



Plan^{to}Farm

Setting the Table for Food & Agriculture on Salt Spring Island

SALT SPRING ISLAND AREA FARM PLAN

January 26th, 2008

Purpose

Improve the long-term health & viability of a community's agricultural economy

- An AFP allows a community to consider its agricultural situation in order to:
 - Identify issues that are impacting farming
 - Identify opportunities to strengthen farming
 - Determine & describe a way forward



Background

Efforts that initiated the AFP process...

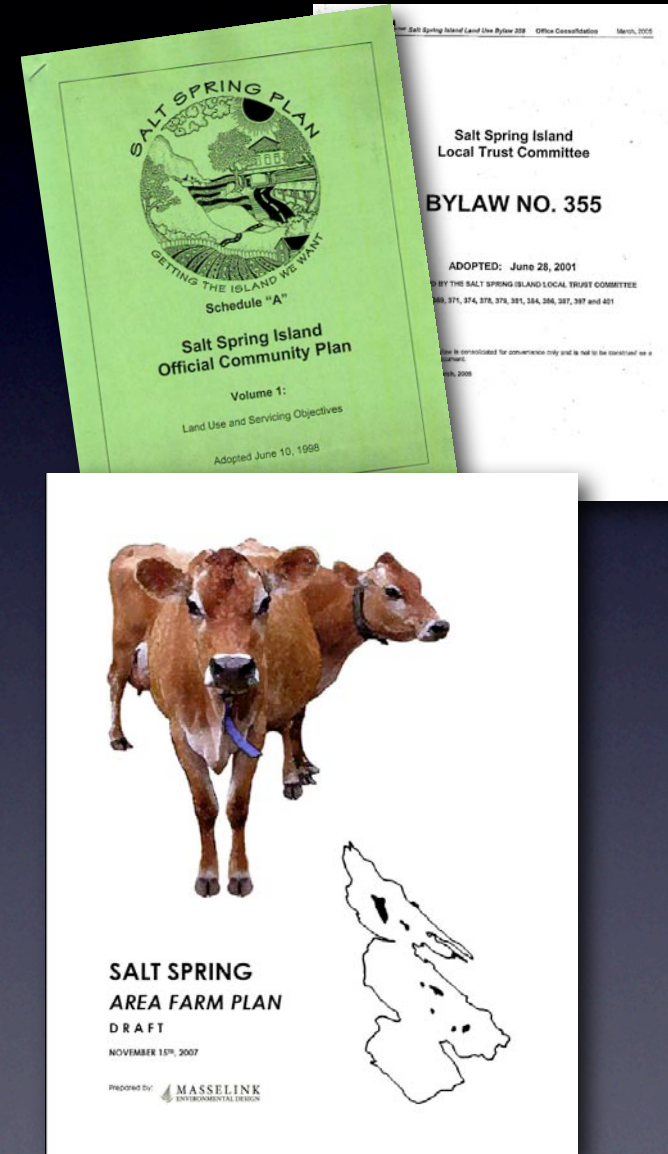
2005 Salt Spring Island Agricultural Advisory Committee recommends the development of an Area Farm Plan

2006 The Salt Spring Island Farmers Institute & the Island Natural Growers - supported by the Local Trust Committee & Ministry of Agriculture & Lands - initiate the planning process

Acquisition of funding from the Investment Agriculture Foundation to support process

AFP Process

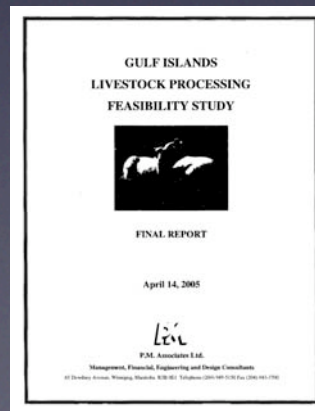
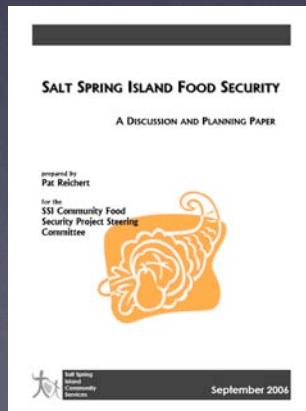
- Analyze background information
- Identify issues & opportunities
- Establish a guiding vision
- Develop strategies & recommendations
- Provide recommendations to the OCP review process
- Establish an implementation plan
- Public review



Supporting Information

The foundation of the Plan...

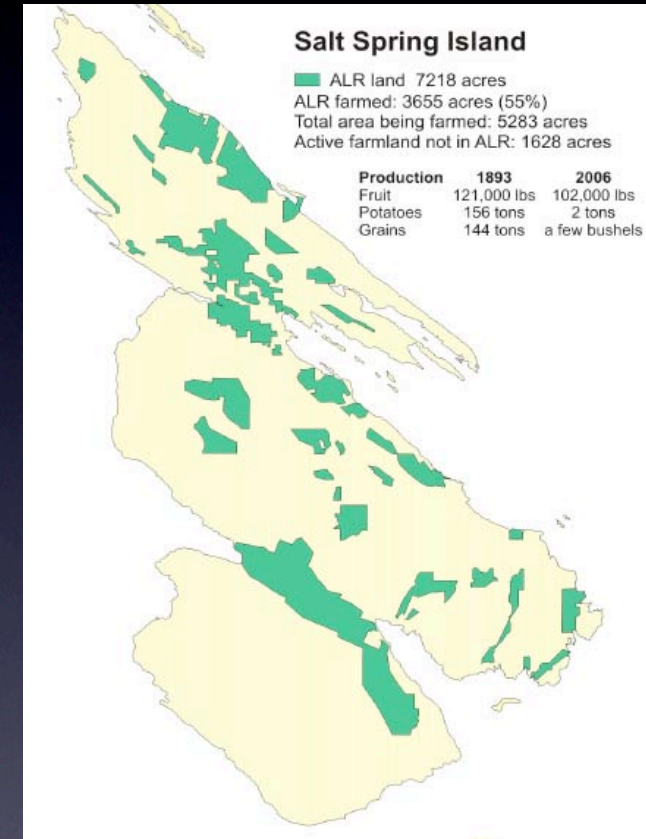
- Agricultural Land Use Inventory
- Statistics Canada 2006 & 2001 Agricultural Census data
- Additional information & research



Agricultural Context

SSI specific data:

- 16% of SSI is in the Agricultural Land Reserve
- 2138 ha of land is being actively farmed
 - 1479 ha in ALR
 - 659 ha outside of ALR
- 40% of farms are less than 4 ha (10 acres)
- 65% of farms less than 4 ha are not being farmed
- In 2006 GFR = \$4,000,000
- 65% of farms have GFR of less than \$10,000
- The average SSI farmers is 55 years old
- Farmland is selling for more than \$60,000/acre



Public Consultation

Informed & guided development of the Plan

Community Dialogues

- Session 1 - Issues (Jan. 20, 2007)
- Session 2 - Opportunities (Feb. 17, 2007)
- Session 3 - Vision (March 10, 2007)

Review of Draft Plan

- With farmers
(Nov. 29th & Dec. 12th, 2007)
- Public comment forms



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COMMUNITY DIALOGUES

Join the 2nd in a series of three discussions on the future of food & farming on Salt Spring Island.

Dialogue #2: Opportunities*
Saturday, February 17th, 2007
1:30 - 4:30 pm
Gulf Islands Secondary School
Multipurpose Room, Rainbow Road
*Please register before Feb. 12, 2007

Dialogue #3: Vision
Saturday, March 10th, 2007

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Contact: Anne Macey 250.537.5511 macey@saltspring.com

Sponsored by: Investment Agriculture Association of BC
Islands Farmers Institute, Island Natural Growers, Island Trust
BC Ministry of Agriculture & Lands, Capital Regional District

WASSSELINK
PLAN TO FARM PROJECT

Mission

To return agriculture to a place of prominence on Salt Spring Island as a healthy, viable, & culturally supportive endeavor.

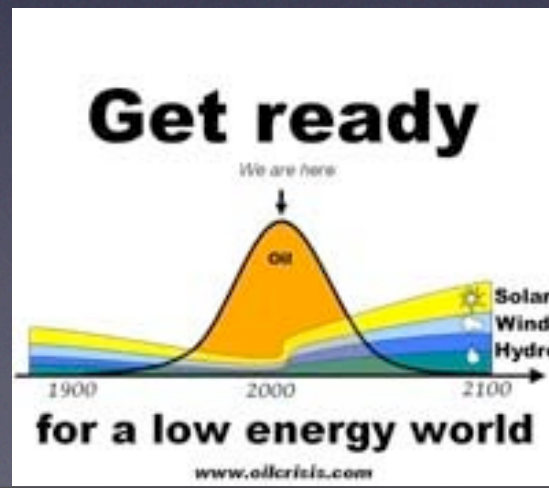
Central Goals:

- *Re-establish agriculture as a social, cultural & economic priority*
- *Facilitate the growth of associated farming activities*
- *Encourage the adoption of environmentally & socially considerate farm practices*



Key Issues

- *Local authority for agricultural decisions*
- *Protection & use of agricultural land*
- *Environmental stewardship*
- *Local agricultural knowledge & awareness*
- *Supporting infrastructure & services*
- *Economic viability*
- *Food security*



Guiding Vision

“That Salt Spring Island becomes a place where agriculture is a strong, vital & productive part of the local economy & is carried out in a manner that promotes & protects a sustainable community”

Supporting Principles:

- *Protection & use of farmland*
- *Education & appreciation of agriculture*
- *Environmental stewardship*
- *Cooperation*
- *Self Reliance*
- *Transparency in addressing agricultural issues*



Key Recommendations

Establish a Salt Spring Island Agricultural Alliance

Purpose:

- Implement AFP
- Represent & support local ag. interests

Description:

- An efficient, farmer-directed non-government organization
- A community-based source of information, assistance, coordination & promotion
- A natural evolution of the AFP Steering Committee



Key Recommendations

Establish a community farmland trust

Purpose:

- Preserve farmland for future generations
- Provide affordable land to future farmers

Responsibilities:

- Acquire and manage farmland
- Arrange & manage lease agreements
- Ensure that properties are managed in an environmentally & socially sustainable manner



Key Recommendations

Establish key community facilities that support the expansion of agricultural activities

Purpose:

- Key facilities are affecting the viability of agriculture on SSI

Types:

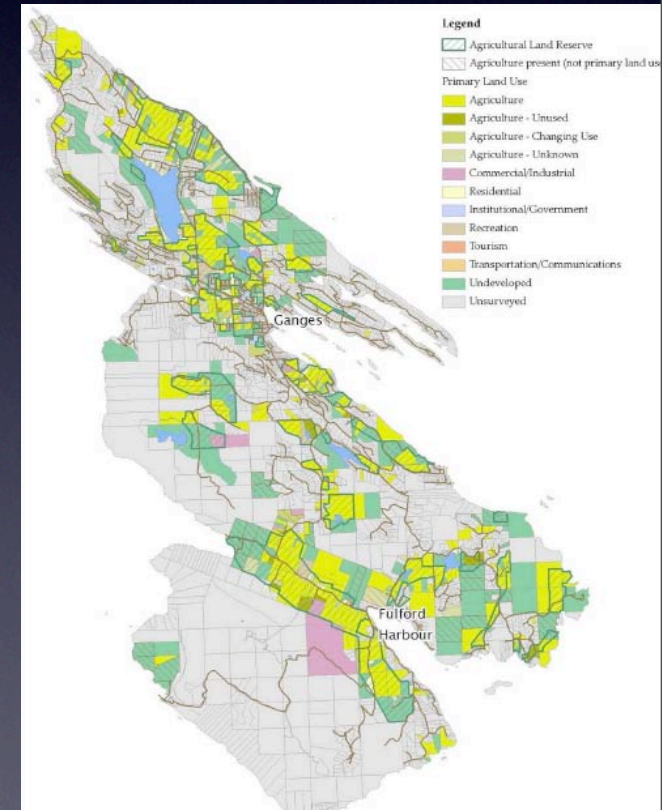
- Abattoir (fixed or mobile)
- Composting
- Refrigeration
- Processing & food preparation



Add. Recommendations

Ensure Local Participation in Agricultural Decisions

- *Maintain local agricultural baseline information*
 - *Collect & organize*
 - *Repeat LUI every five years*
 - *Acquire Canadian Agricultural Census information*
 - *Maintain an accessible “library” of SSI agricultural information & studies*



Add. Recommendations

Protect & Use Farmland

- *Local government planning should reflect a commitment to agriculture*
- *Work with government agencies regarding the use & management of their agricultural holdings*
- *Pursue strategies that make more land available for farming*
- *Increase agricultural awareness of new & potential residents*



Encourage & Support Environmental Farm Practices

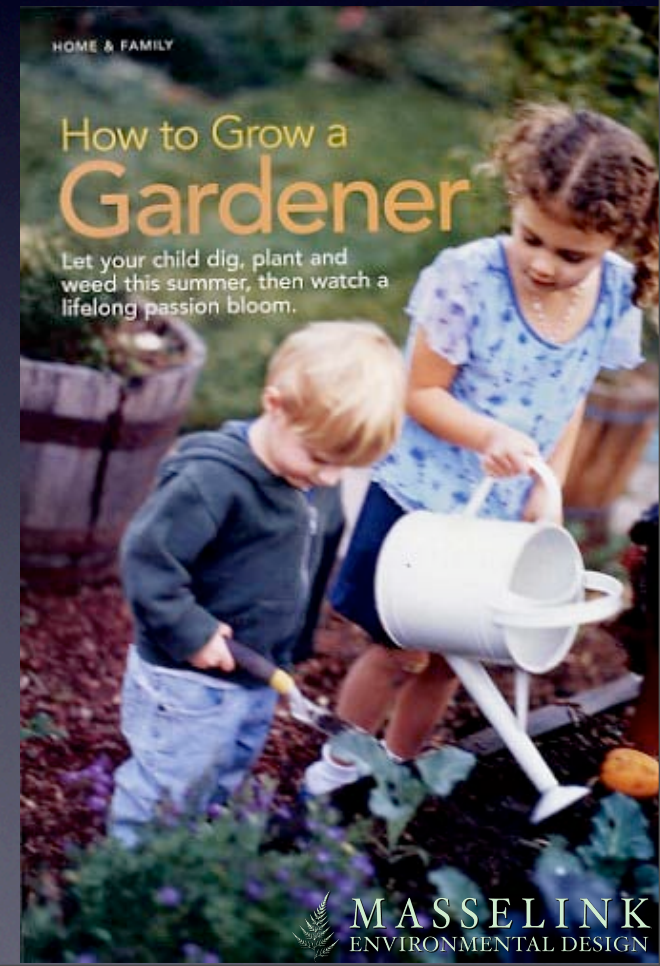
- # Cycles of a Sustainable Farm
- Healthy soil is aerated by earthworms (1) and brims with fungi (2) and bacteria (3). Legume roots (4) fix nitrogen. Five-year crop rotation on this dairy farm (5) begins with alfalfa harvest; roots are left for soil enhancement. After corn is harvested, rye is planted for winter cover, a pattern repeated three times a year. Oats and alfalfa replace corn and rye in the third year. In years four and five alfalfa is cut monthly late spring to fall.
- Alfalfa and grasses provide feed for cattle (6), which produce fertilizer, as does plant residue (7). Public-spirited farmers welcome school tours (8). Ladybugs (9) and other introduced insects control pests; fewer pesticides enter the atmosphere to return to earth in rain (10), resulting in purer rivers (11) and drinking water (12). A cornucopia of organic produce (13) draws buyers to a local market (14), as a farmer hands seed for next year's crop (15).
- Proponents of sustainable agriculture laud its creation of new jobs. Willie Little of Mocon, Mississippi (left, at right), prepares to plant peas for income and to provide work for his kin. Andrew Miller, at left, runs the Beet 4 Farm Cooperative, which helps farmers in Nacaboe County hold on to their land.
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- Illustration by Bob Wages



Add. Recommendations

Increase Local Understanding & Appreciation of Agriculture

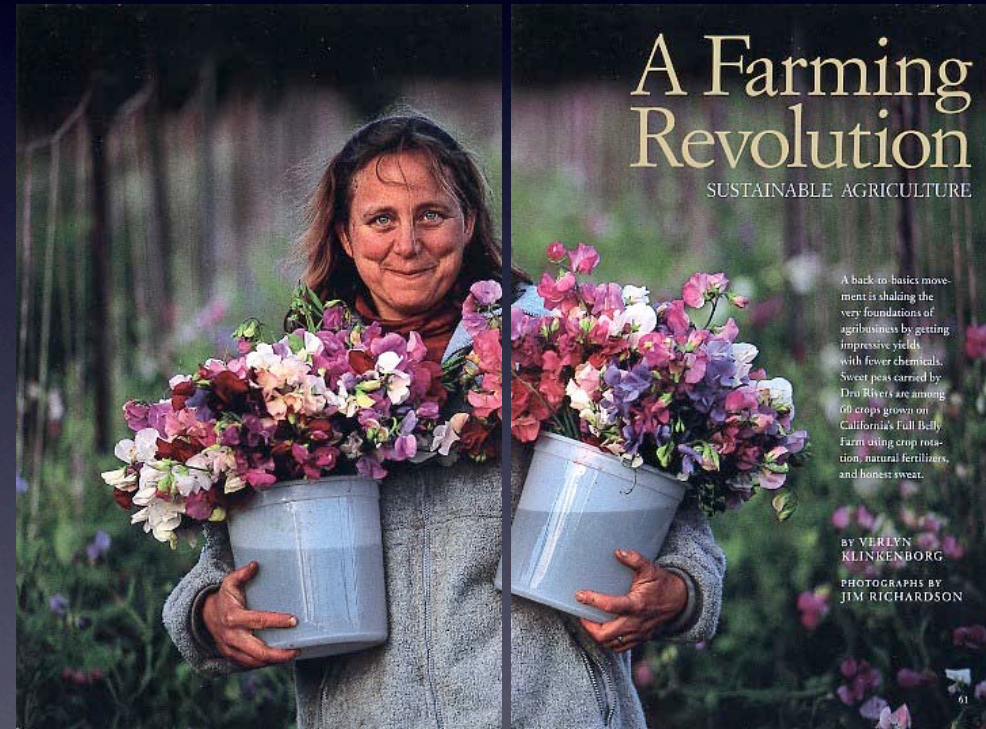
- *Improve local agricultural literacy through the provision of agriculture-focused public education activities & events*
- *Increase agricultural education opportunities for children & youth*



Add. Recommendations

Provide Supportive Agricultural Infrastructure & Services

- *Address the farm housing issue*
- *Increase local agricultural training & mentoring opportunities*



Add. Recommendations

Provide Conditions that Encourage & Support Agricultural Enterprise

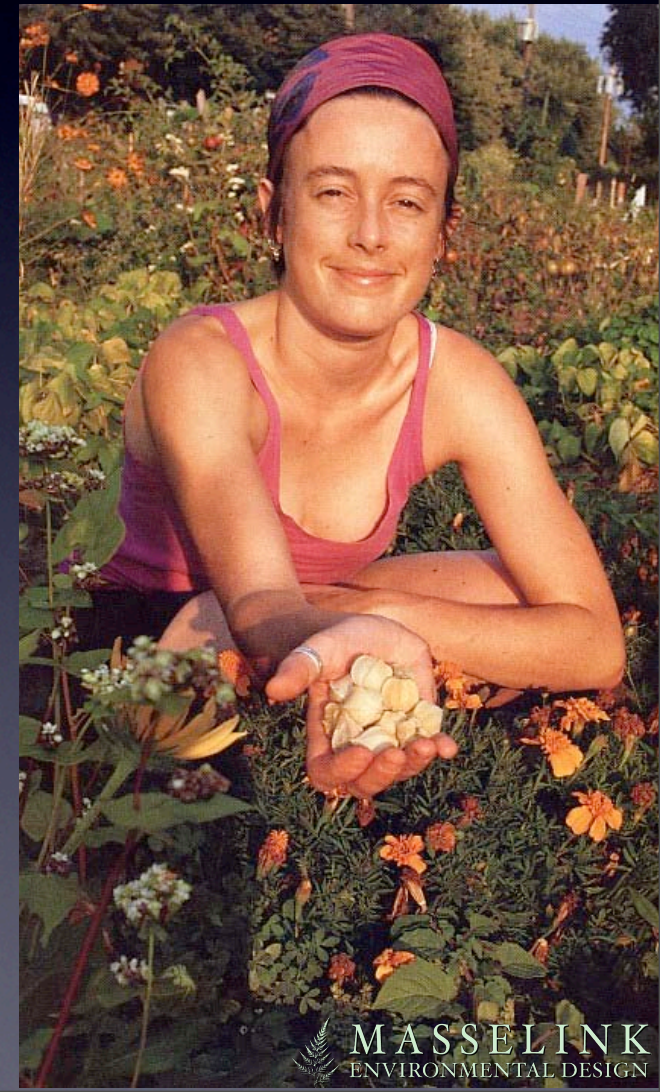
- *Determine potential costs & profitability associated with farming*
- *Develop a coordinated approach to production & sale of local products*
- *Develop local agri-tourism guidelines*
- *Address local farm labour issues*
- *Encourage the development of local ag. product purchasing policies*



Add. Recommendations

Improve Food Security & Self-Sufficiency

- *Increase local seed production capability*
- *Encourage the adoption of a GE free policy for locally grown agricultural products*
- *Establish locally appropriate food safety protocols & standards*
- *Participate in regional, provincial & national agricultural discussions*



Implementation

- Straight forward
- Action oriented
- Identifies:
 - Lead agency
 - Associated partners
 - Timing
 - Priority
 - Additional resource requirements
 - Potential funding opportunities

Recommendations	Associated Actions	Lead Agency	Partners/ Participants	Timing*	Priority**	Resources Required?	Pot. Funding Source(s)
Key Recommendations							
1. Establish a SSI Agricultural Alliance		AFPSC	SSILTC, ING, SSIFI, MAL, CRD, BCParks, SSSF?, others?	Immediate	High	Yes	IAF, Association members
2. Establish a community farmland trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resume discussions that support the creation of a local community farmland trust 	SSIAA	Interested individuals, SSI LTC/IT, ING, SSIFI, MAL, ALC, IMF	Immediate	High	Yes	Lease and membership fees, donations (land & cash), ITF
3. Establish key community facilities that support the expansion of agricultural activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abattoir – need, type, size, location, cost. Interim coord. of off island livestock/meat transport • Cold storage – need, type, size, location(s), cost • Processing – type, size, location(s), cost • Composting – location 	SSIAA or private sector	Facility Committee(s) (SSIA), interested farmers/food processors. May require involvement of SSILTC, IT, MAL, ALC	Immediate – Medium	High	Yes	IAF, private sector

Next Steps...

- Establish the Salt Spring Island Agriculture Alliance
- Secure funding to support implementation of the Plan
- Establish a long-term tracking plan



In Closing...

“It has become increasingly clear that the way we farm affects the local community & that the economy of the local community affects the way we farm...”

We cannot keep things from falling apart in our society if they do not cohere in our minds & in our lives.”

Wendell Berry, from “Renewing Husbandry,” 2005

