



**Southern Gulf Islands  
Local Area Food and Agriculture Plan  
2021 Reports Appendix**

**Prepared for**  
Southern Gulf Islands Community  
Economic Sustainability Commission

**Prepared by**  
Southern Gulf Islands Food Resilience  
Alliance

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## Introduction

As discussed in the main report for the 2021 Southern Gulf Islands Local Area Food and Agriculture Plan (LAFAP), multiple activities were undertaken in 2021 to both improve community and inter-island engagement with local food and agriculture, and to collect up to date information on challenges, opportunities and priorities for local food and agriculture.

The coordinator of each of these engagement activities was asked to prepare a report describing the activity, outcomes, and information collected. Summaries of each of these reports are available in the LAFAP report (Section II and Appendix 3). This Reports Appendix provides each of the individual engagement reports in their entirety.

### Authors

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MIAS: Mayne Island Agricultural Society

PIRAHA: Pender Island Recreation and Agricultural Hall Association

Cover photo: Hardscrabble Farm, Mayne Island

## 1. Gulf Islands Food Co-op Assets Inventory Project (GIFC)



# Southern Gulf Islands Food System Assets and Priority Actions

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Prepared for  
SGI Community Economic Sustainability Commission (CESC)

The “Southern Gulf Islands Food System Assets and Priority Actions” report was prepared as the final deliverable of an agreement with the Southern Gulf Islands Community Economic Sustainability Commission (CESC) to prepare an inventory of food system assets and a prioritized list of actions to improve food system resilience. A key driver was to update the 2017 Southern Gulf Islands Food and Agriculture Strategy with specific actions.

The following is a synthesis and interpretation of data gathered between January and July of 2021 by the Gulf Islands Food Co-op team, with key contributions from the Galiano Community Food Program and Mayne Island community leaders.

## Summary

- A 'resilient' food system has been defined as one that can withstand shocks and stressors such as global climate change, economic downturns, and the COVID-19 pandemic, all of which result in food supply and distribution problems.
- Although these global issues may seem far away from the Southern Gulf Islands, we have experienced enough drought and disruption in the last few years to value the importance of a resilient local food system.
- As one step towards increasing understanding of our current food system, the Food Asset Inventory lists existing assets on Pender, Mayne, Galiano and Saturna Islands, including food growers, retail and commercial food businesses, community food organizations, and businesses that provide services or supplies to food growers.
- Two online mind-maps were prepared collaboratively to describe some interconnections in our food network, and to share perspectives of key impediments to achieving greater food resilience.
- A key project deliverable was to use the data collected in the Inventory to identify specific priority actions that our communities can take to achieve greater self-reliance.
- The following report is considered a launching point for more discussion and is not intended as a 'complete' picture of our islands' food system but begins to characterize the key issues and provides a framework and process to gain further input from islanders and Indigenous communities.
- Sixteen (16) Priority Actions are grouped under five (5) themes: Strengthen the Network, Diversify Sales Options, Fill Information Gaps, Share Skills and Knowledge, Support Community Events and Projects.
- The value of the Inventory would increase if more details from all islands are added, and if it is kept up to date annually.
- Far more attention is needed to gain understanding of an Indigenous view of food systems based on values including respect and reciprocity for all living beings.
- Readers are invited to comment. Please contact [info@gulfislandsfoodco-op.org](mailto:info@gulfislandsfoodco-op.org).

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# INTRODUCTION

## Project Development and Outcomes

The project to create an inventory of food assets on the Southern Gulf Islands (SGIs) was proposed by the Community Economic Sustainability Commission (CESC) to determine a way to update the SGI Food and Agriculture Strategy (Masselink, 2017) with concrete priority actions to improve food resilience. It was agreed that there were major information gaps: how many growers were on each island; what they were growing and where they were selling; how many restaurants were serving locally grown product; what the challenges and successes of our community food organizations were; and essentially who is doing what on each island.

An inventory of the current ‘assets’ including growers, organizations, and food-related businesses, was identified as an immediate need. The Gulf Islands Food Co-op (GIFC) was tasked with collecting data and creating a list of priority actions within a budget of \$4,500.

We assumed that it would be a fairly simple process of documenting well-known entities on each island related to our food system, and doing some analysis of what is working well, and what the major gaps are. This would then logically lead to a prioritization of actions needed to improve the resilience of our challenged food system on the islands.

However, it was not long into the development of a spreadsheet, that the complexities of what we were attempting became apparent - this was not a simple project at all. What evolved were numerous long conversations with partners about how to organize layers of information, what level of granularity was possible to collect, how to protect privacy of individuals, and how to ‘accurately’ describe a food system that is deeply entwined and interconnected with everything from personal values to global economics.

The result is a collection of deliverables: an inventory in the form of a series of spreadsheets, two mind-maps, and this summation report that includes a table of Priority Actions. It is not considered a ‘complete’ picture of the islands’ food system but is instead an approximate ‘snapshot’ in time of entities that make up the system, and a high-level view of how they are interconnected.

Suggestions for Priority Actions are based on analysis of the data collected, many conversations and interviews with several commercial growers on Pender Island, discussions with the Galiano Community Food Program (GCFP), as well as perspectives gleaned from attending meetings and conferences with regional organizations. They are also consistent with the 16 broad recommendations made in the SGI Food and Agriculture Strategy.

**The value of the project would be greatly improved by keeping the inventory reasonably well updated, so that it becomes an evolving and “living” document that serves as a tool for answering questions about our system and to help prioritize actions. It is not particularly useful as a static report and as such requires support for development into a database and ongoing upkeep. Upgrading to a database would also protect private information, thereby enabling select data to be shared with other organizations.**

The report includes an analysis of the data in the inventory, noting major gaps and challenges with how our food system operates, as well as corresponding opportunities that could address some of those challenges – the ones that are within our sphere of influence in our region.

Since the most complete dataset in the inventory is for Pender Island, analysis of Pender is used as a template or prototype that other islands can build upon. Some region-wide solutions are also identified. Although each of the islands has a unique culture and distinct needs, all four islands have some challenges in common that could be addressed collectively.

The GIFC sees its most important role as building networks across the islands – building relationships with Indigenous communities without whom we cannot hope to have a sustainable food system; increasing connections and understanding between sectors (e.g. growers and restaurants); creating opportunities for relationship building and knowledge sharing among food growers (e.g. the upcoming soil health program) and among food organizations.

When individuals and organizations are better connected, leaders are better equipped to identify what projects are needed to improve our food system. There is no one group that can implement all the project ideas that arise, but we can co-operate on projects that lead to concrete improvements. This asset inventory and report are tools to help this process.

## Colonial, Indigenous, and Resilient Food Systems

A notable absence to this team was an Indigenous perspective or representation, even though we recognize that Indigenous foodways and knowledge are essential to the future well-being of human sustenance, especially in the context of the urgent climate crisis. This gap in the GIFC is being addressed through the slow process of building relationships with the WSA NEC, Penelakut and other Coast Salish communities, as well as making the effort to learn about the devastation of colonialism through personal research and listening.

A definition of a food system from the Institute of Sustainable Food Systems is *“an interconnected web of activities, resources and people that extends across all domains involved in providing human nourishment and sustaining health, including production, processing, packaging, distribution, marketing, consumption and disposal of food”* (Mullinix, 2020). However, this definition is not as holistic as an Indigenous view of a food system. The recently published collection of articles *“Indigenous Food Systems – Concepts, Cases, Conversations”* (Settee and Shukla, 2020) explains what colonial food systems have been desperately lacking – the respectful connection to lands, waters, and other living beings.

It defines the concept of Indigenous food systems as *“inclusive of land, air, water, soil and culturally important plant, animal and fungi species that have sustained Indigenous peoples over thousands of years...[Indigenous foods are] cultivated, taken care of, harvested, prepared, preserved, shared, or traded within the boundaries of our respective territories **based on values of interdependency, respect, reciprocity and ecological sensibility.**”* (Settee and Shukla, 2020, Page 61, emphasis added).

In the same collection of articles, Leslie Dawson says *“Simply put, food is more than nutrition. Food is a social phenomenon and is both reflective of and informed by cultural values, social relationships, and identities... food is not simply what we eat, but how and why we eat it and more importantly what it*

*means. Our attitudes about food, and our practices and rituals around eating, reflect our most basic beliefs about the world and ourselves” (Settee and Shukla, 2020, page 85).*

A ‘resilient’ food system can be defined in different ways but is essentially one that can withstand shocks and stressors - on a global scale these arise from climate change, conflict/civil unrest, economic downturns, market disruptions and the recent COVID-19 pandemic, all of which result in food supply and distribution problems (Piters, 2021). Although some of these global issues may seem far away from our Southern Gulf Islands, we have experienced enough disruption in the last two years to recognize the importance of a resilient local food system.

There are also unique stressors on island communities that are so reliant on ferry transportation and that have a small population. However, our island communities have unique strengths including a powerful drive to make change - right here, right now!

## ASSET INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

The GIFC has prepared an inventory of food system assets on Galiano, Mayne, Pender and Saturna Islands in the form of a series of spreadsheets described in more detail below. Essentially, these spreadsheets list each island’s growers, community organizations, commercial and retail entities, as well as key businesses that sell products and supplies necessary to food growers. There is also a sheet that lists various Indigenous contacts, organizations, and publications specific to the SGIs.

Entries were made by the GIFC team and the GCFP just from knowledge of our respective islands, which is likely not complete but considered ‘good enough for now’. Growers were not necessarily contacted to ask permission to share their information and so GIFC is keeping all spreadsheet data private at this time. It should be noted that information about ocean harvesting practices or issues has not been included, and this report does not address food distribution channels. However, the distribution sector is being researched by the *Closing the Supply Gap* team as a broad region-wide effort.

**To increase confidence in the data, it is recommended that more in-depth interviews (and other tools such as surveys) be conducted across all sectors to gain a better understanding of operations, goals, successes, challenges as well as more detailed information where it is useful. Interviews also serve to build relationships and strengthen the Network of food-related entities.**

Many conversations have been occurring over the summer of this year at the GIFC Information Table that has rotated among the islands at each of their Saturday Markets. Information gleaned from these events will be summarized separately from this report.

### Growers

This spreadsheet lists all known food growers on all islands who sell their food in some capacity even if minor or intermittent. To make the list manageable it generally does not include home gardeners who do not sell their products. Home food growers are still a vital part of the food system in terms of local food security, but this level of detail is not practical to capture or maintain.

In a few instances some growers were included who do not make sales but are significant in other ways, for example a grower who has decades of practical knowledge and teaches food growing skills to the community is an asset to the community and so is included in the growers list.

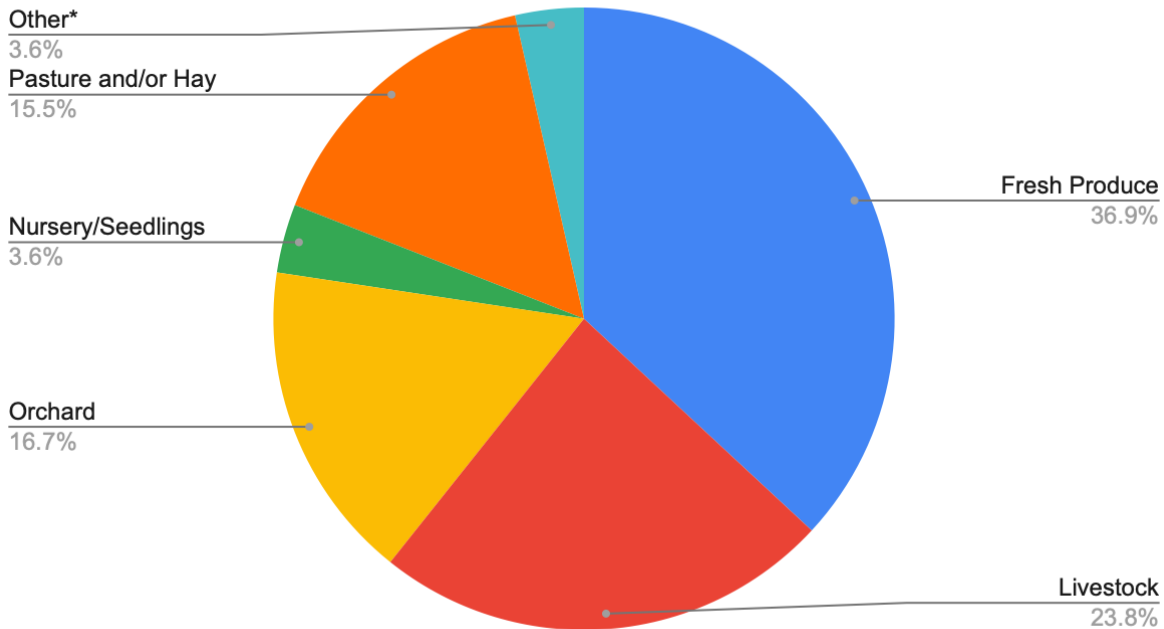
The column headings in the sheet are:

**Entity Name, Island, Scale of Property** (<1ha, 1-5ha, >5ha), **Scale of Production** (Small, Medium, Large definition to evolve), **Main Type of Production, Tags** (30 different categories e.g. Fruit, Vegetables, Pigs, Poultry, Eggs, Nuts), **Sales - Where** (Farmers Market, Direct, Farmstand, Grocer etc.), **Sales – When** (season), **Website and/or Social Media, Contact Information** (if publicly available or specifically given).

Using Pender Island as an example, the data has been summarized along themes that increase understanding of our food system and will therefore be useful for broader planning purposes such as the SGI Local Area Food and Agriculture Plan (LAFAP).

What is being grown on Pender Island?

### Pender Island Growers - Main Production Types



\*Other refers to hops, vineyard and seeds

NOTE: These percentages are calculated based on the number of growers, and is NOT based on land area, in which case there would be far higher percentages for pasture and hay than fresh produce.

There are 45 Pender Island growers listed who make sales. Of these:

- 92% directly market their products to consumers
- 69% have properties 5 hectares or less, and most (84%) are small to medium scale producers. Of the few larger-scale producers, about half are producing for beer, wine or cider
- 11% provide some year-round supply – others are primarily summer sales

- 7% grow and sell nuts, while 27% produce and sell eggs
- 4% sell to restaurants and 4% sell to grocers
- The most common proteins supplied are eggs and lamb.

Although not quantified, it can be seen from roadsides that there is arable land on Pender Island that is not being actively ‘farmed’, some of which is simply unimproved pasture with occasional grazing or is providing some value for wildlife. Since farming on the islands has little economic return, exacerbated by an aging demographic and lack of labour, it is understandable that some larger properties with arable acres are not being used to their full agricultural potential.

### What are the gaps on Pender Island?

#### Production related gaps:

- Minimal supply of locally grown seeds, although there is a new public seed library
- Lack of soil amendments on island
- No suppliers of locally raised chicks or pullets
- Insufficient hay production for existing livestock
- Animal breeding stock is not quantified
- Wild harvesting of plants and deer, and ocean harvesting of fish, shellfish and seaweed is not quantified
- No fruit tree, berry or native food plant nursery stocks

#### Processing related gaps:

- No meat processing on the island and poor access to off-island meat processing facilities
- Limited sales of value-added products from locally grown produce

#### Consumer related gaps:

- No public sales of poultry as meat (3 growers for home consumption only)
- Only 1 of the 4 pork producers sell their meat
- Limited sales of winter storage crops (e.g. potatoes, squash)
- No sales of greens and fresh vegetables during winter months
- Customer demand for local produce not quantified, nor their preferred venue for sales.

Many of these gaps noted above are common to all the islands, but not all of them, reflecting different cultures and priorities on each island.

#### For example:

- lack of meat processing is a common challenge on Galiano, Mayne and Pender Islands, but Saturna has a Class A facility with cut and wrap service. Ferry transportation limits access from the other islands, and the facility has limited capacity for different livestock.
- Pender, Mayne and Saturna growers sell very few root crops for winter storage, whereas Galiano has a dedicated storage crop market in October called “Stock Up Market”.
- transportation is a common issue for all islands, affecting all sectors of the food system and needs to be addressed at the regional level, likely needing provincial support.
- Galiano and Mayne Islands have native plant nurseries but Pender and Saturna do not.

The Galiano Community Food Program 2021 report “A Wider Lens – SGI Food Resilience” describes needs and opportunities on Galiano Island, and many of the gaps noted above are consistent with

their findings, including the recurring theme that all sectors want more communication and collaboration. Some specific information about Galiano’s growers is provided in their report e.g. “Galiano’s farmers are mostly small operations, on 5+ acres, practicing organic, regenerative, or other methods of farming. Most farmers are over 55 years of age and have been in operation for over 10 years. There are some young farmers as well—four of the respondents are between 35 and 54 years of age. Most earn under 15% of their incomes from their farms.”

### What are some key opportunities for Pender Island growers?

Some opportunities are presented below, based on a logic model (included as Appendix A) that names possible root causes of the issues, and shows that many are controlled by global forces. Nonetheless, there are still some significant actions that can be taken at a regional or island-specific level.

Community resilience rather than just economics is the emphasis behind the ideas offered below:

- **Attract new growers** to the island, and connect to unused arable lands e.g. the Young Agrarians farm matching program. This appears to be already starting to happen in response to Covid-19 and global crises, with at least three new food growing enterprises started since 2020. Success will depend on resolution of land affordability and housing issues which require provincial and federal action.
- **Connect growers regionally via training opportunities** e.g. implement a series of ongoing Farm Field Days on many different topics with university extension support.
- **Extend the growing season** to fill consumer demand for year-round fresh vegetables and create additional revenue for growers e.g. new greenhouses, or co-operative use of existing ones that are not being fully used.
- **Diversify sales venues** e.g. the Pender Island Farmers Institute began a pilot program in 2021 to test the viability of a mid-week produce market, which was successful for growers and consumers alike; the Pender Growers Collective has succeeded in providing a way for small growers to sell together at the Saturday Market and share costs; perhaps a CSA box program could be trialed next, or new pop-up markets, or online sales platforms. Galiano growers have specifically requested support with marketing products co-operatively (2021 GCFP, A Wider Lens).
- **Save locally grown seeds** and share with the seed library, thereby adding to our source of locally adapted seeds, as well as increasing skills in seed saving, cleaning and proper storage.
- **Diversify and increase amount of protein crops** such as pulses and nuts to improve self-reliance in protein e.g. the Bean Collective successfully trialed a collaborative and very low-cost way to grow bulk drying beans at Highgrove Farm & Commons.
- **Explore wild foods harvest in a regenerative and non-extractive way**, and with respect and collaboration with Indigenous knowledge keepers e.g. there is potential for resurrecting a disused nursery space to propagate native food plants with the WSANEC community; there has been some interest in ‘farming’ kelp and edible seaweeds; and the Penelakut elders are already sharing their knowledge for harvesting and processing deer on Galiano Island.
- **Learn regenerative practices to improve soil health** and reduce the need to import soil amendments e.g. the Healthy Soils Program (in winter 2022) was successful in engaging 64 island food growers to learn about soil health. This project was supported by Kwantlen Polytechnic University’s Institute of Sustainable Food Systems, and was funded by Vancity. More programs like this could improve soil health on island farms over the long term.

Other opportunities related to lack of services for growers are provided in the section “Services and Supplies for Growers”.

## Commercial and Retail Businesses

This spreadsheet lists all known food retailers, restaurant/cafes, commercial bakers, and processors on all islands. The column headings in the sheet are:

**Entity Name, Island, Type of Business** (12 categories including Grocery Store, Restaurant, Food Truck, Home Baker, Food Waste Services), **Operating Season, Operating Details** (e.g. retail store, family dining, homestand etc.), **Tags** (13 different items e.g. Groceries, Coffee, Meals, Preserves), **Website and/or Social Media, Contact Information** (if publicly available or specifically given).

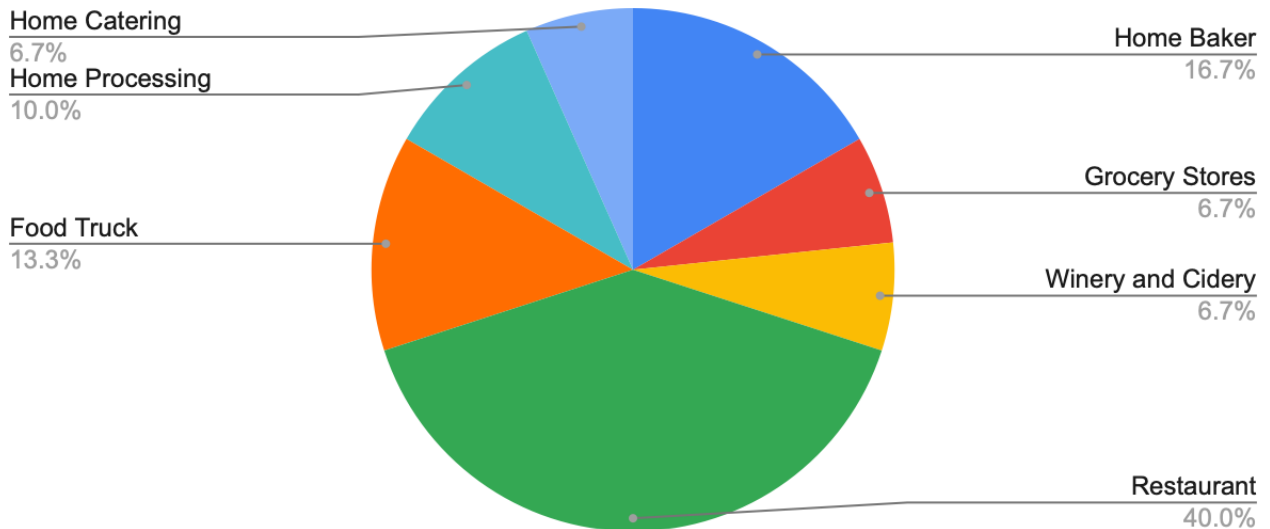
Again, Pender Island data is analyzed as a prototype and some observations and opportunities are noted below. More data needs to be collected about Galiano, Mayne and Saturna Islands and many more interviews need to be done to better understand this sector. A few general observations: compared to other islands there is reasonable diversity of operations on Galiano and less so on other islands; Galiano has 5 grocery outlets (Pender has 2) and 14 restaurants (Pender has 12); Saturna has fewer businesses reflecting the lower population, but is still well served by their iconic general store and pub; Mayne Island has a Tru Value grocery store as an anchor, plus the Farm Gate Store which has been essential for sales of local produce, preserves and more. Galiano has distributed a “Galiano Grown” label in retail stores and restaurants to showcase supporters of local produce which has been highly successful.

Twin Island Cider on Pender provides an important case study in terms of their business model that is embedded in the local community. Apples from old orchards are rescued and fermented to create unique high-value cider, which is a form of food preservation. Their business model is notable as they provide skilled orchard care and pruning on many properties from which they harvest apples across the islands. This kind of reciprocity with the trees is often missing in community gleaning programs where fruit is harvested, but the skills and labour to manage the orchard may not be available.

When farmers or orchard owners with little income don’t have means for infrastructure improvement, it is not reasonable to expect a harvest for the long term. Another successful model for addressing orchard care, is the “Adopt a Tree” program at Corbett House, where old apple and pear trees are ‘adopted’ by community members who prune and tend the tree in exchange for the harvest. This provides long term investment and care for valuable old fruit trees, as well as a unique point of connection for community.

What food businesses are on Pender Island?

## Pender Island Commercial Food Businesses



NOTE: Percentages are calculated based on the number of businesses, not economic value.

What are some gaps on Pender Island?

- Several old orchards would benefit from skilled tree pruning and care in exchange for fruit harvest.
- Under-used commercial kitchens on Pender and over-supply of some produce at different times of year.
- Businesses can be challenged to stay viable during the non-tourist seasons.
- Most growers are not supplying retail/commercial businesses, and collectively do not currently produce enough to meet restaurant demand.
- Food waste from restaurants and residents is collected and taken to Vancouver Island for composting - this could instead be kept on-island as a valuable resource for growers.
- Grocery items that are close to their 'best-before' date or expired are thrown out – although some of this food is captured for feeding pigs on the island, there is still food wasted that could be rescued.
- During extreme weather events leading to power outages the island's grocers have been challenged to provide enough supply to residents.

What are some key opportunities on Pender Island?

- **Adapt the "Galiano Grown" label** to showcase businesses using local produce as well as provide visibility for growers.
- **Identify the barriers to local food processing** and sales on the island e.g. is it lack of equipment, or markets, or facilities or other?

- **Make a business case for a food processing social enterprise** using existing commercial kitchen facilities and equipment.
- **Purchase equipment** for community use and self-reliance e.g. production equipment, processing equipment, storage equipment.
- **Install storage facilities** to help the community withstand crisis events that may increase in frequency due to climate change e.g., grains and pulses can be safely stored for long periods.
- **Increase sharing of skills and knowledge** of food processing for residents to enable better use of high production seasonal items, reduce food waste, and increase food security.
- **Create a Nut-Network** to glean established hazels and walnuts from old orchards, potentially a small business opportunity.
- **Replicate the Meet-Your-Maker event** that was successful on Galiano, to enable better connections between growers and restaurants etc.
- **Partner with the South Island Farm Hub** for sales of produce off-island (i.e. Victoria and Saanich) as well as value-added items that have a longer shelf-life and year-round sales potential.
- **Conduct a food waste audit** to know type and volumes of waste that could be rescued for human use or processed into animal feeds.
- **Create small-scale decentralized compost facilities** for food waste and other organic materials on-island. Attempts to establish a larger facility on Pender revealed that regulations and costs are a significant barrier.

## Community Organizations

This sheet lists all known community organizations that have some connection to the islands' respective food systems. Examples from each island are the Galiano Community Food Program, the Saturna Food Bag Program, the Mayne Island Food Bank, and the Pender Island Farmers' Institute. There are a total of 59 active organizations listed at present.

The column headings in the sheet are: **Entity Name, Island, Primary Purpose, Key Successful Projects/Systems, Facilities, Spaces & Infrastructure, Equipment & Tools, Main Contact's Name, Website and/or Social Media, Contact Information.**

Community organizations are the backbone of a resilient community in many ways, usually operated by hard-working volunteers. With so many small organizations across the islands with some connection to food, it is no wonder not all of them are well-connected. Communication and connection are key to avoiding duplication of effort, and necessary for supporting each other to maximum benefit for all.

The Food Resilience Alliance (FRA) was created as one tool for encouraging such collaboration between island food organizations, starting with a joint grant application in which far more funds were secured collectively than each organization would have secured separately. This past summer, the FRA hosted several "Roundtable" discussions on topics chosen by participating groups that could be discussed in depth e.g. Food Banks, and Hay supplies. This has been a successful forum and we recommend that it continue. Some of the information gleaned can be entered into the spreadsheets as new layers of detail are discovered.

Again, because data in our spreadsheets is most complete for Pender Island, we have focused analysis on Pender, but we are keen to learn more about the other islands as community leaders have time to share data and do some deeper analysis.

What are some successful programs on Pender Island?

- **Pender Fall Fair** – the Fall Fair has been going (with only a few interruptions) for decades and is operated by the Pender Island Farmers Institute (PIFI) which started in 1924. COVID-19 has prevented the Fair from taking place for the last two years, and its continuation depends on future COVID-19 status.
- **Wednesday Market** (operated by PIFI) is a new mid-week opportunity for growers to sell produce, meat, preserves, baked goods; enhanced by new commercial fridges and freezers it has been a huge success for growers and local customers.
- **The Bean Collective**, in which a group of people share the labour of growing a bulk amount of drying beans on one property. FarmFolkCityFolk (FFCF) provided threshing and cleaning equipment and expertise, as well as a seed-saving workshop for 25 participants.
- **Friday Soup Lunch**, in which a weekly soup program (despite COVID-19) enables some community building as well as a dignified way to obtain low cost or free meals for anyone who, for various reasons, may not be able to access sufficient healthy food.
- **The Crisp** apple festival, in which a full day of apple-related activities come together with music and guest speakers. Apple gleaning and processing using a community apple press has been occurring on and off for many years depending on available volunteers.
- **Youth and Agriculture** programming at the Community Hall, in which youth are hired to develop creative programming for the community around food security and food growing.
- **Food Bank**, in which volunteers collect and store donated foods and then provide to anyone in need each Wednesday year-round.
- **Pender Growers Collective**, in which produce from multiple growers is sold at a single table at the Saturday Market, providing a unique way of connecting small-scale and home-scale gardeners to customers in a collaborative spirit.

What are some key opportunities for all islands?

- **Sharing information** among organizations, what has worked well and can be replicated/adapted for other islands; document successful programs.
- **Identify under-used facilities and equipment** and match with people looking for same. On Pender this would include community kitchens, an outdoor wood fired oven at the school, orchard ladders, apple press, pressure canner and food dehydrator.
- **Combine efforts for Regional and Provincial advocacy** as a unified and strong voice e.g. advocate for CRD and Islands Trust to enable small-scale composting for community use; BC Ferries to make hay and livestock transport more manageable; BC government and Islands Trust to enable housing for temporary farm workers.
- **Learn from successful organizations** (e.g. Galiano Conservancy) as to how to create self-sustained economic support for food organizations, ultimately enabling a stable and secure local food economy.

## Services and Supplies for Growers

This sheet lists all known businesses that provide services and supplies to growers. The column headings in the sheet are: **Entity Name, Island, Description of Service or Supply, Main Contact's Name, Website and/or Social Media, Contact Information.**

Services for growers include veterinary, heavy machinery operation, abattoir, hauling, and internet connection. Supplies for growers include seeds, soil amendments, aggregates, seedlings, building supplies and hardware. When these services and supplies are available on the island it is a huge time-saver for growers, given the alternative of travelling to Vancouver Island or the Mainland. A simple list was created to identify all major materials and services that food growers and livestock producers would generally need, and then checking off whether they were available and sufficient.

For Pender Island, many essential services and supplies are available but generally insufficient in volume and diversity, and some are completely absent. The economics of providing supplies to a small population is challenging.

What are some gaps in Services and Supplies on Pender Island?

- **Large-animal vet** is not able to practice due to prohibitive cost of insurance.
- **Abattoir and cut and wrap service** is not available.
- **Agricultural extension services** from BC government are not available.
- **Poultry chicks and pullets** are not available for sale on-island.
- **Fruit tree, native plants and berry nursery stocks** are not available for sale on-island.
- **Animal feeds supply** (hay, pig and poultry feed) is insufficient.
- **Vegetable seeds, irrigation supplies, market-garden supplies** (e.g. crop protection) are insufficient.
- **Soil amendments, manures, straw and mulch materials** are insufficient.
- **Slow or non-existent internet connection** may seem like a trivial issue, but it does impact on-farm efficiency where time is so precious, and lost opportunities occurring due to lack of internet connectivity should be a non-issue by 2021.

These services and supplies are either absent or insufficient for the existing level of agriculture and food growing being practiced right now – there is a greater challenge if/when new growers and livestock producers start up additional enterprises.

There is also greater stress on global supply chains; for example, DuBois Agrinnovation is a major supplier for many agricultural needs across Canada, but they were unable to keep up with demand in 2021 due to COVID-19 and climate disasters in the US and Mexico. This is a clear indicator that the Southern Gulf Islands need to become more self-reliant in supplies and services where possible.

What are some opportunities related to Services and Supplies?

- **Share or contract out large equipment** such as chipper, mulcher, bed shaper.
- **Share skills and knowledge among growers** to address challenges such as unpredictable weather, soil and crop health, livestock care etc.
- **Collaborate to schedule veterinary visits** and share costs.

- **Obtain on-farm slaughter training and licenses** under new BC regulations.
- **Advocate for Salt Spring Island abattoir** upgrade to accommodate livestock from the outer islands.
- **Apply for funding to purchase equipment** to share e.g. poultry incubator, hatcher and brooder equipment (an attempt was made via the Federal Local Food Infrastructure Fund but was unsuccessful).
- **Advocate for broadband upgrades across all islands** – this is already underway via the CESC.

## Indigenous Resources

This sheet lists the key Indigenous nations and organizations related to the SGIs e.g. WSANEC Leadership Council, Penelakut contact information, and some food related contacts such as the PEPAKEN HAUTW native plant nursery, and Woodwyn Farm now owned by WJOLELP (Tsartlip) Nation. Some critically important published resources specific to the islands are referenced such as “The Saltwater People” and “Reclaiming the Reefnet Fishery”. As our own understanding increases around Indigenous knowledge, we will add to this list of assets. The GIFC has started to build relationships with Indigenous communities and is committed to the long-term work of decolonizing our organization.

## MIND-MAPS

A mind-map is a way of visually linking key concepts using images, lines, and links. It is especially useful when trying to understand non-linear and complex concepts – such as a food web. The spreadsheets created for the Asset Inventory are necessarily linear, but this format does not help to understand the inter-connections of a web-like food system.

Two types of digital mind-maps were created for this project. One is a representation of an ‘ideal’ community food system with all sectors functioning well and showing a myriad of potential interconnections – an aspiration of how a food system could function as a natural ecosystem of interrelated and cooperative parts. It was created by Ben Dunsmuir in an online application called “The Brain” and is intuitive to use and build. A series of notes and ideas are included in this thorough and detailed visual map.

This ‘ideal’ food system enables us to compare and chart our current (challenged) regional food system. The second mind-map is a high-level representation of our current food system using the “Miro” application. This is easy to build and develop in an online team environment. Two sessions with participants from Galiano, Mayne and Pender (Saturna representatives were invited but unable to attend) were led by a professional facilitator to create a high-level depiction of a complex system and discuss our varying perspectives on how it all connects.

A limiting factor in doing this more detailed analysis is the time required and limited resources from volunteer community leaders. Another challenge with this work is the highly subjective viewpoints and experiences of what is important in a food system, as well as the many layers of complexity, and different scales (global to backyard) of influence.

The mind maps are tools for discussion, and not an endpoint in themselves. The conversations that took place in creating the “Miro” map were more valuable than the map itself and informed many of the ideas and recommendations in this report. Links to view each mind map are below.

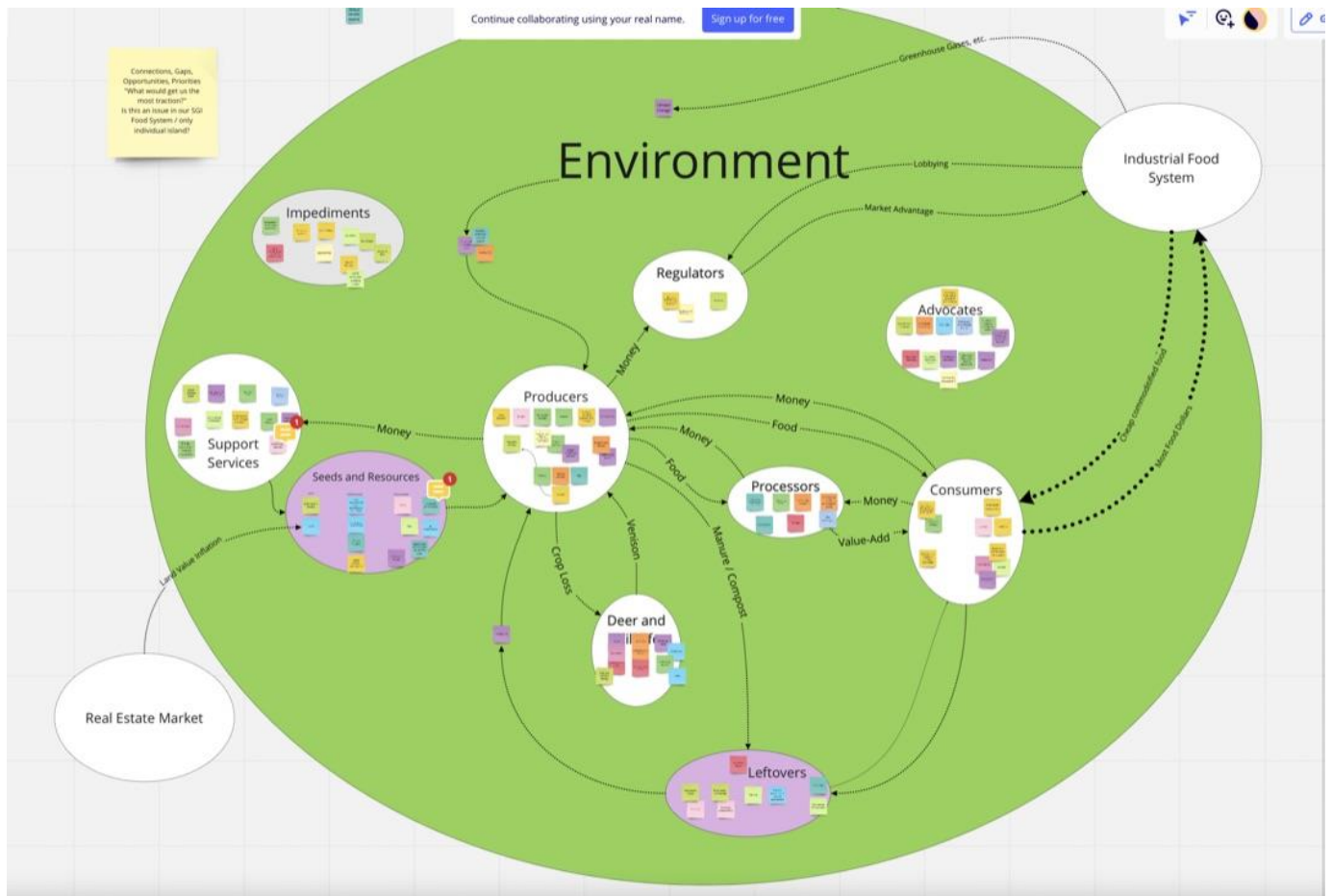
An ‘ideal’ community food system

<https://bra.in/7pdMzV>

A simple map of our current food system

[https://miro.com/app/board/o9J\\_ILytfFQ=/](https://miro.com/app/board/o9J_ILytfFQ=/)

A Mind-Map created to show the current food system on the SGIs



## CONCLUSIONS & PRIORITY ACTIONS

Each of the gaps in all sectors described above exist because of complex challenges in global markets and supply networks; federal, provincial, and regional levels of governance; consumer desires and habits; geography and geology of our archipelago; and our rapidly changing climate bringing greater unpredictability and instability. The task of providing so-called ‘solutions’ to these challenges is

therefore extremely complex, and likely why no-one has yet claimed “what it’s going to take” to bring food security to our communities. That said, there are still some clear steps that can be taken at the regional and island-specific level to make improvements. The table in **Appendix B** captures potential actions to address challenges experienced in our food system.

The suggested actions are based on many conversations and interviews with advocates, growers, restaurant owners, several commercial growers on Pender Island; perspectives gleaned from Galiano’s Meet Your Maker event; and attending meetings and conferences with regional organizations (the Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable (CRFAIR), Closing the Supply Gap (CSG), and the South Island Farm Hub (SIFH) in Victoria).

Many more conversations are needed to flesh out and revise the proposed draft ideas. We hope this report will be a springboard for discussion. There are assumptions behind the recommendations that have not necessarily been articulated or challenged, hence the value of continued conversations on these topics.

### Process for Prioritizing the Actions

The Inventory provided a way to ask different questions of the data. We asked questions such as ‘what percentage of growers provide protein crops’; ‘what percentage of growers sell direct to consumer’; ‘what key services and supplies are missing’?

Then, a further line of enquiry created the table in **Appendix A** where root causes of our food system challenges were noted along with recognizing the level of control for that issue (e.g global or regional), followed by an attempt at identifying what actions could be taken at a regional or local level. This table highlights the fact that many of the challenges that we experience locally are controlled by global forces, such as climate change and industrial markets.

The next line of enquiry was to consider all the identified regional and local actions, arranged by themes such as Land, Markets, Waste, Social Networks and more, and then apply a time scale, level of effort, and expected return for each action as a way to prioritize the actions. The “Expected Return on Effort” in **Appendix B** was developed with a very simple 3x3 grid (Low, Medium, High). There are other ways of prioritizing which would reveal different results.

<b>Grid</b>	LH	MH	HH
	LM	MM	HM
<b>Y - Return</b>	LL	ML	HL
	<b>X - Effort</b>		

This grid indicates that actions requiring low effort but provide a high return (or value) are tagged GREEN as a high priority. Oppositely, actions that require high effort for little return would not be worth pursuing, tagged in RED. Other colours indicate a simple scale of lower to higher priority.

**This method would ideally be applied by a team with differing perspectives and experiences, and the results may well be different. We do not see this report as static but hope it will be used to ask new questions, apply different criteria when needed, and develop new priorities as projects are completed and new information about our food system is revealed.**

## Current Priority Actions

The author applied the above prioritization method and arrived at the following 16 actions as highest priority; most are applicable to all islands. Various groups and individuals (not just the GIFC) would be needed to implement the actions below.

### Strengthen the Network

1. Connect with Indigenous communities and identify suitable supports and projects.
2. Create opportunities for food-related community organizations to connect and discuss successes, challenges, and solutions e.g., via the FRA-Roundtable.
3. Enable growers to coordinate veterinary services for livestock, hay transportation and storage, share equipment, knowledge, and seeds.
4. Apply for funding to purchase shared equipment for growers.

### Diversify Sales Options

5. Pilot new direct-sales options such as CSA box programs, pop-up markets or online platforms.
6. Continue the Co-op Sales Tables, and mid-week Farmers Markets.
7. Promote better use of existing food processing facilities and equipment to create value-added shelf-stable items for sale.

### Fill Information Gaps

8. Interview interested landowners to understand their needs, challenges, and possibilities for expanding agricultural use.
9. Identify needs, barriers, and opportunities for a potential food processing social enterprise.
10. Resolve regulatory issues that prevent farm-worker housing.

### Share Skills and Knowledge

11. Expand the Healthy Soils Program for growers (by university educators).
12. Develop a series of Farm Field Days led by experienced growers and ag extension scientists on topics chosen by growers.
13. Enable “Slaughter-Right” training on islands where there is demand and apply for Farmgate and Farmgate-Plus licenses.

### Support Community Events and Projects

14. Replicate Galiano’s Meet Your Maker event on other islands.
15. Continue support for food festivals, art shows, community skills, gleaning programs, and Seed Libraries.
16. Support awareness, stewarding and planting of native food plants on private and public lands.

## RECOMMENDATIONS to the CESC

The GIFC has created a framework for collecting data about our SGI food system, and we have created a process for analysing and interpreting that data such that Priority Actions can be discussed and identified on a continuing basis. What is needed next is the financial and administrative support to enable the community groups and individuals to improve our food system.

1. Support regular FRA-Roundtable sessions on varying topics identified by community groups.
2. Source funding to upgrade spreadsheet-based inventory to an online database (e.g. AirTable).
3. Source funding to enable islands to add more data to the inventory, and apply some analysis e.g. develop surveys, in-depth interviews, enter data, analyze data, and revise Priority Actions annually.
4. Keep abreast of funding opportunities and apply collaboratively where possible to ensure best value for all.
5. Advocate to CRD, Islands Trust, BC Ferries, and provincial ministries to resolve specific regional issues.

## REFERENCES

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Kristine Webber – Gulf Islands Food Co-op  
Zorah Staar – Gulf Islands Food Co-op  
Erika Preece – Gulf Islands Food Co-op

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A - Logic model to identify issues, causes and actions to improve food resilience on the SGIs

What is the local challenge?	Why?	Root cause	Level of Control	Regional action	Island-specific action
Lack of produce being grown on island compared to demand/need	Unused arable land	Farming is not profitable and so farmland is under-used	Global	CRD policy to support food growing	Inventory unused arable land
	Lack of access to arable land parcels	Land is expensive and farming is not profitable	Global	CRD policy to support food growing	Interview landowners with unused arable land
	Lack of skilled labour	Farming is not profitable and not appealing as a career	Global	Develop a Food Growing elective at Gulf Islands Secondary School	Advocate teachers to use the Valley Home Farm and School Garden for food growing awareness
	Lack of housing for temporary farm workers	Building codes and regulations prohibit affordable temporary housing options	Provincial, Regional	Advocate for amending building code requirements	Identify specific housing needs
	Lack of good soil	Geology of our islands - Class 2 at best	Local	Obtain funding for education on soil building practices	Growers to connect and share their soils knowledge/experience
	Lack of amendments	Not much livestock (manure source); food scraps are taken off island; very little non-coniferous wood waste	Regional	CRD support to enable community scale food waste composting on-island	Advocate for community scale composting
	Infrastructure is expensive (water, fencing, season extension)	Raw materials are getting more expensive all the time; global supply chain problems	Global	SGI Food Resilience Alliance to apply to governments and foundations for grants; find benefactors or public support	Define exact needs for equipment
	Low market prices for produce - farmers can't make a living	Industrial food system sets low prices without cost of externalities; economics favour large scale industrial producers and economy of scale	Global	Region-wide promotion of the necessity for locally grown foods and explain reality of food prices	Make local growers more visible and valued
	Lack of supplies and services for growers	Small population makes business economics difficult; transportation is expensive	Global	Advocate BC Ferries for discounts	Growers can collaborate to purchase items in bulk and share transportation costs

	Lack of plant proteins being grown	Low market price of pulses as long as supply chains function; lack of knowledge/experience with these crops; infrastructure to fence, water and establish nut trees to maturity is expensive	Global	Obtain funding for education on how to grow pulses and nut trees in this climate	Expand the work of the Bean Collective; expand nut tree plantations; form a Nut Network to glean from old nut trees that are not currently harvested
Few livestock being raised	Lack of slaughter options	Lack of access to Salt Spring and Saturna Islands facilities	Provincial, Regional	Advocate for SGIs to be considered in the SSI abattoir expansion; support new on-farm slaughter licenses and training	Identify on-farm slaughter needs
	No large-animal vet	Insurance costs prevent the Pender vet from practicing on large animals; other islands do not have a vet either	Provincial	Livestock owners across the islands to collaborate on sharing vet visits and costs	Livestock owners to meet with Pender vet to explore options
	Lack of hay	Transportation, storage, and inconsistent production on islands	Provincial	Livestock owners to create plans for collaborating on transportation, storage, and production	Each island's livestock owners to more clearly identify where collaboration could make sense
	Lack of poultry chicks/pullets	Past experience of supply of chicks and pullets was not economically viable	Provincial	Apply for funding for incubator and hatching supplies	Identify incubator and hatching supplies needed
Food is wasted	Over-restrictive 'best before' dates on grocery items; culture of waste	Food culture based on industrial food system; health authorities restrict use of imperfect foods	Global	Advocate for safe food rescue; educate on ways to reduce food waste through all sectors	Conduct a food waste audit to identify easy-fix areas
	No fruit gleaning program on Pender	Lack of a champion and funding	Local	Learn from successes at Galiano and Mayne Islands	Support the new Pender Apple Crisp festival; ensure gleaning programs include pruning and orchard care
	Perishable food spoilage	No long-term food storage	Local	Research community food storage options and costs; advocate for funding best options	Determine storage needs
Lack of Indigenous foodways leads to less resilience	Local settlers often have little understanding of Indigenous culture or world view	Colonialism	Federal, Provincial, Regional, Local	Learn what it means to decolonize, and find opportunities to build relationships with Indigenous people and culture; obtain funding for local workshops and support	Make efforts to connect with WSANEC and Penelakut communities; Start to propagate and grow native food plants in gardens

Increasing summer drought and heat; unpredictable seasons	Climate change	Extractive global economy, dependence on fossil fuels, capitalism, colonialism	Global	Food growers to learn from Indigenous peoples' knowledge, and connect with each other to share resources, ideas on mitigation and adaptation to climate change	Individual actions to reduce consumption of fossil fuels; protect and plant trees; increase food production using regenerative practices; learn and practice respect and connection with the Earth.
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APPENDIX B – FIRST DRAFT Road Map of Priority Actions  
(with invitation to discuss and refine with actors across the food network).

Theme	What's the problem to solve?	What can be done at a regional or local level?	Who could potentially do it?	What timeframe?	Expected Return on Effort	Effort	Return
Land	Unused arable land	Interview landowners to understand their needs, challenges and possibilities; quantify unused parcels possibly for use	GIFC, PIFI, GIFI, GCFP	Mid-term		M	M
		Connect landowners with Young Agrarians land matching program if appropriate	Interested Landowners	Long-term		L	M
		Advocate to CRD for agricultural infrastructure grants (Community Works Fund or other funds) for fencing, water storage and land improvements	CESC	Long-term		H	M
Farmers/Growers	Not enough of them, and the ones we have can't make a living, or can't find a place to live.	Advocate School District 64 to develop increased food growing and agriculture education at schools; get Ag in the Classroom program on the islands	CESC	Long-term		H	M
		Discuss how to solve lack of housing for farm workers	All	Long-term		L	M
		Find supports for any growers wishing to extend their growing season; match unused greenhouses to willing growers	FRA, GIFC	Mid-term		M	M

		Continue to support Seed Libraries across the islands to improve self-reliance and local provenance	GIFC	Short-term		L	M
		Promote the value of local food and farmers to consumers e.g. promotion campaigns, food festivals, public food forums	CRC	Mid-term		H	H
Services and Supplies for Growers	Limited or no availability and high costs of most services and supplies (e.g. vet, hay, soil amendments)	Enable Growers to collaborate (e.g. coordinate vet visits, hay supply and storage), share equipment (e.g. chipper, bed shaper), share knowledge (e.g. crop health, livestock care etc.), save seeds	Growers, PIFI, GIFC	Mid-term		M	H
	Lack of slaughter facilities	Obtain "Slaughter-Right" training and apply for Farmgate and Farmgate Plus licenses where appropriate	PIFI, GIFI, FRA	Mid-term		M	H
		Advocate Salt Spring Island abattoir to accommodate outer islands in their upgrade plans	PIFI, GIFI, FRA	Short-term		L	M
	Lack of capital to purchase equipment	Apply for funding to purchase shared equipment e.g. poultry incubation and hatching, market garden equipment etc.	PIFI, GIFC, GCFP, FRA	Done		L	H
Transportation	Costly to transport feed and supplies on BC Ferries, and scheduling issues with transporting livestock and other goods between islands.	Advocate BC Ferries to make hay and livestock transportation more manageable	CECSC	Long-term		H	M
		Purchase hay in bulk and share among livestock producers	PIFI, GIFI, FRA	Mid-term		L	M
Markets/Customers	Differing demands - some want more locally grown produce while some shop off-island for cheaper prices and more variety	Continue to fund the Co-op Sales Tables and Info Hub Table at Saturday Markets	GIFC	Short-term		L	M
		Support continuation of the PIFI Wednesday market	PIFI	Short-term		L	M

		Diversify sales venues for local growers that also match consumer needs e.g. pilot box programs or pop-up markets; create a "Pender Produce" label (same as Galiano Grown)	PIFI, GIFI, GIFC, SIFH	Mid-term		M	H
		Partner with the South Island Farm Hub to diversify sales to off-island markets, and/or to make use of online sales platform for on-island sales	GCFP, FRA, GIFC	Long-term		M	M
	Lack of connection and understanding between Retail/Commercial and Growers	Continue "Meet Your Maker" event on Galiano, and expand to other islands if desired	GCFP, FRA, GIFC	Short-term		M	H
		Support the proposed Microgreens workshop for Galiano growers to supply restaurants; assess applicability to other islands	GCFP, FRA	Short-term		M	H
Food Processing & Storage	Lack of value-added processing of locally grown produce	Identify needs, barriers, and opportunities for a potential food processing social enterprise	GIFC, FRA	Long-term		M	H
		Increase knowledge-sharing of food processing skills among each island's community	CRC	Mid-term		L	M
		Promote use of existing facilities e.g. community kitchens, food processing equipment	GIFC	Short-term		L	M
		Implement community gleaning and processing workbees, while also ensuring tree pruning and orchard care	CRC	Mid-term		L	M
	Lack of food storage and availability when crisis events occur (e.g. week-long power outages, possible future global crisis events)	Explore viability of a storage facility, or other solutions e.g. pulses and grains can be stored safely for long periods	FRA, CESC, CRC	Long-term		L	L
Waste Reduction and Recovery	Food is wasted in all sectors of the system	Conduct a food waste audit to know type and volumes of waste that could be rescued for human use or processed into animal feeds	CRD	Mid-term		H	H

		Determine viability of community-scale composting facility to keep organic waste on Pender	CRD, Islands Trust, FRA	Long-term		H	H
		Support education of homeowners' backyard composting skills	CRC	Mid-term		L	L
Social Networks	Lack of connectivity, communication, and collaboration within and across islands, and within and across all sectors of the food system	Develop a series of Farm Field Days to address topics of common interest to growers, with guest speakers and agriculture extension scientists	FRA, GIFC	Long-term		M	H
		Strengthen and leverage connections with off-island food and agriculture organizations such as CRFAIR, SIFH, Sandown Regenerative Farm, FFCE, Universities	FRA, GIFC	Short-term		L	M
		Create opportunities for community organizations to connect and discuss successes, challenges, solutions	FRA Roundtable	Short-term		L	H
		Support food festivals e.g. The Crisp, Mayne Apple Festival, art shows, and explore new events such as a food conference	CESC, FRA	Short-term		M	M
Ecosystem Health	Climate change is impacting growers with unprecedented and unpredictable weather extremes. Mitigation and adaptation measures are needed globally and locally.	Advocate MAFF to prepare a water supply and demand model for the islands; funding support for water storage (ponds, tanks)	CESC	Long-term		H	H
		Advocate for funding support to maintain (and/or increase) on-farm ecosystems such as forest, hedgerows, bird and pollinator habitat, ponds and creeks, native species.	FRA	Long-term		H	H
		Secure funding for regenerative practices that improve soil health and sequester carbon; collect baseline soil health measures	GIFC has confirmed a pilot Soil Health program; more funding needed for baseline quantification and program continuation	Short-term		M	H

Culture	Lack of understanding of Indigenous world view and foodways; those who are trying to build bridges find it difficult to overcome cultural barriers.	Develop connections and support collaborative projects e.g. remove invasive weeds and plant native species under Indigenous leadership	Galiano, Mayne and Pender Conservancy Assoc's are already working on this; GIFC could partner on projects with a 'food' emphasis	Mid-term		L	H
		Community organizations to meet and identify specific ways to decolonize, and build relationships with Indigenous communities	CESC-FRA Roundtable	Short-term		L	L
		Support awareness, stewarding and planting of native food plants on private and public lands	Indigenous communities, Galiano, Mayne and Pender Conservancy Associations with support from FRA and interested landowners	Long-term		L	H
		Explore wild foods harvest in a regenerative and non-extractive way e.g. native food plants nursery	PICA, GIFC with WSANEC	Long-term		H	H

## 2. Co-operative Sales Tables (GIFC)



Report to:

Ed Andrusiak, Food Resilience Alliance

2021-11-10

Report by:

Nancy Goodman, Gulf Islands Food Co-op (GIFC)

### **COOPERATIVE SALES TABLE PROJECT 2021**

#### **Overview**

The Gulf Islands Food Co-op (GIFC) Cooperative Sales Table Project was funded by the Capital Regional District through the Community Economic Sustainability Commission (CESC) and Community Works Fund (CWF) grant. The newly formed committee of the CESC called the Food Resilience Alliance (FRA) played a coordinating role in securing the CWF grant, demonstrating the effectiveness of project collaboration between food and agriculture groups in the Southern Gulf Islands (SGI), with common efforts aimed at increasing regional food security.

#### **Background**

The primary purpose of the project was to provide a hosted sales venue for backyard gardeners and small scale growers alike to contribute any amount of fresh produce to sell at local Farmers' Markets on Pender, Mayne and Galiano from May through October 2021. These SGI Farmers' Markets often have little fresh, locally grown produce available for purchase, while many growers either do not have enough produce to fill a table on their own or they do not have the time or desire to grow for, then sell at, the weekly Saturday market. Therefore, a cooperative model addresses both of these concerns, increasing the amount of produce available at the market while not taxing the growers with demands of their time and energy for consumer sales.

The secondary purpose of the project was to create connection not only between the growers, the table hosts (also growers), and the GIFC so that growers feel valued as an integral part of the local food system, but also between these groups and consumers, whose choice to support the local food system is the basis for identifying the need for this project.

Using this model of cooperative efforts toward a positive overall community outcome, the Cooperative Sales Table project is an example of how community food resilience really is the shared responsibility of all of community members.

### **Cooperative Sales Table Project Delivery**

The concept for the Cooperative Sales Table is simple. GIFC advertises early in the season via email and weekly via Facebook that a Cooperative Sales Table venue is available at the local Farmers' Markets (FM) on Pender, Mayne and Galiano (*Appendix 1*). Participant growers are encouraged to contact the GIFC Project Coordinator at [info@gulfislandsfoodco-op.org](mailto:info@gulfislandsfoodco-op.org) to book their free table spot on any of the islands, which helps the table host plan for enough space (although, almost no one books ahead of time, which is also fine).

On Saturday, a paid table host arrives early at the local island FM to set up tables in anticipation of participant growers. When the participant growers arrive for the first time, they are asked to fill out a waiver/ producer agreement (*Appendix 2*), which includes their contact information, farm name and address, and releases the GIFC from any liability associated with their products. The participant grower and the table host decide on a price for their product, the inventory that they bring is recorded by the table host to ensure that the grower will be fully paid for all sales made, and the grower is then free to leave until the end of the market.

The host sells all growers' products throughout the length of the market, tracking sales in whatever way is simplest, again to ensure that all sales are tallied accurately. When the growers return to collect any unsold produce (otherwise this could be unfortunately composted), the host hands them 100% of their profits from the day. The table host then takes down the table, pays the FM for the table rental fees, and leaves.

The table host keeps a copy of the daily sales, which contains information about who sold what quantities of what crops and products as well as the total sales for the day. Over the course of the season, these details can provide GIFC with a lot of useful information that will help the project moving forward.

### **Cooperative Sales Table on Pender Island**

The Cooperative Sales Project (CST) began as an idea on Pender Island to try and encourage backyard gardeners to consider themselves as growers and providers of local food, an important part of island food security.

Because funding for this potential GIFC project in 2019 was delayed, a few inspired growers created their own informal group based on the cooperative sales model, calling themselves the Pender Growers Collective (PGC). PGC began selling at a local roadside stand, and once funding for the GIFC project came through in time for the Fall/Winter Market at the Community Hall (mid-September to mid-May), the PGC became the hosts of this GIFC Cooperative Sales Table. In 2020 and in 2021, PGC has continued to host the GIFC CST, welcoming new growers as they become interested in participating..

As one of only two tables selling produce at the Pender Island Farmers' Market (PIFM), the Pender CST always has a lineup when the starting bell rings at 9:30am. The PIFM (running from late-May to early-September) is a member of the BC Farmers' Market Association. As host of the PIFM, the Pender Island Farmers' Institute (PIFI) requires that all vendors be members of PIFI and that each contributor has a valid FoodSafe or MarketSafe certificate. The market space rental fee is \$10, and the

PGC members bring their own tables and tent. PIFI and the PIFM manager, Isaac Grimmer, have expressed their happiness that more produce is being sold at the Farmers' Market, as they have identified this as a priority.

Because the PGC has active communication with their "members," and because Pender has a year-round market venue, the GIFC CST is able to begin earlier and run longer in the season than on Galiano and Mayne. Because of the longer season, PGC's weekly table hosting fee is less than what the table hosting fees are on Mayne and Galiano, as the funding remains equal on all islands.

The Pender Cooperative Sales Table featured 12 different growers throughout the 2021 season on Saturdays from May 15 to October 23 (22 weeks). During this time, growers sold vegetables, greens, berries, fruit, flowers, herbs, eggs and value added products (*Appendix 3*), for a total sales of \$9666.00.

As the PGC is looking to become more independent from the GIFC funding, they have been collecting a 10% of sales fee (to a maximum of \$10) to build more resilience into their organization (just in case the GIFC is unable to secure funding for this project in the future). Participant growers sign their recognition of this fact as part of the GIFC waiver.

Since many people no longer carry cash, PGC has considered whether or not a Square system, enabling table hosts to take credit and debit card payments, would be worth the cost/ benefit ratio. Because all of the PGC growers are well connected with each other, division of the digital monies collected would likely happen fairly easily, but GIFC would probably not want to be involved in this, especially when thinking about credit card fees, etc. Since their table generally sells out anyway with cash customers, there is not a huge motivation to make this investment of energy and funds at this time.

The GIFC to PGC cooperative model for running the Cooperative Sales Table is the ideal situation for which we are striving in this project overall: a small community of growers, communicating and leaning on each other for support, willing to pitch in and help as volunteers. This project on Pender has been successful since the beginning because of the solidarity between the participant growers and the goodwill their group has built with the Pender Island community separate from GIFC. However, without the funding secured by GIFC, PGC would need to work very hard to keep such a well-coordinated effort functioning efficiently.

### **Cooperative Sales Table on Galiano Island, hosted by Barry New**

Since 2019, Barry New has been our reliable and diligent table host for the Cooperative Sales Table (CST) on Galiano. As an avid grower himself and as a well-connected mover-and-shaker in the Galiano food growing community, Barry has been able to slowly build the success of the CST year after year. He is aided weekly by volunteer Errol "Becky" Beckford, a mid-scale grower who enjoys participating in this cooperative model of sales (although, truly, he does grow sufficient produce that he could easily fill a table on his own). As a volunteer for setting up the Galiano Saturday Market, Barry is always early and ready for participant growers to bring their produce prior to the 10am start, and for this reason (and many others), the Galiano CST has at least three full tables of fresh produce weekly, with a lineup prior to the market beginning.

The Galiano Saturday Market (GSM) requires a 10% table fee to a maximum of \$40 for rental of space, tables and a tent (if available). This sizeable fee comes with the added bonus of a guaranteed musical performance throughout the length of the market, choice of space, help setting up, and an odds'n'ends shed with tape, string, etc. that may help individual vendors with making the most out of their space.

This fee also helps the GSM pay for its market manager, Hilary Jones,' effective coordination efforts and for a paid person, Ferron, to help set up and take down each vendor's space. The GSM is a very welcoming place for both consumers and vendors, and Hilary has expressed her joy at having more produce available for sale at the market.

The Galiano Cooperative Sales Table featured 12 different growers throughout the 2021 season on Saturdays from July 3 to October 9 (15 weeks). During this time, growers sold vegetables, greens, berries, fruit, flowers, herbs, eggs, and value added products (*Appendix 3*), for a total sales of \$8725.

Similar to the Pender Growers Collective's desire for a way to take digital payments from consumers, Barry is considering whether a point of sale or an etransfer of payment may be an idea worth investigating. The concern with digital payments, though, is that if everyone pays digitally, how does Barry and GIFC separate from the total sales the individual payments to growers (ie—if someone buys Barry's beans for \$4 and Becky's greens for \$5 and pays \$9 by etransfer to a separate email address for payments, does someone need to serve as an admin on that account to then send Barry a \$4 etransfer and Becky a \$5 etransfer from that \$9 total?). With both Pender and Galiano mentioning digital payments as something to consider, though, GIFC will look into what exactly this could entail.

One challenge that Galiano's CST struggles with more than either Mayne or Pender is that the participant growers often show up with their produce and to fill out their paperwork at the beginning of the market, when consumers are already lined up to purchase. Many of these vendors have not given Barry information about what they are selling and how much they want to sell them for, so when consumers hand Barry these products to purchase, he often has to look around the table to find them. Obviously, this creates a chaos that is never really under control until the market is close to over, as some weeks, this is the only table selling produce at the market (and most weeks it is one of only two or three).

A second similar challenge happens when the market is winding down. Barry is figuring out sales of each grower while new sales are still happening so that he can pay the growers when they come to take their unsold produce away. On top of that, some growers do not pick up their leftovers until well after the market ends, forcing Barry to watch the table while he is helping to tear down the market.

All in all, the Galiano Cooperative Sales Table continues to be financially lucrative for the growers involved. Although Barry noted that there are several challenges that he faces with the project weekly, he ended by saying, "Overall, very glad to do all of this. All [the] vendors seemed happy and would certainly try again next year."

### **Cooperative Sales Table on Mayne Island, hosted by Jaqke Austdone**

By far, the Mayne Island Cooperative Sales Table (CST) has had the biggest improvement from the performance of the past two years. Previous to this season, GIFC struggled to build connections with the Mayne Island growing community and thus felt grateful when Amber Albrecht, the only produce farmer selling weekly at the Mayne Island Farmers' Market, agreed to offer table space near her Hardscrabble Farm's bountiful set up to accommodate the CST.

However, this seemed to cause confusion more than being seen as an opportunity as a sales venue, but to her credit, Amber reached out to the growers that she knew could use this table, and eventually, a very (very) few growers contributed to the table. In 2019, sales were \$300 (in comparison to approx.

\$6000 on Galiano and \$3000 on Pender); in 2019, sales were again lagging far behind Galiano and Pender.

At the end of 2020, Amber decided to pass along the responsibility of the CST to a different host, hoping that the small inroads that she was able to make would help to get growers interested in participating in the future. GIFC thanks Amber for her leadership, as she was definitely successful in getting the ball-rolling with a tiny bit of momentum.

GIFC realized that we needed greater communication and visibility on Mayne in 2021 (and also on Galiano), which prompted us to propose the Information Hub Table project, a hosted table to chat with market attendees about various aspects of food security in the local food system. GIFC focussed its efforts on Mayne, committing to host six weeks of the project there. This InfoHub Table would feature ample signage and materials to draw attendee attention, and would be set up beside the Mayne Island CST, hoping that this dual effort would increase GIFC's visibility on Mayne while better promoting the CST.

At the beginning of the 2021 season, Jaqke Austdone joined as the table host for the CST. Being a small scale grower and relatively new to Mayne, Jaqke saw that the opportunity to sell his small amounts of produce alongside other growers' small amounts of produce could result in a full table, more likely to attract consumers than a small showing would. Jaqke reached out to the few growers that he knew, and posted frequently on local Facebook pages, trying to encourage growers to contribute to the table. Slowly, over the course of the season, the table grew from just Jaqke's produce to include several local farms, including a large scale egg producer who volunteered to help Jaqke on a few of the market days.

The Mayne Island Farmers' Market (MIFM) has been very supportive of the CST since the beginning. In 2019 and 2020, the MIFM manager, Richard de Armond, did not charge GIFC for the space or the table in hopes that the project would take off and more produce would be sold at the market. In 2021, this generosity and encouragement paid off, as the CST had produce for sale for all 15 weeks, making it one of only two tables featuring produce (the other, of course, being Amber's Hardscrabble Farm table). The space rental fee is \$12, which includes space for up to three tables and two tents, and was located at the entrance of the market under a shady tree, and plenty of help is offered during set up and take down.

The Mayne Island Cooperative Sales Table featured 10 different growers throughout the 2021 season on Saturdays from July 3 to October 9 (15 weeks). During this time, growers sold vegetables, greens, berries, fruit, flowers, mushrooms, herbs, as well as value added products, eggs and duck eggs (*Appendix 3*), for a total sales of \$5082.28.

Jaqke was generous in sharing the use his farm's high quality digital scale, which was very useful, especially when selling bulk tree fruits, squash and potatoes. Several prices could be programmed in it to then be used with bulk items, displaying the price quickly, which was helpful to both participant growers (who could get an idea of the price they would be charging for a weighed item), consumers (who could see how much the weighed item would cost them) and the table host (who could record the price and weight when tracking the items of growers).

Jaqke's farm also invested in the Square payment system for their own farm sales, and they generously allowed other growers to use the system free of charge. (GIFC does not have funds to cover the fees associated with this system, as Jaqke knew all along, so there was no request of GIFC for this.) He only

pulled out the Square if necessary, and he did say that he thought they probably were able to make more sales with the digital payment option than only with the cash option. (It is worth noting that not all produce sold out each week, so the motivation to offer this payment alternative likely sprang from that reality.) Again, as noted previously in this report, digital payment options may need to be considered by GIFC as this project continues.

While a few participant growers did show up after the start of the market with produce, Jaqke was able to organize the products efficiently, often with the help of his partner, Sean, or egg producer, Nick. Because the energy of the MIFM is much more relaxed than either the Galiano or Pender markets, and because Amber's Hardscrabble Farm produce table has had such a loyal following for so long (again, as the only produce grower at the market for many years), the CST sales happen at a manageable pace, so the late arrival of produce did not cause any lasting negative effects through the length of the market.

Having the InfoHub Table beside the CST this season was a successful way to increase GIFC's overall interaction with the Mayne Island community. Local consumers were happy to see another produce vendor at the market as well as another new food grower on Mayne Island, so the response was very positive. And the attraction of local food brought people over to chat with me at the InfoHub Table, directly associating food security in the local food system with the food being sold beside me by farmer Jaqke on the Cooperative Sales Table.

Therefore, of all the CST projects on Pender, Galiano and Mayne this summer, the most successful in terms of both strengthening the community engagement with the GIFC and building new connections within the growing community is by far the Mayne Island Cooperative Sales Table, thanks to the new energy of Jaqke and also to Amber and Richard, for believing in this project as much as we have at GIFC all along.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations for the Future of the Cooperative Sales Table Project**

The GIFC Cooperative Sales Table project is proving to be successful, with each subsequent year, showing better buy-in by participant growers and higher sales due to higher volumes of food being sold. As the project continues to grow, the obstacles and opportunities grow along with it. I have identified the following eleven areas that should be addressed next season and my recommendations on how to do so:

1. Some participants were uncomfortable signing the waiver at the time of drop off, and I would guess that this lead most people to not actually read what they were signing. In an effort to make this part of the process less onerous, I will revamp the waiver to make it shorter and more concise, possibly using the GIFC website to include a section that explains the rules more thoroughly. I will also send out the waivers with an informative email at the beginning of the season to allow people to print this off and bring it with them to the market or to sign up via email.
2. Some information about how the project is practically run on each island needs to be shared better with each participant grower in order for the table host to be able to use their time most efficiently. Using the contact information voluntarily shared by the participant growers on their waiver, GIFC will reach out to these growers earlier in the season, reminding them of the guidelines that make the project run more smoothly.

3. The waiver also includes a section for participant growers to respond, as follows: “If GIFC was to organize a certification course, I would be interested in...,” wherein 9 participant growers are interested in taking MarketSafe, 5 are interested in taking FoodSafe and 4 are interested in taking Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), showing that 18 out of our 32 grower participants would like to increase their understanding of their role in food safety. Because the Community Resource Centre (CRC) has been successfully offering helpful courses in the Southern Gulf Islands over the last few years, I will reach out to the CRC to see if we can try and address this opportunity to improve our local growers’ skills.
4. There was some interest this season particularly in selling value-added products at the Cooperative Sale Tables. Because these value-added products have a greater risk of contamination than fresh produce, GIFC required that a separate table selling these items be marked with a heavy disclaimer, releasing the GIFC from any liability should an issue arise. I will look into ways in which we can support producers of value added foods away from the Cooperative Sales Tables, as these foods veer slightly off course from the original intention of the project (although clearly, food preservation is a necessary component of local food security). Possibly, anyone wanting to sell these value added foods would need to be present as a volunteer to answer any questions, making clear that the product is from their home kitchen, clarifying that GIFC assumes zero liability in the transaction.
5. Similar to the above point is the interest to sell eggs at the Cooperative Sales Table, which, again, likely comes with a different set of guidelines to follow for safe sales. Eggs are a highly sought after food at all the markets, bringing customers over to the table immediately and likely leading to produce sales. I will look into the rules around the safe sales of eggs, and GIFC will have a discussion about whether or not we continue to allow eggs to be sold on the Cooperative Sales Table.
6. Because this is a cooperative model, there are certain legal components that must be followed weekly so that consumers know who they are buying what from in case of food-borne illness. While this is likely a rare concern for consumers, it must be taken seriously as an organization. I will stress the importance of all of these points more clearly early next season so that: all the waivers are filled in completely by all of the grower participants; all the produce on all the tables are clearly marked with the name of the farm where it was grown; and all the farms are listed as participants at the table. Because some tables have volunteer or rotating hosts, these rules need to be made clear at the outset of the relationship. GIFC will also look into improving access points to this information, whether with a sandwich board, large white board, etc.
7. As the table seems to be attractive to participant growers selling bulk tree fruit, a commercial sized digital scale for each island seems like a good investment to consider. This would allow for quicker and simpler transactions, and it would help growers value their items appropriately. I will talk to Jaqke about where he purchased the excellent model of digital scale used on Mayne this summer and report back to GIFC.
8. Since the project has now run successfully on all three islands for three seasons, increasing the number of growers each year, GIFC could begin to standardize the display options for the produce brought by growers. While some growers have their own branded idea for making their

produce appealing to consumers, many simply bring their food with no real thought about how it will look on the table. GIFC will discuss the option of purchasing easy to clean and store totes or baskets for each island to use on their Cooperative Sales Table.

9. Because COVID has changed consumers habits from carrying cash to using cards and phones to make point of sale purchases, GIFC needs to explore options for the possibility of taking digital payments. I will look into Square and etransfer, and GIFC will decide whether or not the admin and costs to provide these options are worth the payoff to the Cooperative Sales Table project. (It is also possible that these could be useful in other aspects of the organization, so that is also something for GIFC to consider.)
10. Because the project on each island is becoming more popular, GIFC should consider whether we look to coordinate volunteers to assist the table hosts on each island. These volunteers could potentially be sourced from the participant growers themselves. Alternately, we could organize a second project running weekly on each island that would set up near the Cooperative Sales Table and that could have a secondary function of assisting with any issues that arise at the CST. One idea for this secondary project could be a form of the InfoHub Table project, hosted by a local GIFC representative, and which would be simple enough to walk away from periodically when the need arises.
11. One thing worth considering is what the potential funders often bring up during our annual project pitch—could this project create revenue for GIFC? The short answer is “no,” but maybe a longer answer (or the alternative) should at least be explored, as funding is never guaranteed to GIFC and this project may someday need to be run without funding. How would that look? Would we be able to find other ways to support growers using a cooperative model? PGC on Pender is starting to think ahead of this possibility as a group, but Mayne and Galiano are far from this being possible. I will consider the options available ahead of GIFC’s next funding discussions.

In closing, I will say that I am encouraged by the growth of the Cooperative Sales Table project on all the islands, each improving the project delivery in their own unique ways. Pender Growers Collective as host of the project on Pender has shown how diligent coordination can keep together an informal yet dedicated group of volunteer participant growers, cultivating community in a very organic way. Galiano’s Barry and Becky have shown grace in how making the experience easy for participant growers is worth any temporary challenges they face in attempting to organize the chaos stemming from providing this simplicity. And Mayne’s Jaqke, along with Amber and Richard, have all played a very large role in the project’s current positive status by prioritizing (then and now) the possibility of success. The Cooperative Sales Table project has proven its value on Pender, Galiano and Mayne Islands, and should, therefore, continue to be supported with funding year after year.

With gratitude,

Nancy Goodman, GIFC Project Coordinator

***Appendix 1: Advertising for the GIFC Cooperative Sales Table Project***

Every Tuesday or Wednesday, an ad similar to this was posted on our Facebook page, then shared to local Facebook pages by Jaqke on Mayne, Erika on Galiano and me (Nancy) on Pender:

Are you a backyard gardener or a small scale grower with produce to sell, either weekly or even once in awhile? The Gulf Islands Food Co-op (GIFC) hosts a Cooperative Produce Sales Table on Pender, Mayne and Galiano each weekend from early July until Thanksgiving at the Saturday markets, giving growers the opportunity to drop off their bounty to be sold on their behalf! Please contact Nancy at [info@gulfislandsfoodco-op.org](mailto:info@gulfislandsfoodco-op.org) by Friday evening to reserve your spot on the shared table on your island and for more details! (Note: please contact asap if you want to participate on Pender.)

**Are you a  
local food grower?**

We can help you  
sell your extra produce at this table!



For more information, email [info@gulfislandsfoodco-op.org](mailto:info@gulfislandsfoodco-op.org)

**Appendix 2: Waiver, also called the Producer Agreement**

This Waiver, or Producer Agreement, is required to be filled out and submitted by each grower participant in the Cooperative Sales Table project. Each island’s agreement is a tiny bit different, as you will see below:

Gulf Islands Food Coop (GIFC) Co-operative Sales Table Producer Agreement 2021--Mayne

Date:

Farm Name:

Farm Address:

Contact Name:

Contact Phone Number:

Contact Email Address:

GIFC Member (membership not required; just info for our records): yes no

I am certified (please circle any applicable): Food Safe Market Safe GAP Not Certified  
(this information may be required by *certain* organizations for GIFC participation,  
ie. Pender Island Farmers’ Institute requires growers to have Food Safe)

If GIFC was to organize a certification course, I would be interested in (please circle any applicable):  
Food Safe Market Safe GAP None

I grow the produce that I sell using natural and organic methods (without chemicals and pesticides), and I wash the finished produce using potable water. I understand that the Gulf Islands Food Co-op accepts no liability for any concerns arising from the production and sales of the products that it receives from me; the GIFC Cooperative Sales Table simply provides a visible location for the sale of my products.

I agree to pick up my unsold produce at the end of the market day, understanding that it will otherwise be composted (although GIFC would prefer this food not be wasted). At the sole discretion of the GIFC Cooperative Sales Table Representative, I may make an alternate agreement for collecting or donating this unsold produce.

I acknowledge that 100% of the cash sales from my products sold at this GIFC Cooperative Sales Table will be available for me to pick up at next week’s GIFC Cooperative Sales Table. At the sole discretion of the GIFC Cooperative Sales Table Representative, I may make an alternate agreement for collecting these funds.

By signing this agreement, I acknowledge the above information will suffice to represent myself, my farm, and my products to be sold at the GIFC Cooperative Sales Table throughout my participation for the duration of the GIFC Cooperative Sales Table project.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Gulf Islands Food Coop (GIFC) Co-operative Sales Table Producer Agreement 2021-Galiano

Date:

Farm Name:

Farm Address:

Contact Name:

Contact Phone Number:

Contact Email Address:

GIFC Member (membership not required; just info for our records): yes no

I am certified (please circle any applicable): Food Safe Market Safe GAP Not Certified  
(this information may be required by *certain* organizations for GIFC participation,  
ie. Pender Island Farmers' Institute requires growers to have Food Safe)

If GIFC was to organize a certification course, I would be interested in (please circle any applicable):  
Food Safe Market Safe GAP None

I grow the produce that I sell using natural and organic methods (without chemicals and pesticides), and I wash the finished produce using potable water. I understand that the Gulf Islands Food Co-op accepts no liability for any concerns arising from the production and sales of the products that it receives from me; the GIFC Cooperative Sales Table simply provides a visible location for the sale of my products.

I agree to pick up my unsold produce at the end of the market day, understanding that it will otherwise be composted (although GIFC would prefer this food not be wasted). At the sole discretion of the GIFC Cooperative Sales Table Representative, I may make an alternate agreement for collecting or donating this unsold produce.

I acknowledge that 90% of the cash sales from my products sold at this GIFC Cooperative Sales Table will be available for me to pick up at next week's GIFC Cooperative Sales Table. At the sole discretion of the GIFC Cooperative Sales Table Representative, I may make an alternate agreement for collecting these funds. I also acknowledge that 10% of my total sales will be contributed to the Galiano Saturday Market as the fee for vendors, and I authorize the GIFC Cooperative Sales Table Representative to contribute this amount on my behalf.

By signing this agreement, I acknowledge the above information will suffice to represent myself, my farm, and my products to be sold at the GIFC Cooperative Sales Table throughout my participation for the duration of the GIFC Cooperative Sales Table project.

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Signature

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Date

Gulf Islands Food Coop (GIFC) Co-operative Sales Table Producer Agreement 2021--Pender

Date:

Farm Name and Address:

Contact Name:

Contact Phone Number:

Contact Email Address:

GIFC Member (membership not required; just info for our records): Yes No

PIFI Member (membership required to participate in the Farmers Market): Yes No

I am certified (please circle any applicable): Food Safe Market Safe GAP Not Certified  
(this information may be required by *certain* organizations for GIFC participation,  
ie. Pender Island Farmers' Institute requires growers to have Food Safe or Market Safe)

If GIFC was to organize a certification course, I would be interested in (please circle any applicable):  
Food Safe Market Safe GAP None

I grow the produce that I sell using natural and organic methods (without chemicals and pesticides), and I wash the finished produce using potable water. I understand that the Gulf Islands Food Co-op accepts no liability for any concerns arising from the production and sales of the products that it receives from me; the GIFC Cooperative Sales Table simply provides a visible location for the sale of my products.

I agree to pick up my unsold produce at the end of the market day, understanding that it will otherwise be composted (although GIFC would prefer this food not be wasted). At the sole discretion of the GIFC Cooperative Sales Table Representative, I may make an alternate agreement for collecting or donating this unsold produce.

I acknowledge that 90% of the cash sales from my products sold at this GIFC Cooperative Sales Table will be available for me to pick up at next week's GIFC Cooperative Sales Table. At the sole discretion of the GIFC Cooperative Sales Table Representative, I may make an alternate agreement for collecting these funds. I also acknowledge that 10% of my total sales will be contributed to the Pender Growers Collective as a participation fee into that organization, and I authorize the GIFC Cooperative Sales Table Representative to contribute this amount on my behalf.

By signing this agreement, I acknowledge the above information will suffice to represent myself, my farm, and my products to be sold at the GIFC Cooperative Sales Table throughout my participation for the duration of the GIFC Cooperative Sales Table project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Appendix 3: Products Sold Weekly and Weekly Sales Total**

\*this table is useful in comparing what is being grown and sold by participant growers on each island, and how the sales numbers compare to each other on the same dates. Not all weeks of the entire project have records available. The weeks that show “Missing Invoice” has accurate total sales information, but is missing the list of produce. The weeks that show “No Data Recorded” or “No Further Records” still has accurate total sales information. The week that says “Inaccurate Total” is missing sales information. Even without complete records, we can get a sense of what was happening on each island at the same time on the same dates.

July 3

Galiano—3 growers		Mayne—1 grower		Pender—5 growers	
Beans		Cilantro		Beets	
Beets		Flowers		Cucumbers	
Cabbage		Greens		Flowers	
Flowers		Kale		Garlic	
Garlic		Parsley		Onions	
Gooseberries		Peas		Patty Pans	
Greens		Zucchini		Peas	
Kalaloo				Potatoes	
Lettuce				Turnips	
Peas				Zucchini	
Zucchini		Eggs		(Missing 4	
Dried Herbs		Duck Eggs		Invoices)	
Ginger Beer		Herbal Tea		Herbal Tea	
\$168		\$125		\$464.50	

July 10

Galiano—4 growers		Mayne—1 grower		Pender—4 growers	
Basil		Basil		Basil	
Beans		Chard		Beet Greens	
Cilantro		Edible Flowers		Beets	
Cucumbers		Flowers		Flowers	
Flowers		Greens		Garlic	
Garlic		Kale		Lettuce	
Gooseberries		Mint		Marjoram	
Kalallo		Parsley		Mint	
Kale		Peas		Onions	
Lettuce		Zucchini		Peas	
Peas				Potatoes	
Sprouts				Rhubarb	
Strawberries				Zucchini	
Dried Herbs		Eggs			
Ginger Beer		Duck Eggs		Herbal Tea	
\$694		\$311.50		\$426	

July 17

Galiano—4 growers		Mayne—1 grower		Pender—4 growers	
Artichoke		Basil		Basil	
Basil		Chard		Beets	
Beans		Flowers		Flowers	
Beets		Greens		Herbs	
Flowers		Kale		Lettuce	
Garlic		Parsley		Mint	
Kalallo		Zucchini		Onions	
Lettuce				Zucchini	
Peas				(Missing	
Potatoes				Two	
Shallots				Producer	
Zucchini				Invoices)	
Dried Herbs		Eggs			
Ginger Beer		Duck Eggs			
\$659		\$136.20		\$636	

July 24

Galiano—5 growers		Mayne—1 grower		Pender-3 growers	
Artichoke		Flowers		Basil	
Basil		Greens		Beans	
Beans		Kale		Beets	
Beets		Parsley		Flowers	
Cucumber		Spring Onion		Garlic	
Flowers		Tarragon		Lettuce	
Garlic		Zucchini		Marjoram	
Kalallo				Patty Pans	
Lettuce				Potatoes	
Plums				Vegetables	
Potatoes				Zucchini	
Shallots					
Zucchini					
Dried Herbs		Eggs			
Ginger Beer		Duck Eggs			
\$683		\$131		\$561	

July 31

Galiano—6 growers		Mayne—1 grower		Pender—3 growers	
Basil		Broccoli Sprouts		No	
Beans		Chives		Data	
Beets		Eggplant		Recorded	
Cucumber		Flowers			
Flowers		Greens			
Garlic		Kale			
Onion		Parsley			

Peas		Tarragon		
Pepper		Tomatoes		
Plums		Zucchini		
Potatoes				
Shallots				
Zucchini				
Dried Herbs		Eggs		
Ginger Beer		Duck Eggs		
\$802		\$235.00		\$353

August 7

Galiano—6 growers		Mayne—1 grower		Pender—3 growers	
Basil		Blackberries		Beans	
Beans		Cucumbers		Beets	
Beets		Flowers		Carrots	
Cucumber		Greens		Cucumbers	
Garlic		Mushrooms		Figs	
Onion		Tomatoes		Flowers	
Peppers		Zucchini		Herbs	
Plums				Kale	
Potatoes				Lavender	
Shallots				Parsnips	
Zucchini				Patty Pans	
				Peas	
				Plums	
				Potatoes	
				Tomatoes	
Dried Herbs		Eggs		Zucchini	
Ginger Beer		Duck Eggs			
\$876		\$158.88		\$483.50	

August 14

Galiano—6 growers		Mayne-1 grower		Pender—5 growers	
Basil		Beans		Beans	
Beans		Cabbage		Beets	
Beets		Flowers		Cabbage	
Cucumber		Kale		Carrots	
Garlic		Mushrooms		Cucumbers	
Mint		Parsley		Figs	
Potatoes		Peppers		Flowers	
Shallots		Tarragon		Herbs	
Tomatoes		Tomatoes		Parsnips	
Zucchini				Patty Pans	
				Pea shoots	
				Peas	
				Plums	

			Potatoes	
			Tomatoes	
Dried Herbs		Eggs	Zucchini	
Ginger Beer		Duck Eggs	Catnip	
\$503		\$312.55	\$593	

August 21

Galiano—6 growers		Mayne—3 growers		Pender—4 growers	
Basil		Basil		No	
Beans		Beans		Data	
Beets		Chives		Recorded	
Cabbage		Crabapples			
Cucumber		Cucumbers			
Flowers		Dill			
Garlic		Flowers			
Kale		Garlic			
Onion		Kale			
Pears		Parsley			
Plums		Patty Pans			
Potatoes		Peppers			
Shallots		Plums			
Zucchini		Potatoes			
		Tomatoes			
		Zucchini			
Dried Herbs		Eggs			
Ginger Beer		Duck Eggs			
\$590		\$313.49		\$349.50	

August 28

Galiano—8 growers		Mayne—3 growers		Pender—4 growers	
Basil		Apples		Apples	
Beans		Basil		Basil	
Cabbage		Beans		Beans	
Carrots		Beets		Beets	
Cucumber		Blackberries		Cabbage	
Flowers		Celeriac		Carrots	
Grapes		Chives		Cucumbers	
Onion		Cucumber		Flowers	
Parsnips		Dill		Kale	
Plums		Flowers		Parsnips	
Potatoes		Garlic		Peas	
Shallots		Grapes		Tomatoes	
Squash		Greens		Zucchini	
Tomatoes		Hot Peppers		(Missing	
Zucchini		Kale		One Invoice)	
		Lettuce			

		Mushrooms		
		Parsley		
		Peas		
		Peppers		
		Plums		
		Potatoes		
		Tarragon		
		Tomatoes		
		Zucchini		
		Pesto		
		Pickled Walnuts		
		Potted Basil		
Dried Herbs		Eggs		
Ginger Beer		Duck Eggs		Jelly
\$624		\$933.91		\$546

September 4

Galiano—8 growers		Mayne—6 growers		Pender—3 growers	
Apples		Apples		(No	
Basil		Basil		Data	
Beans		Beans		Recorded	
Beets		Beans		And	
Cabbage		Celeriac		Two	
Carrots		Chives		Invoices	
Corn		Cucumbers		Missing)	
Cucumber		Dill			
Flowers		Flowers			
Garlic		Grapes			
Grapes		Hot Peppers			
Kale		Kale			
Mint		Lettuce			
Onions		Mushrooms			
Peas		Parsley			
Plums		Patty Pans			
Potatoes		Pears			
Shallots		Peas			
Squash		Peppers			
Tomatoes		Plums			
Zucchini		Potatoes			
		Tomatoes			
		Zucchini			
		Pickled Walnuts			
		Eggs			
Dried Herbs		Duck Eggs			
Ginger Beer		Potted Basil		Inaccurate	
\$1166		\$912.75		Total \$187	

September 11

Galiano—7 growers		Mayne—1 grower		Pender—4 growers	
Apples		Basil		Apples	
Basil		Beans		Asian Pears	
Beans		Cucumbers		Chard	
Beets		Flowers		Cucumbers	
Cabbage		Honeydew		Flowers	
Corn		Hot Peppers		Herbs	
Cucumber		Jalapenos		Pears	
Flowers		Mint		Peppers	
Grapes		Mushrooms		Pumpkins	
Onions		Parsley		Rhubarb	
Onions		Peas		Tomatoes	
Pears		Peppers		Zucchini	
Peas		Tomatoes		(Missing	
Peppers		Zucchini		One Invoice)	
Plums					
Potatoes					
Squash					
Tomatoes					
		Potted Basil			
Eggs		Eggs			
Dried Herbs		Duck Eggs			
Ginger Beer		Pickled Walnuts		Eggs	
\$621		\$306		\$487.50	

September 18

Galiano—6 growers		Mayne—2 growers		Pender—4 growers	
Apple		Beans		Apples	
Basil		Cucumbers		Beans	
Bean		Flowers		Cabbage	
Beets		Greens		Carrots	
Cucumber		Kale		Cucumber	
Onions		Parsley		Flowers	
Parsnip		Peas		Kale	
Peppers		Peppers		Plums	
Plum		Tomatoes		Squash	
Potatoes		Zucchini		Tomatoes	
Shallots				Zucchini	
Squash					
Tomatoes					
Zucchini					
Dried Herbs		Eggs			
Ginger Beer		Duck Eggs			
\$557		\$304		\$387.50	

September 25

Galiano—7 growers		Mayne—4 growers		Pender—4 growers	
Beans		Apples		Beans	
Beets		Cucumbers		Beets	
Cabbage		Honeydew		Cucumbers	
Flowers		Hot Peppers		Flowers	
Garlic		Jalapenos		Herbs	
Gooseberries		Mushrooms		Kale	
Greens		Pears		Parsnips	
Kalaloo		Peppers		Patty Pans	
Lettuce		Tomatoes		Pears	
Peas				Plums	
Zucchini				Tomatoes	
Dried Herbs				(Missing 3 invoices)	
Ginger Beer		Pickled Walnuts		Jam	
\$791		\$434		\$456.50	

October 2

Galiano-3 growers		Mayne—2 growers		Pender—3 growers	
No		No		Apples	
Further		Further		Basil	
Records		Records		Beans	
				Beets	
				Cabbage	
				Carrots	
				Cucumber	
				Cucumber	
				Flowers	
				Kale	
				Parsnips	
				Patty Pans	
				Pears	
				Pumpkins	
				Quince	
				Squash	
\$679		\$195		\$642	

October 9

Galiano—2 growers		Mayne—4 growers		Pender-4 growers	
No		No		Beets	
Further		Further		Carrots	
Records		Records		Cucumber	
				Herbs	
				Kale	
				Parsnips	

			Patty Pans	
			Pears	
			Pumpkin	
			Squash	
			Sugar Pumpkins	
			Sweet Potato	
			Tomatoes	
			(Missing 3 invoices)	
\$188		\$273	\$780.00	

### 3. Info-Hub Table – Rapid Market Assessment (GIFC)



Report to:  
Ed Andrusiak, Food Resilience Alliance

2021-11-10

Report by: Nancy Goodman, Gulf Islands Food Co-op (GIFC)

#### **INFORMATION HUB TABLE PROJECT 2021**

##### **Overview**

The Gulf Islands Food Co-op (GIFC) Cooperative Sales Table Project was funded by the Capital Regional District through the Community Economic Sustainability Commission (CESC) and Community Works Fund (CWF) grant. The newly formed committee of the CESC called the Food Resilience Alliance (FRA) played a coordinating role in securing the CWF grant, demonstrating the effectiveness of project collaboration between food and agriculture groups in the Southern Gulf Islands (SGI), with common efforts aimed at increasing regional food security.

##### **Background**

The primary purpose of the project was to increase organizational understanding of the current level of public awareness of the challenges in the local food system by engaging in casual conversation at local Farmers' Markets on Pender, Mayne and Galiano. The conclusions drawn from the conversations highlight opportunities for targeted food security projects in the future by not only GIFC but by our partners in the FRA.

The secondary purpose of the project was to increase the visibility of the GIFC on Mayne, Galiano and Pender Islands in order to engage community members into future project participation, to better understand how GIFC can use the unique qualities of each island to tailor future projects, and to help facilitate overall communications within a stronger regional community network of the Southern Gulf Islands.

##### **GIFC InfoHub Table Project Delivery**

The project was fairly simple: set up a table with ample GIFC and "Community Food Resilience" signage and food growing information, along with a large interactive flip chart (provided by the Community Resource Centre). GIFC agreed that the CESC FRA's community engagement activity, the Rapid Market Assessment (RMA), would be a fitting addition to the Information Hub Table.

The RMA consisted of 3 sets of 3 questions each, and one set was asked at each market. The questions were written on the large flip chart, and when a participant came over to answer the questions, I would use a different coloured marker if they identified themselves as a local (blue) or a visitor (pink). I would use the set of three questions as a conversation starter, which was very effective in gauging how interested they might be in either participating in food security initiatives and/ or actively producing food in the SGI (or neither). I would ask them their names, make a corresponding coloured dot in my notebook, and once they had left, I would take fairly detailed notes of our conversation. After the market ended, I would prepare a report of my findings, as well as up to five conclusions that I believe could be drawn from the week's information. (I will concede, however, that the data and conclusions are skewed to bias people who are willing to answer questions in a Farmers Market setting, and thus cannot be considered as fully representative of the public. For purposes of this project, I offer the data and conclusions as simply informative guidance toward GIFC and FRA goals.)

Each set of questions in the RMA had a theme:

(1) COVID 19:

- a. Did COVID-19 affect your access to locally produced food?
- b. Did you take advantage of online food shopping opportunities during the pandemic?
- c. Did you shop locally for food more often during the pandemic than you had previously?

(2) Climate Change:

- a. Has climate change affected your day-to-day eating habits?
- b. Do you think that the local food system is being impacted by climate change?
- c. Are you concerned about the local food system's resilience amidst a changing climate?

(3) Farmers Markets

- a. How regularly do you attend farmers' markets? Weekly, Once-in-a-while/ Monthly, or Only on vacation/ Only with visitors
- b. Why do you attend farmers' markets? Choose best answer only: To support local food producers and farmers, To support local artists and crafters, or For entertainment and other social aspects
- c. Would you attend an off-peak season farmers' market in SGI (ie November to April)? Yes or No...If yes, why would you attend an off-peak season farmers' market in SGI? To support local food producers and farmers, To support local artists and crafters, or For entertainment and other social aspects

The intention of these particular community engagement questions was to understand the level of self-awareness the participants had as consumers in the local food system. In the COVID-19 theme, participants needed to consider the different options they have for accessing food, especially when consumer conditions are not ideal. In the Climate Change theme, participants needed to consider aspects that affect the production of the food that they consume, especially when production conditions are not ideal. And in the Farmers Market questions, participants needed to situate themselves as immediate active consumers, asking themselves why they are actually at that particular market at that particular moment.

These questions tended to lead to answers (or more questions) which allowed for further conversation, often allowing for the opportunity to inform the participant about local programs offered by GIFC and

other FRA partner groups, depending on which island I was on that Saturday. I often spoke about the GIFC Cooperative Produce Sales Table, set up beside my InfoHub Table, as well as the local Seed Libraries on Pender, Mayne, and Galiano as examples of regional projects; when on Galiano, I would often talk about the Gleaning Project or the Soup and Meals Programs through the Galiano Community Food Program; when on Pender, I would talk about the PIRAHA's Food and Farm Tours and PI Farmers Institute's Wednesday evening Farmers' Market; when on Mayne, I would make sure that everyone knew about the Mayne Island Apple Festival benefitting the Mayne Island Food Bank. Thus, the InfoHub Table was an ideal gathering place for questions, concerns, ideas and enthusiasm about the local food system.

Altogether, I spoke to 131 participants--61 SGI locals (from Pender, Mayne, Saturna and Galiano) and 70 visitors from a variety of locations (ie Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island, BC Interior, Alberta, Quebec, Ontario, Yukon, Ireland, India, and more). The number of participants and the length and quality of conversation was directly affected by the weather (ie—who wants to stand in the rain voluntarily answering questions) and by the location itself (ie—difficult to talk when a festival is happening, etc).

While the locals have an excellent on-the-ground perspective of what is going on currently in the SGI, the visitors brought many ideas from their own experiences elsewhere to the topic of local food security. The visitors were often very enthusiastic about participating in the RMA, as I believe that these visitors are looking for community connection during their stay in the SGI.

Local participants generally seemed to be at the Farmers' Market for a purpose, so the conversations were usually quick (while they were waiting for something else) or very long (as though they were enjoying the social atmosphere and were willing to chat about all manner of things with an active, albeit somewhat captive, listener). Some of the conversations veered well off course from food security, but always seemed to have elements relevant to strengthening community; some conversations resulted in personal connections to grow participation in the GIFC and to grow GIFC's participation in each island's community; most of the conversations resulted in a mutual learning moment, as many truths and ideas were shared by both the participants and me.

### **Conclusions Drawn from Weekly Reports**

From the information garnered from the eleven weekly reports, I drew the following 41 (although non-exhaustive list of) conclusions: (Please see the *Appendices* below for full reports.)

W#1:

1. Social media and online marketing are effective and necessary components in building relationships between local food producers, businesses and consumers.
2. "Growing food for the family" and "supporting a local food system" are two separate distinctions which are not necessarily connected. Even if someone grows their own food, they may not feel connected to/ a part of the local food system. They may just feel that they are feeding themselves.
3. Moving from the city to reside full time in the Gulf Islands necessitates a change of consumer expectations and habits, which are largely driven by availability and cost of products.
4. Development and turnover of real estate does affect local food production, regardless of location. If farmland or prime growing land is sold to either a disinterested party or

inexperienced grower, less food will be produced to feed either just the landholders or the community.

5. Local farms, markets and businesses on Mayne Island were successful in responsibly handling COVID-19, ensuring that consumers felt safe to shop locally.

W#2:

1. Pender Island grocers, restaurants and venues for fresh local food were successful in supplying most of the food needs of local residents during COVID-19.
2. Online food shopping by locals, both for local and non-local foods, helped to sustain residents during the pandemic, ensuring that off-island trips were minimized.
3. Growing food at home was a priority for many people as a key to ensuring sufficient availability of a variety of foods. Seed saving by these growers was also identified as important to local food system resilience and individual survival.
4. Outside influences, such as government regulation or organizational mandates, affect the access to and abundance of locally produced food.
5. A holistic understanding of our human place in nature may encourage more people to value nature as a partner in our lives, and thereby, too, in local food system resilience.

W#3:

1. Responsible water use and conservation of water resources are necessities whose importance will only increase as climate change becomes more extreme.
2. Cooperative commercial growing of particular crops for export may allow for food production to become a viable economic venture once again. Similarly, cooperative commercial growing to feed the local island residents and visitors could also be economically viable if growers each focussed on one particular crop per farm, thereby encouraging a consistent, substantial supply of several different crops.
3. Climate change impacts can be understood at both the local and the global level in terms of food systems, the effects of which can be felt by each of us as consumers.
4. A disconnect between day-to-day food needs for personal consumption and the importance of local food production exists in SGI. While people showed concern that climate change is affecting the local food system and that it would continue to do so in the future, they struggled to realize that their daily food needs are also being directly impacted by climate change.
5. Education around the requirements of all aspects of a healthy and resilient food system continues to be needed in SGI.

W#4:

1. Local and provincial regulations and restrictions during the pandemic affected the food shopping habits of both SGI locals and visitors, with both positive and negative impacts for the local food economy.
2. The ability and desire of grocers to stock local food is often the key to expanding the accessibility of local food to more of the community.
3. Online shopping provides a variety of options that supplement the food readily available in SGI grocery stores.
4. Backyard gardens provide a necessary supplement to the food available in SGI grocery stores.
5. Residents of SGI have less food options available generally than residents of communities on the Lower Mainland/ Interior/ Vancouver Island (ie—less restaurants, grocers, meal kit

programs, etc.), and thus, accessibility to the available options and to growing their own food is an important aspect of SGI food security.

W#5:

1. A year-round market on Mayne could be supported by people who generally only attend the summer Farmers' Market.
2. The lingering effects of the COVID-19 restrictions are still affecting patrons of the Farmers' Market.
3. People support Farmers' Markets for reasons besides simply being a local food sales venue.

W#6:

1. Water conservation is of paramount importance in terms of mitigating the effects of climate change on the local food system.
2. Weather events (ie heatwaves, heat domes, lightning, etc) and wildfires, while difficult to plan for, must be considered by local food producers in order to maintain and encourage a resilient local food system (ie—livestock displacement, crop failures, etc).
3. Food related resources must be accessible in a variety of ways in order to reach those who may need the resources the most.
4. The local food economy depends on many external factors for its success (ie—affordable housing, small business dependence, effective transportation, government intervention, etc.)
5. Discussions about climate change are challenging, as many people become overwhelmed by trying to envision and solve it in terms of a global problem.

W#7:

1. Connecting individual eating habits to climate change is complex, the connections being sometimes obvious and sometimes not so obvious. Educating consumers about food in general may help people connect their choices to impacts on climate change.
2. Growing food at home is one way to understand and address climate change, allowing individuals to see the direct effects on plants, animals and the harvest.
3. Growers likely have a better understanding of the actual effects of climate change on the local food system than consumers do. The community at large could benefit from hearing directly from local growers about how climate change is impacting food production.
4. The increasing population in the Southern Gulf Islands complicates the discussion about climate change and food security, as we need to consider (1) how do we feed the largest population any of the islands has ever had; (2) how do we ensure that potential foodlands are not developed to house the increasing population; (3) what will be the impact of a growing population on the already fragile natural environment?

W#8, 10, 11:

1. Consumers would attend a year-round Farmers' Market on Mayne Island.
2. Consumers seem to understand the value of a year round venue for food producers to sell their fresh and processed food and would support this endeavour.
3. The existence of a Farmers' Market encourages new growers to consider selling their fresh produce.

4. Convenience of purchasing local food is still a factor for consumers when deciding who to support.

#### W#9: Pender

1. Meaningful systemic change in addressing the current climate crisis must be two fold, coming from both the regulatory bodies (ie government trade policies affecting subsidies, allowable limits in production and post-consumer waste, etc.) and the general public (ie expectations of the capacity of food systems to continually adapt to desires).
2. Many costs in the global food system are hidden in order to provide the Western public with “affordable” food, perpetuating the idea that local food is expensive.
3. A return to traditional ways of growing, producing, processing and preserving food would encourage less food waste.
4. The effects of drought and heatwaves are affecting local food production.
5. Many people struggle to feel heard and understood when they discuss issues of importance regarding climate change, local food security and individual responsibility.

#### **Recommendations for Priorities based on Conclusions from Weekly Reports**

As you can see, several recurring themes exist; from these conclusions, I recommend consideration of the following 9 (again, non-exhaustive list of) recommendations for priorities moving forward, in no particular order:

1. Water conservation initiatives would be well supported and are vital in long term food growing. These may include educational workshops on conservation, bulk purchasing of rain catchment systems, lobbying government for allowances or even subsidies for water saving measures (ie composting toilets, rainwater water use in homes, etc).
2. Population growth in the Southern Gulf Islands (SGI) will increasingly stress not only our finite natural resources, including water and soil, but also our social resources, such as housing and labour. Conversations to discuss long-term solutions AND implementing the decisions into necessary actions is key for true community resilience.
3. The realities of growing food commercially in the SGI need to be better understood by the community at large. Educating consumers about how the global food corporations externalize costs of production onto low wage labour, unethical treatment of animals and devastation of the environment VERSUS how the local food producers are transparent in their valuation of cost of production (ie paying a living wage to labourers, often not paying themselves, providing safe conditions for staff and livestock, using quality feed for livestock, using organic growing methods in the soil, using water responsibly, etc.) would be one step toward a better understanding.
4. A successful and resilient local food economy needs a strong system of supports available in the community. These include access to land on which to grow and from which to sell food, affordable housing to access and retain sufficient trained labour, local businesses to employ and retain consumers and to provide necessary materials for food growing, etc. If foodlands are

prioritized by local and provincial governments, solutions to current inadequate supply of supports will become part of the larger conversation about food system resilience. Therefore, lobbying governments to prioritize foodlands is important.

5. Home gardening continues to be a valuable aspect of SGI food security. While many home gardeners grow only a very few plants for themselves, the possibility that these gardeners may expand their skills and production to share with family, friends, and neighbours is an important stage to eventually increase capacity toward small scale commercial production, if they so choose. Encouraging any sort of initiatives to help more people to begin gardening as a hobby and to continue food growing as a lifestyle would likely garner significant support. Similarly, offering assistance to established growers in the form of free products or services would also go a long way to increasing the food growing potential of the SGI.
6. Seed saving is an important aspect of food system resilience, as having a regionally adapted seed stock for SGI guarantees our food growing ability amidst a changing climate. Seed saving also allows for a very personal connection to local food, as the saver chooses the plant, takes the time to carefully harvest and dry the seeds, stores them safely and then plants them again, and the cycle continues. Therefore, further encouraging seed saving efforts is a simple way to bring people into the local food security movement from the comfort of their own gardens.
7. True food system resilience, both in terms of consumer expectations and producer capabilities, needs definition in order to set a target for which to strive. (ie we are likely not going to grow avocados, so at what point does the conversation address the desire for certain foods in terms of local food production vs. food production for survival.) What does resilience or food security mean in terms of our organizational goals? Does it need definition, or can it mean many different things to different people? (ie Food security in relation to a food bank would be making sure that a client has access to nourishing calories, often dried pasta, flour, sugar, rice, milk, etc. which cannot be produced sufficiently (if at all) in the SGI; food security in relation to, say, the GIFC would be knowing that enough food could be produced in the SGI to sustain the population, but what does ENOUGH even mean?) Therefore, some definitions and targets around food security could be helpful in both short and long term community resilience planning.
8. People interested in local food system resilience need more pathways to get involved, as community groups and meetings are not necessarily tailored to everyone's taste. At the same time, online content from local food related groups is often not widely shared and appears sporadic due to lack of resources to upkeep webpages, social media accounts, etc. Therefore, community engagement using online resources is a way to inform many people of efforts being made toward strengthening local food system resilience. Similarly, assisting growers with their online presence would also likely have a positive impact on consumers accessing local food.
9. Indigenous perspectives were completely absent from this project, as no participants identifying as First Nations were spoken to at any of the Farmers' Markets. This is a glaring omission, as all of the recommendations above refer to ways in which we build community and value the land for providing us our sustenance. Moving forward, this project (and truly all projects)

should seek to out ways to engage local Indigenous residents to better understand their food growing priorities.

### **Project Delivery Challenges and Opportunities**

Because the table host (me) was the same each week, there was a fair amount of travel time between the islands. For example, to travel to and from Mayne from Pender was a simple 8:30am departing ferry with a 5pm return ferry, but travel to and from Galiano from Pender was impossible on a Friday or a Saturday, so I had to camp overnight near Swartz Bay to take a 5:50am ferry to Sturdies Bay then take a 5pm ferry home to Pender. While the day on Mayne would cost approximately \$40 in ferry fares and gas, a day on Galiano could cost \$50+ in ferry fare and gas plus \$30 for accommodations. However, in doing this, I also realized how difficult it is for Galiano Saturday Market to attract tourists from Vancouver Island and from the other Gulf Islands, as the ferries make a Saturday day trip very difficult, especially in comparison with the Mayne and Pender markets, which benefit from the frequency and timing of ferries from Swartz Bay. (Also worth noting is that a day trip to Saturna from Pender was only possible Mon-Wed with no return ferries at all, so there was no possibility of running this project on Saturna this summer, even if there had been a Saturday market.)

Another challenge was simply running a table as a Penderite on Pender, where I knew most of the locals at the Farmers' Market. While this may seem like a great resource, most people that came to the table came to chat or kill time, and when asked to participate in the RMA, they suddenly had important things to do. Therefore, it made more sense to travel to Mayne and Galiano, where I am only sort of known outside of the GIFC.

Many of the participants in the RMA portion of the InfoHub project wanted to be able to further engage with groups beside GIFC in their communities/ vacation locales. Although I was able to tell people what groups were doing what on each island, I did not have contact info available at the table to pass along directly to them. I think moving forward, this project could use the Food Asset Inventory Map information to make a list of what the organizations are doing on each island and how to contact them directly. I would make clear to these organizations at the beginning of the season that they would all be very welcome to contribute pamphlets, business cards, posters, etc. to the table to advertise their events and activities.

Which brings me to my last point, which is that this InfoHub Table concept could be useful to any and all food organizations in the SGI, and I wonder if hosting would be best suited to rotate between groups, giving each group an opportunity to talk directly to the public about what they are doing. Potentially, this table could have two hosts weekly—one as the primary volunteer host, who sets up, records and takes down everything, and a secondary host, who is there to add to the food security conversations, broadening the perspective shared with participants.

In closing, I sincerely believe that this Information Hub Table project has helped GIFC to better understand the challenges and opportunities within the Southern Gulf Islands local food system. From experiencing the unique culture of each island, to seeing the possibilities of collaboration with other island specific food organizations and like-minded individuals, as well as to gaining perspective on the several aspects of consumer disconnect from and grower realities in the local food system, GIFC has learned a lot of valuable information that can be carried forward in our future project planning, assisting our efforts in supporting the local food growing community.

With gratitude,

Nancy Goodman

Project Co-ordinator of the Gulf Islands Food Co-op (GIFC)

## Appendix #1

### Data Collection from the Weekly Reports

Wk	Date	Island	Total: Local/ Visitor	Question Set	Results: a, b, c—questions in set local/visitor
1	July 3	Mayne	19:7/12	1. COVID	a. yes 2/7; no 5/5; b. yes 3/7; no 4/5; c. yes 5/6; no 0/6; as usual 2/0
2	July 10	Pender	17:10/7	1. COVID	a. yes 1/1; no 9/6; b. yes 7/3; no 3/4; c. yes 2/3; no 1/0; as usual 7/3; unanswered 0/1
3	July 17	Mayne	10:5/5	2. Climate	a. yes 2/3; no 3/2; b. yes 2/4; no 3/1; c. yes 3/5; no 2/0
4	July 24	Galiano	22:7/15	1. COVID	a. yes 2/6; no 5/9; b. yes 4/6; no 3/9; c. yes 3/5; no 4/9; unclear 0/1
5.	July 31	Mayne	8:5/3	3. Markets	a. weekly 2/0; monthly 3/2; rarely 0/1; b. i. Food 3/2; ii. Art 0/1; iii. Social 2/0; c. yes 5/2; i. Food 4/1; ii. Art 1/1; iii. Social 0; no 0/1
6.	Aug 7	Galiano	12:8/4	2. Climate	a. yes 6/2; no 2/2; b. yes 7/4; no 1/0; c. yes 8/4; no 0
7.	Aug 28	Pender	9:6/3	2. Climate	a. yes 3/3; no 3/0; b. yes 5/2; no 0; unsure 1/1; c. yes 5/3; no 1/0
8 10 11	Sept 4, Oct 2, 9	Mayne	22:8/14	3. Markets	a. weekly 7/2; monthly 1/6; rarely 0/6; b. i. Food 8/9; ii. Art 0; iii. Social 0/5; c. yes 8/1; i. Food 6/5; ii. Art 2/4; iii. Social 0/2; no 0/2
9	Sept 25	Pender	12:5/7	2. Climate	a. yes 3/1; no 2/6; b. yes 5/5; no 0/1; unsure 0/1; c. yes 5/5; no 0/2

#### Results:

The GIFC InfoHub Project ran six times on Mayne Island, three times on Pender Island and twice on Galiano, for a total of eleven weeks. The cumulative answers from just the questions are as follows:

1. COVID 19: 58 participants (24 locals/ 34 visitors)

a. Did COVID-19 affect your access to locally produced food?

Yes: 19 participants (5 locals/14 visitors)

No: 39 (19/20)

b. Did you take advantage of online food shopping opportunities during the pandemic? Yes: 30 (14/ 16)

No: 28 (10/18)

c. Did you shop locally for food more often during the pandemic than you had previously?

Yes: 24 (10/ 14)

No: 20 (5/15)

Continued to shop locally as usual: 12 (9/3)

Unanswered: 1 (0/1)

Unclear: 1 (0/1)

2. Climate Change: 43 participants (24 locals/ 19 visitors)

a. Has climate change your day-to-day eating habits?

Yes: 23 participants (14 locals/ 9 visitors)

No: 20 (10/10)

b. Do you think that the local food system is being impacted by climate change?

Yes: 34 (19/15)

No: 6 (4/2)

Not Sure: 3 (1/2)

c. Are you concerned about the local food system's resilience amidst a changing climate?

Yes: 38 (21/ 17)

No: 5 (3/2)

3. Farmers Markets: 30 participants (13 locals/ 17 visitors)

a. How regularly do you attend farmers' markets?

Weekly: 11 participants (9locals/ 2 visitors)

Once-in-a-while/ Monthly: 12 (4/8)

Only on vacation/ Only with visitors: 7 (0/7)

b. Why do you attend farmers' markets? Choose best answer only:

To support local food producers and farmers: 22 (11/11)

To support local artists and crafters: 1 (0/1)

For entertainment and other social aspects: 7 (2/5)

c. Would you attend an off-peak season farmers' market in SGI (ie November to April)? Yes:

27 (13/14)

No: 3 (0/3)

If yes, why would you attend an off-peak season farmers' market in SGI?

To support local food producers and farmers: 16 (10/6)

To support local artists and crafters: 8(3/5)

For entertainment and other social aspects: 2 (0/2)

## ***Appendix 2: Weekly Reports 1-11***

GIFC Food Security InfoHub Project, funded by the CESC

### **Week 1: Saturday, July 3, 2021**

Location: Mayne Island Farmers' Market, 10am to 1pm

1. Rapid Market Assessment for Community Engagement Data for CESC Report  
19 participants—7 MI locals identified Mayne Island as their locale during COVID; 12 visitors identified non-SGI communities (all on the Lower Mainland) as their locale during COVID; thus, the following questions were asked in reference to each participant's home community

a. Did COVID-19 affect your access to locally produced food?

Yes: 9 participants (2 MI locals, 7 visitors)

No: 10 participants (5 MI locals, 5 visitors)

Did you take advantage of online food shopping opportunities during the pandemic?

Yes: 10 (3 MI locals, 7 visitors)

No: 9 (4 MI locals, 5 visitors)

b. Did you shop locally for food more often during the pandemic than you had previously?

Yes: 11 (5 MI locals, 6 visitors)

No: 6 (6 visitors)

Continued to shop locally as usual: 2 (2 MI locals)

#### **Summary**

Visitors from the Vancouver area remarked repeatedly that access to local food, especially closer to downtown was made very difficult by COVID protocols. If local farmers markets were open, often the lineups were incredibly long and slow moving, with little guarantee of decent selection once at the venue. Many small food related businesses closed, and many of these had been supporters and sellers of locally produced food. Visitor 8 mentioned that they started to use a home delivery service called Legends Haul, whose mission is “to change the food ecosystem one haul at a time [by] offer[ing] consciously sourced ingredients from hyper-local farmers, producers, restaurants, and business owners from across BC” (legendshaul.com). This same family was very motivated in supporting the local food system, so they did go out of their way to find a way to purchase local food.

Visitors suggested that better online presence by farmers could have encouraged them to shop locally more often. Visitor 2 suggested that getting farmers to use Instagram (and to a lesser degree Facebook) would foster relationship-building, as the customers could stay informed about what is happening on the farms, what foods are seasonally available, and could follow-up post-market with the farmers growing the food they eat during the week. Visitor 3 suggested that a farm to downtown customer delivery service would have been the only way they could have accessed locally produced food in their East Vancouver neighbourhood. They also mentioned that the mass development in Vancouver has continually displaced community garden opportunities for people in their neighbourhood, further diminishing the availability of local food.

Some visitors were not particularly interested in the local food system but were very enthusiastic home gardeners, regardless of their experience and food growing space. Visitor 9 did not actively seek out local food nor was she concerned about the problems that exist in the local food system, but she did speak at length about her gardening successes and challenges. Visitor 6, new weekenders on Mayne, are new gardeners on the Lower Mainland, with just a small growing space, and are looking forward to learning more about growing their own food. Visitor 7 have family on Mayne, and feel very connected to island life, so they are interested in trying to garden a bit for the first time on the Lower Mainland. And Visitor 8 are excited to try gardening on their south facing deck, which they had not considered attempting prior to the pandemic.

Some of the participants are weekenders or identified as visitors because they only moved to Mayne recently (although still during COVID). As a weekender, Visitor 1 realized, from his experience in his home community on the Lower Mainland, that shopping locally and supporting the community was important to him, and he carries these values with him when he visits Mayne. Visitor 5 enjoys coming to the market to see what is happening on Mayne. Visitor 4 moved to Mayne later in 2020, purchasing bare land in hopes of building a home and growing their own food, although her property had previously been landfill, so they are having to geo test and soil test before anything can be started.

The Mayne Island local participants were all happy to chat at length about supporting local food and about growing food. To a person, everyone felt safe at the market and at local businesses throughout COVID. Local 1 said that her shopping habits had not changed much, as she always tried to support local producers and businesses, and she also continued to grow some of her own food, both of which constitute the healthy and peaceful way of life on Mayne. Local 2 shopped entirely locally throughout the pandemic, as he did not leave Mayne until the vaccines were available. Local 6 is possibly interested in eventually becoming a grower, as she bought a property that had in the past been a productive garden space, but she works in healthcare off-island and is relatively inexperienced as a grower. Local 3 also moved to Mayne full time in 2020, and they have noticed that their desires for specific foods have changed to the best of what they can find on Mayne instead. They identify that there is a gap in the variety of spices and traditional ethnic foods available on Mayne, and for this reason, they shop periodically in Sidney. Local 4 retired from a food distribution business to living and shopping full-time on Mayne, and she is surprised at the price of certain foods as well as the lack of availability of what she knows to be highly trendy and well-selling foods on the Lower Mainland. However, she is able to order what she wants in bulk at a very low additional cost through the local businesses on Mayne. Local 5's habits did not change much during COVID, as she came and went from Mayne as necessary for health reasons, and so was able to shop mostly off-island as she had before. And Local 7 graciously came over simply to support our efforts to understand and strengthen the local food system, which she does by primarily shopping locally and growing her own food.

## Conclusion

From the conversations and the Rapid Market Assessment Tool, the following themes emerged:

- 1 Social media and online marketing are effective and necessary components in building relationships between local food producers, businesses and consumers.
- 2 “Growing food for the family” and “supporting a local food system” are two separate distinctions which are not necessarily connected. Even if someone grows their own food, they may not feel connected to/ a part of the local food system. They may just feel that they are feeding themselves.

- 3 Moving from the city to reside full time in the Gulf Islands necessitates a change of consumer expectations and habits, which are largely driven by availability and cost of products.
- 4 Development and turnover of real estate does affect local food production, regardless of location. If farmland or prime growing land is sold to either a disinterested party or inexperienced grower, less food will be produced to feed either just the landholders or the community.
- 5 Local farms, markets and businesses on Mayne Island were successful in responsibly handling COVID-19, ensuring that consumers felt safe to shop locally.

## **Week 2: Saturday, July 10, 2021**

Location: Pender Island Farmers' Market, 9:30am to 1pm

Rapid Market Assessment for Community Engagement Data for CESC Report

17 participants—10 locals identified Pender Island as their locale during COVID; 7 visitors identified non-SGI communities (Victoria, Richmond, Alberta, Toronto, India) as their locale during COVID; thus, the following questions were asked in reference to each participant's home community

- a. Did COVID-19 affect your access to locally produced food?

Yes: 2 (1 PI local, 1 visitor)

No: 15 (9 PI locals, 6 visitors)

- b. Did you take advantage of online food shopping opportunities during the pandemic?

Yes: 10 (7 PI locals, 3 visitors)

No: 7 (3 PI locals, 4 visitors)

- c. Did you shop locally for food more often during the pandemic than you had previously?

Yes: 5 (2 PI locals, 3 visitors)

No: 1 (1 PI local)

Continued to shop locally as usual: 10 (7 PI locals, 3 visitors)

Unanswered: 1 (visitor)

### **Summary**

Locals spoke of several common themes that emerged during their COVID-19 experience on Pender Island, and visitors shared diverse experiences of the lockdown depending on their location.

Locals 1, 2 and 9 mentioned that staples, such as organic/ BC flour and dried/ canned beans were difficult to find locally, so these items were often purchased online. Local 1 and Local 2 also each used online shopping to support a local farm, noting that there was a lack of variety of food crops grown in the community. (Local 1 said that there used to be many more growers selling produce at the market, and she wondered if they stopped coming to market because of the bureaucracy and politics of doing so.) Local 3 said that she had stocked up on food coincidentally prior to the lockdown, so she did not need to grocery shop in the first few months. Local 9 said that her shopping habits did not need to change, as she shops fairly seasonally to keep her food budget small. Local 7 moved to Pender prior to

the pandemic, and they shopped entirely locally, as did the rest of the named locals. As a local processed food business owner, Local 6 was able to move her product in larger quantities, so the business remained open and successful.

Visitors' experiences of sourcing local food were largely affected by the rules in place by their local governments or by the businesses themselves. Visitor 6 spent time in both Mumbai, India and Toronto, ON during the pandemic. Whereas prior to COVID-19 her family in India was able to purchase fresh, local food from familiar, long-time vendors who delivered to their home, her family started to order online from other vendors, as many familiar businesses closed or changed their systems, causing inconvenience or even lack of available food. In Toronto, she was able to find the foods she wanted, sometimes in person, sometimes online or as takeout. Visitor 2 mentioned that Farmers Markets remained closed in his town during the pandemic, which meant that local food was not as available in his community. Visitor 3 said that while Farmers Markets did remain open in her community, line ups were very long, as these venues were indoor and could only support a few people inside socially distanced at once. Visitor 5, who shared her time between Pender and Victoria, said that she was able to access local food in both locations, and that it seemed like there were new consumers of local food at Victoria's Moss Street Market based on their inexperience at navigating both the long-time set up of the market and the actual purchase from individual vendors. Visitor 4 mentioned that Richmond farmers pivoted to find new ways to sell produce and to increase access to local food for more community members during COVID-19. Farms with Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) box programs, such as Sweet Digz Farm, as well as others, took advantage of government subsidy/ grant programs to ensure there was less food waste and sustained level of production during the pandemic. (She also mentioned a possible connection between KPU and City of Richmond in supporting these initiatives.)

Many locals and visitors alike said that growing their own food during the pandemic was a priority. Local 2 had the foresight to predict a seed shortage, so she purchased seeds before COVID-19 became the pandemic, and Local 3 noted that particular seeds were difficult to find. Locals 3, 4, and 9 had prioritized seed saving prior to the pandemic, so they had sufficient seeds for their needs. Each grower grew more food than usual, and Local 4 also noted that her 16 year-old grandson decided to start a large garden at his family home in Saanich during COVID-19. Local 7 moved to Pender partly to be able to grow more of their own food. Local 6 mentioned that companion planting of Indigenous food plants in orchards strengthens the roots while holding back the trees' unnecessary seasonal growth, increasing the production and quality of the fruit. For this reason and to support the local Coast Salish First Nations' traditional practices, she has prioritized the future propagation of these plants in her business and at home.

The topic of climate change came up frequently during the conversations, especially since the long heatwave of late June/ early July was still fresh in everyone's minds. Local 5 spoke about the need to prepare for weather events and wildfire when thinking about local food system resilience. They wondered if a community wood chipper would help clean up some of the tinder-dry debris in the forests and yards on Pender. They also mentioned that a community composting project would make a lot of sense. Their example from Kamloops: people would bring their leaves and yard clean up compost to a drop off point in the fall and would be given a bag of soil created from last years' drop offs, enticing them to continue this cycle. Local 2 and Local 3 spoke at length about how the old growth forest logging in Fairy Creek and the ill treatment of Indigenous peoples is evidence that our society no longer understands and values the holistic connections between humans and nature. For instance, would reverence for the earth and humans as nature even allow for the atrocities that have recently come to

light in the Indigenous Residential School System, where youth were forcibly removed from their culture and in many cases died? Would the logging of the very last of the giant trees for money be prioritized in a society that values nature over an economic paradigm? Both Local 2 and Local 3 spoke to the idea that governments are no longer useful in preventing or addressing the travesties destroying nature and people, so maybe business or wealthy elites are the new possible change-makers (ie Elon Musk as a creative problem-solver has been able to accomplish much more than governments have.)

## Conclusion

From the conversations and the Rapid Market Assessment Tool, the following themes emerged:

1. Pender Island grocers, restaurants and venues for fresh local food were successful in supplying most of the food needs of local residents during COVID-19.
2. Online food shopping by locals, both for local and non-local foods, helped to sustain residents during the pandemic, ensuring that off-island trips were minimized.
3. Growing food at home was a priority for many people as a key to ensuring sufficient availability of a variety of foods. Seed saving by these growers was also identified as important to local food system resilience and individual survival.
4. Outside influences, such as government regulation or organizational mandates, affect the access to and abundance of locally produced food.
5. A holistic understanding of our human place in nature may encourage more people to value nature as a partner in our lives, and thereby, too, in local food system resilience.

## **Week #3: Saturday, July 24, 2021**

Location: Mayne Island Farmers Market 10am to 1pm

Rapid Market Assessment for Community Engagement Data for CESC Report

10 participants—5 locals identified Mayne Island as their locale during COVID; 5 visitors identified non-SGI communities (Lower Mainland and Ireland) as their locale during COVID; thus, the following questions were asked in reference to each participant's home community

- a. Question #1: Has climate change your day-to-day eating habits?

Yes: 5 participants (2 locals, 3 visitors)

No: 5 participants (3 locals, 2 visitors)

- a. Question #2: Do you think that the local food system is being impacted by climate change?

Yes: 6 participants (2 locals, 4 visitors)

No: 4 (3 locals, 1 visitor)

- b. Questions #3: Are you concerned about the local food system's resilience amidst a changing climate?

Yes: 8 participants (3 locals, 5 visitors)

No: 2 (2 locals, 0 visitors)

Summary

With the June 2021 heatwave (30C+ temperatures for a week) still fresh in their memory, several participants were motivated to speak about the impacts of the effects that are commonly attributed to climate change. Local 2 (along with two other long-time locals, who were not surveyed) spoke about the heatwave having affected this year's apple crop, as many Transparent Apples are falling off the trees now, far from ripe, and many trees that had not yet set fruit had their blossoms wither away. Visitor 1 mentioned that the blueberry crop, while appearing to be bountiful, luscious and juicy, has been tasteless this season. Similarly, Visitor 3 mentioned that raspberries cooked in the sun and shrivelled on the canes, while strawberries just ripened then rotted in the fields, unable to be safely picked quickly enough.

Unpredictable weather events are also affecting the global food system. For instance, Local 2 mentioned that American companies in the southern states have been looking at land and water in the BC interior region, as they are predicting a time when food production in the south will just not be possible due to a lack of water, deteriorating soil and unsafe weather. Visitor 2 said that her country longer experiences a true summer, as most days are cloudy and often stormy. She said that due to this new reality, food crops are difficult to sow and harvest, so the farmers largely invest in dairy farming or other forms of livestock production. She is very concerned that climate change will affect both food production and access to healthy local food moving forward.

Water was repeated as a primary concern of a changing climate to both the local and the global food system. Local 2 mentioned that even a local affordable housing initiative was constrained by concerns raised about availability of water and the effect of the project on neighbouring properties by increased density on long-term water availability. Local 5 spoke about the importance of commercial producers growing only what makes sense in terms of resource sustainability, including financial, physical and environmental resources. Visitor 4 is concerned about the diminishing salmon run and the effect that this will have on other aspects of the food system and the environment.

Many of the changes related to climate change that people had made to their day-to-day eating habits were directly connected to water. Visitor 5 and Visitor 4 both cited water as the main reason that they stopped eating red meat, as industrial meat production uses a large amount of water per calorie to produce. Local 2 mentioned changing from almond milk to a different source of nut milk, as the water demands of California almonds are heavily taxing the depleting water reserves in the state. Local 5 said that he encourages people to grow food crops for themselves that are expensive when purchased in the store, rather than trying to grow a large amount of a variety of crops, sourcing the other foods locally since they are more affordable.

Local 5 also spoke to possible ways to encourage more local food production with climate change in mind, as he has been a long-time producer on the island. He suggested that possibly encouraging more people to grow tree fruits, such as apples and pears, may be the best option, as these trees would only need a few years of dedicated care, but, once established, could produce for decades. He mentioned that in the early 1900s, tomatoes were a new trend in Vancouver, so Gulf Island producers were able to grow these in giant fields (covered fields in later years) to sell 100% as an export crop to the city. Local 5 suggested that producers loosely work together to figure out what the "new tomato" trendy cash crop could be in the Gulf Islands, and start to invest in this to secure commercial contracts off-island, creating an economic viability to SGI food production, once again.

Wildlife was also mentioned as a concern to both local food production and to overall soil health. Local 5 discouraged the increase of soft fruit production in the Gulf Islands, including plums, cherries and

berries, as the number of birds has significantly increased in the last few years, essentially decimating any crops not practicing some form of exclusion (ie netting, cannons, etc). Visitor 5 mentioned that the absence of apex predators (ie cougars, etc) in regions such as SGI allows the deer population to grow far larger than the ecosystem can withstand, eventually both affecting the health of the soil and destroying food crops that are unable to be fenced adequately.

Only two of the participants, Local 3 and Local 1, do not believe that climate change is a reality, and they both agreed that science proves that the fluctuations in temperature and weather effects are part of the normal condition of the Earth. Therefore, they answered each question with a “no,” objecting to even the idea of climate change, let alone any perceived effects on the food system resulting from it. Local 2 and Visitor 3 had a long conversation about their surprise at the comments, as they were standing within earshot during the comments from Local 3 and Local 1, although somewhat optimistically, Visitor 3 thought that increased heat from climate change would allow for a longer growing season in Canada, resulting in an increase in food production from our current levels. Several of the other participants were “shocked” to see those two “nos” appearing in all the questions, especially #3, and conversations about the need for education ensued. Visitors from the Lower Mainland were especially surprised to see these results on the flip sheet from people identified as locals, saying that the impacts of climate change on the local food system are too obvious to ignore.

## Conclusion

From the conversations and the Rapid Market Assessment Tool, the following themes emerged:

1. Responsible water use and conservation of water resources are necessities whose importance will only increase as climate change becomes more extreme.
2. Cooperative commercial growing of particular crops for export may allow for food production to become a viable economic venture once again. Similarly, cooperative commercial growing to feed the local island residents and visitors could also be economically viable if growers each focussed on one particular crop per farm, thereby encouraging a consistent, substantial supply of several different crops.
3. Climate change impacts can be understood at both the local and the global level in terms of food systems, the effects of which can be felt by each of us as consumers.
4. A disconnect between day-to-day food needs for personal consumption and the importance of local food production exists in SGI. While people showed concern that climate change is affecting the local food system and that it would continue to do so in the future, they struggled to realize that their daily food needs are also being directly impacted by climate change.
5. Education around the requirements of all aspects of a healthy and resilient food system continues to be needed in SGI.

## **Week #4: Saturday, July 24, 2021**

Location: Galiano Saturday Market, 10am-2pm

Rapid Market Assessment for Community Engagement Data for CESC Report

22 participants—7 locals identified Galiano Island as their locale during COVID, etc; 15 visitors identified non-SGI communities (Calgary, Williams Lake, Kamloops, Squamish, New Westminster,

Vancouver and Victoria) as their locale during COVID, etc; thus, the following questions were asked in reference to each participant's home community

a. Question #1: Did COVID-19 affect your access to locally produced food?

Yes: 8 participants (2 locals, 6 visitors)

No: 14 participants (5 locals, 9 visitors)

b. Question #2: Did you take advantage of local food shopping opportunities during the pandemic?

Yes: 10 (4 locals, 6 visitors)

No: 12 (3 locals, 9 visitors)

c. Questions #3: Did you shop locally for food more often during the pandemic than you had previously?

Yes: 8 (3 locals, 5 visitors)

No: 13 (4 locals, 9 visitors)

Unclear: 1 (1 visitor); reason: could not say as she had just moved to the neighbourhood at the beginning of COVID-19

### Summary

Participants discussed a variety of priorities when considering food shopping during the pandemic. Local 1 chose to stay mainly on Galiano during the pandemic, said that she shopped less on Galiano than she normally would have, as she felt that the responsible thing to do was to bring groceries and sundries with her since her second home is in Vancouver. Visitor 4 also brought up the importance of recognizing that accessibility to local food during COVID-19 may have been complicated by the fact that the pandemic has been very difficult for working families on many levels—lack of childcare, unreliable work/ income, homeschooling, etc. Local 7 and her small family still shopped twice monthly in Victoria for food, supplementing with local grocers. Local 3 shopped exclusively on Galiano so they never had to go to town during the pandemic, mentioning that they were able to buy seafood, produce as well as their staples and sundries from local farms and grocers. Local 4 spoke to the importance of shopping locally to keep businesses afloat during tough times. Local 5, a long-time senior local, only shops locally, ideally directly from farmers at the Saturday Market or at the local grocer throughout the week. Visitor 12 said that she severely limited her shopping outings and venues because she had a partner at home who was considered high risk for contracting COVID-19. Visitor 3, a senior from Vancouver, said that she stopped shopping at the smaller stores and at the local farmers' markets in her neighbourhood in favour of the larger chain grocery stores because of the ability to get everything she needed in one location while also being able to easily social distance from other shoppers. Visitor 9 from Kamloops said that she shopped more locally than ever before because of the restrictions in place becoming a reminder to do so, and Visitor 4 echoed that sentiment. Visitor 14 was still able to shop locally, but the farmers' market in his area closed for the entire year. Visitor 13 from Vancouver commented that there were no noticeable changes made to his shopping habits during COVID-19. The visitor from Visitor 5 mentioned that the local grocers in his East Vancouver neighbourhood drive out to the Fraser Valley to purchase produce from local farms to sell in the store. Visitor 8 and Visitor 16 both noted that their local grocers focus on providing 100% locally grown produce. Visitor 15 said that

the ability for some stores to operate as “normal” daily grocer while still consistently stocking an abundance of local produce is much more convenient and accessible for her and her peers than trying to shop for local food in a farmers’ market setting.

Participants had equally diverse motivations and experiences with online shopping during the pandemic. Visitor 15 mentioned that as a senior, she and her peers in Vancouver are still happy to have the online shopping experience from their grocers available to them so that they do not have to interact with people while shopping. Visitor 9’s only online shopping experience through COVID-19 was to support a large local farm in Ashcroft. Local 6 only purchases large amounts of staples, including nuts online through specialty stores or large chain grocers, and Local 4 only use online shopping to purchase pet food. Local 7 tried online food shopping, but due to the unreliability of Canada Post in SGI, she felt that this endeavour was a bit risky. Visitor 2 uses an online produce shopping service in Vancouver weekly, and Visitor 7 bought into a weekly CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) food box program, which they found while shopping for other foods online. Several people mentioned that they used online shopping for ordering takeout food, as well as sampling companies that provide meal kits, which they had not tried prior to COVID-19. It is also worth noting that several people commented that the unreasonable amount of packaging when using online shopping for food was enough motivation to stop purchasing food online. Also worth mentioning when discussing the internet as a tool during COVID-19 is Visitor 2’s comment that the successful integration of Zoom communication into both work and personal life has been positive, as she has felt more able to participate in community discussions while also being able to take various educational courses and workshops offered from around the world (ie—she took a beekeeping course from a New Zealand instructor).

Many participants discussed how the importance of producing their own food became clear during the pandemic. Local 7’s small family continued to expand their garden, which supplements their grocery shopping. Local 4 just put in a garden during COVID-19, as did Visitor 7 and Local 2, although both of the latter chose not to continue, as they found that their neighbours also grew more food and were happy to share. Local 6, an avid gardener at the local allotment gardens, took on a second growing plot in order to increase the amount of food grown to fill her own winter pantry and to share with her community. And Visitor 6 mentioned that she and her partner prioritize gardening and hunting, especially since her local grocers do not stock locally produced food.

## Conclusion

From the conversations and the Rapid Market Assessment Tool, the following themes emerged:

1. Local and provincial regulations and restrictions during the pandemic affected the food shopping habits of both SGI locals and visitors, with both positive and negative impacts for the local food economy.
2. The ability and desire of grocers to stock local food is often the key to expanding the accessibility of local food to more of the community.
3. Online shopping provides a variety of options that supplement the food readily available in SGI grocery stores.
4. Backyard gardens provide a necessary supplement to the food available in SGI grocery stores.
5. Residents of SGI have less food options available generally than residents of communities on the Lower Mainland/ Interior/ Vancouver Island (ie—less restaurants, grocers, meal kit programs, etc.), and thus, accessibility to the available options and to growing their own food is an important aspect of SGI food security.

## **Week #5: Saturday, July 31, 2021**

Location: Mayne Island Farmers' Market, 10am-1pm

\*note: because it rained throughout most of the market and I was unable to borrow a tent, most market patrons were not interested in coming to answer my questions while standing in the rain

Rapid Market Assessment for Community Engagement Data for CESC Report

8 participants—5 locals identified Mayne Island as their locale during COVID, etc; 3 visitors identified non-SGI communities (Vancouver and Nanaimo) as their locale during COVID, etc; thus, the following questions were asked in reference to each participant's home community

a. Question #1: How regularly do you attend farmers' markets?

Weekly: 2 participants (2 locals)

Once-in-a-while/ Monthly: 5 participants (3 locals, 2 visitors)

Only on vacation/ Only with visitors: 1 (1 visitor)

b. Question #2: Why do you attend farmers' markets? Choose best answer only.

To support local food producers and farmers: 5 (3 locals, 2 visitors)

To support local artists and crafters: 1 (1 visitors)

For entertainment and other social aspects: 2 (2 locals)

c. Question #3: Would you attend an off-peak season farmers' market in SGI (ie November to April)?

Yes: 7 (5 locals, 2 visitors)

No: 1 (1 visitors)

If yes, why would you attend an off-peak season farmers' market in SGI?

To support local food producers and farmers: 5 (4 locals, 1 visitors)

To support local artists and crafters: 2 (1 local, 1 visitors)

For entertainment and other social aspects: 0

Summary

\*note: because it rained throughout most of the market and I was unable to borrow a tent, most market patrons were not interested in coming to answer my questions while standing in the rain

Although there were only a few participants in this week's Rapid Market Assessment, the participants did offer some useful information about how farmers' markets fit into their shopping habits. Local 5 spoke of using the farmers' market as a sort of test of his comfort level coming out of COVID-19 restrictions, as he felt comfortable to shop outside with or without a mask while around several tourists. As a long-time weekender, he would support a winter market, and he is very concerned about local food security. Local 1 also said he would support a winter market, as his main priority for coming weekly to the market is to support local food producers. Visitor 3 visits regularly throughout the year and would

also support a winter market. She also mentioned that central Vancouver Island seems to have less farmers' markets than SGI. The Visitor 1 is able to shop regularly at farmers' markets, although the lines are still long at this point of the pandemic; he also said that this visit to SGI is very rare, so he would not support a winter market. Because Visitor 2 grows a lot of her own food, she uses the market as a venue to purchase gifts from the local artists and crafters. And Local 2 comes weekly to the market to buy produce but mainly to socialize, since his job is no longer out in the public eye.

## Conclusion

From the very few conversations and the Rapid Market Assessment Tool, the following themes emerged:

1. A year-round market on Mayne could be supported by people who generally only attend the summer farmers' market.
2. The lingering effects of the COVID-19 restrictions are still affecting patrons of farmers' market.
3. People support farmers' markets for reasons besides simply being a local food sales venue.

## **Week #6: Saturday, August 7, 2021**

Location: Galiano Saturday Market, 10am-2pm

Rapid Market Assessment for Community Engagement Data for CESC Report

12 participants—8 locals identified Galiano Island as their locale during COVID, etc; 4 visitors identified non-SGI communities (Vancouver, Deep Cove, Rosedale/ Chilliwack) as their locale during COVID, etc; thus, the following questions were asked in reference to each participant's home community

- a. Question #1: Has climate change affected your day-to-day eating habits?

Yes: 8 participants (6 locals, 2 visitors)

No: 4 participants (2 locals, 2 visitors)

- b. Question #2: Do you think that the local food system is being impacted by climate change?

Yes: 11 (7 locals, 4 visitors)

No: 1 (1 local)

- c. Questions #3: Are you concerned about the local food system's resilience amidst a changing climate?

Yes: 12 (8 locals, 4 visitors)

No: 0

## Summary

Several participants were concerned about the short- and long- term effects of heat, drought and wildfire, especially on grains and livestock. Local 1 has stopped eating red meat due to the amount of water used to grow livestock. She is also concerned about the impact that the drought in the prairies will have on the availability of grains and pulses. Similarly, Visitor 1 are concerned about the drought in Western Canada, from the prairies and the interior to their own backyard garden. Visitor 2 both eat

far less meat than they used to eat because of the water use in global food production. They are concerned about the displacement or death of livestock in the interior and in the prairies due to wildfire and drought. Visitor 3 stopped eating red meat due to methane off-gassing, and she is concerned about global grain shortages as result of the prairie drought.

Water was at the top of mind of many participants. Local 2 and Local 3 are both concerned about wildfires and heatwaves impacting the availability of food locally, especially in terms of water resources. They would also like to see more hazelnut trees planted in SGI so that eventually there will be less local dependence on California for nuts, as they are concerned about the amount of watering that must happen to maintain almond trees. Visitor 3 also mentioned that almost no food is produced in Deep Cove, but that most of what is advertised to them as “local” is sourced from the Fraser Valley, which suffered during the heat wave and is now suffering during the drought. Visitor 4 is concerned about water, especially in terms of how she may not be able to sustain her own garden. Visitor 1 are concerned, too, that Vancouver has not planned sufficient infrastructure for maintaining drinking water and water for gardens. They started a garden during COVID-19, and they worry about a future when they will not be able to water it. Visitor 2 commented on all the shellfish that died during the last heatwave, and Local 8 is concerned about local fish stocks, as she no longer sees large fishing vessels in Active Pass as she used to ten years ago, and wonders if that is connected to climate change.

Aside from the direct effects of climate change, other systemic issues are impacting the local food system. Local 5 is concerned that, compared to the city, the lack of food related resources of all kinds in SGI results in a less healthy population (ie—dumpster diving in the city is a necessary resource for some people, and this is not available in SGI). Local 6 is concerned about food waste in SGI, and she is interested in expanding gleaning programs to farms and grocers. She is also concerned about a privileged assumption that just because food related resources are available in the community that everyone who needs these resources is able to seek these out (ie—mental health barriers, overall stigma of not being able to feed self and family, access to and understanding of technology, etc). Local 5 is also concerned about housing for people who want to stay and work in the local food system of SGI, citing child care as a reason that her family may need to move off-island (no affordable housing for potential child caregivers would raise the cost of child care beyond what is reasonable for a working family to be able to pay).

Reflection on climate change seems to overwhelm some people. Local 4 is very concerned about climate change, especially the new “heat dome” effect that BC suffered early this summer, and he believes that a complete revamp of the way the world thinks about fossil fuel use and consumption, tourism, and global food production is the only solution. He is quite pessimistic that small changes locally can make enough of a difference to climate change. Local 1 is concerned about global climate change and what that means for local food security. Local 1 also mentioned that food has far too much unnecessary packing, often plastics, including on local produced food. Local 7, a local who lives on Parker Island, had a lot to say about what she refers to as the “rhetoric” and “lip-service” paid by people who talk about climate change. She believes that the growing populations of India, China and Latin America are to blame when it comes to climate change, and that the “true minority” in the western world is Caucasians at 16% of world population. Yet, she argues, this 16% is charged with fixing all the world’s problems, and that the world needs to realize that culture is a choice not nature (ie—her example included that colonial pioneer families had lots of kids but the subsequent generations in the western world have produced far fewer children because it is no longer practical to do so). She is pessimistic that small local projects will have any tangible impact, and without buy-in from the heavily

populated countries, there is no point in the west addressing climate change. She also cautions that investing in something like, say, crickets as the new “trendy” protein without understanding that the mass production of anything will lead to negative consequences (ie—disease, etc) sets us up for a repeat of the current global food system.

## Conclusion

From the conversations and the Rapid Market Assessment Tool, the following themes emerged:

1. Water conservation is of paramount importance in terms of mitigating the effects of climate change on the local food system.
2. Weather events (ie heatwaves, heat domes, lightning, etc) and wildfires, while difficult to plan for, must be considered by local food producers in order to maintain and encourage a resilient local food system (ie—livestock displacement, crop failures, etc).
3. Food related resources must be accessible in a variety of ways in order to reach those who may need the resources the most.
4. The local food economy depends on many external factors for its success (ie—affordable housing, small business dependence, effective transportation, government intervention, etc.)
5. Discussions about climate change are challenging, as many people become overwhelmed by trying to envision and solve it in terms of a global problem.

## **Week #7: Saturday, August 28, 2021**

Location: Pender Island Farmers’ Market, PI Community Hall, 9:30am-1pm

Rapid Market Assessment for Community Engagement Data for CESC Report

9 participants—6 locals identified Pender Island as their locale during COVID, etc; 3 visitors identified non-SGI communities (Burnaby, North Vancouver, Whitehorse) as their locale during COVID, etc; thus, the following questions were asked in reference to each participant’s home community

- a. Question #1: Has climate change affected your day-to-day eating habits?

Yes: 6 participants (3 locals, 3 visitors)

No: 3 participants (3 locals)

- b. Question #2: Do you think that the local food system is being impacted by climate change?

Yes: 7 (5 locals, 2 visitors)

No: 0

Not sure: 2 (1 locals, 1 visitor)

- c. Questions #3: Are you concerned about the local food system’s resilience amidst a changing climate?

Yes: 8 (5 locals, 3 visitors)

No: 1 (1 local)

Summary

Participants had a variety of perspectives on the effects of climate change on their day-to-day eating habits. Local 1 and Local 2 say that their eating habits have not changed because they are able to buy all the produce they need all season at the Farmer's Market. Local 4's eating habits have not changed, focusing on what is produced locally year round, including meats, produce, breads, etc. Visitor 1 says that she buys local food as much as she can afford, that she does need to budget for it, and that her neighbours already grow too much food for themselves so they share with her often. Local 5 says that her eating habits have likely changed in ways that she doesn't even realize, since so much of our global food system is mysterious to us as consumers. Local 4 does not support California products because their food production is perpetuating drought conditions. Visitor 2 eats less meat due to her concerns about climate change, and Visitor 3 hunts for much of his own food, so his meat eating habits have not changed.

The ability for some of the participants to grow food to feed themselves and others also affects their day-to-day eating habits, which are indirectly related to climate change. Visitor 1 says that her housing co-op is hoping to build planter boxes to encourage residents and children in growing food for their small community of residents. Local 5 is interested more and more in growing her own food, inspired by last year's GIFC Squashfest event (when she grew food for the first time!) and also by the neighbours who have given her strawberry plants to try and grow. Local 3's eating habits have changed with the diversity of foods he is able to grow and preserve himself throughout the longer growing season. Local 6's eating habits have not changed, as she has been producing much of her own meat and vegetables for many years, although she does say that growing this food is becoming more challenging.

Many participants make an easy connection between climate change and negative impacts on the local food system, while some participants do not make the same connection. Local 2 thinks that climate change is impacting food production capabilities globally, but that climate change will not affect Pender as much as other places, noting that we do not have hurricanes and that the "heat dome" heatwave was just "played up" by the media. As a farmer, Local 4 says that the impact of drought is a significant local effect of climate change. Similarly, farmer Local 6 is very concerned about low water levels in wells and the impact of the lack of rain on the health of both animals and crops. Local 6 and Visitor 2 share concern about the lessening availability of staples (grains, legumes, feed, livestock, etc.) that are grown in the interior because of the effects of drought and wildfire on the land. As a gardener, Local 3 thinks that climate change is affecting the local food system because he sees people increasing the amount that they are growing at home (from gardening toward producing), taking advantage through forecasts of timing of heatwaves, rain, and weeks of full sun. Visitor 3 hunts for a lot of his own food, as do many in his community, and he is beginning to see changes in the availability and behaviour of wildlife which he attributes to climate change. He also says that produce is very expensive in the North, as most food is imported from far away, and is concerned that although a warming climate may lengthen the growing season, the negative effects on the rest of the natural environment may cancel out any seemingly positive effects. Visitor 2 thinks that we all need to be concerned about climate change.

Many participants were concerned about how climate change will affect the local food system, both indirectly and directly. Visitor 3 is concerned that the effects of climate change on wildlife will impact the ecosystem in unforeseen ways, thereby affecting especially the local food system. Local 1 is not sure if the local food system is currently affected by climate change, as she has never asked the growers if this is the case, but she is concerned that we may not be able to grow food here in the future. Local 6 says that the future of farming is bleak, especially in terms of global production. Local 4 says that because of climate change, everything that impacts local farming seems unpredictable in a way that it

was not before. Local 5 is concerned that farmers may just give up trying to grow food because of the unpredictability that climate change brings. Local 3 is concerned about the effect that local population growth will have on the ability of the local food system to meet the needs of so many people, although he is confident that local growers will pivot to attempt to meet these needs. Visitor 1 is concerned with the long term effects of development on potential foodlands in order to house the population that is growing significantly, also worrying about how the local food system will be able to keep up to meet these needs. Alternately, Local 2 says that he thinks that with so many more people moving to Pender, the local food system will have more potential growers and will likely be more resilient than ever.

## Conclusion

From the conversations and the Rapid Market Assessment Tool, the following themes emerged:

1. Connecting individual eating habits to climate change is complex, the connections being sometimes obvious and sometimes not so obvious. Educating consumers about food in general may help people connect their choices to impacts on climate change.
2. Growing food at home is one way to understand and address climate change, allowing individuals to see the direct effects on plants, animals and the harvest.
3. Growers likely have a better understanding of the actual effects of climate change on the local food system than consumers do. The community at large could benefit from hearing directly from local growers about how climate change is impacting food production.
4. The increasing population in the Southern Gulf Islands complicates the discussion about climate change and food security, as we need to consider (1) how do we feed the largest population any of the islands has ever had; (2) how do we ensure that potential foodlands are not developed to house the increasing population; (3) what will be the impact of a growing population on the already fragile natural environment?

## **Weeks #8, 10 and 11: Saturdays, Sept. 4, Oct. 2 and Oct. 9**

Location: Mayne Island Farmers Market (and Apple Festival on Oct. 9), 10am to 1pm

\*note: due to rainy weather or non-ideal conversing conditions (ie loud music, very large moving crowds, etc), I chose to combine three dates together in one report, using the same flipchart for each date in order to record quality results stemming from a reasonable quantity of data; most people just answered the questions then moved along, but a few had a short conversation.

### Rapid Market Assessment for Community Engagement Data for CESC Report

22 participants—8 locals identified SGI as their during COVID (7 Mayne Island, 1 Saturna Island), etc; 14 visitors identified non-SGI communities (including Vancouver, New Westminster, Victoria, and Montreal) as their locale during COVID, etc; thus, the following questions were asked in reference to each participant's home community

- a. Question #1: How regularly do you attend farmers' markets?

Weekly: 9 participants (7 locals, 2 visitors)

Once-in-a-while/ Monthly: 7 participants (1 local, 6 visitors)

Only on vacation/ Only with visitors: 6 participants (6 visitors)

b. Question #2: Why do you attend farmers' markets? Choose best answer only.

To support local food producers and farmers: 17 (8 locals, 9 visitors)

To support local artists and crafters: 0

For entertainment and other social aspects: 5 (5 visitors)

c. Question #3: Would you attend an off-peak season farmers' market in SGI (ie November to April)?

Yes: 20 (8 locals, 12 visitors)

No: 2 (2 visitors)

If yes (20 participants), why would you attend an off-peak season farmers' market in SGI?

To support local food producers and farmers: 11 (6 locals, 5 visitors)

To support local artists and crafters: 6 (2 locals, 4 visitors)

For entertainment and other social aspects: 2 (2 visitors)

### Summary

Participants in the conversation had a variety of reasons for attending Farmers' Markets (FMs). Visitor 9 comes to the FM solely for local food, since it tastes so much better than food not grown locally. Local 1 shops at the FM weekly, and would definitely support a year-round FM, as she likes to see that local producers of food and art are able to make a good living selling what they create. Visitor 2 from Vancouver says that there are stores that prioritize selling local food that are more convenient than attending local area FMs. She says that when she comes over to Mayne, she shops at the FM primarily for food during the high season, and in the off season, she would shop mostly for crafts to support the artists. Similarly, Visitor 6 supports local food producers whenever possible, so a winter FM would be a great additional venue for growers, but his priority for shopping at a winter FM would be to buy art and crafts for holiday gifts. Visitor 3 says that as a visitor mostly on weekends, the FM is something to do, to see if there is anything new being made and to find out if there are any local events happening on the weekend. Visitor 7 lives far away, so would likely not attend a winter FM in SGI, and she attends mainly for entertainment. She also thinks that a winter FM would encourage growers to grow food all season. Visitor 8 also lives far away in Montreal, so would likely not attend a winter FM in SGI, but in her own community, FMs run all year long, so she is able to buy fresh local food and support artists whenever she wants. Although she said that her primary purpose is supporting local food producers, Visitor 8 says that supporting crafters and artists at the FM is a very close second. Local 3 agrees with Visitor 8, especially since she is able to produce some of her own food but not able to produce quality art and crafts herself. Visitor 10 owns a lot on Mayne, so wants to eventually grow and hopefully sell food at the market. Local 3 may also want to grow food to sell someday, too. Local 2 just moved to Saturna with the hope of growing a lot of her own food in the future. She says that she regrets that she has not retained all the information that her grandfather, an avid farmer, had to offer during his lifetime of experience in Ireland.

It is worth noting that because participants were "forced" to choose their "best answer only" as to why they attend a local FM, several were divided between choosing to support food producers or artists. This was an intention of the question: as a consumer, if you had to choose between food, art or

entertainment, which are you prioritizing when you attend a Farmers' Market? There is no judgment from me attached to their answer, but also worth noting is that these participants are people already attending this FM who are also willing to answer questions at a Food Security Information Table hosted by the Gulf Islands Food Co-op, and the flipchart already had a few prior answers under the food categories, so these people likely felt slight pressure to answer in line with others. However, the intention still serves its purpose, as these 22 participants are now hopefully likely to consider those questions when they attend FMs in the future (one can hope, anyway).

## Conclusion

From the conversations and the Rapid Market Assessment Tool, the following themes emerged:

1. Consumers would attend a year-round Farmers' Market on Mayne Island.
2. Some consumers seem to understand the value of a year round venue for food producers to sell their fresh and processed food and would support this endeavour.
3. The existence of a Farmers' Market encourages new growers to consider selling their fresh produce.
4. Convenience of purchasing local food is still a factor for consumers when deciding who to support.

## **Week #9: Saturday, September 25, 2021**

Location: The Crisp Apple Festival, Port Browning Marina, Pender Island, 11am to 3:30pm

Rapid Market Assessment for Community Engagement Data for CESC Report

12 participants—5 locals identified Pender Island as their locale during COVID, etc; 7 visitors identified non-SGI communities (Vernon, North Saanich, Victoria, and Calgary) as their locale during COVID, etc; thus, the following questions were asked in reference to each participant's home community

- a. Question #1: Has climate change your day-to-day eating habits?

Yes: 4 (3 locals, 1 visitors)

No: 8 (2 locals, 6 visitors)

- b. Question #2: Do you think that the local food system is being impacted by climate change?

Yes: 10 (5 locals, 5 visitors)

No: 1 (1 visitor)

Don't know: 1 (1 visitor)

- c. Questions #3: Are you concerned about the local food system's resilience amidst a changing climate?

Yes: 10 (5 locals, 5 visitors)

No: 2 (2 visitors)

## Summary

Many participants identify climate change as a factor affecting the food system. Visitor 5, a produce manager at a large city supermarket, notices that the local system is being affected by climate change because there was a shortage of local berries this season and that less produce (local and global) is available for purchase overall. Visitor 7 from Vernon says that the severe heat in the Okanagan, coupled with wildfires, has devastated her local food system, seeing many orchards failing to produce any significant harvests. Visitor 2 grows her own garden, so she sees the evidence of climate change in how hot it has been, how much more water she needs, etc. Local 3 is concerned about the heat and what its effect will be on the island's ability to grow produce and livestock. Visitor 1 has not changed her eating habits, but she does now subscribe to a local CSA food box program, supporting local farmers, and allowing her to forego gardening herself. Local 1 says that people may be addressing climate change individually by changing their food habits.

Some participants discuss how governments and corporations have a large role to play in regulating climate change at the global level and at the local level. Local 4 says that the biggest issue is that the systems in place (ie—global food production, etc) lead to climate change, which then create local food system failures. Local 3 says that climate change is affecting the food system, which maybe seems more obvious in other countries than here in our region. For example, she says that Argentina's topsoil has been eroded by years of mono-cropping soy and corn to feed the cattle that is now pastured on land cleared of lush forests. Local 3 is also concerned that the increase in local population and the proposed increases in density to accommodate working individuals and families will have a disastrous effect on the amount of water available on the island.

Some participants feel that a broader understanding of the interconnectedness between systems (both global and local) could help consumers situate themselves as part of the solution to the climate crisis. Visitor 2 supports the local food system because the global system does not work as well as a community based system. Visitor 4 calls food waste in the west criminal, feeling that climate change is affecting food systems and that change needs to come from the top, although all our little bits of effort are important. She says although the price of food is rising, she is still able to purchase what she wants. Visitor 4 thinks that when we consider costs and waste, it is helpful to contextualize this. For example, she prioritizes charitable donations to a particular organization that helps female students in Malawi pay for their diploma (essentially, a person can finish high school, but if they cannot pay the \$190 at the very end, they have no credential to show at the end of their years of education), so she collects recyclables in the form of single serve plastic and aluminum drink containers from recycling bins on the residential streets of Sidney before the recycling trucks pick them up. With the deposit refunds she earns, she saves up to \$190 and sends this to the charity. She sees this food system waste as an opportunity, and all it costs her is her time. The cost of public education in Canada is externalized, not paid at the time of graduation but paid through taxes throughout the student experience. This is similar to the price of food—the prices of food are kept artificially low through externalizing the true costs onto low paid foreign labour, subsidies for corporate mono-cropping enterprises, and international trade incentives. If the true cost of food in the global food system (ie at the grocery store) was as evident as the true cost of food is in the local food system (ie at the farmers market), consumers may prioritize spending their \$190 food budget supporting local farmers and keeping the money in their community.

The waste in the food system is on the mind of the participants. Similar to Visitor 4, Local 4 considers food waste a (religious) sin, and although she did not immediately make any connection between climate change and her daily eating habits, she says now that the amount of plastic waste used on food

affects what she chooses to purchase. Local 1 gleans fruit from her neighbours, whose overgrown orchards produce fruit that would be otherwise wasted. Local 3 has reduced the amount of meat in her daily diet because she is concerned about water waste in meat production, and she makes sure that she uses every bit of meat and bones that she buys. Local 4 also says that “the old ways are the best ways,” in terms of growing and preserving food. She prioritizes saving her own heirloom bean seeds and planting ample amounts of beans as protein in perpetuity as key to her family’s resilience. Local 1 says that she, too, saves some of her own seeds.

Because supply chain deficiencies are well hidden in the complex economic base of the global food system, consumers may not see effects of climate change directly on the foods they consume. Similarly, consumers may not comprehend how climate change adversely affects local growing conditions, as they have yet to have to completely “do without” something seasonal that they want (ie-- they can simply buy a tomato from Mexico at the grocery store if the local crop fails). Local 2 says that her day-to-day eating habits are not affected by climate change because she is still able to get the relatively small variety of foods that she eats at essentially the same price and quality as always. Visitor 6 says he had never considered that climate change may be impacting the global or local food system. Visitor 3, also from Alberta, are not concerned about local food system resilience because they think that local growers will simply adapt to find a new way to grow food. Produce manager Visitor 5 is concerned that people don’t understand why they can’t get the variety of produce that they want year round.

(As a note, Visitor 4 says that she is grateful to be able to have a thorough conversation about all this, as she does not find adequate pathways for these sorts of discussions. Similarly, Local 1 says she is very interested in what we are doing and that she is happy and inspired to talk to people at length who feel the same type of concern about the local food system as she does. The ability to have lengthy conversations about food security is a strength of this project, allowing for many different ideas to be shared in a casual conversation, generally free of judgment on either side of the table.)

## Conclusion

From the conversations and the Rapid Market Assessment Tool, the following themes emerged:

1. Meaningful systemic change in addressing the current climate crisis must be two fold, coming from both the regulatory bodies (ie government trade policies affecting subsidies, allowable limits in production and post-consumer waste, etc.) and the general public (ie expectations of the capacity of food systems to continually adapt to desires).
2. Many costs in the global food system are hidden in order to provide the Western public with “affordable” food, perpetuating the idea that local food is expensive.
3. A return to traditional ways of growing, producing, processing and preserving food would encourage less food waste.
4. The effects of drought and heatwaves are affecting local food production.
5. Many people struggle to feel heard and understood when they discuss issues of importance regarding climate change, local food security and individual responsibility.

#### 4. Food Production Workshops and Farm Tour Series (PIRAHA)

*What the FRA program funded:*

Name	Date	Attendance
Apiary Visit	July 16, 2021	17
Baking workshop	July 18, 2021	8
Baking workshop	July 25, 2021	9
Cidery Visit	August 11, 2021	15
New Direction Farm visit	August 12, 2021	7
Jam and Chutney Making workshop	August 15, 2021	12
Canning Workshop	August 22, 2021	2
Apiary Visit	August 27, 2021	2

#### *Short Description/Summary*

The CRC funding allowed for farm visits and food workshops to take place on Pender. A very exciting opportunity as so many people on Pender are already into growing, gardening and harvesting. This workshop and visit series gave people the opportunity to use whatever they were growing, as well as showcase the local islander skills. We had a mix of locals, seasonals, and tourists attending the workshops and visits which shows that these events can be interesting to people from different walks of life and experiences. We also wanted to inspire building gardening and cooking skills in people so that they could share these things in turn with their family and friends. The greater goals of these workshops and visits was to showcase what is happening in their local food systems and help them feel a little more engaged/empowered in understanding where they fit in it, and how if we all come together we can make a difference.

## *Successes*

- Using facebook, instagram and in-person advertising (at the farmers market or posters around the community) See below for examples
- Using the Wednesday food-only market to advertise
- Making sure all events have post-event surveys to gather feedback: almost 100 percent of the feedback has been positive, and people are very much enjoying the farm/production site tours - Particularly, the first apiary and cidery visit had 15+ people.
- Planning workshops much in advance for ease of organizing through sending lots of emails, networking at farmers market and other events and advertising early in advance.

## *Challenges*

- Last minute cancellations and add-ons to food workshops; the numbers can be very hit and miss.
- Difficulties in making events more 'hands-on' especially when there are more people in the class. How to balance wanting more people to attend with different facilitation styles.
- Let's Talk Food discussion group did not take off – consistency and timing did not work out
- Difficulties in creating events with other community groups or hall programming – ie the Seed library, the GIFC, doing a Youth food activity/discussion
- Inter-island engagement and online compatibility/capacity. How do we engage

## *Next Steps/Ideas*

- Want to organize fall workshops in Sourdough bread (Barry) and Cottage Cheese making (Ewa)
- I will post about seasonal and farm to table recipes on the Facebook page so that people can submit their recipes
- How to start creating relationships with local Indigenous communities when it comes to food issues...

## *For the Future:*

- If possible, create a weekly farm visit date so people can mark it in their calendars – this does not always work for farmers/producers though
- Network with everyone possible at the farmers market: farmers, locals, and tourists
- Try to purchase things for the workshops through local producers, if possible
- Please make sure to get invoices from farmers if you buy their local produce so it is easier to pay them.
- People enjoyed hands-on workshops, and things that could be done in a few hours (ie canning and fermentation)
- Instead of having one poster for each event, have one (if possible) describing the time and event with all the information in one place, that way it is easier to read in passing. However, this would not allow new information to be added.
- Make sure you have all the items and equipment you need for each workshop

### *Survey Results*

The survey results were super helpful to me as I planned more and more workshops. For example, the Breadmaking workshop (our first food production workshop) had a lot of valuable feedback and learning that i could apply to the other workshops. People really enjoyed visiting the farms/cidery/apiary and meeting the producers and hearing what they had to say.

### Breadmaking:

“It was good to get together with community members again. Thanks for putting the workshop together. It was interesting to know that bread making isn’t all that complicated and something a person can learn and develop their own techniques. Prepare the agenda and steps for a 1-hour demo with some time at the end for a tasting and Q&A session

1. Attendees arrive and are provided an overview on the subject/what to expect
2. Have the various stages of the demo prepared in advance e.g.,
  - i. Have a head table in the main room for demo – people can remain seated
  - ii. Have video setup to show only the head table
  - iii. Have a copy of the recipe (optional) I like the way you sent it electronically with the feedback form

- iv. Have the various tools used on display (at the head table) so the presenter can provide a quick overview on each tool and its purpose
- v. Describe the process of mixing, kneading and placing the dough in the bowl (for its first rest/rise)
- vi. Have some dough already prepared so attendees can see what it looks like after the first rest/rise
- vii. Illustrate the braiding (with dough that is already prepared and rolled out) this is the only actual demo provided and can be done at the head table
- viii. Have a loaf already braided that has gone through the 2<sup>nd</sup> rest/rise (ready to go into the oven)
- ix. Have a loaf already in the oven ready to come out as soon as the presentation is done so people can have a tasting and have a Q&A session

You gals did an amazing job – thanks for putting it together.

#### Tomato Canning:

“Karin explained the process very well - step-by-step - I feel pretty confident! Ayesha was very helpful! I would recommend this event to my friends/family”

#### Cidery:

“I learned about the process of making cider, planting trees, the importance of biodiversity. Fantastic event - loved it!”

“It was great having a local expert to ask questions to!”

#### New Direction Farm Tour:

“Increased awareness of challenge involved in sustainable agriculture. Very worthwhile.”

“I learned new ideas about growing food, and using less plastic.”

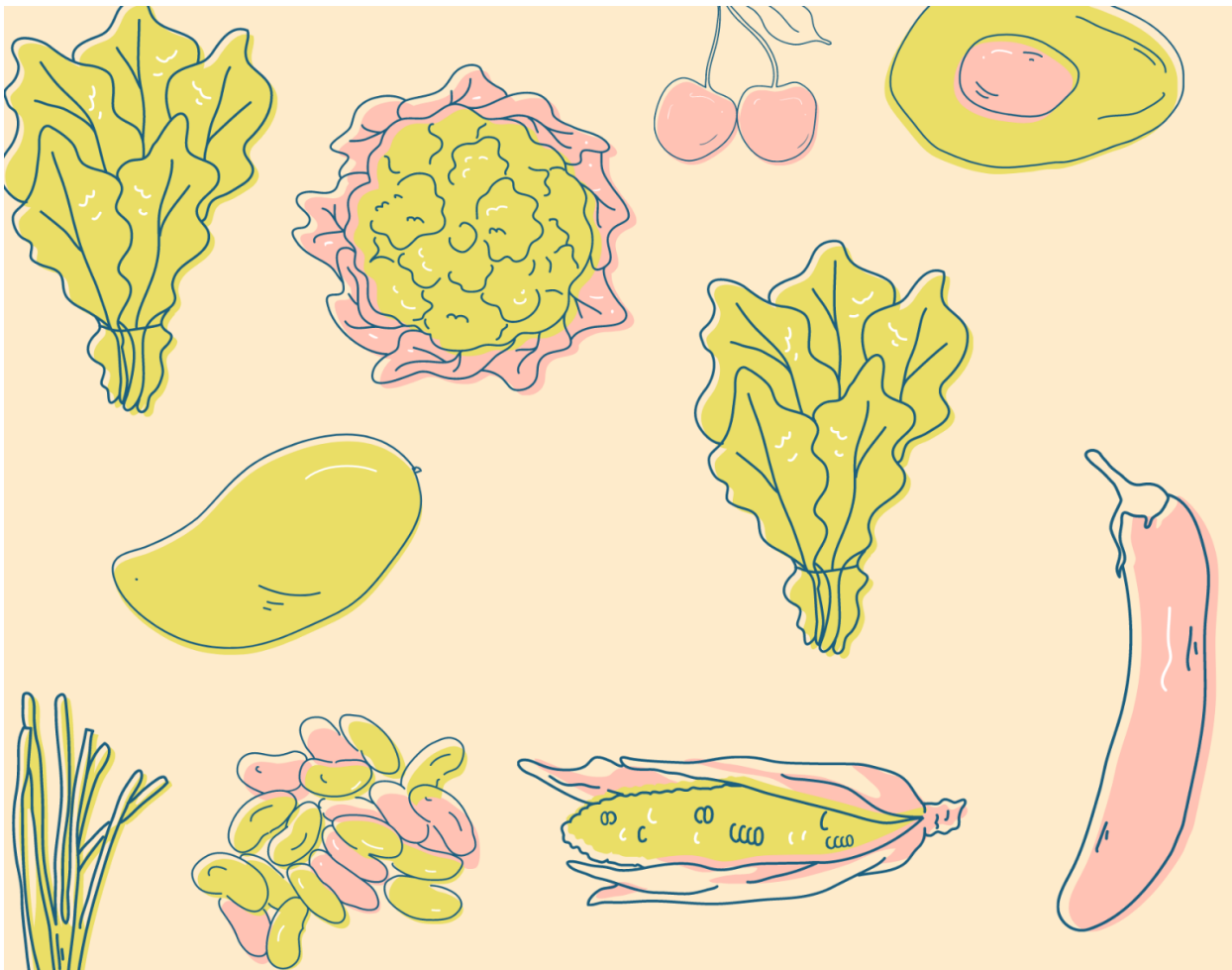
#### *Promotional Materials:*

Please find attached in Appendix A.

Appendix A: Promotional Material

#### *Photos*

Please find attached in Appendix B.



# LET'S TALK FOOD!

**Join us on July 14 at 3:30 pm at  
the Hall for a film screening  
and discussions**

**Donations accepted,  
refreshments available**



PENDER ISLAND COMMUNITY HALL

# *tour of Cottonwood Creek Farm*

WITH BARRY THE BEEMASTER



FRIDAY, JULY 16

1-3 PM

REGISTER BY EMAILING  
[PENDERHALLHERITAGE@GMAIL.COM](mailto:PENDERHALLHERITAGE@GMAIL.COM)



DONATIONS ACCEPTED

MEET AT THE FARM





PENDER ISLAND COMMUNITY HALL

# *bread making* *workshop*

WITH ALLY TAMMEMAGI

.....

SUNDAY, JULY 18

2-5PM

REGISTER BY EMAILING  
[PENDERHALLHERITAGE@GMAIL.COM](mailto:PENDERHALLHERITAGE@GMAIL.COM)

DONATIONS ACCEPTED

ALL MATERIALS PROVIDED



# BAKING WORKSHOP WITH JAYDE VAN EATON

**Sunday, July 25th**

**2-5 pm**

REGISTER BY EMAILING  
[PENDERHALLHERITAGE@GMAIL.COM](mailto:PENDERHALLHERITAGE@GMAIL.COM)

DONATIONS ACCEPTED

ALL MATERIALS PROVIDED





# TWIN ISLAND CIDERY TOUR



**WEDNESDAY, AUGUST  
11 @ 3PM**

**5601 LUPIN ROAD, PENDER ISLAND**



REGISTRATION REQUIRED, CONTACT  
[PENDERHALLHERITAGE@GMAIL.COM](mailto:PENDERHALLHERITAGE@GMAIL.COM)  
PENDER ISLAND COMMUNITY HALL



To register, please email  
[penderhallheritage@gmail.com](mailto:penderhallheritage@gmail.com) or  
call 250-629-3669



# ***Jam and Chutney Workshop with Anne Burdett***

## **AUGUST 15, 2-5PM**

JOIN US AT THE PENDER COMMUNITY HALL  
AS WE LEARN TO MAKE SOME DELICIOUS  
BLACKBERRY JAM AND CHUTNEY. YOU CAN  
EVEN TAKE A JAR HOME!



ADMISSION PWYC, SLIDING SCALE  
(\$5 SUGGESTED)  
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT  
PENDERHALLHERITAGE@GMAIL.COM  
OR CALL 250-629-3669





# Tomato Canning Workshop with Karin Campbell

● ● ●

## August 22, 2-5PM

Try out some water canning of everyone's favourite tomatoes. Don't forget to take your jar home with you!



Admission PWYC, sliding scale (\$5 suggested).

For more information, contact [penderhallheritage@gmail.com](mailto:penderhallheritage@gmail.com) or call 250-629-3669

**AUGUST 29, 2-5PM,  
COMMUNITY HALL**

***Fermentation Workshop  
with Karin Campbell***

Take a jar of cabbage  
home!

Admission is PWYC  
(\$5 suggested)

Registration required, email  
[penderhallheritage@gmail.com](mailto:penderhallheritage@gmail.com) to sign up

Appendix B: Photos of Various Events



























## 5. Mayne Island Apple Festival (MIAS)

### **MAYNE ISLAND APPLE FESTIVAL REPORT**

October 15, 2021

Submitted by: Russ Anthony

The Mayne Island Apple Festival was held on Saturday, October 9, 2021 following the practice of previous years of holding it on the Saturday of the Thanksgiving weekend. The Festival is made up of three main elements:

- 1) the Community Squeeze where community juicing equipment run by volunteers invite residents to bring in their small batch of apples for juicing;
- 2) The Apple Showcase where varieties of apples grown on Mayne (158 varieties this year, even though it was a poor yield year) are displayed, participants vote for Mayne's Best Tasting Apple. Experts provide advice on apple growing and apple identification, and there is apple juice and cider tasting, lively music and other events to celebrate and inform on the importance of local food production; and
- 3) All this is tied in with the last Farmer's Market of the season where vendors sell special apple treats and attendees can buy apples to take home.

Taken together the specially decorated site attracts hundreds of people to learn, share and enjoy the Island's apple bounty. The Festival is held in the Agricultural Hall Grounds under large open wall tents specially set up for the Festival, and this year was reorganized to meet or exceed all public health protocols. We cancelled the children's art and play area (no apple bobbing!) and all volunteers wore masks and gently enforced social distancing, but that did not seem to affect the festive atmosphere.

A special feature of the Mayne Island Apple Festival is that there is no admission charge and all squeezing and tastings are by donation only with all the net proceeds of the Festival going to the Mayne Island Food Bank. Everything is run by volunteers and even some of the proceeds from apple sales went to the Food Bank.

There are no orchard tours and apple growers provide the apples for display or juicing as their support of local apple production. This fosters a strong community feeling around food production. Because all net proceeds go to the Food Bank, the Festival itself operates from annual grants or revenue generated by holding spring workshops, which though also by donation, do sometimes generate funds beyond costs.

The Festival costs are about \$500 annually, mostly for renting tents, display materials, advertising and community communication and the out of pocket costs of experts or other attendees from off Island. Because the 2019 Festival was cancelled after we received a grant from the Agricultural Society we needed only \$200 to meet our expected costs, so that is all we requested from the CWF funds.

We expect to hold the Apple Festival again next year and would respectfully request a larger grant to cover the Festival and support efforts to make it an even better experience. Because of the way

we operate financially, a grant to the Apple Festival is also supporting community engagement, local apple producers to showcase their products, the Food Bank and the Farmer's Market. I hope we can discuss this matter further at the appropriate time.

## 6. Seed Library Support (GIFC)



Report to: Ed Andrusiak, Food Resilience Alliance

2021-11-02

Report by: Roz Kempe, Gulf Islands Food Co-op

### **SEED CLEANING AND SAVING WORKSHOP – OCTOBER 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

#### **Overview**

The Gulf Islands Food Co-op (GIFC) invited FarmFolkCityFolk (FFCF) to come to Pender Island to provide a seed saving and seed cleaning workshop. The FFCF have a mobile trailer full of large and small-scale seed cleaning equipment that they provide to communities all over the Province in the fall. This service helps growers with seed saving and cleaning, free of charge. The GIFC signed up for this service and promoted the workshop to communities on all four gulf islands. We attracted 25 participants, created a professional video of the event highlights, and were able to provide many vegetable seeds to the Pender Seed Library.

#### **Background**

There are three fully established Seed Libraries on Galiano, Mayne and Pender Islands. Saturna has also taken small steps towards a community seed resource. There is increased interest on the islands in saving our own seeds and being more resilient in seed supply ever since Covid supply chain issues led to shortages in 2020.

For a seed library to be successful the participants and particularly the leaders need to be knowledgeable about how to save, clean and store seeds, and since there is so much to learn it is helpful to create opportunities for continuous learning. The goal of this workshop was to learn to use seed cleaning equipment, and to provide growers with basic information about how to save seeds from vegetable plants. It was also intended to bring the community together around a common purpose of food security for the islands.

#### **The Workshop**

GIFC booked the FFCF Mobile Seed Cleaner in August, for an October workshop on Pender Island (SDAYES) – specifically at Highgrove Farm just off Hooson Road. We chose to hold the workshop on Pender because the community Bean Collective had grown a large quantity of beans, and we were looking for a way to efficiently process them. After harvesting and drying, the beans needed some

mechanized threshing and cleaning. It was important to FFCF to have a large volume of seeds to process to make it worth their while to travel to the islands.

The morning work started at 10am to process beans from the Bean Collective and beans from another grower (New Direction farm), using the FFCF thresher and winnower. There were 9 of us working in the morning to learn from the FFCF staff how to operate equipment, and to hand thresh some beans. The FFCF staff operated the thresher, but we were taught how to operate the winnower (The Winnow Wizard) and learned how to operate a smaller table-top winnower (The Clipper) for cleaning small sized vegetable seeds. We ended up with 22kg of dried beans for the Collective, plus another 17kg for New Direction farm. We filled several large jars with coriander, barley, lettuce and beet seeds. Many of these will be donated to the Pender Seed Library.

The public workshop began at 1pm, which was attended by 25 people, including 2 from the Galiano seed library. The workshop was specifically scheduled to allow for ferry schedules from the different islands, and we provided transportation from/to the Otter Bay terminal. Covid-safe protocols were followed throughout the day – masks, sanitizer, mostly outdoor activity, and distancing when indoors. We also collected attendees' contact information.

We began the afternoon session with appreciation for the WSANEC traditional territories on which the workshop was located, and where many of the beans were grown. FFCF then provided an hour-long presentation about the basics of seed saving, after which everyone was welcome to help clean remaining beans and/or clean their own vegetable seeds with The Clipper. The small hand screens were popular to use because of their simplicity and were the best tool for very small amounts of seeds. It was a valuable opportunity to try out the seed cleaning equipment that the GIFC hopes to purchase next year, in particular the Clipper and some hand screens. Several people were interested and inspired to learn about the Bean Collective which provides a fun and practical way to grow beans collaboratively - perhaps this idea will spread to other farms and other islands.

The entire day was filmed by Kenta Kikuchi, who then made two videos – one 5-minute Highlights video, and one full-length recording of the presentation. Both are now posted on the GIFC website <https://gulfishlandsfoodco-op.org/seed-saving-page/>

The day ended at about 4pm, and feedback was very positive – it was very educational and inspiring, and many valuable connections were made between participants. The FFCF staff were knowledgeable and experienced, offering an information-dense event; and the location was perfectly suited being a large barn with covered outdoor workspace. We are excited to repeat the session next year, possibly rotating to different islands so that the benefits and opportunities are shared among the islands. The two attendees from Galiano expressed an interest to hold a workshop there next year.

The workshop was extremely good value, costing only \$1370 in total including the professional videographer. In future, we should budget more money to pay for the facility rental (which was donated this year), and FFCF will likely need to charge a fee for their service in future years. If video work is required in future, there should be a higher budget as half the work was donated this time.

The poster that was used to promote the workshop is attached, along with photos of the event. Promotion occurred through GIFC e-mail list, Facebook, and Pender Post. We are grateful to

FarmFolkCityFolk and Highgrove Farm, as well as our funder the Community Works Fund. We would also like to thank Vancity for supporting the start-up of the Pender Seed Library, and many other GIFC projects.



FarmFolk CityFolk presents:

# Seed Cleaning and Saving Workshop

Learn the basics of seed saving and clean your seeds using our equipment. Get hands on experience with a thresher, clipper, and winnow wizard.

**October , 2021 | 1:30 pm**  
**Hosts: Ben Kadel & Roland Maurice**  
**Location: Highgrove Farm,**  
**441 Highgrove rd., Pender Island**

Register for FREE with Karin  
at [penderseedlibrary@gmail.com](mailto:penderseedlibrary@gmail.com)



The threshing machine being cleaned before use.



The dried beans waiting to be threshed.



The Clipper table-top seed cleaner



The Clipper close-up.



Hand threshing beans



Hand-threshing chick peas



FCCF Presentation audience inside the barn



Cleaned "Tigers Eye" beans



## 7. Galiano Gleaning Project (GCFP)

### **Galiano Community Food Program Project Report**

**Event Name:** Gleaning Project 2021

**Date:** summer/fall 2021

#### **How it works**

The gleaning project organizes groups of volunteer pickers to pick excess fruit (and sometimes vegetables). We are very grateful to the landowners who generously host us, and being respectful of their space and property is very important. This also sometimes determines the times we are able to pick, as we make sure we are there when it is convenient to any residents.

The harvest is divided 3 ways: One third for the landowner, one third for the Food Program, and one third divided among the picking volunteers. When I have a site that I know is ready to pick, I email everyone on the Gleaning list to inform you of the opportunity. I try to give you as much notice as possible, but often the window is pretty tight - ripe fruit waits for no picker! It's much easier for me to coordinate if you reply promptly.

I work hard to gauge the right number of pickers, taking into consideration how much fruit there is, and what we can safely manage at each site. Sometimes there are more people interested than we can accommodate - please know that I do my best to make sure everyone gets a chance to pick and if I say no to you for one pick, you'll probably be first in line for the next opportunity. This does mean that each person should not expect to pick more than a handful of times each season. How often you can expect to pick depends on your availability and how bountiful a harvest we have from year to year.

If you indicate you are available for a pick, and you are offered a spot to pick, please take that commitment seriously. I know that things come up last minute and sometimes it is necessary to cancel - in that case please give me as much notice as possible so that I can hopefully replace you. It's much more efficient when we can visit a site with the right number of pickers and get all the ripe fruit, rather than have to arrange to return multiple times to the same trees. (However, please do NOT attend a picking session if you are unwell, even if it means cancelling at the last minute.)

#### **Safety**

As always, Gleaning is an exercise in working communally. The Gleaning Coordinators will work to ensure instructions are clear and everyone is comfortable. Keeping everyone safe requires that you follow instructions, use patience with each other, and ask questions and voice your concerns. Look out for one another! Please review the Orchard Ladder Safety overview.

#### **Stats**

48 active community members (63 last year)

25 picking sessions (22 last year)

17 picking sites (15 last year)

1967lbs of fruit (2988 last year)

#### **Issues/concerns/discoveries**

This year I recruited more 'deputy' gleaning coordinators. We had a team of 3 plus myself this year and it worked really well - it splits the workload in the peak season, and also helps a lot having people who live in

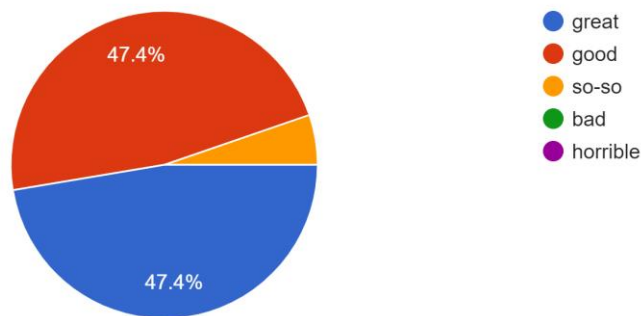
different parts of the island who can check for ripeness in their neighbourhood. This year we ran a first aid training program before Gleaning started and all of the coordinators had their first aid certification.

A truck would be a huge help - it is tricky to manage the large ladders in personal vehicles, and it's also tricky to get the gear to so many different sites between the different coordinators - would be so much easier if the gear just lived in the truck during the picking season. One coordinator actually damaged her personal vehicle trying to squeeze all the gear in this year, and I often have minor damage to my vehicle as well from loading the ladders on.

### Feedback Survey Responses - 19 respondents

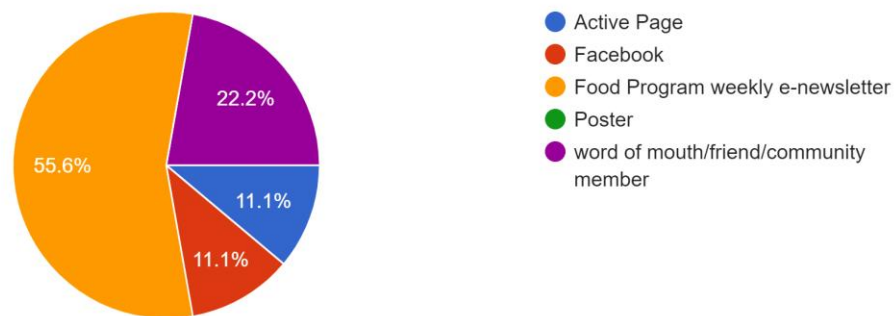
How was this year's Gleaning Project?

19 responses



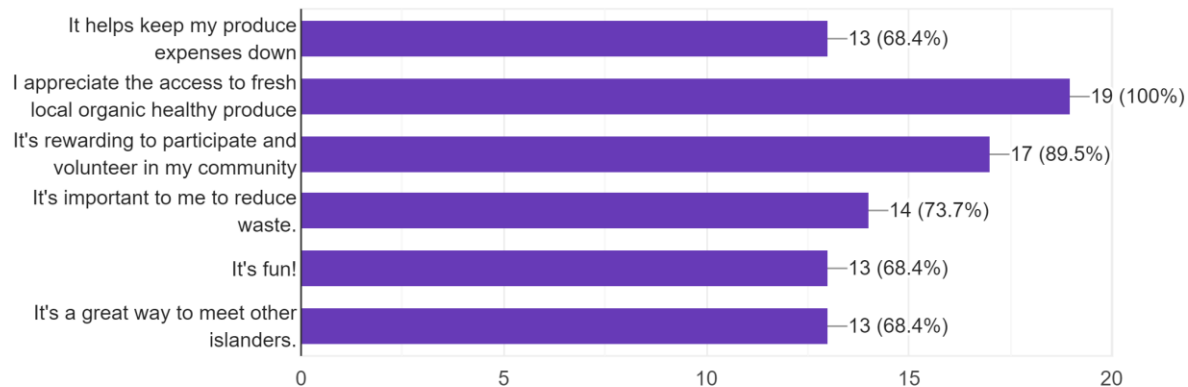
New members: How did you hear about the Gleaning Project?

9 responses



Why do you participate in the Gleaning project? Please check all that apply.

19 responses

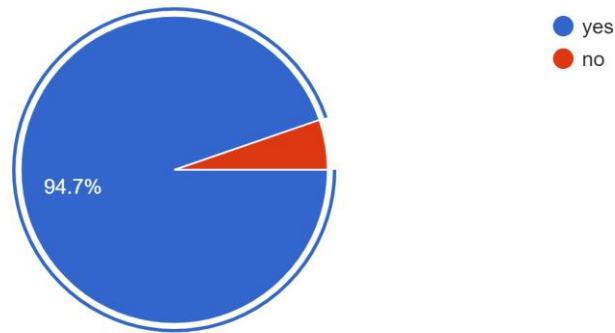


### What were your favourite parts?

- Healthy delicious fruit that is greatly appreciated
- teamwork, visiting other properties, sharing abundance of good food
- Getting out to do something different than work on our property.
- Visiting familiar orchards and gardens year after year, and reconnecting with friends I haven't seen in a while.
- Delicious fruit!
- Being part of the community and receiving fresh produce
- Interacting with other gleaners! Also sharing recipes and ideas of what we were going to do with the fruit.
- Meeting other gleaners
- The community spirit
- local food, saving money
- It feels good to be able to have surplus to preserve which helps to keep our produce costs down in the winter months. I also like contributing to the food program.
- Looking at the harvested apples
- The sociability of picking with others; the connection to the seasons; the joy of abundance and sharing it.
- community involvement, finding new ways to use / preserve fruit
- Learning about different varieties and what's in season when
- meeting other gleaners
- enjoying the company of other gleaners; sharing the harvest with neighbours
- All of it

Did you meet someone new through Gleaning this year?

19 responses

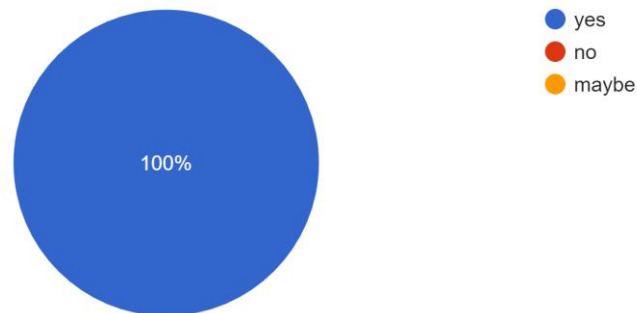


### What should we do differently next year?

- It's so great! I wasn't sure if I could bring my partner this year, some people did, but I know there is a limit to the numbers of gleaners, so I didn't.
- I will volunteer after Sept because I think the apples will be riper
- Yer nailing it!
- Possibly link more with processing workshops
- Maybe recruit more landowners to participate
- Nothing
- It's all good
- more ladders
- I appreciate how the food program is run and how the glean team is conducted. I do not have any suggestions for improvements at this time.
- Nothing really
- Once this year, there was a bit of a miscalculation re: the number of pickers versus the amount of fruit.
- n/a!
- increase community awareness that gleaning exists and all are welcome to participate
- It was a little discouraging to not know whether you were going to be offered a spot after volunteering, (wondering how long you should wait to get a confirmation?), so it became hard to plan. Anything to improve on that communication piece would be nice.
- Have a check-in midway with gleaners to see their priorities ( in terms of personal food security) have been met or if they are really hoping for a certain food, e.g. corn/apples

Do you expect to participate again next year?

19 responses



**Is there anything else you'd like to share about the project?**

- An island program that we are thankful for everyday. As people whose health requires a low sugar diet, because of this program we have home made sugar free jam on our toast every morning!
- Wonderful leadership thank you
- I love everything about the gleaning program! It's very Galiano!
- No
- Loved it!
- I sometimes have trouble affording enough food for my family to eat healthy and well especially in the winter months. I rely on the gleaning project to be able to preserve fruit through drying and canning. This way my kids get fruit through the winter even when it becomes too expensive in the store for us to afford. Thank you for all the work that you do to keep this program running.
- Thank you!
- Gleaning is a wonderful idea
- I appreciate the opportunities sent my way.
- This is an amazing program that I am extremely proud to be a part of. Thank-you to all of the organizers!!

## 8. Galiano Garlic Co-op (GCFP)

### Project Report

**Event Name:** Community Garlic Co-op Garden 2021

**Date:** growing season 2020-21, harvest 2021

### How it works

The Galiano Community Food Program Garlic Co-op grows 1000+ heads of garlic each year. The co-op began in 2009 and has moved twice since the original site. 2021 was our 5th year growing on our current site. Typically we plant our own seed, which we've saved over several seasons and becomes quite acclimatized to our growing conditions. The original purchased seed is certified organic. We plant in the fall, and harvest in June/July. We save the biggest bulbs of our harvest to use as seeds the next season. In the spring, we harvest scapes, the green tops of the plants that are delicious. We fertilize with sheep manure, blood meal and fish fertilizer. We meet about once a month to do the work as a group. These are usually fun sessions that last 1-2 hours. Each participant's share of the garlic harvest is calculated based on the number of hours they attend. We encourage contributions of organic matter for the compost, and leaves or cardboard for mulch. Members get extra credit for these contributions.

We collect a membership fee of \$30-\$50 (sliding scale) each season. This goes towards the cost of amendments such as fertilizer and also goes towards the cost of staff coordinating hours.

### 2021 Stats

Active Members: 14 (see list at end), same as last year

10 work parties over the year

Planted: 1561 cloves in early November (up 100 from last year)

Harvested: 1334 bulbs on July 16, of which 684 were undamaged. See notes below.

### Successes

Membership was steady and the group worked well together. This year we continued with our pandemic protocol, and most of the year was pretty smooth.

### Challenges

A few weeks after we'd planted our main beds, we did put in an extra bed as an afterthought, to get a few more seed in, but it was a failure - the bed wasn't able to drain well because it wasn't raised up, and very few of the seed took (although the ones at the top of the slope did ok).

We did have a significant setback at harvest time. One of the participants noticed during scape harvest that some of our plants were looking sickly and had mold. This was a surprise because it had been such a dry summer season, so I sent some samples to the provincial lab for testing, and they confirmed the presence of white rot. This is quite a devastating diagnosis - harmless to humans but very destructive to the plants, rendering them much less likely to cure and store. Even worse, it lives in contaminated soil for decades. As a result, our 2021-22 season will involve a significant increase in labour as we dig a new bed and start over in uncontaminated soil, and without saved seed, our seed cost outlay for the subsequent season will be up \$865. Fortunately, the landowner has kindly agreed to let us use the adjacent plot so at least we have a site secured. 650 bulbs were damaged by mold. A good portion of these were still good to eat, but not suitable for curing and storing. By not saving any of our harvest for seed, we were still able to make sure that our members took a good amount home, so in the end there wasn't too much disappointment.

It's hard to know exactly what caused the problem. It could be that our original purchased seed was contaminated, and that seems the most likely, especially as our records show some signs of mold in small amounts over most of the years we have been in this site. The problem didn't become serious until the 5th year, which was the first year we returned to a bed for the second time, after a 4 year rotation.

### Recommendations

Our current model works quite well, and saving our own seed has been a great way for participants to observe over the years how much bigger the bulbs get (since that is the quality we select for when saving our seed). It's also been a very affordable way for us to acquire seed - certified organic garlic seed isn't cheap! However it's clear after this year that we have to plan for unexpected setbacks when growing, and if at all possible, allocate funding to cover unanticipated seed costs that may arise.

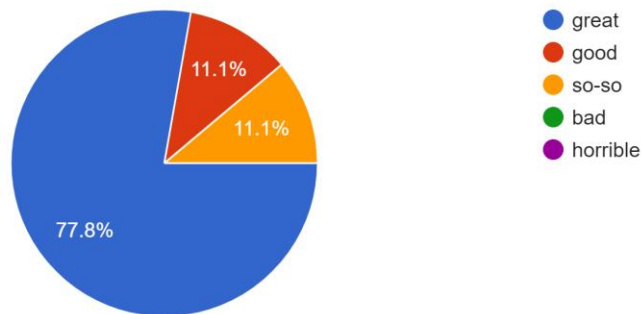
### Weather

An especially wet early spring and an especially dry summer.

### Feedback ( responses from survey)

How was your experience with this season of the garlic co-op?

9 responses



### What was your favourite part of being a garlic co-op member?

Be part of a team who grows organic garlic. Great work atmosphere

Getting out and meeting people I wouldn't normally cross paths with. Also, garlic.

having Emma doing all of the organising

Comradery & the flexibility of picking up and delivering cardboard when convenient as well as working with others to distribute it.

Working together. Seeing people that had been hard during Covid.

Extra garlic!

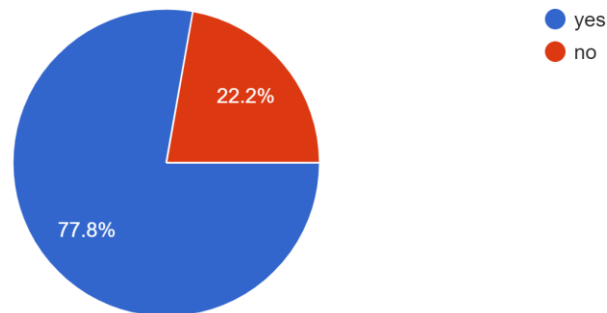
Working together

Working out in the fresh air with a group of enthusiastic (mainly) women

Working with others

Did you meet someone new through the co-op this year?

9 responses

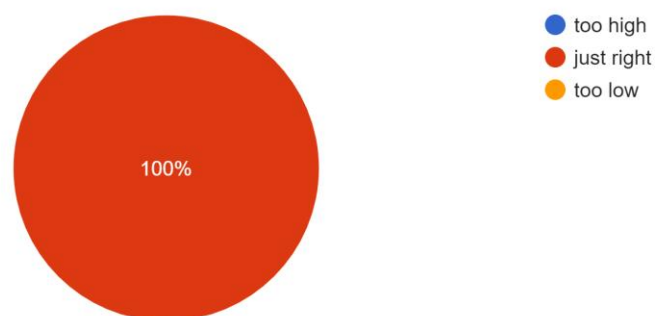


### Were you happy with the harvest?

- We got less generous harvest than usually because a garlic disease but it is part of gardening. We are learning from it.
- Definitely! Almost too much for me.
- Bad luck with all the care & effort that the crop became infected. I wonder if the wet spell &/or the heat waves contributed.
- No; about 25% were diseased, with some partly useable. Can they be highgraded and preserved?
- Yes, even though there were problems.
- Not particularly but food growers can't expect bumper crops every year.
- Ok
- Definitely
- Except for the whole mould thing yes

Did you think the membership price of \$30/\$50 per year was reasonable?

9 responses



### Any suggestions for how we can improve the co-op?

I really like the way it is done. Perfect 🏆

continue as is

No, I think it is great, well organised, educational.

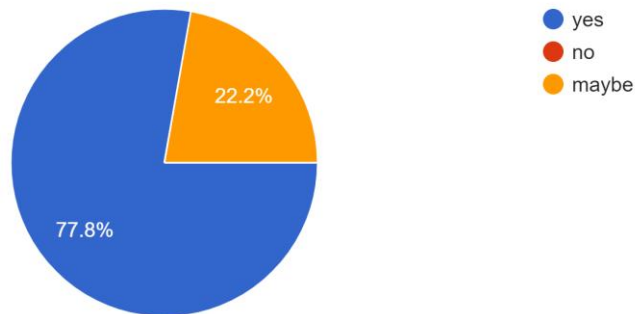
Not really.

Not really

Have people sign in and out, then there is no discrepancies in the final count of hours worked

Do you expect to be a member in the co-op next year?

9 responses



**Is there anything else you'd like to share about the co-op?**

When a member has something to say, we listen and discuss.

Thanks to Emma for amazing interpersonal & organizational skills

I always appreciate your openness to doing things differently.

Appreciate all the work done by Emma and the Food Program!

So glad to be part of Food program and that Food program organizes, keeps tally, stc.

No

It was good!!!

**Expenses**

None for garlic seed - we planted all our own saved seed this year

\$30 In cover crop seed

\$25 in fish fertilizer (\$31/bottle. Didn't use a whole bottle)

\$100 in Blood meal

\$10 Lime

Replacement Seed costs: \$865

Staffing costs: 46.5 hours at \$28 = 1302

\$0 in-kind hours for Youth Development Leaders

\$0 in-kind donation of land use

\$0 in-kind donation of manure + delivery

TOTAL: \$2332

**Revenues**

\$2500 from FRA minus \$160 re-allocated to Gleaning = \$2340

\$500 in memberships reallocated to other Food Program projects = \$0

\$0 in-kind hours from CRC for Youth Development Leaders

\$0 in-kind donation of land use

\$0 in-kind donation of manure + delivery  
TOTAL: \$2340

### **Notes for next time**

### **Membership list**

1. Nicole D'Allaire
2. Barb Grehan
3. Colette Lagace
4. Diana Lilly
5. Richard Nathans
6. Nancy McPhee
7. Cate Sandilands
8. Hanna Sandilands
9. Jelena Crane
10. Jodie Bard
11. Joey Schibald
12. Joan Robertson
13. Pat Pilat
14. Jane Wolverton

## 9. Indigenous Food Plants Project (GIFC)



Report to:

Ed Andrusiak, Food Resilience Alliance

2021-12-12

Report by:

Roz Kempe, Gulf Islands Food Co-op

### **INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND NATIVE PLANTS PROJECT**

#### **Overview**

The Gulf Islands Food Co-op (GIFC) is committed to working on developing respectful working relationships with the Indigenous peoples of these islands. Given that so few of the Indigenous communities have any physical presence on the islands, it can be challenging to know how to connect. Our intent with this native food plants project was to make some connections with any one of the WSANEC, Lelum Sar Augh Ta Naogh (Coast Salish Peoples of Galiano Island - CSPoGI), or Penelakut communities to work together on a native food plants project of their choosing. We were able to connect with WSANEC and CSPoGI in two very different ways as described below.

#### **PEPAKEN HAUTW Native Plants Nursery (located at Brentwood Bay WSANEC Tribal School)**

In November this year, we had a very productive and meaningful conversation with the Director of the PEPAKEN HAUTW Nursery – Judith Lyn Arney – about possible opportunities for collaboration in the future. This unique native-plants nursery is a non-profit organization dedicated to education of the WSANEC youth, and to restoration of their unceded homelands including reserve land on SDAYES (Pender Island) located at QENENIW (Hayes Point).

The conversation was rich with learning for GIFC (Nancy Goodman and Roz Kempe), with open sharing about challenging topics, for example, how settler methods of ‘agriculture’ are practiced on Indigenous lands, and how the Indigenous landscape still exists just underneath the lands that have been cleared for farming on the islands. Judith suggested that if growers can be encouraged to work with natural systems on these farmlands, the value the land can be recognized in a more holistic way. If landowners could be better informed as to the specific ecosystem inherent in the landscape that they occupy, perhaps some restoration of parts of these lands could occur, providing a potential path forward for reconciliation.

Restoration work is seen as a physical act of decolonization, and restoration acts are embedded in Indigenous land sovereignty. To do restoration work together may create more awareness of how restoring the ecosystems also recognizes Indigenous cultures and their deep connection to the land. There is an opportunity to use our settler privilege to help educate other settlers of the effects of the erasure of Indigenous culture on the land, and how we can actively restore/decolonize.

Children from the Tribal School are involved in food growing and restoration work on the school lands, and once they are a bit older, they help with restoration work out in the other traditional reserve lands, including on SDAYES. In the future, these skilled restoration workers ideally could be employed as teams to provide education and restoration work throughout the WSANEC lands and beyond. This would require a framework along with funding to implement and could be seen as a long-term project to work on collaboratively.

In the short-term, GIFC and PEPAKEN HAUTW agreed we may be able to collaborate on one or more of the following:

1. Day of Restoration and Education at QENENIW on SDAYES. This work would involve community engagement with WSANEC peoples (and possibly SDAYES settlers, if the WSANEC are open to this) to do physical restoration work along with education of Indigenous understanding of natural processes working together in the ecosystem. This work can be done anytime between March and November, with different activities in different seasons. Formally, the WSANEC community requires that a WSANEC archaeologist be onsite anytime that restoration work is being done. If settlers are to be involved there may be a need to do some pre-workshop education about respecting the land and understanding the purpose of the project. Judith will provide a budget, then GIFC will apply for grants to secure the funds if possible.
2. The creation of a tool (ie—pamphlet, webpage, or other) to enable settlers to identify the traditional ecosystem on which they have settled, along with helping to improve the natural processes of the land. This could encourage creating a relationship with the land outside of the economic requirements of food production. This tool could be distributed widely in the Gulf Islands and would help embed the idea of Indigenous land sovereignty into agricultural uses of land.
3. GIFC Board members would be interested in attending a future “Thursday” work day at SNIDCEL (Tod Inlet) to actively work at restoration and build relationships with the WSANEC community.

As part of the CRFAIR Good Food Gathering event on November 25<sup>th</sup>, the PEPAKEN HAUTW leaders provided a tour of the SNIDCEL restoration site, which GIFC (Roz Kempe) attended. We were able to provide a \$400 donation to PEPAKEN HAUTW, using the CWF funds, as appreciation for all the time they offered us, and to show good faith towards continuing our relationship.

### **Galiano Conservancy – Native Plants Garden for the Lelum Sar Augh Ta Naogh office site**

The Lelum Sar Augh Ta Naogh (Coast Salish Peoples of Galiano - CSPoGI) has a new office building on Galiano Island right on the waterfront. This community identified a need for a native plants garden as a learning tool for their community members. The Galiano Conservancy has staff skilled in native plant restoration, and a nursery, and also has a good working relationship with Shar Wilson of the CSPoGI.

The GIFC had the CWF funds, and so we partnered on implementing this project in which the GCA designed a small garden to meet Shar’s vision, and selected plants from the GCA nursery.

On December 6<sup>th</sup>, the GIFC (Roz Kempe) joined the GCA work crew to prepare the ground and build a deer fence. Although we had planned to install the plants on the same day, with members of the CSPoGI, the snowstorm the previous night blocked off access from Shar’s driveway. So we have postponed the actual planting activity, but in the meantime, the site is all ready to go, and the plants selected and waiting – see photos below.

We hope this project will serve as the beginning of a positive working relationship between the GIFC and the CSPoGI. It will most importantly provide a demonstration garden of native food and medicine plants for Indigenous community members to tend and learn from and beautify the space.

**Photos from the site preparation day, December 6<sup>th</sup> 2021, Galiano Island:**

Preparing the site



The site prep completed – just needs a little soil and the plants (already selected and waiting)



GCA Native Plant Nursery



**Photos from the SNIDCEL restoration site, tour hosted by PEPAKEN HAUTW, November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

Restored area with invasives removed, and then replanted with native species



Sarah Jim (left) and Judith Lyn Arney, from PEPAKEN HAUTW explaining the restoration work at SNIDCEL.



## 10. Countertop Gardens Project (CRC)

### SGI CRC- KITCHEN COUNTERTOP GARDENS PROJECT

#### DESCRIPTION:

The Southern Gulf Islands Community Resource Centre recognized that seniors or folks living in temporary housing might have trouble growing their own food. Considering that many islanders are privileged to have enough garden space to supplement their diets with home-grown food, the CRC felt that everyone else should be able to at least grow some herbs or salad greens if so desired. The Kitchen Countertop Gardens project served as a pilot to see if indoor growing kits would be successful in filling this gap. With the gardens also came a seed library membership (\$10 value), appropriate seeds, and a bag of potting soil.

#### MARKETING:

Originally, the project was meant to be useful for seniors who may live in smaller suites or are physically unable to maintain a garden. After contacting the Better at Home program on Galiano, it was discovered that seniors either didn't have enough room in their suites for the gardens (not enough counter space), or were sufficient enough in keeping a garden. Therefore we decided to reach out to the food bank since some folks using their services may want to grow food yet may not have the space or time to grow their own food. We advertised in the Active Page and also put up an informational flyer in the Food Bank.

#### PARTICIPANTS:

Out of the 5 gardens we purchased, one user is a senior, three are food bank users, and one is a community member who hadn't set up their garden yet. The coordinator also received a garden to test it out and troubleshoot.

#### SUCSESSES:

- Gardens were fairly simple to put together and use
- Made a short video to show the process
- Also made a handout to check in with participants, offering tips and recipes using salad greens and herbs
- The uptake of the gardens was quick, all of them are still in use

#### CHALLENGES:

- Received little to no feedback on how it's going with the gardens
  - At least one of the participants does not use the Internet
- Some folks might find the seed library aspect too complicated to use
- Additional potting soil for refreshing the gardens may be a cost barrier
- Confidentiality is a big deal for working with the food bank, which made it a bit more complicated for communications (e.g. not necessarily going to make a Facebook group for participants for support, etc.)

#### NEXT TIME:

- Establish a better line of communication right at the beginning- hand out or send an introduction survey with the link to the video & asking preferred contact method
- Ensure clarity about expectations in regards to feedback from participants

# WANT TO START A GARDEN BUT DON'T HAVE THE SPACE OR TIME?

## Sign up for a countertop garden!

What's included:

- Low energy LED grow lights
- Auto-watering up to 2 weeks
- Seeds from the Seed Library of Galiano
- Potting soil
- Gardening support + demo videos

Interested? Email:

**[galianofoodbank@gmail.com](mailto:galianofoodbank@gmail.com)**

to get a kit.

A project by the:



## **11. Microgreens Workshop (GCFP)**

Project on hold until 2022.