

Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Farmer Survey

Introduction

The Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District has recently contracted a team of local professionals to assist with implementation of some primary initiatives of the 2011 Alberni Valley Agricultural Plan.

Those initiatives are

1. Exploring options for Farmer's Market improvements.
2. Identifying farm gate sales opportunities.
3. Identifying local marketing opportunities in the Alberni Valley, the West Coast, and Vancouver Island.
4. Identifying grant opportunities for the local agricultural sector.
5. Including shellfish growers in local agricultural initiatives.

This survey is one of the key methods the team will use to assess the needs of the farmers with regards to those initiatives. What you have to say IS important! We sincerely thank you for taking the time to fill it out.

Please note that results will only be available to the public in general form and without any names or associations attached to responses. We respect the right to your privacy.

* Survey respondents will be entered to win an ad in Island Farm magazine.

Please complete survey and either drop it off or mail to the ACRD office below

***Alberni Clayoquot Regional District
C/O Farm Plan Implementation Team
3008 5th Ave
Port Alberni, BC
V9Y 2E3***



ALBERNI-CLAYOQUOT
REGIONAL DISTRICT



Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Farmer Survey - October, 2014

The Farm Plan Implementation Team - Who We Are and Why We Care

Connie Kuramoto - Team Leader

Connie is the current manager of the Canadian Mental Health Association's Healthy Harvest Farms in Port Alberni. Connie has extensive previous experience in the Horticulture and Agriculture industry, including managing both a market garden and commercially run greenhouses. She was employed at Vancouver Island University as an instructor and technician for over twenty years. Connie has retired from VIU, but continues to teach Horticulture at North Island College in Port Alberni and at Gaia College in their Organic Land Care Diploma Program, as well as offering various workshops throughout the Vancouver Island area and in Vancouver. Connie is the owner of "Gardens on the Go", which offers Horticulture training, services and consultations. Connie is passionate about all aspects of food security, including both ecological and economic factors.

Anna Lewis - Project Assistant

Anna Lewis was raised on an Alberni Valley family farm that currently has four generations residing on it. During this time Anna has witnessed several evolutions of traditional farming, including beef, dairy, hops and forage. She inherently understands the challenges facing small and large scale agriculture having worked in dairy, greenhouse production, silviculture, market gardens, and community gardens. Anna has relevant experience with the process of agricultural based business start-up, market research, niche marketing, bookkeeping, grant applications, survey development, conducting interviews and she knows the importance of due diligence.

Heather Shobe - Project Assistant

Heather Shobe is owner/operator of Eden Tree Farm and Gardening, a small farm in the Alberni Valley. Her business projects include starting a local Fruit Gleaning Project and spearheading a School Garden initiative. Heather has extensive experience with farm marketing, market research, bookkeeping, as well as small farm start-up and operation. She also has experience with identifying and completing grant applications and funding for various projects. Heather is an active member of Alberni Valley Transition Towns Food Group and a board member on the local Vancouver Island Health Authority Community Food Action Initiative.

Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Farmer Survey - October, 2014
General Info About Your Farm

Your Name _____

Farm Name _____

Farm Size / Number of Acres _____

Specific location of farm within region _____

Main Crops _____

Other Crops _____

Approximate Annual Farm Revenue _____

Best contact phone number _____

Email address _____

Farm Marketing and Farm Gate Sales

6. Where do you sell your products? Please circle all that apply

Farm Gate Farmer's Market Wholesaler Retailer
Online Other (name) _____

7. Which of those marketing opportunities would you like to increase? _____

8. Which are your least preferred marketing opportunities? Why? _____

9. What are your perceived barriers to increased-

Farm Gate Sales? _____

Wholesale sales? _____

Retail Sales? _____

Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Farmer Survey - October, 2014

10. How could the ACRD help to decrease those barriers? _____

11. Have you participated in, or are you interested in participating in events such as Family Farm Day? Y / N

If not, why? _____

12. Would you be interested in participating in a region-wide series of workshops at various farms? Y / N

What areas could your farm highlight? _____

13. How do you think the ACRD can best help to promote the purchase of farm fresh local food by the broader community? _____

14. Do you have any other comments with regards to farm marketing and farm gate sales? Please provide.

Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Farmer Survey - October, 2014

15. Please answer the following questions about general marketing initiatives.

General Marketing Initiatives	Y	N	Comments
Would you be interested in selling to a regional distribution agency?			
Would you be interested in participating in Community Supported Agriculture such as box programs, animal sharing and other non traditional methods of farm sales?			
Would a guide to regional marketing opportunities (restaurants, wholesalers, retailers, caterers etc) and tips for working with those markets be helpful to you?			
Would you be interested in accessing a local 'brand' and logo to use in advertising and marketing?			
Would you be interested in a revamped and extended local products directory which included a broader description of your farm and farming practices?			
Are you interested in initiatives such as local 'farm dollars'. Please describe any ideas.			
Would you be interested in joining a local Farm Collective to share resources/tools, marketing power, branding and logo, buyers and sellers guide, social media, website, retail cooperative store opportunities, advertising and other initiatives?			
Would you be willing to pay a small annual fee (approx. \$25) to be part of such a collective?			
Would you be interested in selling products through a web based platform?			
Do you currently use Social Media as part of your farm marketing?			

Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Farmer Survey - October, 2014

Farmers Markets

Farmers Markets provide a key marketing opportunity for farmers as well as an opportunity for consumers to access high quality local products in an efficient manner. Farmers markets are rising in popularity across BC. A vibrant and thriving market is an important cultural and community event which will attract locals and visitors alike.

The ACRD recognizes current challenges within the Farmers Market community and wishes to assist with renewing a peaceful and satisfying situation for all stakeholders, including the public.

1. Do you currently sell at any Farmers Markets? Y / N

Is so which one/s? _____

2. If not, what is stopping you from participating in a local Farmers Market? _____

3. If so, would you be willing to change the day/time/location of the market you participate in? Please expand. _____

4. At present, what would be your ideal Farmers Market location, day of the week and time? _____

5. In 5 years, what would be your ideal Farmers Market location, day of the week and time? _____

6. What is the best management structure for a local farmers market? Please circle

Independently managed Farmer Run Collective Elected

Other (comment) _____

Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Farmer Survey - October, 2014

7. Would you prefer to amalgamate existing farmers markets or keep them as they are?

8. What are some general barriers to sales at Farmers Markets? _____

9. What guidelines/regulations do you feel are important at a local farmers market?

Regulations	Y	N	Please Comment
Only local products			
Farmers have priority over crafters			
Clear set up/take down rules			
Guidelines for advertising of 'organic' products			
Ability to sample products			
Clear complaint procedures			
Packaging regulations			
Seniority system established			
Allow stall sharing/selling for others			
Allow vendors from out of region			
Other(name) _____			
Other(name) _____			
Other(name) _____			

10. Would you be interested in participating in a mediation or a similar process to work through existing challenges? Y / N

11. What are some other ways you could see the challenges being resolved? _____

Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Farmer Survey - October, 2014

12.If it is helpful for you, please share your perspective with regards to the current challenges facing the Farmers Market Community in the region. _____

13.Other feedback with regards to Farmers Markets?

Large Farms (>5 acres)

1.How can we best include large farming operations in regional planning and events such as family farm day or farm tours?

2.As a large farm, what supports do you need to maintain viability both in regional and national markets?

Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Farmer Survey - October, 2014

Small Farms (<5 acres)

1. What supports do you need to maintain economic viability?

General

The ACRD is looking at grants and funding for further agricultural initiatives. Please help us put these resources where they will best benefit you, the farmer.

1. What are your greatest barriers to increased production of

Meat _____

Vegetables _____

Grains _____

Forage crops _____

Fruit _____

Nursery plants _____

Other crops (name) _____

2. How can the ACRD best support your farming operations? Please describe.

a) Environmental support? (irrigation, ditches, soil/land surveys, climate change adjustments, rainwater harvesting, ponds, wells etc) _____

b) Educational programs? (marketing, soil science, propagation, business skills, accounting, farm start-up, regulatory knowledge, packaging, general cultivation techniques, farm tours, other) _____

Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Farmer Survey - October, 2014

c) Changes to taxation/zoning/bylaws?

d) Regional infrastructure? (abattoir, freezers/fridges, storage, community equipment purchases, other) _____

e) Provincial/federal political support and of what sort? _____

3. Would you be interested in a land sharing or leasing arrangement which would assist young people to enter the industry or allow other farmers to expand their endeavors?

Y / N

4. If yes, could we add you to a publicly available database? Y / Not now / Never

5. Please add any other information or ideas you have about how the ACRD can help support agriculture in the region.

Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Farmer Survey - October, 2014

6. Are you part of or do you participate in any local agricultural groups? Circle
Farmer's Institute Transition Towns Food Group Fall Fair Planning
Other(name)_____ Would you like to be? Y / N

7. Can we contact you to discuss your responses to the survey and/or other local agricultural initiatives? Y / N

***We welcome feedback, questions, suggestions and constructive criticism!
Please feel free to contact us over the coming months about any regional agricultural issues, projects or support requests.***

Thanks again for taking the time to complete this survey!

Contact Us

<http://acrdfarmplan.webs.com/>

Connie Kuramoto - Gardens on the Go
connie.kuramoto@gmail.com
(778) 424-8888 • cell (250) 240-0281
www.gardensonthego.net/

Anna Lewis
(250) 735-0520
amirakoel@yahoo.ca

Heather Shobe - Eden Tree Farm and Gardening
(250) 724-2175
heather@edentreefarm.ca
www.edentreefarm.ca