

Growing Green Project

Law and policy reform for sustainable food systems
in southwestern British Columbia

Policy Recommendations

Submitted to
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada
and the Voluntary Sector Initiative

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Canada



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Foreword

This report focuses on the policy recommendations developed by the *Growing Green* Project. In addition to developing policy recommendations, the project hosted a day-long forum on March 12, 2004 called Putting Policy on the Table: Building Sustainable Food Systems in Southwestern BC, and produced materials to assist voluntary sector input to public policy and a number of essays and case studies. A summary of all project activities and copies of all materials can be found on the project Web site at www.ffcf.bc.ca/GrowingGreen.html.

Acknowledgements

First, *Growing Green* thanks the project funders: the Voluntary Sector Initiative of the federal government through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and Tides Canada. Without this support the project would not have been possible.

Growing Green acknowledges the role of its voluntary sector partners and the advice of its Reference Group regarding the policy work described in this report. Our intent throughout was to support our voluntary sector partners in areas of importance to them that are also essential components of sustainable food systems.

Voluntary sector partners

BC Agriculture Council
 BC Food Systems Network
 Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable
 Certified Organic Associations of BC
 Community Nutritionists' Council of BC Food Security Standing Committee
 District A Farmers' Institutes and Salt Spring Island Farmers' Institute
 Environmental Law Centre at the University of Victoria
 Multifunctionality of Agricultural Land Project, FarmFolk/CityFolk Society
 Island Farmers' Alliance Meat Inspection Committee
 Lower Mainland Food Coalition
 POLIS Project on Ecological Governance

Reference Group

Bruce Bakker	horticulture producer
Marion Best	World Council of Churches
Larry Bomford	BC Institute of Agrologists
Ben Bradshaw	Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University
Oliver Brandes	POLIS Project on Ecological Governance, University of Victoria
Linda Geggie	GroundWorks Learning Centre
Charan Gill	Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society
Cathleen Kneen	BC Food Systems Network
Bob McCoubrey	organic farmer
Lorna Medd	Northern Health Authority
Moura Quayle	Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, University of British Columbia
Wayne Roberts	Toronto Food Policy Council
Daphne Sidaway-Wolf	Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
Ramesh Singal	Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society
Shelley Wells	Quest Outreach Society

Growing Green Project Team

Lawrence Alexander	West Coast Environmental Law, Project Manager Year 1 (2002-03)
Herb Barbolet	FarmFolk/CityFolk (2002-04)
Kristina Bouris	Liu Institute for Global Issues (2003-04)
Evan Fraser	Liu Institute for Global Issues (2002-04)
Kathleen Gibson	FarmFolk/CityFolk, Project Manager Year 2 (2002-04)
Mark Haddock	West Coast Environmental Law (2003-04)
Chris Rolfe	West Coast Environmental Law (2004)
Rodney Wilts	West Coast Environmental Law (2002)

Consultants

Justin Bull	Web site design
Cheney Cawkwell	Logistics coordination for March 12, 2004 policy forum
Georgia Dahle	Liu Institute for Global Issues, Reference Group meeting coordination
Linda Geggie	Member of the Reference Group, advice on voluntary sector tools and resources
Suzanne Hawkes	IMPACS, strategic communications advice
Jennifer King	Photos and stories for alternative farms essay
Nancy Klenavic	UVic Faculty of Law, essay on sustainable food policy, Capital Regional District
Pat MacGregor	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, project officer
Bonita Magee	FarmFolk/CityFolk, Reference Group meeting coordination
Minelle Mahtani	IMPACS, strategic communications advice
Kathleen McIntosh	UVic Environmental Law Centre, research project on junk food in schools
Michael Marrassese	FarmFolk/CityFolk, Web site coordination
Derek Masselink	Farmland trusts project
Alexandra Melnyk	West Coast Environmental Law, bookkeeping and accounting
Heather Pritchard	FarmFolk/CityFolk, budget tracking

Executive Summary

Launched in April of 2002, *Growing Green* was a two-year law and policy reform project designed to:

1. develop concrete, practical law and policy reform proposals to make growing and distributing food in BC more sustainable, and
2. strengthen the capacity of voluntary organizations to contribute to federal, provincial, and local law and policy making.

Funded in part by the federal Voluntary Sector Initiative, *Growing Green* was a project of West Coast Environmental Law, FarmFolk/CityFolk, and the Liu Institute for Global Issues. All three organizations worked collaboratively and shared the project benefits with dozens of farming, food, and voluntary sector organizations (see Appendix 1).

Growing Green's focus was on federal, provincial and local law and policy as it applies to growing food in and around BC's urban areas, i.e., the southwestern part of the province. *Growing Green* worked with and sought advice from a Reference Group of leaders in agriculture, food, environment and community economic development.

Growing Green was based on the premise that participants in the food system already provide environmental services, but the system must provide more in order to be truly sustainable.

Growing Green's aim was to "put our shoulders to others' wheels." In the first year of the project, *Growing Green* identified over 50 areas for policy action. Ten priorities were selected for investigation and sorted into two groups.

Policy Priorities Group 1 - Making Sustainable Food Systems Work

These priorities focused on linking all parts of food systems "from seed to plate" through a community development approach, and reached beyond agri-food policy into health and regional/municipal policy:

1. Making the case for community-based food councils
2. Showcasing model Official Community Plans, Agricultural Area Plans and bylaws
3. Contributing to development of provincial public health legislation
4. Addressing the sale of junk foods and beverages in schools
5. Attracting small-scale food processors

Policy Priorities Group 2 - Making Sustainable Food Systems Pay

These priorities derived from issues on the farm and mostly addressed provincial agri-food policy:

6. Promoting multi-family housing on farms
7. Bringing UK National Trust and other 'working farm' trust models to BC and restoring farmers' right to conservation covenants on ALR land
8. Registering short-term farmland leases against title
9. Obtaining affordable access to supply management schemes for organic producers
10. Rewarding farmers for providing ecological services

Table 1 on page 4 shows the voluntary sector partners, government agencies, policy recommendations, key results and resources associated with each policy file. Our voluntary sector partners own the project's results. The key resources listed in Table 1 and attached to the project's Web site at www.ffcf.bc.ca/GrowingGreen.html were contributed by both by project partners and by *Growing Green* Project Team members, consultants and volunteers.

NOTE: The Project Team decided at the end of Year 1 not to pursue the multi-family housing on farms file because it was too conflicted and complex to address with the existing project resources.

The project's focus on sustainable food systems meant that linking the sectors of agriculture, food, health, environment, small businesses and community economic development was of critical importance. It is when you look at a food system at any scale – national, provincial, regional or local – that you see how the sectors and related government departments and policies intersect and overlap. The connecting work has to be done from outside government. *Growing Green* was particularly effective in facilitating connections between:

- *community-based citizens' food security organizations and local government* – *Growing Green* helped mobilize and connect local food and agriculture organizations with the City of Vancouver and helped develop new links between the Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable and local governments in the Capital Region
- *public health and agriculture* – the Ministries of Health Services and Agriculture, Food and Fisheries collaborated on preparation of the meat inspection regulation but, at least in its first draft, public health concerns regarding food safety trumped the interests of small- and medium-scale meat producers and processors – *Growing Green* facilitated dialogue in an attempt to resolve the agriculture and food concerns about the regulation
- *strata within agriculture* – also on the meat inspection regulation issue, *Growing Green* was able to voice the concerns of small- and medium-scale farm and food businesses where the BC Agriculture Council could not, because it is organized on commodity lines and most of its member commodities were split along scale lines – this was an opportunity for a regional food systems approach to complement a commodity-based approach in a constructive way for the whole BC agriculture sector
- *public health and food security* – working with the BC Food Systems Network, *Growing Green* made a small contribution to the rapid growth of a productive relationship between the province's Medical Officers of Health and the Food Security Standing Committee of the Community Nutritionist' Council of BC
- *community economic development and agriculture* – *Growing Green* facilitated dialogue between the Small Scale Food Processor Association and its CED partners and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries and Investment Agriculture Foundation.

In a couple of instances, *Growing Green* developed what "honest broker" consulting roles between the voluntary sector and government agencies. Herb Barbolet and Kristina Bouris assisted the City of Vancouver to link with the Lower Mainland Food Coalition to help facilitate development of the Vancouver Food Policy Task Force and Food Policy Council. Kathleen Gibson assisted the BC Farm Industry Review Board with liaison between supply managed marketing boards and specialty/organic producers as part of the FIRB's Specialty Production Review.

It is interesting to note that although the major goal of the Voluntary Sector Initiative was to enhance the relationship between the voluntary sector and government and to increase the voluntary sector's capacity, these roles were not easy to set up. The honest broker concept ran into conflict of interest concerns on the part of the government agencies. The parties had to work through initial assumptions about real or perceived conflicts of interest to understand the actual risks in this area, and then articulate the roles very carefully. This process was a valuable exercise that could form another report on how to script liaison between government and the voluntary sector.

The Project Team found that its combination of legal, academic and non-profit experience was particularly effective in policy analysis and development. The Team was able to reach into the legal, academic and non-profit communities for advice and assistance. Several masters' students from UBC and the University of Victoria completed research papers for the project. One was hired onto the Project Team for the project's second year. Consultants and volunteers from the non-profit sector also made many important contributions to *Growing Green's* work.

In terms of concrete and practical policy and law reform proposals, *Growing Green's* most useful achievements included helping in:

- Creation of the Vancouver Food Policy Council (announced March 11, 2004) and an Action Plan for a Just and Sustainable Food System for the City of Vancouver that incorporated policy recommendations from local food and agriculture organizations
- Groundwork for the creation of a Capital Region Food Council

- Facilitation of a stronger working relationship between Medical Officers of Health and Community Nutritionists, making a case for the importance of food security to public health, which will be reflected in a 2005 report from the Provincial Health Officer and will be taken into consideration in the drafting of a Public Health Act for BC
- Promotion of policy recommendations regarding meat inspection for BC that promote increased food safety as well as viable small-, medium - and larger -scale farm and food businesses
- Development of the idea of investing in working farms for conservation purposes and development of a pilot project prospectus and research into policy barriers and options
- Development of policy options for including organic producers in supply management schemes for turkey, chicken, eggs, broiler hatching eggs and dairy

The project's official end date did not, of course, bring the work to a halt. The Project Team recommends the following as key next steps:

- *Vancouver Food Policy Council*: establish a baseline for ongoing measurement of food security in the city and its region
- *Capital Region Food Policy Council*: interpret CR-FAIR's Baseline Assessment of Food Security to regional and local governments and develop a plan for creation of a regional food council
- *Meat inspection regulation*: ensure that small- and medium-scale meat production and processing businesses can grow while at the same time guaranteeing food safety – help develop and implement practical plans for upgrading facilities and training business owners and operators; seek changes to the regulation if necessary
- *Farmland trusts*: continue to support TLC The Land Conservancy with research into policy options and help facilitate a pilot farmland trust project
- *Small scale food processing*: continue to support development and implementation of a pilot regionally based shared services co-op
- *Organics and regulated marketing*: continue development of policy options for a system favourable to the growth of organics that can be accommodated within supply management
- *Ecological services*: identify, develop and implement a pilot program to reward farmers for ecological services – link to the Agricultural Environment Initiative and to the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program

Although growing and distributing food in BC may not yet be more sustainable because of *Growing Green*, the project's work has helped build some connections, develop some policy options, make some recommendations and establish some vehicles and mechanisms that will enable this to happen in the future.

The project operated through a period of turbulence for BC food systems. The avian flu crisis brought parts of the BC agri-food industry and related government departments to a standstill in early 2004. This disaster highlighted the importance of looking at whole food systems and tackling system design issues. A food system driven by efficiency and price emphasizes concentration and larger scale – and when it experiences a problem, the fallout is correspondingly widespread. More than ever it should be evident that exploring alternatives to the conventional North American agriculture and food system model would be at least sensible, and potentially a key to true sustainability.

Table 1

Growing Green Policy Recommendations, Results & Resources Summary – March 2004

Priority policy issue <i>Partners/ Government agencies</i>	Policy Recommendations			Results	Key resources (see <i>Growing Green Web site & note below</i>)
	Remove barriers to farmers	“Plan B:” alternative to fossil-fuel-based agriculture	Overhaul system, build regional food economies		
<p>Community- based food councils</p> <p><i>Lower Mainland Food Coalition, Capital Region Food & Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable</i></p> <p><i>Local & regional governments in GVRD¹, CRD²</i></p>	<p>Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> farmers markets local food buying clubs local food procurement policies for schools & hospitals zoning & permitting for specific farm uses to protect agricultural land near cities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support urban agriculture (e.g., community gardens, rooftop gardens, agriculture in parks) Develop regional food processing centres, incubator kitchens Support school nutrition programs Link composting & waste recycling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create food councils Apply food “lens” to planning Undertake food security assessments Host public forums on food security Support “Buy Local” campaigns Provide food sector job skills training for low income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vancouver Food Policy Council created in March 2004 Action Plan for Creating a Just & Sustainable Food System in the City Links established City of Vancouver to LMFC³ Baseline Food Security Assessment completed in CRD Strategy under way to promote food security to Councils in CRD CR-FAIR⁴ built up with more community links 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LMFC’s policy recommendations to City of Vancouver Discussion papers re food councils in GVRD & CRD Baseline Food Security Assessment in CRD Research paper on policy options for a food policy council in CRD
<p>Model OCPs, AAPs, bylaws</p> <p><i>Smart Growth BC, FarmFolk/CityFolk Multifunctionality of Agricultural Land Project</i></p> <p><i>Local & regional governments in GVRD, CRD</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize importance of agriculture in OCPs⁵, AAPs⁶, bylaws Establish Agricultural Advisory Committee, link it to local food security organization Develop mechanism to minimize conflict between agriculture, other bylaws Develop info package for farmers re existing policies & bylaws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop agricultural plans for new sites e.g. parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate decision makers & staff re food system perspective Undertake further research into planning for agri-food Involve municipal staff & community groups on Agricultural Advisory Committees Develop new publication “Planning for Sustainable Food Systems” like Planning for Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of model OCPs, AAPs & bylaws summarized Policy options developed to support sustainable food systems in CRD Stronger links made between Smart Growth, FF/CF⁷, MAFF⁸, others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research paper on planning for sustainable food systems Research paper on policy options for sustainable food systems in CRD Smart Growth Smart Bylaws Guide

Priority policy issue <i>Partners/ Government agencies</i>	Policy Recommendations			Results	Key resources (see <i>Growing Green Web site & note below</i>)
	Remove barriers to farmers	"Plan B:" alternative to fossil-fuel-based agriculture	Overhaul system, build regional food economies		
Public health <i>CNC-BC⁹, BC Food Systems Network</i> <i>Provincial govt: Ministry of Health Services, PHO¹⁰, MHOs¹¹, Health Authorities</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish strong philosophical & program links between food security, public health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a food security initiative for the province Establish a provincial food council linked to PHO to educate decision makers & public about links between public health, food & food systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BC Food Systems Network helped build critical mass CNC-BC & MHOs forged stronger links CNC-BC developed major paper for PHO PHO annual report on food security & public health coming in 2005 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research paper Making the Connection: Food Security & Public Health Framework for Core Functions in Public Health Sorrento 2003 conference report
Junk foods & beverages in schools <i>Environmental Law Centre</i> <i>School boards</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate school board food & beverage contracts Take concerns to Ombudsman Raise concerns with local MHO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop contracts that require healthier & more local foods & beverages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations for concerns parents & students can raise with school boards Examples of policy recommendations provided from other jurisdictions Vancouver School Board has picked up the issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research paper on policy options for junk foods & beverages in schools
Small-scale food processing <i>SSFPA¹², IFA¹³ Meat Inspection Cttee</i> <i>Provincial govt: MAFF, Ministry of Health Services, MLAs¹⁴</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure meat inspection regulation is appropriate to small- & medium-scale meat producers & processors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop pilot regionally based social enterprise co-op to offer services including branding, bar coding, lab testing etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake further research into applicability in BC of economic models from Europe Develop support & program(s) for regional brands & logos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSFPA better positioned to link with MAFF, Investment Agriculture Foundation Farm & processor concerns re meat inspection regulation raised with govt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSFPA market scoping report BC Food & Beverage Processors Survey SSFPA shared services co-op plan Memo to MLAs on policy options for meat inspection
Farmland trusts <i>District A Farmers' Institute, TLC The Land Conservancy</i> <i>Local & regional govts, Provincial Agricultural Land Commission</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop farmland trust model for BC Develop prospectus for possible Salt Spring pilot Address differences in conservation & farming agendas <p>Do further work with ALC¹⁵ on conservation covenant guidelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure land trusts are authorized to pursue broad conservation goals Develop innovative investment options e.g., with ethical investment industry, estate planning, ecological gift income tax incentives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote concept of investing in working farms for conservation purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interest from BC farmers' institutes & land trusts Group on Salt Spring committed to developing pilot project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prospectus for Salt Spring Island farmland trust Summary of policy issues for BC farmland trusts Concept paper re conservation of working farms

Priority policy issue <i>Partners/ Government agencies</i>	Policy Recommendations			Results	Key resources (see <i>Growing Green Web site & note below</i>)
	Remove barriers to farmers	"Plan B:" alternative to fossil-fuel-based agriculture	Overhaul system, build regional food economies		
Farmland leases <i>District A Farmers' Institute, BCAC¹⁶</i> <i>Ministry Sustainable Resource Mgmt, ALC, UBCM¹⁷</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In some cases consider treating planted crops as personal property under Personal Property Security Act 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough evidence to pursue amendment to Land Title Act Watching brief maintained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memo summarizing findings Draft resolution for UBCM
Organics & regulated marketing <i>COABC¹⁸</i> <i>Provincial govt: Farm Industry Review Board, MAFF</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop system & mechanisms to allow organics to participate fairly in supply management schemes & grow according to market demand 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linkage between COABC Initiative & FIRB's¹⁹ Specialty Production Review Assistance given to COABC Initiative, extensive economic & legal analysis done Process stalled due to avian flu outbreak 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COABC Initiative reports FIRB report on Specialty Production Review Blueprint for Change policy proposal
Ecological services <i>POLIS Project</i> <i>Local & regional governments</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake research to identify ecological services provided by local farms 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop scheme to identify farms that provide ecological services Establish marketing identity Develop & implement programs to reward farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education through POLIS Project re farms' ecological services Incentive & reward program options summarized in research paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incentives for Good Environmental Management paper Blenkinsop Creek Galey Farm case study Backgrounder on farms & freshwater systems

1. GVRD	Greater Vancouver Regional District	11. MHO	Medical Officer of Health
2. CRD	Capital Regional District	12. SSFPA	Small Scale Food Processor Association
3. LMFC	Lower Mainland Food Coalition	13. IFA	Island Farmers' Alliance
4. CR-FAIR	Capital Region Food & Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable	14. MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
5. OCP	Official Community Plan	15. ALC	Agricultural Land Commission
6. AAP	Agricultural Area Plan	16. BCAC	BC Agriculture Council
7. FF/CF	FarmFolk/CityFolk Society	17. UBCM	Union of BC Municipalities
8. MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries	18. COABC	Certified Organic Associations of BC
9. CNC-BC	Community Nutritionists Council of BC	19. FIRB	BC Farm Industry Review Board
10. PHO	Provincial Health Officer		

NOTE: Some of these resources were produced by Growing Green Project Team members or consultants. Some were produced by Growing Green voluntary sector partners. All are posted or linked on the Growing Green Web site.

1.0 PROJECT OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

Launched in April of 2002, *Growing Green* was a two-year law and policy reform project designed to:

1. develop concrete, practical law and policy reform proposals to make growing and distributing food in BC more sustainable, and
2. strengthen the capacity of voluntary organizations to contribute to federal, provincial, and local law and policy making.

Funded in part by the federal Voluntary Sector Initiative, *Growing Green* was a project of West Coast Environmental Law (WCEL), FarmFolk/CityFolk (FF/CF), and the Liu Institute for Global Issues. All three organizations worked collaboratively with dozens of farming, food, and voluntary sector organizations.

Growing Green's focus was on federal, provincial and local law and policy as it applies to growing food in and around BC's urban areas, i.e., the southwestern part of the province. To acknowledge and build upon innovative ideas generated across the country, *Growing Green* sought advice from a Reference Group of leaders in agriculture, food, environment and community economic development.

Growing Green was based on the premise that participants in the food system already provide environmental services, but the system must provide more in order to be truly sustainable.

1.2 Premise

Food and its production are essential for life. *Growing Green's* objective was to enhance the capacity of the voluntary sector in BC to better promote law, policy and regulatory reform towards sustainable agriculture and food systems.

The food system produces far more than just the calories we eat. It produces:

- *Economic services:* the agriculture and food economy multiplies jobs in communities and supports rural cultures.
- *Environmental services:* carefully managed, farmland protects the soil, provides a buffer against droughts and floods, and can provide habitat for a range of species.
- *Social services:* food is integral to building relationships between people and communities. We gather to buy and to enjoy food. Farmland – the working landscape – is important for people's sense of place and season.

There is a challenge, however. In many situations, rather than rewards, farmers incur penalties for providing these services, since "sustainable practices" increase costs, and cost increases make farms uncompetitive. Southwestern BC should be a model region for sustainable agriculture and food. However, the socio-economic system as a whole has created a food production and distribution system that discourages environmentally sound farm management.

Groups across the political and ideological spectrum are concerned about these problems. Many solutions are proposed:

- Some feel that key strategies involve reducing regulatory barriers that farmers face when they try to enact best management practices.
- Others argue that the current food system is insecure because it relies on low-cost fossil fuel to transport food around the world. To protect ourselves against nightmare scenarios (including natural disasters, terrorist attacks, or rocketing oil prices) we need to develop an alternative or "back-up" plan that reduces our dependence on international energy supplies.
- Others feel that a solution is to overhaul the food system, and focus on building a more "locally based" food economy.

Growing Green took a collaborative approach, bringing parties together to develop strategies for moving forward on all three fronts.

1.3 Policy Priorities

Based on its discussion of sustainable food systems and development of the project's premise, the Project Team initially identified six thematic areas for the project's policy work:

1. *Strengthening local food economies and systems* (e.g., direct marketing, community-supported agriculture)
2. *Enhancing the agricultural land base* (protection, classification, tenure)
3. *Improving on-farm water management* (manure handling, chemical runoff, fish habitat)
4. *Reducing agriculture's dependence on fossil fuels* (soil demineralization, "food miles")
5. *Redefining food quality and safety* (risk assessment, food handling, grading)
6. *Reforming marketing structures* (marketing boards, organics)

In the first year of the project, *Growing Green* consulted with almost 40 voluntary sector organizations (see Appendix 1) regarding their key agriculture and food concerns. From this we identified over 50 areas for policy action from which we selected 9 top priorities. Selection criteria were:

1. request for attention from the voluntary sector
2. existing momentum on the issue in both the voluntary and the public sectors – *Growing Green's* aim was to "put our shoulders to others' wheels" and facilitate their efforts
3. resonance with the project premise and sustainable food systems concepts
4. a good fit between the issue and the skills of the Project Team.

Certain issues were not addressed by the project. These were issues that are important in the context of sustainable food systems but ones the Project Team either felt were being well covered by others or simply did not have the time and energy to address. These included:

- Biotechnology
- Fisheries
- Wild and uncultivated foods – of particular importance to First Nations
- Repeal of the Farmers' and Womens' Institutes Act.

One issue was added during 2003. With the help of the Environmental Law Centre at the University of Victoria, we were able to conduct some policy research into the issue of junk foods and beverages in schools. One issue, farm labour practices, was considered for inclusion in 2003-04 but was not pursued, due to administrative difficulties of the voluntary sector partner, the Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society.

The policy priorities were sorted into two groups:

1. *Making sustainable food systems work*: these priorities focused on linking all parts of food systems "from seed to plate" through a community development approach, and reached beyond agri-food policy into health and regional/municipal policy.
2. *Making sustainable food systems pay*: these priorities derived from issues on the farm and mostly addressed provincial agri-food policy.

Making Sustainable Food Systems Work

From agriculture, health, environment, labour, community development and other sectors stream innovative ideas for improving our food systems (such as Environmental Farm Plans, school meal programs, chef-farmer partnerships, immigrant farm worker training and hundreds more). Though food is the common thread, there are no forums for inter-sectoral discussion and problem solving around food systems. Nor is food on local government planning agendas. *Growing Green* explored the potential for community-based food councils (provincially and

regionally/locally) to host such discussions, develop collaborative solutions for food system problems, and influence legislation and planning. This section's priorities were:

1. *Making the case for community-based food councils.* Work primarily in the Capital Regional District and Greater Vancouver Regional District, with reference to other food coalitions operating around BC and across Canada. Food councils can help bring about changes in food systems that increase community economic activity, decrease environmental impacts, and strengthen community relationships.
2. *Showcasing model Official Community Plans, Agricultural Area Plans and bylaws for agriculture/food.* Review examples of effective agri-food regulations, in collaboration with WCEL, Smart Growth BC, CitiesPlus, the GVRD and others.
3. *Contributing to development of provincial public health legislation.* Collaborate with the Community Nutritionists' Council of BC Food Security Standing Committee and other groups to offer advice re: community food security in relation to public health.
4. *Addressing the sale of junk foods and beverages in schools.* Investigate schools' responsibilities to care for students' health and the contents of food and beverage supply contracts. Research examples from other jurisdictions where healthy foods and beverages have been mandated and junk foods and beverages banned.
5. *Attracting small-scale food processors.* Work with the Small Scale Food Processor Association and others to identify and address key regulatory incentives and barriers to strengthening small-scale food processing businesses in BC.

Making Sustainable Food Systems Pay

The food system would provide more ecological services if there were a better economic case for doing so. *Growing Green* investigated the following ideas as ways to make more sustainable food practices pay off for farmers:

6. *Promoting multi-family housing on farms.* Eliminate or reduce ALR or local government rules/bylaws that prevent or discourage multi-family housing and ensure that multi-family housing models are designed to avoid rural sprawl and promote long-term sustainable farming on the land.
7. *Bringing UK National Trust and other 'working farm' trust models to BC and restoring farmers' right to conservation covenants on ALR land.* Investigate ways to attract trust organizations and estates to invest in working sustainable farms and secure sustainable farming practices for future generations.
8. *Registering short-term farmland leases against title.* Seek a legislative amendment to enable farm leases without subdivision.
9. *Obtaining affordable access to supply management schemes for organic producers.* Design and implement models within which small organic producers can obtain quota from supply management schemes to use collectively.
10. *Rewarding farmers for providing ecological services.* Using an award-winning freshwater project as a case study, design mechanisms for identifying farms that provide ecological services and for rewarding farmers who provide those services.

The linkage between *Growing Green's* project priorities and Canada's Agricultural Policy Framework is outlined in Appendix 2.

1.4 Support to Voluntary Sector Partners

Growing Green set aside budget resources for a program we called "Sharing the Benefits" to facilitate policy dialogues and related efforts on request from voluntary sector partners. The project provided financial support to:

- BC Food Systems Network – to support attendance at provincial food security conferences in September 2002 and 2003
- Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable – to support hosting a policy dialogue regarding food security for the Islands in 2004

- Certified Organic Associations of BC – to support attendance at its February 2003 Annual General Meeting and to prepare information materials regarding organics and regulated marketing in 2004
- POLIS Project on Ecological Governance – for a workshop in March 2003 on farm ecological services, in particular freshwater systems
- Your Local Farmers' Market Society – for a workshop in June 2003 regarding formation of a community-based food council in Greater Vancouver
- Small-Scale Food Processor Association – for a workshop on small-scale value-added farm/food businesses at the BC Co-operative Association's inaugural AGM in June 2003
- The Land Trust Alliance – to support attendance at its July 2003 Annual General Meeting
- Derek Masselink – to prepare a prospectus for a farmland trust pilot project on Salt Spring Island and a research paper on Canadian and BC policy issues regarding farmland trusts, with TLC The Land Conservancy

Growing Green also hired a member of its Reference Group with extensive experience in the voluntary sector to recommend tools and resources the project could produce that would be of particular use to voluntary sector organizations that want to work with government on policy matters. These included:

1. An information roundup on how to contact and work with local government. "Local Government 101" was offered in seminar form at the March 12, 2004 forum.
2. A resources summary for community-based food councils, drawing on experiences in Vancouver and Victoria and other jurisdictions.
3. A "mind map" of sustainable food systems: a visual description of how the pieces of food systems fit together can help people make more sense of the many connections. *Growing Green* helped collect some materials and begin work on a sample for the Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands region.

To wrap up the project, *Growing Green* decided to host a forum and invite all the groups we had worked with over the course of the project. This forum on March 12, 2004 was called Putting Policy on the Table: Building Sustainable Food Systems in Southwestern BC and was intended to:

- highlight voluntary sector projects that are influencing sustainable food system policy, law and regulations in BC and elsewhere
- provide participants with practical tools and techniques they can use to influence policy change
- celebrate the accomplishments of the *Growing Green* Project
- discuss strategic directions for sustainable food system initiatives in BC
- strengthen the network of people working towards sustainable food systems for southwestern BC

Teaching sessions in the morning included workshops on food mapping for policy change, schools and policy change, and Local Government 101. The afternoon focused on showcasing the work of voluntary sector partners, and a panel discussion on policies that shape sustainable food systems with case studies from around the world.

1.5 Liaison with Government

Members of the *Growing Green* Project Team liaised with a range of government officials. In a couple of instances, *Growing Green* developed what we called "honest broker" roles as intermediaries between the voluntary sector and government agencies on specific policy issues. On the community-based food councils file in Vancouver, Herb Barbolet and Kristina Bouris took assignments with the City of Vancouver Social Planning Department to facilitate liaison between the City and local food and agriculture organizations during development of the Vancouver Food Policy Task Force and the Vancouver Food Policy Council. On the organics and regulated marketing file, Kathleen Gibson took an assignment with the Farm Industry Review Board to facilitate liaison between the supply-managed marketing boards and specialty producers, as part of both the FIRB's Specialty Production Review and COABC's Growing the Organic Supply Managed Sector Initiative. Negotiating these roles with the government agencies in question was an exercise that required careful investigation of questions of conflict of interest and confidentiality.

1.6 Legal, Academic and Voluntary Sector Links

One of the strengths of the *Growing Green* Project Team in policy development was its members' ability to reach into and link the legal, academic and voluntary sector communities. Law colleagues provided valuable advice on policy approaches for many of the files. Masters' students from UBC and UVic contributed research papers and helped organize events. Numerous people in the voluntary sector contributed time, ideas, and expertise to help *Growing Green* develop its policy recommendations.

1.7 Report Structure

Section 2 describes each of the policy files in detail. Each topic contains the following:

- introduction/overview
- list of project goals
- public beneficiaries
- key voluntary sector partners
- findings – a short history of the process *Growing Green* used to pursue the topic
- policy recommendations
- policy instruments
- additional resources

All the resource materials are, or will soon be, posted on the *Growing Green* Web site.

2.0 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

MAKING SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS WORK

These priorities focus on linking all parts of food systems “from seed to plate” through a community development approach. They reach beyond agri-food policy to health and regional/municipal policy.

Growing Green decided to investigate the following law reform topics:

- Develop **community-based food councils** to connect agriculture, food, health, environment and economy through the food system and to bring a food focus to regional and municipal planning.
- Identify examples of **Official Community Plans, Agricultural Area Plans or bylaws** that support aspects of regional/local food systems.
- Make the case for **food security as an essential criterion for public health** based on the following linked assumptions:
 - Chronic disease prevention is critical to public health
 - Healthy eating is critical to chronic disease prevention
 - Food security is critical to healthy eating
 - Sustainable food systems are critical to food security
- Determine contractual arrangements between **junk food and beverage suppliers and schools** and identify legal and policy measures to reduce the amount of such foods and beverages in schools.
- Support meaningful participation in program and policy development for BC’s **small-scale food and beverage processors**, and address threats to small-scale meat producers and processors from the proposed meat inspection regulation.

2.1 Community-based Food Councils

Introduction

Community-based food councils link regional and local governments with citizens to look in an integrated way at local food systems "from seed to plate." *Growing Green* aimed to facilitate development of community-based food councils in the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) and the Capital Regional District (CRD). Wayne Roberts, Coordinator of the Toronto Food Policy Council, a community-based food council with a successful 10-year history, advised *Growing Green's* efforts in this area.

Growing Green assisted the Lower Mainland Food Coalition with production of a discussion paper (Closer to Home, see Resources below) and hosting a public meeting in June 2003 regarding development of a food council for the Lower Mainland. After this meeting, the City of Vancouver struck a Food Policy Task Force to further examine the issue. *Growing Green* helped facilitate the work of the Task Force and its links with the Lower Mainland Food Coalition and other local food and agriculture organizations. On December 11, 2003, the City of Vancouver approved a proposed Action Plan for Creating a Just and Sustainable Food System for the City of Vancouver, and on March 11, 2004 approved funding for a Vancouver Food Policy Council with two staff: a coordinator and a planner from the Social Planning Department (see <http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/initiatives/foodpolicy/>).

In the Capital Regional District (CRD), *Growing Green* helped the Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable (CR-FAIR) develop a baseline food security assessment and host a series of public forums called "Making Food Matter" on regional food issues, from food access to food policy. *Growing Green* co-produced a discussion paper (Cooking up a Healthy Food System in the CRD, see below) and in October 2003 co-hosted a community leaders' breakfast where a Food Policy Reference Group was formed to pursue questions about food systems and regional/local government in the CRD.

Goals - Vancouver

1. Make recommendations to the City regarding a community food policy plan for safe and equitable growing, distribution and provision of food in Vancouver.
2. Assist regional and senior governments and the UBCM to develop an action plan to meet any food policy targets Vancouver City Council adopts.
3. Facilitate links to Agricultural Advisory Committees and food security organizations and Smart Growth BC in the region.

Goals - Victoria

1. Expand CR-FAIR to a regional food security coalition that anchors community input and can facilitate creation of a CRD food council, which (1) will further CR-FAIR's mission (2) report to citizens and local government, (3) be robustly structured (survive changes in political administration), and (4) provide for a paid Coordinator.
2. Identify a number of "quick start" projects in specific municipalities in the region.
3. Facilitate links to Agricultural Advisory Committees (e.g. the Peninsula Agricultural Commission and others) and food security organizations and Smart Growth BC in the region.

Public beneficiaries

Citizens (eaters all), who can be involved in OCP, AAP and bylaw development directly and through agricultural advisory committees, food councils and other bodies. Farm and food businesses, which are affected by Official Community Plans, Agricultural Area Plans and bylaws relating to agriculture and food.

Voluntary sector partners

Lower Mainland Food Coalition (LMFC). The Lower Mainland Food Coalition (LMFC) emerged from an initial meeting held December 9, 2002 to which groups and organizations concerned about food policy were invited. The LMFC's core group of members include farmers, nutritionists, media, researchers, and citizens working on food issues in the community. Some of these people were previously members of the Vancouver Food Policy Organization and most have worked in the food community for years. The LMFC's role includes ongoing liaison with the Vancouver Food Policy Task Force.

Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable (CR-FAIR). Initially formed in 1997, CR-FAIR is a coalition of agencies and individuals in the Capital Region interested in the region's local food system. Its 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." Its mission is *to increase knowledge and bring about positive change in the food and agriculture system in the Capital Region*. Its current five-year plan includes the following objectives:

- introduction of and engagement in regional planning for food that links agriculture, food, environment, health and economy
- increased involvement of public and decision makers in supporting local food system and foodsheds

Findings - Vancouver

Herb Barbolet of the Project Team led *Growing Green's* focus on development of a food policy council for Vancouver.

The LMFC, which descends from the Vancouver Food Policy Organization and the Lower Mainland Food Council, was formed in 2002-03 and created a mandate for what it wanted to achieve, which was articulated in its document *Closer to Home: A Recipe for a Community-Based Food Organization*.

On June 12-13, 2003, with *Growing Green's* help, the LMFC organized a two-day workshop in Vancouver to create an Action Plan for a community-based food council. This meeting brought community organizations, farmers, policy people, local Councillors, planners and others together using the process of Open Space (facilitated by Kathleen Gibson of the Project Team) to consider priority policy recommendations for a Vancouver Food Policy Council. These recommendations compiled and delivered by LMFC to the City in August 2003.

A City of Vancouver Council motion of July 8, 2003 signalled a new opportunity to work proactively towards the goal of developing a just and sustainable food system for the City of Vancouver. A Task Force made up of City Councillors, staff and representatives of local food and agriculture organizations was struck. Its mandate was to develop short- and long-term goals and make recommendations on how these actions would fit into a policy framework and governance model. It set up and conducted an extensive consultation process and developed a food action plan with three components – creation of a Vancouver Food Policy Council, an interim work plan and an implementation support system

The Task Force delivered An Action Plan for Creating a Just and Sustainable Food System in the City of Vancouver was presented to Council in December 2003. Council adopted the plan on December 11, 2003 and announced funding for the two staff positions March 11, 2004.

Herb, on contract to the City, helped the LMFC liaise with the City during the work of the Task Force. Kristina Bouris of the Project Team also assisted as part of her graduate course work and on contract to the City. As of the end of March 2004, Herb and Kristina Bouris were both contracted to the City to help set up the terms of reference for the implementation of the Vancouver Food Policy Council.

Findings - Victoria

Kathleen Gibson led *Growing Green's* focus on development of a food policy council in Victoria. As a member of the CR-FAIR Steering Committee, she helped develop its 2002-07 strategic plan called Putting Food on the Table that includes the following desired outcomes:

- Increased involvement of public and decision makers in supporting local food system and foodsheds
- Introduction of and engagement in regional planning for food that links agriculture, food, environment, health and economy

CR-FAIR met with Brewster Kneen in January 2003 to learn about the early days of the Toronto Food Policy Council. Kathleen Gibson, throughout *Growing Green* from 2002-2004, attended meetings and kept in touch with the developments in Vancouver. She also participates on the Forum of Research Connections, a group of consultants working on food security issues that grew out of the Vancouver Food Policy Task Force.

In summer 2003, law student Nancy Klenavic volunteered to prepare her major paper for Law 399 at the University of Victoria on the topic of the legal context for a sustainable food system in the Capital Region. With information from *Growing Green* she investigated the options development of sustainable food systems policies in the CRD and the creation of a regional food policy council. In fall 2003, CR-FAIR and *Growing Green* developed a discussion paper entitled Cooking up a healthy food system in the CRD.

Growing Green helped bring Wayne Roberts of the Toronto Food Policy Council to Victoria for breakfast meetings in December 2002 and October 2003. Wayne advised CR-FAIR to develop a Food Policy Reference Group of community leaders to begin development of a strategy and process for proceeding towards a regional food policy council.

From fall 2003 to March 2004 CR-FAIR supervised the work of consultant Emily MacNair who researched and wrote a Baseline Assessment of Food Security for BC's Capital Region. This was publicly launched at City Hall March 3, 2004.

By the end of *Growing Green*, CR-FAIR was working on roll-out of its food security assessment to the Capital Regional District and local municipal councils. The intent is to educate local government decision makers about the region's food security status and to press for the inclusion of agriculture and food in planning, by means that will include a regional food policy council.

Policy recommendations - Vancouver

[From Action Plan for Creating a Just and Sustainable Food System for the City of Vancouver, December 9, 2003]

The Vancouver Food Policy Council will act as an advisory and policy development body that aims to improve the health and security of the local food system. The Food Policy Council will help community groups concerned with food issues to connect with each other and relevant public bodies. Together, staff and Food Policy Council members will serve as catalysts for addressing food-related issues, with a particular focus on areas where the City of Vancouver has the capacity to act. The Food Policy Council will also help identify those areas where partnerships will be required to achieve food system goals. A focused sample of possible initiatives is provided below:

1. *Production.* Creating and promoting community gardens; promoting rooftop gardens; promoting urban agriculture; economic development opportunities linked to sustainable local agriculture; buy local campaigns.
2. *Processing.* Creating a coordinated food processing and distribution centre; studies on local food processing; supporting community kitchens; commercial kitchen incubator projects.
3. *Distribution and access.* Promoting food co-ops and buying clubs; coordinating emergency food systems; creating and supporting local farmers markets; volunteer programs for coordinating emergency food distribution; food sector job skills training for low income people.

4. *Consumption.* Providing assistance to the School Board, when requested, in meeting their established school nutrition goals; public education on food security and insecurity; infant and child nutrition projects; public forums on food security issues.
5. *Recycling of productive wastes.* Promoting food composting; using creative approaches to waste reduction, recycling and composting.
6. *Policy.* Discussion papers on food policy issues; advocacy campaigns.

The following specific items were identified for immediate action in 2003-04:

- Development of a community food system assessment
- Feasibility study for the creation of rooftop gardens
- Assistance with creation of community gardens
- Assistance with creation of farmers' markets
- Assistance with creation of a coordinated food processing and distribution facility for low-income citizens

Policy recommendations- Victoria

[From A Baseline Assessment of Food Security in British Columbia's Capital Region, and The Need for a Sustainable Food Systems Food Policy in the Capital Regional District]

Consider establishment of a regional food policy council under the Local Government Act. A Food Policy Council in the Capital Region could help develop and administer a sustainable food systems food policy to reconnect the components of the food system and increase community food self reliance, and to address the disconnects between agriculture, food, environment, and personal and community health. Policy measures could include :

1. Securing enough land in and around the city for food production
 - increased liaison with the Agricultural Land Commission regarding protection of agricultural land
 - integration of agricultural land into regional growth strategies, OCPs and AAPs, for example development permit areas for protection of farming; zoning to permit more processing near farms or to reduce urban sprawl (urban containment boundaries)
2. Encouraging urban food production
 - support for developments that include affordable or mixed-income housing and food-growing capability
 - support for community gardens and rooftop gardens
3. Creating local processing and preserving industries
 - incubator kitchens to assist small-scale food processing
4. Opportunities for consumers to obtain locally produced and processed food
 - zoning and development permits to limit size and number of big grocery stores
 - support for development of farmers' markets
 - encouragement of local tenders for food supply contracts in hospitals and schools
5. An effective waste management system that collects nutrients and returns them to food-producing areas
 - strategy to connect composting facilities to food-producing lands
6. General approaches to address disconnects
 - increase access to and awareness of healthy, nutritious, high quality food
 - integrate environmental stewardship into the entire food system
 - increase agricultural education offerings
 - increase participation of young people in growing food
 - develop more collaboration between organizations, government agencies and business to link agriculture, food, health, environmental aspects of food system
 - support and link community-based food programs that empower people to produce, process and preserve food for themselves or as a business

Policy instruments

Food policy councils that work with regional and local governments to develop or amend Official Community Plans, Agricultural Area Plans, regional growth strategies, and bylaws. See section 2.2.

Resources (see Growing Green Web site)

General

- Mar 2003 Food Councils Backgrounder
- Toronto Food Charter

Vancouver

- Dec 2003 An Action Plan for Creating a Just and Sustainable Food System in the City of Vancouver (web link)
- Aug 2003 LMFC Policy Recommendations to the City of Vancouver
- Jun 2003 Closer to Home: a Recipe for a Community-Based Food Organization

Victoria

- May 2004 Councils fact sheet re Capital Region food security
- Mar 2004 public fact sheet re Capital Region food security
- Jan 2004 Baseline Assessment of Food Security in BC's Capital Region
- Oct 2003 CR-FAIR discussion paper "Cooking up a healthy food system in the CRD"
- Sep 2003 CR-FAIR strategic plan and outcomes
- Aug 2003 "Sustainable Food Systems" Food Policy in the Capital Regional District
- May 2003 Making Food Matter Forum report
- CR-FAIR vision, mission

2.2 Official Community Plans, Agricultural Area Plans, and Bylaws

Introduction

Local governments have an important role to play in the creation of sustainable, local food systems. The consequences of poorly functioning food systems, such as hunger, loss of farmland and the disappearance of locally owned food stores, are most visible at the local level. Much of the existing work to build alternative, sustainable food systems is already taking place at the local level through community-based projects.

Given the proximity of local government to their constituents, local governments are in a strong position to build alternative food systems that respond to their community's needs and circumstances. In BC, local governments are responsible for the public interest of their residents and fostering the current and future economic, social and environmental well-being of their community. Under the recent *Community Charter*, local government powers are widened even further to ensure they are able to meet the needs of their community. Within their specifically mandated powers, local governments in BC have a host of tools at their disposal that can be used to help facilitate sustainable, local food systems.

As well as promoting community-based food councils as the key vehicles at the regional and local government level for promotion of sustainable food policies (see previous section), *Growing Green* looked for useful examples of local and regional government mechanisms that could be used to implement such policies. These mechanisms include Official Community Plans (OCPs), Agricultural Area Plans (AAPs) and bylaws, particularly zoning bylaws. *Growing Green's* research drew on a variety of sources, including Smart Growth BC's Smart Bylaws Guide, FarmFolk/CityFolk's Multifunctionality of Agricultural Land project at Colony Farm, research by Nancy Klenavic in the Capital Region, and data from Agricultural Advisory Committees around the province collected by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries (MAFF).

Goals

1. Identify policy mechanisms (OCPs, AAPs, bylaws etc.) can facilitate sustainable, local food systems
2. Participate in educating Councils and Regional Districts about the importance of local food economies and planning for agriculture and food.

Public beneficiaries

Citizens (eaters all!), who can be involved in OCP, AAP and bylaw development directly and through agricultural advisory committees, food councils and other bodies. Farm and food businesses, which are affected by OCPs, AAPs and bylaws relating to agriculture and food. Local government officials who are seeking to incorporate sustainable food systems objectives into their planning activities.

Voluntary sector partners

Smart Growth BC. Smart Growth BC is a provincial non-governmental organization devoted to fiscally, socially and environmentally responsible land use and development. Working with community groups, businesses, municipalities and the public, it advocates for the creation of more livable communities in British Columbia. SGBC was created as a joint project of the University of Victoria Eco-Research Chair of Environmental Law and Policy (now the POLIS Project) and West Coast Environmental Law Association. It was incorporated as an independent non-profit society in December 1999.

FarmFolk/CityFolk's Multifunctionality of Agricultural Land Project (MALP) at Colony Farm. This project will produce an Organic Agricultural Plan (OAP) for 160 acres in the GVRD's Colony Farm Park. Using permaculture principles, the OAP will promote a triple bottom line: environmental protection, economic viability and community building. MALP

is a collaborative effort involving the stakeholders of Colony Farm, community partners, and the public. The production of this plan and its support from the GVRD is a major development towards the integration of agriculture into regional parks.

Findings

In February 2003 Kathleen Gibson of the Project Team attended a workshop hosted by MAFF that summarized the work to date of all the Agricultural Advisory Committees in the province. She began to assemble a reference file on OCPs and bylaws. In summer 2003 she coordinated a number of discussions between FarmFolk/CityFolk and Smart Growth BC. An ongoing linkage was established between the organizations and *Growing Green* regarding the shared focus on agricultural land and local government.

Also in summer 2003, Nancy Klenavic in her paper *The Need for a "Sustainable Food Systems" Food Policy in the Capital Region District*, outlined a variety of ways OCPs, AAPs, bylaws and regional growth strategies could accommodate sustainable food systems policy and a food policy council in the Capital Region (see recommendations and resources below and in previous section.)

In spring 2004, Kristina Bouris, member of the *Growing Green* Project Team and a student in the School of Community and Regional Planning, summarized options and examples of regional and local government policy that could support sustainable, local food systems. Her observations were as follows:

- few local governments in southwestern BC have used OCPs, AAPs or bylaws to help facilitate sustainable, local food systems
- over half of the OCPs in southwestern BC have no mention of food or agriculture at all
- where agriculture is mentioned, it is not in a food system context: it is usually conventional commodity-based agriculture and the production part of the system only (not including distribution, processing, consumption or waste recycling)

Kristina's initial research question *What are local municipalities in southwestern BC doing to plan for local food systems?* turned out to be premature. She decided to focus her thesis on the question *Do municipalities in southwestern BC see the food system as an area in which they should be involved?*

Policy recommendations

Nancy and Kristina's research brought out the following general recommendations:

1. *Systems-focused policies.* Local governments should consider policies that can be applied to the other stages of the food system, namely distribution, processing, consumption and waste recycling. For example, municipalities can implement policies that support a vibrant street food industry, or zoning designations that ease the way for farmers markets or the development of a small-scale food processing industrial area.
2. *Education for local and regional government decision makers and staff.* A subsequent project to *Growing Green* should work with planners and councilors to explain food systems and why sustainable, local food systems are important and should be on the planning agenda.
3. *Information resources.* Development of a publication similar to the Agricultural Land Commission's *Planning for Agriculture* (1998) called "Planning for Sustainable Food Systems," outlining ideas and options for municipal planners.
4. *Political and financial support and monitoring for model policies.* It is important to remember that policies on their own will not lead to sustainable food systems. They require a political commitment to implementation, and monitoring over the long term. Financial support is critical to long-term success. In seeking for new policies, the voluntary sector can ensure long-term success by proposing a comprehensive approach that links policy change with human and economic resources, and public education.

5. *Further research* to identify opportunities for increased local and regional government involvement in planning for sustainable, local food systems: in particular those aspects related to distribution, processing, consumption and the recycling of waste.
6. *Specific policy options.* The researchers drew attention to the following policy options that could be included in OCPs, AAPs or bylaws, as appropriate. This is by no means an exhaustive list but a selection of what could be considered to be strong examples of useful policies (also see previous section on community-based food councils):
 - agriculture and food named as a key focus, broadly defined, with specific policy objectives
 - sustainable and local food system mentioned, with ways to support it (e.g. Buy Local strategies)
 - designation of food production (e.g. community gardens) as a permitted use in city and regional parks
 - specific agricultural plans for specific city and regional sites (such as the Organic Agriculture Plan for Colony Farm)
 - involvement of planning staff on agricultural advisory committees
 - involvement of voluntary sector and community groups in development and implementation of AAPs – groups have specific, defined responsibilities
 - development permit areas to protect farms inside and outside the Agricultural Land Reserve
 - incentives to developers for urban agriculture e.g. bonus density incentives for gardens on site
 - mechanism to minimize conflict between agricultural and other bylaws
 - information package for food producers regarding existing policies and bylaws
 - separate rates (e.g. water) for food production

Policy instruments

OCPs, AAPs, bylaws or regional growth strategies as most appropriate, see resources below.

Resources (see Growing Green Web site)

- MALP at Colony Farm project outline (to come)
- Apr 2004 Planning for Sustainable, Local Food Systems
- Smart Growth Smart Bylaws Guide at www.wcel.org/issues/urban/sbg
- Aug 2003 "Sustainable Food Systems" Food Policy in the Capital Regional District
- Mar 2003 OCPs and bylaws backgrounder

2.3 Public Health Legislation

Introduction

Sustainable food systems are holistic in nature, so law and policy reform efforts must forge links between agriculture, food, health, environment, and community sectors, and all levels of government. *Growing Green's* focus on public health legislation is based on the following linked assumptions:

- Disease prevention is critical to public health
- Healthy eating is critical to disease prevention
- Food security is critical to healthy eating
- Sustainable food systems are critical to food security

Growing Green followed the efforts of staff in the Ministry of Health Services on redefinition of core public health functions towards drafting legislation regarding public health. *Growing Green's* aim was to support the work of Community Nutritionists Council of BC (CNC-BC), the BC Food Systems Network and others who link healthy eating, food security and public health.

Goals

1. Establish a strong conceptual link between food security and public health in core health services review material and in the minds of senior managers in the Ministry of Health Services.
2. Ensure that community-based food councils are in the communications and planning loop for provincial public health initiatives.
3. Achieve acknowledgement of community-based food councils as potential key service providers for food-related aspects of chronic disease prevention.

Public beneficiaries

Public health professionals and advocates working in their own area and through food councils are effective messengers carrying citizens' concerns about food security and public health to governments.

Voluntary sector partners

Community Nutritionists Council of BC Food Security Standing Committee. Community Nutritionists are dietitians trained to advise on diet, food and nutrition issues that affect public health. Community nutritionists translate the science of nutrition into practical information that helps both individuals and population groups at all stages of the lifecycle make healthy food choices. At the broadest level, community nutritionists work with government and industry on the impact of food production, distribution and consumption on the nutritional status and health of the population.

BC Food Systems Network. The Network was formed in September 1999 to link people all over the province involved in community-level action related to food security. In keeping with the holistic perspective of the dozen or so local food security and food policy organizations in BC, the Network emphasizes the way in which food issues cross cultures, sectors, and age groups. Through an email network and annual conferences, Network members share insights, initiatives, strategies and critical analysis of events in the food system and their own work.

Findings

For the past four years, the BC Food Systems Network has been including public health professionals – Community Nutritionists and Medical Officers of Health– in its discussions about and development of community-based food security around BC. The Network's annual conference in 2003 featured a panel on food security and public health

that included Dr. Trevor Hancock of the Ministry of Health Services who is developing a framework for core functions in public health (see below).

One of the key concepts in that framework was that core programs centered in the Ministry of Health Services can link to the efforts of other health professionals and agencies and to the wider community, through issue-based initiatives. One example is chronic disease prevention. In 2002-03, Medical Officers of Health, CNC-BC, some large foundations (e.g. Heart and Stroke) and other health-related organizations formed the BC Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance as the vehicle for a province-wide Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative. The BC Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance then merged with the BC Healthy Living Alliance, which has as its mission *To improve the health of British Columbians through leadership that enhances collaborative action to promote physical activity, healthy eating and living smoke-free.*

Growing Green, noting in the Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance's presentation materials a considerable emphasis on the importance of community action and partnering with community organizations, asked the Ministry of Health Services to involve members of the *Growing Green* Project Team and BC Food Systems Network in Alliance meetings or at least in the communications loop. Ministry staff pointed out that the CDPA was an organization for professional personnel in the public and voluntary sectors and, although they agreed to keep *Growing Green* informed, no information was received.

In late 2002, the Provincial Health Officer asked CNC-BC to develop a case for the importance of food security to public health. CNC-BC's Food Security Standing Committee contracted with Kathleen Gibson of the *Growing Green* Project Team and Cathleen Kneen of the Reference Group to research and draft a paper that would provide a framework and evidence base to link food security and public health. The paper was submitted to the CNC Food Security Standing Committee in March 2003. It defined food security in the context of community nutrition; analyzed Community Nutritionists' key functions; discussed Community Nutritionists' food security efforts in the context of public health and core health functions; assembled a body of evidence for the role of food security in prevention of chronic disease and promotion of population health, and made a number of policy recommendations (see below).

In August 2003 *Growing Green* attempted unsuccessfully to pursue discussions with CNC-BC regarding ways to collaborate on this policy topic. CNC's process for ratifying the paper involved several further drafts with a new editorial team. As of March 31, 2004 the paper, now entitled *Making the Connection – Food Security and Public Health*, was not finalized.

In October 2003 the Medical Officers of Health invited CNC-BC to a one-day consultation on food security. Herb Barbolet of the Project Team and Cathleen Kneen of the Reference Group both made presentations at that session. The outcome of the session was the formation of a joint Medical Officer of Health-Community Nutritionist working group on food security and public health.

The Provincial Health Officer has committed to do his annual report for 2005 on the topic of food security and public health and will be using the paper as a key reference. It is anticipated that drafting of the Public Health Act will begin in 2005.

Policy recommendations

As of March 2003 *Growing Green* endorsed the following policy recommendations regarding the links between food security and public health:

1. A provincial food security initiative to improve the health of all British Columbians through a coordinated approach to the establishment of community-based food security around the province. This initiative would overlap with the BC Health Living Alliance's focus on healthy eating as a key component of healthy living. It would support local/regional community food security coalitions and their focus on linking all parts of food

systems and developing community-based skill-building programs such as community kitchens and pregnancy outreach. It would rely heavily on Community Nutritionists for development and implementation.

2. A BC Food Council as a vehicle for the initiative. It would:

- advise the Provincial Health Officer and report to the CEOs of Health Authorities
- link the grassroots movement for public health and food security - farmers, fishers, First Nations, agrologists, Community Nutritionists, Medical Officers of Health and others – to health authorities and municipal, regional and provincial governments
- educate decision makers and public about food security, food systems, and public health
- ensure public health policies include food security perspectives
- undertake research, both academic and community based
- liaise with national and international organizations concerned with food security

Resources (see Growing Green Web site)

- May 2004 Making the Connection – Food Security and Public Health (to come)
- Oct 2003 Framework for Core Functions in Public Health
- Sep 2003 BC Food Systems Network Mission Statement
- Sep 2003 Back Yard to Front Burner Conference Report
- Mar 2003 public health legislation backgrounder

2.4 Junk Foods and Beverages in Schools

Introduction

As the project progressed, *Growing Green* Project Team members became more and more concerned about issues related to junk foods and beverages in schools.

As school budgets suffer increasing cuts, school trustees seek new sources of revenue such as those provided by vending machines that sell pop and candy. However, there are significant costs to students' health in terms of obesity, diabetes, and heart problems. Too much sugar also has demonstrable negative effects on students' ability to learn. In addition, there is now evidence that companies manufacturing fatty and sugary foods and beverages know their products tend to be addictive, and deliberately target student populations through advertising and merchandising. Contracts between junk food and beverage suppliers and schools or school boards usually contain non-disclosure clauses, so they cannot be scrutinized by the public.

Through a member of its Reference Group, *Growing Green* learned about the Environmental Law Centre at the University of Victoria and its program for law students to research issues of public concern. The project submitted three topics for students' consideration. One student, Kathleen McIntosh, picked up this topic in fall 2003 and produced a report with policy recommendations for *Growing Green*.

Goals

1. Investigate schools' responsibility "in loco parentis" and the status of confidential contracts between school boards and junk food and beverage suppliers.
2. Help identify legal and policy measures that can be taken to reduce the amount of junk foods and beverages sold in BC schools.

Public beneficiaries

Students and their families: healthy foods and beverages in schools help students learn more readily and protect them against diet-related disease.

Voluntary sector partners

For this students' rights issue, the best spokespersons are the students themselves.

The Environmental Law Centre (ELC). The ELC is both a non-profit society and a University of Victoria law course. The primary mission of the ELC is to provide research and advocacy on public interest environmental issues.

Findings

Kathleen McIntosh prepared the report below on legal issues related to junk food and beverages in BC public schools. Her report defines the problem, examines various legal approaches, and offers recommendations for addressing the problem.

Legal approaches considered include actions under the Ombudsman Act; School Act; and Child, Family and Community Service Act. The most promising of these seems to be the Ombudsman Act.

Regarding contracts, although school food and beverage suppliers require non-disclosure clauses, school boards have public accountability. Whether or not a given school board may have an obligation to disclose terms of food

and beverage supply contracts, it can certainly be questioned about them. Regulation at the provincial level could overthrow such contracts, e.g. by banning certain foods and beverages.

The Hon. Christy Clark, Minister of Education, and the Vancouver School Board made public statements regarding their intent to substantially remove junk food from the schools. We feel the issue has been well vetted and heard, and changes are in the works.

(One Ontario student's persistence for over two years led to a November 2003 order by that province's Information and Privacy Commissioner, for the York Region District and Peel District school boards to fully divulge the terms of their contracts with Pepsi and Coke. Nicholas Dodds had begun asking questions about soft drink machines in his school when he was in Grade 8. He kept asking for information and finally got attention and help from the Information and Privacy Commissioner. The contracts themselves and the background issues are summarized at <http://aci.on.ca/~saublent/school/vending.html>.

Policy recommendations

Students and their families can:

1. Protest to the provincial Ombudsman a school or school board decision to sign a food or beverage contract.
2. Raise concerns about school foods and beverages with the Medical Health Officer for the region (who reports to the regional health authority).
3. Write to the school board requesting information about the terms of existing food and beverage supply contracts (using a Freedom of Information request if necessary) – scrutinize the contract and then ask for changes where appropriate.
4. Work with others to seek provincial regulation against junk foods and beverages in schools.

Policy instruments

The report below appends motions made to the City of LA Unified School District regarding obesity prevention and promotion of healthy beverage sales. These motions mandate specific nutrient standards for school foods and beverages, thus effectively banning junk.

Resources (see Growing Green Web site)

- Dec 2003 Junk Food in Schools report
- Nov 2003 Aurora Boy Forces Cola Deals Into Open

2.5 Small-scale Food Processing

Introduction

Organizations and people in the middle links of a local food system "chain" are key to the survival and health of the whole. *Growing Green* worked with the Small-Scale Food Processor Association (SSFPA), providing strategic advice on its business plans.

In its first years of work, the SSFPA articulated and demonstrated the tremendous economic potential of BC small-scale food processors. The SSFPA is currently developing a business plan for a social enterprise that will include (1) the SSFPA itself and its non-market member services, and (2) a member-owned, specialty food shared services co-operative to offer services such as regional branding, bar coding or lab testing.

At the same time as the SSFPA was forming, an exploration of the potential and organizational options for all BC food and beverage processors was proceeding under the auspices of Investment Agriculture Foundation. By early 2004 the blueprint for a BC Food Processors' Council had evolved to the point where a productive relationship with the SSFPA seemed likely.

From January through May 2004, *Growing Green* developed a kit and helped coordinate province-wide input to MLAs and the Ministries of Health Services and Agriculture, Food and Fisheries regarding a proposed meat inspection regulation under the Food Safety Act. Small-scale meat producers and processors were very concerned that the regulation as proposed would put many of them out of business and thus threaten community-based food security all around BC.

Goals

1. Help SSFPA get a proposal accepted for a regional pilot project (on Vancouver Island) for a flexible manufacturing/marketing network co-op to pool product from various small local processors and do processing, labelling, packaging and distribution.
2. Provide useful information and resources regarding food-related co-op models that work (e.g. from Emilia Romagna in Italy).
3. Ensure that the SSFPA is in a strong position on its own and in relation to provincial agri-food agencies (Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Investment Agriculture Foundation).
4. Explore options for meaningful regulatory change regarding food safety regulations, HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points) in particular, for small-scale food processors.

Public beneficiaries

Healthy processing businesses help anchor food systems in community economies and provide local product choices to consumers. More and more, chefs and eaters alike are demanding local food choices in their restaurants and retail stores.

Voluntary sector partners

Growing Green's key partner on this file was the Small Scale Food Processor Association, which was formed at the request of BC processors in 2001. Its members are processors with 25 or fewer employees (which accounts for about 75% of all processors in BC). The SSFPA was developed and is run by a consulting company, Community Venture Development Services, which has a community economic development approach and strong links to the BC Co-operative Association and other co-op partners. Although the SSFPA is a non-profit, this is a business sector issue and the aim was to help the association more effectively represent its processor members' policy concerns.

For its work on the meat inspection regulation, *Growing Green* worked with the Meat Inspection Committee of the Island Farmers' Alliance (IFA). The IFA is an association of farmers, food producers and supporters that was formed in 1998 to promote sustainable agriculture on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. It markets Islands products with a regional logo, the "Fresh from the Island" rooster.

Findings

In its first three quarters, *Growing Green* offered advice to the SSFPA on organizational issues. It focused in its last quarter on policy issues related to meat inspection.

SSFPA strategy and management. *Growing Green* provided advice to the SSFPA on strategic planning and management. *Growing Green* saw in the SSFPA a new opportunity to link agriculture and food with community economic development, and to develop new organizational models (such as its proposed social enterprise) to support regional and local agri-food infrastructure.

Kathleen Gibson provided ongoing advice regarding positioning of the SSFPA in relation to the Investment Agriculture Foundation and its support for the development of a provincial food and beverage processors' association. Such a body was proposed to consolidate the voice of all food and beverage processors in BC and to coordinate federal-provincial funds earmarked for processing under the Agri-Food Futures Fund (AFFF). Investment Agriculture, the AFFF administrator, is closely identified with the BC Agriculture Council, which is dominated by "mainstream" (large, well-established, commodity-based, often export-oriented) agricultural associations in BC. *Growing Green*, with its focus on sustainable food systems and regionally based, small-scale, emerging farm and food businesses, wanted to ensure the SSFPA was not overlooked.

Over the two years of *Growing Green*, the SSFPA was moving full steam ahead with organizational development, setting up training programs and other services for its members, and producing a business plan for a social enterprise that would connect and support the SSFPA and a member-owned, specialty food shared services co-operative. Kathleen made a presentation about *Growing Green* to the SSFPA's workshop at the BC Co-operative Association AGM in June 2003. Kathleen and Herb Barbolet sat on the SSFPA's Business Plan Development Advisory Committee.

In summer 2003, Herb attended a course in Vancouver and Bologna, Italy on Economics and Management of Co-operative Enterprises sponsored by Van City Capital Corporation and the Centre for Co-operative Economics at the University of Bologna. The Emilia Romagna area of Italy around Bologna is famous for its small-scale co-op ventures of all kinds. Herb shared with SSFPA lessons learned in Italy about small-scale farm and food co-ops and possible transferability to BC.

By early 2004, the SSFPA had earned recognition in agriculture and food circles. The province-wide food/beverage association concept had evolved through a number of drafts to a proposal for a BC Food Processors' Council. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries provided staff as liaison to help find ways for the SSFPA to have a meaningful role. *Growing Green* advised SSFPA that it would have more to gain than lose by participating.

Meat inspection regulation. In January 2004 the implications of a proposed meat inspection regulation sponsored by the Ministries of Health Services and Agriculture, Food and Fisheries became apparent. The proposed regulation was based on a flawed rationale, proposed measures that threatened to put small local meat producers and processors out of business, and was undertaken without adequate consultation.

Growing Green consulted with staff in the Ministry of Health Services and in Agriculture, Food and Fisheries and participated in the public consultation through the Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable. Working with the Meat Inspection Committee of the Island Farmers' Alliance, *Growing Green* and CR-FAIR prepared and circulated a kit to organizations in BC that are concerned about regional and local foods and food systems. The

kit provided a summary of the issue and materials to encourage and help others to express concerns and share ideas - both with staff preparing policy options for the Ministers and with Ministers regarding the next steps in the process. This work was ongoing when the project ended in March 2004.

After the initial consultation the regulation was unavailable for further public review. *Growing Green* and CR-FAIR learned that MLAs were to be briefed about it and that their input might bring about changes. Accordingly a two-page memorandum about the food systems context and impacts of the regulation, with policy recommendations, was distributed to all MLAs on April 19.

Policy recommendations and instruments

Building on policy recommendations developed by the Island Farmers' Alliance Meat Inspection Committee, *Growing Green* and CR-FAIR developed the following proposal for the province's meat inspection system.

We recommend a Meat Inspection Regulation with the following characteristics to appropriately address **all scales** of meat slaughter and processing:

1. Proper slaughter and processing establishments:¹ health and safety regulations **suitable for small- and medium-sized establishments**, including on-farm and mobile facilities
2. Trained and certified abattoir operators:
 - somebody certified in and responsible for food safety on site during all operating hours
 - local training programs available – possibly through local colleges
3. Trained and certified meat inspectors
4. Monitoring (quarterly? as well as unannounced) of meat by government-certified meat inspectors throughout slaughter and processing
5. Inspection of slaughter and processing establishments (quarterly? as well as unannounced)
6. Complete traceability and accountability for all slaughtered and processed meat
7. BSE protection:
 - elimination of all animal byproducts from animal feeds
 - development of a government facility for the testing of all slaughtered cattle for BSE
 - appropriate tissue samples from all cattle to be sent to the facility and tested for BSE
8. Provincial audit of the meat inspection process: occasional review of the meat inspection process to ensure food safety and industry viability

¹ Note: "establishment" means any abattoir, slaughter house, packing house or other premises in which animals are slaughtered, or in which portions or products thereof are prepared for food, or are stored.

Resources (see Growing Green Web site)

- Feb 2004 SSFPA Business Plan for a Shared Services Co-operative (to come)
- May 2004 Essay on Emilia Romagna
- Apr 2004 memo to all MLAs re meat inspection
- Mar 2004 meat inspection regulation kit
- Mar 2004 CR-FAIR to Ministers re meat inspection reg
- Mar 2004 National Farmers' Union re: abattoirs
- Feb 2004 memo re BC Food Processors' Council
- Jan 2004 CR-FAIR to Ministers re meat inspection reg
- May 2003 SSFPA update
- May 2003 BC Food & Beverage Processors' Survey
- Mar 2003 small-scale food processors backgrounder
- Nov 2002 SSFPA Market Scoping Report

MAKING SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS PAY

These priorities derive from issues on the farm and mostly address provincial agri-food policy.

The food system would provide more ecological services if there was a better economic case for doing so. *Growing Green* is investigating the following ideas as ways to make more sustainable food practices pay:

Farmers making long-term investments into sustainable farming practices encounter regulatory barriers. Some of the obstacles are:

- raising money off title in the ALR
- building houses for other families that want to work and invest in the farm
- transferring the farm to future farmers or generations and providing for retirement without subdividing
- obtaining affordable access to markets (quota) for supply-managed commodities

To help reduce or remove these obstacles, *Growing Green* decided to investigate the following law reform topics:

- Eliminate or reduce ALR or local government rules/bylaws that prevent or discourage **multi-family housing on farms**. Ensure that multi-family housing models are designed to avoid rural sprawl and promote long term sustainable farming on the land.
- Eliminate barriers and design solutions for adopting **farmland trust** models (like the UK's National Trust) that could: (1) attract much needed investment into sustainable farming (2) permit farmers to make a living wage for their efforts, and (3) allow farmers to pass on their sustainable farm practices to future generations without subdividing.
- Seek to restore farmers' rights in the ALR to ensure future sustainable farm practices on their land by registering **conservation covenants** against their title.
- Eliminate or reduce restrictions on registering **short-term leases** on title within the ALR.
- Obtain **quota for organic farmers** in supply-managed commodities (dairy, turkey, chicken, egg) to use 'collectively' in order to increase economic security, and promote ecological benefits associated with organic/sustainable farming.
- Investigate and identify options for **rewarding farmers for ecological services** they provide (wildlife habitat, green space, floodwater storage etc., in addition to food).

2.6 Multi-family Housing on Farms

After investigating this issue, the Project Team decided to set it aside as being too complex and conflicted to pursue in the time frame of the *Growing Green* project.

Resources (see Growing Green Web site)

- Mar 2003 co-farming backgrounder

2.7 Farmland Trusts and Conservation Covenants

Introduction

Growing Green explored with organizations like The Land Trust Alliance and The Land Conservancy the concept of investing in working farms for conservation purposes. This would mean supporting farms that already provide remarkable ecological services and farmers who show commitment to high environmental standards.

Growing Green prepared and presented a paper entitled *Natural Allies: Land Trusts and Working Farms* to the July 2, 2003 AGM of The Land Trust Alliance and began work with potential farm and conservation trust partners (including District A Farmers' Institute and The Land Conservancy) on the development of a pilot farmland trust project for Salt Spring Island.

Land trust organizations often work with farmers who wish to register conservation covenants on their properties. BC's 2002 Agricultural Land Commission Act says "a covenant that prohibits the use of agricultural land for farm purposes has no effect until approved by the Commission." Many trust organizations wrote to the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) to object to this section on the grounds that it would further discourage efforts of farmers to register conservation covenants on properties within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR).

Goals

1. Help facilitate a partnership (on Salt Spring Island) between land trusts and working farms.
2. Submit a funding application for a pilot farmland trust project on Salt Spring Island.
3. Provide useful information on farmland trusts from BC, Canada and other jurisdictions.

Public beneficiaries

Farmland trusts indirectly benefit members of the public by preserving local food-growing potential, wildlife habitat and green space.

Voluntary sector partners

District A Farmers' Institutes and Salt Spring Island Farmers' Institute (see short-term farmland leases section).

TLC The Land Conservancy, founded in 1997, is modeled after the National Trust of Britain. It is a non-profit, charitable Land Trust working throughout British Columbia. One of its priorities is to work with members of the agricultural community to promote agriculture as an environmentally compatible industry. TLC recognizes the value of conserving farmland for its environmental, economic, historical and social benefits. It has developed its Conservation Partners Program with in order to protect and enhance important habitat on privately owned agricultural lands by providing recognition, incentive and assistance to growers who are committed to conservation of natural habitat on their farm. TLC is very interested in the concept of farmland trusts.

The farmland trust is available only to owners or purchasers of agricultural land. Further participation of voluntary sector organizations in the concept could be achieved by seeking community access to or ownership of agricultural land, e.g.:

- investments in farms that could be run by workers
- agriculture in parks
- agriculture on other Crown lands
- people taking over "free" farms on request (UBC is being offered about one farm per week but has no capacity to take on these properties)

Findings

Lawrence Alexander researched farmland trust models in the UK and elsewhere and developed contacts with TLC The Land Conservancy and Land Trust Alliance before presenting his paper to the Land Trust Alliance AGM in July 2003. The paper outlined a number of options for investing in working farms and suggested next steps that included more in-depth dialogue between land trusts and farmers, and pilot projects to test the concepts.

In late July, Lawrence developed a tentative pilot project proposal and convened a small group of interested parties to discuss development of such a pilot on Salt Spring Island.

Regarding conservation covenants, the ALC released new guidelines in July 2003 and West Coast Environmental Law submitted comments on them.

In January 2004, Derek Masselink (former manager of UBC Farm) was brought in on contract to help convene discussions about a pilot farmland trust project on Salt Spring. After discussion with interested parties, Derek was commissioned to develop (1) a prospectus to describe the possible Salt Spring farmland trust in more detail, for the benefit of the Islanders interested in pursuing it and (2) a summary of Canadian and BC land trust examples and related policy issues (barriers and solutions) relevant to Salt Spring and farm lands in BC, for reference by the Islanders and by TLC.

Although scheduling and consensus building remain challenging, especially in island environments where development pressures on the land base are particularly acute, many key components for a farmland trust on Salt Spring are already in place. The Land Conservancy, local farmers and the Real Estate Foundation are all interested. The Salt Spring Monetary Foundation (which has developed a local currency and is looking for assets to back it) is interested as well. Enthusiasm among these parties has increased over the two years of the *Growing Green* project.

Policy recommendations

[From Natural Allies: Land Trusts and Working Farms, July 2003]

To expand the current engagement between land trusts and farmers, we believe the following represents a partial list of what would be necessary:

1. *Willing land trusts; willing farmers.*
2. *Interest among land trust donors.* Create interest among potential donors to bequeath or donate land and money for investing in working farms, and (equally important) for managing the land. We understand this may present some difficulties for smaller land trusts that have limited money for management and who, as a result, look to annex land to local government parks, etc.
3. *Path to 'ethical investment' industry.* Create opportunities for people seeking ethical investments to invest in working farms 'trusts'.
4. *Changes to land trust objects/constitutions.* Ensure land trusts are authorized to pursue broader conservation goals (e.g. protect sensitive areas and open space, urban containment, etc.), and enter into innovative arrangements (e.g. purchase and leaseback or accept shares in lieu of land).
5. *Support from provincial regulators, including the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC).* Seek the support of provincial regulators, particularly the ALC. Design model conservation covenants and leases that work for everybody, and agree on a set of guidelines for their use. Seek an investment from the \$5.3 billion federal/provincial Agricultural Policy Framework—particularly its 'green cover program' and the \$7 million it has allocated for 'environmental farm planning' in BC. Investigate advantages (if any) of seeking statutory authority like the UK's National Trust.
6. *Eligibility under federal Income Tax.* Ensure working farm investments qualify for 'ecological gift' tax incentives (e.g. 'open space'). Design measurable criteria in clear regulatory language.

7. *Address concerns of broader farm community.* Find ways to respect and address the following potential concerns of farmers:
- Concerns about not being the owners of the land they farm (perhaps draw parallels to other businesses who don't own the buildings they work in).
 - Nervousness about conservation interests owning the land, and about farm practices that don't maximize the 'food value' produced by the land (e.g. by farming 'clean' down to a stream or imposing efficient rows);
 - Concerns about wildlife 'cleaning out' adjacent farms.

Policy instruments

See examples in BC and Canadian issues summary and Natural Allies: Land Trusts and Working Farms (below) and Incentives for Good Environmental Management (Ecological Services, section 2.10).

Resources (see Growing Green Web site)

- Jul 2004 prospectus for Salt Spring Island farmland trust (to come)
- Jul 2004 policy issues for BC and Canadian farmland trusts (to come)
- Jul 2003 DRAFT Pilot Farmland Trust Project Proposal
- Jul 2003 Natural Allies: Land Trusts and Working Farms
- Mar 2003 farmland trusts backgrounder
- Dec 2003 ALC Conservation Covenant Guidelines
- Mar 2003 conservation covenants backgrounder

2.8 Short-term Farmland Leases

Introduction

Growing Green heard from farmers that although the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission states that a farmer can register a short-term lease on part of a property on Agricultural Land Reserve land, this practice is in fact denied because of court decisions. The result is that a person wishing to secure his or her investment in, for example, fencing and irrigation on leased land is unable to do so by registering the lease against the owner's title.

Growing Green sought an amendment to the Land Title Act or Agricultural Land Reserve Act to lift the onerous application of section 73 (requiring subdivision) that removed options and flexibility for landlords and tenants leasing farmland.

Goals

1. Help secure support for a legislative amendment to enable farm leases without subdivision.
2. Help seek commitment for draft amendment on the legislative agenda for 2004 or 2005.

Public beneficiaries

Consumers seeking locally grown foods; farmers and farm families.

Voluntary sector partners

Farmers' and Women's Institutes. About 130 regionally based institutes represent hundreds of local farmers around the province. Districts are linked into the province-wide FARM Community Council and thus into the BC Agriculture Council. (One policy issue *Growing Green* was unable to pursue, but which was raised as a key concern during the project, is the proposed repeal of the BC Farmers and Women's Institutes Act.)

One of the sponsors of this issue was District A (Coast-Islands) Farmers' Institutes, the regional body including farmers' institutes in Metchosin, Cobble Hill, Salt Spring Island, Pender Island, Mayne Island, Cowichan, Nanaimo-Cedar, Coombs, Port Alberni, Comox-Courtenay, Powell River and Sayward, and the Island Farmers Alliance, Islands Natural Growers and Farm Women's Network. District A operates a farmer driven, volunteer, listserv and Web site: www.bcfarmnet.org.

The BC Agriculture Council (BCAC). Formed in 1997, BCAC provides leadership in representing, promoting and advocating for the collective interests of all agricultural producers in BC. Commodity association members are grouped into 6-8 sectors. FARM Community Council is a member of the Community Agriculture sector.

Findings

Lawrence Alexander did the initial work on this file, pursuing requests from District A Farmers' Institute and others. He consulted with the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission and with senior staff in the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management (MSRM).

His proposed approach was to seek an amendment to the Land Title Act or Agricultural Land Reserve Act. He drafted a resolution for an interested local government to take to the Union of BC Municipalities Convention.

In July 2003, Lawrence was advised by policy personnel in MSRM that this amendment would not be viewed as a high priority and would likely be put over to the spring 2005 legislative session. Lawrence recommended some ways *Growing Green* could attach this amendment to other issues that might be going forward to the same session.

Mark Haddock of West Coast Environmental Law picked up the file in September 2003. Among other contacts, he talked with legal counsel working with the Richmond Farmers' Institute on the farmland lease issue. Mark, Kathleen Gibson and Herb Barbolet met with Steve Thomson of the BC Agriculture Council in late September and agreed to continue discussion about the issue and the proposed amendment.

However, over the next few months, Mark's further consultation with members of the Canadian Bar Association's Real Property Section convinced him that there would be significant difficulty in designing and getting support for the proposed amendment.

Policy recommendations and instruments

Growing Green sees that there are valid concerns on both sides of this issue, but given the difficulties in precisely identifying the "legislative fix" and achieving law reform, there probably would need to be considerably more evidence that this issue posed a significant impediment to farmers to justify special treatment under the Land Title Act. For the present time, *Growing Green* recommends a "watching brief" on this issue that monitors and tracks specific developments over time.

There are alternatives for meeting some of the interests behind these concerns. For example, when it comes to financing farm operations, planted crops can be treated as personal property for the purposes of security arrangements under the Personal Property Security Act. This solves some but not all of the identified problems.

Resources (see Growing Green Web site)

- Mar 2004 memo farmland lease law reform considerations
- Jul 2003 draft amendment action memo
- Jul 2003 draft farm lease resolution
- Mar 2003 short-term leases backgrounder

2.9 Organics and Regulated Marketing

Introduction

Small-scale farmers (particularly organic farmers) argue that although many support the principle of supply-managed marketing, the administration of existing supply-managed marketing schemes (specifically for chicken, eggs, broiler hatching eggs, milk and turkey) fails to serve them. They argue that their products are fundamentally different from those of conventional producers and should therefore not be regulated as if they are the same. Farmers who want to integrate their farms by producing multiple products want to reduce the multiple regulatory burden of reporting to several different marketing boards. Fees and levies associated with supply management schemes are too onerous for small farmers, and cost of quota is prohibitive for small farms and new entrants.

Related concerns and materials are now filed on a Web site launched by friends of BC organic farmers in November 2003. See www.organics.bc.ca

Following a presentation to the Certified Organic Associations of BC (COABC) Annual General Meeting in February 2003, *Growing Green* worked with a small advisory committee of organic farmers and, after meetings with industry opinion leaders and provincial regulatory officials, prepared a short "blueprint for change" policy proposal in July 2003. The COABC advisory committee, working with representatives of the organics industry, went on to develop a project entitled the Growing the Organic Supply Managed Sector Initiative. This is a consultative initiative to research and develop models for improving the current systems for regulating production/marketing of organic egg, chicken, turkey and milk products.

In the same time frame, the BC Farm Industry Review Board (FIRB), the supervisory and appellate agency responsible for marketing boards in British Columbia, instigated a review of specialty production programs in the five supply-managed commodities. *Growing Green* helped facilitate links between the FIRB, the five marketing boards involved in the review, and the work of the COABC Initiative.

Goals

1. Assist the organics coalition to identify and use appropriate channels for communicating its ideas and recommendations to government.
2. Help the organics coalition to clearly identify program options - and the financial and legal implications of each - to make the regulated marketing system more responsive and effective for organic products and remove existing impediments to stronger growth in the organic sector.
3. Articulate the pros and cons of an "honest broker" role in this kind of policy development situation.

Public beneficiaries

Citizens interested in eating or growing organic foods - for reasons that may include nutrition, personal health, or a desire to avoid genetically modified foods. This issue addresses consumer choice and the variety, quality, and price of food. To date, consumers have been excluded from these policy discussions.

Voluntary sector partners

COABC is a non-profit business association. It administers the BC Certified Organic Program, a voluntary agri-food quality program sanctioned by the BC government through the Organic Agricultural Products Certification Regulation under the Agri-Food Choice and Quality Act. COABC's direct membership is about a dozen certifying associations that certify organic farms for compliance with the BC organic standard. COABC also carries out initiatives that support the growth of the sector in the province, including administration of the Organic Sector Development Program, which helped fund the COABC Growing the Organic Supply Managed Sector Initiative.

West Coast Environmental Law also helped fund the COABC Initiative, through its Environmental Dispute Resolution Fund.

Findings

Issues related to new entrants and specialty products, especially organics, in the five BC supply-managed commodities have festered for years. Now a(nother) concerted effort is being made to address them. Two recent BC Supreme Court decisions, the announcement in September 2003 of the FIRB Specialty Production Review, and increased interest and support from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries all emphasized the resonance of this *Growing Green* file and gave it a strong context.

Lawrence Alexander's work on the file helped establish the legal framework, generate discussions with policy makers, outline some options and key questions to pursue, and provide ideas for funding the COABC Initiative. Kathleen Gibson picked up the file when the COABC Initiative was getting under way and provided strategic, process and editorial advice as required.

The COABC Initiative and the FIRB review were linked by communication between the Coordinator and the Board Chair, a linkage facilitated by Kathleen Gibson's dual role with *Growing Green* and on contract to FIRB for Phase 1 of its review (to end December 2003). This role is discussed further in the *Growing Green* project evaluation report.

The original schedule for the FIRB review and the COABC Initiative was completion by the end of March 2004. However, when the avian flu crisis developed in the Fraser Valley in February 2004, the feather industry in BC came to a standstill and this file was interrupted. As of May 2004, revised schedules estimated completion of the FIRB Specialty Production Review by July 2004 and the COABC Initiative in fall 2004.

All the parties remain interested in resolution and in a system for including certified organic and other specialty products in supply-managed marketing that will be fair, sustainable and workable. All agree that in principle this should be possible. All agree that the key challenges will be identifying workable options that the COABC membership, the boards and the government can live with. The BC marketing boards and government agencies must work within the constraints of the federally-managed supply management system.

In her presentation regarding the COABC Initiative at the March 12, 2004 *Growing Green* forum (a session attended by the FIRB Board Chair and two members), Gunta Vitins outlined COABC's overview of this issue, which puts the policy work in the context of the overall goal and includes outreach to the public and to markets for organic products.

Policy recommendations and instruments

Under development through the COABC Initiative and the FIRB Specialty Production Review. The COABC Initiative should also help provide input to the policy development process from consumers and marketers of organic products.

Resources (see Growing Green Web site)

- COABC Initiative reports on policy models for eggs, chicken, turkey, dairy (to come)
- Farm Industry Review Board report on Specialty Production Review (to come)
- July 2003 Blueprint for Change policy proposal (embargoed)
- July 2003 process memo to organic partners (embargoed)
- May 2003 organics letter to Premier
- Mar 2003 organics and regulated marketing backgrounder

2.10 Ecological Services: Incentives and Rewards

Introduction

Food comes from the meeting between human ingenuity and nature. Done properly, this relationship can enhance nature, lead to stronger and more productive ecosystems, and provide much-needed habitat for wildlife. Done wrong, food production can destroy the environment it depends on. Which path we take depends on what incentives we create. If farmers are only rewarded for producing low-cost food, regardless of the consequences, then we will have polluted ground water, eroded soil, a loss of biodiversity and an environment filled with toxic chemicals. If, however, farmers are rewarded for environmental stewardship, then human ingenuity can bring about environmentally friendly food production. Currently, the majority of our food comes from a system dominated by price and blind to environmental costs. However, there is an alternative.

To address this problem, and develop strategies to re-create an agriculture that nourishes land and community, *Growing Green* began by studying good news stories and cases of farmers who had found ways to do well financially by doing well by the environment. The major case study was the Galey Farm near Victoria, where the farmer had worked with aquatic ecologists to restore a wetland on his property.

Growing Green partnered with the POLIS Project on Ecological Governance at the University of Victoria to examine this case in a March 2003 day-long workshop entitled Governance and Environmental Services Provided by Farmers and Freshwater Systems. The workshop included a presentation on properly functioning condition of streams; site visits to the Galey Farm and the Vancouver Island Technology Park (a former hospital that has been retrofitted to a specific standard under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program); and a facilitated discussion.

Goals

1. Develop methods to identify the ecological services that farms provide.
2. Develop a mechanism for consumers to identify farms and farm products that provide these benefits.
3. Summarize policy mechanisms to reward farmers who provide ecological services.
4. Develop a strategy for engaging governments to implement best mechanisms.

Public beneficiaries

Everyone, for public goods provided by farmers (e.g., food, green space, wildlife habitat, water storage); and home owners who benefit from the flood protection provided by farmland.

Voluntary sector partner

POLIS project on Ecological Governance: POLIS is a research institute based at the University of Victoria. From the POLIS Web site:

Most literally, the concept of the polis refers to the ancient Greek city state. Unlike today's fragmented politics, the polis is rooted in place. The importance of the territorial community permeates our work at POLIS, whether it is the forest policy research and activities of the International Network of Forests and Communities or the urban planning of our Smart Growth projects. In all our work, we explore the potential both of "community-based" alternatives to exclusively bureaucratic or corporate management, and of "ecosystem-based" contexts for creating sustainable economic activities in forestry, fisheries, urban growth and so on.

There is great promise in reinvigorating the ideals of the polis. Its emphasis on face-to-face directness offers an antidote to the giantism of the age of globalization. The value that the polis places on dialogue provides guidance for how we might foster new forms of technological and economic innovation as well as self-regulation and self-maintenance. Its emphasis on a shared commitment to place and community reminds us of the values that we have lost in the rush to get ahead, the values embodied in what is called 'civil society'.

Findings

Evan Fraser coordinated the research on this file.

The Galey Farm case study examined the wetland restoration project that had re-created the natural path of a stream and habitat for birds. In doing so, the farmer reaped a number of benefits: increased usable acreage, reduced pesticide costs (the birds now attracted to the site ate troublesome insects), and protection of his fields against vandalism. The farmer also re-created the natural flood plain of the river system. This put his fields in the way of floods, but protected the homes downstream.

Key lessons from this case study include:

1. We need the tools of the ecologist to understand how to modify the landscape so that food production and a healthy environment can occupy the same space. In this case the farmer teamed up with a group of aquatic ecologists who identified the "properly functioning conditions" of the watershed and then set about restoring those conditions.
2. Policy and regulation need to support this sort of intervention. In this case study some existing regulations (e.g. fisheries) stood in the way of the work.
3. There should be ways to reward farmers for creating such ecological benefits. In the event of a flood, this farmer loses his crop, but in doing so protects and benefits the homes downstream.

An extensive search uncovered a wealth of policies designed to accomplish the above goals. The method used to restore the wetland in the case study is just one way of identifying the ecological values of farmland. Other possibilities include establishing a certification body that would use generally agreed criteria to assess the ecological value of specific farms. This could be based on the LEED system. There also need to be mechanisms to allow consumers to identify farm products produced on these farms. The organics industry has set the standard here, but the government needs to do more to support such initiatives. Finally, there are many schemes established to reward farmers who farm enhance ecological services. Many of these examples come from Europe (specifically the UK) where governments actively support farmers' contributions to the rural environment.

One key finding from this project was that it will be difficult to standardize these sorts of mechanisms. On the one hand there is a need to ensure the highest environmental standards so the consumer has confidence in the product for which they pay a premium price. This is also necessary to avoid unscrupulous firms "green-washing:" misleadingly marketing their products as environmentally friendly. On the other hand, it is very difficult to standardize something as elusive as "high environmental standards" since what is fine on one field will not be fine on another (for example clay soils will trap and store manure while manure spread on sandy soils quickly pollutes ground water). We have not tried to resolve this debate.

Policy recommendations

1. Promote local-level research to identify the characteristics of farms that provide environmental services.
2. Develop a scheme for identifying those farms that provide these services.
3. Establish a marketing identity for products that come from these farms and educate the public to understand what this means.

Policy instruments

Options are summarized in the Incentives for Good Environmental Management paper.

Resources (see Growing Green Web site)

- Aug 2003 Incentives for Good Environmental Management
- Blenkinsop Creek Galey Farm case study
- Mar 2003 Farmers Freshwater Systems backgrounder
- Mar 4 2003 POLIS workshop agenda
- Mar 4 2003 POLIS workshop participants
- Mar 2003 ecological services backgrounder

Appendix 1

Growing Green Project - Summary of Contacts
2002-2004

Voluntary sector organizations are flagged in *italics*

Growing Green made presentations to:

1. Agricultural Land Commission
2. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
3. BC Agriculture Council
4. *BC Co-op Association*
5. *BC Food Systems Network 2002 and 2003 annual conferences*
6. Canadian Wildlife Service
7. Capital Regional District
8. *Certified Organic Associations of BC*
9. *Community Food Security Coalition 2003, Boston*
10. *Cowichan Farmers' Institute*
11. *District A Farmers' Institute*
12. Economics Co-ops course, Bologna, Italy
13. Environment Canada
14. GVRD Economic Strategy for Agriculture in the Lower Mainland
15. *Land Trust Alliance 2003 AGM*
16. Leading Edge Conference 2003: Stewardship and Conservation in Canada
17. Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
18. Ministry of Land, Water and Air Protection
19. Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management
20. National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy
21. Office of the Auditor General
22. Provincial Health Officer
23. *Salt Spring Island Farmers Institute*
24. *Smart Growth BC*
25. UBC Agroecology Forum
26. Voluntary Sector Initiative
27. *World Congress of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM)*

Growing Green collaborated closely with:

1. *BC Co-op Association*
2. *BC Environmental Network*
3. *BC Food Systems Network*
4. *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives*
5. *Canadian Diabetes Association*
6. *Canadian Environmental Network*
7. *Canadian Food Security Network*
8. *Canadian Organic Growers*
9. *Capers Community Market*
10. *Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable (CR-FAIR)*
11. *Certified Organic Associations of BC*

12. *Community Food Security Coalition*
13. *Council of Canadians*
14. Council of Nutritionists of BC Food Security Standing Committee
15. *Cowichan Farmers' Institute*
16. *District A Farmers' Institute*
17. Environmental Law Centre, University of Victoria
18. Institute for Media, Policy, and Civil Society (IMPACS)
19. *International Society for Ecology*
20. Investment Agriculture Foundation
21. *Island Farmers' Alliance*
22. *Land Trust Alliance*
23. *Lower Mainland Food Coalition*
24. McConnell Foundation
25. *Nanaimo Food Link*
26. *Oxfam*
27. Peninsula Agriculture Commission
28. POLIS Project on Ecological Governance
29. *Progressive Intercultural Services Society*
30. Real Estate Foundation of BC
31. Riverside Secondary School
32. *Salt Spring Island Farmers' Institute*
33. Salt Spring Island Monetary Foundation
34. *Sierra Club of Canada*
35. *Slow Food – Vancouver and Victoria*
36. *Small Scale Food Processor Association*
37. *Smart Growth BC*
38. *Society for Agriculture, Jobs and Environment (SSAJE)*
39. *The Land Conservancy*
40. UBC Faculty of Agricultural Sciences
41. Vancouver Agreement
42. Vancouver Foundation
43. Vancouver Island Health Authority
44. Victoria Foundation

Growing Green made substantive contributions to:

1. *Cities Plus*
2. Canadian Labour Congress
3. *Certified Organic Associations of BC*
4. *CR-FAIR*
5. *David Suzuki Foundation*
6. Greater Vancouver Regional District Agriculture and Habitat Task Group
7. Vancouver Food Policy Task Force
8. World Wildlife Fund

Growing Green contacted regulators:

1. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
2. Agricultural Land Commission
3. BC Farm Industry Review Board
4. Canadian Agri-Food Research Council
5. Canadian Wildlife Service
6. Capital Regional District
7. City of Vancouver Food Policy Task Force
8. City of Vancouver Social Planning Department
9. City of Vancouver Parks Board
10. City of Vancouver School Board
11. Environment Canada
12. Greater Vancouver Regional District
13. Health Canada
14. Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
15. Ministry of Community, Women's and Aboriginal Services
16. Ministry of Health Planning
17. Ministry of Land, Water and Air Protection
18. Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management
19. National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy
20. Office of the Auditor General
21. Provincial Health Officer
22. Romanow Commission hearings

Growing Green consulted through its Reference Group:

1. *BC Food Systems Network*
2. BC Institute of Agrologists
3. *Certified Organic Associations of BC*
4. *GroundWorks Learning Centre*
5. Investment Agriculture Foundation
6. Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
7. Northern BC Health Authority
8. POLIS Project on Ecological Governance
9. *Progressive Intercultural Services Society*
10. *Quest Outreach Society*
11. Simon Fraser University, Department of Geography
12. Toronto Food Policy Council
13. UBC Faculty of Agricultural Sciences
14. *World Council of Churches*

Appendix 2

**Growing Green Project Priorities and
Canada's Agricultural Policy Framework
2002-2004**

From among dozens of ideas, *Growing Green* chose 10 law and policy reform projects that offer realistic and meaningful progress towards a more sustainable system for growing, processing and distributing food in BC and Canada. In their agricultural policy framework *Putting Canada First*, the federal and provincial governments commit to making Canada 'the world leader in food safety, innovation and environmentally responsible production.' This document sets out the common ground between the two. It is written in the spirit of providing a base for more substantive discussion about mutual interests.

Common objectives

Both *Growing Green* and *Putting Canada First* support the following objectives, as articulated by *Putting Canada First*:

- Make Canada the leader in food safety, innovation and environmentally responsible production.
- Focus programming improving income prospects for farmers.

Substantive policy

Growing Green's priority topics fall under two general categories: making a sustainable food system *work*, and making a sustainable food system *pay for farmers*.

Table A1 – Part 1
Growing Green Policy Priorities and APF Goals

Making Sustainable Food Systems Work

From agriculture, health, environment, labour, community development and other sectors stream innovative ideas for improving our food systems (such as Environmental Farm Plans, school meal programs, chef-farmer partnerships, immigrant farm worker training and hundreds more). Though food is the common thread, there are no forums for inter-sectoral discussion and problem solving. Nor is food on government planning agendas. *Growing Green* explored the potential for food councils (provincially and regionally/locally) to host such discussions, develop collaborative solutions for food system problems, and influence legislation and planning. This section's priorities are:

Growing Green policy priority	Relevant goal in Putting Canada First
<p>1. <i>Making the case for community-based food councils.</i> Work primarily in the Capital Regional District and Greater Vancouver Regional District, with reference to other food coalitions operating around BC and across Canada. Food councils can help bring about changes in food systems that increase community economic activity, decrease environmental impacts, and strengthen community relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase and improve the use of environmental planning tools and management systems, enhance efficiency and performance, and secure the long-term sustainability of producers' operations.' [Environment]
<p>2. <i>Showcasing model Official Community Plans, Agricultural Area Plans and bylaws for agriculture/food.</i> Review examples of effective agri-food regulations, in collaboration with WCEL, Smart Growth BC, CitiesPlus, the GVRD and others.</p>	
<p>3. <i>Contributing to development of provincial public health legislation.</i> Collaborate with the Community Nutritionists' Council of BC and other groups to offer advice re: community food security in relation to public health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect human health by reducing exposure to food-borne hazards. [Food Safety and Food Quality]
<p>4. <i>Addressing the sale of junk foods and beverages in schools.</i> Investigate schools' responsibilities to care for students' health and the contents of food and beverage supply contracts. Research examples from other jurisdictions where healthy foods and beverages have been mandated and junk foods and beverages effectively banned.</p>	
<p>5. <i>Attracting small-scale food processors.</i> Work with the Small Scale Food Processor Association and others to identify and address key regulatory incentives and barriers to strengthening small-scale food processing businesses in BC.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate access to capital for farmers entering the sector, expanding their business, or moving into value-added and diversified production. [Renewal]

Making Sustainable Food Systems Pay

The food system would provide more ecological services if there were a better economic case for doing so. *Growing Green* is investigating the following ideas as ways to make more sustainable food practices pay off for farmers:

Table A1 – Part 2
Growing Green Policy Priorities and APF Goals

Growing Green policy priority	Relevant goal in Putting Canada First
<p><i>Intro</i></p> <p>Farmers making long-term investments into sustainable farming practices encounter regulatory barriers. Some of the obstacles are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raising money off title in the ALR • building houses for other families that want to work and invest in the farm • transferring the farm to future farmers or generations and providing for retirement without subdividing • obtaining affordable access to markets (quota) for supply-managed commodities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate access to capital for farmers entering the sector, expanding their business, or moving into value-added and diversified production. [Renewal] • Planning tools can ease intergenerational transfer. [Renewal] • Capital is key to growth and diversification. [Renewal] • Facilitate access to capital for farmers entering the sector, expanding their business, or moving into value-added and diversified production. [Renewal]
<p>6. <i>Promoting multi-family housing.</i> Eliminate or reduce ALR or local government rules/bylaws that prevent or discourage multi-family housing..</p>	
<p>7. <i>Bringing UK National Trust and other 'working farm' trust models to BC and restoring farmers' right to conservation covenants on ALR land.</i> Investigate ways to attract trust organizations and estates to invest in working sustainable farms and secure sustainable farming practices for future generations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate access to capital for farmers entering the sector, expanding their business, or moving into value-added and diversified production. [Renewal] • Programming should encourage the adaptation and innovation that makes a stronger future for the farming operation. [Business Risk Management] • Planning tools can ease intergenerational transfer. [Renewal] • Capital is key to growth and diversification. [Renewal] • Facilitate access to capital for farmers entering the sector, expanding their business, or moving into value-added and diversified production. [Renewal]
<p>8. <i>Registering short-term farmland leases against title.</i> Seek a legislative amendment to enable farm leases without subdivision.</p>	
<p>9. <i>Obtaining affordable access to supply management schemes for organic producers.</i> Design and implement models within which small organic producers can obtain quota from supply management schemes to use collectively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate access to capital for farmers entering the sector, expanding their business, or moving into value-added and diversified production. [Renewal] • Capital is key to growth and diversification. [Renewal] • Facilitate access to capital for farmers entering the sector, expanding their business, or moving into value-added and diversified production. [Renewal]

Growing Green policy priority	Relevant goal in Putting Canada First
<p>10. <i>Rewarding farmers for providing ecological services.</i> Using an award-winning freshwater project as a case study, design mechanisms for identifying farms that provide ecological services and for rewarding farmers who provide those services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitate access to capital for farmers entering the sector, expanding their business, or moving into value-added and diversified production. [Renewal]• Programming should encourage the adaptation and innovation that makes a stronger future for the farming operation. [Business Risk Management]• Capital is key to growth and diversification. [Renewal]• Facilitate access to capital for farmers entering the sector, expanding their business, or moving into value-added and diversified production. [Renewal]