Future of Food on Vancouver Island

Presented by
Linda Geggie
Overview

1. Current Situation—Our Food System
2. Global Food Economy
3. Local Food Production Capacity?
4. Re-localization Efforts!
Our Current Situation on Vancouver Island…

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly!
Vancouver Island

• Traditionally key foods were salmon, seal, octopus, herring, cod, deer, ducks, shellfish, greens, root vegetables and berries.

• Foods and practices

• changed dramatically with

• settler populations
The Food System plays a large role in island life...

Food System accounts for:
- 20% of retail sales
- 20% of service jobs
- 20% of car trips
- 40% of garbage
  and
- 80% of organic waste
Vancouver Island

• 2855 Farms
• Over 1200 primarily producing livestock
• and 1500 field crops
Vancouver Island

• Estimated expenditures on food over $5.369 billion

• Gross farm receipts $163.7 million

• That’s only 3%
On Vancouver Island we import over 90% of our food.
(50 years ago we imported about 10%)
CRD Region-Food Production

- 7% of land base in the ALR
  – approximately 975 farms
  – 50% of farms are under 10 acres
  – 50% farms earn between $2,500 to $25,000
  – 30 organic farms, many more transitional
  – 25 wineries and a cidery in Greater Victoria and nearby Cowichan Valley
What we grow in the CRD

- **Field crops** 4,232 h (almost 3000 Hay)
- **Fruits and Berries** 257 h (apples strawberries grapes)
- **Vegetables** 355 h (corn, cabbage carrots, squash)
- **Livestock** (chickens 600,000, 4,000 Cattle, 800 dairy cows, 9,000 sheep, 388 hogs)
CRD - Food Distribution

- Most local vegetables, fruits and berries are bought direct from the farm gate not through grocery retailers

- Majority of residents purchase food from 5 major grocery chains who are supplied by 5 major distributors
Fruits of a Global Food Economy

- Accessible, nearby
- Food abundance
- Wide range of foods
- Available year round
- Food affordable
- Ability of people to maintain cultural diets
Food Supply Chain
Global Food Supply through AGRIBUSINESS Model

"agribusiness is more than just owning and cultivating the land to raise crops and livestock (agriculture production).

Agribusiness is also the financing of agriculture and the manufacturing, transporting, wholesaling, and distribution of farm machinery, fertilizers, chemical pesticides, seed, feed, and packaging materials (agricultural inputs).

Agribusiness also manufactures, processes and markets food (agricultural outputs)."
Emergence of Food Company Clusters

4 companies control the seed market
3 produce most nitrogen fertilizers
9 companies collect all Canadian Grain
4 companies mill 80% of flour
4 companies dominate beef packing
Canadian Grocery Retail

- 80% of retail is through six companies
- The combined market share of the Loblaw Companies Ltd., Sobeys Inc., exceeds 50%.
- Loblaw's has estimated 35% of the market -the max allowed by Canada's Competition Bureau.
Global Trend

• United Kingdom: top five retailers control about 76.5% of the market (J Sainsbury plc, Wal-Mart-owned Asda Group and Tesco)

• United States: five retailers are established as the grocery industry's frontrunners (Kroger, Supervalu, Safeway, Ahold and Wal-Mart)
Owning the Chain-Cargill in US

- 1st in Corn Exports (Continental Grain)
- 1st in Soy exports
- 1st in Grain handling facilities
- 3rd in animal Feed plants
- 3rd in Beef Packing (Excel)
- 3rd in Pork (Swift)
- 3rd in Turkey (Cargill’s Turkeys)
Cargill is one of Canada's largest agricultural merchandisers and processors with interests in meat, egg, malt and oilseed processing, livestock feed, salt manufacturing, as well as crop input products, grain handling and merchandizing.
Farmers?

In 2000, Canada had 276,548 farms (down from 430,522 in 1966).
Trans-national Sourcing

• Transnationals look to purchase goods at the cheapest cost and move them to where they can be sold at the highest price

• On Vancouver Island it is hard to compete when across the globe workers in rural areas receive less than $5 a day and health and environmental regulations do not exist or are unlikely to be enforced.

• Size matters!
How is Global System doing at feeding people?

6 Billion People in the world
Estimated that of these:
• 1 Billion underfed (800 million children)
• 1 Billion overfed

In the CRD, approximately 40% of adults overweight, while at the same time there was a 25% increase in use of food banks in the last 10 years (1 in 6 children).
Our Health

- Diet related illnesses are on the rise (diabetes epidemic, cardio vascular, osteoporosis, and cancers)
- Our children’s life expectancy is lower than ours.
Our Planet

• Falling Water Tables (especially in key areas of agricultural production)
• Deterioration of rangelands that supply majority of world’s protein
• Soil erosion, loss of topsoil and continuing destruction of croplands
• The collapse of global fisheries
Greenhouse gas emissions in 2004 by source

- Power: 25.9
- Industry: 19.4
- Buildings: 13.1
- Transport: 7.9
- Land use: 17.4
- Farming: 13.5
- Waste: 2.8

SOURCE: IPCC, Working group 1, 2007
Many Downsides

- Overfed and underfed
- Decreasing Health and wellbeing
- Reliance on long distant transport
- Reliance on industrial production methods
- Loss of farms and rural communities
- Limited control of supply
- Disaster and disruption
- Peak Oil and Price

SO WHAT?
What could a different food system look like?
Re-localization Movement
What is our current capacity to feed ourselves closer to home?

We don’t really know!

We need to better understand, at regional and sub-regional levels, patterns of food consumption and production
What is our current capacity?

Dr. Aleck Ostry is conducting a study to compare food being consumed with current production levels for major food categories in our local health areas. (2006 figures)
### Preliminary Results: Dairy Self-Sufficiency (Ostry 2009)

#### % Self-Sufficient

- **160% - 170%**
- **42% - 150%**
- **17% - 41%**
- **0.41% - 16%**
- **0% - 0.4%**
- **No Data**

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<td>152.4%</td>
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<td>Campbell River</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>35.50%</strong></td>
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### Preliminary Results: Fruit Self-Sufficiency (Ostry 2009)

#### % Self-Sufficient
- **18% - 75%**
- **7.5% - 17%**
- **4.7% - 7.4%**
- **3% - 4.6%**
- **1% - 2.9%**
- **No Data**

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Preliminary Results: Vegetable Self-Sufficiency (Ostry 2009)

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We will need more land in production......

To produce a healthy diet based on the recommendations of the Canada Food Guide for British Columbians (given existing production technology) irrigated farmland will need to increase by 49% in BC by 2025.

*BC Food Self Reliance Report (MAFL)*
Challenges for Local Food Production

- Loss and Cost of land
- Loss of infrastructure
- Loss of farmers (retiring/operations viability)
- Labour skills/costs
- Increasing/changing policy and regulations
- Consolidation of grocery industry
Challenges for Food Production

- Competition from cheaper imported food
- Lack of consumer knowledge of food system
- Consumer expectation of cheap food as opposed to “better value food”
But....

Growing Awareness of relationship with food (health, environment, sustainability and re-localization movements)

Temperate Climate and long Growing Season

Good arable land, and forest diversity, proximity to seas

Diverse and Talented farming community

Great diversity of initiatives active community

Our Politicians/public service gaining understanding of the value and importance of local agriculture and food

Increasing collaboration (horizontally and vertically)
So what is being done?

- Individual action
- Education Initiatives
- Organizations Projects
- Networks/coalitions
- Inter-sectoral collaboration
- Policy and Planning
- Links to regional, national, and international efforts
Supporting Local Food Production and Distribution

- **Consumer Awareness** and education campaigns to support buying local

- **Training New Farmers:** Entrepreneurship, Apprenticeship, Training, Mentorship Programs

- **Accessible Land:** Farmlands initiatives such as Trusts, Community Farms Program, Farmlands Conference

- **Investment** in farmers (ICC, MAL)

- **Cooperative processing and marketing initiatives**

- **Conferences and events**
Associations Active!

- Small Scale Food Processors Association
- South Island Organic Producers Association
- 4H Clubs
- Island Natural Growers
- Southern Vancouver Direct Farm Marketers
• The Island Farmers' Alliance mission is to ensure the sustainability and growth of the Island agriculture.

• 60 members: beef, vegetable, eggs, poultry, dairy
Focus on Farmlands
Our Foodlands
Our Future

A working conference on ensuring the viability and accessibility of farmlands for food production in BC’s Capital Region

More people are looking to “buy local” but our farmlands are more often growing estates rather than food.

This conference will take a hard look at:
- Skyrocketing land costs and accessing farmlands for farming
- Models and opportunities for leasing, and land sharing
- Emerging ideas for farm succession
- Tools and ideas for local and regional planners and governments
- Lessons from other regions facing similar challenges

Come to learn, share what you know, and plan to put the pieces in action

When: November 27, 2008 - Schedule TBA
Where: Mary Winspear Center, 2243 Beacon Avenue, Sidney BC
What: Private sector, community groups, local and provincial planners, governments and authorities exploring strategies for farm viability and accessibility of farmland in BC’s Capital Region

To become a sponsor, request a conference program, or for more info contact Linda Geggie at lgeggie@telus.net or 250-727-9605.

Funding provided by:
Northbrook Farm

Land Sharing
Cooperative Processing and Marketing

Nanaimo Heritage Food Co-op

The purpose of the co-op is to mobilize partners to rebuild local food systems in the Island Coastal region.

The co-op’s business plan includes providing distribution, warehousing, co-packing services aimed at the ‘foodservice’ market channel: institutions, restaurants, etc. …Google: Edible Strategies
Food Distribution

FoodRoots Distributors Coop

• Buys from 25 local farmers
• Distributes through pocket markets and the “Fruit Loop” as well as warehouse sales
Farmers Markets 2008

• Huge growth in Markets
• $3.09 Billion
• 28 million shopper visits
• $32.06 avg. purchases per shopper visit
• 1-5 avg. jobs created per vendor
• 50-199 avg. customers per day per vendor
• $100-$999 avg. sales per day per vendor
Urban Agriculture

- Community Gardens
- Fruit Trees and edible landscaping
- Therapeutic Gardens
- Neighborhood pocket markets
- Backyard poultry
- Spin Gardening
- “Edible” Commons and Parks
- Demonstration sites
Zero Mile Diet!
LifeCycles Projects ..... Urban Agriculture Hub
Home Grown Gardens
Growing Schools
Food Miles
Victoria Fruit Tree Project
Farmlands Project
Policy and Planning
YouthCore
Victoria Compost Education Center

Our 5th Anniversary - Pumpkin Smash!
The Pumpkin Smash will be held November 7th and 8th from 10am to 3pm each day. Bring your family and friends, and of course your pumpkins, and join us for Pumpkin Bowling and other fun family games to help us raise awareness for composting!
Backyards and Community Gardens

Nurseries estimate that vegetable seed and start sales were up 30% this year in the CRD!
Edible landscaping
Health and Access

- Emergency Food Distribution Agencies
- Fruit Tree Project
- Quest Victoria
- Healthy Eating Active Living Project
- Aboriginal Food Gathering and Gardens initiatives
Just in Greater Victoria

46 programs are offered by 39 agencies.

Every week, 39 agencies serve up to 20,195 meals and 5770 snacks as well as provide food, food vouchers and hampers for 2375 guests to take away.

26 agencies serve a high proportion of homeless or unstably housed guests in their food and meal programs.

2974 volunteer hours are spent each week with food and meal programs.
Food Resources Directory

AGENCIES & ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING FOOD RESOURCES IN BC'S CAPITAL REGION 2009
Food Recovery

Grocers throw out 200 lbs of fresh produce a day on average (Angrove 2008)
Good Food Box

a bulk-buying program that aims to lower your grocery bill by buying bulk, fresh fruits and vegetables from local farms and distributors.

What kinds of boxes are there and how much do they cost?

- $5, $10 or $15 Fruit and Veggie Box
- $12 All Fruit Box
- $15 Natural/Organic Box

Can anyone buy a box?

Yes, anyone can buy a box. In fact the more people who buy into the program, the more people who will benefit.
Community Kitchens

• Community kitchens support folks to work together to plan, and prepare meals to share and take home.
Fruit Tree Projects

- Sooke, Western Communities and Greater Victoria

- This year the LC FTP aims to match or exceed last year's harvest of 30,000 pounds of fruit.
Feasting For Change

Reconnecting Food, Land and Culture

Aboriginal Peoples in South Vancouver Island come together around Traditional Food Feasts to discuss food security in their communities.
Public Education

• Speakers and Celebration Events
• Garden and Farm Tours
• Buy Local Directories (Fresh from the Island, LifeCycles Good Food Directory)
• School programs
• Markets and Fairs
Tomato Challenge

• Go Local Tomato Challenge

• Saanich Municipal Staff
Island Chef Collaborative

• Over the last five years, the ICC has provided $22,000 worth of equipment to 16 small farms on Vancouver Island
• The ICC’s inaugural Defending Our Backyard in 2008 raised funds to provide $9,500
Slow Food

- Slow Food Victoria
- Slow Food Canada
- Slow Food International
Policy and Planning

• Health, Agriculture, Environment, Social Welfare, Trade policy and regulations impact food systems

• All levels of government
  – Agriculture Area Plans
  – Food Charters
  – Food Strategies and Health Action Plans
Capital Region-Food & Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable

- BC Govt and Service Employees’ Union
- Canadian Cancer Society
- Community Social Planning Council
- GroundWorks Learning Centre
- Island Chefs Collaborative
- Island Farmers’ Alliance
- LifeCycles Project Society
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries
- Small Scale Food Processor Association
- The Land Conservancy
- Vancouver Island Health Authority
Capital Region Food Charter
A Proposal

Canada is committed to the United Nations Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights specifying the right of everyone to adequate food, and endorses an Action Plan for Food Security that states "the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger" and "food security exists when all people at all times have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life." To meet this national commitment, and to make food security work in our community, the Capital Regional District and other local organizations adopt the following vision and support the following elements as the basis for a Capital Region Food Charter.

Our vision is a sustainable and secure local food and agriculture system that provides safe, sufficient, culturally accepted, nutritious food accessible to everyone in the Capital Region through dignified means.

Food Security and Production

1. Food is an integral part of the economy of the Capital Region and surrounding area. Commitment to building bridges between urban and rural communities on food security will strengthen the farm sector’s self-reliance, growth and development. By building on the mutual interdependence of producers and consumers, we can encourage local food and food businesses (e.g., Farmers Markets, farm direct sales, etc.).

2. Local agriculture and agricultural land are important to producers and consumers alike. By acting side by side, we can support urban and rural food security initiatives, we can preserve farmland, wetlands, wildlife habitat and green space.

3. Urban agriculture can be advanced through the establishment of community gardens and residents’ gardens that contribute directly to the economic, environmental and social life of city residents.

4. Food must be produced in a manner that is environmentally sustainable, safe for consumption and socially just.

Food Security and Justice

5. Food is a human right. Every Capital Region resident should have access to an adequate supply of nutritious, affordable and safe food without social and economic barriers.

6. To meet the demands of the Capital Region, we must work with those communities most affected by lack of access to nutritious, affordable and safe food. By supporting programs like the Fresh Fruit and Veggie Box, we can help people who need fresh fruits and vegetables with local producers.

Food Security and Health

7. Food security contributes to the physical, mental, spiritual and emotional well-being of residents.

8. Food security is a core function of public health. A healthy population requires healthy food which in turn requires a healthy food system.

9. Nutrition education and consumption of wholesome, healthy foods are important factors in population health. Promotion of healthy eating begins with prenatal nutrition and breastfeeding.

10. By encouraging healthy living, we can reduce the incidence and prevalence of diet-related diseases.

11. By encouraging people to eat locally, we can increase consumption of fresh, nutritious, wholesome food as well as contributing to environmental health by reducing food miles.

12. Food brings people together in the celebration of family and community, strengthening links between diverse cultures and communities. The preparation, eating and sharing of food engages individuals and families in a social and community fellowship that balances physical and spiritual needs.

13. Food is a social good that sustains and supports us and our communities.

Food Security and Globalization

14. Ensuring domestic and local ownership in our food supply is critical for the future of the region.

15. Any international agreements entered into by our governments must respect the full realization of people’s right to adequate, nutritious, accessible, affordable, safe food at home and internationally.

16. National, provincial, and local governments must guarantee the right of communities and individuals to food security through supporting viable, sustainable, agriculture production and optimal population health.

17. Food for all is a basic human right.

18. Food insecurity is a human-made problem that can be solved through collective action.

19. Food security is a fundamental human right that requires a collective effort to achieve.

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28. Food security is a human right that requires a collective effort to achieve.

29. Food security is a human right that requires a collective effort to achieve.

30. Food security is a human right that requires a collective effort to achieve.
Several Canadian municipalities have passed food charters:

- Toronto (2001)
- Saskatoon (2002)
- Prince Albert (2003)
- Sudbury (2004)
- Kaslo Village (2007)

- And Central Saanich and North Saanich!
Final Report, Phase 2:
Capital Region
Food and Health
Action Plan
Measure Progress

inside:
Community Food Production Resources
Capital Region Food Distribution Network
Individual and Household Food Security
Action Recommendations

a baseline assessment of

food security

in British Columbia's Capital Region
Local Government Initiatives

• Agriculture Area Plans
• Urban Agriculture Resolution
• Community Garden Policies
• Land Use Planning Strategies
• Public lands for food production and Farmland Acquisition
Land Acquisition: District of Saanich and the Haliburton Community Organic Farm
Research and Community University Partnerships

- Uvic Office of Community Based Research Searchable Database and Inventory
- Buy Local Purchase Policy
- Sharing Food and Knowledge Forum
- Community based research projects
- Vancouver Island Community University Research Alliance (VICRA)
Working Together

- Vancouver Island Farmers Alliance
- Vancouver Island Food Systems Network
- Vancouver Island Traditional Foods Network
- Small Scale Food Processors Association
- VIHA area “Food Security Hubs”- (Courtney, Nanaimo, Duncan, Capital Region and Western Communities)
Grass Roots Linkages

- Working Group on Food Access
- Sooke Food Chi
- individual groups
- Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable
- Vancouver Island Food Systems Network
- BC Food Systems Network
- Food Secure Canada
- beyond
Conclusions

- Global Food Economy and retail market difficult to shift, may take external forces?
- Local Food Production Capacity investment
- Processing and Distribution models and infrastructure
- Promise in markets, independent grocers, grow your own movement
- Continued need for education and awareness
- Shifts in Policy and Planning
The Future of Food on Vancouver Island

What type of food system do you want?
What are things you can do to contribute to a healthier sustainable food system on Vancouver Island?

What things need to be a focus for collaborative work?
More info?

Linda Geggie
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www.lifecyclesproject.ca
www.communitycouncil.ca