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FarmFolk CityFolk’s annual local food celebration and fundraiser, Feast of Fields, has become a culinary tradition during harvest season. While drawing in the fresh country air, guests stroll across a farmers field, wine glass and linen napkin in hand, tasting the very best their region has to offer. The Feast highlights the connection between farmers and chefs who offer mouth watering creations using the freshest local, seasonal and sustainable ingredients. Accompanied by BC wines, beers and spirits, Feast of Fields is a gastronomic picnic for the palate.

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Errata. In our Spring 2012 issue we noted that “any meat or meat products sold out of province or out of country must be processed by a Class A or B licensed facility.” A few readers pointed out that this is not the case. Currently there are no abattoirs in BC that are federally registered to process beef for export. There is one plant still doing pork, 11 doing poultry. In the last 2 to 3 years two federally licensed abattoirs, one in Dawson Creek and one in Pitt Meadows, relinquished their federal licences and acquired provincial licences. Virtually all beef raised in BC for large consumers markets is finished, processed and marketed outside of BC, generating almost no economic value for BC producers and processors.

Thanks to Jillian Merrick, Abra Brynne and Kathleen Gibson.
The harvest has begun! There is nothing like the first sweet berries of the season, especially after such a long wet spring. But strangely, as I devour these delicious treats, I start thinking of the need to preserve all of this goodness to last me through next winter.

Home preserving has been a tradition in my family for generations and the secret has always been to use the freshest produce we can find. The first preserve we do is raspberry jam so this year my wife and I headed into the Fraser Valley to Collin Regehr Farms, an organic raspberry farm in Abbotsford. It sounds like an old distinguished farm so I was surprised when we were greeted by 27 year-old Collin Regehr. When I asked Colin how long he had been certified organic he answered 8 years. So with some complicated math I figured he started this farm and the age of 19!

This is an inspiring story but not an unfamiliar one these days. The “Young Agrarian” movement has taken off and in this issue you can read about how we are supporting this growing movement of new and young farmers. Also in this issue is a wonderful article by Allison Bell about the joy and economic opportunities of preserving local food, a passionate call to action from our founder Herb Barbolet, an insight into our culture of working with seed by our Farm Program manager Heather Pritchard, an in-depth article from our editor Michael Marrapese on the plight of bees, and from Lori Petryk, host of Good For You Good For Our Earth, some great tips on how to prioritize your organic food budget.

These are just a few of the articles in this jam-packed issue (pardon the pun). I hope you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoy bringing you these wonderful and important stories about how together we are rebuilding our food system.

Nicholas Scapillati
Executive Director, FarmFolk CityFolk

Nicholas Scapillati is the Executive Director of FarmFolk CityFolk. He is a dedicated activist and conservationist and has worked on environmental sustainability issues for over 15 years. Urban agriculture has been a tradition in Nicholas’ family for generations which has cultivated his love of food and passion for cooking.
Re-Framing the Picture

By Herb Barbolet

Preface

This article is based upon thoughts first presented to The McConnell Foundation Sustainable Food Systems Workshop, then to The Food Energy Descent – Action Plan at the Museum of Vancouver and a presentation to the Dialogue Course at SFU.

I’ll assume that if you are reading this then you are already aware of “The Perfect Storm” (no not the movie). Increasingly, the convergence of Peak Everything, Climate Chaos, the Financial Meltdown, Fear Politics, Pandemics, et.al. is being called The Perfect Storm.

These conditions, and so much more, led to a Global food crisis in 2008. And, since little has been done to ameliorate the underlying causes of these conditions, there have been and will be further global food crises.

By making this statement some might understandably accuse me of also using fear politics. My response is that fear politics uses hyperbole and hypothetical situations (weapons of mass destruction, out-of-control crime, Iran’s nuclear capability) to manipulate the electorate. On the other hand, creating dialogue about the perfect storm potentially empowers people to collectively solve the problems.

Try Googling, “How to Survive the coming food crisis”, you will find more than 41 MILLION hits. Almost all of them are how to look after yourself or your family. That is the bad news because if anyone thinks they can survive global food shortages on an individual basis they are either delusional or a billionaire (who if not delusional, must almost all be sociopaths).

Can we recognize, reclaim and create alternative social realities that the 1% (in Occupy’s terms) tell us cannot possibly exist?

We can envision a future where everyone, everywhere has clean air and water and enough, good, safe, wholesome, culturally appropriate and nutritious food. We can act to use the local and organic food movement to productively join that debate and make it matter.

I am optimistic. That is because in order to survive as a species we need to dramatically change the way we conduct business and relate to one another. And, I see that the tipping point is now – change has already begun – for the better and for worse. We don’t have a choice but to change whether we want to or not.

In keeping with Naomi Klein’s thesis in Shock Doctrine, I believe that it is our job to make manifest a positive future.

It is a cliché that people don’t change. They do. But it IS true that behaviour is very hard to change. Klein has arguably framed the issue better than any one else. People
change when there is no other choice. Then, the way they change is determined by the messages, examples and models available to them.

I think that we need to re-frame – not necessarily WHAT we do, but rather how we think about what we do – because most people do not want to face what could turn out to be a very bleak future.

For many, denial is easier than constructively dealing with our global realities. How can we reach people who, in Erich Fromm’s terms, want to *Escape From Freedom* and want certainty, not choice? Or who are, in Neil Postman’s terms, *Amusing Ourselves To Death*? Sporting events can attract 60,000 people. 10 million people sign onto the Internet to read Perez Hilton trash some celebrity. How many people do we reach? How can we reach more?

I am offering a suggestion for your consideration (repeat 2X), (I love the language of the Occupy Movement) that our vision and therefore our goals and objectives become much more focused on systemic change – a paradigm shift, if you will.

If I am right then, when the reality hits, enough people will realize that change is essential, or, as a friend of mine says, “Shift Happens”. But it does take time, maybe decades.

Despite the corporate agenda to commoditize all existence, families and communities are not the purely selfish, self-interested, economic entities that some economists, think tanks and TV advertisements would have us believe. Mutual support and reciprocity guide most human interactions. But these commonplace, everyday acts don’t make news or sell products, or appear in GDP statistics.

Food was and is about food security, food sovereignty and food democracy. At some level, everyone knows that if a community or a country cannot maintain control of their food supply they will starve or be conquered.

Transition Towns, Occupy and the Vancouver Food Policy Council profoundly understand replicating and ramping up. The good news is the emergence of new movements such as Occupy, Transition Towns, Global Villages, Relocalization, community or cooperative self-sufficiency, food hubs, farm to school programs and others, are all heading in the right direction. They represent what we lost and what we might regain.

Urban agriculture won’t feed the masses but it can and does mobilize community, bring neighbours together to celebrate, overcome fear and breakdown isolation.

It takes creating a collective vision. It takes rebuilding community. It need not be complicated.

Television and the Internet are hard to compete with to win hearts and minds. However Farmers’ Markets and celebrations such as Feast Of Fields do attract a significant crowd of intelligent and motivated people.

We need many more arts, cultural and performance events organized around the theme of Real Food. We need to think about the needs of the future, we need to think out of the box. Together we can begin to formulate a vision and an action plan to feed ourselves – and our communities – in an uncertain future.

We are the moderates and the progressives. The radicals are those who are stealing our democracy and the wealth of our nation from us. They must and they will be stopped.

Herb Barbolet has been active in community development for more than 30 years. As Associate with the Centre for Sustainable Community Development at Simon Fraser University he has coauthored food assessment studies for provincial health authorities and a guide to food assessments for the provincial health services authority. He was the founder and for 10 years, executive director of FarmFolk CityFolk and earlier executive director of the Community Planning Association of Canada (BC).
“Seeds are the first link in the food chain, and the embodiment of biological and cultural diversity, and the repository of life’s future evolution.”

Vandana Shiva
Manifesto on the Future of Seed

When Vandana Shiva launched Slow Food’s Manifesto of the Future of Seeds at Terra Madre in 2006, 8,000 farmers, producers, academics and cooks gave her a standing ovation. On behalf of FarmFolk, I was proud to sign onto the “movement for seed freedom.”

FarmFolk CityFolk has a long history of working for a community-based seed system. Partnering with Patrick Steiner of Stellar Seeds to create BCSeeds, a group of organic seed growers who inform and direct FarmFolk CityFolk’s work on seeds, we surveyed local seed growers and developed a program to address their most pressing concerns. We’ve held workshops, organized an event around Humberto Ríos La Brada, a visiting plant breeder from Cuba, and conducted a strategic session with 35 farmers and seed growers to outline a plan of action.

We’ve built a website, published Small-Scale Organic Seed Production by Patrick Steiner and a manual on How to Grow a Community Seed Collective by Robin Wheeler.

Sadly, Robin passed away last year. An active member of BCSeeds, Robin insisted on teaching best practices for community seed-saving as part of a strategy for local food sovereignty. Through monthly workshops organized by Village Vancouver, she introduced many city folks to the art and science of growing their own seed. One workshop, co-led by Robin, Mojave Kaplan, (Planting Seeds Project) and Maria Hunter (Dragonfly Seeds) stimulated the formation of the Cedar Cottage Seed Savers Collective, one of many BC community groups focused on seed saving.

To honor Robin we set up a tribute to her work at the COABC Conference and AGM last Spring. We passed along packets of medicinal seeds from Robin’s collection. One “Young Agrarian”, Gabe Cipes, is growing starts from her seeds to interplant into Summerhill Vineyard. Some folks in East Van are planting a Memory Garden in her honour. Robin’s legacy will live on in the way that mattered the most to her.

When people advocate for the “right” to save seed I recall the words of a thought provoking writer and friend Brewster Kneen. He makes an excellent point in his The Tyranny of Rights when he says “the call for recognition of farmers’ right to save seeds replaces the practice of actual doing so, whether recognized as a right or not. It appears to be assumed that these practices cannot be carried on without their acceptance as “rights” by the state.” What I took away from his writings is that we can have the “right” to farm, the “right” to save and grow our own seed but that doesn’t mean we will. We must “do it” or we will loose the knowledge, the art and the craft of “how to”.

So I do it. Grow seed that is. Michael and I grow out the Tolosa black beans (Alubia Negra) we brought home from Terra Madre in 2006. Every fall we separate out the...
best and most mature of the black seeds (set aside to plant out this spring) from the immature ones (set aside to dry for winter soup).

Just before my stepfather John Harder died, he left me his most precious possession. John was 17 during the great depression when he constructed a box with two trays from scrap wood and lined each tray with two rows of paper mache ridges so they would hold small glass test tubes he then filled with seeds. He collected the many kinds of peas, beans, barley, wheat, oats and millet and rapeseed his uncle and my grandfather, H.G. Neufeld, grew. He also saved the seeds from the wild plants that he found growing around the farm: prickly lettuce, wormseed, mustard, Russian thistle, red root pigweed and wild buckwheat.

My grandfather H.G. — the Seed Man, as they called him — was inducted into the Saskatchewan Agricultural Hall of Fame. One of the many reasons he was recognized was his work with Dr. W. J. White at the University of Saskatchewan. They began, in 1944, with rapeseed research on samples selected by him from his farm in Nipawin, Saskatchewan. This led 10 years later to the release of the first Canadian variety of rape, Golden.

If he were living today, I wonder whether he would be one of those Saskatchewan farmers who extoll the virtues of Monsanto. Would he marvel at how quickly technology can modify seed when it that took him a lifetime of growing, observing, rogueing, selecting and tracking to achieve the qualities he was looking for. Would he believe that Monsanto can solve world hunger?

Or would he be outraged at our seeds being controlled by a handful of companies, fear the decline in diversity and worry about the loss of seed-saving knowledge. Would he mourn the death of 250,000 Indian farmers, who, no longer able to save their own seed, have to buy it from Monsanto and, rather than facing the shame of bankruptcy, choose to commit suicide.

Or would he celebrate the growing number of cities worldwide who declare themselves GE Free.

I hope it’s the later, as I continue the seed legacy through my work with FarmFolk CityFolk. Participating with USC Canada and Seeds of Diversity in the Bauta Seed Initiative has brought BCSeeds to the national table to strategize the best way to secure our seed future. The future we envision puts seed sovereignty back in the hands of the farm and the community. The BCSeed Gathering in November 2012 will link us nationally to a Seed conference happening concurrently in Montreal.

Heather Pritchard is FarmFolk CityFolk’s Farm Program manager. She lives on Fraser Common Farm Cooperative and is a working member of Glorious Organics Cooperative.
Which would you pick: a glass of wine or an endangered Burrowing Owl (they’re about the same size)?

Sommeliers taste wine seeking notes, aroma, acidity, the appearance “in the glass”, the sensations “in the mouth” and the finish. But when I planned my green nuptials over four years ago, I had more on my mind than the dilemma of red or white (and which guests could not be seated next to each other).

In Western Canada, a lot of local wine comes from B.C.’s Okanagan Valley. It’s a great vacation spot with beautiful lakes and orchards. It’s home to rare plants and animals of the antelope-brush Ecosystem—and a great place to grow grapes!

It’s also one of the four most endangered ecosystems in all of Canada.

Over 60 per cent of antelope-brush habitat has been lost to houses, grazing or agriculture. Today only 3,100 hectares remain, and 88 species are either gone or at risk of disappearing. When wine tasting and buying, keep nature in mind.

"MADE WITH ORGANICALLY GROWN GRAPES”

Wines with this label have a minimum of 70 per cent organic grapes, but are not the same as certified organic wines. They’re often processed using the same equipment and in the same facility as conventional wine, and may contain sulphur dioxide.

CERTIFIED ORGANIC WINE

Producers use 100 per cent organic grapes and can’t use toxic pesticides, herbicides, or synthetic fertilizers. Instead, they fertilize with compost, compost teas, green manure, and cover crops. They also rely on mechanical weeding, mowing around the vines, mulching, and companion planting. To avoid using insecticides to control cutworms, they let chickens graze under the vines or handpick the worms off leaves. Certified organic wine doesn’t use genetically modified organisms (GMOs) or contain sulphites. (Conventional wines use GMO yeast.)

BIODYNAMIC WINE

Biodynamic vineyards use natural resources to cultivate grapes without pesticides, fungicides, herbicides, synthetic fertilizers, or growth stimulants, and often meet or exceed the standards and regulations for organic-certified farming.
Ask the tough questions

Find out how the vineyard protects, maintains or enhances the surrounding ecosystem. Burrowing Owl Estate Winery, for example, donates proceeds to the Burrowing Owl Conservation Society of B.C. Tinhorn Creek has worked with The Land Conservancy to restore rattlesnake habitat and the South Okanagan-Similkameen Stewardship Program to build snake fences, and Working Horse Winery allows bears to steal a few bunches of grapes here and there.

What are your favourite Earth-friendly wines?

Lindsay Coulter is David Suzuki's Queen of Green. You can find her blog at www.davidsuzuki.org, click on blogs, then Queen of Green. It's all about green living made easy.

You can find out more about the Burrowing Owl Conservation Society of B.C. at burrowingowl-bc.org or visit them at our Okanagan Feast of Fields where they will be pouring their delicious wine and supporting our annual fundraiser.

You can visit the Land conservancy of British Columbia at;

blog.conservancy.bc.ca

and the South Okanagan-Similkameen Stewardship Program at;

www.soscp.org/about-us

We believe a viable and sustainable local food system is essential. So our Small Growers Loan encourages growth for local farmers who show passion and potential.

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You can find out more about the Burrowing Owl Conservation Society of B.C. at burrowingowl-bc.org or visit them at our Okanagan Feast of Fields where they will be pouring their delicious wine and supporting our annual fundraiser.

You can visit the Land conservancy of British Columbia at;

blog.conservancy.bc.ca

and the South Okanagan-Similkameen Stewardship Program at;

www.soscp.org/about-us

Make Good Money (TM) is a trademark of Vancouver City Savings Credit Union.
If I weren’t so intimidated by the brilliant books written by a number of friends and acquaintances, I might have a few published myself. And now, here is another to add to that list: John Restakis’ *Humanizing the Economy.*

In the past few decades the world has been extensively globalized. Politics and economics in the United States now affect the entire world; even those countries whose citizens live a subsistence existence off of the land.

What is happening in the US and Canada, is an ideological war. On the one hand are those libertarians and radical free-market advocates who say everyone acts in their own self-interest. The goal is to compete against everyone else, and the one who dies with the most toys wins. On the other hand, there are those who believe in humanizing the economy. I, along with Restakis, Italian economist Stephano Zamagni and John Kenneth Galbraith, believe family, community, health and happiness are more important life motivators than greed.

Through television and advertising ordinary people support the constructed Horatio Alger myth that “anyone can be president” and anyone can be a billionaire — if you really, really want it. As a result ordinary people, who actually are hard working and love their families and support their communities, vote into office ideological radical conservatives. Ironically this is contrary to those voters’ own self-interest.

*Humanizing The Economy* is a brilliantly told, passionate, and intellectual exploration of how our world could be different and better. Restakis creates a very accessible journey through economic democracy and its history, concepts and philosophy. He travels through time, philosophy and religion to arrive at several contemporary examples of how a humanized economy is coming to be in some places and might how it might be achieved in others.

*Three other books I admire: Evan Fraser’s *Empires of Food,* Wayne Roberts’ *Get a Life!* and also *Real Food for a Change,* and Tim Lang’s *Food Wars.*

Herb Barbolet has been active in community development for more than 30 years. As Associate with the Centre for Sustainable Community Development at Simon Fraser University he has coauthored food assessment studies for provincial health authorities and a guide to food assessments for the provincial health services authority. He was the founder, and for 10 years, executive director of FarmFolk CityFolk and earlier executive director of the Community Planning Association of Canada (BC).
Young Agrarians

Germinating the Next Generation of Farmers

By Sara Dent

Young Agrarians (YA) are the movers and shakers of a new agrarian movement — rural and urban farmers, market and community gardeners, community groups and academics, politicians, the public and supporters who want to rebuild, promote and inspire the agriculture of our country. We want food policy to move from mapping the issues and resources to putting seeds in the furrows and agrarians on the land, whether that’s a 100-acre field or a vacant lot in the middle of the city. The next generation of farmers will come from the apartment buildings of Toronto, the fields of Saskatchewan, the shores of Nova Scotia, the orchards of British Columbia – and everywhere in between.

The idea for Young Agrarians germinated at a meeting with the National Farmers Union’s (NFU) Youth Network Spring 2011 on Vancouver Island. Myself, Seann Dory (SOLEfood Farm) and Derek Shanahan (Food Tree) heard from NFU members about the isolation and issues many were facing, and the need to have more impact in terms of reaching out to the public.

My belief in the power of people to build healthy communities and food systems has fueled my involvement with YA. I began farming in 2005. Since then, I’ve visited and photographed many food systems and farmers. I believe that if more people knew how beautiful farming is, they would better support the people doing it, and maybe even take up the art of growing food themselves.

Since soil and plants are the “new sexy” for me, my mission has become to get the following message out to as many people as possible: reconnect with the land and your food supply wherever you are, and we’ll build a better, more self-sustaining culture.

The YA project has big goals. We want to build vibrant on-line and off-line communities to celebrate, inspire, diversify, network, share resources and connect the work we do together. We want to weave the stories of young farmers from coast to coast into a colorful mosaic. We’re focused on making visible what people are already doing, with the goal of drawing new young people into sustainable agriculture. We know that in BC alone, less than five percent of farmers are 34 and under, and more than 50 percent are 59 and older. We need young people to start growing food, especially with peak oil looming and the impacts of climate change.

Young farmers also need mentors. It’s the farmers out there that have been doing it for years that are the trailblazers. We need models for working together, starting businesses, accessing land and making farming viable.

Young Agrarians is a partnership with FarmFolk CityFolk.

Sara Dent is an urban gardener, permaculture educator and designer, facilitator, photographer and project manager. Visit her websites at saradent.ca and farmlove.org.

Please get involved! We are looking for collaborators to host events, to reach out to young farmers, and to build the network. Please get in touch!

Email: theyoungagrarians@gmail.com
www.youngagrarians.org/
www.facebook.com/YoungAgrarians
twitter.com/#!/youngagrarians
www.flickr.com/groups/youngagrarians/
You hold the jar steady on the counter with one hand and grasp the top with the other. With a quick flick of the wrist, you twist off the ring, carefully pry the lid and listen for the pop and swoosh. Wafts of summer-fresh dill fill the air. You close your eyes and take a bite—crispy, crunchy, dilly, pickle heaven. Just like Granny used to make, or Aunt Ethel, or Cousin Beth, or, wait a minute, what does the label say? Mountain Ash Preserves in Powell River, BC. Who could possibly be responsible for this perfection?

Well, how about this? Take a team of keen students, add two teachers, a measure of forward-thinking School District Administration, over 1000 pounds of locally grown pickling cucumbers and all the berries you can find and what do you get? Pickle perfection, and a groundbreaking Business Education and Culinary Arts course at Brooks Secondary School in Powell River, that is changing the way we look at education and the way students see their food.

When Mountain Ash Farms, an canning and preserving business and a Powell River institution, was looking for a buyer, Powell River Education Society Services (PRESS) seized the opportunity. Jay Yule, PRESS’s Executive Director and Superintendent of Schools, recognized the value of real-life educational experiences that running a business like this could provide students. With business plan in hand, an inventory of tried and true recipes and access to locally-grown ingredients, a delicious culinary edu-business was realized.

Under the direction of Chef Instructor and Red Seal Chef Mike Austin and Business Education Teacher Anne Hutchings, Business Innovations 12 students learn the importance of time-honoured culinary traditions, business and marketing acumen, and where their food comes from. And, did I mention that all of this happens outside of regular school hours in a gleaming commercial kitchen?

Every Tuesday afternoon, students assemble in the Teaching Kitchen at Brooks Secondary, home to its ground-breaking Professional Cooking Program, to blanch, peel, chop, slice and simmer a veritable bounty of mostly locally-grown berries and vegetables for delicious jams, jellies, salsas, chutneys and pickles. Dakota Whalley, who is studying both Marketing and Culinary Arts, loves the skills she is learning, especially the teamwork aspect. Dakota explained “we all just jump on the task and get the job done” … “we are learning really good skills for the future, how to preserve foods and we learn the value of food when we look at food waste and food costing.” She also sees this course as an important step on her journey to becoming a chef after leaving high school. In addition to culinary skills, students like Dakota are learning about merchandising, market trends and customer satisfaction.

Mountain Ash Preserves produces over 20 delectable products including Strawberry-Rhubarb Jam (one of their biggest sellers), Heirloom Tomato Salsa and...
several varieties of pickles. And while the team has created “gourmet” products such as Strawberry Fig Jam, they are finding that what customers want are the more traditional products. “People want simply prepared natural foods that taste like the foods their grandmothers used to make,” states Austin. And when it comes to quality ingredients, Mountain Ash Preserves does their best to obtain the freshest.

“We are trying to use as much local produce as possible,” states Anne Hutchings, who points out that one of their primary producers is certified organic Hatch a Bird Farm in Wildwood, just outside of Powell River. According to Hutchings, “Hatch-a-Bird Farm grows our pickling cucumbers, zucchini, cucumbers and tomatoes for our September pickling.” And they don’t just grow a few cucumbers. Last year, Hatch a Bird Farm provided 1200 lbs of pickling cucs! Preserving large quantities of fresh produce requires a lot of foresight, seasonal cooking, and working closely with the farm. “We need to know that we can pick up the amount of product we need, otherwise that sets us back a week,” states Business student Emily Anderson. So, how does the team pull it all together?

Mountain Ash students contact customers in the early spring to determine their needs and to find out which products are the best sellers. Armed with this information they meet with farmers Helena and Peter Bird to “request late planting.” Staggering planting “can be a challenge” according to Helena Bird, but she sees enormous value in working with the students who visit the farm weekly to pick up their vegetables. Coast Berry Farm, a berry producer committed to sustainable agricultural practices on the Sunshine Coast, provided most of the berries that went into the making of over 300 jars of jams and jellies last year. An abundance of wild blackberries, harvested by students provides an unending supply of berries for blackberry preserves and syrup. So, where can you find a jar of delicious Mountain Ash Preserves?

They are flying off the shelves at specialty grocers in Powell River, the Lower Mainland and on Vancouver Island. Students learning practical business, marketing and culinary skills, working-side-by-side preparing recipes as good as Granny made while supporting local farmers? What better recipe is there for student success?

For more information, visit mountainashpreserves.com

Allison Bell is a volunteer with the BC Culinary Arts Specialists Association. She completed her MA in Gastronomy: her area of research was food security in the Windermere Valley of BC. She teaches Professional Cooking in Invermere and is extremely passionate about teaching kids a love for good food, the pleasure of eating, and to understand where their food comes from.
Bees and flowering plants evolved together nearly 100 million years before homo sapiens.

Plight of the Bumblebee
By Michael Marrapese

Somehow bees capture our collective imagination. Their cooperative organization and focused industriousness is fascinating and endearing, more so than any other insect. Our relationship with the honey bee is ancient. Bees and flowering plants evolved together nearly 100 million years before homo sapiens. For early humans, and many other animals, honey was a valuable food source. People discovered early on that, if properly stored, it would keep indefinitely. Of course, to harvest it, you would likely get stung, frequently. Thus, I imagine, evolved the study of bees and how to manage them.

But in modern times, the last 50 to 70 years, we have seen dramatic changes in this ancient relationship. Currently, bee populations are in decline. The main problem we hear about is colony collapse disorder (CCD) where, after winter, large numbers of hives are simply empty. Recent studies suggest that one factor in CCD is chronic exposure to low doses of a class of insecticides called neonicotinoids. Researchers observed that over the course of several months bees were disappearing and the hive collapsed.

When pesticides are tested for safety they usually only test the LD50, the dose that kills 50% of an insect population. But, much like our experience with the introduction of DDT, the long-term effects of an insecticide are unpredictable and long-reaching. Tony Puddicombe, of the School of Horticulture at Kwantlen Polytechnic University is concerned. “I don’t think you can ever be 100% certain that a new product will not be harmful in some way. Low dose effects take a few years to show up,” he says.

Another problem is foreign pests. The Barroa Mites are originally from Asia and are an extremely invasive and destructive pest. The Asian bee has co-evolved with these mites developing grooming behaviors that help keep the mite infestation in check. Puddicombe adds that, “There’s a lot of focus in queen breeding to attempt to produce bees that have more of this grooming behavior or have other defense mechanisms against the mites.”

Jen Cody of Growing Opportunities Farm Coop thinks that bees can tell us a lot about the state of our environment. “They’re a little bit like the canary in the coal mine. Their story is indicative of a number of problems we have agriculturally.” As she points out, the current practice of using industrial chemicals to manage pests often backfires. “Using chemicals against pests creates chemical resistant pests that are harder to control. ‘Now I’ve got a super bug that I can’t control—now what do I do?’ That’s what’s happening with the Barroa Mites.”

The other big change is the dwindling percentage of the population still involved in apiculture. “Two or three generations ago, 90% of us were farmers. We all would
have had bee hives and collected honey. When we didn’t have sugar cane it is was our primary source of sugar,” Puddicombe reflects. Cody sees this as a critical issue. “As less and less of the population is involved in agriculture we are losing many of the essential agricultural skills,” she says. “One very positive thing about urban beekeeping is that it helps maintain a level of skill related to agriculture. People living in cities become part of a pool of people who gain and retain these skills — they will be the people who pass on these skills."

Two folks working to keep this knowledge alive are Ian Tate, Immediate Past Chair, Delta Chamber of Commerce and Patricia Fleming, Executive Director of Earthwise Society. Both are co-chairs of the Feed the Bees Campaign. Tate is quick to point out that the health of bees has an enormous economic impact. The value of pollination to the BC economy is about 440 million dollars a year. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations estimates that of the 100 crop species that make up 90% of the world’s food supply, 71 of them are bee-pollinated. “It is imperative that we all pay attention to this,” he says. “While the micro-issue is the need for pollinators, the macro-issue is everything from food security to sustainability of the human race.”

At their Ecological Demonstration Garden in Tsawassen, Earthwise shows that it is possible to create beautiful and sustainable gardens without the use of pesticides. “The point of ecological farming is that it takes care of more than just growing food,” says Fleming. “Part of that is promoting biodiversity—when you’re planting to feed the bees you are also planting for bio diversity.” Earthwise runs a number of educational activities for school age children and the general public. This year they have introduced a program that specifically focuses on bees and their role in pollinating plants. “The more you learn about bees the more fascinating they are. Maybe it’s because they are so very unlike humans. How they work, how the hives function is amazing. There is a real beauty in the bees themselves. And then they produce this fabulous honey,” says Fleming.

Ultimately, the care of bees is tied to the care of our environment which in turn has enormous impacts on our food system. “How can something the size of your little finger nail affect us as a species in such a profound way?,” Tate ponders. He’s got some advise for all of us. “Two things,” he says, “If you ever see a swarm, call a beekeeper, not an exterminator. And second buy local honey, because the stuff in the little plastic bear may not be the product you think it is.” Good thoughts. It’s also important to remember that we, like the bees, are part of a biological system, not separate from it.

Michael Marrapese is the Communications and IT Coordinator with FarmFolk CityFolk. He has a background in television, theatre and print, is an avid photographer and writer. He loves the challenge of the ever-evolving world of technology in a not-for-profit office.

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL MARRAPESE

BEE FRIENDLY

The Folks at Feed the Bees (www.feedthebees.org) have a lot of great resources to help you support a healthy and sustainable bee population in your community. These are some of the plants you can grow in your garden or around the edges of your fields and orchards that will help feed pollinators all year.

- Christmas Rose
- Oregon Grape
- Columbine
- Bugloss
- Chives
- Lupin
- Foxglove
- Cornflower
- Lavender
- Sea Holly
- Anise Hyssop
- Fennel
- Black Eyed Susan
- Verbena

You can get the complete list from Feed the Bees (www.feedthebees.org/).

You can get three different bee garden starter kits; a Native Plant Kit, one for Sun Gardens and a Herb Garden Kit, each for $35. Kits includes seven easy-to-grow perennials that provide a continuous source of bloom from April to October that will help feed bees in your garden. Order the kits on line.
Organic Food, is it our panacea?

By Lori Petryk, RD, MSc.

Organic food sales have risen by 17 to 20 percent a year for the past few years despite organic products typically costing 10 to 40% more than similar conventionally produced products. British Columbians are especially fond of their organic food and purchased 26% of the organic food sold in Canada! With the trend to organic food production increasing, the question I am often asked is: “Are we really getting what we pay for?”

Environmental Benefits?

Without a doubt, organic farming has numerous environmental benefits. The Canadian Organic Growers defines organic farming as a type of agriculture using a set of principles that puts nature first, such as; protecting the environment, maintaining long-term soil fertility and biological diversity, and promoting the health of livestock.

Health Benefits?

Do any of the environmental benefits of organic farming translate into health benefits for the person consuming organic food?

The short answer is, it depends. Eating organic food offers no guarantee that the foods you choose will promote health, so you need to stay vigilant and read the ingredient labels.

When it comes to your health, significant benefits can be achieved simply by improving the type of foods you buy. Highly processed certified organic foods may have as little nutritional value as their non-organic counterparts. There are plenty of examples of organic breakfast cereals and granola bars whose first few ingredients are sugar, oil, and salt. Too many empty calories found in any type of processed and refined grain food can leave people listless and contribute to the country’s rising obesity rates.

The leading causes of death in Canadians are cancer and heart disease. The prevalence of these diseases can be drastically reduced by eating a diet high in fruits, vegetables and whole grains, with moderate amounts of healthy fats and protein.

If a person’s diet consists of processed and refined grains, organic or not, those foods will not contribute to better health. Do your homework, read the label and the ingredient list before mindlessly throwing an organically labeled food item into your food cart!
ORGANIC PROCESSED FOODS

None of us eat the perfect diet 100% of the time. When choosing processed or high sugar foods for ‘cheat nights’, or kids birthday parties, choosing certified organic processed foods can still offer some benefits. Certified organic food is guaranteed to be free of genetically modified organisms (GMO), artificial colors and artificial flavours.

Buyer beware: Even if a processed food is certified organic, it does not guarantee the item is free of chemical contaminants that the food may have come into contact with after harvest or processing. For example, many canned food manufactures use a plastic liner made out of a chemical called Bisphenol A (BPA). BPA is controversial because it can migrate from the cans’ lining into the food. Studies have shown that when BPA is absorbed into the body it exerts weak, but detectable, hormone-like properties. The federal government added BPA to Canada’s toxic substances list. BPA is still found in the linings of canned foods such as canned beer, canned soda, canned soups. Unless the can is labeled ‘BPA free’, assume the canned item will have small amounts of BPA that has leached from the plastic.

The next question that often arises in conversation is, “Are organic unprocessed foods healthier?” If you just compare the levels of vitamin and minerals found in organic and non-organic produce, scientific research will not provide a clear answer. Many things that contribute to a food’s vitamin and mineral content such as the type of soil it is grown in, weather conditions, and freshness. Being certified organic does not control all these differences.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

Most of the scientific comparisons of organic and non-organic foods only examined food’s essential vitamin and mineral content. We now know that in addition to vitamin and minerals, foods are made up of hundreds if not thousands of natural plant chemicals called phytonutrients. We are just learning how these phytonutrients affect our long-term health, but early studies show they are important in proper cell division, which could possibly help in cancer prevention, as well as enhancing immune response. A literature review of studies that compared various phytonutrients in organic and non-organic food, found that organic food indeed had higher concentrations of the specific phytonutrients they had studied!

WHAT ABOUT MEAT?

When it comes to meat selection, it can be equally confusing. Thankfully, in Canada, whether certified organic or not, no growth hormones are used in poultry, pork, or dairy cattle. Growth hormones are may be used in non-organic beef cattle.

Antibiotics, on the other hand, are used more often. They may be used in non-organic poultry, non-organic pork and in fish raised for food. Antibiotics may also be sprayed on fruit and given to honey bees. Milk and eggs from treated animals are discarded.

BEST BUY

If your budget only allows you to buy a few organic food items, start with organic beef. The reason? Cows are large animals and the impact of raising organic cattle is far reaching. Buying organic beef guarantees the meat is free of growth hormones and antibiotics. Their feed will be grown organic-ally meaning less pesticides being sprayed on the crops fed to the cattle.

The Environmental Working Group publishes Dirty Dozen™, a list of the 12 fruits and vegetables that are most contaminated with pesticides. Head to there website for more information: www.ewg.org/foodnews.

Lori Petryk, RD, MSc, Lori can be seen hosting FarmFolk CityFolk’s Good for You, Good for Our Earth Educatainment videos on nutrition and sustainable food. Go to: www.goodforyouandearth.com for more information.
“While 68% of the farmers felt dissatisfied with the income they could generate from their farming activities, 60% said they made a positive return on investments.”

There is a genuine interest in the viability of agriculture as more people become aware of the shortcomings of industrial agriculture, and start thinking about the practicality of a locally grown food supply. For agriculture to be sustainable, it must financially sustain the farmers. The challenge of making agriculture viable in all sectors is formidable. Fortunately, there are some effective strategies that farmers are using to get ahead.

My interest in small farm viability lead me to graduate school at the University of Victoria, and into a research thesis on small farm economics. I interviewed 25 farmers on the Saanich Peninsula during the winter of 2009. Results from the study revealed a very diverse and resilient agriculture on Southern Vancouver Island. Throughout the interviews, I was impressed at the analysis that the farmers offered on the global food system, on the regulatory environment in which they operate, and on the strategies they were employing to stay viable. Despite all the obstacles that the farmers identified, all but two planned to keep farming into the foreseeable future.

While 68% of the farmers felt dissatisfied with the income they could generate from their farming activities, 60% said they made a positive return on investments. The majority of farmers sought off-farm income to sustain their lifestyles. Of the farms with greater than $10,000 gross farm receipts, 45% received the majority of their household income from the farm, and 25% gained more than 90% of household income from farming.

Farmers that were less dependent on off-farm income tended to have more years of experience, although a couple of newer organic producers seemed to be bucking this trend. Off-farm income was an important strategy for financial resilience, that is, having an alternate income stream to maintain cash flow and buffer the farm from external shocks. Some of the newer farmers expressed surprise that they were able to generate enough income to carry them through most of the year, and were cautiously optimistic about devoting more time on farm, and less time on secondary careers.

Half of the surveyed farms were selling 70% or more of their production from the farm gate or at farmers’ markets. There was optimism about the trend toward more local consumption and increased sales opportunities from farm gate and farmers’ markets. Season extension was a focus for some of the vegetable farmers, and they expressed enthusiasm about the increase in early spring, late fall and winter markets.
Knowing that they could direct market crops during a longer season was encouraging these farmers to plant more successions of vegetables for early and late harvest.

80% percent of the farms marketed through 2 or more channels which included farm stands, farmers markets, direct sales to retailers and restaurants and CSA programs. 88% of farmers were practicing value retaining strategies, that is, drawing attention to the inherent qualities of the food like its heirloom origins or greater nutritional benefit, or to their production practices. Advertising farm products as local, or grown on a heritage farm, or produced according to certified organic standards, are all examples of drawing out more value from farm products rather than thinking about them as commodities. Only 20% of farmers were practicing value-adding, like making jams or processed foods. Some farms were adding value to their farms with petting zoos, picnic areas and farm tours in order to draw in visitors and alternative revenue streams.

Larger farms tend to be more financially stable. They also had a significant investment in infrastructure, most notably land, which helped guarantee access to capital and credit. For many of the farms, staying small was an intentional strategy for resilience. Several farms used the phrase “flying under the radar” to describe their protected niche. By selling from the farm gate and having direct contact with their customers, they were able to avoid the cascading series of expenses required to comply with health regulations, and wholesale standardization.

Of the barriers to farm viability, most notable were the price of land and pressure from neighbours. The price of land in Saanich is among the highest in Canada. Not owning land presented limitations to farmers who were not willing to invest in farming infrastructure because they couldn’t get a long-term lease. However, for those who accessed land by leasing, they were able to do so at very reasonable rates in comparison to the mortgage payments of their counterparts.

The ability to get along with neighbours was a large factor in farm viability because so many of the farmers in the survey were selling from the farm, and local by-laws are complaints-driven. If a neighbour decided they didn’t like the farm, they could make life difficult and limit a farmer’s options for direct marketing. Farmers in our study spent an average of 240 hours and $6,560 in the past year dealing with neighbour complaints.

Farm viability is a delicate balance of the environmental, political and social landscape. A diverse skill set is required to make a farm work. The good news is that all the pressure on farmers has reduced our numbers to a very determined elite who are proving it can be done.

To read the full study, How do (or can) Local Farmers Make it Work? go to http://hdl.handle.net/1828/3599

Robin Tunnicliffe farms full-time on an acre and a half on the Saanich Peninsula. She co-owns Saanich Organics, a produce distribution company. Robin has written extensively on topics relating to small-scale farming efficiency and viability. Most recently, she co-authored All the Dirt: Reflections on Organic Farming.
When the EU began relaxing quota regulations, the producer price fell 6%, while consumer prices increased by 17%.

**CHEESE REGULATIONS**

Canada Upholds Regulations on Fresh Dairy Processing

By Jacqueline Scott

**BACKGROUND HISTORY**

Whereas most Canadian food processing standards are governed solely by the Food and Drug Regulations (FDR), cheese is subject to two sets of law, the second being the Dairy Products Regulation (DPR). For years there have been conflicting interpretations and even contradictory rulings between the two federal regulations.

To remedy misunderstandings and confusion, the Ministry of Agriculture and Agri-Food created the Dairy Industry Working Group (DIWG). A major goal of the DIWG was to help producers and processors reach common ground and to harmonize the FDR and the DPR, to benefit all industry stakeholders.

**FEDERAL ACTION**

In 2006 the DIWG moderator submitted a report to the Ministry, which aided in prompting the CFIA to propose new regulations with goals of 1) identifying and formalizing the “historic levels” of dairy ingredients that can be used by cheese processors; 2) ensuring uniformity and harmonization through the adoption of minimum standards governing the use of fresh milk in cheesemaking.

In 2008, CFIA introduced amendments to the FDR and the DPR. The regulations require Canadian cheese producers to strictly limit the use of ingredients such as milk protein concentrates (MPCs).

Opposing the new laws, 3 multinational cheese makers (Kraft Canada Inc., Parmalat Canada Inc. and Saputo Inc., aka “KPS”) jointly filed an Application for Appeal in the Federal Court of Canada.

KPS challenged the constitutionality and validity of the amendments under the Food and Drugs Act (FDA) and the Canada Agricultural Products Act (CAPA). They also accused that the purpose of the new regulations was to effect an economic transfer from dairy processors to dairy producers, and suggested that this would backfire in the long run. They argued that forcing cheese producers to use more full-fat milk and less MPCs would threaten the entire dairy industry.
**What are MPCs?**

An MPC is any type of concentrated milk product that contains 40-90% milk protein (by weight). To produce MPCs, whole milk goes through an ultrafiltration process that removes the water, lactose and smaller minerals. The casein and whey proteins that are left behind are then spray-dried, resulting in a concentrated powder. Characteristics include protein-rich, lactose-low, increased heat stability, solubility and dispersability. Since they are generally produced as a dry powder, exporters can ship the product long-distances at low cost. Processors can use MPCs to stretch yields, also at low cost.

There are a variety of milk proteins that are manufactured differently and can have different commercial uses. MPCs are used as an additive in products such as processed cheese, yogurts, frozen desserts, crackers and protein bars.

**What’s the problem?**

Although KPS warned that the result of the new regulations would increase the cost of cheese thereby negatively affecting the industry as Canadian consumers would buy less, we know from other countries’ examples that this is unlikely. In fact, in places where agricultural protections have been relaxed, farmers and consumers have been clear losers (to the benefit of the multinationals).

The European Court of Auditors in an October 2009 report found that between 2000 and 2007, when the EU began relaxing quota regulations, the producer price fell 6%, while consumer prices increased by 17%.

Inspections and tariffs on imported MPCs are few to none. The United States, which has seen increasing amounts of unregulated protein sources, has already demonstrated that these imports are driving down the price of domestically produced milk and are putting American dairy farmers out of business. Fewer farmers mean fewer choices for consumers, and lack of monitoring puts health and food safety at risk.

FDA officials feel there is little concern about the safety of dry milk protein concentrates because the products are treated with heat during pasteurization and drying, which kills pathogens. However, high temperatures also destroy nutritional value. It is also important to note that pasteurization cannot protect against other food safety risks, like melamine adulteration, for example.

Considering recent issues with health compromises in China, including the melamine-tainted baby formula, consumers have every reason to question imports of dairy products from countries where sufficient standards cannot be enforced.

**Where the regulations stand now**

On more than one account since 2009, the Supreme Court of Canada has denied appeals by KPS.

The regulations are at a compromise, with a minimum level of milk to be used in production of various cheeses, but also allow for certain levels of additives.

They do however maintain a licensing system for cheese importers as a way to facilitate the enforcement of the regulations in a consistent and equitable fashion.

Saputo expressed disappointment with the outcome but states, “We respect the Supreme Court’s decision and we have been fully compliant with the cheese regulations since they came into effect in December, 2008.”

**What you can do**

Check labels. If you are concerned about this controversial ingredient and discover them in a product, don’t hesitate to let the manufacturer and grocery store manager know.

Look for dairy products that have ‘Made with 100% Canadian Milk’ printed on the label and consider choosing those.

Urge the FDA to keep the standards of identity strong for dairy products like yogurt.

Familiarize yourself with your producers. Saputo is the largest dairy processor in Canada (12th largest in the world), owning 650 trade-marks registered in Canada. Subsidiaries include Dairyland, Neilson Dairy, and Vachon.

Avalon Dairy and Goat’s Pride Dairy are examples of small-scale local producers here in the Fraser Valley.
Sustainability Heroes

B.C. has its own set of sustainability heroes and we will honour them here each issue.

FARM BAG FUNDRAISER

The Farm Bag Fundraiser, co-founded by Jennifer & Nicholas Vincent (Little Green Book/Visualise It) and Thomas Tumbauch (Localmotive Organic Delivery), is modeled as a fundraising engine for schools and community groups. Farm Bag Fundraiser creates a CSA-style winter market for local farmers providing customers with 20lbs of fresh produce each month. Participating schools and community groups earn a sales commission of 20%. The program as a win-win-win for consumers, fundraisers and farmers. A successful pilot program ran October to April in South Okanagan with 13 groups selling over 34,000 lbs of produce and they’re expanding this program to other regions this year.

farmbag.littlegreenbook.ca

NATURE’S PATH FOODS

Nature’s Path truly believes in sustainability. They trap energy from their ovens to re-purpose, putting it back into plant operations reducing their outside energy consumption. Reducing packaging reduces water use and with their waste water system capturing and reusing condensate water from the boilers and clean up processes, they reduce their overall water use by 1.5 million gallons every year. Since 2009, they’ve increased their inter-modal transport, substantially decreasing their carbon emissions - and by being organic, they keep 16 million lbs of synthetic fertilizers and 1/4 million lbs of pesticides from being used. We’re sure they’ll meet their goal of zero waste by 2020.

naturespath.com

O.U.R. ECOVILLAGE

Permaculture is re-creating our lives as holistic and interconnected. Thirteen years ago, O.U.R. ECOVILLAGE on Vancouver Island became a 25-acre Sustainable Living Demonstration Site and Education Centre. They’ve grown and last year through education programs, they hosted over 10,000 folks. This year heralds the anticipated opening of O.U.R. Zero Mile Meal Eatery allowing groups to be part of the farm culture in new ways that include food service/various forms of accommodation/meeting and classroom space. O.U.R Ecovillage is one of North America’s premiere Permaculture Demonstration sites and they’re working hard to continue the good life and support others in learning the same!

ourecovillage.org
The Urban Food Revolution

Hat’s off to Peter Ladner, a great supporter of FarmFolk CityFolk and one of our monthly perennial donors. Check out his exciting new book, *The Urban Food Revolution, Changing the Way We Feed Cities*.

Peter’s book takes a closer look at how producing food locally makes us healthier, alleviates poverty, creates jobs, and makes cities safer and more beautiful. The Urban Food Revolution is an essential resource for anyone who has lost confidence in the global industrial food system and wants practical advice on how to join the local food revolution. Ladner draws on his political and business experience to show that we have all the necessary ingredients to ensure that local, fresh, sustainable food is affordable and widely available.

Many of our supporters are making great strides to make our food system more sustainable and we are proud that Peter is a FarmFolk CityFolk member.

“...so many examples of inspiring, innovative projects and initiatives that are improving community food security that it’s hard not to feel invigorated and compelled to take action...”

– Carly Dunster, Spacing Magazine

**Bernardin**

Preserving things local for over one hundred years.

Proud supporter of FarmFolk CityFolk’s Feast of Fields

Come and see us at
Alderlea Farm and Cafe
in Duncan on September 16

www.feastoffields.com  www.bernardin.ca
Why are barns red?

During the late 1700s barns began to transform from unpainted to protected from the elements. Commercial paints weren’t available so a homemade, inexpensive mixture of linseed oil, milk, lime, and rust (aka ferric oxide which kills fungi and mosses) was produced and barn red coloured paint was born. It is important to note, however, in some areas of the United States a common barn colour is white possibly associated with dairy production and the idea of pure and clean. Today, most new barns are still painted red out of tradition.

Membership Application or Membership Renewal

☐ YES, I’ll become a new member of FarmFolkCityFolk (annual).
☐ Please renew my annual membership in FarmFolkCityFolk.
☐ Individual ($30)
☐ Student/Senior ($15)
☐ Family ($50)
☐ Non-Profit Society ($100)
☐ Small Business ($250)
☐ Corporate ($500)

Note: New Membership Prices.

☐ Yes, I’d like to donate monthly as a “Perennial Donor”.
☐ $15/month ☐ $25/month ☐ $50/month ☐ $______/month
My preferred method of giving is ☐ automatic withdrawal (enclose VOID cheque)
☐ VISA debit (provide information below) ☐ post dated cheques (enclose)
I authorize FarmFolkCityFolk to debit this amount each month. A full tax receipt will be issued in January & I can change/cancel my pledge anytime by contacting FCF.

Enclosed is ☐ a cheque
I am enclosing: Membership Fees: $☐ Donation: $☐ Total: $☐
☐ VISA information below:
VISA Card # __________ Expiry Date __________
Signature ____________________________

Name ________________________________
Organization (if any) ______________________
Address ______________________________

City __________________ Postal Code __________
Tel. (home) __________________________
Tel. (work) __________________________
Fax _________________________________
e.mail ________________________________

Please make your cheque payable to FarmFolkCityFolk and mail to 1661 Duranleau Street, 2nd Floor Vancouver, BC V6H 3S3
National Strategy for Seed Security
By Michael Marrapese

USC Canada and Seeds of Diversity Canada have launched the "Bauta Initiative on Canadian Seed Security", a pilot project seeking to work with farmers, gardeners, food activists, and community organizations to grow, conserve and spread locally adapted, bio-diverse seed.

Recognizing that a truly sustainable food system needs a secure source of high quality, locally grown seeds, USC brought together 23 seed and food leaders from across the country to discuss the needs and opportunities for building seed security in Canada.

BCSeeds, a project of FarmFolk CityFolk, has been contracted by USC to bring the initiative to the west coast including three Train the Trainer workshops which were held in Nelson with Patrick Steiner of Stellar Seeds, in Lillooet with Mojave Kaplan of the Planting Seed Project, and on Central Vancouver Island with Craig Evans of Growing Opportunities Farm Coop. This nation-wide series of “seed training” workshops trains seed growers as well as members of community organizations in the best practices of seed production in order to further spread that information in their local communities.

Jane Rabinowicz has been hired by USC to research strengths and weaknesses in the seed system across Canada and to make recommendations towards developing a Canadian Strategy for Seed Security. While she was in BC, FarmFolk CityFolk introduced her to many of the seed growers and seed savers in our province. USC will be supporting both the BC Seeds Gathering in November at Kwantlen University as well as the Seed Connections – Broadcasting Seed from Coast to Coast Conference to be held at McGill University. We aim to focus locally but connect nationally.

FarmFolk CityFolk’s seed program dovetails perfectly into the national initiative and will continue to support the development of seed collectives across BC, to train trainers, to participate in on-farm research and to develop educational resources.

For information about the National Seed Gathering in BC visit our website at www.farmfolkcifyolk.ca/2012/04/2012-seed-gathering/ or visit www.seeds.ca/ev/events.php for information about the conference in Montreal.
A sustainable food system begins with your choices. For over 20 years, we’ve been providing our communities with the choice for something better:

- Quality foods sourced from BC growers and food producers
- Ethically raised meats and poultry and sustainably sourced Ocean Wise approved seafood
- Fair trade organic varieties of produce, chocolates, coffees, teas, sugars and more
- Complimentary nutrition advice to help you make the most of your food choices