

British Columbia

Organic Grower

Movable Coldframes

Tips for building a mobile greenhouse

Fresh Starts

At Shalefield Organic Gardens

Farm-to-Chef

Creating successful connections

Journal for the Certified Organic Associations of BC - Spring 2015

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Starting Fresh

A surprising twist on a familiar theme: meet Yolanda and Brian, "old young farmers," at Shalefield Organic Gardens.

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Cover Crops

A win-win-win for protecting your product, preserving wildlife habitat and enhancing the soil.

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BC Organic Grower

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We welcome letters to the Editor (300 words maximum) and articles (1000 words maximum). Letters to the Editor are published at the discretion of the editor, based on relevance and suitability.

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On the Cover: Fruit from a perennial agriculture system.
Credit: Susan Cousineau

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Editor's Note

By Marilee Peters

Ah, spring. The green shoots poking through the bare earth to let us know that once again that magical season of rebirth, renewal and growth has arrived. In the spirit of the season, we're planning a few changes here at the BC Organic Grower.



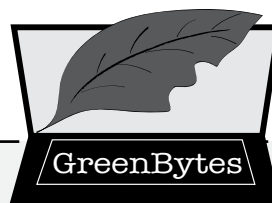
Starting with this issue, you'll note that the letters from the Executive and the Office Report have been replaced with a new section we're provisionally calling COABC News Patch, giving you quick updates on – well, on the news from COABC. Got an idea for a more creative name for our new section? Great, we were counting on that! Send your suggestions to editor@certifiedorganic.bc.ca and impress us with your inventiveness.

Wait, there's more! We'll be introducing themed issues over the coming months, starting in the summer of 2015 with a Livestock issue. It's a logical follow-up to the enormously successful 2015 COABC Conference held this past February in Chilliwack. If you weren't able to make it to the conference, you'll have a chance to experience some of the fascinating diversity of presentations in these pages, as we feature articles drawn from a selection of the workshops, beginning in this issue with Susan Cousineau's article on permaculture.

As well, in this issue you'll find Chris Bodnar of Close to Home Organics offering suggestions for building a movable coldframe and Christine Terpsma, program coordinator for the Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust sharing some of the knowledge gleaned from over a decade of research on cover cropping in Delta. As well, be sure to check out the great roundup of conference highlights from organizer extraordinaire Michelle Tsutsumi, and excerpts from the presentation of this year's Brad Reid Memorial award to Heather Pritchard of Glorious Organics Co-op, in recognition of her many years of activism on behalf of organic agriculture in BC.

Finally, in celebration of 2015 as the International Year of Soils, we're featuring thoughts on the mysterious nature and beneficial role of humus in our Footnotes in the Field column. All in all, this issue is full of information that will help you germinate new ideas this spring! Here's to a busy, productive growing season. 🌱

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Lower Snowpack, Lower Flow

The BC River Forecast Centre releases Snow Survey and Water Supply Bulletins eight times per year for all regions across British Columbia.

The most recent bulletin for April 1, 2015 indicates lower than normal snow pack for a number of areas, including the South Coast, (13%) Vancouver Island, (15%) and the Skagit (34%).

To find out more about the implications of this data and to learn about the snowpack levels in your region, visit:

 www.bcrfc.gov.bc.ca/bulletins



Fact vs. Fiction: Videos debunk Myths about Organic Certification

When videographer and North Okanagan Organic Association administrator Cara Nunn, accompanied by cameraman Bruce Mol, arrived at the Vernon farmer's market one warm sunny morning late last summer, she knew they had an interesting day ahead of them. Their mission? To find organic growers who would agree to talk frankly—on camera—about some of the myths surrounding organic certification, and explain the reality behind the myths.

On the list of tough topics: the cost of certification; paperwork; and the allegation that consumers don't care whether food is certified organic. As it turned out, organic farmers were eager to challenge these myths. Growers Sarah Martel of 4 Elements Farm, Michael Rudy of Pilgrim's Produce, Jacqui Sproule of Sproule and Sons, and Bev Wiens of Stepney Hill Farm shared their reasons for choosing organic certification.

Know a farmer hesitating about whether to make the leap to organic certification? Share one of the videos, from COABC's Youtube channel:

- **Myth #1:** Certification is Just for Big Farms
- **Myth #2:** Organic Certification Costs Too Much
- **Myth #3:** Buffers Use Up All My Land

➤ **Myth #4:** Natural is Just as Good

➤ **Myth #5:** Certification Paperwork is Overwhelming

The videos were produced thanks to funding from Vancity.

COABC Develops Toolkit for Processors

by Rochelle Eisen

Building on the successful 'grow organic food' and 'market organic food' toolkits launched in 2014, COABC is pleased to announce that a new 'prepare organic food' toolkit will be added to the lineup this spring.

Like its predecessors, the 'prepare organic food' toolkit will streamline the flow and accessibility of key information. Processors and other operators involved in food handling and preparation will now have easy access to up-to-date information contained in one locale. This toolkit is designed to be a time-saving and frustration-reduction resource, which may well encourage more operators to certify. Providing support and resources targeted to organic processing and food preparation will help create a stronger organic value chain and a larger economic impact for the BC agri-food sector.

The 'prepare organic food' toolkit will provide key information on selecting certification bodies, interpreting the organic standards and permitted substances list, logo options, tools to help with certification documentation, and more. The

demand for organic products and supply chain challenges will also be addressed.

COABC has hired Resilient Solutions Consulting to develop the toolkit, and Mediability to incorporate it into the website. Expect to see the new toolkit launched by May 2015. For more information, please contact Rochelle Eisen of Resilient Solutions Consulting at rochelle@resilientsolutionsconsulting.org or 250.499.2413

Funding for this project was provided in part by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture through programs delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C.

New Directors Elected at 2015 AGM

The COABC Board of Directors for 2015/16 includes:

Executive

Co-President: Carmen Wakeling (PACS)

Co-President: Corey Brown (SOOPA)

Vice-President: Andrea Turner (PACS)

Treasurer: Terra Park (PACS)

Secretary: Arzeena Hamir (IOPA)

The new executive of COABC has been working hard to establish a structure that works for us for the 2015-16 year. We feel confident that the model we have established will create a cohesive and effective team. We will keep the board abreast of relevant information and look forward to working together to keep the COABC thriving.


For the full list of directors, please see below.

COABC Group Insurance

COABC is exploring the possibility of a group benefits policy for the Association, and will be obtain-

ing a quote from Investors Group for this purpose. To formulate a quote, Investors Group will need some basic information about the potential group members, and representatives from the company may be contacting you to gauge interest and gather this information. An association plan would pool all the people within the association and

create a large group which the insurance company looks upon as one company.

Benefits of the group policy include substantially lower rates, lower risk of rate increases, options to individually tailor the plan to member needs, access to financial planning services, and more. 

2015 COABC Directors

Certification Body	Position	Name
British Columbia Association for Regenerative Agriculture (BCARA)	Director	Rod Reid
British Columbia Association for Regenerative Agriculture (BCARA)	Alternate	Jim Henderson
Bio-Dynamic Agriculture Society of British Columbia (Bio-D)	Director	Mary Forstbauer
Bio-Dynamic Agriculture Society of British Columbia (Bio-D)	Alternate	Gabe Cipes
Boundary Organic Producers Association (BOPA)	Director	Roly Russell
Boundary Organic Producers Association (BOPA)	Alternate	TBD
Fraser Valley Organic Producers Association (FVOPA)	Director	Susan Snow
Fraser Valley Organic Producers Association (FVOPA)	Alternate	Doug Luder
Island Organic Producers Association (IOPA)	Director	Arzeena Hamir
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Kootenay Organic Growers Society (KOGS)	Director	Abra Brynne
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North Okanagan Organic Association (NOOA)	Alternate	Robert Bothe
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Pacific Agricultural Certification Society (PACS)	Director	Terra Park
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Pacific Agricultural Certification Society (PACS)	Alternate	Yvonne Kosugi
Pacific Agricultural Certification Society (PACS)	Alternate	Ed Clarke
Pacific Agricultural Certification Society (PACS)	Alternate	Sam Quinlan
Pacific Agricultural Certification Society (PACS)	Alternate	Angad Juneja
Similkameen Okanagan Organic Producers Association (SOOPA)	Director	Corey Brown
Similkameen Okanagan Organic Producers Association (SOOPA)	Alternate	Moses Brown
Consumer and Environment Rep (BC Food Systems Network)	Director/ Alternate	Rosemary Plummer/ Brent Mansfield
Ministry of Agriculture (BCMA)	Ex-Officio	Susan Smith

Celebrating Flocks, Stocks & a Smoking Good Conference

Highlights of the 2015 COABC Conference in Chilliwack

By Michelle Tsutsumi

A convergence of information, camaraderie, and mingling — that was the 2015 COABC Conference in a nutshell. With sold out attendance, a record-setting Silent Auction, and an incredible level of food donations, it was truly a conference to remember.

Participants were enthusiastic about all the learning that took place over the weekend. The sessions on crowdfunding, co-ops, farmers' markets, pest management, environmental farm plan, and indigenous narratives related to food lands were particularly popular. There were so many engaging topics offered concurrently that some folks mentioned that it was hard to choose which one to attend!

In keeping with the conference theme of Flocks, Stocks & Two Smoking Barrels of Produce there were several sessions on livestock, including discussions about feed and the challenges of sourcing locally, a session on animal welfare in dairy operations, and a panel on slaughter facilities. Dr. John Church kept the audience amused, bringing a humorous storytelling approach to his presentation of research findings on the health benefits of organic beef. A session on pasture management strategies has already prompted requests for further discussions on this topic, while Anne Macey's session on interpreting the organic standards in relation to livestock was of particular interest to chicken producers given the recent reclassification of organic chicken from specialty to mainstream quota.



Chris Bodnar and daughter Clara, drawing for door prizes. Credit: Cara Nunn



COABC Executive Director of Operations Jen Gamble (left) and Office Manager Kristy Wipperman (right) - thanks for a job well done! Credit: Cara Nunn

A Selection of Conference Firsts

- ★ Participants at the first ever full-day pre-conference workshop learned how to *Create Your Own Employee Handbook*.
- ★ Friday's Open Space Discussion was an opportunity for conference participants to share their ideas and experiences, and it was fantastic to see tables full of people putting their heads together on topics such as livestock, water, seeds, and organic standards.
- ★ Dogwood Brewery joined Crannóg Ales in serving beer at the Friday reception, only 24 hours after receiving their license. Other crowd pleasers at the reception included Coldstream Creek Road Orchard, providing a range of four types of apple juice; Lotusland Vineyards, pouring their delicious reds and whites; and Twisted Hills Craft Cider, serving alongside Pemberton Distillery and their ever-expanding repertoire of liquor.

Heather Pritchard

Winner of the 2015 Brad Reid Memorial Award

Excerpted with thanks from speech by Chris Bodnar

It seems odd that Heather would be getting what is, essentially, a lifetime achievement award. She's one of those farmers who has packed so much into her life, yet has such a youthful energy, that it seems difficult to guess her age! But she is a mentor and elder to many as well as a friend and colleague to us all.

Practically speaking, Heather has accomplished a lot. In 1986 she was one of four partners who incorporated the Glorious Garnish and Seasonal Salad Company Limited based on Fraser Common Farm in Aldergrove. This pioneering work established a model for what remains a high-value crop for many farms and introduced the concept of high-quality salads to the menus of Vancouver restaurants.

In 2006 Heather helped dissolve the Glorious Company and incorporated as Glorious Organics Co-operative, a workers' co-op. This move very much exemplifies Heather's outlook toward cooperation and developing democratic organizations in the agricultural sector.

Around 1993 she helped establish Farm Folk City Folk, which transformed the way people in BC think about their food and farmland. Currently Farm Folk City Folk's Farm Program Manager, Heather has previously served as the Executive Director, steering the organization through periods of financial difficulty. She negotiated with Vancity



*Heather Pritchard receiving the Brad Reid award from Karen Reid.
Credit: Cara Nunn*

to establish the Community Farm Endowment Fund - a \$500,000 endowment that now supports the work of FF-CF's Community Farms Program.

Heather is a supporter of the Young Agrarians, the BC Eco Seed Co-op, and matriachs her large, extended family, weaving all the strands into a brilliant web of complex relationships with complementary values and goals.

Above all, Heather is a fierce proponent of AgriCULTURE. The farming is one thing -- maybe even the easy part of it all. But she has a vision that includes culture, community and a way of life that enriches and feeds our souls as well

Our Thanks To...

Young Agrarians coordinator Sara Dent for sharing the story of Young Agrarians growth through online and offline networking in her memorable keynote address.

Sto'lo Elder Eddie Gardner, for his poignant and humorous welcoming words and song.

Mary Forstbauer, for organizing a record-breaking Silent Auction, both in number of items (200) and money raised (just under \$4,000). Well done!

Master of Ceremonies Chris Bodnar for his fantastic job of keeping the program running on time, making

us laugh, and offering an impressive, personalized background for Heather Pritchard, who received the Brad Reid Memorial Award in acknowledgement of her tireless efforts for organics and engaging new farmers (see above for details).

A heartfelt thank you goes out to the event sponsors, planning committee, volunteers, hotel staff, and food donors (who donated over \$7,000 of food and beverages), who made this such a memorable weekend -- one to be celebrated on so many levels.

And finally, thanks to the 185 participants who came to listen, learn, laugh and share with their fellow organic farmers and producers from all across BC. 🌱

FRESH STARTS

At Shalefield Organic Gardens



Credit: Yolana Versterre & Brian Patterson

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE YOUNG TO SUCCEED AS A NEW FARMER, AS THIS INTREPID PAIR FROM THE COLUMBIA VALLEY ARE PROVING.

By Hannah Roessler

“**T**here is just so much shale in the field, we’re always picking up rocks – so there you have it: “Shalefield Farm” was born!” explains Yolanda Versterre when I ask her about the name of the farm in Lindell Beach, BC she owns with her partner Brian Patterson.

The story of Yolanda and Brian’s entry into farming puts a fresh twist on the new farmer tale: as Yolanda puts it, “we are old young farmers.” While discussions of the aging farmer base and the challenges faced by young entrants into farming are a frequent theme in farming news, its not often we hear about people embarking on farming careers later in life.

Brian has owned the 10-acre property south of Chilliwack, near Cultus Lake, for many years, but Shalefield Organic Gardens only started taking off in 2005, when Brian began his professional life as a farmer — at the ripe young age of 55! He had been laid off from his job as a printer, as new mechanization and technology made his job of 35 years obsolete. It was an opportunity for a new start, and Brian began growing blueberries, raspberries and garlic — no longer as a hobby, but with an eye towards making money.

Inevitably, there were challenges in the transition from hobby farmer to professional grower. As Yolanda describes it, “Brian had been growing one row, so then

he just started growing 10 rows! But of course, everything changes with scale, doesn't it?"

While Brian had years of experience growing vegetables for family and friends, Yolanda was completely new to farming. She had moved to BC after working as an operating room nurse in Holland, and met Brian while they were both enjoying their other hobby – trail running. Did this athletic training prepare them to be the successful farmers they are now? Certainly farming requires stamina: "It's a LOT of work," Yolanda sighs, noting that they've given up trail running, along with tennis, since farming provides all the exercise they have time or energy for!

Today, Yolanda and Brian and their dedicated staff have nine acres in production, growing strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and a variety of field crops. They have a few experimental crops, such as ginger, which they source certified organic from Hawaii; it's done very well this year, and it's a hit with market customers. Sprouts are another Shalefield specialty crop, one they started to develop a source of farm income throughout the winter months. Their sprout blends, which they create using over 10 types of sprouts, are a customer favourite at the market.



Yolana Versterre & Brian Patterson of Shalefield Organic Gardens. Credit: Shalefield Organic Gardens



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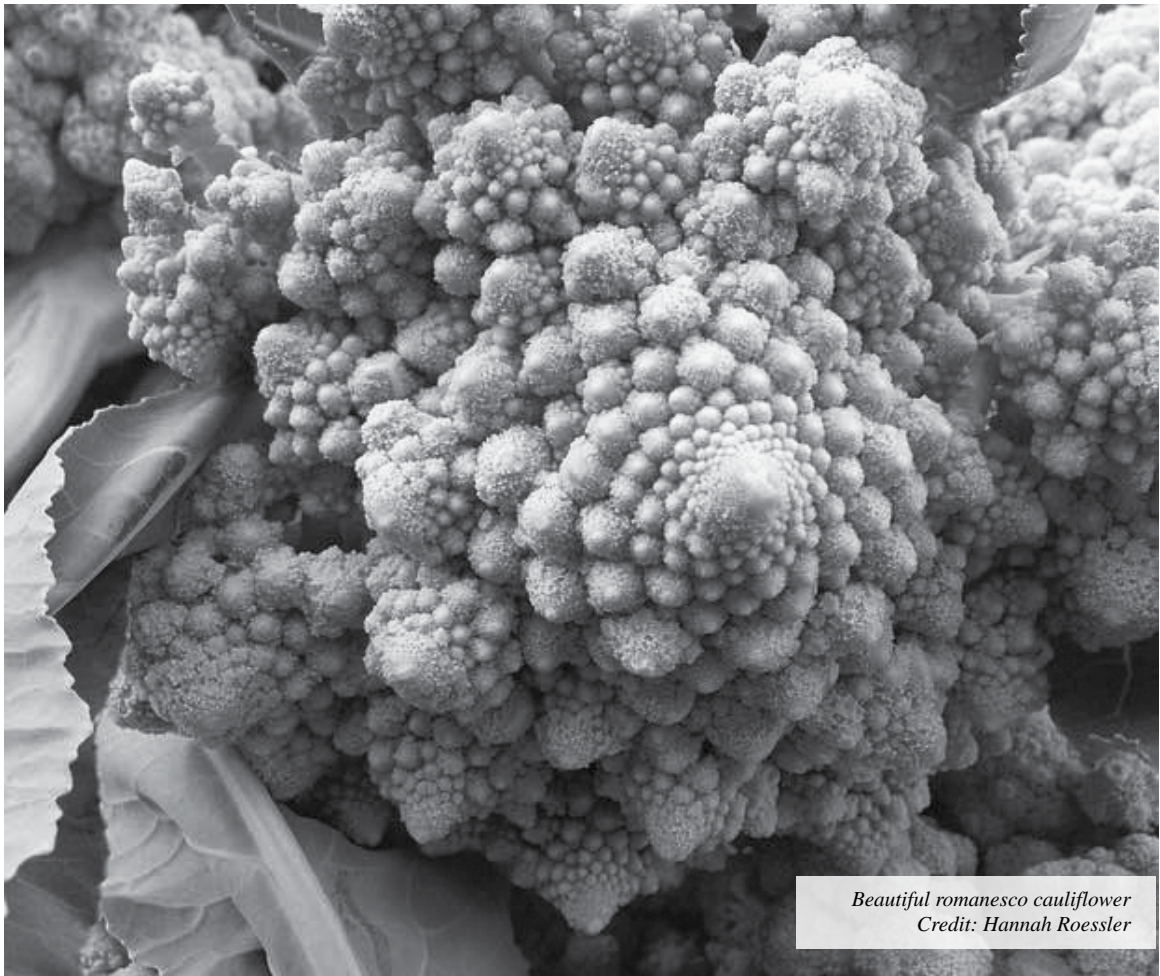
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*Beautiful romanesco cauliflower
Credit: Hannah Roessler*

USING TECHNOLOGY TO BUILD CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Yolanda explains that they mostly sell at farmers markets, and have started using a market share program to help retain customers. Customers can purchase a market share for either \$500 or \$250 and then receive a gift card for the amount, which they bring to the market with them. Yolanda scans the card with an iPhone app, which subtracts the amount of their purchase and sends an email to the customer to let them know how much credit they have left on their card.

This year they are expanding into a CSA program and they are determined to provide a veggie box to a family in need. They'll need to attract 50 CSA box customers to attain this goal, and are well on the way there. As Yolanda notes, "how many times do you just have the one bunch of carrots left that didn't sell, just because it's that last bunch of carrots? I've asked for

a lot of help from other people to get to this stage of farming and I am so, so very grateful for what I get to do in my life, because farming allows me to eat so healthy and live well. And I really want to help someone else access that."

A BIODYNAMIC COMMITMENT

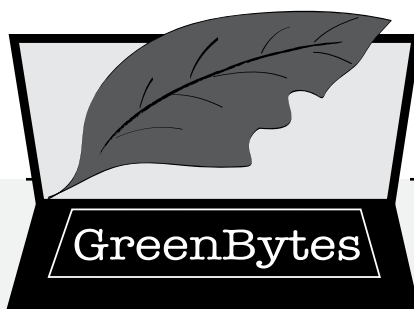
Growing up in Holland, Yolanda became familiar early on with the use of homeopathics for healing. Today, she and Brian practice biodynamic agriculture at Shalefield, and Yolanda feels the philosophy behind biodynamics fits with the ethic of healing holistically. Following biodynamic cycles can be challenging given the tight rotations of market growing, but the pair are committed to making it work for their operation.

Yolanda and Brian's experiences starting their farming business at Shalefield Organic Gardens makes it clear that, whatever age you begin farming, a willingness to learn new things and take chances is the first require-

ment. Add a big measure of love and commitment to the job and you've got a recipe for success: "We just love what we are doing. We are so excited about the fact that we are still here. We made it! It's do-able. You can do it. You can make it happen." 🌱

🖱️ www.shalefieldorganicgardens.com

Hannah Roessler has farmed in Nicaragua, Washington, and BC, on permaculture farms, polyculture cafetals, organic market farms and a biodynamic vineyard. She has an MA in Environmental Studies and her research is focused on climate change and small-scale organic farming. She currently farms on the Saanich Peninsula on Vancouver Island.



FarmStart Tool Shed

A well-stocked and organized tool shed is a boon to any farmer. FarmStart, an Ontario-based organization dedicated to serving the needs of young farmers, has an online tool shed full of resources for beginning farmers, and is also great for producers who are scaling-up, or trying out new equipment or techniques.

A few topics you can find covered in the Tool Shed:

- Crop planning
- Pastured Poultry
- Bloat in Ruminant animals
- Tool reviews
- Growing grains & beans small-scale
- Irrigation

The FarmStart Tool Shed also has some tools and books for sale through their online store. Check it out:

🖱️ store.farmstart.ca/blogs/farmerreviews

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ALL THE RIGHT MOVES

Tips for Designing and Building Your Own Movable Coldframe



Left: detail of wheel and rail that makes this coldframe move. Right: anchoring system. Credit: Chris Bodnar

Thinking of investing in a large greenhouse structure? Going mobile can cost more, but has potential for significantly increasing returns on your investment.

By Chris Bodnar

Have you been tempted by Elliot Coleman's writings to build a movable coldframe? A number of options for pre-fabricated movable coldframes exist south of the border, but finding information and supplies in BC proves to be a bit trickier. Nonetheless, movable coldframes should be an attractive option for many growers.

Most growers don't need a coldframe all of the time for crops that might otherwise benefit from cover at points in their growing life. With a movable coldframe, growers have the potential to extend their season by using the structure on three distinct crops over the course of the year. This can significantly increase the value and utility of a structure over a larger footprint, without having to pay to cover the entire growing area. A crop plan in this system can look something like this:

- ✓ Starting early greens, herbs, potatoes, radishes, beets and/or carrots inside a coldframe provides products for early markets.
- ✓ In late April or early May the coldframe can be moved off the early crops and onto beds where hot summer crops such as cucumbers and tomatoes will grow.
- ✓ By early to mid-October, when hot crops are finished, the coldframe can be positioned over fall and winter crops like salad greens, Asian greens, beets, carrots and even celery.

In a well-planned system, growers can maintain production throughout the entire year, capturing market share in the winter when local greens are scarce and cash flow might be down to a trickle.



From top to bottom: 1. Additional bracing on the coldframe sides help distribute energy from wind gusts to the second and third arches. Additional corner bracing prevents distortion of corners, helping to maintain 90 degree angles. 2. Diagonal bracing extending from above the doorway up to the peak of the second arc helps distribute energy from wind gusts across the structure. 3. The diagonal bracing starting at the top of doorways continues throughout the structure, adding strength and helping to distribute energy across the entire structure. Credit: Chris Bodnar

On our farm, we have been growing in movable coldframes for three seasons and have learned a few lessons to help make the experience of going mobile a bit easier.

Why go mobile?

Growers can, of course, try to time their crops in order to get early crops out of their coldframes before planting hot crops, and then transplanting winter crops after summer crops are finished. But there's always the risk that early crops might be delayed due to a cooler spring and the structure won't be ready for tomatoes when the tomatoes need to get into the ground. Likewise, transplanting after removing summer crops may not provide enough time for fall and winter crops to grow before slowing down and going dormant in November.

With a mobile coldframe, the structure moves according to a pre-determined schedule. Established plants will generally do fine outside by May and larger fall or winter crops may be ready to provide continuous harvest if protected by mid-October, thus avoiding gaps in the harvest schedule.

Another reason to go mobile is that it helps with crop rotations. We had previously grown tomatoes in the same stationary coldframes season after season. In our mobile arrangement, we have three positions, thus increasing the rotation to at least three years.

Finally, by moving a coldframe, all soil in the growing area is regularly exposed to weather, thus helping to avoid a build-up of nutrients and minerals that may otherwise be detrimental to the growing conditions.

Choosing a size

When making covered areas mobile, the size of a structure can range from individual beds with hoops covered with floating row cover or plastic right through to steel-arch commercial coldframes. On our farm we choose to convert a stationary 30' x 30' structure to a mobile and construct a new 36' x 95' coldframe as a mobile coldframe.

We chose a larger structure in order to maximize the heat footprint inside the structure, thus increasing the growing potential in colder seasons. Having said this, we could have constructed two 20' x 100' coldframes

for a lower cost; the larger size increases the price significantly. We used the rule of thumb that as long as the length was equal or less than three times the width, roll-up sides should be sufficient to avoid any “dead zones” of stagnant air (thus reducing the need for fans)

Won't it fly away?

Every owner of a mobile coldframe has likely had the nightmare vision of their structure taking off during a storm. With careful planning, this need not be a concern.

Gothic arch greenhouses rely on the fact that they are shaped like upside down airplane wings. Fluid dynamics dictates that wind will actually push the coldframe down.

Where growers go wrong, however, is in forgetting that a mobile structure will require additional strength.

Most greenhouses are engineered to get a large part of their strength from the bases of the arches being driven into (or cemented into) the ground. Without adequate bracing, the coldframe is more likely to crumple from wind blasts at the ends -- and then wind getting underneath the structure will flip it (anchors being useless at this point).



Celebrating 25 Years

Pro Organics is proud to represent BC organic producers and to be celebrating our 25th year of supporting local, organic, sustainable farming.

Today, as it was 25 years ago, our mission remains the same: Promoting the growth and integrity of organics from field to table.



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In a movable system, additional bracing is required, both for strength as well as to distribute energy throughout the structure during blasts of wind against the end walls. Diagonal inter-arch bracing at the peaks also helps to distribute energy across the structure.

And about anchors: we used earth anchors from Evertight Anchors, based in Saskatchewan. They have a number of earth anchors for varying soil types and pull strengths. These anchors are easy to install and remove and have a 4000lb+ pull strength. The general method of attaching this is with a bolt, turnbuckle and eye hooks to the interior greenhouse frame. These earth anchors are used to secure grain bins on the prairies, so they have a demonstrated track record. Plus, they are likely the most cost effective and are manufactured in Canada.

There are also growers in the province who use 2.5' to 5' rebar stakes at 10' spacing, attached to the greenhouse with steel strapping or high tensile wires.

To roll or slide?

One decision you'll have to make is how you want your mobile coldframe to move. We chose to use fencing wheels that roll on steel pipe tracks (mounted on 2x8 lumber). While constructing our structures we found that Johnny's Selected Seeds provided the best price on fencing wheels, even after shipping and import fees. Most local fencing companies didn't even stock enough wheels for a project of this size (40 wheels required for a 95' structure). With our coldframe on tracks we are able to move it by hand with six people (and it's even easier with eight, not to mention using a tractor).

Harnois Greenhouses offers plans for coldframes on skids. The steel skid, attached to the arches, provides greater strength overall, but requires a tractor to pull the structure when moving. The Harnois greenhouse can also be modified to a wheel and track system.

Anything else to know?

There are a few other considerations when planning a movable coldframe:

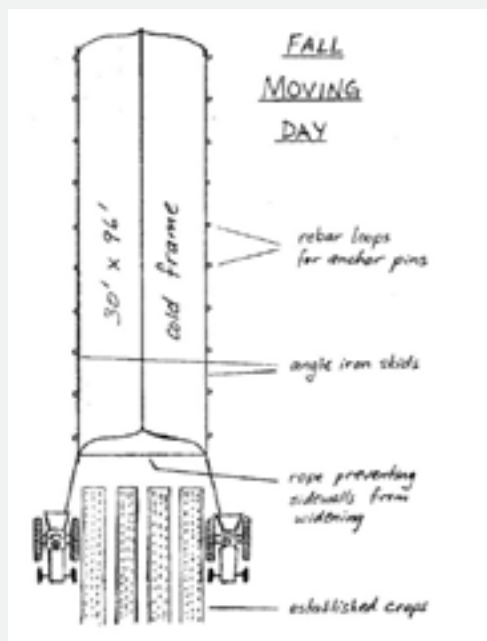
- ★ **Irrigation:** Ensure you design an irrigation system that works for all of the positions you're growing on. If installing underground pipes, it's best to do this prior to building the structure.

- ★ **Electricity or Heating:** If you require electrical hook-up for inflation, ventilation or any other purposes, think through installation of lines with a qualified electrician. Long extension cords (that will get lost in greenery) are dangerous.
- ★ **Levelling:** If building a coldframe on rails, levelling the land prior to setting down the rails is very important to avoid putting undue stress on the structure. For us, this involved the use of an excavator, which increased the cost of the project.



certifiedorganic.bc.ca/publications/bcog

Chris Bodnar owns and operates Close to Home Organics at Glen Valley Organic Farm in Abbotsford with his wife, Paige. Now into their ninth season of farming, Chris and his family have learned some of the challenges and opportunities of farming on a small scale in the organic sector. They operate a 135-member Community Shared Agriculture program and sell at two weekly farmers markets during the farming season.



Credit: Hermann Bruns

Further Info

There are a number of growers across the province with movable coldframes who might be willing to show you their systems.

Plus, past issues of the *BC Organic Grower* include articles with additional information:

Moving your greenhouse part 1

by Hermann Bruns

(scroll to pages 16-17)

www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/publications/bcog/issues/Vol5N1.pdf

Moving your greenhouse part 2

by Hermann Bruns

(scroll to page 24)

www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/publications/bcog/issues/Vol5N2.pdf

MULTIPURPOSE COVER CROPS not just for the birds!

A decade of cover crop trials in Delta, BC provides valuable learning on what works for coastal growers

Sunflower cover crop mix. Credit: Christine Terpsma

By Christine Terpsma

Every agricultural region has its own production challenges, and farming in the Fraser River delta is no exception. While Delta BC is a major food-producing area, with some of the best soils in all of Canada, it also is located along a major migration node for over 1.4 million birds annually. That's a lot of birds using the estuary and—you guessed it—the neighbouring farm fields.

Migratory birds, although widely celebrated for their international significance (the delta is Canada's top "Important Bird Area," and over the winter months hosts Russia's only population of Lesser Snow Geese), can pose significant challenges for farms. Farmers in Delta growing overwintering crops such as winter cauliflower found that after several thousand waterfowl descended upon their fields and grazed multiple times, few crops were salvageable for market. Dairy farmers who planted high protein feeds, such as Italian rye grass, clover and orchard grass, sustained so much damage as a result of hungry birds that their fields

were often reduced to bare soil and required re-seeding the following spring.

The bottom line: farmers were incurring significant costs each year to make up for lost or damaged crops due to wildlife grazing.

Using Cover Crops as a Distraction

In the early 1990s, farmers in the delta began partnering with conservation stakeholders to trial cover crops as a means to provide alternative feeding areas for migratory waterfowl. The vegetation has a decent window before the first frost to establish and provide feed for waterfowl, and therefore lure them away from economically important crops like hay fields.

The Delta Farmland & Wildlife Trust took over the administration of the initiative in 1995, and named it the "Winter Cover Crop Program." In the twenty

years since that time, Delta farmers have established a cumulative total of 26,915 hectares of cover crops. Although the program is often linked to wildlife issues, there are other reasons Delta farmers invest in cover crops. Soil in Delta tends to be heavy in texture and prone to compaction with extensive mechanical cultivation. Prolonged periods of winter rainfall can cause ponding on fields, which exacerbates drainage issues. The root systems of cover crops can help break soil compaction and ease ponding by assisting water infiltration into the soil profile.

Applying the Lessons Learned

At this point, you may be wondering how cover crops can be applicable to your operation. Although the circumstances surrounding cover cropping in Delta are specific, the lessons learned here over the last twenty years may be useful for other areas of similar climate and soil type. Regardless of the size of farm or mode of production, cover crops are a useful tool for sustainable soil management. They provide a wide variety of benefits including soil cover during heavy rain, erosion control, building organic matter by acting as a “green manure” and weed suppression. Cover crops can assist in nitrogen scavenging and fixation and may even provide late-summer pollinator habitat.

The Delta Farmland & Wildlife Trust, in partnership with the University of British Columbia and local farmers, has conducted over a decade of monitoring and research to determine which cover crops work best in a coastal environment. The results of research and farmer trials have led to three winter cover crop types which are most commonly used by Delta farmers today: spring cereals, winter cereals and legumes.

Spring cereals are frost-sensitive and include varieties such as Spring Barley and Spring Oats. These cover crops are attractive options because of relatively inexpensive seed and their ability to establish rapidly, choking out common weeds such as chickweed.



Snow geese enjoying cover crop. Credit: Markus Merkens

Farmers usually plant spring cereals in August to mid-September. To achieve maximum biomass accumulation (and therefore a thick “green manure” for spring plough-down), planting early is key. Some farmers prefer to plant Spring Barely over Spring Oats due to

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Snow geese focusing in on cover crop. Credit: David Bradbeer.

Barley's allelopathic effects, which can assist weed control in the spring.

Unlike spring cereals, winter cereals survive repeated frost events and continue growth in the spring. Winter Wheat, Fall Rye and Spring Wheat (yes, it overwinters!) fall under the winter cereal umbrella of cover crops. Seed for these crops tends to be more expensive, however these frost-tolerant cereals also establish rapidly and choke out weeds. Biomass accumulation for winter cereals takes place in both the fall and spring seasons, and the crop can be harvested the following year. These cover crops tend to be planted in mid-September.

The Benefits of Legumes


While spring and winter cereals are considered more traditional cover crops in Delta, farmers, especially organic producers, are increasingly turning to legume cover crops as a way to fix nitrogen during the non-growing season. Legumes such as clover (Crimson, White and Red varieties) have been trialed in various capacities in the Delta area. Crimson clover prefers well-drained soils, and produces rapid growth when conditions are favourable. White clover tends to be slower in establishment, and also is not fond of wet

soils. Delta farmers, when selecting this clover type, tend to underseed it with grain for best growth. Red clover is the most popular clover in Delta rotations. It can survive water-logged soils and produces a deep taproot that can help break compaction and assist drainage.

In general, Delta farmers plant clover cover crops as early as possible after cash crop harvest to maximize growth and nitrogen-fixation, and also to provide valuable late-season habitat for pollinators.

Recently, growers have been experimenting with cover crop mixes as part of their rotation. In particular, forage (or tillage) radish, planted in late-summer, has gained popularity amongst producers. Farmers cite benefits such as improved drainage as a result of radish taproots reaching up to 30cm in length.

In 2014, a Delta farmer experimented with a forage radish mix which included Sudan Grass, Sunflower, Sugar Beet, Lentil and Chick Pea. This mix was planted mid-summer and grew to over a meter tall before first frost. Besides buzzing with pollinators throughout the summer, this cover crop also provided habitat for songbirds, who hunted aerial insects over the fields.

As the use of cover crops diversifies and evolves in Delta, one thing remains constant: cover crops are multi-functional tools that can be tailored to provide specific benefits for each farm and mode of production. More local research on new legume and mix varieties (such as the forage radish) is needed to quantify their soil enhancement properties, but over 1,200 hectares of both cereal, legume and mixed cover crops planted in Delta on an annual basis speaks volumes about the confidence growers place on the value of cover crops. Despite challenges to farming in this area, local producers find cover crops to be an investment in long-term soil sustainability. 

Christine Terpsma is the Program Coordinator for Delta Farmland & Wildlife Trust. The Trust works with Farmers in the Fraser River Delta to preserve farmland and associated wildlife habitat through sustainable farming and land stewardship. Christine grew up on a Delta dairy farm, and is an Articling Agrologist with the BC Institute of Agrologists.

The Delta Farmland & Wildlife Trust would like to acknowledge the significant contributions of the following organizations to the Winter Cover Crop Stewardship Program: Delta Agricultural Society, BC Waterfowl Society, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation, Wildlife Habitat Canada, Environment Canada, Corporation of Delta and City of Richmond.

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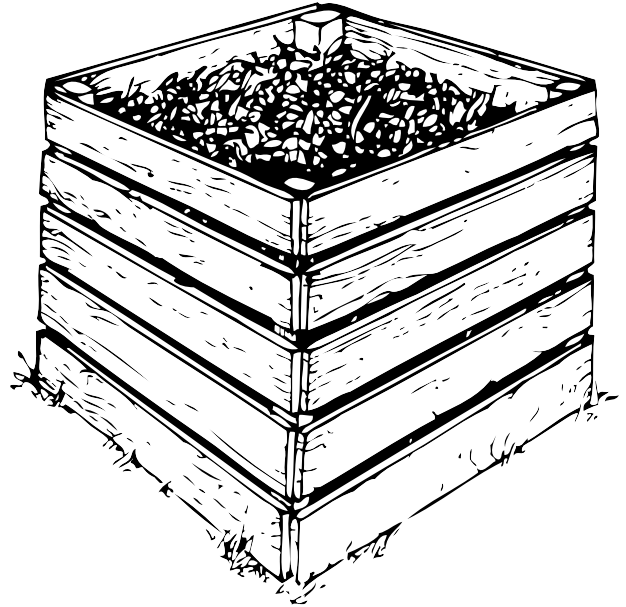
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HUMUS

the soil memory



By Marjorie Harris

“Essentially all life depends upon the soil ... there can be no life without soil and no soil without life.” Charles E. Kellogg, *USDA Yearbook of Agriculture*, 1938

It is well-known that humus is an important component of soil fertility, but there is so much more to know about this elusive material. Humus is mysteriously alive, a memory-holder within the soil. Yet what exactly is it?


Humus is the organic residue remaining after plant and animal matter has been altered and broken down by microorganisms. As the breaking down is happening, new particles are chemically created in humus, called colloidal particles. These particles are organized into long, convoluted carbon chains and rings bonded with hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen. Joined together by clay, these become what are called organo-clay complexes.

The organo-clay complexes within humus are highly charged, carrying negative charges that are pH dependent and of vital importance to the soil. They contrib-

The benefits of stabilized colloidal humus include:

- ☺ Provides long-term nutrient reserves, releasing to plants as needed: especially nitrogen, phosphorus and sulphur
- ☺ Improves soil structure and Cation-Exchange Capacity
- ☺ Reduces soil erosion by ‘sticking/binding’ soil particles together
- ☺ Humic and fulvic acids stimulate and promote plant growth
- ☺ Improves soil water holding capacity (porosity), allowing greater air and water movement

ute to the Cation Exchange Capacity of the soil, affecting the soil's ability to hold onto essential nutrients for slow release to the plants as needed.

In effect, humus acts as nature's great electrostatic chemical reactor, binding biomolecules (such as DNA) in the soil and protecting them from enzyme attack and breakdown. Biomolecules bound in this way are held in "suspended animation" and can retain their biological activity for years, if not eons. This is why we can say that humus is the soil's "memory": thanks to humus, the soil can influence living things in the present by delivering biological information from the past to be inserted into organisms currently alive. Like a time capsule, humus transfers biological information through time, and affects nearly all of the soil's ecosystem functions. 

To learn more about humus, check out:

- ★ *The Nature and Properties of Soils, 13th edition*, by Nyle C. Brady & Ray R. Weil
- ★ *The Intelligent Gardener*, by Steve Solomon
- ★ *ATTRA: Sustainable Soil Management- Soil System Guide*

✪ Compost Tip

How to make good, stable colloidal humus on the farm

Steve Solomon, in his book, *The Intelligent Gardener*, recommends adding a heap of clay soil into the compost pile so that the organic residues can bind to the clay to produce high quality colloidal humus. The organic matter needs clay to stabilize it and then humus can remain in the soil for hundreds of years. Humus is dark in color, crumbly to slightly gelatinous in texture, and has an "earthy" smell.

Marjorie Harris, P. Ag., IOIA V.O., lives in Armstrong, BC and works locally and internationally. She can be reached at marjorieharris@telus.net.





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Building Farm-to-Chef Connections

Working with the Basics



Marlene Thimer raises organic pork, turkey and chicken at Happy Pig Organic Farm Credit: Happy Pig Organic Farm

Getting farmers and chefs to the table in BC's North has a few challenges: busy people, long distances, short growing season. Beyond the Market is taking on those challenges to make sure local organic products get on the menu.

By Jillian Merrick and David Connell

Personal connections are an underlying force for building the capacity of local and regional food systems. These connections are in full view at a farmers market where local residents talk directly with the people who grow, raise, or gather the food. Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs) and farm-gate sales provide similar ways for people to foster direct relationships with farmers.

Farm-to-chef relationships are another type of personal connection within local food systems. Although less visible than the social atmosphere of farmers markets, farm-to-chef relations add another strand to the networks that make up the local food web.

In 2012, members of the Beyond the Market program wondered how they could help build farm-to-chef connections in the BC Highway 16 region. A broad aim of Beyond the Market is to build, strengthen, and diversify the agriculture and food service industries from Valemount to Terrace by linking farmers, ranchers, purchas-

ers, and consumers in the region in an effort to identify the barriers to the local food industry and encourage collaboration and entrepreneurial development to overcome them.

Every initiative to help the regional food system in Central Interior BC must contend with a dispersed population over a geographic area that spans 800 km east to west. This geographic scope of the region certainly makes it more challenging to match the right farmer with the right produce with the right restaurant at the right time.

The bottom line, for both farmers and chefs? It takes time and effort to find each other and then more effort to get to know each other.

As people supporting similar programs elsewhere have discovered, farmers and chefs are two of the most difficult people to reach by telephone, email, or in person. At Beyond the Market, we started by contacting — as

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Apples	+	+	+	+								
Asparagus					●	●	●					
Asian vegetables					●	●	●	●	●			
Beans							●	●	●			
Beets	+	+	+	+	+	+	●	●	●	●	+	+
Blueberries							●	●	●			
Broccoli							●	●	●	●		
Brussel Sprouts								●	●	●		
Cabbage	+	+	+				●	●	●	●	+	+
Carrots	+	+	+	+	+		●	●	●	●	+	+
Cauliflower							●	●	●	●		
Chard							●	●	●	●		
Celery								●	●	●		
Corn							●	●	●	+		
Cucumber							●	●	●	●	+	
Eggplant							●	●	●			
Garlic	+	+	+		●	●	●	●	●	+	+	+
Grapes								●	●			
Herbs					●	●	●	●	●	●		
Honey	+	+	+	+	+	●	●	●	●	+	+	+
Huckleberries								●	●	●		
Kale								●	●	●	●	
Leeks								●	●	●	+	+
Lettuce					●	●	●	●	●	●		
Mushrooms	+	+	+	+	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	+
Onions	+	+	+				●	●	●	●	+	+
Parsnips	+	+	+					●	●	●	+	+
Peas							●	●	●	●		
Peppers								●	●			
Potatoes	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	●	●	●	+	+
Pumpkins	+							●	●	●	+	+
Radishes						●	●	●	●	●		
Raspberries							●	●				
Rhubarb					●	●	●	●	●			
Rutabagas	+	+	+	+	+	+	●	●	●	●	+	+
Saskatoons							●	●				
Spinach					●	●	●	●	●			
Squash	+							●	●	●	+	+
Strawberries							●	●				
Tomatoes						●	●	●	●	●		
Turnips							●	●	●	+	+	+
Zucchini							●	●	●	●	+	+
Whole Grains	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	●	●	●	+	+

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best we could — chefs throughout the region to find out their level of interest in buying directly from local farms. Although we were aware of the growing interest in and resounding success of farm-to-chef programs in places like Vancouver, we were not sure about the level of interest among chefs in Central Interior BC.

Although about 40% of the chefs we spoke to did not consider buying local food important to their business, we were delighted to hear that most of the chefs attached some importance to serving local food. In fact, one in three of the chefs we contacted said that buying local food was “very important” to their business.

Continued on page 28...

RESTORATION AGRICULTURE

permaculture at farm scale



More farmers are responding to climate uncertainty, market viability and rising costs by exploring the benefits of restoration agriculture. Could it be right for your operation?

By Susan Cousineau

Heard about permaculture, but aren't sure how it could possibly apply to anything other than backyard gardens and small, experimental approaches? Restoration agriculture is about using permaculture design to develop productive, profitable systems at farm scale that are not only financially sustainable but also ecologically regenerative. Restoration agriculture can provide new income streams and a diversity of harvests, while regenerating soils and rebuilding a thriving, biodiverse and highly productive ecosystem.

The term restoration agriculture was coined by Mark Shepard of New Forest Farm in Viola, Wisconsin and is based on the idea of using a diversity of perennial plants, from trees and berries to shrubs and forages, to replace or augment agriculture using annual plants. The most common practices involve incorporating agroforestry, permaculture, and related techniques to produce what is known as a perennial polyculture: a multi-storied, biodiverse system of crops, from fruit and nut trees to vegetables, herbs, and livestock.



Turning to Perennial Agriculture

Research shows that annual tillage-based agriculture depletes soils of nutrients, structure, and water storage capacity, making systems based on annual agriculture particularly vulnerable to drought, flooding and extreme weather events.

Perennial crops can help to ameliorate some of the weaknesses inherent in annual cropping by utilizing plants with more extensive, longer-lived root systems. These can access deeper water tables during the dry years, and take up water more effectively in wet years.

Perennial plants are productive through a much longer season than annuals, which don't go in the ground until perennials have already been leafing out for several weeks or even months. In a time of increasing climate variability and instability, perennial woody plants can buffer farm income against both weather and market fluctuations.

“If you want to make small changes, change how you do things. If you want to make major changes, change the way you see things.” ~ Holistic Management Practitioner and Trainer, Don Campbell

Mixed Perennial Forages: Brown's Ranch

One farm that made major changes in their operations towards more perennial crops and forages is Brown's Ranch, operated by Gabe and Shelly Brown in Bismarck, North Dakota.

After switching to a no-till strategy in 1993, on the advice of a neighbour who had done so several years before, the Browns experienced a series of severe droughts and hailstorms. For several consecutive years, these extreme weather events devastated their seasonal harvest. Looking for something to feed their cattle, they began working with mixtures of perennial and annual cover crops to develop an intensively managed grazing system.

In 1998, after a particularly severe hailstorm, they noted that while all the annual crops had perished, the perennials continued to produce. As the years progressed, they found that the perennial forages and annuals left to self-seed provided enough nutritious pasture to reduce their winter feeding from six to seven months down to as little as three. An added bonus

was that by using holistic management and intensive grazing, the prevalence of noxious and invasive weeds decreased over time, so their cattle were faring better with more nutritious forage.

Gabe Brown credits their holistic management trainer Don Campbell with their shift in perspective, so that they now view building and maintaining their topsoil as their primary objective, rather than simply raising beef cattle and corn to market. Using intensive grazing practices with cattle on mixed perennial forages has also, incidentally, reduced their fly and parasite problems to a level that they no longer use control products; the small amount of pests that remain allow them to select the most resistant stock to develop better herd genetics for their farm.

Today they maintain pasture forages and cover cropping systems with multiple cash crops - spring wheat, winter triticale, oats, corn, sunflowers, peas, hairy vetch, and alfalfa - and up to 20 different cover crop species, including sorghum, millet, buckwheat, hemp, radishes, turnips, ryegrass, phacelia, cowpeas, soybeans, sugarbeets, clovers, kale, and legumes that double as forage after crop harvest. And they're happier, more relaxed, and more productive than ever.

Permaculture Orchard: Miracle Farms

A more intensive way of incorporating woody perennial plants into a farm production system is through the use of tree-based crops such as fruits and nuts. Different ways of incorporating trees and shrubs with annual crops range from shelterbelts and windbreaks to alleycropping (crops grow between rows of trees) and silvopasture (trees in pasture).

One thriving example is Miracle Farms (Les Fermes Miracles), a 12-acre farm owned by Stefan Sobkowiak, in Cazaville, Quebec. Starting from a conventional apple orchard with 12 apple cultivars, Stefan has developed Canada's first permaculture orchard, now boasting 100+ apple cultivars, in addition to red and black currants, apricots, peaches, raspberries, 18 pear cultivars, 7 cherries, pawpaws, kiwis, grapes, mulberries, and saskatoons.

Taking an innovative approach to production borrowed from his days in grocery-store retail, Stefan has planted his rows so that all fruits in a row ripen within a 10-day window. By planting a minimum of two or three rows, Miracle Farms has developed a way for u-pick customers and farm harvesters to quickly and

efficiently harvest a variety of ripe produce from either side of an alley.

Keyline Design: Shepard's Farm

On a larger scale, Mark Shepard's 106-acre farm in Wisconsin, boasting over 250 000 chestnut, walnut, hickory, apple, pear and cherry trees, has combined a variety of concepts that utilize perennial forages and biodiverse agroforestry, implementing them with a framework called keyline design and keyline plowing.

Keyline design, developed by P. A. Yeomans in the book *Water For Every Farm*, starts with locating points on the landscape, called keypoints, that have high potential for water collection. Subsoiling and planting along rows parallel to a contour line passing through each keypoint effectively moves water from hydrated valleys to drier ridgelines. Water is able to move passively via the subsoil lines throughout the farm landscape, and can also be collected in series of small temporary and permanent ponds that help to rehydrate the soil and feed plant growth.

By planting a variety of trees of different heights, along with perennial shrubs, herbs, groundcovers, annual vegetables and even mushrooms, based on the keyline pattern, Shepard has greatly reduced the need for irrigation and increased overall productivity through the constant availability of water and nutrients in the soil. Incorporating livestock on pasture and in the alleys between tree rows accelerates the return of nutrients to the soil, while potentially reducing weeds and providing an additional source of income to the farm.

Although this is only a brief glimpse into agroforestry and perennial agricultural systems currently active in North America, there are a growing number of examples to be found, particularly of more tree-based and perennial forage systems.

Perennial agriculture is an idea that is gaining rapid interest with the increasing variability of weather, unpredictability of markets, declining soil fertility and rising costs of fuel, compost and organic additives, seeds, and other materials. Each farm will have a unique solution that works for their market, climate conditions, soil types, and the desires of the farmer. It is an exciting time as the shift towards a restorative perennial agriculture becomes increasingly important.



For more information, check out:

The Canadian Agroforestry Development Centre

 www.agr.gc.ca

USDA National Agroforestry Centre

 www.centerforagroforestry.org

Centre for Agroforestry Research at the University of Missouri

 www.nac.unl.edu

A farm girl from the Robson Valley in BC's central interior, raised on 300 acres of forest, livestock and crops, Susan Cousineau has long sought to unite family food production with ecological health. After earning a B. Sc. in Ecology from the University of Calgary, she obtained two M. Sc. degrees in Evolutionary Ecology in the Netherlands and France. Always curious, Susan works at the nexus of food security, regenerative agriculture, and ecological renewal practices backed by science.



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It's not just pigs who are happy at Happy Pig Organic Farm! Turkeys on the range. Credit: Happy Pig Organic Farm

...Continued from page 23

About half of the chefs were already using local food in their menus. These were results we could work with.

We asked chefs what Beyond the Market could do to support their efforts to source and use more local foods. The one thing that most chefs asked for was a “how to” guide for sourcing local foods. Thus, the Beyond the Market Farm-to-Chef program focused on the basics: what is grown in the region, when it’s available, and where to find it.

As Prince George chef Wayne Kitchen stated, “As a proud supporter of local and organic foods I see the necessity for more dialogue between farmers and chefs to create deep understanding of each industry.”

With the guide we wanted to help chefs increase their business, serve their customers better, and meet the growing demand for local food. Its main purpose though, was to help chefs add more local food to their menus. We designed the guide as a four-step process, with each step adding a layer of information that helps a chef move from thinking about local food to contacting the right farmer to promoting their use of local food.

Step 1: Review the product list

Ask Yourself:

- ✓ Do I use any of these products?

- ✓ Does the seasonal availability of these products fit within my menu planning?

Step 2: Build a relationship

Contact the producers in your area who are supplying a product you would like to source. Find out:

- ✓ How much product they have available.
- ✓ How often they have product available.
- ✓ Where to buy or how it’s delivered.
- ✓ Set-up a system that works for both you and the producer.
- ✓ You may want to start with a trial period. Be flexible as you iron out the kinks over the first season
- ✓ Work with your existing distributors.
- ✓ Contact your wholesale supplier to request their local products. Visit www.beyondthemarket.com/wholesalers for a list of wholesalers who supply local food to the north.

Step 3: Educate yourself and your staff


- ✓ Plan to visit your producer’s farm or ranch.
- ✓ Developing a relationship with the producer encourages longevity and reliability; that quality translates to your customers. This will also allow you to make suggestions as to how much and which products you would like to see next season.

- ✓ Let your staff know what your vision is for your company by sourcing local foods.
- ✓ Tell them what you've learned about the product and the producer. This will help your staff promote the local foods to your customers.
- ✓ Organize a staff field trip to your local producer and sit down for a meal of local food with your staff.

Step 4: Promote and Advertise

- ✓ Advertising methods include:
- ✓ Fresh sheets: Menu slip-ins that can be altered regularly as available product changes.
- ✓ In-restaurant displays (ie. chalkboard menus, farmer profile and picture on the wall, etc.)
- ✓ Culinary Showcase Events
- ✓ Communicate with your customers.
- ✓ Talk to them about the products and find out which others they would like to see locally sourced.
- ✓ Notify the media.
- ✓ Share even small success stories with the public to generate more interest and business.

We assumed that chefs may not be much different from many residents: they may not know what can be grown in this region or when it is available. The reality is that we cannot grow everything in this region that can be grown in the main agricultural areas of BC. A cornerstone of the guide, therefore, is a chart of seasonally available fruits, vegetables, and meats. The guide also refers chefs to a directory of producers and wholesalers.

Talking with chefs and working on the guide was an experience that reminded us of one of the most important aspects of building the capacity of a regional food system: person-to-person connections. The guide is a simple, practical tool that will help to connect chefs and farmers, but the success of a farm-to-chef program is to not only provide the right information but also the events and activities that foster face-to-face connections. That's our next challenge. 

Find more information about the Beyond the Market project at:

 beyondthemarket.ca

Jillian Merrick is the coordinator for the Beyond the Market project. She has spent the last 10 years in


Prince George, earning a BA in Economics and International Studies from UNBC and working for a variety of local not-for-profit organizations. Jillian is strongly focused on engaging all sectors of the community to mobilize for better economic, environmental, and social outcomes.

Getting to the Meat of the Issue


Nancy O's is a Prince George restaurant that received a menu consultation from the Beyond the Market program. A relatively new restaurant with a reputation for quality food in a classic bistro pub setting, they were looking to take their menu to the next level. Co-owner Garrett Fedorkiw says the consultation helped their kitchen team to understand the seasonality of local food in the north and plan their menu around it. When it became apparent that meat was one of the most widely available year-round local products in the north, they began to focus their efforts on localizing meat ingredients on their menu. They've located a pork supplier transitioning to certified organic, and hope to source more organic suppliers in the future.

Find a Producer Near You!

To find a producer near you, visit:

 www.beyondthemarket.ca/buy-local/directorylistings

for information regarding local food regulations in the north:

 www.beyondthemarket.ca/buy-local/regulations

News & Announcements

CBAN Launches GMO Inquiry

What are the real impacts of GMOs on our environment, on our food and farming systems, on our economy, and on our health? After twenty years of government approval for genetically modified crops in Canada, there are still a lot of unanswered questions.

The Canadian Biotechnology Action Network thinks it about time the public gets the answers it deserves to these questions. They've launched GMO Inquiry 2015 – a year of ongoing investigation into GMO food, looking at the evidence to see if claims about these products stand up to scrutiny.

To get involved, and to make sure that your questions about genetically modified crops are answered, visit gmoinquiry.ca.

Progress on Canadian Organic Standards Updates

Updates to the Canadian Organic Standards are closer to completion: draft versions of the Permitted Substances List and General Principles and Management Standards documents have been voted on, and results of the ballot will be reviewed in early May.

Recommendations and a formal public review process will follow, allowing all Canadian stakeholders an opportunity to comment on the proposed changes.

Find the draft documents here:

www.organicfederation.ca/sites/documents/B-0032-0310-000-E-NE0012.pdf

Lists:
organicfederation.ca/sites/

Organic Week 2015

Mark your calendar for Organic Week 2015 September 19-27th!

Market Research & Money Management Workshop for Urban Farmers

The Vancouver Urban Farming Society, Young Agrarians, and Vancity are partnering to present a workshop to help you grow your urban farm business!

To support new and aspiring entrepreneurs, Vancity offers the Each One Grow One sessions which provide information and tools to help make your young business more financially stable and sustainable. The half day workshop will address two topics as identified by the urban farming community, Keys to Market Research and Making the Most of Your Money. It will be co-facilitated by Vancity and Urban Farmer Marc Schutzbank. WHERE: Vancity Oakridge Community Branch, 5594 Cambie St, Vancouver, BC

For more info, visit:
youngagrarians.org/events



Healthy Soils for a Healthy Life

Also launched for 2015: the International Year of Soils. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is hoping to increase awareness of the importance of soil for food security and essential ecosystem functions. The UN will be supporting events all year long, including Global Soil Week, happening from April 19 to 23, 2015.

Want to get involved? There are events happening throughout BC, including a presentation of the movie Symphony of the Soil at UBC Botanical Gardens,.

Find out more about International Year of Soils at www.fao.org/documents/B-0032-0311-000-E-NE0012.pdf

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