

# SOUTHERN GULF ISLANDS FOOD & AGRICULTURE STRATEGY

## RESULTS OF MARCH 14-22, 2015 DIALOGUE SESSIONS

### BACKGROUND

The Southern Gulf Islands Economic Development Commission is in the process of developing a Food and Agricultural Strategy for the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral area. As part of this planning process a series of Dialogue sessions were held, engaging around 70 residents in a conversation about the desired future for local food and agriculture. These sessions provided an opportunity for the Strategy's organizers to have a conversation with people involved and interested in food and agriculture on five of the major islands in the South Gulf Island archipelago. Participants responded to the following three questions in a series of informal small group discussions:

1. What is the state of food and agriculture in the Southern Gulf Islands and on your island?
2. What do you want it to be?
3. What needs to be done to make this happen?

### SESSION LOCATIONS

<b>Saturday, Mar. 14, 2015</b>	Mayne Island - Agricultural Hall - 2-5 pm
<b>Friday, Mar. 20, 2015</b>	Galiano Island - Lions Hall - 2-5 pm
<b>Saturday, Mar. 21, 2015</b>	Pender Islands – Community Hall - 2-5 pm
<b>Sunday, Mar. 22, 2015</b>	Saturna Island - Community Hall – 10 am - 1 pm

### FUTURE SESSIONS

Follow-up dialogue sessions are being planned for each island in mid-May 2015. Stay tuned for details!

### QUESTIONS

If you have any questions or comments about the Dialogue #1 outcomes please contact Michael Dunn ([mjechael.dunn@gmail.com](mailto:mjechael.dunn@gmail.com)).

### MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the Southern Gulf Islands Food and Agriculture Strategy process please visit:

[WWW.GROWINGISLANDS.COM](http://WWW.GROWINGISLANDS.COM)

## OUTCOMES - SUMMARY

Thank you to all of you who participated and contributed to the conversations. Your input is greatly appreciated and will help us ensure that the policies and actions we include in the Food and Agricultural Strategy are relevant and reflect the interests and ideas of the region's island communities. For clarity and to contribute to a shared understanding about the attitude and ideas for agriculture within the region we are providing a compilation of the notes gathered from those meetings. Please feel free to share this information with your friends and networks.

### Mayne Island

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#### Current State:

- *Underutilization of existing land available for growing and no infrastructure to support*
- *Fractured and poor*
- *Isolation, restrictions and lack of innovation*

#### Desired State:

- *New ideas, new crops shared infrastructure and better local wisdom and community owned farm land*
- *Expertise, innovation and capital (6 figures)*
- *Healthy real local food with increased community support for producers through product selection, branding and infrastructure assistance*

#### What We Could Do:

- *Food processing, preserving, growing for seed, using food/growing cooperative and agronomy support for adaptation*
- *More knowledge and capital. Institutional and community farms. More government support and less regulation*
- *Food is the core linking the producer with the community and the community with the world*
- *Food as a focus – an attractor*

### Galiano Island

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#### Current State:

- *Off to a good start, has great potential to grow - can it be sustained?*
- *Galiano produces less than 5% of our food but agricultural production has increased dramatically over the last 7 years. The southern Gulf Islands? Improving*
- *Difficult to measure – worse than 100 years ago but better than 15 years ago*

#### Desired State:

- *Self-sufficient year-round in produce, meat and dairy*
- *We see high quality, differentiated produce unique to the Southern Gulf Islands*
- *Most people said subsidization of some kind is required for growers (labour, land, equipment)*

#### What We Could Do:

- *Build an inter-island, community-based farmer organization/co-op focused on our unique opportunities in agriculture*
- *The distribution and establishment of Galiano piloted Mennonite farming practices, which will revolutionize agricultural production and wiser and more efficient water use throughout the Gulf Islands*
- *Set up solutions that meet the diverse needs of farmers and growers*

## **The Pender Islands**

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### **Current State:**

- *Poor – needs development.*
- *Blocked and hindered despite hard work*
- *Lack of coordinated system for marketing and distribution. Need for co-operative growing, support, sharing of equipment, transportation, innovative marketing*
- *Sad and shocking and yet the potential is there. How little our potential is used. Work hard then turn around and blocked and hindered*

### **Desired State:**

- *Development of co-operative infrastructure for machinery, water catchment, greenhouses*
- *Farm store used by all farmers year round. Local food year-round and supported by islanders eating locally*
- *Gulf Island exemptions on regulations intended for larger markets or larger producers*

### **What We Could Do:**

- *Help develop business plans and markets with producers for year round crops*
- *Co-op: Working together with co-operative efforts like farm store, co-op boat*
- *Special economic and agricultural development zone for Gulf Islands. CSA program*
- *Education: School programs or summer camp farm program*

## **Saturna Island**

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### **Current State:**

- *Underutilized traditional and wild ocean resources. Disconnection between consumer and producer. Low local consumption. As much agriculture if not more if our changes are implemented*
- *We might produce 2% of food consumed. We can produce more but local consumers are not buying local*
- *95% of food products purchased off-island*
- *Lack of control*

### **Desired State:**

- *Raise local consumption to 80%. Food cooperative – storage, production and sales. BC Ferries magically becomes a passenger-oriented service. Travelling store!*
- *We would like to see government subsidies and taxes, and a tighter farming that works together in advocacy and help*
- *100% of locals buying local grown food products would make a big change*
- *Change culture of residents – “build the market”*

### **What We Could Do:**

- *Establish community food growing, distribution system that would engage people more with the production and consumption of their food. Community food box program utilizing farmer and gardener generated products. Establish a community garden*
- *We can create mutual farm co-operation for help and advocacy in information and consumer education, and local food programs*
- *Communicate the value of locally produced food and provide opportunities for cooperation and encouragement of young farmers*
- *Education and extension: What’s our growing potential? What are the gaps in growing and the market?*

## OUTCOMES – DETAILED NOTES

### Mayne Island

Mayne Island Agricultural Hall

2-5 pm March 14, 2015

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Approximately 15 people in attendance in three conversation groups.

#### **QUESTION 1: What is the state of food and agriculture on your island? In the Southern Gulf Islands?**

##### ***Group 1: Underutilization of existing land available for growing and no infrastructure to support.***

- More interest in locally grown but may not know how to do this
- Younger people – need to have more, can't be a hobby
- Not enough people producing on Mayne to support a retail outlet
- It is not growing in a productive way
- Cannot get certain crops grown
- Lack of stability in lives and land use
- Don't support locally grown food with purchases
- People dabble
- Limited or no storage or processing of local produce for value-added products like apple juice
- Lack of branding
- Who is going to do this?
- Under utilized infrastructure
- Farm ownership – operating on an annual basis with different growers (non-owner farmers)
- Lots of agricultural land for sale- uncertain future.
- Don't know what crops to grow
- Aging farmers – lack of input from young people
- Most crops of broader commercial interest are individually marketed
- Lack of knowledge

##### ***Group 2: Fractured and poor.***

- Not very good/poor
- Use any means of getting people involved
- Complex food system for food production consistency
- ¼ local sales -> need off-island sales
- Slightly intensive small land multi farms

##### ***Group 3: Isolation, restrictions and lack of innovation.***

- Isolation from larger off-island markets
- Regulations limiting factor
- Other restrictions include;
  - Infrastructure
  - Security gap (economic viability)
  - Increasing costs (land, transportation)
- Lack of innovation
- No new farmers
- 75% of farms are for sale on Mayne
- No incentives for farming/new farms

- Can't get people to grow
  - Too much work
  - Need to mechanize but difficult with small areas

**QUESTION 2: If you could wave a magic wand what would you like it to be?**

***Group 1: New ideas, new crops shared infrastructure and better local wisdom and community owned farmland.***

- Youth involvement making enough money so that they stay long enough to develop local growing wisdom
- Community ownership of land (commons)
- Grow for the island first
- Local employment
- Refrigerated transport
- Export surpluses
- Seafood
- Transportation infrastructure that supports the movement of farm foods within the region
- Properly scaled and suitable commercial approach for the Gulf Islands – island/regional - not overwhelmed by global sources
- Brand that captures imagination – Gulf Island Grown/Mayne Grown
- 100% community buy-in
- 'Earth share' – pairing people who cannot afford land with people who can
- Local abattoir that can process deer
- Local expertise (extension) to assess capability and possibility – future oriented – what could be grown
- Change in eating habits – eating what can be grown locally – connecting this to cooking and chefs
- Local processing capability
- No GMOs
- Seed self-sufficiency
- Greenhouses – infrastructure to extend season, diversity and volume of products

***Group 2: Expertise, innovation and capital (6 figures).***

- More growers – grow something
- More knowledge and capital
- Educations for clients
- Less Costco shoppers
- Cancel big box stores for food production
- Make local food production more appreciated and profitable
- Large uptake in saving food for out of season
- Younger population
- Less government regulations, interference
- More government support – not necessarily less regulation
- Fallow deer production/regulations
- Facility for cold storage for holding for transport or hold to process (e.g. apple juice)
- Institutional/community farms – wisdom of the land
- Identify successes

- Identify infrastructure (abattoir, composting, resources)

**Group 3: *Healthy real local food with increased community support for producers through product selection, branding and infrastructure assistance.***

- Health for all including the poor
- Community owned farms
- Young, committed, determined growers
- Elders transfer of knowledge (mentoring)
- Education for all
- Anticipating, adapting to climatic and economic changes – cutting edge
- Self-sufficiency
- Wild foods for eating and sale (fallow deer, Canada geese, oysters, blackberries)
- Arable land divided between animal and plants
- Processing plant for apple juice
- Government and community more supportive
- Communal storage, shipping and distribution
- Food celebration – dinner, festival

**QUESTION 3: *What could you do here & in the Southern Gulf Islands to realize these dreams?***

**Group 1: *Food processing, preserving, growing for seed, using food/growing cooperative and agronomy support for adaptation.***

- Creative ways to use common foods
- Growing for seed – local adapted and plants conducive to produce seeds (seed sharing, storage, processing and exchange) and education and support
- Community food processing and preserving
  - Community facilities and expertise (freezing, drying, canning, fermenting and storage)
- Community gleaning
- Community food coordination program (e.g. Galiano)
- Growers cooperatives – by crop type e.g. Galiano garlic growers coop
- Approach current land holders -> to dedicate portions of their land to growing (long-term)
- A farm-based AirB&B – bringing willing farmers and growers to the land
- Using local scaled capacity
- Sharing knowledge and wisdom, machinery, land
- Supportive community mechanisms to encourage and allow this
- Addressing the harvest weak link – transportation, storage and processing

**Group 2: *More knowledge and capital. Institutional and community farms. More government support and less regulation.***

- More knowledge and farming
- Younger population
- More government support
- Fallow deer production/regulations
- Cold storage facility
- Institutional/community farms
- Identify successes

- Identify infrastructure needs
- Cooperative farming
- Product identification
- Class D slaughter permits for local producers
- Capital (big item)
- Enough produce for local population and grow to niche markets with positive cash flow

***Group 3: Food is the core linking the producer with the community and the community with the world.***

- Begin with your vision or passion
- Consider your circumstances
- Apply yourself
- Someone with knowledge on how to best use the land
- Cooperation and communication with the larger community
- Consider the whole costs
- Environmental impact
- Personal health
- Local – more nutrients
- Less garbage
- Local branding
- Community involvement in agricultural land (common)
- Cold storage and refrigerator trucks for common use
- Community education and celebrations
- Encourage young families
- Economic development plan to include agriculture and food

**Galiano Island**  
**Galiano Lions Hall**  
**2-5 pm March 20, 2015**

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Approximately 15 people in attendance in three conversation groups.

***QUESTION 1: What is the state of food and agriculture on your island? In the Southern Gulf Islands?***

***Group 1: Off to a good start, has great potential to grow, can it be sustained?***

- Almost all of our food is imported
- Most of what is grown on the island is sold on the island (any surplus – which isn't much – goes off island)
- Used to sell more off-island in the past – not now
- Not saturating the market yet on Galiano; may happen this year with corn
- Current production is highly seasonal, mostly perishable produce grown
- Extending the season with greenhouse production (mizuna, lettuce, purple-sprouting broccoli, kale, Brussels sprouts)
- With more younger farmers we could have year-round production
- Agriculture now is better than it was 10 years ago. Growing less than 50 years ago but more than 10-15 years ago
- Cheaper to buy food in town since ferries were put in place
- Many people used to be self-sufficient
- Knowing our local farmers and their organic produce is helping sell local
- Not just the lack of young people, it's the high cost of land, labour and machinery
- Some people in agriculture either pay themselves or pay hired help
- Housing – if farmers could provide in expensive/temporary housing hired help, then help might be affordable
- OCP in the way of expanding agriculture on Galiano
- Young people can go anywhere in BC; what do we have to offer to attract them?
- How do you make a living when on average we're losing \$0.15 on the dollar
- Tax structure allows people to buy land, put horses on it and get a tax credit
- Galiano by and large was farmed in different areas in the past than now
- Other S. Gulf Islands:
  - Mayne is producing well and could go year-round
  - Salt Spring island is doing well (Tues. and Sat. markets)
  - Penders – market is doing well
  - Saturna – lamb production seems to be going ok – supplying some produce to Thrifty's
  - Lack of young farmers is killing agriculture on the S. Gulf Islands – need more

***Group 2: Galiano produces less than 5% of our food but agricultural production has increased dramatically over the last 7 years. The southern Gulf Islands? Improving.***

- It is growing
- It is wet and cloudy – late spring
- It is productive
  - 45 years ago headed south in terms of production but now it is turning more local and building awareness
  - Galiano was self-sufficient in the '50s and '60s (milk from dairy farm to Salt Spring, pigs, eggs to CPR boats, herring fishery at N. end)



- We are building agriculture up once again
- Differences between the South and North ends even more distinct in the past
- Supply chain efficiencies – single biggest factor in arresting agricultural development
- People/residents had to be self-sufficient in '50s and '60s because of ferry service – more choice at that time
- Growing is growing – no more near self-sufficiency for our present population
- Saturday Market – Sunshine, Morgan, Cable Bay, Mathew Clearsky, Barry, Gnome Grown Farm
- Independents – Koster Farm, Sam Mabberley, Dave Morgan, Hans Bongertman, Danna Marben
- Galiano Food Program has been established
- Ethics of food self-sufficiency are changing (social, institutional, sustainability benefits)
- Methods - an analysis of “how” we farm and use water (being mindful, food from here that is harvested here)
- “Our food” – food from the sea, forests (mushrooms), Oregon grape
- Old farms – may be begun again – the utilization of unused land

**Group 3: *Difficult to measure – worse than 100 years ago but better than 15 years ago.***

- Difficult to measure. Historical snapshots. Worse than 100 years ago but better than 10-15 years ago
- Under-developed
- Foraging and indigenous ways are underutilized and under-reported
- Can't comment on S. Gulf Islands
- We are only supplying 5% based on what is produced by our farms – 50-60 years ago we had 100% food security
- We have large growing awareness
- Probably same for S. Gulf Islands

**QUESTION 2: *If you could wave a magic wand what would you like it to be?***

**Group1: *Self-sufficient year-round in produce, meat and dairy.***

- Cheaper labour would help
- More relaxed OCP bylaws to house workers (e.g. tents)
- See all old farm areas back in production; not for horses
- See cows and dairy re-introduced
- Would like to start up a mixed farm with 50-60 acres – lift restrictions
- Start an abattoir on the island but need a cheap way to remove feathers and offal
- Can agriculture programs at UBC and Kwantlen provide students to work in the summer on farms
- Need to get kids interested in farming with hands on experience to get them hooked on farming
- Local outlet (Daystar) will take produce but are not proactive by going to the farmers and ordering 100 lbs. of product
- Some local food outlets will do this but not all of them – local outlets can sell way more food produced on Galiano but farms need to be able to provide a reliable supply (30% of food in stores is thrown out!)
  - Actual statistics on food wastage is 50-52% of all produced food is lost between the field and the fork

- Local food is less at about 30%
- Need to help keep up the quality of local food but don't need "runway model" vegetables
  - Need to get buyers to accept that veg. doesn't need to be perfect to be good
  - Perhaps could give away not so good looking veg. to overcome this stigma
  - Need to raise awareness of good food value of no-so-good-looking veg. to reduce food wastage
  - "Ugly food" needs to be marketed as cool – currently is a loss leader
  - Reducing wastage could result in reduced prices for local food and increased efficiency
- Still competing with Costco – can we match or beat Costco prices?
- Big stores have political power and use it to keep small farmers out of the lucrative markets

***Group 2: We see high quality, differentiated produce unique to the Southern Gulf Islands.***

- Mennonite farming practices ~70% less water used for farming
- Greater number of all growers – particularly on unused land, balconies, backyards and larger operations
- Low technology use (gravity fed irrigation, simple techniques, using proven farming/traditional applicable farming methods)
- Vegetarianism and everyone grows organically understanding the complex value of doing so (nutritionally, sociologically, ecologically, environmentally, culturally) – supports the traditional small family farm
- Ability to hold year-round Farmers' Market on all of our islands
- We have the ability to connect with all other SGI growers to support one another through information, techniques, expertise, bartering and all forms of sharing to meet the goal of again being self-sufficient in terms of our food production
- Centre of Learning established on each island that is hooked up with local universities' agricultural dept. – advocating a free exchange of ideas about how we can grow and support more growing of crops
- Ideally we achieve self-sufficiency for the S. Gulf Islands
- Advertising the carbon cost of food and nutritional value of local food – to raise awareness
- "Galiano Grown" "GG" brand
- Soil enhancement – research and instructions
- Clam gardens – harvest/management – development
  - Food from the sea
  - Managing other indigenous crops
- Year-round cultivation methods and storage
- Drip irrigation seminars, information, and supplies
- Lower ferry fares – on Saturday for growers?

***Group 3: Most people said subsidization of some kind is required for growers (labour, land, equipment).***

- 100% self-sufficiency – total food security
- High quality differentiated agriculture market
- All food products would have a carbon price
- Cheap (subsidized) labour to encourage farming

- Land is too expensive to own/farm – subsidization of land and equipment
- Free/cheaper postsecondary education

**QUESTION 3: What could you do here & in the Southern Gulf Islands to realize these dreams?**

***Group 1: Build an inter-island, community-based farmer organization/co-op focused on our unique opportunities in agriculture.***

- Need to start with better communication between islands
  - Add a farmers' page to the Island Tides
  - We have so much to gain because many problems/opportunities are the same for each island
- Have farmers coming together to share the Rain-Flo model of agriculture with other micro farmers- expanding Rain-Flo and farming model to 4 S Gulf Islands and Salt Spring Island (moving equipment between the island inexpensively on the ferries)
- Build relationships among micro farmers through trade and getting to them as people (build community)
- Need to add in people who grow their own produce to expand knowledge sharing and enthusiasm and passion for agriculture – build community around agriculture
- The Galiano Food Program is a great start on how to revitalize agriculture on Galiano and build community
- The agricultural triangle: Agriculture/Social-relationship/Food revolution
- Start a Farmers' Institute on Galiano – do so on the other islands (need a farm organization)
  - Start an organization for backyard agriculture as well
  - Could be a stand alone group or through as existing club (Galiano Club)
  - Want to encourage micro growers to get together and form cooperatives to share and market to who can grow what best i.e. share up the market among growers and backyard farmers if it will work
- Perhaps use a communication network to form a co-op to more effectively share markets – hard to enforce because many people have trouble sharing in this way
- Need to look at business models (partners) to share markets and rotate hard and easy crops
- One experience of two people working together was positive but did not work with a third party
- Producer co-ops are doing poorly now because getting farmers to agree is difficult
- Mennonite farmers are successful because they get together and hold things in common – also held together by religion and ideals
- Might be easier to get a co-op going between islands where like-minded are self-selecting and can work together in a co-op.

***Group 2: The distribution and establishment of Galiano piloted Mennonite farming practices, which will revolutionize agricultural production and wiser and more efficient water use throughout the Gulf Islands.***

- Mennonite farming technology throughout the Gulf Islands
- Patient capital resource agency
- Young family businesses to manage and contract planting
- Cooperative - Galiano Farm Association for the free exchange of all expertise, information and crop inventories and the harvest-to-market dates
- Educating new farmers – osmosis effect, gentle involvement, lifestyle

- Facebook farming group
- Practical component - mentoring

***Group 3: Set up solutions that meet the diverse needs of farmers and growers.***

- Hook the young people who want to farm with the people who own the land
- Encourage secondary processing of farm goods
- Grow the local market
- Good governance that will subsidize labour – lobby government for subsidies
- Apprentices
- Affordable housing
- Cooperatives
- Permaculture (Seven Ravens)
- Greater diversity of strategies and ideas
- Set up solutions that meet diverse needs of farmers and growers
- Most people said that subsidization of some kind is required for growers (labour, land, equipment)

## **The Pender Islands**

**Pender Islands Community Hall**

**2-5 pm March 21, 2015**

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Approximately 24 people in attendance in three conversation groups.

### ***QUESTION 1: What is the state of food and agriculture on your island? In the Southern Gulf Islands?***

#### ***Group 1: Poor – needs development.***

- No support for local businesses
- Little support for local restaurants
- Series of government regulations that stopped local
  - Meat (lamb, chicken, pork, goat)
  - Soft cheese sales
- Fuel costs way too high on Pender – forcing people off island for gas and then they by their groceries and produce in town
- Ferry costs too high to bring in farm supplies and to transport farm products
- Local by-laws prohibit co-op on a farm stand

#### ***Group 2: Lack of coordinated system for marketing and distribution. Need for co-operative growing, support, sharing of equipment, transportation, innovative marketing.***

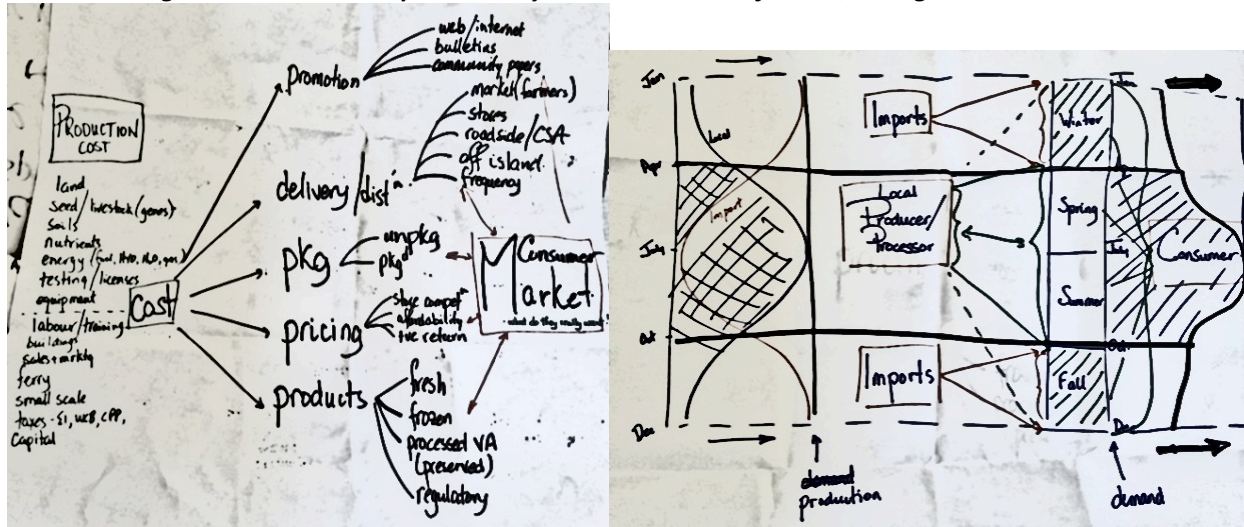
- If large part of diet doesn't grow here, we need to educate/feed that grows locally
- Critical mass- we don't have the numbers of growers to be able to feed our island
- What could we produce on island and year round? Individual sustainability
  - Nettle, rosehip, blackberries
- What could we produce:
  - Eggs, lamb, wool, farmers' market, hops (to Victoria), blueberries, apples, peas, a little bit of beef, chickens
- TruValue needs consistent supply, preparation, packaging
- Transportation – co-op or farm boat
- Co-op farm equipment – small tractor, boiler, smoker, food dryer, apple press, orchard ladders
- Marketing by forum
- Excess garden produce traded, bartered

#### ***Group 3: Sad and shocking and yet the potential is there. How little our potential is used. Work hard then turn around and blocked and hindered.***

- Selling off-island is a big inconvenience and cost
  - Time and \$\$
  - Effects what you grow – non-perishables – easy shipping
- New farmers are early retirees
  - Not a bad thing
  - Less starry eyed
  - More business savvy
  - Bring along young people
- Limits:
  - Ferries
  - Water
  - Lack of distribution system/personal relationships
- More lamb produced than consumed

- Islands Trust has lead to an anti-business approach/shadow
- No supply managed egg or dairy
- Hard to find the market
- No systematic distribution
- Pasteurization
- Producer and marketer
- Federal and provincial limits – Marketing boards
  - Only a certain amount
  - Two types – small or HUGE
- Not a lot of interaction between farmers
  - Yes for haying
  - Informal
- Little support on island for produce
- Once a year purchase from Poets' Cove
- Farmers' Institute more focused on the Saturday Market – lots of artists and a few farmers

The Following illustrations were provided by N. Pender Island farmer, George Leroux.



**QUESTION 2: If you could wave a magic wand what would you like it to be?**

**Group 1: Development of co-operative infrastructure for machinery, water catchment, greenhouses.**

- More co-op farms – food and equipment
- Less regulations from health and marketing boards
- Mobile abattoir
- Exchange economy vs. cash
- Family farms
- Education programs for kids in schools/summer camps
- Gray water for irrigation
- Affordable transport
- End subsidies (tax breaks) for large farms and corporations
- Accessary farm buildings be exempt from code requirements
- Co-op greenhouses

**Group 2: Farm store used by all farmers year round. Local food year-round and supported by islanders eating locally.**

- Raise production on land with agricultural potential – double it
- Local food available all year round and islanders who eat locally
- Urban farming practices - raised beds, container gardens, greenhouses
- Water storage – cisterns (rain catchment), water saving and conservation
- Permaculture
- De-regulation – standards and regulations – farmers’ store – what do you have to do to get into TruValue Foods and Poets’ Cove
- The word organic has changed – favours large growers
- Most organic growers have certification papers
- Transportation between islands - co-op or farm boat
- Farm store needed

**Group 3: Gulf Island exemptions on regulations intended for larger markets or larger producers.**

- Local coordination and standards
- The supermarket could be stocked by the island and the restaurants
- Segregate out health and safety from commercial regulations
- No restrictions on Farm gate sales – give people the information they need, then let them make choices
- A co-op launch owned by farmers to get produce off the island
- A sustainable transportation option that’s affordable
- Farm stores on the island 50% from the farm and up to 50% from other farms

**QUESTION 3: What could you do here & in the Southern Gulf Islands to realize these dreams?**

**Group 1: Help develop business plans and markets with producers for year round crops.**

- Desirability – what is
  - Needed?
  - Wanted?
  - Will it be supported? By farming community, by community
- Viability
  - Regulations – CRD, Health, Province
  - Water availability/soils
  - Work force – accommodations? Relaxation of building codes
  - Cost to market
  - Zoning support – commercial activity without commercial zoning
  - Response from competition
  - Cost of investment in relation to return (cost of land, taxes, infrastructure)
  - Government subsidization of large farmers and corporations but not small farms
- ALR land – capability of being farmed
  - How much is not suited for agriculture because of no soil, poor soils, slope, etc.
- Can crop allocation be discussed so not everyone grows the same crops
- Start with kids
- Develop co-op
- Crop allocation between farmers
- Develop water catchment systems
- Crop variation – grains, millet, barley

- Find location for co-op greenhouse

**Group 2: Working together with co-operative efforts like farm store, co-op boat.**

- Farm store – retail market stall
- Rolling back regulations - Historical exemption - old rules that make farming more viable
- Include Southern Gulf Islands in CRD Program (Peninsula Agriculture group)

**Group 3: Special economic and agricultural development zone for Gulf Islands. CSA program.**

- Learn from experts – live on edge of growing exotics e.g. avocados (Bob Duncan, N. Saanich)
- Everyone is aware of what they can eat locally
- Want a farm store
- “Producers” have/keep personal lists of who buys their lamb, meat or chickens so how does a new growing find out about demand, possibilities? – concerns about legalities
- Local food perceived to be expensive
- Why doesn’t TruValue buy our local produce?
- Shocking that only 24% of our ALR lands under cultivation
- Vibrant farmers’ market but no coordination between growers as to what’s available
  - Is it saturated because we only have ~2000 residents?
  - Need a market demand survey
  - Many come to look but don’t buy
  - Some local dedicated customers
- Community refrigeration or natural cold storage
- CSA program involving a group of farmers, growers
- Individual households may have food resiliency, however, we are a community (only 3 days of food in stores)
- Our aspiration is to be food self-reliant
- Farm equipment is expensive to purchase -> cooperative
- Excess garden produce
  - How to share?
  - How to store? Education, learning
  - How to distribute?
- Farm gate sales
- Community greenhouse – extend the growing season
- Food gaps?
  - Dairy
  - Limited # of greenhouses
- Food stuffs:
  - Price
  - Convenience
  - Quality
- Evidence of former farms (S. Pender)
  - 1930/1940s -> can be done, used to grow a lot – want to restore this
- Lots of land potential to grow food
- Seasonal – winter
  - What can we grow?
  - How to shift people’s mindsets?



- Need a revolution
- Need a willingness to experiment – let go of what doesn't work
- Farm equipment acquisition
- Co-op farming
- Kibbutz model – Masanobu Fukuoka (Japanese farmer and philosopher)
- Workshops/teaching
- Land – tents for workers
- Chicken processing
- Education/ healthy children
- Co-op guarantee supply
- Abundance
- Salesmanship - marketing

## Saturna Island

### Saturna Island Agricultural Island

10 am- pm February 13, 2014

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Approximately 12 people in attendance in three conversation groups.

#### ***QUESTION 1: What is the state of food and agriculture on your island? In the Southern Gulf Islands?***

***Group1: Underutilized traditional and wild ocean resources. Disconnection between consumer and producer. Low local consumption. As much agriculture if not more if our changes are implemented.***

- Almost all food from off-island (average family consumes ¼ beef+ 1 lamb + 12 chickens + 10 fish + 52 doz. Eggs ¼- ½ lbs. of vegetables/day – a hundred couples eating this would far exceed current local production)
- ~5% produced on-island
- Access to feed may be precarious
- Vineyard doesn't produce food
- Farms – Campbell's, Haggis, Breezy, Money
- Disconnect between buyer and producer
- Large agriculture is subsidize – local is not and is therefore expensive
- Potential land to develop and use
- Potential for buyers
- Farmers are fragmented and could be more supportive – lending equipment
- Viability of market?
- Potential for branding – island/farm
- Money Farm works with Mayne Is. Farm Gate store – need more relationships
- Fairs in Saanich, Sidney, SGI
- Difficult and disconnected – S. Gulf Islands
- Success = Island brands e.g. Salt Spring Island cheese
- Younger farmers are interested but no support
- Partnership
- Benefits for ALR inclusion

***Group 2: We might produce 2% of food consumed. We can produce more but local consumers are not buying local.***

- Winery -> "faulted"? Replaced
- Breezy Bay -> 7-8 years herbs -> Thrifty's
- Labour, transportation
- Niche markets
- Local fishery very successful – local sales to Pender
- Soil quality?
- Cost of good food – do we want this? Are we willing to pay for it?
- Local people don't want to pay the price
  - Local meat did not sell at store
  - Cheaper than lamb prices in town
- Local market not big enough to support food
- Consumer education -> producers and locals
- People try to grow their own food
- Bulk foods brought from outside

- Each island is unique and can grow certain things the best – what are these?

**Group 3: 95% of food products purchased off-island.**

- Fragmented – producers and marketers operate alone
- Lacks critical mass?
  - Economics of scale not part of system and therefore small farmers can't compete on price – need to rely on quality!
- Saturna producers sell primarily on-island!
- Marketing – 95% of agricultural products come from off-island
- Land costs prohibitive for agricultural investment
- Could the unused agricultural land be utilized?
  - Attract youth
  - Lease from owner in return for upkeep
  - Tax benefits maintained for owner
  - Co-operatives – distributed plantings maintained by organized cooperatives
- 0% of local products marketed off-island
  - Past – Renner's greenhouse – landscaping plants – failed due to currency fluctuations – other examples gone due to outside competition
- Farm tax advantages – how to make farm taxes work to better agriculture?

**QUESTION 2: If you could wave a magic wand what would you like it to be?**

**Group 1: Raise local consumption to 80%. Food cooperative – storage, production and sales. BC Ferries magically becomes a passenger-oriented service. Travelling store!**

- 100% food security
- Agricultural co-op – tools, library, abattoir, equipment and facilities, expertise (soils), apple press, trailer, greenhouses
- Marketing – Saturna brand and SGI brand
- Young people running operations
- Land – owners willing to allow their land to be farmed
- Tourists
- Ferry – cars with farm plates ride free
- Transport in distributor chain (small scale) – Thrifty's wants to dump store
- Customers buy local
- Market runs longer – incentive for more food/farm vendors
- Food festival – Saturna + SGI
- Federal subsidies for small farms (subsidies, tax-breaks, ferries)
- More \$\$ in farming
- More people willing to farm
- Vineyard is converted to allotment plots – need capital to replace grapes – opportunities for employment – family run
- Water catchment
- Wild foods and ocean resources
- Full-time residents
- Interisland transportation
- Good information – what is available, when, where?
- Communications – farm to customer
- Farm equipment – greenhouses

- Support for small efforts
- Farm tax broadened
- Personal satisfaction not in farming economics

**Group 2: We would like to see government subsidies and taxes, and a tighter farming that works together in advocacy and help.**

- Better island traffic (interisland) for exchanging goods and products
- Become a community
- 80% local food eaten by locals and visitors – allow 20% for exotics like citrus
- Better information on what is available
- Community garden
  - How to make it fair?
  - Water
- More people living here fulltime – fewer empty houses
- Integrate other food services like - deer, seafood
- Environmentally considered use of resources (good ecological management)
- Deer as food (also to reduce numbers – cull)
- Gabriola Commons -> example of collective effort, commercial kitchen
- Winery given to locals for community garden

**Group 3: 100% of locals buying local grown food products would make a big change.**

- More produce grown and consumed locally
  - Informed and experienced farmers
  - Greenhouses
  - People with energy
  - Capital
  - Economic return to farmers
- Wild harvests
  - Deer/goats
  - Shellfish
  - Fish
- Distribution
  - Must find access to off-island markets
  - Ferry cost is a burden
  - Small distributors are disadvantaged
- Subsidy – how to use for better utilization of agricultural lands
- Local preferences – “They” don’t buy local – cultural habits – “Costco” people
- 80% local- if we had 100% of locals buying 80% locally we would have enormous change
  - Build a “commitment and culture of buying locally”
- Food preference education
  - They need to know how to cook
  - Pressure cooking course
- Local trees maintained

**QUESTION 3: What could you do here & in the Southern Gulf Islands to realize these dreams?**

**Group 1: Establish community food growing, distribution system that would engage people more with the production and consumption of their food. Community food box program utilizing farmer and gardener generated products. Establish a community garden.**

- Dinners/Festival – herring and nettle fest, harvest, mushroom, olive – SGI Food Fest.
- 31<sup>2</sup> dinners (Feast of Fields) – revive
- Local food initiative
- People power
- Summer market – better considerations for food
  - Who has responsibility to do this?
- Store – local considerations (apples, organic)
- Approach owners with unused farmland about farming their land
- Connecting young farmers with these opportunities
- Local farm communication
  - Continuously
  - 31<sup>2</sup>?
- Consumer educated on food prep., availability, storage
- Explore grant opportunities
  - Equipment
  - Infrastructure
- Farm tax intact
- Pressure ferries to reduce ferry fares for farmers
- Advocacy - SGI local food group
- High end product vs. raw/waste
- Commercial kitchen – group use, classes (canning) 31<sup>2</sup>
- Research
- Environmental concerns – help with initiatives (solar, soil additives)

**Group 2: We can create mutual farm co-operation for help and advocacy in information and consumer education, and local food programs.**

- Community gardens
- There is land that can be suitable for growing food
- Others farm the land for someone who may not want to be a farmer themselves
- Draw efforts together to utilize what already is available
- Honour the private gardeners more
- Encourage local exchange
- Educate people how to use and store fresh produce -> realistic ways to do this -> food prep. Classes
- Food Co-op
- Farmers Co-op – box system from a pool of farms
- Firewood is also an agricultural product – here on Saturna supported by through the Lion's Club
- Get together and do stuff
- Work bees
- Nettles
- Saturna products i.e. nettles

**Group 3: Communicate the value of locally produced food and provide opportunities for cooperation and encouragement of young farmers.**

- Consumers – we have to increase local consumption
  - Education
    - Food preparation and preservation courses and printed materials
    - Fight the “Costco culture” habits
    - Utilize community spirit “buy local”
    - Demonstrate quality of locally grown food – myth busting
- Cost competitiveness
  - Show real costs of imported and industrialized food!
  - Lease land programs – use agricultural land (owner tax benefits – grower opportunities)
  - Cooperatives – tith programs, u-pick, community tax programs
  - Subsidy – how to improve and make accessible to local farmers e.g. France and UK – commitments to retail agriculture
  - Distribution – off and intra-island
- Demographics – how to attract and keep young culture to aging island community