenges 8 and 10 and builds on assets 1, 3 and 6 <p>Case Study: WWOOF; http://www.wwoof.org/</p>
<p>28. STRATEGY: Apprenticeships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop agricultural apprenticeship programs
<p>29. STRATEGY: Organize growers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop connections/networks to determine produce availability, resale capacity, stronger food networks
<p>30. STRATEGY: VFINS force</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm outreach in community (from a worksheet, not sure what VFINS is)

Group #5 - Facilitator's Name: Erica Crawford Boettcher

Group Members: Melissa Roberts (Thrifty's), Tony Threlfall (Farmers Institute), Marguerite Lee (Farmers Institute), Michael Nickels (Seven Ravens tree nursery), Mark Whitear (Certified Organic Agriculture mixed farming, sustainable forestry), Stephane Pigeon (Grandview Farm), Matajji (Consumer, new to SSI), Suzanne Schroeder (Aspiring farmer), Ian Kyle (Farmer), Paul Reynolds (New land owner)

ENERGY (plus)
<p>1. STRATEGY: Soil Amendment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, prevent burning of organic material (branches, scrap, etc)—eg: local bylaw • Have a facility where all organic matter can be dropped off, and also have a chipping facility. If people are not allowed to burn it, there will be enough material to make this operation viable • Compost the material (organic matter, chip compost) and when people drop it off, they can also pick up the compost that is ready • Integrate with sewage composting (mix with above compost)? For some uses (eg: fruit trees), this would be possible. For others, mixing with sewage material may not be possible (eg: vegetables) • Could also apply the organic material to unused land to grow, for example, hay • Some lands on SSI have not been properly fertilized for many years—need to replenish soils <p>Challenges Addressed: Soil quality, Environmental effects (of burning, dealing with organic waste), Critical infrastructure gaps, Agricultural land not used for farming</p> <p>Case Study: Mitchell Farm, Saanichton Peninsula</p>
<p>2. STRATEGY: Plan Key Lines into the water system, for water security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish series of linked ponds and connecting waterways from the top of the hill to the bottom • Establishes catchment on land, and in times of elevated flows, overflow can move through rivers/creeks • Capture and store water • Use for energy production <p>Case Study: Australia, all over the place</p>
<p>3. STRATEGY: tie in winter greenhouse production with local energy production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local micro-hydro projects could produce enough energy to, for example, power greenhouses in the winter • Citrus could be grown in greenhouses
<p>4. STRATEGY: Local energy production, feed excess back into the grid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy and fuel are needed on-island, at lower prices • Explore what could be produced here (eg: micro-hydro, biofuels, wind, solar, etc) • Could be used for concentrated uses (eg: greenhouses), and excess could be put into the grid (is this currently possible? Would something have to be set up to allow for this on SSI?) • Are there impediments/barriers to local energy production? • Incentives or rebates could be given for locally suitable energy production (small scale)
<p>5. STRATEGY: Use ponds for aquaculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building off the “Key Lines”, ponds could be used for aquaculture • byproducts from fish processing could go into a composting facility
<p>6. STRATEGY: Grey water treatment, setting ponds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produces organic matter and heat that can be used (for energy, heating) • Note: methane is a concern as a greenhouse gas (need to research the benefits/costs of this)

<p>7. STRATEGY: Alternative energy sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce dependence on expensive off-island energy—explore options for local energy production/supply • Consider long-term effects of these alternatives when deciding if they are real options for SSI • Biodiesel for tractors? Need a distribution system. How to make this (or other ideas) commercially viable?
<p>EDUCATION</p>
<p>8. STRATEGY: Agricultural education in schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reintroduce farming into highschool curriculum • Establish understanding that farming IS a career • Applied, experiential learning; hand-s on learning experience for students, on the farm. They should also be introduced to the business side of farming. • Work in tandem with the school board • Farmers Institute committee could present concepts for this to the school board. • Course credit could be given for agriculture experience gained over the summer • The farmer would have defined responsibilities for the training/education that they are to provide (this is not a cheap labour grab! That would just turn kids off farming even more) • Farms could also sign up through the Farmers Institute to speak to classes at the highschool <p>Challenges Addressed: Increase public understanding, Public undervaluing of local/organic food and of farming as a profession, Lack of labour and housing</p> <p>Case Study: SSI! A former teacher, who was also a farmer, used to run this type of program years ago (Paul Reynolds a student in this program) - Many students went on to pursue veterinary studies, agricultural, etc</p> <p>9. STRATEGY: Work Experience for Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students from SSI and elsewhere could be offered work experience on farms • This would increase peoples' familiarity with farming, educate people <p>Challenges Addressed: Poor public understanding, lack of skills, lack of new farmers</p> <p>10. STRATEGY: Create a group of local farmers, etc, providing expertise to mentor/help new farmers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses need for farming education and social change. Draws on social capital, farming history and expertise <p>Case Study: S.O.I.L. "Stewards of Irreplaceable Lands" in Saanich - partnering arrangement of farmers with those who want to make a longer term commitment to farming (www.soil.com, .ca?)</p> <p>11. STRATEGY: Farming fact-finders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send some farmers and/or interested individuals out to visit other communities (especially in Europe) who have addressed similar challenges. See what others are doing <p>12. STRATEGY: Raise Public awareness through education campaigns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult education <p>13. STRATEGY: Community gardens as education tool</p> <p>14. STRATEGY: Raising awareness with signage at/on BC ferries, regarding invasive species and pests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental concerns about transportation of pests and invasive species (especially plants) • Species are transported on camping gear, boats, vehicles, etc • Signage could tell people about the risk, and ask them to inspect their vehicles, gear, etc. • Draws on tourism, and awareness <p>Challenges Addressed: Living on an island, Keep island free of pests/invasive species</p>

<p>15. STRATEGY: Improve facilitation of temporary farm work exchanges on island, via the Farmers Institute</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber of commerce as a liaison for tourists wanting to WWOOF on SSI • Farmers Institute could send a list to members (in their newsletter), raising awareness of WWOOF and how they could be involved • Could something similar be established for non-organic farms? Via Farmers Institute? ie: providing a farm working/learning experience in exchange for room and board
<p>16. STRATEGY: Inform potential buyers of agricultural priority in the area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include on the Real Estate Sales Sheet, or a disclosure sheet, information on current and potential farming practices and agricultural uses of that parcel of land, and surrounding lands in neighbourhood • Include a list of by-laws • Let potential buyers know of the priority of agriculture in the area • Draws on involvement of all of the community <p>Challenges Addressed: Poor understanding publicly (NIMBY), Conflicts between neighbour</p>
<p>17. STRATEGY: strategies for reducing conflicts with neighbours</p> <p>Case Study: Michael Ablerman’s second book, about Fairview Farm in California, has lots of suggestions</p>
<p>ECONOMICS</p>
<p>18. STRATEGY: Change law to allow parts of a property to be leased legally for farming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • draws on local environmental and social values, and asset of living on an island <p>Challenges Addressed: availability of land to (new) farmers, local food security, security of tenure</p>
<p>19. STRATEGY: Create incentives to bring pasture land back into use</p> <p>Challenges Addressed: reduce fire hazard, limited land base</p>
<p>20. STRATEGY: Status to keep working farms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status can be granted for land kept in a pristine state in perpetuity—could we do that for farmland? • The land MUST continue to be used as a working farm, in perpetuity
<p>21. STRATEGY: Consider best ways to use empty/uncultivated lands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pasture, Grain, Greenhouses • What can we grow here? What grows best here?
<p>22. STRATEGY: Connected issues of hay production, livestock raising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unused land could be put into production for grain, hay • This requires fencing, other ways to keep deer from decimating the crops • But, there is currently a decrease in livestock operations on the island, due to the changing regulations, processing requirements, lack of processing facilities on-island, so there is also a drop in demand for hay production • Also a concern about economic viability of hay or grain production—for one thing, areas for this type of production need to be suitable for use of a combine
<p>23. STRATEGY: Legalize on-farm accommodations, cookhouses, etc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legalize the building of small 100 to 150 sq. ft. sleeping cabins and a shared kitchen, communal space • Could house farm workers, encourage them to stay longer, and improve the economics for farmers • Draws on social capital, affordable housing and living on an island
<p>24. STRATEGY: Lower fees and simplified regulations for simple farm buildings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example, pole barns - Buildings being constructed for storage, processing, etc, should not have to conform to residential standards. • Would help with economic viability and draws on supportive local institutions
<p>25. STRATEGY: prime agricultural land in the parks should be used for cultivation</p>

<p>26. STRATEGY: Link farmers with landowners to lease land that could be farmed, provide tax incentive to landowner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessees can farm land on the owner's behalf, so that the tax incentive is there for the owner to lease the land out for farming (problem: currently, if land does not already have farming status, can't acquire status via a lessee farming the land) • Could try to change the rules and regulations (BC gov't) • Alternatively, landowners could enter some kind of partnership agreement so that the lessee has long-term guarantee to use land for farming, while the landowner reduces his/her taxes through acquisition of farm status. • Requires high labour inputs—could link with agricultural credit through schools program? <p>Challenges Addressed: Lack of land for new farmers, Farmable land not being used (absentee landowners) Case Study: LLAFF "Linking Lands and Future Farmers", Saanich, "Saanich Organics"</p>
<p>27. STRATEGY: Ecoforestry outlet for local distribution to provide more local wood products</p>
<p>28. STRATEGY: Raise money via property taxes from non-resident unoccupied homes, to buy land that can be leased to local farmers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draws on supportive local institutions, social capital, SSI brand and strong local market <p>Challenges Addressed: Land for young farmers, Loss of farming culture, Economic viability, High cost of farming, Local food security</p>
<p>OTHER</p>
<p>29. STRATEGY: All-stakeholder processes to link these issues across the community and other levels of government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes similar to this, where varying stakeholders come together in discussion with government officials, other sectors of the community (business, farming, social services, etc), etc, to find common issues, understanding and strategies
<p>30. STRATEGY: Islands Trust should make better use of Agricultural Advisory Committee on all agricultural issues, consistently</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Islands Trust is not always receptive to input by AAC • AAC sometimes participates in decision making, sometimes not • AAC should always be included, and their recommendations listened to • Decision by Islands Trust to involve AAC should not be discretionary—it should be clear when and how they are to involve the AAC in this process • Draws on AAC awareness/expertise, and hands-on involvement (social capital) <p>Challenges Addressed: Restrictive and conflicting local government policies and regulation</p>
<p>31. STRATEGY: Legislation for environmentally harmful practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deal with environmental impacts • eg: GMO-free legislation, or ban on pesticides <p>Case Study: Powell River: GMO-free legislation, District of North Vancouver: pesticide-free legislation</p>

GROUP #6 - Facilitator's Name: Ian Scott

Group Members: Elizabeth Cooper, Scott Nyuli, George Ehring, George Landry, Allison Fox, Mike Romaine (CRD Environment Committee), Ted Harrison, Delaine Faulkner, Bob McGinn, Rebecah (steering committee)

LAND USE
<p>1. STRATEGY: Zero Net Loss of Farmland (x 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some land not suitable for ALR • 40% of land being farmed on the island is not in the ALR • Allow farmland to be taken out of the ALR as long as new land is being added.
<p>2. STRATEGY: Constricted (Required) Food Tree Planting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require new developments to plant fruit/nut trees as part of landscaping • Encourage same on old properties <p>Case Study: Is being done elsewhere, but exact location not cited.</p>
<p>3. STRATEGY: Planting Food Trees on Parkland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant fruit/nut trees on parkland
<p>4. STRATEGY: Increased land zoned as agro-industrial zoning (linked to community owned infrastructure)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for more food processing, cold storage, etc.
<p>5. STRATEGY: Parkland dedication used for community gardens</p> <p>Case Study: Being considered by City of Victoria</p>
<p>6. STRATEGY: Subsidize “community garden plots” on ALR land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchased by IT or by CRD • Made available at reasonable rates
<p>7. STRATEGY: Real Estate industry to give notice to new home buyers about farm neighbours</p>
WATER
<p>8. STRATEGY: Grants from local government for H2O receptacles</p>
ACCESS TO LAND AND FARMING
<p>9. STRATEGY: Farmland Trusts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make land available to for those who want to farm - owners land or trust land • Divide desire to farm and ownership of land • Allow estate donations
<p>10. STRATEGY: Unused land loaned to grow food</p>
<p>11. STRATEGY: Local government to purchase prime ALR lands, then rent land at affordable rates to those who will farm land</p>
<p>12. STRATEGY: Loan unused land to farmers</p>
TRAINING, MENTORSHIP AND SUPPORT
<p>13. STRATEGY: Farm Start - program to help young farmers get started by providing access to land, equipment, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 years to farmers get going <p>Case Study: Program exists in Ontario</p>
<p>14. STRATEGY: Recognized Apprenticeship Program</p>
<p>15. STRATEGY: Mentorship Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to get into farming • Develop some kind of farming passport - indicates certain aspects - your chicken degree, your sheep husbandry skills
<p>16. STRATEGY: Assist the start-up of small scale organic farms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide technical and financial assistance • Coordinated by central agency

17. STRATEGY: Booklet explaining options for people who want to go into farming
18. STRATEGY: Improved Extension Services
19. STRATEGY: Cadet Program for youth interested in farming Case Study: Program in New Zealand
COLLABORATION AMONGST FARMERS
20. STRATEGY: Establish an Agricultural Institute (linked to education and land ownership areas as well) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institute could be responsible for organizing and / or managing many of the activities below
21. STRATEGY: Develop contracts for the sale of locally-grown food to public institutions or other large facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May include hospitals, schools Growers may need to organize as a co-op to manage to supply sufficient volumes.
22. STRATEGY: Machine / tool rentals co-op
23. STRATEGY: Collaboration amongst farmers / growers / investors to purchase / build community owned infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e.g. abattoir, produce processing facilities, cold storage, packaging facilities
24. STRATEGY: Develop contracts for the sale of locally-grown food to public institutions or other large facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May include hospitals, schools Growers may need to organize as a co-op to manage to supply sufficient volumes.
25. STRATEGY: Cooperative distribution/marketing of local food
26. STRATEGY: Improved marketing strategy by group of farmers
27. STRATEGY: United Farmers of Salt Spring - Marketing Strategy Case Study: Saskatchewan Wheat Pool
28. STRATEGY: Re-establish a food co-op <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Old location was not good People complained about why it did or did not work People chose to buy cheaper food at Thrifty's Growers need 4 or 6 month notice on what to grow and often did not get it
29. STRATEGY: Farmer's institute backing a retail outlet for members' products
COMMUNITY SUPPORT
30. STRATEGY: Develop a community strategy to stop purchasing products that require expensive and polluting fuel consumption to be brought to SSI <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e.g. no pineapple
31. STRATEGY: Promotion program linking local food to climate change / global warming
32. STRATEGY: Community Supported Agriculture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Order for the week
33. STRATEGY: Backpackers Hostel tailored to farm labourers or offering reduced rate to this clientele <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People can share knowledge of farm labouring / opportunities Case Study: Places in New Zealand where this exists there are shuttles to the farms
LOCAL INVESTMENT
34. STRATEGY: Foster local investment in local food production <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extension of micro-loans Take advantage of ethical investment motivation in local community Advocate for investment to be written off Federal government tax credit ("flow through share") IT could do plebiscite Comment: Trust cannot own land

<p>35. STRATEGY: Community Supported Agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order for the week
<p>36. STRATEGY: Create more financial incentives to farm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax breaks are not enough • Some people are afraid about farming their land
<p>37. STRATEGY: Large scale organized investment for community farmers / housing</p>
<p>38. STRATEGY: Facilitate local capital resources investing in local agriculture</p>
<p>EDUCATION</p>
<p>39. STRATEGY: Increased public education re local food security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real environmental costs of food • Only 4 days of food supply on the island • Climate change may impact food security
<p>40. STRATEGY: High classes in agriculture, both growing and marketing using land that is leased or in available land trust holdings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classes were held at GIS previous to 1990
<p>41. STRATEGY: Garden club mentors getting involved in teaching high school students about growing</p>
<p>42. STRATEGY: Better public education / workshops on farming practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the ING and Farm Institute workshops
<p>43. STRATEGY: Mentoring / education program to introduce new residents to terminology/local practices concerning land designation and regulations of local government bodies</p>
<p>OTHER</p>
<p>44. STRATEGY: Local government / community must advocate to federal and provincial governments to subsidize farmers so new federal and provincial initiatives /programs can be implemented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need 5 year phase in • Regulations are forcing farmers out of business - waste regulations, cold storage, meat processing
<p>45. STRATEGY: Need a return to a food-based (farming) culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GMO free • Better food security • Seed sanctuary

Group #7 - Facilitator's Name: Kaitlin Kazmierowski

Group Members: Ty Cameron, Charlie Eagle, Judi Eagle, Brandon Bauer, Daniel Courteau, Martin Counsell, Ben Luna, Vanessa Farias

FARMER TRAINING	
2. STRATEGY: Farm training Association/ group set up similar to those of the UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This was part of a worksheet handed in, and was not elaborated on during the discussion <p>Case Study: www.sftg.co.uk</p>
3. STRATEGY: Farm Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize monthly regional meetings regarding the development of a skill Tap into local knowledge
4. STRATEGY: Farm training via educational institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day/ weekend courses imported from nearby agricultural colleges to be held locally or arrangements made for group travel/ accommodation.
5. STRATEGY: On-going workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to provide workshops such as “Seedy Saturday”, and perhaps include other topics such as composting and cover cropping Workshops could also serve as community out-reach education programs and allow the public to understand theories behind agricultural practices.
6. STRATEGY: Financial aid for mechanization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This would allow farmers to decrease costs and allow local food to become more financially viable for more members of the public. This would encourage farmers to grow commercially in terms of size (larger scale)
APPRENTICESHIP/ PUBLIC TRAINING	
7. STRATEGY: Educational PR Campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This would allow the public to become educated with respect to the reasons to buy local food, organics, etc.
8. STRATEGY: Education apprentice programs for farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This would be more than a WWOOFing program This program would follow a formal curriculum created by farmers and organize a labour pool to coordinate apprenticeship activities. <p>Case Study: CRAFT program in Ontario</p>
STRATEGY: International exchanges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This would be a way of acquiring new knowledge (i.e. Cuban agriculture) Promoting WWOOFing is one way of implementing this strategy This could also serve as a tool for expanding value added products <p>Case Study: Pearson College is coming to SSI in March. It is an environmental science based program and attracts high quality students, and is well-funded as well.</p>
TRAINING THROUGH SCHOOLS/ CURRICULUM	
9. STRATEGY: Tours for schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational tours for schools, both on and off-island This would link farmers and children, thus contributing to future farmer education This would also allow farmers another means of making some extra money <p>Case Study: A farmer north of Toronto did farm tours of his pumpkin patch for schools. He included pumpkins for kids and charged \$250/tour. He made \$60 000 one year from this.</p>

<p>10. STRATEGY: Include farming in the curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create classes for agriculture and organic agriculture in all schools on SSI, as well as environmental issues and local food production. • Use local farmers as classroom extensions
<p>11. STRATEGY: High school agriculture curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement high school agricultural vocational training and agricultural science programs, especially with hands-on training. • Most schools in the country own agricultural land, why not make it part of the curriculum? • A problem with this is that school ends in June half-way through the growing season
<p>12. STRATEGY: Farm to cafeteria programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link farmers and school children; financial benefits for farmers, health benefits for children. • Could even provide organic “junk” food (e.g. burgers made from local beef and whole grain buns) • Some parents may not want their kids to be forced to eat local foods; too much social conditioning (but isn't this happening in schools already via vending machines selling Coke and Pepsi?) <p>Case Study: There is a pilot program in BC where once a week school children get a local apple, for example, and are educated all about local apples and growing practices etc. Also, Jamie Oliver's organic produce in schools program.</p>
<p>COMMUNITY GARDENS</p>
<p>13. STRATEGY: Large scale/ commercial community garden</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This could be run by a farming co-op where farmers share tractors and tools in order to cooperatively produce a large quantity of produce, while sharing implements. <p>Case Study: Cortez Island farmers potato co-op</p>
<p>14. STRATEGY: Food bank gardens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the big need for food for those in need by growing fresh food and donating it. • Could be grown in community plots by local residents and farmers
<p>15. STRATEGY: Perennial food systems in public places</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edible landscaping; native fruit trees and shrubs instead of poisonous ornamentals along streets. • Could be used at schools; have an edible section of the school yard. • But this could cause a liability issue for schools if children accidentally eat something inedible <p>Case Study: Clairmont University in San Diego; an old mission containing many fruit trees; students would pick oranges on their way to class.</p>
<p>16. STRATEGY: Community garden and allotment scheme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide infrastructure for community gardens to allow non-farmers to become more self-sufficient • Address the fact that those who want to grow food are not always provided with a means of doing so.
<p>17. STRATEGY: Create a backyard garden program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite master gardeners/ composters to come help people set up their gardens to produce greater amounts of food. • Promotes self-sufficiency, cultural and health improvements. • Food will be strategically grown and individuals will be encouraged to share seeds, labour, knowledge, etc. <p>Case Study: England (war-time especially)</p>
<p>POTENTIAL CO-OPS/ BUSINESS START-UP</p>
<p>18. STRATEGY: Community compost co-op</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a centralized community composting facility for manure, yard waste, wood chips, etc. • This could become an education centre; master composters could be invited for workshops <p>Case Study: Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre</p>

<p>19. STRATEGY: Co-op Transport/ freezer Truck</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This would allow small-scale meat producers to get their produce off-island for slaughter and then back on-island for sale Would cut costs for producers Also mentioned the idea of the “roving abattoir” which would come to the island for a few weeks at a time <p>Case study: Roving abattoir in the San Juan Islands</p>
<p>20. STRATEGY: Small rental greenhouses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small greenhouses could be rented to residents/ farmers for start-up operations, for those with no place to grow food These would cut costs and address the high cost of land on SSI
<p>FOOD SECURITY</p>
<p>21. STRATEGY: Seedshelter Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A community facility that would act as a depot for stored and locally canned food in case of emergency/ disaster This would further expand the idea of food security into the realm of disaster management <p>Case Study: War-time England</p>
<p>FOOD VENUE IMPROVEMENTS</p>
<p>22. STRATEGY: Rotating family table restaurants on farms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A big pot-luck on a different farm each month; could start out as invite-only and then grow from there This would promote the foodie culture on SSI as well as increase a sense of community <p>Case Study: Slow food movement started in Italy</p>
<p>23. STRATEGY: Create more small excellent restaurants (original comment: “restaurants on SSI suck!”)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmers and restaurants could work in partnership; this allows farmers a regular source of income and demand, while restaurants would have to learn to create dishes based on seasonality. Because restaurants have such high demands for certain crops (e.g. potatoes, especially in high season) a farmers potato growing co-op could be formed to supply for such a need.
<p>FARMERS MARKETS</p>
<p>24. STRATEGY: Year-round marketing of SSI products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an all-weather indoor farmers market (including meat market) that could run everyday. This market would have to be conveniently located for consumers in a high pedestrian traffic area in Ganges. The facility would need to be highly visible; the old fire hall was suggested, but there is some contention surrounding this <p>Case Study: Many international examples</p>
<p>ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING</p>
<p>25. STRATEGY: Testing/ mitigation of hazardous waste</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-going soil testing for contaminants due to new and very old infrastructure; apparently arsenic was found in this soils beside rainbow road due to new paving for new developments. Someone needs to enforce environmental codes and standards Need infrastructure to deal with the safe disposal of hazardous materials such as old car parts, etc.
<p>26. STRATEGY: Signage regarding importing bees to SSI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There needs to be signage at the SSI ferry terminal and at Swartz bay regarding the quarantine of imported bees (currently only Tsawassen has a sign). Those importing bees via ferry should have a certificate proving they are healthy; SSI now has a mite problem in its hives due to a lack of signage and quarantine
<p>LINKING FARMERS</p>
<p>27. STRATEGY: Link Farmland to Farmers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSI should have a LLAFF chapter (Linking Land And Future Farmers), this a registry of unused farmland for landless farmers <p>Case Study: LLAFF chapters in the US</p>

<p>28. STRATEGY: Island Facilitator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSI needs a “go to” person that farmers can consult regarding issues such as land status, farm incentives, legalities, etc. • This could be done through an agriculture extension- business type program • Could also link local farmers to establish farmer-to-farmer help connections • Needs to be more specific/ appropriate to SSI (there is a government agent in Sydney) <p>29. STRATEGY: Contact list of farmers on SSI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This would be a directory of contact info for all the farmers on the island and would state hours of availability etc. • A means of linking farmers to help each other, share knowledge, create community, work cooperatively, etc
<p>COMMUNICATION</p>
<p>30. STRATEGY: Communication Tools to promote local food, link farmers and public</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a comprehensive website detailing local food and farm activities, issues and opportunities • Create a farmer’s newspaper in order to connect/ educate people (especially since some people don’t have computers/ internet)
<p>FINANCES</p>
<p>31. STRATEGY: Financial incentives to comply with Environmental Farm Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The environmental farm plan is an excellent guide for farming environmentally, however there is no incentive to follow it. • Compliance should be rewarded and recognized by the government; this could occur via tax benefits (potentially local tax benefits) <p>Case Study: Co-pay, Sheri Nielson</p>
<p>32. STRATEGY: Start-up funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish low interest loans or grants to aid with local start-up and co-operative costs • This could be done with the help of the SSI monetary fund, local banks and institutions; this would also allow local lenders to benefit thus strengthening the local economy
<p>PROCESSING AND STORAGE</p>
<p>33. STRATEGY: Infrastructure creation for local food activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a co-operative community infrastructure system for cold storage/ controlled atmosphere, processing, canning, meat, juice, kitchen facilities. • The farmers institute already has existing infrastructure for this, however, space could be rented after hours at other locations such as the high school, so that the money raised from renting out space could directly benefit agricultural programs at the school.
<p>34. STRATEGY: In-puts storage on Island</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a unified site for bulk sales of farm in-puts that come from off-island in large quantities • Could be co-operatively run
<p>MARKETING</p>
<p>35. STRATEGY: Create a Unified SSI Brand and Label</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This would prove local food security, take advantage of a popular name, promote off-island sales, serve as a marketing tool for co-ops, and increase marketability for value-added products
<p>36. STRATEGY: SSI should strive to be GMO free</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All GMOs should be banned from the island and/or food/ seeds should be labelled as containing GMOs • Difficult to ensure 100% that no contamination has occurred • Labelling laws/ grocery store policies do not promote the acknowledgement of GMO products in stores <p>Case Study: The EU has laws which force producers to label GMO foods</p>
<p>BY-LAWS AND LAND</p>
<p>37. STRATEGY: No tolerance policy regarding the removal of ALR land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This should be enforced in order to ensure that ALR land is not rezoned for other uses

38. STRATEGY: Islands Trust by-law enforcement coalition

- Currently no one is enforcing the environmentally degrading practices of developers (especially with regards to water use/ drainage)
- Fines should be collected from offenders and the money should be re-distributed back to members of the community who need it to repair infrastructure damage caused by the practices of offenders.

FUNDRAISING

39. STRATEGY: Food for fundraising

- Food could be donated from producers and sold (to tourists especially) in order to raise funds for community development, thus re-investing back in the island

GROUP 8 - Facilitator's Name: Kristi Tatebe

Group Members: Jane Squier, Wendy McEachern, Donna Venderwacken (sp?), Murray Hunter, Diane Roberts, Raven Hume, Auguste Mann, Paula Johnson

WATER
<p>1. STRATEGY: Create a community system of water storage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salt Spring does not have a water problem; it has a water storage problem.
<p>2. STRATEGY: Encourage / allow greywater reuse for irrigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently this is prohibited
EDUCATION/TRAINING
<p>3. STRATEGY: Re-establish a high-school agriculture program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e.g. Tree/shrub nursery for reclamation of native and beneficial planting in landscaping - teaches horticulture skill, creates awareness of sustainable practices re: water capture, erosion control, CO2 sink <p>Case Study: SOLID example in Africa, Fernwood has a program, Gulf Islands High School used to have a program</p>
<p>4. STRATEGY: "Farm School"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a working farm school that educates students while they work • Potential partnerships with UVIC, UBC, SFU etc.
<p>5. STRATEGY: Land Trusts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to encourage non-farming farmland owners to lease their land for farming. • Could be long-term leases, potentially short-term but issues for lessees wanting to do organics (requires a longer time scale to plan for) • Tax incentives • Establish a land trust that oversees lease agreements for tenured and community agriculture projects (ensures agreed-upon agricultural standards are met)
<p>6. STRATEGY: Farming Mentorship Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link experienced residents to new farmers to share experience & encourage continued farming. • Addresses loss of farming culture
<p>7. STRATEGY: Resource Book</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish a book of resources for farmers starting out - who is growing what, where do I go for information about X? How do I get involved in ING, etc.
<p>8. STRATEGY: Education campaign around local food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If people could buy more locally then could reduce the need for delivery & its contributions to Climate Change
<p>9. STRATEGY: Teaching Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay wages to farmers who wish to teach farming practices • Farmer's Institute could be used as a training area for some farm practices
COMMUNICATION/MARKETING
<p>10. STRATEGY: Website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the web to connect farmers/consumers • Produce swap section (addresses distribution / marketing / food security issues) • Growing clubs • Inform people about local food, education, location of farms (downside: many people don't want visitors) <p>Case Study: localharvest.org</p>
<p>11. STRATEGY: Inform newcomers ("immigrants") about agriculture on Island</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pamphlet could be delivered through the realtors that informs potential residents of the agricultural nature of SSI (could help avoid future conflicts over noise, smell, sounds etc.) - Let people know that island is a "working agricultural community"

<p>12. STRATEGY: Newspaper publication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the Driftwood (newspaper) to publish 2 pg. report once a month re: local agricultural happenings to encourage local consumption of local food • Perhaps could build on “Green Pages” section already offered by the Driftwood (currently have to ask for it, maybe it could be made a regular publication?)
<p>13. STRATEGY: Marketing Co-op</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need an umbrella organization to facilitate marketing of produce for local farmers (who don’t individually have time to ‘push’ their produce) • Would allow farms to collectively be more competitive with larger, off-island enterprises <p>Case Study: Rolling Prairie Farmer’s Alliance, Lawrence, Kansas</p>
<p>14. STRATEGY: CSA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a large Community Supported Agriculture program whereby multiple farms co-operate to provide to a larger number of consumers (can offer more varied produce & share the work) <p>Case Study: Lawrence, Kansas</p>
<p>15. STRATEGY: Buying club</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumers connect to group order etc. & take advantage of larger orders (e.g. rack of lamb, beef quarter etc.) <p>Case Study: Vancouver (nowbc.ca)</p>
<p>16. STRATEGY: Local Food Wheel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show products & seasons to educate consumers of food seasonality <p>Case Study: localfoodswheel.com</p>
<p>17. STRATEGY: Farmer Matching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match new farmers with retiring farmers • Similar to matching renters to rental properties • Would prevent some of the loss of farmland & allow retiring farmers to maintain some control & perhaps ownership over their land e.g. lease agreements?
<p>18. STRATEGY: Demand Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research & create a list of what products local restaurants / businesses need & want. • Allows farmers to cater to market demand if they so choose
<p>19. STRATEGY: Tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the tourist industry to support locally produced food & drinks <p>Case Study: Cowichan Valley</p>
<p>COMMUNITY PROJECTS</p>
<p>20. STRATEGY: Community compost facility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRD operated?
<p>21. STRATEGY: “Build, then ask”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin building housing for farm workers, then work on getting permission • Sustainable, low-impact buildings • Issues around the illegality of this one
<p>22. STRATEGY: Farm Swap</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion of Seedy Saturday to facilitate tool swap • Tool sharing program
<p>23. STRATEGY: Bulk Purchasing (for farms)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization like I-SEA research options & facilitate bulk purchases of equipment, machines, water catchment systems, tanks, etc.
<p>24. STRATEGY: Community Kitchen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certify one facility for community use. Multiple users to use & legally prepare food for sale

<p>25. STRATEGY: Communal Meat Processing Facility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To allow local producers to legally process meat on-island
<p>26. STRATEGY: Value-Added Products</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community organization needed to coordinate creating of value-added products
<p>27. STRATEGY: Dedicated outlet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated physical structure Facilitate exchange /sale of food Sliding scale to help families in need On Farmer’s Institute land? <p>Case Study: Similar to Spinning Mill, Granville Island Market (dedicated structure)</p>
<p>GOVERNMENT (DE)REGULATION</p>
<p>28. STRATEGY: Local Govt. needs to relax & allow for local variation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs to allow for variation / relaxation of rules Local, organic small farms have different needs than large agri-business - redirect funding to support this OCP review needs to take this into account <p>Case Study: Cowichan Regional District</p>
<p>29. STRATEGY: New building code regulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRD needs to allow a different code for farm outbuildings (don’t need to be built to suburban standards)
<p>30. STRATEGY: GMO Free</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declare SSI a “GMO-Free” zone Issues with new Alberta/BC trade regulations?? <p>Case Study: New Zealand</p>
<p>31. STRATEGY: Allow farm worker accommodation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local govt. could encourage affordable accommodation for workers with farmers, or even require it of new development <p>Case Study: Banff, Whistler</p>
<p>32. STRATEGY: Re-define “Farming”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand definition of farming to include agro forestry, water capture areas, natural habitat in farm plan
<p>33. STRATEGY: Cluster Industry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish zero waste systems by grouping industry to enable sharing/re-use of waste products (waste from one enterprise becomes input to another Current regulations don’t allow this - needs to be changed
<p>34. STRATEGY: Add Value-Added income to Farm income</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow income from value-added products to be counted as on-farm income Would increase profitability
<p>35. STRATEGY: Strengthen ALR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only allow removal of land if comparable land is added elsewhere on island Institute mechanisms to make it more difficult to remove land from ALR but make it easier to add <p>Case Study: National Parks system in Canada</p>

GROUP #9 - Facilitator's Name: Tamsin Mills

Group Members: Gwyn Strike, Jane Barry, Jim Barry, Lucille Lamarche, Alice Richards, Jim Erickson, Susan Evans, Conrad Pilon, Douglas Carnegie

HOUSING
<p>1. STRATEGY: Review building bylaws for ALR to allow supplementary housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For farm labourer housing or family use • Deals with lack of affordable housing / lack of new farmers and skills training
PUBLIC MOBILIZATION
<p>2. STRATEGY: Engage public support in letting politicians know that small farms are important</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shadow what has happened with environmental movement recently. Bring agriculture more to the forefront. • Public mobilization campaign possibly starts through letter writing.
<p>3. STRATEGY: Promote local farming as a solution to environmental problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the environment has recently become an issue at the forefront of peoples' minds, use this to our advantage to promote local farming and eating local food as an important step in solutions to environmental problems. • Through education
CONNECTIONS
<p>4. STRATEGY: Reduce ferry rates to Salt Spring Island to encourage market/produce sales from/to Vancouver Island</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Especially need removal of fuel premium • Possibly reduce rates specifically on Saturdays or on specific days of the week.
<p>5. STRATEGY: Connecting with existing (or creating new) transportation network for transfer of goods/raw materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idea here is to create transportation connections to increase affordability • For example: If SSI Coffee is going North maybe the transport can come back with cheap pine beetle lumber from the interior that can be used in workshops or building on SSI. • Decrease cost by decreasing deadheads.
<p>6. STRATEGY: Connecting with like-minded individuals in other "satellite" areas of B.C.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create a larger presence among smaller farmers • Network for information exchange, recruiting of labourers and political presence
WATER
<p>7. STRATEGY: Pursue viability of water catchment systems as a building code requirement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As new houses are built they would require mandatory water catchment devices
<p>8. STRATEGY: Decrease cost of water and give water priority to growers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give priority to growers for water usage • Receive cheaper rates when using community water
LABOUR
<p>9. STRATEGY: Use seasonal workers from, for example Mexico, using existing immigration laws</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example: apple pickers in Okanagan • Shorten school year • Government could become involved in providing work terms and some of the funding
<p>10. STRATEGY: Hire students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government could become involved in providing work terms and some of the funding <p>Case Study: France : Student farm work force is organized by the local government. Wage is considered good by many students</p>

SALT SPRING ISLAND SPECIFIC	
11. STRATEGY: Organic / Seed Sanctuary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognition of the value of the existing seed sanctuary BUT this strategy refers to one providing storage and protection of Salt Spring Seeds (those originating and found on the Island) Could be a great example for other places
12. STRATEGY: Declare SSI an Organic Zone	
13. STRATEGY: Voluntary local Farm Practices Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary because want to avoid over regulation
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICE	
14. STRATEGY: Local (paid) farm department within governing body offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity for local networking Dissemination of information on a regular basis (detailed info.) Co-ordinate and identify individuals, products, areas - in essence all information pertaining to farming on SSI (other areas too)
15. STRATEGY: Produce map of Farmland not being farmed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Others pointed to the land use inventory and that this has already been done This information could be specifically presented at local, central office
PROCESSING	
16. STRATEGY: Co-ordinate off-island processing needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-ordinate transport / travel costs Locating and identifying processors willing to handle small farmers Some specific notes to this: If everyone used the portable abattoir it would be doable but not the case as some have pre-existing contracts with off-island processing that they have to honour. Organic livestock can't be processed at same time. Problem of what to do with the waste. Apparently new waste regulations for livestock coming into effect in May Perhaps opportunity to transport livestock / waste with dangerous goods ferry
MARKETING/CENTRAL BOARD	
17. STRATEGY: Organize and copyright a Salt Spring Trademark that could be applied to local products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create good jobs on island by selling off island at premium prices Profit by extending the market Hire professional marketers to get the name out there, go to culinary shows, set up professional booths Look at how Nature's Path is carried by Whole Foods, try to do the same Providing funds for promotion
18. STRATEGY: Set up Quality Control Board to set standards for trademarked products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the moment anyone can use label To ensure high quality product
19. STRATEGY: Establish a marketing board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central board to promote and solidify SSI brand
EDUCATION	
20. STRATEGY: Provide Lectures / training courses for adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage home food production Stress: Healthy Food: the exercise you get, lack of pesticides, local Include small animal husbandry, backyard food production
21. STRATEGY: Set up Guest speaker / Instructors on food and agriculture issues in school (curriculum)	

<p>22. STRATEGY: Public Education Program on local food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include ideas of the CO2 produced through transport and link to climate change • Why buy local • Promote the Slow Food Movement (see later strategy) <p>Case Study: www.SlowFood.ca</p>
<p>23. STRATEGY: Set up a mentorship program for aging farmers to pass their knowledge on</p>
<p>PRODUCE</p>
<p>24. STRATEGY: Separate Produce Market from Saturday Morning Market</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important for Islanders to get their local produce at the market but many are deterred due to influx of tourists making it undesirable to head downtown on Saturday. Traffic, tourists, lack of parking etc.
<p>25. STRATEGY: Create central storage for produce for the winter months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need produce to be stored or processed for annual trade
<p>GOVERNANCE</p>
<p>26. STRATEGY: Access funding from the federal/provincial governments that is earmarked for environmental programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help farmers with different projects • Ride wave of current dollars being put toward environment and try to tie it to agriculture
<p>27. STRATEGY: Establish Farmland Trust</p>
<p>28. STRATEGY: Gain Supportive Local Bylaws</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific mention of bylaw 355 that deals with set-backs and doesn't promote farming
<p>CENTRAL FARMING HUB</p>
<p>29. STRATEGY: Create a farmers / food Hub</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For producers and consumers to come together • Retail local products / centralize all the groups • Include information to growers and farmers including marketing and strategies • Similar idea to Growers Circle (this didn't work though)
<p>30. STRATEGY: Promote Slow Food Movement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like idea behind Buy BC campaign - could have local SSI food sticker • Education on eco-footprint and CO2 saved through less transportation etc.
<p>31. STRATEGY: Identify value-added products and provide creative workshops on how to produce these</p>
<p>OTHERS</p>
<p>32. STRATEGY: Equipment Banks</p>
<p>33. STRATEGY: Supplies List</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputable workers and supplies
<p>34. STRATEGY: Seed Sharing</p>
<p>EXAMPLES OF SUCCESS FROM THE INTERIOR THAT COULD PROVIDE GOOD FIELDTRIP FOR SALT SPRING ISLANDERS (PARTICIPANT FROM INTERIOR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bonaparte Valley/ Cache Creek / Ashcroft • Horsteins Farm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Started out as farm gate sales and grew from there ◦ Now supplies Save-On Foods ◦ Affordable labour - uses local students ◦ Hires Mexicans and Pilipino labourers via seasonal immigration laws • Bonaparte Wine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Declined to grow out of farm gate sales ◦ Similar to SSI in that it is like an island - distant from major markets



Community Dialogue #3: Vision - BACKGROUND PAPER

I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This paper will provide an overview of the Plan to Farm process, summarize Community Dialogue #2 and, most importantly, outline your homework for Community Dialogue #3 to be held on Saturday, March 10th, 2007.

Plan to Farm Process

Plan to Farm: Setting the Table for Food & Agriculture on Salt Spring is an area farm planning process initiated by the Islands Farmers Institute and the Island Natural Growers in collaboration with the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, and Islands Trust. Additional funding has been provided by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of British Columbia, and the Capital Regional District.

Plan to Farm's Steering Committee has identified two primary goals for the process:

- Re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural and economic priority on the island; and
- Facilitate the growth of associated farming activities.

Community Dialogues

Community participation is an important foundation on which Salt Spring Island's area farm plan will be built and implemented. Three linked community dialogues have been organized to start the planning process. The purpose of the dialogues is to establish a common base of knowledge and understanding of the issues facing farming on our island. Participants have an opportunity to discuss agriculture on Salt Spring and collectively articulate a vision for the future of food and agriculture on the island. The three community dialogues have been structured to build on each other.

Approximately 108 people from a wide variety of backgrounds attended the second community dialogue session held at the Gulf Islands Secondary School on the afternoon of Saturday February 17th, 2007. Those in attendance spent over an hour in small groups identifying strategies to address the issues and take advantage of the assets for farming on Salt Spring Island.

Community Dialogue Session #1: Issues	Saturday, January 20, 2007
Community Dialogue Session #2: Opportunities	Saturday, February 17, 2007
Community Dialogue Session #3: Vision	Saturday, March 10, 2007 Gulf Islands' Secondary School 1:30 - 4:30pm

Registration

Everyone - including participants of Community Dialogue #1 & #2 - is asked to register for Community Dialogue #3 in order to help us with event coordination and planning.

To register please contact: Anne Macey, *Plan to Farm* Project Manager
(250) 537.5511 or email: macey@saltspring.com

By **Wednesday, March 7th, 2007**

COMMUNITY DIALOGUE #3: VISION

Purpose

The purpose of the next meeting is to take a critical look at the results of Dialogue #1 and #2 and identify some recommendations for the final plan. The topic for this meeting is "Vision" because it is about envisioning what *Plan to Farm* will recommend as priority actions. It is a vision for the way forward.

The objectives for Community Dialogue #3 are:

1. To critically evaluate the identified strategies; and
2. To identify priority challenges and recommend strategies to address these challenges for *Plan to Farm* process.

Question for Discussion

Given the challenges identified in Community Dialogue #1, what do you see as the priority challenges that Plan to Farm should address? Given the strategies identified in Community Dialogue #2, which strategies will best address the challenges?

Your Homework

We ask that you do the following to prepare for Community Dialogue #3:

1. Review the list of challenges below. Identify and rank your top five.

Previously Identified Challenges Facing Salt Spring Island Agriculture

- Availability of water
 - Conflicts with new neighbours
 - Critical infrastructure gaps
 - Environmental impacts of farming
 - Farmland not being farmed
 - High cost of land
 - Inability to achieve local food security
 - Labour and housing shortages
 - Lack of new farmers
 - Lack of skills training
 - Lack of profitability
 - Lack of provincial and federal support for small farms
 - Loss of farming culture
 - Poor understanding of local farming and food production issues
 - Restrictive local government regulations and policies
2. Familiarize yourself with the list of strategies (Section II) grouped according to the challenges listed above.
 3. Come prepared to present your ranked list of challenges and to discuss some of the proposed strategies listed under each challenge (see pages 4 - 10).

For this dialogue session - **be critical!** We want you to focus on what is *important* and what is *feasible*.

To assist participants in their preparation for the third Community Dialogue we have provided

a summary of the second dialogue session (see section II of this paper). This list of strategies has been grouped according to the principal challenge that each addresses. The strategies have NOT been prioritized within the groups. Every effort has been made to capture the ideas presented in the group discussions accurately and concisely. Please bring any omissions or errors to the attention of your facilitator at the meeting on Saturday March 10th, 2007.

As the *Plan to Farm* process unfolds it is expected that new challenges and strategies will be identified. This initial summary is a starting point that will help guide our discussion of the vision for how agriculture and associated activities can become a vibrant and central part of the Salt Spring Island economy and culture.

An unedited version of the notes from Community Dialogue #2 is available on request.

Helpful information

As you think about some possible recommendations for *Plan to Farm* consider the following:

There are many possible criteria or "filters" that you might use to evaluate a strategy. Is the idea feasible? How much will it cost? Can it be implemented primarily by the community and/or local government? How long will it take? These are some criteria (and you are welcome to add more) that you might consider when reading through the attached list of proposed strategies.

II. SUMMARY OF PROPOSED STRATEGIES TO RE-ESTABLISH AGRICULTURE ON SALT SPRING ISLAND

The following table contains a range of ideas brought forward in Community Dialogue #2, through research and discussion with the agricultural community. They are grouped according to the key challenges identified in Community Dialogue #1. Although it is recognized that most of the ideas address a number of challenges, here they have been grouped according to the principal challenge in an attempt to save space and focus discussion. In a few cases, the ideas are listed under two or more challenges.

CHALLENGE: AVAILABILITY OF WATER
Decrease cost of water for farmers • Give farmers priority use.
Government subsidy of water conservation technology • Subsidies for rainwater barrels, low-use fixtures, cisterns, etc.
Use greywater or treated effluent water for irrigation
Greywater settling ponds • Produces organic matter and heat that can be captured for reuse.
SSI water audits • Modeled after existing energy audits.
Create a SSI-specific Sustainable Water Yield Model • Would help determine exact supply of water.
Build more farm ponds • Opportunity for winter storage and summer use.
Drip irrigation training programs • Skills training course.
Require water catchment devices (e.g. barrels, cisterns) for new developments • Establish in the local building code.
Promote use of native plants • Native plants often use less water.
Grow crops with lower water needs • E.g. beans, squash instead of crops like tomatoes
Island-wide non-destructive water catchment system • Ensure that water is not inappropriately diverted to create catchment ponds.
Promote hilltop to valley-bottom ponds and waterways
Incentives for riparian (waterway) protection • e.g. hedgerows, buffers, stream corridors, wetlands.
Ban lawns
Map SSI groundwater • To alert farmers & neighbours to potential impacts & help clarify supply levels.
Work with the CRD on demand-side water management for SSI • Explore how new technologies & practices can reduce farmers need for water.
Encourage adoption of agroforestry and permaculture practices
CHALLENGE: CONFLICTS WITH NEW NEIGHBOURS
New homebuyer handout • Provision of info. that informs new homebuyers/realtors about the location of the Island's farming areas & issues.
Promote local agriculture and food products to new residents
No net-loss of ALR policy • If ALR land is to be excluded, require that a reciprocal amount of land on SSI of equal size and value is added back.

Do not allow subdivision of potential farmland • Ensure parcel sizes remain viable for agriculture.
Islands Trust by-law enforcement team • Establish a community-led volunteer monitoring and enforcement team.
SSI farm practices peer advisors team • Establish a group of farmers whose role is to help reduce disputes between farmers & neighbours.
Designate areas adjacent to ALR & other agricultural areas as a farming Development Permit Area • Establish as a policy within the OCP.
Buffers between residential developments and farms built on the residential property
Agriculture Impact Assessment procedure for any large developments
CHALLENGE: CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE GAPS
<i>Hard Infrastructure</i>
Provide more agro-industrial zoned land • Increased amount of land for food processing facilities.
On-island meat processing facility • Develop either a mobile or permanent abattoir facility.
Refrigerated meat transport • An appropriate transport truck run as a co-op or community sponsored entity.
Food storage facility (cold) • A facility that addresses on-island food storage needs (meat, vegetables and grains).
Food processing facility • A certified co-op or community-sponsored facility for canning, drying or smoking fruit, meat and fish.
Create separate produce market • Split from Saturday market to ease congestion & improve desirability for locals.
Develop an all-season farmer's market
Community composting facility • Operated with government participation & support. Consider if & how sewage sludge might also be composted.
<i>Soft Infrastructure</i>
SSI farm co-op • Establish an agricultural cooperative to build & coordinate multiple infrastructure needs.
Supplies list • Maintain a list of reputable suppliers.
Farm inputs collaborative • To realize cooperative & economic efficiencies in the purchase, transport and storage of supplies & equipment.
Tool swap or co-op • A way that farmers can share, borrow or rent farm tools & equipment.
Value-added organization • Help coordinate the creation of value-added products.
Coordinate off-island processing • Farmers would share the costs for off-island trips/processing.
Coordinate off-island transportation • e.g. if SS Coffee is going north, same truck can come back with pine beetle lumber for SSI buildings.
Reduced ferry fares for farmers • To encourage market/produce sales off-island.
CHALLENGE: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF FARMING
Proclaim SSI a genetically modified organism-free zone
Proclaim SSI an organic farming-only zone
Establish a voluntary farm practices code • A code of practice that farmers agree to follow. Can use trademark in return.
<i>Environmental Farm Planning workshops • Provide financial incentives to encourage participation in the Provincial EFP Program.</i>

Invasive species and pest signage at B. C. Ferries
Establish a community strategy to discourage the purchase of environmentally harmful products
Develop a farm specific by-law • Pursue the regulation of farm & agro-forestry practices under the Local Government Act.
Organic pesticides brewing club • Collaborate to develop and share organic methods to effectively address farm pest issues.
Community Seed Bank • Develop a community & government supported seed bank.
Farmland Trust • Community-owned farmland that can be leased back to farmers with terms & conditions.
Skills training and exchange • Evening, weekend classes or meetings on a variety of farm practices & topics.
Create more financial incentives to farm • Current financial incentives/subsidies are not adequate. Reward farmers for ecological practices.
Cluster industry • Group industries to enable sharing/re-use of each other's waste products. Would require a regulation change.
CHALLENGE: FARMLAND NOT BEING FARMED
Increase the tax relief for agriculture • Provincial tax relief is not adequate. Need to increase incentive to encourage the leasing of farmland.
Change tax relief rules for landowners who lease land • Current rules do not allow tax relief for land not in production prior to the lease.
Foster leasing of farmland • Identify potential farmland available for use. Establish organization to link landowners with potential farmers.
Landowners to loan unused land to farmers • Land provided in exchange for food.
Determine the best use of un-used farmland
Establish a SSI agricultural investment group • An institution that connects private & public investment with farmers & initiatives in need.
Farmland Trust • Community-owned farmland that can be leased back to farmers with conditions.
Include value-added income in calculation of Farm Income
Farm start-up program • Program that helps provide the farming basics to new farmers - land, equipment & technical support.
CHALLENGE: HIGH COST OF LAND
Establish a SSI agricultural investment group • Institution that connects private & public investment with farmers & initiatives that need it.
Farmland Trust • Community-owned farmland that can be leased back to farmers with terms & conditions.
Increase the tax relief for agriculture • Current provincial tax relief is not adequate, need to provide increased incentive for farmland leasing.
Change tax relief rules for landowners who lease land • Current rules do not provide tax relief for land not in production prior to the lease.
Create more financial incentives to farm • Current financial incentives are not adequate. Need to reward farmers for ecological practices.
Provide low or no-interest loans to new farmers and small farms • Affordable credit does not exist at current lending institutions.
Include value-added income in calculation of Farm Income

Develop a farm investment tax write-off scheme • Establish a model similar to mining explorations “flow-through shares.”
Tax incentives for personal food production • Current tax incentives only exist for commercial food production.
Develop Linking Lands & Future Farmers program on SSI • Matches new farmers in need of land with retiring farmers with unused land.
Provide land grants to new farmers
Local governments purchase ALR & then lease back to farmers
CHALLENGE: INABILITY TO ACHIEVE LOCAL FOOD SECURITY
Create allotment/community gardens • On agricultural, private & public land. Subsidize development through development cost charges.
Operate food bank gardens • Run with volunteer labour.
Increase backyard gardening & animal raising • Provide increased training opportunities & develop a backyard-sharing program.
Redistribute unused tree fruit
Increase greenhouse production • Promote greenhouses & supportive alternative energy systems. Make greenhouses available for rent.
Establish perennial gardens in public spaces
Grow food, fruit and nuts on parkland
Require the plant fruit trees & establish permaculture gardens in new developments
Promote seed saving and sharing
Aquaculture ponds • Diversify farm production. Explore how waste materials could be utilized.
Collective kitchen • Groups share food & preparation costs. Finished product is then taken home for packaging.
Establish a buying club • Allows members to reduce costs by making bulk purchases.
Emergency food storage facility
Hold workshops on wild food harvesting
CHALLENGE: LABOUR AND HOUSING SHORTAGES
Create innovative zoning for on-farm housing • Develop zoning that allows cluster housing on farms & on-farm affordable housing options.
Attract labour through on-island training & housing
Farm labour pool • Develop a registry of farm labourers (& their skills) willing to work on SSI.
Hire students • Government supported, summer farm work program for students.
Attract foreign labourers • Use foreign seasonal workers as permitted by immigration laws.
Work for food programs • Promote programs like World-Wide Opportunities on Organic Farm.
“Build, Then Ask” • Build housing for farm workers, then work on getting permission. Legality issues.
SSI housing agency • Establish body to help address housing challenges.
SSI farm labour housing strategy • Complete a comprehensive review of the farm labour housing challenge & develop a detailed strategy.

Review ALR housing policy • Evaluate whether the current farm workers housing policy is effective.
Hostel for farm labourers • Provide special farm labourer rates & transport to & from farms.
Foster large-scale community investment in housing • Leverage SSI wealth to address housing challenges.
CHALLENGE: LACK OF NEW FARMERS
Farming apprenticeship program • Provides valuable mentorship & trains new farmers.
Teaching positions for farmers • Pay wages to farmers who help teach farming practices.
Gulf Islands Institute of Agriculture • On-island training facility & institution featuring workshops & classes for farmers.
On-island university classes • Allows university students to learn about Gulf Island farming issues.
Change the university curriculum • Update post-secondary curriculum to reflect sustainable agriculture/forestry practices.
School programs • Greater focus on sustainability & food. Provide applied learning opportunities (farm tours, school gardens, work experience).
Agricultural Junior/High School • An agriculture curriculum centered school.
Agricultural Cadet/Youth Program • Youth learn agricultural skills and contribute to farm labour. Possible extension of 4H program.
CHALLENGE: LACK OF SKILLS TRAINING
Skills training and exchange • Evening, weekend classes or meetings on a variety of farm practices/topics.
Renewed agricultural extension services • Ensure support provided to small-scale producers.
Informational resources for farmers • Features print & on-line best practices, organic growing techniques, contacts & other resources.
Resource center • Central facility for all local farming resources/guidebooks/workshops.
On-line farmer resource center • One-stop-shop for all local farming resources/guidebooks.
International farmer exchange • Participants share what they learn upon their return.
Drip irrigation training programs • Skills training course.
CHALLENGE: LACK OF PROFITABILITY
Develop the Salt Spring Island “Brand” • Clarify what is required to be a certified SSI product.
Market Salt Spring Island products • Mechanisms might include a marketing strategy, establishment of a co-op or board, & local ad campaign.
Establish SSI Quality Control Board • Establish standards for SSI-branded products.
Encourage local tourism operators to promote local foods
Promote and support agri-eco-tourism • Ensure regulatory barriers are minimized. Include other SSI environmental initiatives.
Provide low or no-interest loans to new farmers and small farms • Affordable credit does not exist at current lending institutions.
Include value-added income in calculation of Farm Income
Set up local bartering and trading system • Establish a Local Exchange Trading System (LETS).

Create more financial incentives to farm • Current financial incentives are not adequate. Reward farmers for ecological practices.
Create incentives for pasturing animals • Not economically viable at this point.
Cooperative applications for quota • Overcome small farm size on SSI by jointly applying for quota (eggs).
Establish more restaurants on SSI
Eco-forestry outlet • Sell local lumber harvested and milled in sustainable manner.
Improve local food retail exposure • Re-establish co-op or other farmer-centered retail outlet. Increase visibility at current establishments.
Improve links between farmers and restaurants
Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) • Direct purchasing establishes relationship with farmer. Food basket purchased with cash or labour.
Food contracts with public institutions • Local hospitals, schools & government offices purchase from local producers/businesses.
Establish an SSI Agricultural Cooperative
Resource guide on farming-related funding opportunities • Connect farmers & other food to existing funding opportunities.
CHALLENGE: LACK OF PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR SMALL FARMS
Create acceptable home “food-safe protocol” • Provide small operations affordable options to process food safely.
Change lessee rules around farm status • Current rules make it difficult to lease a portion of your property
Simplify regulations and lower fees for farm buildings • Farm buildings should not need to meet the same standards at suburban dwellings.
Renewed agricultural extension services • Ensure support provided to small-scale producers.
Redefine farming • Expand definition to include agroforestry, water capture, natural habitat.
SSI agriculture lobby group • To limit regulatory burden on small farms & provide financial support when regulations are in the public interest.
Dialogue with MLAs and MPs • Make higher levels of government more aware of SSI agricultural issues.
CHALLENGE: LOSS OF FARMING CULTURE
Create farmer/food hub • Central facility for farmers/consumers to come together for information sharing & retailing products.
Farmers potlucks • Create a monthly event where farmers (and others) get together on a farm to share a meal.
Farmers contact list • Ensure farmers have a way to get a hold of each other.
Organize growers • Get growers working together to address SSI farming challenges.
Farming apprenticeship program • Provide valuable mentorship & train new farmers.
Develop Linking Lands and Future Farmers program on SSI • Match new farmers in need of land with retiring farmers with unused land.
Renewed agricultural extension services • Ensure support provided to small-scale producers.
Network with regional groups • Forge better links with agriculture & food organizations on Vancouver Island & the Mainland.
CHALLENGE: POOR UNDERSTANDING OF LOCAL FARMING & FOOD PRODUCTION ISSUES
Farmers Speakers Bureau • Establish list of local farmers willing to speak to students/public.

Farm to Cafeteria • School cafeterias could feature local products in their menus.
Workshops/classes on a variety of agriculture-related topics
Farm experience holidays
Public education campaign • Broad campaign to address issues of food security, value of local food, relationship between farming & health, etc.
Information dissemination • On-line/print listing of local farm & food activities.
Farming newspaper or Driftwood column • Increase local awareness of issues associated with SSI agriculture.
Develop a local food wheel • Key information tool for eating local SSI products in season.
Working farm museum
Farm tours and open houses
Farm-based food festivals
Collaborate with the Public Dreams Society • Establish innovative food/agriculture celebrations.
Farm “Survivor” • TV show highlighting realities of small-scale farming.
Promote Slow Food movement • Cultural & ecological reasons for promoting local foods.
Farm signage systems • Unified farm signage system for marketing & raising awareness of local food.
Establish an eat-local campaign • Encourage Salt Spring Islanders to eat more Island-produced food!
Limit imported food (tax imported food) • Make it difficult for Salt Spring Islanders to buy food that is not local.
Continue research into sustainability in other communities
CHALLENGE: RESTRICTIVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS AND POLICY
Review OCP to ensure that the value of agriculture and agroforestry are reflected
Establish by-law development review procedure for farm areas • Establish better response/input mechanism for farm community.
Review land use by-law • Analyze impact of current land-use by-law on farming operations.
Islands Trust should make more effective use of the Agricultural Advisory Committee
Establish an Islands’ Trust agricultural advisor/facilitator position • A fulltime staff member that deals with agricultural issues.
Flexible local rules • Government rules should recognize needs of small local farmers. Funding should be redirected to support this.
Multi-sectoral process • Establish a multi-sectoral committee to continue the Farm Plan dialogue & implement its recommendations.
ADDITIONAL STRATEGIES
Access provincial/federal funds for environmental programs • Many tie in with agriculture.
Establish farm information tracking systems/maps • Keep better track of what land is being farmed & the products being produced.

March 14, 2007

Dear *Plan to Farm* Participants,

We would like to thank all of you who were able to attend the third Community Dialogue on March 10th for the Salt Spring Island *Plan to Farm* process. This meeting built on the valuable feedback received from the first and second Dialogue sessions. We thank you for your careful discussion and evaluation of the proposed challenges and strategies. Your feedback will provide strong direction for the priorities in the Area Farm Plan and we thank you for your contributions.

Attached are the summary notes from the small group discussions. We ask that you review the summary of your group's discussion to ensure that it reflects the ideas and comments that were shared. If you would like to clarify points or add some new strategies, please send your comments using the methods described below. Groups are listed according to the facilitator's name.

Please feel free to share these notes with those who were not at the meeting. We would invite further comments and suggested strategies.

We ask that you provide comments via email or mail by Monday, March 26th, 2007.

Comments can be directly emailed to plantofarm@gmail.com.

Written comments can also be mailed or delivered to:

Anne Macey, 106 Old Scott Road, Salt Spring Island BC, V8K 2L6

Next steps...

Under the direction of the Steering Committee we will be preparing a draft Area Farm Plan over the next few months. In the fall, the draft Plan will be presented to the community for their consideration through another series of dialogue sessions. Feedback and comments received will be incorporated in the final document.

OCP Review Process:

In the next few weeks the Steering Committee acting as the Agriculture Focus Group will be submitting a recommendation on agricultural issues to the Official Community Plan process. Their submission will be informed by the Plan to Farm Community Dialogue process. Salt Spring community members will have an opportunity to provide additional comments from April onward.

Thank you once again. We look forward to seeing you this fall!



Derek Masselink P.Ag.
Principal, Masselink Environmental Design

Community Dialogue #3 Group Notes

This document contains a summary notes for all 9 groups. Please locate your group from the list below and find the corresponding page. Review the summary and send any comments or corrections to plantofarm@gmail.com by March 23rd, 2007.

Group 1 - Food Producers	Page: 2
Group 2 - Food Producers	Page: 5
Group 3 - Food Producers	Page: 8
Group 4 - Food Producers	Page: 11
Group 5 - Distributors/Food Retailers/Others	Page: 15
Group 6 - Food Processors	Page: 17
Group 7 - Eaters/ Food Access	Page: 21
Group 8 - Eaters/Food Access	Page: 24
Group 9 - Other/Overflow	Page: 27

Participants:

Group 1 - Food Producers

Facilitator: Kristina Bouris

Jim Scott, Alice Richards, Ted Olson, Nikki Spooner, Elizabeth Cooper, Margaret Thompson, Melanie Platz

Group 2 - Food Producers

Facilitator: Kristi Tatebe

John Wilcox, Sue Earle, Kanu (George Bowie), Brandon Bauer, Garnet Lee, Becca Black, Martin Counsell

Group 3 - Food Producers

Facilitator: Matt Thomson

Linda Frost, Lorraine Lowry, Sheri Berkowitz, Rollie Cook, Susan Evans, Kerry Lee, Ron Weisner, Michael Weisner

Group 4 - Food Producers

Facilitator: Tamsin Mills

Kathy Weisner, Mike Fullerton, Conrad Pilon, Stephane Pigeon, Janis Gauthier, Vanessa Farias, Mark Whitear, Jane Squier

Group 5 - Distributors/Food Retailers/Others

Facilitator: Andrea Gillman

Melissa Roberts, Jim Erickson, Ron Pither, Ellen Taylor, George Ehring, Jim LeMaistre (observer)

Group 6 - Food Processors

Facilitator: Bev Suderman

David Wood, Murray Hunter, Lisa Lloyd, Aaron Silverman, Daria Zovi

Group 7 - Eaters/Food Access

Facilitator: Erica Crawford Boettcher

Tony Bruce, Helen Bruce, Peter Lamb, Roger Middleton, Maxine Leichter, Marion Pape

Group 8 - Eaters/Food Access

Facilitator: Kaitlin Kazmierowski

Marian Hargrove, Wendy McEachern, Mataji Ishaya, Lois Sprague, Donn Tarris, Mark Broderick

Group 9 - Other/Overflow

Facilitator: Ian Scott

Group Members: Pat Reichart, Ty Cameron, Zelly Taylor, Gary Coleman, Suzanne Shroder, Dennis Hoddrott, Elizabeth White

Group 1 - Food Producers

Group Members: Jim Scott, Alice Richards, Ted Olson, Nikki Spooner, Elizabeth Cooper, Margaret Thompson, Melanie Platz

Facilitator: Kristina Bouris

GROUP'S RANKING OF CHALLENGES:

1. Poor understanding of local farming and food production issues (6)
2. Critical infrastructure gaps (5)
3. Farmland not being farmed (5)
4. Restrictive local government regulations and policies (4)
5. Availability of water (4)
6. Inability to achieve local food security (3)
7. Loss of farming culture (2)
8. Lack of provincial/federal support for small farms (1)
9. Lack of profitability (1)
10. Lack of skills training (1)
11. Lack of new farmers (1)
12. Labour and housing shortages (1)
13. High cost of land (1)
14. Environmental impacts of farming (0)
15. Conflicts with new neighbours (0)

Summary of Discussion Points:

- Poor understanding of local farming and food production issues is the top challenge because it is the foundation upon which some of the more complex issues (high cost of land, lack of profitability) rest.
- Public awareness will increase profitability.
- We need to protect our existing farmers first, and they need existing potential customers to understand and value local food.
- Public understanding will increase community support, as well as inform policy makers and others.

GROUP'S EVALUATION OF STRATEGIES:

CHALLENGE EVALUATED: *Poor understanding of local farming and food production issues*

“Conceptual” Public Education Strategies (on-paper strategies, not necessarily tied to a physical place):

1. Strategies:

- Speakers Bureau
- Public education
- Information dissemination
- Newspaper/column
- Food wheel
- Eat local campaign
- Establishing a Slow Food Convivium
- Public workshops/classes

Discussion Points:

- Pros: all are easy to do, low-cost, urgent, community-based, broad impacts and are “low-hanging fruit”
- Cons: difficult to measure their success (but it is important to try to measure it)

- Note: These are good strategies as long as there are taken as part of a unified effort and a goal-driven plan. Public education will be a pillar of any plan.

Recommended? YES

“Concrete” Public Education Strategies:

2. Strategy: Farm Tours /Open Houses

Discussion Points:

- Already undertaken on SSI by the Wool Gatherers
- Not for everyone or every farm, but maybe those interested could coordinate
- Pros: exposure, networks, opportunity to meet other farmers as well as public, low-cost
- Cons: requires organization, bio-security, liability, time, timing (seasonality), volunteers needed, not income generating, lack of respect from visitors

Recommended? YES, WITH RESERVATIONS

3. Strategy: Crop Farm Signage

Discussion Points:

- Uniform signage system that would identify crops/livestocks visible along roads
- Signs would change over the course of the season
- Pros: low-cost, educational, raises awareness, easy to implement
- Cons: Not for those who do not have a visible property

Recommended? YES

4. Strategy: Directional Farm Signage

Discussion Points:

- Not useful unless the farm has a tour or shop or other attraction for public to visit
- Artist Studios do not report extra profit
- Could be tied to a directory/map
- Con: Some farms do not want to encourage surprise visitors

Recommended? NO

5. Strategy: Local Food Festivals

Discussion Points:

- Need more celebration of Local Food at SSI festivals
- Could use model from Apple Festival (tours, demos, etc)
- Integrate Local Food into existing Fair. Food booths should feature local food. Fair should be extended given all of the effort involved. Make links to local chefs - cooking demos, local food meals. Could tie in Farm Survivor.
- Could create stand-alone Local Food festival. Or monthly Local Food Meals cooked by chefs, with tickets sold in advance.

Recommended? YES

6. Strategy: Agritourism Working Farm Holidays

Discussion Points:

- Pros: income for farmers, education, informative for visitors, labour, public loves it
- Cons: housing needed, needs coordination

Recommended? YES

7. Strategy: WWOOF World-Wide Opportunities On Organic Farms - Specialized Working Holidays

Discussion Points:

- Pros: address labour shortage in particular, education, informative for visitors, labour, public loves it
- Cons: housing needed, needs coordination, never sure who you are going to get

Recommended? YES

8. Strategy: Labeling of Foods

Discussion Points:

- Increase knowledge about GMOs people don't realize how much they are eating

Recommended? YES

SUMMARY OF OTHER DISCUSSION POINTS:

One member presented an idea for an umbrella organization that would oversee all of the activities. This would unite members of existing organizations. All of the expertise that is needed for these 7 areas can be found on-island.

We need an organization- island-based - to coordinate all related activities and programs.

Different committees to oversee different functions:

1. Marketing/public education
2. Education - farm skills, apprenticeships, etc
3. Land use issues - environmental impacts, crop/pasture rotation plan for all farmland (entire island), farm practices code, etc. water retention
4. Housing (farm labour)
5. Neighbour relations & Island-wide harmonization of land use
6. Oversee hard infrastructure (abattoir, cold storage, food processing, etc)
7. Credit - from an island-based foundation, not affiliated with private financial institutions.

Group 2 - Food Producers

Group Members: John Wilcox, Sue Earle, Kanu (George Bowie), Brandon Bauer, Garnet Lee, Becca Black, Martin Counsell

Facilitator: Kristi Tatebe

GROUP'S RANKING OF CHALLENGES:

1. Critical infrastructure gaps (7)
2. Lack of profitability (5)
3. High cost of land (4)
4. Restrictive local government regulations & policies (3)
5. Lack of new farmers (2.5)
6. Lack of skills training (2.5)
7. Conflicts with new neighbours (2)
8. Labour and housing shortages (2)
9. Lack of provincial & federal support for small farms (1)
10. Farmland not being farmed (1)
11. Inability to achieve local food security (1)
12. Availability of water (0)
13. Loss of farming culture (0)
14. Poor understanding of local farming & food production issues (0)
15. Environmental impacts of farming (0)

GROUP'S EVALUATION OF STRATEGIES:

CHALLENGE EVALUATED: *Critical infrastructure gaps*

1. Strategy: SSI Farm Co-op

Discussion Points:

- Already have had a co-op & failed
- Culture is different here than places where co-ops work (e.g. Saskatchewan)
- If no one is responsible it is difficult to achieve success
- Unknown costs make some wary of joining
- Private individuals can serve many of the needs addressed by a co-op

Recommended? NOT STRONGLY - YES, if managed & overseen by an individual who bears responsibility

2. Strategy: On-Island Cold Storage/Processing Facilities

Discussion Points:

- Needs to have a manager
- Farmer's Institute = built out already (not allowed any more buildings) - would require regulatory change
- Already being done privately (Craig at Natureworks, Stark Rd.)

Recommended? YES BUT private individuals could also fill this need

3. Strategy: Provide More Agro-Industrial Zoned Land

Discussion Points:

- Industrial land can be used for agricultural purposes, as can ALR land
- Need some kind of funding/bonds/lending/investment scheme

Recommended? UNCLEAR

4. Strategy: All-Season Market

Discussion Points:

- If the covered space were available, farmers would fill the demand
- Relates to the need for a storage facility on-island

- Would be an easy inquiry into Parks as to how feasible this is - not really the scope of the Area Farm Plan
- There are already opportunities to market year-round (Natureworks store), that farmers are not exploiting (don't like farming in the winter rain, etc.)
- Problem with Natureworks - can't run a business & buy from farmers at retail prices (has to buy at wholesale prices)

Recommended? YES BUT perhaps shouldn't be a focus of the plan

5. Strategy: Tool Swap

Discussion Points:

- Already happens informally (neighbours)
- Would need a maintenance program to ensure upkeep or else will not be successful
- Many equipment needs are seasonal & cannot be easily shared (e.g. haying equipment) as it must be used within a very short time window & all those with that need will need it at that time.
- Can hire machinery & private operators for most tasks, but it's expensive

Recommended? PERHAPS BUT needs careful planning & management. Not a priority strategy

6. Strategy: Supplies List

Discussion Points:

- Good idea, easy to implement
- Could be published in a web-based format (e.g. Farmer's Institute site?)
- Useful
- Should start with a list of needs, and create a calendar of availability & rates for supplies
- Education component
- Could involve several categories (produce/meat available, as well as educational opportunity)

Recommended? YES BUT once again this could happen outside the AFP process, so perhaps shouldn't be a focus

7. Strategy: On-Island Meat Processing Facility

Discussion Points:

- Abattoir = too costly
- Federal regulations regarding waste disposal are uncertain - this results in an unacceptable level of risk for any investor
- Not enough animals to make it cost effective [aside: perhaps legalizing the sale of game meat could address this?]
- Cowichan Valley facilities are still more feasible
- Farmer's Institute has a report commissioned on this topic - available upon request

Recommended? YES IF the regulatory uncertainties, barriers can be overcome. This should be a focus of the plan.

8. Strategy: Refrigerated Meat Transport

Discussion Points:

- Again, should be privately owned/run
- Good opportunity for an individual

Recommended? YES BUT again may be below the scale of AFP process

9. Strategy: Reduced Ferry Fares for Farmers

Discussion Points:

- Great idea, but it would never happen!

10. Strategy: Create a Separate Produce Market

Discussion Points:

- Already exists in the Tuesday market

Recommended? NO - already exists

SUMMARY OF OTHER DISCUSSION POINTS:

- Challenges are all inter-related, so it was difficult to prioritize
- High cost of land agreed to be an underlying challenge (at the root of many of the others)

Additional Strategies:

- Develop an “Agricultural Procurement & Marketing co-coordinator” position.
 - This person would link producers / suppliers etc. & give farmers more time to farm
 - Co-operative ventures would need good management - this person could fill that role
- Farmland Trust strategy also fits here
- Lack of housing for farm workers should be identified as a critical infrastructure gap

Group 3 - Food Producers

Group Members: Linda Frost, Lorraine Lowry, Sheri Berkowitz, Rollie Cook, Susan Evans, Kerry Lee, Ron Weisner, Michael Weisner

Facilitator: Matt Thomson

GROUP'S RANKING OF CHALLENGES:

1. Critical Infrastructure Gaps (9)
2. Lack of Provincial and Federal Support / Restrictive Local Gov't Policies (8)
3. Lack of Profitability (7)
4. High Cost of Land (5)
5. Availability of Water (4)
6. In ability to Achieve Food Security (2)
7. Labour and Housing Shortages (2)
8. Environmental Impacts of Farming (1)
9. Loss of Farming Culture (1)
10. Poor Understanding of Local Farming and Food Production Issues (1)
11. All other challenges: (0)

GROUP'S EVALUATION OF STRATEGIES:

#1 CHALLENGE EVALUATED: *Critical Infrastructure Gaps*

Interim/Immediate Strategies:

1. **Strategy: Co-Ordinate Off-Island Transportation for Slaughter**

Discussion Points:

- Not a viable long-term solution
- Useful to reduce costs in the short-term, but it's a quick fix
- Moving livestock is hard on animals and devalues the final product

Recommended? YES BUT only as part of a longer term planning toward on-island meat processing facilities

2. **Strategy: Supplies List/Web Forum**

Discussion Points:

- Low-hanging fruit
- A reasonable way to link reliable supplies/suppliers to farmers
- Integrated into a larger networking effort through the development of a farming web

Recommended? YES

3. **Strategy: SSI Co-op**

Discussion Points:

- Been there, done that
- We've already tried and it fell apart

Recommended? NO

Long-Term Strategies:

4. **Strategy: Abattoir**

Discussion Points:

- Not immediately do-able, but ultimately necessary
- Part of a long-term farm strategy

Recommended? YES with proper planning

5. Strategy: Food Processing/Agro-Industrial Processing Facilities

Discussion Points:

- Would enormously contribute to viability of farming, but there's not currently enough production
- Needs to be coordinated with zoning changes to allow further development of this infrastructure

Recommended? YES - with increased on-island production

6. Strategy: Winter Market

Discussion Points:

- Good way for local consumers to ensure year-round food security
- Not enough production in winter months
- Concerns about who would work/run the market all year

Recommended? YES - with increased productivity

Additional Notes:

Participants recognized the importance of both immediate/interim solutions to critical infrastructure gaps, however, many of the long-term solutions are dependent upon at least maintaining, if not increasing farm productivity on-island. Without productive farms the implementation of many of these strategies would be useless in moving toward food security.

#2 CHALLENGE EVALUATED: *Lack of Provincial, Federal And Local Support*

Overall Strategy: Use Existing Local Institutions to Lobby for Change

1. NEW Strategy: Strengthen Local Institutions

Discussion Points:

- ING, IFI, SSLers for Safe Food and the organizing committee for the Apple Festival provide a strong existing community framework through which to implement change
- These institutions would also provide outreach framework to ensure citizenry's support for agricultural initiatives

Recommended? YES

2. Strategy: Local Lobbying

Discussion Points:

- Use strengthened institutions to push OCP review (agricultural), review bylaws (labour, housing, agro-industrial food processing zoning, processing rules)

Recommended? YES

3. Strategy: Press for Meeting with Murray Coell, Local MLA

Discussion Points:

- Use stronger local institutions, and Plan to Farm results, to express concerns about viability of small-scale producers
- Depend on local citizens for support
- Needs mobilization of entire community, not just 120 farmers

Recommended? YES

#3 CHALLENGE EVALUATED: *Lack of Profitability*

3. Strategy: Branding/Marketing of Local Food

Discussion Points:

- Consumers need education about why food is cheap, and become willing to pay more for local food
- Should be targeted at supplying local needs, not necessarily based on tourist dollars

- Brand will allow higher costs
- Something like a sticker saying “I support SSI farmers.”

Recommended? YES - targeted locally

4. Strategy: Cutting Costs (Turn IFI Back into Buying Co-op)

Discussion Points:

- Feed costs are 20% higher on-island
- Requires going off-island
- Buying in bulk, collectively, makes it significantly cheaper to buy for producers
- Part of a coordination strategy, but also linking with the strengthening of local institution
- Some concern about that needing to be a member-driven initiative

Recommended? YES - if not IFI, then another institution

SUMMARY OF OTHER DISCUSSION POINTS:

- These strategies feed into each other, and address some other challenges
- Strengthening local institutions is tied into coordination and education efforts, and could provide an institution/institutions through which to do immediate, interim and long-term planning

Group 4 - Food Producers

Group Members: Kathy Weisner, Mike Fullerton, Conrad Pilon, Stephane Pigeon, Janis Gauthier, Vanessa Farias, Mark Whitear, Jane Squier

Facilitator: Tamsin Mills

GROUP'S RANKING OF CHALLENGES:

1. Critical Infrastructure Gaps
2. Lack of Profitability
3. Lack of Provincial and Federal Support for small farms
4. Inability to Achieve Local Food Security
5. Restrictive Local Government Regulations and Policies
6. Availability of Water (tied with above)
7. Lack of Skills Training
8. Labour and housing Shortages (tied with above)
9. Poor Understanding of Local Farming and Food Production Issues
10. Environmental Impacts of Farming
11. Farmland not being Farmed
12. Lack of new Farmers (tied with above)
13. Conflicts with New Neighbours (all those marked #10 received no votes)
14. High Cost of Land
15. Loss of Farming Culture

Summary of Discussion Points:

- Lack of skills training should just be called lack of skills
 - Lack of skills seem to be at the bottom of most of the challenges
- Hard to focus on one challenge because they are all tied together
- Critical Infrastructure gaps really can't be discussed without thinking about economic viability
- Soil Amendments left off challenge list (pointed out by several group members that composting facility was included in the Critical Infrastructure Gaps strategy).

GROUP'S EVALUATION OF STRATEGIES:

CHALLENGE EVALUATED: *Critical Infrastructure Gaps*

1. Strategy: Provide More Agro-Industrial Zoned Land

Discussion Points:

- Limited more by "not in my backyard" (NIMBY) neighbour conflicts than by zoning
- Some questions in group as to whether one can carry out industrial activities on ALR now without restrictions
- Feeling was among group that no restrictions currently exist for industrial activities on ALR except for those arising from NIMBYism (neighbour conflicts)
- No specific zoning regulation exists currently for "agro-industrial" zones
 - Zoning is not the limiting factor here
- Environmental impacts that could be regulated can be controlled through Environmental Farm Planning (EFP) program

Recommended? NO - Not a zoning problem

2. Strategy: On-Island Meat Processing Facility

Discussion Points:

- Lack of on-island meat processing facility was the straw that broke the camel's back. One added hassle making farming on-island less viable
- Mobile Abattoir facility:
 - Model in San Juan Islands
 - Cost approximately \$250 thousand
 - Problems include:
 - Hard to find a manager and hard to find people to slaughter the animals
 - Disposal of offal (composting could help resolve this issue)
 - Water and runoff issues
 - Unclear legislation/regulation
 - Some feel that Federal Government has ruled against mobile abattoir facilities
 - Regulation very unclear in terms of moving livestock. Including moving them on Saltspring to get to where mobile abattoir is set up.
 - Do they need full vet workup, tagging?
 - Would it be any easier to transport livestock short distance on Saltspring compared with taking them off-island?
 - Benefit: for all islands as a whole would be benefit
 - For Salt Spring animals would still have to be transported to central area
- Permanent Abattoir - question of economic viability - not enough animals on SSI to make it viable
- Need incentives (financial or otherwise) to get producers that are going off island back ON island
 - Producers that require abattoir need to be at the table as a group
 - If economic gain and increased ease is demonstrated by mobile abattoir then will bring those going off island back to processing ON island
- Infrastructure Capital is the biggest problem
 - Need government investment in SSI Infrastructure
 - Look for local investment in Abattoir - ad. in the paper
- Need to better inform producers about regulations concerning transport of livestock and possible alternatives for processing
- Buy in - need community buy into food security
 - Frankensteer and Meatrix movies
 - Educate public concerning health implications and treatment of transport and off-island processing
 - Need total buy in by producers in terms of food security and local abattoir facility

Recommended? YES

3. Strategy: Refrigerated Meat Transport

Discussion Points:

1. This would happen if above strategy to have local processing facility (on-island) is successful

Recommended? YES

4. Strategy: Cold Food Storage Facility

Discussion Points:

- Case study: Stow Lake Farm - walk-in storage, CSA
- Need for a facility that is large and carefully controlled that can take us into the winter
- Pros: Extends life of crop, People will grow more of what they know how to grow best, Food for the winter
- Cons: Premature strategy: not enough production on island, Hard to find land for central facility, A central facility would take too long to get to. Food viability and quality decreases rapidly with any time lag before cold storage
- Monetary fund
 - This could be used to invest in such things as cold storage facilities
- Create small neighbourhood scale coolers
 - This would decrease transport time
 - Decrease time product is out of cooler
 - Coolers at this scale are more manageable
 - Tied to neighbourhood markets - 4 to 5 farms could create infrastructure for small markets

Recommended? YES though not as a central facility but at smaller scale (see below)

5. NEW Strategy: Neighbourhood or Grower Collectives

Discussion Points:

- Neighbourhood might not be correct word as do not want to necessarily denote geographic proximity
- Do not want to use co-op as this has been tried and not the way to go
 - Co-op tried that included worker, producer, consumer
 - Co-op might work if just included producers
 - Suggested words such as partnership, collective, collaborative
- Some examples of collaborations on this scale
 - See Spirit View Ranch - found through researching Thrifty's Traditional Beef
 - Similkameen Fruit Packers
- Pros include:
 - Not duplicating each others efforts
 - SSI brand ties in here - identify what we do well
 - These small group collaborations link to addressing many challenges through together working on strategies
 - Can function as a unit offering and taking advantage of learning opportunities
- Cons include:
 - We've been talking about this for a long time but nothing ever gets going
 - We need a trigger or crisis to get us going
- What would this look like:
 - Produce stands at group scale
 - On-site coolers
 - Co-ordination of production for continuous supply for market and commercial sales
 - Co-ordination of distribution
 - Small groups could together educate and market
 - Come together with other groups for PR campaign

- Issue with so many groups on island overlapping their efforts in terms of education
- There needs to be an effort to come together to minimize overlap and maximize effectiveness of information dissemination

Recommended? YES - instead of SSI Farm co-op look at smaller group collaborations

6. Strategy: SSI Farm Co-op

Discussion Points:

- This has been more or less addressed by the above strategy
- Several other ‘Soft Infrastructure’ strategies fall within this category and therefore weren’t addressed separately
 - Supplies list (apparently one already exists)
 - Farm inputs collaborative
 - Tool swap or co-op

Recommended? Not as a Co-op - see above strategy concerning small group collaborations

7. Strategies: The group did not support the strategies “Coordinate Off-Island Processing” and “Coordinate Off-Island Transportation”

Discussion Points:

- The group felt that they wanted to avoid strategies that facilitated shipping livestock off island
- Support temporary strategies that include processing off-island but are more interested in the creation of strategies that keep processing on-island

Recommended? Temporarily only

SUMMARY OF OTHER DISCUSSION POINTS:

We did a quick opinion poll at the beginning of the open discussion to find out which strategies needed our immediate attention. These included:

- On-Island processing
- Food storage facility (cold)
- Develop all season farmer’s market
- Community Composting facility
- SSI farm co-op which would also address:
 - Supplies list
 - Tool swap or co-op
 - Farm inputs collaborative
- Food processing facility received moderate priority and the other strategies were flagged as low priority
- Developing an all-season farmer’s market was strongly supported - the issue here would be finding good management
- Separate produce market - this has already been done to an extent via the Tuesday Market - recognized need to extend market season
- Big problem flagged as economic viability of farming
 - Many doing something else to subsidize farming and in turn working a lot
 - People have less time to think and act on these strategies
 - Need for skills and extension workers to create business plan to help make farm viable
 - Need for practical skills to increase viability
 - Feeling by a group member that people are farming at the level that they want to and they don’t want to do more
- Could work longer hours or full time all year to increase viability but they aren’t

Group 5 - Distributors/Food Retailers/Others

Group Members: Melissa Roberts, Jim Erickson, Ron Pither, Ellen Taylor, George Ehring, Jim LeMaistre (observer)

Facilitator: Andrea Gillman

GROUP'S RANKING OF PRIORITY CHALLENGES:

1. High cost of land (5 votes)
2. Lack of provincial and federal support for small farms (4 votes)
3. Labour and housing shortages (3 votes)
4. Lack of profitability (3 votes)
5. Critical infrastructure gaps (2 votes)
6. Farmland not being farmed (2 votes)
7. Restrictive local government regulations and policies (2 votes)
8. Inability to achieve local food security (1 vote)
9. Lack of skills training (1 vote)
10. Loss of farming culture (1 vote)
11. Poor understanding of local farming and food production issues (1 vote)

Summary of Discussion Points:

- General consensus on challenges selected as priorities others that didn't receive many votes but were noted as important in discussion—loss of farming culture and poor understanding of local farming and food production issues.
- Language -effort should be made to use positive language when talking about tax incentives

GROUP'S EVALUATION OF STRATEGIES:

CHALLENGE EVALUATED: *High Cost of Land*

1. Strategy: Develop Linking Lands & Future Farmers Program on SSI

Discussion Points:

- Time wise this is quick to implement
- Cost effective
- Not a lot of 'bang for your buck' here—need to have security of tenure in doing this, establish long term leases, ownership
- Have seen advertisements for this around town, with little response
- Need to focus on bringing all parties together and better informing people of opportunities
- Proximity to linked land is an issue
- Difficult if not living on land and wanting to do large scale farming
- Family-can't leave anything for your children with this model
- This is do-able but is not effective

Recommended? NO

2. Strategy: Farmland Trust

Discussion Points:

- Provides best value
- Does not change the value of land, works well given high cost of land
- Administration system-can set up group to administer lands
- Co-operative options are a possibility
- Can examine Cuba model
- Plots can be passed down through the family

- Three Point Properties: here Farmers Institute doesn't want to be responsible for the administration of land dedicated to them, need to bring in board or other organization to administer.
- This model does not rely on senior levels of government

Recommended? YES

3. Strategy: Include Value-added income in Calculation of Farm Income

Discussion Points:

- Would encourage diversity of products
- Would yield higher income
- Links with strategy of creating more financial incentives to farm

Recommended? YES

4. Strategy: Local Governments Purchase ALR then Lease Back to Farmers

Discussion Points:

- Poor use of taxpayers money
- Farmland trust is a better alternative, can be linked to investment group

Recommended? NO

5. Strategy: Subdivision Cash (i.e. developers dollars) Put into Fund to Purchase Viable Parcels of Land

Discussion Points:

- Acquiring land to be used for community gardens
- Redefinition of park land to include community gardens lands under 'recreational use'
- A mechanism for 5% is already in place (CRD)

Recommended? YES

6. Strategy: Tax Incentives for Personal Production

Discussion Points:

- Does final use matter, whether it goes to personal eating or selling to a neighbour to eat?
- This is desirable but not a priority

Recommended? NO

7. Strategy: Establish a SSI Agricultural Investment Group

Discussion Points:

- A high priority issue
- With capital on island, this could allow investment in the purchase of an abattoir facility
- The spinning mill on the island was purchased in this way
- Catherine Austin Fitts and Solari Circles, which use capital to enrich the local economy, is one model to look at
- Can the credit union be brought in? Island Monetary Fund? Salt Spring Foundation

Recommended? YES

Group 6 - Food Processors

Group members: David Wood, Murray Hunter, Lisa Lloyd, Aaron Silverman, Daria Zovi
Facilitator: Bev Suderman

NOTE About Process:

4 out of 5 of these participants were new to the process. Before they felt confident to proceed with the exercises on the agenda, they wished to revisit the framework from which to assess the challenges and strategies. A first concern regarding the stated vision of “re-establishing agriculture as a priority” is whether or not there is a threshold for something to be a priority, i.e. how would we know whether or not this goal had been achieved? A second concern, given the increased population of Salt Spring Island, is that re-establishing food security for the Island, in terms of being able to produce enough food for everybody who lives and visits there, was unrealistic. Rather, a bigger, more inclusive vision is required.

Therefore they proposed the following as a vision for the Salt Spring Island Farm Plan:

Picture Salt Spring Island = Agriculture. SSI is a model for a new economically viable, land-based agricultural economy linking production, processing, marketing, education, tourism, and other land-based (food, drink, fibre, wood, etc.) components. Criteria for inclusion: environmentally sensitive, socially just, sustainable, and economically viable.

In terms of creating such an integrated agricultural economy, participants feared that the Cowichan Valley was far ahead of Salt Spring.

GROUP'S RANKING OF CHALLENGES:

1. Lack of profitability (5)
2. Labour and housing shortages (5)
3. Restrictive local government regulations and policy (4)
 - a. Related to housing
 - b. Zoning re brewery restrictive and expensive
4. Availability of water (3)
5. High cost of land (3)
6. Critical infrastructure gaps (2)
7. Farmland not being farmed (2)
8. Lack of new farmers (1)

Summary of Discussion Points:

- If farming and food processing were more profitable, many of the other challenges would disappear.

GROUP'S EVALUATION OF STRATEGIES:

#1 CHALLENGE EVALUATED: Lack of Profitability

NOTE: Strategies have been somewhat grouped, since this is how the group members processed them. Also, certain strategies have been pulled from other parts of the list, because they seem applicable to profitability.

1. **Strategy: Develop the Salt Spring Island “Brand” & Related Marketing Strategies, Including Quality Control**

Discussion Points:

- Not a lot of effort should be put into this. If the product is good enough, it will evolve by itself.

Recommended? NO

2. Strategy: Encourage Local Tourism Operators to Promote Local Foods

Discussion Points:

- Some participants thought this was being done already, but not all participants were having that experience, so it could be encouraged more.

Recommended? YES

3. Strategy: Promote & Support Agri-eco-tourism

Discussion Points:

- Fits with the proposed vision and is strongly supported as part of an integrated new agricultural economy.

Recommended? YES

4. Strategy: Provide Low or No-Interest Loans to New Farmers & Small Farms, & Other Suggestions Re Financial Incentives to Farmers

Discussion Points:

- Deep concern, based on the experience of the European Union and other bodies, that financial incentives have a strong tendency to create a situation of dependency on the part of the recipient of the subsidy, and are not sustainable for the farmer or for the land
- Preferred strategies involve addressing policy barriers and creating farmer-friendly and agriculture-friendly policies and procedures
- Suggestions re creating agriculture-friendly policies at the local gov't level dealt with elsewhere

Recommended? NO

5. Strategy: Include Value-Added Income in Calculation of Farm Income

Discussion Points:

- The group was surprised that this was not the case.

Recommended? YES

6. Strategy: Set Up Local Bartering & Trading System - Establish SSI Agricultural Coop

Discussion Points:

- May not be relevant to this group
- May require a lot of effort for minimal return
- To function best, groups arise organically. Can't be forced.

Recommended? NOT DECIDED

7. Strategy: Cooperative Applications for Quota

Discussion Points:

- Rules need to be changed at the marketing board
- Concern that there is limited capacity to meet quota requirements on SSI; would need to be assessed

Recommended? Feasibility could be assessed and then a recommendation formulated

8. Strategy: Eco-Forestry Outlet, Cold Storage Facility, Community Kitchen, Abattoir, & Other Infrastructure Development Ideas

Discussion Points:

- Addressing infrastructure gaps such as these could be done using a centralized planning approach
- For example, after a feasibility study was completed for a facility (and it was found to be viable, or a scale was established that would be viable while still profitable - see discussion of challenges), then the local gov't could assemble

land, zoning, business plan, and other elements to ensure a smooth policy road, and then invite tenders from qualified entrepreneurs to invest in this business. The local gov't then issues a license to the entrepreneur, who puts in the capital, to proceed.

Recommended? Feasibility studies required before a recommendation can be formulated

9. Strategy: Improve Local Food Retail Exposure & Related Restaurant Strategy

Discussion Points:

- Key barriers include lack of secure supply and cost of SSI produce
- Creation of cold storage facility would assist with addressing these barriers
- See earlier discussion re addressing infrastructure gaps

Recommended? NOT DECIDED

10. Strategy: Community Supported Agriculture

Discussion Points:

- The “fashion” has changed, and CSA is much less supported now than it used to be
- A lot of work for farmers - Imposes a weekly planting schedule because people like to have lettuce every week
- Consumers like to have certain types of produce each week, whether or not it is in season in their area

Recommended? NOT DECIDED

11. Strategy: Food Contracts with Public Institutions

Discussion Points:

- A very good idea - provides security for the producer, and builds community linkages

Recommended? YES

12. Strategy: Provide More Agro-Industrial Zoned Land

Discussion Points:

- Shortages of land zoned as agricultural, industrial, or agro-industrial lead to increased costs of doing business, with direct implications for profitability
- Concern about public perception on SSI that “industrial” activity jeopardizes “pristine” quality of land base; need to recognize that not all industrial activity is equal, and that a working economy requires that food be produced and processed

Recommended? YES

13. Strategy: Develop an All-Season Farmer’s Market

Discussion Points:

- Essential to the creation of an integrated agricultural economy

Recommended? YES

14. Strategy: Farm-Based Food Festivals

Discussion Points:

- Excellent idea!
- Helps to build an integrated agricultural economy on SSI

Recommended? YES

#2 CHALLENGE EVALUATED: Labour & Housing Shortages

NOTE: Discussion related to related strategies was less systematic due to time constraints.

1. Strategy: Create Innovative Zoning for On-Farm Housing

Discussion Points:

- Current housing regulations, combined with high cost of land and housing, contribute to labour shortages
- Requires review of ALR housing policy
- Solution needs to enable farmer to provide housing for agric workers

Recommended? YES

2. Strategy: Review ALR Housing Policy

Discussion Points:

- Current policy is not working on SSI

Recommended? YES

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES:

1. Strategy: Farm “Survivor”

Discussion Points:

- Great idea!

Recommended? YES

2. Strategy: Reward farmers for Ecological Practices

Discussion Points:

- Good alternative to providing subsidies
- Reinforces the type of agriculture that fits with SSI, and serves the greater good

Recommended? YES

3. Strategy: Renewed Agricultural Extension Services to Farmers

Discussion Points:

- Removal of this type of support has been a blow to farmers/producers, and has contributed to many of the problems that SSI is facing

Recommended? YES

Group 7 - Eaters/Food Access

Group Members: Tony Bruce, Helen Bruce, Peter Lamb, Roger Middleton, Maxine Leichter, Marion Pape

Facilitator: Erica Crawford Boettcher

GROUP'S RANKING OF CHALLENGES:

1. Ability to achieve food security (4)
2. Achieving profitability (4)
3. Filling critical infrastructure gaps (3)
4. Achieving supportive local government regulations and policies (3)
5. Labour and housing shortages (3)
6. Farmland not being farmed (3)
7. Ensuring availability of water (2)
8. High cost of land (2)
9. Lack of provincial and federal support for small farms (2)
10. Conflicts with new neighbours (1)
11. Environmental impacts of farming (1)
12. Lack of new farmers (1)
13. Lack of skills training (0)
14. Loss of farming culture (0)
15. Poor understanding of local farming/food production issues (0)

Summary of Discussion Points:

- Challenges should be reworded into positive language (some have been done above)
- Food security is an ultimate goal, not a challenge
 - All of the challenges listed are part of what needs to be addressed to achieve food security
 - There is a hierarchy of issues that contribute to lack of food security (underlying causes of food insecurity)
 - Need to both work within the existing system/framework (government, economic system, etc) as well as working to change the system to achieve this.
- To evaluate any of these strategies, we need more information/statistics: need to know who our “enemy” is in order to understand what we’re facing, how best to achieve our goals
- Low hanging fruit: this process should directly contribute recommendations to the OCP process currently ongoing
- Additional strategy suggested: organized process for bringing more land into the ALR each year, at a given time (minimize costs/difficulty by holding it at one time during the year where proposals can be brought forward)
- Critical infrastructure is an underlying problem contributing to food security
- This process needs to come up with specific targets, achievable actions and goals
- The challenges all overlap, can’t address one without considering others
- Concern expressed that challenges and strategies outlined here don’t apply to consumers as much as farmers (focus on production challenges/strategies)

GROUP'S EVALUATION OF STRATEGIES (strategies are in no particular order)

CHALLENGES EVALUATED: *Lack of Profitability & Achieving Food Security (incentives for food production)*

1. Strategy: Island organization to Coordinate Overall Agricultural/Food Security Activity on SSI

Discussion Points:

- What is the role of the Farmers' Institute, Island Natural Growers, etc? Why aren't they playing this role?
- They are already doing a lot of these things
- Don't have an overarching body that coordinates across all of this, including FI, ING, etc.
- Suggestion: current steering committee for this process could be continued/institutionalized to serve this coordinating function for the island

Recommended? YES

2. Strategy: Basis of Information, Statistics Needed to Set Targets

Discussion Points:

- For example, water supply is a basic concern that underlies the viability of agriculture and all development on SSI.
- What is the water supply necessary to be able to have food security? What are the resource constraints? Where does ag. need compete with other demands?

Recommended? YES

3. Strategy: Outline a Feasible Approach to Achieving Food Security

Discussion Points:

- Time frame (10 years? 20 years?)
- Targets
- Island-wide coordination and public relations function
- Identify the problem (with appropriate information), come up with doable solutions
- Identify gaps, develop targets to fill them
- Identify/quantify resource constraints
- Evaluate economics and supply constraints
- Need to see how all of these issues are related, in order to understand what the priorities should be

Recommended? YES

4. Strategy: Farmland Trust

Discussion Points:

- Subsidizing farmland for small farms

Recommended? YES

5. Strategy: Infrastructure

Discussion Points:

- Establish an agricultural co-op on SSI
- Cold storage
- Mobile abattoir
- Island-wide organization to coordinate agricultural activity
- Water
- Satisfies all criteria

Recommended? YES?

6. **Strategy: Eat and Buy Local Campaign**
Recommended? YES
7. **Strategy: Zoning Changes for Cooperative Buying/Sharing of Land**
Recommended? YES
8. **Strategy: Joint Consumer-Producer Lobbying of Other Levels of Government to Support Small Farms**
Recommended? YES
9. **Strategy: Support for Personal Food Production and Community Gardens**
Recommended? YES
10. **Strategy: Low/No-interest Loans through the SS Monetary Fund**
Discussion Points:
 - This is a low-hanging fruit (should be able to do it right now)Recommended? YES
11. **Strategy: Identify Specific Recommendations that can Directly be Incorporated in the OCP (changes, addition)**
Discussion Points:
 - This should be done now (low-hanging fruit)Recommended? YES

SUMMARY OF OTHER DISCUSSION POINTS:

- These strategies were all considered practical, given the criteria.
- All are recommended
- They are presented in no particular order
- Other strategies were not evaluated (this list represents some issues under profitability and food security that our group identified as priorities)

Group 8 - Eaters/Food Access

Group Members: Marian Hargrove, Wendy McEachern, Mataji Ishaya, Lois Sprague, Donn Tarris, Mark Broderick

Facilitator: Kaitlin Kazmierowski

GROUP'S RANKING OF CHALLENGES:

1. Labour and Housing Shortages (5)
2. Critical Infrastructure Gaps (4)
3. Farmland Not Being Farmed (4)
4. Poor Understanding of Local Farming and Food Production Issues (4)
5. Restrictive Local Government Regulations and Policies (3)
6. Lack of Profitability (2)
7. Inability to Achieve Local Food Security (2)
8. High Cost of Land (2)
9. Availability of water (1)
10. Lack of Skills Training (1)
11. Lack of Federal and Provincial Support for Small Farms (1)
12. Loss of Farming Culture (1)
13. Conflicts with New Neighbours (0)
14. Environmental Impacts of Farming (0)
15. Lack of New Farmers (0)

Summary of Discussion Points:

The group was surprised that they had voted for “Labour and Housing Shortages”, but also recognized the links between all these challenges. They decided to proceed with this one to see what would come of it.

GROUP'S EVALUATION OF STRATEGIES:

CHALLENGE EVALUATED: *Labour and Housing Shortages*

1. **Strategy: Hire Students (also suggested to make farm work a type of community service for those who have committed petty crimes)**

Discussion Points:

- PROs: Structures for this are already in place on SSI, Farmer support for this, students gain a deeper understanding of agriculture, can be counted as credit for school
- CONs: What real benefits will farmers derive? Lack of skilled labour, different students each season (transient), will have to change minimum wage rules (student min wage for first 500 hours can be as low as \$6; a disincentive)

Recommended? YES - this should start as early as middle school in order to foster on-going connectedness with the land, and future farming relationships

2. **Strategy: Foreign Labour**

Discussion Points:

- CONs: Incentive for locals to leave the farms because there is a reliance on foreign labour to do the “dirty” work, a form of off-loading (might as well ship all produce to another country)
- The group has nothing against foreign workers, but felt that more energy should be invested in local people to work on local farms, also were concerned about human right issues with migrant labour

Recommended? NO

3. Strategy: Create Innovative Zoning for On-Farm Housing

Discussion Points:

- PROs: Keep people on island to do work (less of a transient lifestyle), workers wouldn't have to drive to work (environmental benefits), housing could serve as equity for young farmers/ families, increased sense of belonging for workers, could be built as summer housing/ temporary housing which could be dismantled in the winter, keeping labour on the island all year could foster the growth of off season products and increase consistency in lifestyle and labour needs being met
- CONs: Re-zoning is expensive and time consuming, could result in overall loss of farmland if too much housing is allowed, summer housing promotes the increase on the number of people on-island when water is the most scarce

Recommended? YES - especially since the OCP review is happening. The group recognized that this could take a long time, but felt that it could enable real change. Some members felt that this would be an interesting referendum question; allow the residents to vote and have a say on zoning

4. Strategy: Farm Labour Pool

Discussion Points:

- This is already in place throughout various organizations (e.g. Peninsula Community Services), however, this strategy would require some marketing to make it more visible
- The group also felt that more information regarding farmers' needs is required, and that this strategy could be implemented using a "voluntary" component (e.g. barter some fresh produce for organizing/ training a labour pool)

Recommended? YES - the group felt that this one was a "Low Hanging Fruit". They were also surprised that no "master list" had been created, and thought that connecting the various job posting/ needs arenas via a database or website would be easy. It was recommended that the Farmer's Institute or Island Natural Growers could help with the website and once established, it could be self managing

5. Strategy: "Build, Then Ask"

Discussion Points:

- The group felt that illegal activities shouldn't be promoted, however, as some members put it, "...if the government is an ass" then maybe they should

Recommended? NO "...but if the government is an ass..."

6. Strategy: Hostel for Farm Labourers

Discussion Points:

- How this could be funded: The International Hostelling Association, Barter work for room (like WWOOFing or the Work for Food Strategy that we never got to), co-op ownership by farmers who would also share the housed labour
- This would promote a stronger sense of community between farmers and hired labourers
- It was also noted that seasonal buildings could be used to house seasonal labour (e.g. the school for the summer months)

Recommended? YES - it was also noted that a hostel used to exist on the island

7. Strategy: Foster Large-Scale Investment in Housing (a central investment engine)

Discussion Points:

- PROs: Frame work already in place (already happening), alternative (non-monetary) returns could be better/safer communities and such returns are saleable with SSI residents (this has already happened with the pool and library), could foster that idea on smaller and more permanent forms of housing with decreased ecological footprints
- CONs: returns might not be monetary (a disincentive for some), low investment return

Recommended? YES

8. Strategy: Attracting Labour through On-Island Training and Housing

Discussion Points:

- Could implement an “adoption” process for those who want to farm, but don’t have start-up land/ money
- Could address the lack of year-round labour
- Could attract young farmers/ apprentices
- Provincial and federal inputs could help fund this type of initiative in terms of sustainability education
- A LLAFFchapter was recommended for SSI (the group kind of got tied up in just discussing, rather than evaluating this strategy)

Recommended? YES - the group felt that with was an umbrella incorporating other strategies such as, “SSI Farm Labour Housing Strategy,” “Farm Labour Pool” and “SSI Housing Agency”

SUMMARY OF OTHER DISCUSSION POINTS:

- We need to encourage more permanent labourers on the island, because currently SSI doesn’t have the population to achieve sustainability in terms of food security
- However, it was also recognized that encouraging more people to move to SSI will deplete water resources and possibly have other negative environmental effects.

Group 9 - Other/Overflow

Group Members: Pat Reichart, Ty Cameron, Zelly Taylor, Gary Coleman, Suzanne Shroder, Dennis Hoddirott, Elizabeth White

Facilitator: Ian Scott

GROUP'S RANKING OF CHALLENGES:

1. Lack of provincial/federal support for small farms (5)
2. High cost of land (5)
3. Lack of profitability (4)
4. Critical infrastructure gaps (4)
5. Labour and housing shortages (4)
6. Inability to achieve local food security (3)
7. Farmland not being farmed (2)
8. Poor understanding of local farming and food production issues (2)
9. Restrictive local government regulations and policies (2)
10. Lack of skills training (1)
11. Lack of new farmers (1)
12. Availability of water (1)
13. Loss of farming culture (1)
14. Conflicts with new neighbours (0)
15. Environmental impacts of farming (0)

Summary of Discussion Points:

- Lack of provincial/federal support for small farms and lack of profitability are interwoven issues. These are macro issues. If you can solve these than you can have some real impact. Much of the group agreed with this but not everyone.
- If we can solve the bigger things (provincial/federal support and lack of profitability) some of the other challenges are more local things that be solved, but there are cost involved with doing so.
- Dissenting opinion - Profitability is maybe not such a big deal. Tina Fraser nets 8000 dollars an acre on the Saanich peninsula growing produces. It is hard work and you need good skills to do so. This is an intensive farming operation. The question is what kind of vision do we have for farming/agriculture on Salt Spring. Is it mechanized? Do we find a large influx of new farmers who have the energy and enthusiasm that is required?
- Lack of new farmers is really linked to the lack of profitability (very little incentive to get into farming). Part of the challenge is that lack of information/skills on how to achieve reasonable returns. Average age of farmers is something like 67 years. There has been two generation of farmers who have not made a profit. That is why no young people want to farm.
- Lack of housing a really big issue as well. One reason of the group members is thinking of pursuing farming in a place other than Salt Spring.
- Food security is really important as well. If we really had to feed ourselves, if food was an issue of sovereignty then government and government and community would look on agriculture and farming issues in a different light.

GROUP'S EVALUATION OF STRATEGIES

#1 CHALLENGE EVALUATED: *Lack of Provincial/Federal Support for Small Farms*

Priority Strategy: An Agriculture Commission/Council

- Would have some status with local government - CRD or Islands Trust, but would be arms length to some degree so as not to get hung up in the local bureaucracy
- Would have a much bigger mandate than the Agricultural Advisory Committee that focuses primarily on land use related matters. Is not likely simply a glorified AAC
- Would lobby all levels of government
- Would work well if it formed connections/worked with other communities
- Should also have an "on-the ground component." Such as managing/running the new Three Point donated properties.
- Could raise money and take advantage of interest in health and climate change issues
- Needs at least some paid staff. Need a strong manager for managing land and other non-policy activities.
- Not a co-op - but having it manage or oversee land starts to make it more tangible.
- Policy arm should work like the Water Council
- Another example the Toronto Food Policy Council
→ Local government needs to take food seriously
- Current local organizations - ING, FI don't have the mandate or interest to take on these roles
- Mandate (official status) are really important

Secondary Strategy: Work on Housing Issues/Regulations

- Develop a housing agreement. Work with the CRD
- Local housing agency - under local government control
- ALC - needs to revisit on-farm housing policy
- Having a house on the farm where you work gives you a strong attachment to the land
- Figure out a way that farm labourers can earn equity and own their own homes (but probably not the land)

Secondary Strategy: Community-Owned Land

- Have it owned by the provincial and/or federal and/or local government. Parks for nature conservation/recreation already exist. Why not food production? Examples already include Ruckle Park, Burgone Bay and Ford Lake. Need to take better advantage of those.
- Don't call it a "trust" or "bank." Too many connotations with that.
- Get land out of commodity market

Other strategies also important. The SSI agricultural commission/council can help work on all the strategies suggested in this area.

→ Comment: why should we need quota to sell in our own community - e.g. local farmers selling eggs through Thrifty's?

#2 CHALLENGE EVALUATED: *High Cost Of Land (briefly)*

NOTE: Five strategies were identified with strong promise (this does not mean the other strategies were dismissed - SSI Investment group, community-owned farmland (Farmland Trust), investment write-off, tax incentives for personal food production and linking land with future farmers.

Plan to Farm Survey and Evaluation

Thank you for completing the following survey. The purpose is to collect information about Plan to Farm participants and gather feedback about the process to date.

1. Please indicate your connection with food and agriculture on Salt Spring Island.

Consumer _____	Retailer _____
Producer _____	Food activist _____
Processor _____	

2. Age: Under 30 ___ 30 – 45 ___ 45 - 60 ___ 60 – 75 ___ 75+ ___
3. Sex: Male ___ Female ___
4. Annual household income.

Less than \$30,000 _____	\$50,000 - \$100,000 _____
\$30,000 - \$50,000 _____	More than \$100,000 _____
5. Annual farm gross income (if applicable): _____
6. How long have you lived on SSI? _____
7. Do you raise produce for personal consumption (non-market)? YES NO
8. Do you raise livestock for personal consumption (non-market)? YES NO
9. Do you market produce? YES NO
10. Do you market livestock or livestock products? YES NO
11. Do you own farmland? YES NO
12. If you belong to a food or farm-related organization please indicate which one(s).

13. Which of the Plan to Farm Community Dialogues have you attended?

#1 - Jan. 20 th _____	#2 - Feb. 17 th _____	#3 - Mar. 10 th _____
----------------------------------	----------------------------------	----------------------------------
14. What motivated you to participate in the Plan to Farm process?

15. What have you liked about the Plan to Farm process to date?

16. What would you change about the Plan to Farm process?

Plan to Farm Survey and Evaluation Summary

Survey distributed at Community Dialogue #3, March 11, 2007

Total completed: 60 surveys

1. Connection with food and agriculture on Salt Spring Island

62% of respondents identified themselves as consumers

53% identified themselves as food producers

30% identified themselves as food activists

17% identified themselves as food processors

8% identified themselves as food retailers

3% identified themselves as government staff

2. Age

8 % of respondents were aged under 30 years

15% were aged 30-45 years

38% were aged 45 - 60 years

33% were aged 60 - 75 years

2% were aged over 75 years

3. Sex

45% of respondents were female

42% of respondents were male

3% of respondents did not answer

4. Annual household income

45% of respondents had a household income of under \$30,000

20% of respondents had a household income of \$30,000- \$50,000

23% of respondents had a household income of \$50,000-\$100,000

3% of respondents had a household income over \$100,000

8% of respondents did not answer

5. Annual gross farm income

19/60 respondents stated an annual gross farm income

Of those who answered this question, average annual gross farm income was \$17,100

Of those who answered this question, 42% (8/19) reported an annual gross farm income over \$20,000

6. Length of time living on Salt Spring Island

The average length of time that respondents have lived on SSI was 11 years

7. Personal food production

80% of respondents raised produce for their own consumption

33% raised livestock for their own consumption

8. Commercial food production

47% of respondents marketed produce

27% of respondents marketed livestock

9. Farmland ownership

58% of respondents owned farmland

10. Membership to community organizations

40% of respondents belonged to Island Natural Growers

35% belonged to the SSI Farmers' Institute

8% belonged to Island Organic Producers

8% belonged to Canadian Organic Growers

4% or less belonged to Salt Spring Islanders for Safe Food, Garden Club, Farm Folk/City Folk, Island Farmers Alliance, Biodynamic Society of BC, COABC, WWOOF

11. Attendance at Community Dialogues

58% of respondents attended all three meetings

22% attended two meetings

20% attended one meeting

12. What motivated you to participate in the Plan to Farm process?

- Farming is my livelihood as well as my lifestyle
- The desire to see SSI more independent food-wise
- I want to know that SSI could take care of herself that we're giving more than we're taking and that there is support for this
- Concerns about issues in general; concerns about process (of dialogue) of Islands Trust/OCP
- Future of farming and the OCP review

- Interested in food production, farm culture, strengthening agriculture on SSI
- I plan to farm. Plus, I am very concerned about the current situation (decrease of farming) on SSI
- How badly needed this is
- Having farmed on SSI successfully for 20 years in 70s and 80s I am deeply interested in repositioning local agriculture as a foundation of our community
- Interest and desire to understand the culture as a relatively new farmer
- Future looks grim. We need to work together and plan
- Intent to become a producer
- Dedication
- Interest in information. Concern for rural life and farming
- Wanted to be involved in the process; interested in different perspectives on farming/ agricultural opportunity for the future
- Concern over the 4% statistic revealed by the produce study
- Interest in food security and organic food. Interested in making it easier to obtain local food
- It's important to change our ways, big time, and we have to do it TOGETHER - in community!
- Interest
- The chance to make sure it recognized the "bigger picture"
- Interested in buying nutritious food locally
- Concerned about future of farming on SSI, want programs that help to make it easier to be a market gardener/farmer
- I wish to understand the community's thoughts for the future of farming on SSI
- Interest in food and agricultural land issues, revision of the OCP
- Personal and professional interest
- Interest in preventing SSI from being turned into a theme park
- World hunger and social justice issues
- To learn from those who know
- Concern for future food security
- To assess improvements in land use planning bylaws that would facilitate achievement of Plan to Farm objectives
- Interest in conserving energy and reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions from food traveling from a distance
- Recognition of the impending food crisis to come!
- Proactive community process focused on food and agricultural security
- Planning to buy a farm and want to know in which ways it might be 1) sustainable, 2) profitable, 3) can market be coordinated to increase purchases from farmers
- A need for farming to be encouraged and supported locally
- I think that it is important that someone that makes their living on the farm should have their opinion heard

- Having bought agricultural land I am assessing options for usage - using meeting to gather information more than contributing
- Concerned about the future of food/knowledge/environment/humanity
- The need to build community will to renew the farm economy here plus the need to correct land use bylaw so it 'encourages' farming
- To be better informed about actions local government can take to increase farm production on SSI
- I have dreamed of farming as a career since my teens and have collected files of research on it over 20 years. Returning to SSI 3 years ago, I did childcare on the farm. Those farmers showed me what farming could be. The SSI community has inspired me to apply/focus this.
- Some local, technological and farm related experience
- Long interest in organic farming, former grower and policy interest/involvement
- Concern over the sustainability of agriculture on SSI
- Concern overall locally, provincially and nationally re saving agricultural land and maximizing organic production and supporting Canadian organic ag products. Buying Canadian first mentality
- Invitation
- Interested visitor
- Experience in the field
- Interest in the future of agriculture
- Was invited. Looking to establish links to producers that might be profitable
- Need to gain food security, self-sustainability (community and personal)
- Hope for improvement
- Want to increase and encourage and support more farming
- Interest in making farming a community priority
- Learning/networking
- Farming concerns
- Spark action in areas of interest
- Interest

13. What have you like about the Plan to Farm process to date?

- Discussions, sharing info
- Good brainstorming
- Educational experience. Community process
- Meetings, Anne Macey but mostly community input
- Changes possible, sharing ideas
- Networking with other farmers
- Wide participation and broad ideas
- Good participation, respectful
- Good opportunity for discussion, well structured
- This is the first one for me
- Overall vision

- Community involvement and serious concern; competent facilitators and thoughtful participants
- The high turnout and all the valuable data produced
- Good participation, well organized
- The breadth of discussion
- It's breadth and diversity of ideas
- The conversations, the education, meeting and getting to know my own community as a little more
- Good cross-section/grass roots feedback
- Good community participation. Awareness building. Identification of community constraints to farming
- Very widespread, involved, detailed
- Generally there has been a good discussion, all opinions have been heard
- Well organized
- Good process, respectful of others' ideas which bring a collective and better understanding of major issues and concerns from which hopefully some action will be taken
- I like the format, I see value in the process
- Open, consultative, engaging the public first!
- The diversity of ideas and the passion to develop a plan that would really change things
- Public consultation. Detailed data base/analysis of options
- Community involvement - good facilitation(ors)
- Well organized
- An opportunity for all to express themselves
- Great range of ideas, great turnout, real cooperation
- Extensive involvement of community in the dialogues
- Impressive range of strategies yielded by good brainstorming sessions
- Spectacular organization and follow-up
- The diversity of ideas, positive. A good number of participants, good cross-section.
- First session attended
- Very organized and professional. Respectful (listening to all ideas). Very efficiently run. Thank you.
- Seeing how such a diverse group has identified similar issues and solutions. Promise of ACTION.
- Democratic opportunity to facilitate change.
- Diverse participants and ideas
- Structure. Information, sharing of ideas and concerns.
- Good attendance
- Open dialogue- strong desire expressed to improve small farm ventures
- Mix of people here. Fair methods of collecting ideas.
- Session 2 was full of ideas!
- The ability to exchange information, experience and attitude with a broad range of people.

- Just came today. Have received emails and like the thoroughness of the process.
- Organized
- Very well executed - congratulations - lots of thought and hard work have gone into the process
- Openness. Opportunity to meet others concerned about farming
- Open dialogue good and meeting others. I wish there was some input from planner re what is doable (ie, realities of his situation)
- Generated lots of new ideas/ I'm just starting so networked with people/ it's nice to hear from people who have been doing this
- The diversity of participants. The ideas put forward
- Organization of the process.

14. What would you change about the Plan to Farm process?

- More detailed categories (meeting #3) to have an opportunity to meet with farmers doing the same thing as I am
- More notice re dates
- Share more experience
- A short introduction by the facilitation team in the first session - who is Masselink Environmental Design?
- Would like to have seen even more community awareness - advertisements
- Nothing yet, it has been an effective forum for generating ideas. Wanting to see if any actions materialize
- Nothing comes to mind
- It's a sad statement that our provincial nor federal representatives have not taken part. Were they invited?
- Do it again with another batch of participants
- The agriculture plan be given more time to solidify ideas and directions before input to OCP review is required
- Have stakeholders make real commitment to implement strategies. ID resources upfront that can be brought to bear to address challenges/ strategies.
- We might have provided more local food
- Stay focused on the goal
- Less overview, more meat, dialoguing was good but toooooo much
- A little dry
- More understanding of how to activate ideas in present political structures
- More farming experience at the facilitator's level
- Too much reiteration of challenges. Need to cut straight to finding solutions
- I am not clear on what a group like this can accomplish?
- Very little
- Nil

- Make sure we really do establish a process that will change things. And feed directly into the OCP process
- Need quantitative goals set up first so we know exactly (or approximately) what needs to be done
- More detail into implementation strategies
- Not sure yet - depends on outcome/results and this is my first session
- Maybe have a greater focus on an end result earlier in the process
- Nothing
- More emphasis on what is needed to restore the farm economy here as opposed to what hurts existing farm operators now. More focus on need for land access
- Need for grassroots input to be informed by consultant expertise. Grassroots is fine/essential but so is knowledge of strategies that have worked elsewhere
- Unsure at moment. Will think about it. A participant of dialogue #1, #2, not #3, mentioned we should have started with a vision first.
- Shortened the first dialogue to spend more time with #2, #3
- Good so far
- Not enough participant energy used. Ie, participants might have effectively developed and re-developed strategies in these few weeks. The consultant's process has caused the loss of raw data.
- More promotion, more time, continue process and compare and contrast with other similar processes elsewhere and previous plans to be influenced from, ie through North America, Europe past and present etc
- No change
- Good to have process. Basics to start with - away from lifestyle
- More specific goals
- Clearly explain how the ideas will be implemented- who will do this? How will we determine the who?
- Better PA system
- Less meetings! But ruins community input
- Pretty satisfied so far
- More on some food inspection. Other similar process of results.
- Clearer statement on impact of the process

SALT SPRING ISLAND AREA FARM PLAN RESPONSE FORM

After reading the DRAFT Salt Spring Island Area Farm Plan please complete this form. Responses will help guide the development of the final plan

1. Did you participate in the Area Farm Plan Community Dialogues? YES NO
2. Do you agree with the proposed guiding vision? YES NO
Please indicate why or why not.

3. Do you agree with the proposed key recommendation? YES NO
Please indicate why or why not.

1) Establish a Salt Spring Island Agricultural Alliance

2) Establish a community farmland trust

3) Establish key community facilities that support agriculture

4. Please indicate which recommendations you support. YES NO

4) Maintain local agricultural information

5) Implement accepted agricultural OCP policies

6) Work with government on the use of their agricultural holdings

7) Pursue strategies that make more land available for farming

8) Increase agricultural awareness of potential residents

9) Establish a voluntary SSI agricultural code of practice

10) Harmonize environmental bylaw policies with existing regulations

11) Encourage use of beneficial farm management practices

Please indicate which recommendations you support (con't...).	YES	NO
12) Explore programs that support environmental services on farms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13) Improve local agricultural literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14) Increase agricultural education opportunities for children & youth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15) Address the farm housing issue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16) Increase local agricultural training & mentoring opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17) Develop coordinated approach to prod. & sale of local products	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18) Develop local agri-tourism guidelines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19) Address local farm labour issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20) Encourage the development of local purchasing policies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21) Increase local seed production capability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22) Adopt a GE free policy for locally grown agricultural products	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23) Establish local food safety protocols and standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24) Participate in regional, provincial & national ag. discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Which are the five most important recommendations from your perspective?

6. Do you have any additional recommendations?

7. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

8. Are you involved in agriculture? *If yes please indicate how.* YES NO

THANK YOU!

Please return the response form by December 3, 2007 to:

Anne Macey
Project Administrator

866.257.2046 fax
macey@saltspring.com



SALT SPRING ISLAND AREA FARM PLAN RESPONSE FORM

Number of Response: 7

(See also detailed email responses from Bob Weedon who is hoping to get answers from us to the questions he posed, and Roger Middleton. I've added below Bob's comments directly related to the SSIAA, otherwise are additional responses to section 6).

1. Did you participate in the Area Farm Plan Community Dialogues? YES 5 NO 2

2. Do you agree with the proposed guiding vision? YES 6 NO 1

Trust that people who worked on the plan did so using consensus.

Should read 'becomes' not become'

Agriculture (especially smaller farms) is under attacked by corporate/real estate and intellectually/ethically challenged.

3. Do you agree with the proposed key recommendation? YES 6 NO 1

1) Establish a Salt Spring Island Agricultural Alliance 6 1

1. We do not need another institution /organization with associated overhead, costs etc tasked:

as an executing agency for the Islands Trust (which raises questions of legitimacy); formulating agriculture policies and guidelines on our behalf; lobbying government on our behalf; establishing safety protocols and practices; developing more regulations for farms.

As a farmer whose livelihood depends on agriculture, we already have to deal with a plethora of organizations that already "do these things on our behalf". Ensuring that the policies and regulations they come up with are in fact things that help rather than hinder our agricultural livelihood requires a lot of effort. Having yet another one to deal with is not practical or necessary. The Farmer's Institute is already working well so why create another farm organization on the island. It makes little sense.

2. Island agriculture needs a coordinating body

3. Like minded support /encourage non-ag persons to join.

4. (BW) Good way of coordinating ag interests and concerns and to educate islanders. However, a couple of its structural features raise questions. A charitable organization (ours is the one I know best) in BC can spend only a limited and defined % of its resources on lobbying, and the Alliance clearly is meant to lobby. I'm sure someone has checked this out. Second, at least 2 members of the board as proposed are agencies that would be lobbied. They also would contribute money toward staff salaries, in effect asking them to pay people who then come and twist arms. I can think of other big community interests that might like that situation, too, like the Chamber and the Tourism group. In my opinion neither the interest group nor the community would be well served in the long run. Would it attempt to be a place where environmental and farm interests (often the same, sometimes not) could undertake progressive dialogue? How would this be done?

2) Establish a community farmland trust 6 1

1. Creation of such a trust can only be decided after questions of how the Trust would be organized, governed and funded and what its responsibilities would be are defined. I would support carry in out a feasibility study to answer these questions if the funding for such a study is available.

2. A SS entity to hold and administer agriculture land is needed

3. After fact finding by the Alliance

4. Not sure how this will operate but support the idea in practice

5. Given that 3 point property - 62 acres of ALR land will likely take place early in 2008 the establishment of a farmland Trust should be the highest priority.

3) Establish key community facilities that support agriculture 6 1

1. There is nothing preventing interested parties from pursuing these actions now. They do not need to be enshrined in a community plan

2. Facilities may be privately owned/and or managed, but community support will facilitate regulatory approvals and fundraising.

3. Preferably by a cooperative or private party

4. Please indicate which recommendations you support.		YES	NO
4)	Maintain local agricultural information	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5)	Implement accepted agricultural OCP policies <small>not sure</small>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
6)	Work with government on the use of their agricultural holdings <small>not sure</small>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
7)	Pursue strategies that make more land available for farming	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
8)	Increase agricultural awareness of potential residents	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9)	Establish a voluntary SSI agricultural code of practice	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
10)	Harmonize environmental bylaw policies with existing regulations	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11)	Encourage use of beneficial farm management practices	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
12)	Explore programs that support environmental services on farms	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
13)	Improve local agricultural literacy	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14)	Increase agricultural education opportunities for children & youth	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15)	Address the farm housing issue	2? 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
16)	Increase local agricultural training & mentoring opportunities	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17)	Develop coordinated approach to prod. & sale of local products	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
18)	Develop local agri-tourism guidelines	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
19)	Address local farm labour issues	6 <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20)	Encourage the development of local purchasing policies	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
21)	Increase local seed production capability	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
22)	Adopt a GE free policy for locally grown agricultural products	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
23)	Establish local food safety protocols and standards	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>
24)	Participate in regional, provincial & national ag. discussions	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	1 <input type="checkbox"/>

5. Which are the five most important recommendations from your perspective?

1- SSIAA (1); 2- Community Farmland Trust (2); 3 community facilities [Abattoir, cold storage] (2); 7- strategies to make more land available (1); 8-increase ag awareness (2); 11- encourage beneficial practices (2); 12- support programs for environmental services (1); 13- improve ag literacy (3); 14-Increase ag education(1); 15- Address farm housing issue (3) 16- Increase training and mentorship opportunities (2); 18- develop agri-tourism guidelines (1); 19-address local farm labour issues (1); 21 – increase local seed production capability (1); 22 – adopt a GE free policy (2); 23 local food safety protocols (1); 24 - participate in ag discussions (1); (all inter-related)

6. Do you have any additional recommendations?

1. Develop a guide to the many organizations, programs and support that already exist to help farmers, encourage farmers to develop 'value added' opportunities with their direct farm outputs.

2. Keep it simple

3. SSIAA needs to be given direction to set targets for local food production. Add to C Assist SSI farm producers to include carbon sequestration in their farm management plans. Add to E. Prepare for the establishment of as SSI farm carbon Bank GHG offset mechanism as a financial support for local farmers.

4. All recommendations should live within or uphold the Right to farm legislation. Investment development of alternative funding sources which have beneficial tax credit or refund potential, ie family or RRSP programs. Lobby FCC for less costly financing.

5. Could we be a bit more specific in some of our recommendations? For example what are we talking about when we say we have a farm housing problem. The problem is two-fold local zoning and the ALR regs. We should ask both authorities to relax the rules, that should be in the final report. We need an abattoir and cold storage facilities. One obvious place is the Farmers Institute site – it exists and it is fairly central. The problem is the FI property is not zoned for this and the property is built out to the maximum currently allowed. We should ask for a change in the regs. We currently have a vaguely worded note that farm housing is a problem and we need storage and abattoir facilities. The politicians need something more definitive and something in clear English in order for them to act.

6. Great emphasis should be incorporated in the AFP on agri-tourism, - see CFBMC webseminar by Brent Warner,

7. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

1. Focus on information and education activities. It is interesting to note that the average farm income is slightly above the income required to obtain 'farm status' with the BC assessment authority. This implies strongly that most farms on SSI are limiting their production to generate only this amount of income and are not interested in doing more because the economics are not there.

2. What appears to be missing altogether is any discussion on the driving force of climate change, which underlies the need for increased local organic food production, and, increasingly, national, provincial and local government policies and programs. In this regard there is no reference to SS Community Energy strategy or the Energy strategy task force – the plan includes a target of 10% locally grown food by 2012. ESFT wishes to work with the farm community to achieve this goal which accounts for 23% of targeted GHG emissions reduction for SSI. Strong potential partner. Would like to see draft terms of reference for SSIAA which should include the directive to set targets and establish indicators for local food production. Needs more accessible summary with an organizational chart showing how future action may be implemented. Will the maps be available as an appendix?

3. We have just dug an irrigation pond to serve 7 acres of land. We can improve production but probably need a younger person on the farm to help. We have one acre of bottomland – ideal for berries or veggies but we are unsure about the labour and the market before we commit much time or money- looking for ideas.

4. I would not like to see a no net loss policy for ALR land as it will reduce the flexibility to use low to very low capability lands (which may well have other attributes). It also has the potential to be used as a blocking means or for environmental agendas not related to agriculture.

5. Thank to the committee and to DM for a job well done. It has made me think about the problems and opportunities we have and I learned from the process.

8. Are you involved in agriculture? *If yes please indicate how.* YES NO

Families livelihood entirely dependent on commercial farm operation – full time with workers.

Anyone who eats is involved.

Not as a commercial producer now – long time involvement in COG national.

Farm about 20 acres – 16 ewes, ducks veggies and fruit.

Farmer

Farms to produce food for own consumption

THANK YOU!

Please return the response form by December 3, 2007 to:

Anne Macey
Project Administrator

866.257.2046 fax
macey@saltspring.com

SALT SPRING ISLAND AREA FARM PLAN RESPONSE FORM

After reading the DRAFT Salt Spring Island Area Farm Plan please complete this form. Responses will help guide the development of the final plan

1. Did you participate in the Area Farm Plan Community Dialogues? YES

2. Do you agree with the proposed guiding vision? YES
Please indicate why or why not.
 Yes, but I think it should read becomes not "become".

3. Do you agree with the proposed key recommendation? YES NO
Please indicate why or why not.

1) Establish a Salt Spring Island Agricultural Alliance Island agriculture needs a coordinating body	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
2) Establish a community farmland trust A Salt Spring entity to hold and administer agricultural land is needed	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
3) Establish key community facilities that support agriculture Facilities may be privately owned and/or managed, but community support will facilitate regulatory approvals and fundraising	x	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Please indicate which recommendations you support. YES NO

4) Maintain local agricultural information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5) Implement accepted agricultural OCP policies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6) Work with government on the use of their agricultural holdings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7) Pursue strategies that make more land available for farming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8) Increase agricultural awareness of potential residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9) Establish a voluntary SSI agricultural code of practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10) Harmonize environmental bylaw policies with existing regulations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11) Encourage use of beneficial farm management practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12) Explore programs that support environmental services on farms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13) Improve local agricultural literacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14) Increase agricultural education opportunities for children & youth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15) Address the farm housing issue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16) Increase local agricultural training & mentoring opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17) Develop coordinated approach to prod. & sale of local products	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18) Develop local agri-tourism guidelines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19) Address local farm labour issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20) Encourage the development of local purchasing policies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21) Increase local seed production capability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22) Adopt a GE free policy for locally grown agricultural products	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 23) Establish local food safety protocols and standards | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 24) Participate in regional, provincial & national ag. discussions | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Yes to all of the above

5. Which are the five most important recommendations from your perspective?
 Hard to say, they are all inter-related, and part of the mandate for the SSIAA.
 The one recommendation that I would prioritise is 22.

6. Do you have any additional recommendations?
 Somewhere the SSIAA needs to be given the directive to set targets for local food production.
 Add to C:
 Assist SSI farm producers to include carbon sequestration in their farm management plans.
 Add to E:
 Prepare for the establishment of an SSI farm carbon bank GHG offset mechanism as a financial support for local farmers.

7. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?
 What appears to be missing altogether is any discussion of the driving force of climate change, which underlies the need for increased local organic food production, and, increasingly, national, provincial and local government policies and programs.

In this regard, there also appears to be no reference to the Salt Spring Community Energy Strategy or the Energy Strategy Task Force (ESTF). The mandate of the ESTF is to oversee the implementation of the Energy Strategy, which includes the target of 10% locally grown food by 2012. The ESTF wishes to work with the farm community to achieve this goal, which accounts for 23% of the targetted GHG emission reductions for Salt Spring. The ESTF is a strong potential partner member for the SSIAA and should be recognised.

I would like to see within the AFP a draft Terms of Reference for the SSIAA, which should include the directive to set targets and establish indicators for local food production.

Also needed is a more accessible summary, with an org chart, showing how future action may be implemented.

Will the maps will be added as an appendix, and if not, how will they be made available?

8. Are you involved in agriculture? *If yes please indicate how.* YES
 Not a commercial producer now, but long-time involvement in COG national.

THANK YOU!

**Notes from
Area Farm Plan Steering Committee
Meeting with Farmers
29 November 2007**

3:00 p.m. Farmers Institute

Present: Tony Threlfall, Anne Macey, John Wilcox, Conrad Pilon, Patricia Reichert

Regrets: Rob Klein, Rebecca Bloch; George Ehring; Jane Squier; Derek Masselink

Guests: Ray Hatch, Julia Grace, Bree Eagle, Dan Jason

Purpose of the meeting: to receive comments and analysis from these community members on the draft Area Farm Plan Report.

1. **Dan:** very good. An amazing job.
2. **Julia:** reading it encourages you to really care. Makes you think about a picture of where we are and where we want to get to. Two particularly striking aspects: it shows how old we are and how little we grow. Need to think about *how* we grow. We grow like peasants rather than commercial producers. If the vision is to feed ourselves then we need to address these issues.
Age of farmers: Most farmers don't have young people coming on to take over the farm. [succession planning]. We older farmers are not the group to grow more. In northern Italy there is a whole program to promote getting young people into agriculture.

How we grow: could look at pilot projects; demonstrations. This island doesn't suit big agriculture but can we experiment with making it more efficient. Finding a good level of mechanization and not have to depend just on what one or two people can do by hand. The report doesn't really comment on how much is done by volunteers/woofers and how much we depend on them.

Is the organization we're proposing modeled on the Island Farmers Alliance? Caution that the infrastructure shouldn't get bigger than the farmers. Worry about creating a vehicle that helps government deliver and administer their programs rather than working for farmers.

Questions:

Pat: how can we best tap into the farm knowledge of ageing farmers?.

Julia: need project that taps into the wisdom.

Tony: maybe institutional teaching modeled on college schools.

John & Anne: show linkages with farmland trust and farm knowledge.

John: investment opportunities for the community through the farmland trust. Invite almost like rrsp investables to fund infrastructure, e.g. meat processing.

3. **Bree:** 24 years old: coming back here to farm not an easy thing to do and lots of social pressure not to do that. If we want this to happen there has to be some kind of social shift that makes it more socially acceptable for young to farm. Appreciated dialogue process.
Impressed with report and how coherent it is.
Flagged several things as important.
They are producing lots of food on market garden at Bright Farm and other farms. Question is how can we produce more?
Solution revolves around development of infrastructure. Processing. Covered it except vague in the report. Lay out clearly how the stuff would be run. E.g. abattoir; community composting, some detail on how it's going to work. Need some non-farmer staff because farmers don't have time to run these things. Won't work without a paid person.
Economic viability: focused mostly on marketing and market growth and hardly at all on farm costs. Information suggests the opposite: that marketing is less the problem and more the costs of production. Report needs to address why is it so expensive here and how we can bring the costs down? Acknowledge that we have a good community in terms of understanding pricing.
Education section is good. Liked it a lot.
Move up the section on educating farmers, in the schools. E.g farmers could run two-week courses in the schools.

Raising production for food security. How we farm is very important. There is a lot of overlap in terms of what we're growing. Maybe some coordinated planning. Narrowing down the number of things on each farm. farmers do make it hard for grocery stores.

Good that we laid out benchmarks: *but no environmental benchmark*. Build it in for testing.

Questions:

Anne—education. Potential for getting an agriculture program on Fridays and some modeling at the school. Would enough students be interested?

Bree: It's hard if there is nothing in elementary school. Need more farm tours. Touring a farm when she was in grade 2 was a seminal moment for her. Maggie Allison approached Bree & family to see if they would be involved in program linking at risk kids with farms if she can get grant funding. We agreed.

Anne: any thoughts on other coordination?

Bree: not enough food yet to develop coordination on inputs and outputs. E.g. Buying coop/consortium. Could be done fee for service. Needs to be well managed.

John: maybe farmers institute could take some of this on.

Bree: Could be just so long as farmers are not asked to do it.

Tony: section F. emphasis on market growth rather than just controlling costs. Don't costs drop when increase production?

Julia: lots of different things tied into profitability. Many people don't really grow to be profitable. Saturday and Tuesday markets are wonderful outlet but kind work like a cap and so many farmers don't expand beyond what they can sell at the market. If had her dream she would dedicate the Three Point land to explore expansion involving young people and there would be a requirement to sell some to retail outlets. Impressed by the intensity of production that Dan has going at SS Centre.

Dan: thinking about expanding this intensity and showing others how to do it is standard part of what they do. Just finished doing zero mile diet food kit. Showing people who want to get serious about feeding themselves. Interest is coming on very fast.

Conrad: education. FI doing "AG Ed for Everyone" Could do more but ...

Bree: Cafeteria and AI a good resource at the high school.

Pat: So are you saying we need a technical paper on farm input costs and economies of scale?

Bree: agree that recommendation addressing this would be more appropriate than current emphasis on marketing.

John: debt servicing is big issue. Doesn't like using wooffers.

4. **Ray:** Lots of good stuff in it. But must ask: Who is the plan for? And what direction is the plan taking? Gets social and environment issues from it but if we can make or help to make farming viable for farmers who want to be viable then it's good. Need to think far outside the box. Some of the figures are confusing and may be wrong. Seems that non-ALR land is more productive than ALR. If have nonproductive land get rid of it. No net loss can be problematic.

Really likes the idea of an alliance. Would even like to see farm store downtown. Wants to look at how we do it.

Some of the stuff not necessary and some could be harmful down the road. We don't talk enough about viability. Don't look at age as being a negative but we still need to look at how we get young people into farming. We need to get young people on our farms and sharing the land. How do we do that? Young people need chunk of land for long term and need housing. Things like alr are being used for environmental point of view rather than practical. Should be finding other ways than right to farm.

We don't need to do infrastructure but need support and facilitate alliance to do it. Need private individuals to do this. Viability of farm is key to it all. This doc should set stage for addressing viability.

Housing: trust needs to support us & be flexible enough to allow housing if needed for young family on the farm. Think the rules are there and we need to use them. Not for rental housing but for running the farm. We need to focus the things that are in the report. E.g. emphasis on use of farm rather than protection. If have good use then we protect it.

Look at whole alr. Thinks there's a lot of abuse of it for tax purposes. He has applied to get a piece out of the alr and it looks like it is going through.

Wants to be involved. Especially in the alliance.

5. **Julia:** there's an enormous job in figuring out how and where to start. Could be a disaster if we started with the wrong thing. Implementation really needs to start with something very achievable and that looks good. Each thing needs to be sustainable.
6. **Bree:** E.g Start with poultry support infrastructure.
7. **Julia:** maybe won't work. There are medium level things we should start with that are a lot less expensive than making the big capital investments. Things like coordination rather than build the building.
8. **Ray:** Need to put more time and effort into planning these operational aspects.
9. Discussion about how alliance pays for coordinator.
10. John: need to look at new generation coop organization.
11. Look at models of foundations, funding organizations.
12. Dan: agrees one step at a time but we don't have much time to secure our food supply.
13. Julia: if we had \$500,000 would we build a building to slaughter a few sheep? Let's focus instead on what we can actually do to increase production of food.
14. Ray: let's look at innovative ways of financing farm investment.
15. Ray: contradiction that maybe the report is appealing the general community a bit too much. Who is the plan for? See contradiction between being for the farmer and for the general community.
16. Discussion about it being for both. Fine line to speak to farmers and to general community about agriculture at the same time.
17. Bree: really important to keep environmental aspect in the report. We want to keep farming and it's okay to say we stand up for sustainable farming.

Adjourned 5:00

Synthesis of Key Ideas

- Need to address how we get young people farming in terms of succession planning, social acceptability, tenure and capital investment, agriculture education and experience starting at a young age.
- The recommendation on establishing an alliance is good but need to be clear on several points: a) that it works for farmers not just a community-based tool for government programs; b) that it is operated by paid staff and is well-run; c) that it focuses on coordination and on developing infrastructure in a practical ways building on successes. More detail on how things would be done.
- Need more focus in the report on farm economic viability, perhaps recommending that a technical be done as part of the implementation. The paper would examine farm operating and capital costs on Salt Spring. It could design a plan for farmer sharing of input purchases.
- Need to be clear that we don't have a lot of time left to increase food production and becoming more food self-sustaining. Climate change is going to force the issue sooner than we think.
- Haven't adequately addressed housing.
- Report needs to be clear about who the plan is for.

Possible quotable quotes:

- 1) One from Julia Grace on the farmer organization we're recommending should work for farmers not government agencies.
- 2) One from Bree Eagle on the social obstacles that we need to address if we want more young people becoming farmers.
- 3) One from Dan Jason on need to produce our own food (zero-mile food kit).
- 4) One from Ray Hatch on the best way to protect farm land is to farm it.

**Notes from
Area Farm Plan Steering Committee
Meeting with Farmers
12 December 2007**

4:00 p.m. – 6:30 Farmers Institute

Present: Tony Threlfall, Anne Macey, John Wilcox, Conrad Pilon, Patricia Reichert, Jane Squier; George Ehring

Regrets: Rob Klein, Rebecca Bloch; Derek Masselink

Guests: Kerry Lee, Sandy Robley, Margaret Thomson, Roger Middleton, Marguerite Lee, Harry Burton, Malcolm Bond, Doug Robertson, Lisa Lloyd,

Purpose of the meeting: to receive comments and analysis from these community members on the draft Area Farm Plan Report.

1. **Malcolm Bond:** Father farmed on SSI for 40 years, market gardens. Saw changes over the years. In early days, reality is that people came here rather than Fraser Valley but learned that soil wasn't as good here. Settlers here to claim jurisdiction. Glory days a misnomer. Comfortable life style but not a lot of money. Bigger exodus of young people then than now. More land cleared then than now. Economics have changed because prices of produce from lower mainland so low.

Numbers in the report not accurate reflection of farm incomes on SSI. And most of the income reported is value added. [?] Most important thing is to keep the land base. It will become too expensive to bring food from elsewhere. Soils not good. Climate too dry for good hay and so not enough food for any number of animals. Every bit of land in the ALR must be maintained and no subdivision of ALR land. To maintain the rural atmosphere you have to maintain the land base. Agree with idea to get young people interested. We have enormous labour problem. Need labour for market gardening. There are others like himself who don't mind losing money. *Preserve the land base.* Maybe have some more education in the schools but to put tax payers money in isn't good.

Questions:

George: Subdividing to create smaller farms. How do you feel about that?

Malcolm: If put pieces in between farmland soon the farmland is gone. Should look at putting more housing on farmland. Shouldn't tell people how big a house or barn they build.

John: Recognize constraints and profitability issues but sees the problem as government regulatory issues and emphasis on industrial ag. How do you explain that communities where they do what we're trying to do they are 7 x more successful? Is ag more than just growing crops.

Malcolm: Answer is the lower labour costs. And fewer material goods. We have the lowest food prices because of industrial methods/machines (e.g. milking). Don't agree that it's gov't policies that are driving industrial ag. Corporate farming is being driven by consumer.

2. **Doug Robertson:** The key issues seem to get lost in the document. Not clear idea of nature of growing here on SSI and the main problems. There are people doing it full-time and those doing it part-time. Both are an essential part of ag on SSI. And want to support both visions of that. A) Availability of land and labour biggest issues for those wanting to farm full-time. This doesn't come through in the report. B) Document doesn't really recognize those doing it part-time. Farm tours, e.g. are tremendous tool in encouraging people who come to the island to grow what they can. Start with things that make ag more accessible to the most people. Thinking of current global economy, issues of labour costs and making a living makes it hard to make a living at it for food security reasons.

Questions:

Pat: What about the global implications of climate change?

Doug: Land stewardship is important. Housing. Reduce reliance on food products that have a high carbon input. Small scale ag needs to be encouraged for this reason.

3. **Kerry Lee:** Think the only reasonable outcome of doing this big document is to recommend that OCP not restrict agriculture uses on the island. Document could be one page. It's all moot until there is a crisis. Ag alliance: yet another committee that needs money. Can't really ask farmers to support this so looking at outside money. Farm land trust: protect land for future but doesn't need to be farmed. Leases need to be market based to compete with other farmers. Infrastructure: those who need processing facilities already have them and to have community facilities puts unfair

competition on other farmers and processors. If financially viable there would already be someone doing it. Education: already happening and there aren't obstacles now. You can just do it. On-farm housing: needed but have to offset against farm income. Never going to recoup it. Cost of the land: not a credible obstacle to farming. If you took land cost out of the equation it's still not going to be financially viable. Cost of equipment and labour and other inputs have far more impact. Farmers have different reasons for farming. Marketing: selling is not a big challenge, it's easy. Producing products is costly. Food security: big thing. Until we're in a crisis situation don't see answer to that. Even if more people grow more food it still doesn't address needing cheap labour and having to raise prices. Health and safety regs: producers never sure of what's allowed and not. Summing up: Document could be written on one page. Recommend that OCP not restrict ability to farm and no one is going to make a living until there's a crisis.

Question: George: how does OCP restrict/limit farming.

Kerry: It doesn't really. It's mostly federal and provincial regs.

Sandy: Who restricts size of barn? No common sense there.

George: Don't know where the maximum barn size number comes from.

4. **Marguerite Lee:** Family came at turn of 20th century. 100 years exposure. [page numbers are "on or close"] P. 13 Fall Fair should say recognized ag **not** established. Question statement of market income. P. 15 balance statement of trust balance land uses. Mentoring and education that is inferred would work but not a paid basis but on a casual basis. Learning opportunities can be encourage but can't get paid to learn. Strong statements about making this a ge free zone. Come right out and say we want a pesticide free zone as well as ge free zone. That is the goal you're going for if you're going to have a productive lifestyle. P. 28 educational programming; fall fair not listed and it should be. P. 41 trust working with agencies for strong food system needs to be spelled out more specifically to be through particular land use. Lot of reference to environmentally conscious practices. There needs to be some kind of connection between farmers and other groups on the island about this. Some way of getting true environmentalists, conservationists to work together. E.g. savannah sparrow incident in Burgoyne valley. By the time the decision was made to allow haying the hay wasn't any good. Consequences all around needs to be covered. Agree land base needs to be kept and but question stats on page [?]. You don't need flat land to put greenhouse and lots of not flat land that can be used to produce food. There are stats that need clarifying. Agree that cost of administering some kind of agency just not viable. We talk about ag but nothing to encourage families to grow food and help address food security. Main issues are land availability, labour and how land is used. Regs need simplifying and reducing. Labour is problem. Guiding vision is good. Whole report needs cutting down. *Sentence structure abominable.* On subdivision of land. Dad farmed 10,000 turkeys and grew his own grain. Cooperated on equipment and made money until everyone started going off island to buy food. Now very little farming going on there. There is a curve, a cycle in ag.

Question:

Pat: Comment more on the what the cycle is?

Marguerite: I think people who want to farm and grow vegetables will feed themselves. Have to have desire.

5. **Roger Middleton:** Member of ING, SSFSF. Grew up where dominant occupation was farming. Ag cycle is a long cycle and we're in a down phase of it now. A) Global economics sucking the life blood out of every community in the world. Sustainable ag cannot compete with global. Need to think and act locally. B) Soils crisis as result of industrial ag. This love affair with industrial ag will turn. Coming from economic theory if you can make a normal return people will come into ag and if not people will leave. Look at EU. Unless there is substantial protection for farmers. What will change this? Crisis. Agree need to do whatever can to protect the land and create the economic framework so that young people will want to get into it. Elephant in the room is age of farmers. Create situation of reasonable income/normal return. Until then this situation isn't going to change. Global food production takes advantage of third world labour. Getting back to report, written as advice to steering committee. SC needs to write it's own report. If we are going to protect the base everyone is part of problem and of the solution. There should be an alliance formed as volunteer group to engage others on the island. Local gov't not in a position to support farming community. Need to use provincial agronomists. Need a lot of work done and need gov't support to do this. Majority of support payments goes to large farms. Highest debt levels are among starting farmers. Clearly the industry is not moving in the right direction to be sustainable. How do we survive? We need to find the right niche. Income distribution needs to be looked at. Survival needs to develop marketing strategy that focuses on the very rich. Need to be concerned about our food. Quality of nutrients and minerals is diminishing. Industrial organic isn't necessarily producing quality. Need to increase processing. Need to consider infrastructure expenditures. Confident that this island has enough animals to support abattoir. Stress in meat reduces quality. Others are doing it with less population. In favour of creating community investment fund. This could also help affordable housing. C) Report deficient on food security issue. Need to encourage everyone to grow food. E.g. Need total community to be part of seed sanctuary.

Question:

Conrad: What about marketing or farm costs?

Roger: Trick is to get higher rate of return. E.g. wine. Maybe there's something we can do around the "organic" niche. Major cost is labour. Two sets of issues: those we can address on the island and those we can't because needs others. Need a group to speak with one voice to others including other ag groups. There will be crisis from shortage of labour.

6. **Harry Burton:** farm income needs to be stabilized somehow. In terms of marketing, I sell a lot in Victoria. Need to get connected with other markets. One of the biggest things is the BC Reassessment that is going to happen next year. Going to have to fight it. I'm optimistic about the 65 acres in the Fulford Valley. Will help to get young people back on the land. Some talk about getting fruit processing on the island. Product of Canada label can be on package where 100% of fruit is coming from offshore. That label is a disaster. Need to get it changed. Label needs to refer to contents. Offshore Subsidies: will destroy any small farm income. Videos "Life in Debt" and "Black Gold". Agri-tourism is one thing that does work here but there is a decrease in last couple of years. High cost of accommodation is affecting this. Lucky to be on SSI. People supportive of paying more. Farm income. In USSR small illegal farms were producing 50% of the food. Women are becoming the driving force in organic ag. And that's good. Clarification from Kerry: b&b doesn't go toward farm status.
7. **Sandy Robley:** 26 years on SSI. Less is better. Fewer rules is better. Getting to be a larger and larger problem. Better encourage agri-tourism because we're going to need it. Need to ease up on extra buildings for renting out. Helps the farmer to have those people on the farm. In PEI they are allowing cabins. There shouldn't be subdivision of farmland; bigger is better. Can lease small pieces to different people without subdividing.
- Questions:**
John: what about living on the farm?
Sandy: Yes there needs to be housing. If you don't have bridging you're not going to have farming. Highest prices for land are right here and so are highest costs. Right to farm re the Burgoyne hayland. Now there is no hay. We're running out of hayland now. More horses consuming most of the good hay. Doubled the cost. Have to encourage farming here not discourage it.
Harry Burton: how do you prevent scoundrels from misusing the building rules.
Sandy: You're encouraging green space but there isn't farming on it. Give me some right to do what I need to do farm. Keep public trails away from either side of farm land. Brings dogs, leave gates open, this is a very important thing.
8. **Margaret Thomson:** don't yet qualify for farm status. Can feed all my animals without imported grain. Agree with a lot that has been said. 1) whenever this kind of thing goes on there is always a lot lost between what is said and getting it into the report. One e.g. is water. Managing, better use of water. There is a study of ground water going on. We know so little about it on SSI. 2) I don't believe there is any reference to environmental farm plan. A lot of the things would be dealt with if farmers had EFP done. Encourage all to go through the process. 3) establish key community facilities all for doing that but timing has to be just right. Regarding the abattoir, there hasn't yet been enough shake down time. Don't know how people are coping with status quo. And status quo is still quite fluid. 4) composting there aren't good ways of handling volume. Could be combined. E.g. roasting company, [soya nova]. they don't necessarily need an employee to coordinate. 4) parts of this report are full of jargon and need to be rewritten in plain English. 5) if we can get a good report together with support from many farmers. Need to get people on board, need good publicity.
Anne: clarification. Not more reference in the report about the EFP because funding for that program is not approved beyond March.
9. **Lisa Lloyd:** 30 years. Thank committee for all the hard work. Agree we should preserve the land base. And if we want this we have to drop the regs a little. Agri-tourism is important. Stewardship of land is most important thing but need other things for income. Need to get other people to do things. Like composting, education. Farmers never very good at running things because of seasonal work schedule. Love the alliance idea and having an umbrella. If IAF will help fund. E.g. we need to address the reassessment. It's a huge thing with all kinds of restrictions. We need a really good group to help with this. We need an agrologist. Now there's nobody. Want a strong force on the island. Alliance could be that body. More housing on farmland. Perhaps it could be clustered. We are certified organic so get lots of wwoofers. Always have help because of this. They're fabulous. The Environmental Farm Plan: it's full of regulations again even though I agree with it in principle. Water is huge. Animals: worried about inputs. They're all coming from off-island. Should we be growing animals? But if we don't grow animals we don't get our assessment. Maybe we could build a granary and bring feed grains from Alberta. If we are going to do animals we are going to have some concerted effort.

Discussion:

John: What about the idea of creating an investment ag institution? We can't get core funding from gov't

Marguerite: one of the biggest complaints is that people won't pay the price. So if aging people won't pay more for their food they certainly won't invest.

Malcolm: where is the return going to come from?

Malcolm: never want to see legislated that has to be organic farming. E.g. fencing replacement not an option. Contemplating deer fencing for corn crop. Can't afford fence posts that qualify for organic status. Also have to use a herbicide because can't afford to weed it by hand.

John: don't agree with that. Did it without chemicals.

Doug: I think you can separate people from their money assuming they support organics/local if there's a definite goal. It's hard to get people to invest in something that is viewed as nebulous. Need definite objective.

John: only viable organization is one that has paid staff. Looking for good quality local food. Publicise plan and have good solid objectives.

Jane: if specific about what you were going to provide to the community, e.g. someone to give good technical services.

Roger: fence to keep the deer in.

Malcolm: not allowed and black tail not much of a meat animal.

Marguerite: unique here because we're oriented to the term organic. It really is quite insular. Organic availability and awareness not elsewhere. Needs education for newcomers because people don't come with that orientation.

Lisa: want committee to address assessment concerns.

Anne: what about bringing someone here to talk about it to create a dialogue.

George: engage in dialogue at every level and broad based.

Anne: need to educate assessors about what constitutes full farm.

Sandy: sits on Assessment Review Board. Agrees that need to have argue "farm" case.

Roger: only way to solve this is for SSI to speak with one voice.

Malcolm: Caldwell's on Walker Hook exists as oldest farm only because they have farm assessment. Otherwise will have to be put on the market. There are a couple of other properties the same.

George: agritourism. What do think that entails? What specifically do you have in mind?

Marguerite: anything that involves education, awareness about agriculture activities. Farm stays.

Malcolm: Playschools on a farm. Not allowed but felt it was a good thing.

Lisa: anytime someone walks around a farm begins to get it. It's got to kind of develop organically. It comes out of what you do.

Sandy: farm stays. Small cabins in clusters in PEI. They help do chores.

Lisa: it's a kind of service

Sandy: being real is important

Margaret: next door to SS Spa. The kid remembers every word

Harry: next step is they become customers and they are the most loyal you can have.

Tony: looking at in idealistic sense. On Sannich train rides, wagon rides. More commercial. Kind of frightening. Become more of an amusement park.

Anne: need guidelines

George: if we accept recommendation there would be a general policy statement. And when amend land use bylaw would identify specific activities.

Anne:

Malcolm: pumpkins. Don't advertise it but growing every year. Educational and get extra dollar per pumpkin.

Roger: huge awareness growing in communities about needing nature and getting closer to the land.

Sandy: there has to be common sense.

Malcolm: another way you can make money is if you have a shale deposit.

Comments sent to the committee from Ken Byron: major concern is that we have 3 or 4 designations of zoning for farmland. A1 A2 Watershed and rural. And concerned about discriminatory for farmers because of land use regs on these different zoning. There is no consistency and justification. Denies development rights on his farm property. In 355 they took away options. Also say lost 700 acres of ALR. Where did it go?

Adjourned at 6:30

Synthesis of Key Ideas

- Protecting the land base for farming is essential.
- Financial viability of farming on Salt Spring seems to be an insurmountable issue. Report does not adequately address this issue. Farming is not profitable here. Agri-tourism can support core farming activities, thus increasing likelihood of profit. Regulatory flexibility around size of buildings, especially barns, and types of building, especially having to do with housing, should take a ‘common sense’ approach.
- Regulations and decisions made by government officials can have serious detrimental affects in the community. For example, the decision to not allow haying this year in the Burgoyne Valley until it was too late for the hay has seriously depleted the availability of hay on SSI.
- The economics of farming on Salt Spring in the context of global forces needs to be key consideration. Issues include competition from industrial agriculture, genetically engineering seeds and their patents, pesticide use, underpaid labour in developing countries, are some of the sub-issues affecting small scale farming on SSI. Not enough emphasis in the report on food security.
- Skeptical about the need for and feasibility of the alliance recommendation.
- Changes will only come when there is a food crisis.
- Most of the comments at this meeting were negative. Very little focus on what kind of community we want, what role we want agriculture plays in life of the community. Some mention of food quality but not much discussion about it. There was mention that perhaps ‘organics’ is a niche that SSI could be developed more than it is.
- Major concerns about the negative impact that the BC farm reassessment process will have on farm finances when implemented next year. Strong feeling expressed about the need to do something in a coordinated, ‘one voice’ way.

Quotable quotes

- Quote from Sandy Robley about using ‘common sense’ when developing and applying regulations at the farm level.
- Quote from Lisa Lloyd about labour not a problem because of availability of Wwoofers to certified organic farmers. Capture her expression that they are great.
- Quote from Margaret Thomson about timing has to be just right for development of processing facilities.
- Quote from Roger Middleton that about the “the elephant in the room” is ageing of farmers without succession planning or incentives for young people to become farmers in the current environment.
- Quote from Harry Burton about “product labelling in Canada in a disaster” in that it allows a “Product of Canada” label even though all the produce inputs might be from off-shore.

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