

Small Lot Agriculture in the District of Kent, BC

December, 2004



Kent Agricultural Advisory Committee



Fraser Basin Council



**Investment
Agriculture
Foundation
of British Columbia**

Small Lot Agriculture Initiative



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Executive summary

This survey provides a baseline view of the current amount and types of activity of local small lot agriculture, based on the previous land-use inventory conducted by BCMAFF in the District of Kent. It is intended to help us understand 'where we are now' and to assist in getting to 'where we want to be'. The District of Kent may also find this survey useful in preparing its Agricultural Area Plan.

In association with this project, a workshop was conducted to inform Kent's farmers of immediate and near-term opportunities to increase their SLA income. The workshop included an informal SLA Crop Opportunity Registry of land available for production and crops seeking land. A list of suggestions and information offered at the workshop is provided in Appendix A.

The top ten farming suggestions from this workshop's presenters are as follows:

- High-end restaurant products – novel products with excellent taste and visual appeal
- Farm-market produce – standbys such as pickling cukes, potatoes, onions, green beans, peas; plus herbs, specialty mushrooms, etc.
- Value-added products – bagged mixed salad greens, baked goods, processed wool, etc.
- Organic corn and other organic products
- Cut flowers and floral industry greens
- Farm markets – take advantage of face-to-face relationships with consumers.
- Agri-tourism can be more than local sales.
- On-farm direct marketing – berries, honey, garden vegetables, nuts, pies, jam, etc.
- Marketing co-operatives to sell collectively to markets farther away
- Work together to approach a particular market without swamping it with a single product
- Learn about your specialty – how to grow it, how to sell it, who to sell it to.

Findings

Eighty-three farms (half of the farms) in Kent constitute Small Lot Agriculture holdings, a total of just under 500 acres. Small-lot farmers experience many of the same challenges as those with larger holdings, without the benefit of extension or marketing services for those in the larger commodities. The very diverse SLA products from Kent include lamb, hazelnuts, cheese, coho salmon, wasabi, pea-tops, currants, herbs, garden vegetables and floral greens. Markets are local and regional, with some products needing to be processed. Emerging markets include the restaurant and events market, in addition to roadside sales. Consumers benefit from safe, fresh and accessible product.

A high volume of tourist traffic passes through Kent on the way to the Village of Harrison, especially during the summer. This is roughly estimated at 100,000 visitors from the end of May until the end of September. Many tourists to Harrison are "in a buying mood" and have considerable disposable income. This traffic, plus the abundance of small lot agricultural parcels in Kent, appears to offer significant market potential for niche agricultural products and agri-tourism opportunities.

However, the tentative nature of responses to questions about respondents' plans or ideas for increasing business suggests a need for education and mentorship in areas such as basic business practices, recognizing opportunities, marketing, and planning for lucrative farm operations. This impression is supported by the relatively low numbers of SLA farmers who demonstrate awareness of soil character on their holdings. Educational opportunities such as agricultural extension or short courses, agriculture workshops and agri-community events could bring Kent's farmers into more contact with each other and offer new ideas, information and business potential.

The Lower Mainland's population is expected to double over the next 15-20 years, and food production must increase to accommodate this need. A rapidly expanding urban population is looking for a huge and increasing variety of prime quality food. Restaurants and farm markets alike are seeking well-presented, upscale items such as heritage varieties, baby vegetables, ethnic specialties and organic products. Significant markets also exist for horticultural products such as cut flowers and florists' greens.

As Small Lot Agriculture constitutes 25% of BC's agricultural economy, Kent is well situated to further develop and diversify its economic base while providing food for a growing population in the Lower Mainland. Kent's farmers, located in an area reputed for its excellent soil and climate, are becoming aware of a growing abundance of market opportunities. They are on the way to making the most of them.

Acknowledgements

This project was made possible with funding from the Fraser Basin Council, and with a grant from the Small-Lot Agriculture Industry Development Committee to the Kent Agricultural Advisory Committee. By request of the District of Kent, the funds were administered by the Fraser Basin Council.¹ Special thanks to the BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries for the insert colour map of primary agricultural uses.

Organizations participating in this project:

- Kent Agricultural Advisory Committee and its Small Lot Ag Committee
- Seabird Island First Nation
- District of Kent
- Fraser Basin Council
- BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
- Small Lot Agriculture (Provincial Committee) and Direct Farm Marketing.

Organizations assisting with the workshop in addition to those above:

- Skawahlook First Nation
- Community Futures North Fraser
- BC Certified Organic Program: Cyber-Help for Organic Farmers Project
- University College of the Fraser Valley
- Farmers' Market
- Commodity representatives from hazelnut, fiber, sheep and honey markets

¹ www.fraserbasin.bc.ca

A Statement from BC's Minister of Agriculture

June 12, 2004
Abbotsford, BC

Small lot agriculture is very often the face of agriculture for urban consumers. It matches their traditional perceptions of farming, so it provides a connection that wouldn't otherwise exist.

I believe it is important to recognize part-time and small lot agriculture as a legitimate part of agriculture. Small lot agriculture can contribute greatly to local food supply and to awareness, understanding and support of agriculture generally.

I always encourage small lot, part-time farmers and commercial full-time agriculture and all in between, to co-operate and work together for the common good of the sector. Their interests are intertwined with the overall public interest in a strong agricultural industry.

Kind regards,

John Van Dongen

Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
Province of British Columbia

Small Lot Agriculture in the District of Kent

“Economic diversity is the key to our community’s resilience.”

—Mel Jorgensen, Councillor, District of Kent

The District of Kent recognizes a need for initiatives to increase SLA production as a means of increasing community prosperity, cohesion and resilience. Kent enjoys an abundance of small lot parcels, excellent soil and climate, willing farmers, and significant market opportunities in local tourism. The Kent Agricultural Advisory Committee (KAAC)² intends to create a strategy to draw these opportunities together as part of its agricultural future .

This survey provides a baseline view of the current nature and extent of local SLA activity in the District of Kent.

Funding and Participants

This survey was funded by both the Fraser Basin Council and with a grant from the Small-Lot Agriculture Initiative to the Kent Agricultural Advisory Committee. By request of the District of Kent, the funds were administered by the Fraser Basin Council (www.fraserbasin.bc.ca).

Organizations participating in this survey include:

- Kent Agricultural Advisory Committee and its Small Lot Ag Committee
- Seabird Island First Nation
- District of Kent
- BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
- BC Small Lot Agriculture Initiative and the Investment Agriculture Foundation

This project was facilitated by the Fraser Basin Council.

The Survey’s Focus

In accord with the Kent Agricultural Advisory Committee’s direction, the survey includes the following categories of information:

- Size and number of SLA operations
- Type of agricultural activity
- Total number of small lot agriculture parcels in Kent District

² The Kent Agricultural Advisory Committee (KAAC) of the District of Kent Municipal Council submits reports and recommendations on issues affecting agricultural producers, processors, lenders and others interested in or affected by the local agricultural commodities markets. The KAAC has formed a subcommittee on Small Lot Agriculture.

- Total number of small lot agriculture parcels currently in use
- Total land area used
- Requirements and inputs (hydro, water, soil type)
- Limitations (soil types, other)
- Product market and opportunities (local, retail, wholesale)

What is Small Lot Agriculture?

The provincial definition of small lot agriculture is any production on ten acres or less, or less than \$50,000 per year in income.

The District of Kent has expanded that definition to include lot sizes of 20 acres or less, and to include small lot production activity when the lot belongs to a larger land title, because boundary ownership does not always coincide with production limits.

By Kent's definition, even a large property may have a small lot enterprise, such as five acres of hedging cedars on a dairy farm. Another example could be that of a farm with a large acreage in hay and corn also growing market vegetables for local consumption.

Small-lot agriculture constitutes 25% of BC's agriculture economy, 53% in Canada, and 69% in the United States.³

Survey Scope and Methodology

A gate-to-gate, in-person survey was made of 143 farm operations in the Kent area over a two-month period, with a response rate of 100%. (This represents every farm but one in the District of Kent.) As some farmers own more than one holding, only 142 respondents are represented in the analysis.

ANONYMITY

In accord with assurances given to participants, individual names of participating farms will not appear in this report.

³ Small Farm Canada Magazine, Summer 2004; Marshal County Journal USA, February, 2004.

Errata Page 8: Small Lot Agriculture In the District of Kent, Dec. 2004

Explanatory note: Different agencies measure statistics differently. For streamlining this report with sources from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, we are grateful to our regional agrologist who reviewed the numbers and provided some corrections on this page.

Fraser Valley Statistics and Kent

Agriculture is one of the main economic drivers in this region. The District of Kent's total 15,864 acres of farmland (Agricultural Land Commission 2002) currently generate about \$36.5 million measured in farm gate receipts per year.⁴

Studies* since spring of 2004 show that agricultural production in the Fraser Valley creates spin-offs with an economic multiplier of seven. ($36.5 \times 7 = \$255$ million+ contribution to the economy.)

The Fraser Valley (Lower Mainland, including FVRD and GVRD) generates \$1.4 billion in gross farm gate receipts (2001 census).

Agriculture production in the Fraser Valley creates spin-offs with an economic multiplier of seven ($\$1.4 \text{ billion} \times 7 = \9.8 billion)

Small Lot Agriculture in Kent

Of the 143 farms surveyed, approximately 89 (62%) are less than 20 acres in size.

- Half of the farms surveyed in Kent are less than 10 acres in size.
- This constitutes 485.9 acres (plus 3 N/A parcels) which represents 3% of Kent's total farmland.
- Half of this land is in agricultural production. 238.59 acres = 49.1% of SLA land. (The other half had the owner's residence, etc. and is not always available for cultivation.)
- On each parcel of land in production, 35% farm less than one quarter of the parcel while 28% farm more than three quarters of the parcel of land. 63% farm half of their land available.
- 23 SLA holdings lease land to other farmers
- 4 lease land from First Nations: 1 SLA holder, 3 holders over 20 acres.
- Total land leased by respondents: 714 acres
- First Nation's land available for lease: 1000 acres total with 150 acres still seeking contract⁵

Most available SLA land is in agricultural production. Thirty-one SLA holders reported a total of 70 acres not in production. The survey revealed 5 reasons why some lots and or portions of lots were not in production:

⁴ 2001 Statistics Canada census

^{*} 2004: Paul Bartlett, Dr. R. Ashmid Serecon Consulting

⁵ Brian Jones, Economic Development Officer, Seabird Island First Nation

1. *Owners retired.* Many people living on small lots are retired and do not have the energy to start and maintain agricultural production.
2. *Rural residential.* Some people want the country experience that a small lot has to offer, but commute to a job in the city.
3. *Marginal capability.* The holding is too small or is unusable for agriculture production because of drainage problems, a slough on the property, etc.
4. *Lack of resources.* Some people do not have enough money to start the agriculture production of their choice. Machinery and other costs may be unaffordably high.
5. *Lack of knowledge.* As with any business, agriculture production requires a knowledgeable operator to make it profitable. What best to grow and how to grow it can be difficult questions for those new to farming.

AMOUNT OF LAND USED UNDER LEASE

Total number of SLA acres in production leased to another farmer: 62.3

AMOUNT OF LAND SOUGHT FOR LEASE BY FARMERS

Two SLA landholders said others had expressed interest in leasing their land.
Only one SLA landholder wished to lease more land.

ACREAGE USED FOR NON-AGRICULTURAL PURPOSES

Total acres used for non-agricultural purposes: 9.56

Non-agricultural acreage	Total acres held by reporting farmer
0.05	.78
0.1	5.0
0.15	6.0
0.25	20.0
0.25	69.0
0.51	.51
0.75	9.5
1.0	2.0
1.0	5.5
1.5	4.98

A small portion (less than 1%) of farmland in Kent is used for non-agricultural businesses. Some are generally related to farming, such as trucking and electrical services. Other non-farm uses include boat repair, woodworking and auto-body repair.

Current Agricultural Activity in Kent

Of the 143 farms surveyed, 60 were larger than ten acres (of those, 29 were dairy farms). The other 83 farms (58%) were ten acres or less, fitting the provincial definition of small lot agriculture.

Fifty farms (60%) of the 83 in SLA were in some type of agricultural production. This included a variety of livestock, field crops, or even fruit and vegetable gardens for personal or community use.

TYPES OF PRODUCTION RECORDED IN THIS SURVEY

- beef cattle
- dairy cows (including dry cows)
- sheep
- goats
- pigs
- horses
- llamas
- alpacas
- salmon
- crayfish
- mushrooms
- pea tops (pea shoots)
- wasabi
- numerous fruits and vegetables
- cedar trees
- floriculture
- nursery
- herbary
- bees
- corn
- grass/hay
- hazelnuts
- many kinds of poultry, including chicken, turkeys and special varieties

Production

Field crops

Type(s)	Number of holdings over 20 acres	Holdings of 20 acres or less
Corn	33	0
Grass	85	16
Both corn and grass	32	0

Livestock

Type(s)	Number of head	Acres held by reporting farmer
Beef cattle	1	5.00
(10 holdings)	1	4.80
	5	5.30
	6	5.00
	11	96.0
	14	36.0
	26	40.0
	29	60.0
	40	88.0
	50	64.0

Type(s)	Number of head	Acres held by reporting farmer
Dairy cattle	(Not available)	35.0
(25 holdings)	100	35.0
	27	40.0
	100	40.0
	140	50.0
	50	64.0
	65	65.0
	62	70.0
	100	80.0
	50	86.0
	45	88.0
	N/A	100.0
	65	100.0
	28	116.0
	130	120.0
	360	140.0
	175	150.0
	128	153.0
	75	179.1
	290	180.0
	100	210.0
	110	220.0
	100	250.0
	200	400.0
	300	475.0

This survey reported no dairy cattle on smallholdings less than 20 acres.

Production: Livestock, cont'd.

Type	Number of head	Acres held by reporting farmer
Sheep	80	9.00
(4 holdings)	3	36.0
	5	120.0
	4	153.0
Horses	2	4.98
(25 holdings)	2	5.00
	2	5.00
	3	5.50
	4	6.00
	3	6.50
	2	9.00
	18	9.00
	2	10.0
	4	10.0
	2	15.0
	20	16.0
	2	18.0
	3	18.0
	N/A	20.0
	8	24.5
	16	30.0

Type	Number of head	Acres held by reporting farmer
Horses, cont'd.	1	36.0
	1	40.0
	20	40.0
	30	50.0
	3	100.0
	1	120.0
	4	153.0
	6	400.0
Goats	N/A	4.69
(5 holdings)	N/A	4.69
	N/A	22.0
	N/A	20.0
	N/A	5.00
Pigs	N/A	4.69
	N/A	20.0
	N/A	4.69
Llamas	1	10.0
Alpacas	20	N/A
Dog Kennels	N/A	9.0
	N/A	9.0
	N/A	5.5
Fish		
Salmon & crayfish	N/A	4.7
Bees	N/A	8.23

Dog kennels are yet to be formally accepted as a form of agricultural production. Three farms were recorded as having dog-breeding kennels, and one kennel was specifically breeding livestock-herding dogs.

One kind of production not listed is the raising of falcons. The landowner was not available during the survey, but is known in Kent for raising falcons to protect berries on local berry farms.

Poultry

Chickens	Number	Acres held by reporting farmer
(14 holdings)	7500	22.20
	300	179.10
	80	5.00
	70	5.00
	60	5.00
	40	96.00
	30	36.00
	22	9.00
	20	475.00
	20	5.00
	16	1.00
	12	5.50
	7	24.50
	3	9.00
Turkeys	3	1.00
Other	8	153

The avian flu outbreak in the spring of this year will almost certainly have affected the number of birds being raised in the District of Kent at the time of the survey.

Market Crops

Type	Acres held by reporting farmer
Oyster mushrooms	0.5
Pea tops	5.0
Wasabi	4.7
Tomatoes	0.5
Herbs	0.78
(3 holdings)	0.5
	118
Raspberries	5.00
	1.64
	.88
Cranberries	30.00
	220.00
Currants	1.50
	153.00
Blueberries	2.0
	40.0
Apples	0.5
	1.79
	1.64

Type	Acres held by reporting farmer
Apple Root Stock	69.00
Apricots	0.88
Grapes	67.3
	0.5
Tree fruit (unspecified)	1.25
Plums	0.25
Pear apples	21.0
Strawberries	30
	40
Pumpkins	36
Potatoes	3.4
Peppers	15.0
Variety crops (unspecified)	1.09
	20.0
	153
Flowers	1.09
Hazelnuts	0.50
(8 holdings)	1.64
	5.00
	5.00
	9.50
	18.0
	22.2
	33.0
Cedar Trees	69.0
	15
	23
Trees (unspecified)	4.5
	40

Land Features and Character

Organic Holdings

Organic status	Acres held by reporting farmer
Certified organic	9.5
	50
	96
Virtually organic	.50
(26 holdings)	.50
	.50
	.56
	.78
	.88
	1.09
	1.14
	1.50
	1.64
	1.75
	1.79
	2.00
	4.70
	5.00
	5.00
	5.00
	5.00
	8.23
	9.00
	9.00
	10.00
	40.00
	67.30
	69.00
	118.00

Holdings Which Include a Body of Water

Body of Water	Total acres held by reporting farmer
Slough	2.00
(14 holdings)	2.50
	3.70
	4.69
	4.69
	9.00
	9.50
	42.00
	65.00
	70.00
	100.00
	116.00
	180.00
	235.00
Pond	N/A
Dyke	9.00
(5 holdings)	160.00
	153.00
	250.00
	N/A
Ditch	.50
19 holdings	1.09
	4.70
	18.00
	18.00
	21.00
	22.00
	24.50
	33.00
	35.00
	37.00
	37.00
	40.00
	48.50
	50.00
	67.30
	120.00
	210.00
	400.00
Creek	2.33
	5.00
	9.00
	20.00
	60.00
	118.00
	220.00

Buildings on Property

Type of Building	Total acres held by reporting farmer
Storage Shed	.50
(13 holdings)	.50
	.50
	.50
	.78
	.88
	9.00
	20.00
	24.50
	35.00
	48.50
	67.30
	69.00
Barn	0.5
(23 holdings)	4.69
	4.69
	4.70
	5.00
	5.30
	6.50
	8.23
	9.00
	9.00
	9.50
	10.0
	10.0
	18.00
	20.00
	22.20
	30.00
	36.00
	40.00
	50.00
	96.00
	118.0
	N/A
Chicken Coop	1.00
(4 holdings)	5.00
	5.50
	23.0
Dairy Facilities	22.00 (goat dairy)
(29 holdings)	35.00
	37.00
	37.00
	40.00
	40.00
	50.00
	60.00

Type of Building	Total acres held by reporting farmer
	64.00
	65.00
	70.00
	80.00
	86.00
	88.00
	100.0
	116.0
	120.0
	150.0
	153.0
	160.0
	179.1
	180.0
	210.0
	220.0
	235.0
	250.0
	400.0
	475.0
	N/A
Hazelnut processing plant	69.0
Peatop growing facility	5.0

Inputs Required for Production

Currently used	Number of holdings reporting
Hydro	61
Natural Gas	16
Propane	1
Irrigation	22
Deep well specifically for farming	34
High speed internet	16

Larger farms, as well as a few small lots, use a separate well or some other water source such as the Maria Slough specifically for farming. SLA's do not widely use irrigation because of its expense, but many of the larger farms use it in the growing season.

Many farms do not have access to high speed internet access. These farms use either dial-up or do not use the internet at all.

Market for Land

Interest in land	Total acres held by reporting farmer
Would lease land to other farmer	4.70
(4 holdings)	20.0
	118.0
	400.0
Looking for ag land to lease	9.0
(10 holdings)	30.0
	40.0
	50.0
	80.0
	140.0
	150.0
	180.0
	235.0
	475.0
First Nations landholder in ag	10.0
	N/A
Leasing First Nations land	10.00
(6 holdings)	16.00
	50.00
	100.0
	179.1
	475.0

Soil

Soil type	Number	Acres held by reporting farmer
Sandy loam	24	(14 SLA; 10 holdings > 20 acres)
Mixed	12	(5 SLA; 7 holdings >20 acres)
Munro	2	(1 SLA; 1>20 acres)
Clay/Clay loam	6	(2 SLA; 4>20 acres)
Don't know/ no answer	99	
Testing		
Test regularly: soil	36	
manure	10	
Nutrient/environmental plan		
Have plan	37	
Plan in progress	6	

A large number of farmers were not aware of their soil types and do not test regularly. Some farms found a mixture of soils in their fields, which can create difficulties and at times a lower crop

yield. Eight percent of farms found a low degree of problem with their soil type. Less than 4% had a problem of medium to high degree (Table1).

Seepage and runoff impacts continue to challenge farms in low-lying areas. A total of 30% of farms surveyed indicated seepage and runoff issues.

Some farmers are testing their soil annually as part of their nutrient management plan. Approximately 25% of the farmers surveyed test soils or manure, while 75% do not test at all or only when necessary. About 28% of all farms surveyed have an environmental plan in place or in progress.

Marketing

A number of commodities are sold through marketing boards, although marketing boards are not available to all farmers and their products.

Out of the 143 farms surveyed, 110 market their agricultural products. Seventy-three farms (66%) market through word of mouth and industry associations. Internet marketing is currently used very little in Kent. Livestock auctions are popular, but low livestock prices have driven farmers toward alternative ways to market their product. A number of small lot holders receive income by leasing their land, usually to nearby dairy farmers.

HOW KENT FARMS SELL THEIR PRODUCT

Locally, through direct sales	30%
Marketing outside of Canada	3%
To a friend	1%
At a farmers' market	3%
To a marketing board	33%
To a retail store	1%
Lease land	16%
Auction	9%
Other	22%

Note: Not all 143 farms market their production.
(The number used for this table was 110.)

Production Quota Owned by a Marketing Organization

Name of marketing org.	Acres held by reporting farmer
BCMMB	0.5
(25 holdings)	0.75
	0.75
	0.95
	1.64
	1.00
	1.09
	1.40
	2.00
	30.00
	4.50
	4.69
	5.00
	5.00
	5.50
	9.00
	9.50
	22.00
	23.00
	40.00
	42.00
	86.00
	100.00
	118.00
	250.00

(These numbers represent only those dairies that reported other SLA production on their holdings. The larger farms exclusively given to dairy production were not included.)

BC Hothouse Growers	37.0
BC Egg Marketing Board	69.0
BC Poultry Board	1.0
Scott Paper	40.0
Hazelnut Association	.56
	1.75
	2.00
	210.00
	N/A

Some farmers that belong to marketing boards also market their other products in different ways.

Agri-Tourism Activity

Currently offer	Type	Acres held by reporting farmer
(14 holdings)	private tours of milk parlour	.50
	herbal nursery	.50
	store	.56
	u-pick, tours, retail store	.86
	tours	.95
	horse riding lessons	1.00
	school tours	1.40
	Circle Farm Tour	1.50
	nursery open to public	3.40
	Circle Farm Tour	3.70
	store, school tours	4.69
	tours	5.00
	store, Circle Farm Tour	9.00
	bed and breakfast	9.00
	preschool and other tours	30.00
	Circle Farm Tour	37.00
	Circle Farm Tour	69.00
Would like to offer	garden market at house	.50
(14 holdings)	Circle Farm Tour	1.00
	unsure	1.25
	unsure but part time	2.00
	maybe in future	2.00
	petting zoo, fruit stand	4.70
	maybe Circle Farm Tour?	5.00
	camping facilities	8.23
	educational tours	69.00
	specialty trees	80.00
	Circle Farm Tour & farm gate	96.00
	Circle Farm Tour	153.00
	unsure	210.00
	for dairy	250.00

Many farms do not provide an agri-tourism component because of the demands it makes on the landowner, as well as issues with insurance and bio-security. Out of 143 farms, 19 (13%) offer agri-tourism, and 17 other farms are considering agri-tourism opportunities.

The Circle Farm Tour is an independent group of agricultural producers within Kent that have, together with the District of Kent, produced a brochure to attract self-guided tours.

Means of Finding a Market

Kent's farmers have used a considerable variety of ways to find markets for their produce. The survey specifically asked about the following methods, and received these replies:

Word of mouth – 38 (26 farms of 20 acres & less; 11 farms more than 20 acres; 1 N/A)

Internet or personal research - 1

Industry association - 30

Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Fisheries (BCMAFF) - 0

Other responses included the following:

Auctions (4); publications (4); carried on from original owners (2); people come as customers for other business (trucking, car parts) (2); "born into the dairy industry" (1); neighbours (1); goes to retailer (1); e-Bay (1); flyers, signs (1); passing traffic (1); prof at UBC (1); SLA workshop (1); local store (1).

Marketing Support Desired

Respondents were asked which means of marketing support they thought would be most helpful. Again, they were offered a range of choices and the opportunity to suggest others.

Type	"YES" Responses
Newsletters	6 (4 SLA)
Website/Internet help	6 (4 SLA)
Coordinated marketing group (like a 'Kent Co-op')	10 (4 SLA)
Join an established commodity group	2 (2 SLA)
Get involved with a committee	2 (2 SLA)

Other answers: newspapers and TV ads; more price regulations on goat milk; ideas about where to sell; group building ag awareness; ASSC needs more developing; opening the border back up.

Internet Marketing Assistance

When asked, "do you want internet resources specifically geared for your agricultural activity?" 11 replied "Yes", of whom 4 were SLA farmers.

Other Business Opportunities?

When asked for ideas about agricultural opportunities or projects that need developing, one respondent suggested that it would be more convenient to be able to buy tractor parts in Agassiz. Another said that the community needs more shopping and a better grocery store. Others suggested ideas for their own farm development: mushrooms, cedars, nursery.

The small lot sector in Kent is only beginning to become aware of the market possibilities for their product. These answers suggest that more information and communication with successful farm businesses may be useful in increasing awareness of opportunities. A 'mentorship' program could help emerging small lot enterprises to learn from established, successful ones.

Rural–Urban Interfaces

New home buyers are attracted to Kent's rural lifestyle and economic advantages, and residential growth is the result. This has both advantages and disadvantages to local agriculture.

Conflicts between rural and urban development are evident. The increased traffic flow is a source of concern to many. At least 18 (13%) of farm operators in the area have concerns about dangerous moments on the highway, traffic flow problems, and long waits to get access to a field.

Other problems include garbage dumped in rural areas; loose dogs; trespassing, and urban residential complaints of farm noise and smells.

Only 16 (11%) of farms surveyed had buffers such as trees, shrubs or waterways between the farm and urban development. Seventy-seven farmers (54%) surveyed believe there is a need for buffers simply to help keep urban-rural nuisances to a minimum.

On the other hand, proximity to consumers provides a market opportunity for local growers.

RELATED SURVEY QUESTIONS

Have you ever experienced conflict with rural neighbours?

16 (11%) said Yes; 122 (86%) said No; 3 N/A

Types of conflict: dust, noise, odor (8); loose dogs (2)

Others included: trespassing and vandalism; "my farm is organic, neighbours are not"; noise from tractors at 2.00 a.m.; not cutting the grass; dog noise; ATV activity

Have you ever experienced conflict with urban neighbors on your farm or dyke?

Of 136 responding, 29 (21%) said Yes.

Type of conflict	Number of respondents reporting
Dumping garbage	9
Trespassing	5
Loose dogs	4
Noise	4
Speeders	4
Theft	2

Complaints of "Trespassing" were associated with parties, camping, fishing, and government inspection of drainage. Reports of related damage included fences knocked down, crops ruined, garbage left behind.

Other complaints included: pot growers in field; partying on dyke and ruining crops; people feeding the horses as they walk on the dyke; misusing ALR land; disposing of cats and dogs; and theft of product and items from farm.

Buffers

Survey questions:

Do you have trees, shrubs, greenbelts or waterways as buffers between you and urban development?

16 of 143 (11%) of farms surveyed have a buffer; of those, 11 are under 20 acres.

Do you feel there is a need for a buffer between agricultural lands and urban development?

79 of 142 (56%) said Yes; 57 (40%) said No; 4 N/A

Transportation

In the course of your farm operation, have you experienced any transportation concerns within rural areas?

29 of 140 responding (21%) said Yes, of whom 7 are in SLA.

Type of concern	Number of respondents reporting
Danger in crossing highway with equipment	17 (7 in SLA)
Traffic flow problems	7 (1 in SLA)
Long wait to pull out onto road	4 (2 in SLA)
Problem accessing field with equipment	4 (2 in SLA)
Speeding cars	6

Comments about highway dangers were also associated with crossing the Agassiz bridge and with riding horses on the road.

Specific traffic problems were noted as follows:

- Turning left at Whaleach Rd is difficult
- Limbert Rd is too narrow (2 reports)
- Chaplin Road needs repaving
- Agassiz bridge is not wide enough
- Poor intersections and visibility at Fir/Pioneer
- No left turn onto highway from Seabird
- Pave Chaplin Road (2 reports)
- Need a sign for no air brakes at Tuytens Rd

Limitations and Challenges

140 farmers responded to questions about the challenges and limitations they face in making or keeping their businesses profitable. The answers are not confined to SLA farmers.

	Severity of Problem		
	Numbers of Farmers Reporting		
	Low	Med	High
Soil quality	12	3	2
Size of land	7	3	2
Seepage impacts	25	9	8
Labour	7	2	1
Transportation needs	5	0	0
Storage	6	5	2
Marketing	9	1	2
What to grow	4	1	1
Extension services	6	5	1
Location of farm	6	1	0

11 respondents need food processing facilities to help their businesses to prosper, but did not rate the severity of this need.

Other challenges were reported as follows:

- wildlife in orchards
- trespassers
- need more gravel extraction to reduce seepage
- more money
- lack of community motivation
- fire (medium risk)
- environmental groups who think they own the land
- need assistance in marketing

Further Comments

In addition to replying to specific questions, respondents were given the opportunity to comment freely. These are the results:

- Too much air pollution
- Stop taking land out of ALR
- The community is too closed-minded for agriculture to change
- Using ALR land as industry shouldn't be permitted
- Stop removing ALR land
- Does not want housing development to go in behind
- Urban development needs to be kept to a minimum
- Hate to see more ALR land go out, e.g. fishing lodge
- Urban development needs to be kept to a minimum
- Some people are lazy, always looking for handouts
- Roads are getting busier
- Taxes too high: no paved roads, own well & septic
- Need a transition of trees between urban and rural
- Need to be more creative and self sustaining with food
- More signs needed for traffic
- Need more participation from farmers
- Stop removing ALR land
- Light industry is next door and it shouldn't be
- Nuisance from highway noise
- Keep the dyke cleaner by designating people
- Government issues need clearing on gravel extraction
- Hazelnut trees are not mature yet
- Need to educate rural neighbours on agriculture
- Change laws to help home based business in town
- Permit move property title so easier field access
- Little fertilizer & composted manure, virtual organic ag
- A co-op for the hazelnuts would be good
- Need more traffic signage
- Likes the area that he lives in
- Fishing lodge, people on dyke is a potential problem

Appendix A

Proceedings: Small Lot Agriculture Workshop

Held at the Agassiz Agriculture Hall, May 15, 2004⁶

Over a hundred people took part in this workshop, which stimulated small lot agricultural production by bringing 'the market' and market ideas to landowners in the District of Kent, BC.

In the morning, a variety of market experts shared their knowledge. After an excellent and generous lunch by 4H, the breakout sessions in the afternoon worked with 16 topic areas. Interest groups were established in niche marketing, agri-tourism, product consulting, and horticulture. Next steps include a coordinated approach to marketing products from Kent.

Acting as MC, Marion Robinson, Regional Manager of the Fraser Basin Council, introduced the purpose of the workshop and outlined the bigger picture about small lot agriculture (Appendix C).

Mayor Sylvia Pranger and Kent Agricultural Advisory President, Ken Schwaerzle presented acknowledgments. The BC Small Lot Agriculture Industry Initiative was also acknowledged.



Growers heard that small lot agriculture constitutes 25% of BC's agricultural economy (69% in the USA) and complements production agriculture. Kent's advantage includes the highest heat units in the province and a great deal of 'know-how'.

As land-use pressures increase in the Fraser Valley, the need for food production also increases. Kent is well situated to take economic advantage of developing more food production systems.

Agriculture is one of the main economic drivers of this region. Agricultural production in the Fraser Valley is currently valued at \$1.4 billion measured in annual farm gate receipts. Multipliers extend this figure into the billions.

Provincially, small lot agriculture is defined as 10 acres or less, and \$50,000 worth of production or less. In Kent, it was felt that 20 acres or less was more relevant, and that even a large property could have a small lot enterprise such as 5 acres of hedging cedars on a dairy farm. Small lot agriculture diversifies the economy, hedges against downturns and stimulates community engagement.

⁶ The Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) of the District of Kent Municipal Council submits reports and recommendations on issues affecting agricultural producers, processors, lenders and others interested in or affected by the local agricultural commodities markets. The AAC has formed a subcommittee on Small Lot Agriculture, which commissioned the workshop and this report.

Guest Speaker:

Steven Wong

author and consultant in food and food products

High-end and trends in the restaurant sector

“Food is entertainment.” Restaurants have evolved from hamburger joints to steak houses, from simply providing a meal to now providing a dining experience.

‘Food culture’ used to be imported. Restaurant foods came from Tuscany or Provence and wholesalers provided canned, frozen or prepared selections. Then we had nouvelle cuisine, with large plates and small amount of food that was hideously expensive. As our population diversified and market demands changed, ethnic foods became popular. Italian, Greek, Asian restaurants could be found in every town in BC. From the new ethnic diversity sprang fusion cuisine.

Our made-in-BC fusion is still evolving. We don’t blink an eye at taco wraps with teriyaki chicken and rice fillings. Or at last year’s media hit when Robbie Burns met Chinese New Year with haggis wontons.

Along with this diverse interest there is increasing demand for locally grown foods. BC has wonderful niche markets, fresh produce and great growing areas. We are seeing the emergence of a cuisine we can call home. The latest chef’s mantra is “Local, local, local!”

(Picture slides were presented of masterpiece plates from top Vancouver restaurants that included local products. The audience was able to see the size, varieties and how food is presented.)

In North America we’ve had a steep learning curve regarding food. It wasn’t too long ago when television promoters felt that Food Network will never fly. Other examples of food interest is with the original reality show: Iron Chef or watching London’s’ Jamie Oliver in his \$4 million struggle to get a restaurant going. We are doing things that we haven’t done 10 or 15 years ago.

Chef Robert Clarke from “C” Restaurant is often heard saying, “If I have good ingredients...”

This provides a market edge. In the past chefs made good food from relatively poor ingredients. Now we have the opportunity to make excellent food from outstanding ingredients, thanks to you growers.

Ingredients sought after and trends in the restaurant sector:

- The new trends are baby vegetables, micro-greens, and anything else new and different; e.g. spring onions and white asparagus, heritage varieties.
- The key to selling in high-end markets is really good tasting and high quality fresh food. This does not necessarily mean organic product.

Trends in restaurants are toward “tasting menus”: small plates of food to sample a variety of things. Restaurants are moving from a visual emphasis to one of taste.

For best results...

- It is very important to make plans and preparations in this season to prepare for next year. Get strategic.
- Have something that sets you apart from the rest in a high-end market: a business-like approach, organization and wonderful product. Try and grow something that sets you apart from the rest, again something new and different.
- Get good at 'handling' the product. For example: corn delivered the same morning as picked has superior flavour and market edge. Develop a co-operative way of assisting each other to deliver product to market.
- Extend your growing season for fresh product in spring and fall; cole crops, corn salad and beets in winter. We need more than squash in the winter!
- Some chefs will attribute the grower on the menu and this can result in recognition and market demand.
- Chefs want to focus on local high quality product. Accessing chefs usually requires a food product consultant. Chefs spend long days and do not have time to respond to every approach.
- Maybe a Kent web-site should be made for chefs, on what the producers are growing and what is available?
- Chefs prefer deliveries before and after the weekend on Tuesday and Friday
 - Maybe have a co-ordinated group for chef ordering?
- Variety is necessary so that the market is not flooded with one type of product. Talk to each other and strategize.
- Experiment with small batches of product. Monitor input and costs while you grow and try other things in small batches so that you can provide an accurate price for your product.
- Monitor costs and inputs. The price point is important for selling but it has to be profitable for you, too.
- We can convene producer showcases where chefs do product sampling and provide feedback.
- Prepare to market!

Guest Speakers:

Deb and Dave Schneider

The Schneiders' Ruby Creek Market is east of Agassiz, in the Skawahalook First Nation.

Successful Market Gardens

Deb and Dave showed slides of their 3/4-acre market garden and the wonderful crops it produces. One thousand pounds of vegetables are all sold by word of mouth. The garden is fairly new and was created out of an area that previously had grass and some bush. The fertile alluvial soil is flat land close to the Fraser River. Raised beds are warmer and accelerate plant growth while drip irrigation is the most effective for this operation. The season is extended with 'tunnels' – covers over the crop row.

- Dave recommends taking a horticulture course at UCFV. Recommended book: Vegetable Gardener's Bible.
- First Nations lands that have not had any pesticides can achieve organic certification in one year.
- It is recommended to start small. One acre can be overwhelming until you have devised a system. Have a harvesting plan and storage figured out.
- "First plan and identify your resources. Keep records."
- Establish base crops like potatoes, carrots, onions, then plant other vegetables around this base plan.
- Lettuce sells for \$4 to \$9 per pound. We sell ours for \$3.
- This year we plan on expanding the garden and advertising.
- Recommend seeds from West Coast seeds from Delta as they suit this climate. Currently we also harvest our own seeds.
- Best sellers include:
 - Potatoes. pickling cucumbers, green beans, peas and
 - Bagged mixed salad greens.
- Stagger plantings to provide regular market crops. As we plant every 2 weeks, we harvest 30 lbs. of green beans every 2 days.
- Recommended: companion plantings and organic growing techniques. Use cold frames as well.
- Marketing: Consumers like to have a relationship to the grower.
- Currently all product is sold through local contacts and word of mouth.
- Dave recommends putting flyers in local health food stores.
- "If you like the product, tell others; if you have a complaint, tell me"

If you produce too much food, what do you do? Please donate to elders or to the food bank. These give-aways have brought more customers back and we continue to help each other.

Guest Speaker:

Joanne Hansen

Joanne operates Hansen's Market in Harrison Mills.

Mixed Farming and Agri-tourism

Joanne runs an agri-tourism market on their large dairy farm. She started with vegetables and now sells pies, refreshments and country crafts as well. Her market includes campers and visitors to Harrison Hot Springs.

Joanne needs more fresh local produce as sales continue to increase.

She sells:

- Garlic, tomatoes, squash, green beans, hot and mild peppers
- Black berries, other berries
- Fresh herbs
- Cut flowers, dried flowers
- Hazelnuts, walnuts, and honey
- Homemade pies and jams from a certified kitchen
- Many other fruits and vegetables.

Joanne prefers to get product from local growers in Agassiz, as it saves her travel time to market and local growers can benefit from her sales.

Joanne was able to connect with a number of new suppliers at this workshop.



An example of on-farm direct marketing in Kent

Guest Speaker:

Mary Forstbauer

From Chilliwack, Mary is a grower, presenter, and marketer and an authority on markets beyond the farm gate. Mary and Hans have 12 children.

Far mers' Markets

The Forstbauers sell at farmer's markets four days a week. Mary also has demand from some restaurants and she sells directly to them.

- A nice thing about farmers markets is that the customer comes to you so you do not have to travel around to sell your produce. It is a good opportunity to make money at retail prices for your produce (not at wholesale).
- It's important to meet your consumers and educate them about your product.
- Restaurants shop at farmers markets. It's a good way to get known in the restaurant business.
- Some things to remember if you want to be part of a Farmer's Market:
 - Good signage is important.
 - Family can be very helpful for set up and selling at the market. People love to buy from kids.
 - Food safety is required if you are going to give out samples.
 - Get volunteers to help out and give them free food instead of cash. (Mary gives volunteers \$10 worth of produce for helping out for the day)
 - BC Farm Fresh Magazine is a good way to advertise your business at only \$250 per year. See www.bcfarmfresh.com
 - Make a web-site about your business? Link to existing sites as well.



Guest Speaker:

Tom Baumann

UCFV Professor of Horticulture, and Owner/Operator of Baumann Nurseries, Chilliwack.

Tom has a 5-acre wholesale nursery and does not sell to the public.

Successful Horticulture

The Chilliwack Ag Commission is undertaking the development of a commercial kitchen (the incubator project) to provide value-added opportunity for small lot growers. Check out: <http://www.chilliwackagriculturalcommission.com/>

Tom does not promote THE HIGHEST value crop (!) so these are the next highest in BC:

- Floriculture and nursery at \$400 million. Floriculture is becoming more important and needed as the 2010 Olympics get closer.
- Potatoes and vegetables at \$350 million.
- Berries and grapes at \$95 million (getting workers is a challenge).
- Tree fruits at \$70 million – mostly Okanagan but hazelnuts, here.

BC has very distinct agricultural regions: VR Island, Fraser Valley, Okanagan, etc.

The nursery market is expanding. Grow everything in pots.

- For example, he shipped 1000 plants to Ontario – he had what they wanted.
- The market for cut flowers is huge. Sell at flower auctions or get a broker. See www.ufgca.com/homepage/subpages/Market.html
- Protected vegetables:
 - A greenhouse approximately 20ft x 60ft with heater/fan costs \$7,000.
 - During season use a protected environment first for propagation, then as a Mediterranean climate to mature your crop.
 - Vegetable field crops can have protective tunnels. At PARC they have worked with colored plastic (red) to increase, for example, tomato production and timing.
- Grow cole crops in the shoulder season.
- There is a demand for nurseries. Tom grows many different varieties including rare kinds.
- You can even sell your plants at auctions.

What to grow?

- Corn. Very few farmers grow organic corn and the Fraser Valley is the best place to grow corn. Processors are demanding organic corn.
- Herbs – good market.

- Strawberries of many varieties. Strawberries sell here for about 65 cents a pound, while it can be \$3.50/lb on Vancouver Island. Use drip irrigation. Look into the Selva variety – ‘wood’ strawberry? Best taste is in the tiny wild strawberries. There is a variety available.
- Raspberries – Try ever-bearing or golden varieties.
- Currants have a very small market and benefit from value-added processing.
- Grapes have swamped the market due to many wineries.
- Blueberries? – Don’t try now. We are largest growing area and prices could drop; too risky for small grower.
- Cranberry may work in some seepage areas.
- Gooseberries are passé (even if they were the lead crop in Victorian times).
- Other specialty fruit that one could grow in this climate include Asian pear/Apple pear and sour cherries.
- Mushrooms give tremendous production in a small area. Wide variety of mushroom spawn for home gardeners. Get specialty varieties from sources like Western Biologicals (Box 283, Aldergrove, BC V4W 2T8 604-856-3339). \$3 refundable catalogue.
- Sod production: netting now keeps more soil in.
- Horticulture Therapy is becoming popular and could be an agri-tourism angle. Folks like to get well while gardening.
- Think of destination farming. Examples include the Corn Maze, Dried Flowers by Judy, Minter Gardens, golf and dairy, farm-associated stores and wineries or cheese places, etc.
- Non-timber-forest-products and agro-forestry. The first one you harvest selectively and kindly, the second category, you grow. The floral industry has demand for salal, boxwood, huckleberry, broom, sword fern, moss, curly willow, hydrangea, forsythia, quince, pussy willow, heather, fruit blossom, Christmas greens like cedar boughs, holly, variegated varieties, firs, junipers, etc. Call the Ernie Meyer Floral Co., through United Flower Growers.

Our strengths:

- Climate – best in Canada.
- Many knowledgeable people in the Lower Mainland kind enough to work with each other,
- Access to market
- Energy prices
- Universities
- Extension services
- Supporting industry
- People ‘hunger’ for new stuff, niche markets are growing.

Our Limitations:

- The US/Cdn exchange rate
- Labour costs and shortages
- International competition
- Land costs
- Urban/rural boundary stresses.

If you can't market it, don't grow it. If you don't like selling, then look at other resources like local sales (Joanne Hansen), or form a co-operative effort.

Resources for information:

- Library and internet
- Municipal, City Hall
- Provincial Ministries
- BC Ministry of Agriculture <http://www.gov.bc.ca/agf>
- Specific Organizations
- BCARA
- Direct Marketing Associations: www.bcfarmfresh.ca
- BC Ag Council: www.bcac.bc.ca
- Universities
- Conferences/workshops like this.

Places to get funding:

- Financial Institutions
- Federal/ Provincial Programs
- Tourism
- First Nations
- Consider First Nations business partnerships.
- Associations e.g. (Strawberry Growers Assoc.)
- Research through CCRA –Canadian Customs Revenue Assoc.

Guest Speaker:

Rochelle Eisen

Rochelle is the Principal Coordinator of the BC Certified Organic Program's Cyber-Help for Organic Farmers Project. Born in Ontario, a horticulture graduate from Guelph, Rochelle brings over ten years of organic inspector and adult education teaching experience to this event. She is proud to be a part of a pivotal element of BC's vital agricultural society, as sustainable agriculture and environmentally sensitive horticulture are the building blocks of healthy communities.

Making it Organically

Organics is a growing market. 40% of Canadians buy organic foods. 53% of British Columbians buy organic foods, of which 37% are medium buyers and 17% are light buyers. This number continues to grow as the buyer demands better quality and taste of food.

People want more local grown product and there is great demand for organic food.

- Mainstream retail outlets are now selling organic product. This indicates the strength of the demand.
- 50 to 80% of organic product is imported to BC. Some of it requires tropical production, but BC could position itself to provide 40% of the organic market.
- The best sellers are the primary vegetables and fruit. Opportunities in organics are greenhouse production, berries, corn and seasonal demands like asparagus, Brussels sprouts and Thanksgiving and Christmas foods.

Rochelle recommends:

- Grow what grows best in your area. This minimizes inputs and risk.
- Build relationships to your mentors and customers.
- Provide lots of varieties, stagger the seeding for longer harvest and stretch your season with covers or cold frames.
- Know the fluctuating market.
- Get excellent at signage, labeling and packaging.
- Know your price point.

There is a process for becoming an organic farmer but lots of information is available on how to do it. Info on websites:

- www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa and through BCMAFF; or Pro Organic 604-253-6549; Discover Organic 604-299-1683
- Businesses Like Wild West Organics also buy organic produce from local farmers 604-276-2411 or toll free 1-800-663-0049 in Richmond
- Check out this excellent site: <http://www.oklahomafood.org/>

Break-out sessions

After lunch, break-out sessions were held as follows:

Agritourism with Bruce Fatkin

Agroforestry with Detmar Schwichtenberg, Lisa Zabek

Aquaculture (Fish) with MaryLou Swift

Apiculture (Bees) with Pia Awram

Field Vegetables with Schneiders and Mary Forstbauer

(Mary agreed to stay after 2 pm for more details on markets beyond the farm gate and Farmer's Markets.)

Garlic with Dave Barratt

Fiber and Goats (meat, milk and cashmere) with Marilyn Ross of Sterling Farms

Organics with Rochelle Eisen

Horticulture with Tom Baumann

Niche markets: i.e., Lamb with Brian Chwiendacz and product consultation with Kim Sutherland, Steven Wong

Hazelnuts with Colleen Gingrich and Peter Andres



Break-out sessions at the SLA workshop

“Cross-pollination”

(An informal version of an SLA Crop Opportunity Registry)

On the back wall sign-up sheets for ‘cross-pollination’ covered these topics:

- I have for sale
- I would like to buy
- Other ideas

Results:

- More than 40 new contacts and ‘cross-pollinations’ were made. These are still going on after the workshop.
- Increased awareness and interest continue
- Strong interest in agri-tourism – want to do more with Bruce Fatkin
- Strong interest in Horticulture, though do not wish to formalize a working group. Want to know more about machinery, marketing, sales, crop, risk mgmt., education business planning, farm classification, regulations, financing, certification, and pests. Just advertise next session – we’ll be there.
- Niche marketing for products already available: form group and engage Stephen Wong to consult and convene chefs.
- Agri-forestry: would like to know more about demonstration project funding, maple harvests and site visits.
- Aquaculture: would like to know more about crayfish.
- Fibres: exchanged information
- Field Vegetables: Would like workshop with Elaine Ingham at Pacific Agri-Show in February or custom short course with Tom Baumann.
- Garlic: We know that there is a demand. We need help to connect to the market.

Joanne Hansen was able to connect to a number of new suppliers for her store at this workshop. Some people attending the workshop were ready with their products and found a market on the spot.

Next Steps

The SLA committee will review results and plan for the next workshop in the fall. In the meantime, groups can meet and address identified interests.

Appendix B

Marketing Opportunities in Kent

By Jean Klassen

There are several different approaches to marketing available to farmers in Kent. Here are a few to consider.

1. On-Farm Direct Marketing

As the urban population grows, urbanites are drawn to the country for the atmosphere and experience. This is a growing trend and on-farm direct marketing provides many advantages for the producer as well as the consumer.

Advantages:

- Supplies the consumer with fresh, high-quality products
- Minimizes the cost of packaging, storage and transportation
- Allows direct interaction with the customer receiving your product
- The producer can receive feedback on the product
- Controls prices on products
- Allows small scale farming to be profitable
- Creates a sustainable farm business
- Provides economic development for the community by bring tourists to the area
- Increases agricultural awareness and diversity of products
- Immediate payment to the producer selling their goods
- Offers educational experience to the consumer about the farm

On-farm direct marketing can include U-pick sales. This is a great opportunity to sell a product without labour costs. Consumers can get better-priced produce without the markup.

There can be **disadvantages** to on-farm direct marketing. It can take time and distract from other farm duties such as production or equipment maintenance. Longer hours may be required, and customers must come first in order to create repeat clientele. Many regulations and insurance needs must be addressed when starting your direct marketing business. Beyond these disadvantages, direct marketing farming needs a business plan like any other business.

Other points to remember when direct marketing a product:

- Establish a product that is unique and is different from others
- Provide a unique atmosphere and shopping experience created only by your farm operation
- Internet marketing is becoming a popular way of convenient direct marketing.

2. Roadside Stands

A roadside stand is a very economical way to market farm products. The primary cost to a roadside stand is to build the stand. Roadside stands are popular in the Fraser Valley and most rely on the honor system for payment. There is a risk of money being stolen or the stand being vandalized, but someone attending the stand every so often or making it easily visible from the house will help eliminate problems.

Roadside stands can be used away from the farm in different areas to generate extra income. A farmer could consider this type of marketing if a farm is not easily accessible or away from main thoroughways. Take into consideration some places along the roadside do not want vending and customer parking issues. Away from the farm roadside stands can also be time consuming and the producer must stay by the side of the road, away from the farm all day.

3. Wholesale Marketing

Wholesale marketing can be a quick and convenient way to sell products on the farm. Taking a lower price can reduce producer's profits but everything is sold. The wholesale market can be difficult for small lot producers because they cannot provide the quantity wholesalers want. Larger retail stores usually want the same type of product available in every store making product demands challenging for some small farms.

4. Farmer's Market

Farmer's markets have seen a dramatic resurgence in recent years. The United States Department of Agriculture reports that, between 1994 and 2002, the number of farmers' markets in the U.S. has increased by 79% (City of Abbotsford, 2004). In British Columbia there are over 100 Farmer's Markets, which many people go to looking for fresh produce and more natural or organic foods from the farm rather than the store.

A Farmer's Market is a great way to meet new people. It allows marketers to develop new clientele; explain how production is done on the farm; and make extra cash at retail prices with low overhead. Farmers Markets do not charge much for a table, usually about \$20, and the vendor is not obliged to attend every weekend. This is a good way to start if attempting to market for the first time.

5. Restaurant Marketing

Restaurant marketing can be a difficult market to break into. Many restaurants want local produce and products from farmers in the area for its freshness. Products can come from the farm to the restaurant in a matter of hours rather than being on a truck for a few days.

On the other hand, restaurant marketing can be time consuming. The farmer must travel to different restaurants on specific days and times when the chef is not busy or preparing for the day. Phoning ahead may help but is not guaranteed.

Chefs like fresh products delivered twice a week before and after the weekend. (For tips, refer to guest speaker Steven Wong's talk in Appendix A). The producer will need to work these times into their schedule around other farm duties. A marketing co-op may be beneficial if other producers are looking for similar opportunities.

6. Agri-tourism

Agri-tourism can be considered on-farm direct marketing because people come to the farm for the experience. Agri-tourism can take many forms, commonly including:

- Petting zoo
- Hay ride
- Corn maze
- A on-farm store selling value-added products from the farm
- Bed and breakfast
- Tours

More and more people are venturing out of the city looking for this kind of entertainment. Keep in mind the regulations required for on farm direct marketing when planning agritourism on the farm.

7. Value-added Products

A value-added product is one that is sold for a greater value than the sum of all its components. Examples include:

- Baked goods such as pies, cakes, cookies
- Jams and jellies
- Wool sweaters

Selling value-added products is a great way to increase profits from produced goods.

Remember to use high quality ingredients and do not let component prices outweigh the total value of the finished product. Producing value-added goods can have set backs due to regulations such as using a certified kitchen, and labeling. Any rules and regulations need consideration in your business plan when making a value-added product.

8. Agri-Forestry

Some producers are including agri-forestry as another source of income on their farms (for example, cedar boughs and Christmas greens for the floral market). Trees are also included in intercropping models. For instance, hardwoods such as black walnut may be grown along a perimeter, and harvested in about 20 years.

Another example, called conservation production, uses trees such as poplars to take up nutrients and offer protection in a riparian buffer.⁷

⁷ <http://www.woodlot.bc.ca/swp/index.html>

9. Internet Marketing and Home Delivery

Internet marketing is becoming more popular with any kind of merchandise sales. The internet could also be a great way to promote your farm or sell farm products. If a product-ready marketing farm is lacking computer resources it could be beneficial to become internet literate in order to create a larger marketplace.

A growing trend is to order your produce and value-added products through a home delivery service. Home delivery services are found online and can allow the consumer to shop 24 hours a day. A home delivery service is a convenient way for people to shop while receiving high quality goods in a more direct fashion. It also gives the consumer an opportunity to have the freshest foodstuffs possible usually from the local area.

A local example of a home delivery service is Small Potatoes Urban Delivery, or SPUD (www.spud.ca). SPUD delivers throughout the Lower Mainland, Whistler and on various parts of Vancouver Island. It is easily accessible via the internet, allowing you to place your order on line. Deliveries to each district occur on a specific day throughout the week.

There are over 800 items available on line, varying from natural breads to organic fruits and vegetables. Prices are reasonable and delivery is free if the order totals more than \$35; otherwise there is a \$3 delivery charge. This is a time- and money-saving alternative to grocery shopping. Check <http://www.ffcf.bc.ca> for other home delivery companies.

People that are product ready in Kent can try a variety of these marketing techniques. Some may be easier than others, but each producer will decide which is best for his or her needs.

10. Seabird Island First Nation

“Seabird Island First Nation is sometimes the ‘forgotten treasure’ in the District of Kent,” explains Brian Jones, Economic Development Officer.

Seabird Island First Nation is very interested in Small Lot Agricultural Development, and is always open to new business partnerships.

Seabird Island has over 1000 acres of good agricultural land available for lease, of which over 700 acres are currently under lease agreements. Local non-aboriginal farmers have benefited from available leased land. The lease agreements are written in a way to protect the environment and the soil as a resource.

Seabird Island has one of the largest sheep farms in western Canada. With a land base of approximately 500 acres there are 3000 head in production. Processing is provided by local packing houses, and the product is sold at mainstream markets. Seabird is currently trying to break into the specialty meat market with restaurants and other businesses looking specifically for this high-quality type of meat.

As well as selling wool in bulk, Seabird Island produces many woven woollen goods. Its wool and wool products are attracting interest in the cottage crafting and cultural business sectors. The production of woven Salish blankets helps to affirm First Nations culture. The plan is to further expand Seabird’s wool operation beyond cleaning, carding and grading services, and develop a cottage industry in spinning, dyeing and weaving.

Seabird Island has approximately 115 acres set aside for hazelnuts. Approximately 15,500 trees producing over 275,000 lbs of nuts per year. Seabird Island First Nation plans to process the hazelnuts to create 'value-added products.' There is a demand for hazelnut oils in the restaurant business and Seabird is exploring this niche market. The band may also open a store to provide hazelnuts and value-added hazelnut products to the consumer.

Seabird Island Band invites the community to come to Seabird Island. They have several great projects underway and are always looking for partners. Business partnerships are available in land leasing, joint marketing, and resource sharing, with business advantages of lower input costs.

For more information see www.seabirdisland.ca, or email Brian Jones, Economic Development Officer, at brianjones@seabirdisland.ca.



Seabird Island First Nation's sheep farm

Appendix C

Agriculture in BC—The Big Picture

Why is farming and food production different in BC?

British Columbia's total provincial area (land and fresh water) is about 94.78 million hectares. That's bigger than many countries in the world. But less than 5% of that land is suited to agriculture production.

Approximately 1% of BC's land base is prime agricultural land, found mostly in the Fraser Valley and Vancouver Island. (By comparison, parks constitute 12% of the land base in BC.) The percentage of BC farmland is small, but our agriculture generates half of the food we eat. Agriculture adds over \$2.2 billion dollars to the BC economy and creates over 280,000 jobs for people in this sector⁸. This does not include the multipliers in the agriculture industry, which generate over \$15 billion dollars.⁹ Municipalities earn more revenue from agricultural land than any other type of land use, relative to the infrastructure they need to build and maintain the same land.¹⁰

Nearly every farm in BC is family owned and operated. Families take the risk to run our farm businesses, and to provide more than 280 commercial agricultural products¹¹. Other food-growing regions are vertically integrated. That means that companies and shareholders own the food production system from the farm to the packing plants and distribution.

The Fraser Valley is half the size of Prince Edward Island and produces \$1.4 billion dollars in gross farm receipts. It has the best soil and climate in Canada along with the Niagara peninsula.

The District of Kent's 16,050 acres of farmland generate around \$28 million dollars each year.¹² Farming is one of the largest driving forces driving Kent's economy.

Agriculture is necessary not only for jobs, but for the production of food that is needed to feed our growing population. Agrologists remind us that our food growing regions outside of Canada are experiencing their own sustainability issues and may not be in a position to export food in the future. In many areas they are exceeding their ground water recharge (water for irrigation). California has been a net importer of food now for 10 years.

Fraser Valley farmers are planning ahead to when the Lower Mainland population will double in the next 15-20 years. Is food production going to increase to accommodate this need?

FOOD PROCESSING AND RETAIL SALES

Food retail sales in British Columbia are estimated to be over \$18 billion each year.

- The food industry directly and indirectly generates about 260,000 jobs for British Columbians: nearly 14 percent of BC's employed labour force.

⁸ Fraser-Harrison SmartGrowth, Spring 2004/MAFF

⁹ MAFF faststats, 2002

¹⁰ Fraser-Harrison SmartGrowth, Spring 2004/MAFF

¹¹ BC MAFF

¹² Fraser-Harrison SmartGrowth, Spring 2004/MAFF

- Nearly 1,000 processing businesses in British Columbia take the raw product and produce a wide variety of foods and beverages for the marketplace.
- The activities of processing, transportation, storage, distribution and retailing increase the value of British Columbia's primary food products by about 2 or 3 times, to about \$6 billion each year.

Appendix D

The District of Kent, BC

Location

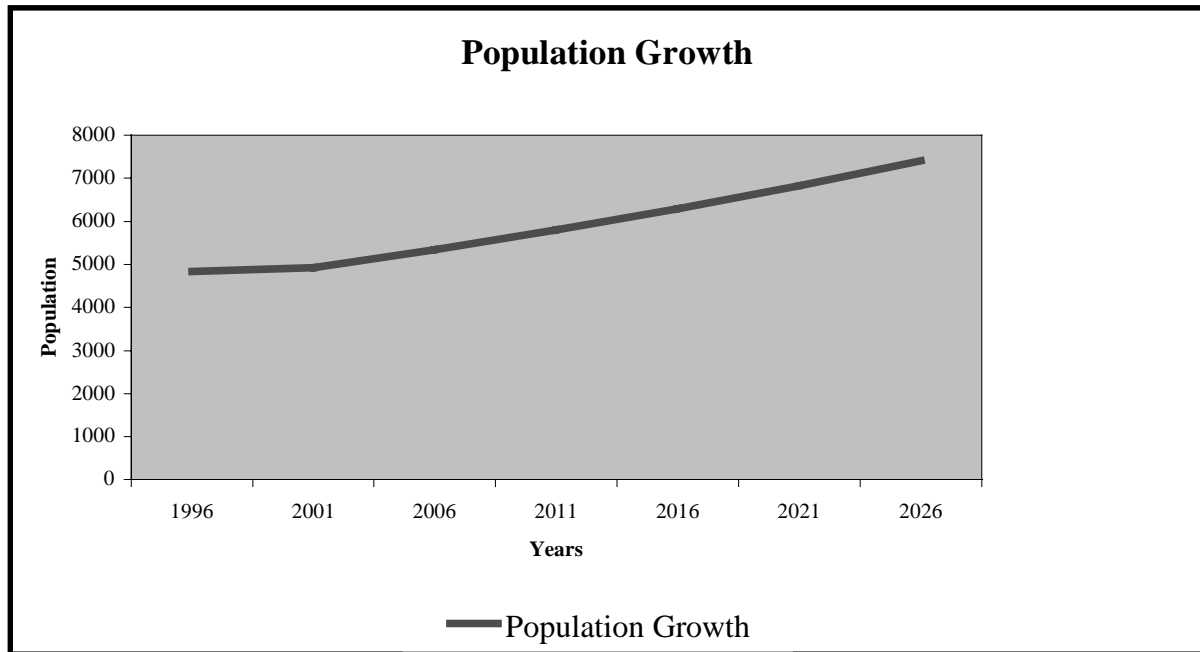
The District of Kent reaches from Harrison Mills to Ruby Creek and neighbours the vacationing hot spot, Harrison Hot Springs. It is located 90 minutes east of Vancouver and easily accessible from either Highway 7 or off Highway 1. It is found near the east end of the Lower Mainland, (see map below).



Fig 1.1 Source: www.mapquest.com

Population

At present the District of Kent has a population just under 5,000, but this is projected to increase as shown below, as the entire Lower Mainland continues to grow over the next twenty years.¹³ Land and resource management in the area will experience greater pressure with this growth.



Population growth in the District of Kent¹⁴

Tourism

People are drawn to Kent because of the diverse tourism offerings in and around Harrison. Activities include hiking, skiing, boating, camping, as well as agri-tourism. For the past two years, the Circle Farm Tour brochure has helped promote agri-tourism in Kent. The brochure is available at the District of Kent, the Tourist Information Centers in both Agassiz and Harrison Hot Springs, and local businesses. Both Information Centers state that the Circle Farm Tour was a popular brochure this summer.

Another popular attraction is the Agassiz Agricultural Fall Fair and Corn Festival. This small town fair attracts ten thousand people to Agassiz each September.

Kent's Tourist Information Center in Agassiz provides information to the public and collects visitor statistics for the area. According to the Tourist Information Center in Agassiz, "it is difficult to account for each tourist coming to the District of Kent. Not everyone uses the Information Centers, and people are unaccounted for."

A total of 2217 people visited the Information Center between May 21 and September 5, 2004. This number is down 466 from last year¹⁵. There are a number of factors to consider why the

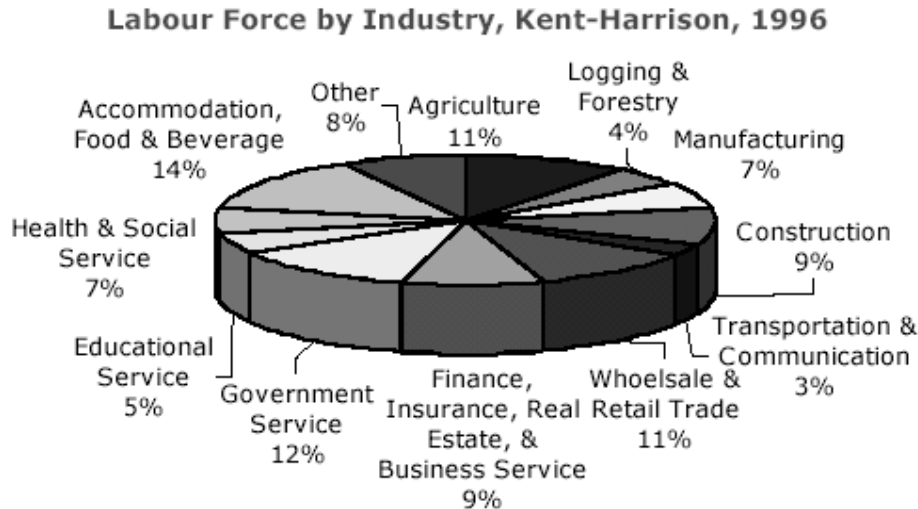
¹³ District of Kent Profile Statistics, 2002

¹⁴ *ibid.*

numbers are less but the info center speculates “high gas prices may have been a reason for fewer tourists this summer.”

According to Harrison Hot Springs Tourist Information Center, more than 3,000 people visit the center per month.¹⁶ The center estimates that only one out of ten people stop for information about Harrison Hot Springs.

Labour



Labour force by industry in the District of Kent¹⁷

Agriculture is the leading industrial occupation by in the District of Kent¹⁸, but third in the employment figures (11%). The number one employment sector is in Accommodation, Food and Beverage Service at 14%. Harrison Hot Springs Hotel alone employs 250 people, which helps to increase this sector’s percentage. Second in employment was Corrections Canada at 12%, as the federal institutions employ 535 people.

Climate

The District of Kent is approximately 100km inland from the coast of British Columbia, making the summer temperatures a few degrees warmer than Vancouver. Its excellent growing season features the highest heat units and the longest frost-free days in all of Canada (mean annual temperature 10.5°C; annual rainfall 1754.7 mm¹⁹).

¹⁵ District of Kent Profile Statistics, 2002

¹⁶ Harrison Tourist Information Centre, Aug 2004

¹⁷ District of Kent Profile Statistics, 2002

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ Environment Canada: Canadian Climate Normals 1971-2000 (<http://www.climate.weatheroffice.ec.gc.ca>)

Traffic Volume

High traffic volume in Kent provides an excellent opportunity for local marketing. Population growth throughout the Lower Mainland has created larger amounts of traffic flow through the District. In an average summer (July and August), over 600,000 vehicles pass through Kent on Highway 9, of which nearly 500,000 are going to and from Harrison. During the rest of the year there is only an 8% decline in traffic entering Kent, although the traffic to Harrison declines by nearly 30%. Traffic counted from all four entrance points²⁰ brings the total to over 1.8 million vehicles in July and August alone. Traffic through Agassiz's town centre decreases by 19% after the summer months.²¹

²⁰Hwy 7 south of Hwy 9 Jctn; Hwy 9 north of Hwy 7 Jctn; Hwy 7 east of Evergreen Drive; Hwy 9 @ Rosedale/Agassiz Bridge

²¹District of Kent Statistics Package (<http://www.district.kent.bc.ca/images/pdf/statistical.profile.package.2004.pdf>)

Appendix E

Kent Agricultural Advisory Committee

The District of Kent Municipal Council has appointed an Agricultural Advisory Committee to conduct public meetings and submit reports and recommendations on issues affecting agricultural producers, processors, lenders and others interested in or affected by the agricultural commodities markets, and to facilitate communications between the Commission and the diverse agricultural and agriculture-related organizations represented on the committee.

The KAAC meet once a month and consist of 15 people in various agricultural sectors. These sectors include dairy, poultry, horses, various vegetables, hazelnuts, flowers and fish. Others are from PARC and from city hall.

To get in touch with KAAC contact the District of Kent 1-604-796-2235.

Appendix F

Fraser Basin Council

The Fraser Basin Council is a non-profit organization that brings people together to solve tough sustainability challenges in the Fraser Basin, an area that is the same size as California, contributes 80% to the provincial economy, is home to some 2.7 million people, and is one of the world's largest salmon-producing river systems.

The Council's vision for sustainability—social well-being supported by a vibrant economy and sustained by a healthy environment—is realized through action-oriented co-operative projects that address daunting challenges, such as economic diversification in rural communities, regional river management, nutrient (fertilizer) management and flood hazard mitigation.

The Fraser Basin Council acts as a conflict resolution agent, an impartial facilitator, a sustainability educator and a catalyst to help people and institutions integrate social, economic and environmental considerations in decision making. The Council's unique Board is comprised of representatives throughout the Basin: all levels of government; First Nations; economic, environmental and social interests; and citizens from all walks of life.

The Fraser Basin Council's Fraser Valley directors are Sylvia Pranger, Duncan Jeffries, Dave Barratt and Roy Mussell.

See www.fraserbasin.bc.ca or call Marion Robinson at 1-604-826-1661.

Appendix G

The Small Lot Agriculture Initiative

The Fraser Valley Farm Direct Marketing Association (FVFDMA) on behalf of the Small Lot Agriculture Advisory Committee manages the Small Lot Agriculture Initiative (SLAI).

Funded by the BC Investment Agriculture Foundation, the SLAI's purpose is to

- Increase enterprise profitability of small lot farms
- Enable more small lots to come into production
- Build capacity in the small lot/scale sector
- Improve local market access
- Encourage the establishment of partnerships
- Work for the removal of regulatory impediments to small lot agriculture
- Promote better working relationships within the industry and the community

The Initiative will focus on the following key areas for projects:

- Development and transfer of technical information;
- Development and coordination of industry data;
- Support of small lot infrastructure upgrades;
- Support of a farm mentor program;
- Support of regional resource centers.

Please contact the office of the Fraser Valley Farm Direct Marketing Association for more information on this initiative:

FVFDMA
Box 327,
#800, 15355 -24th Avenue
White Rock, BC V4A 2H9

Or phone 604.535.5282 (Press 3)

Appendix H
Survey

**Small Lot Agriculture
Development Questionnaire**



Kent Agricultural Advisory Committee



Fraser Basin Council



**Investment
Agriculture
Foundation**
of British Columbia

Small Lot Agriculture Initiative



Land Assessment:

1. Size of land parcel: (acre x 0.404687 = hectare) _____
 2. Portion currently in agricultural production: _____
 3. If currently in production, what type(s)?
Field crop YES NO What type(s)? _____
Livestock YES NO What type(s)? _____ How many? _____
Poultry YES NO What type(s)? _____ How many? _____
Bees YES NO What type(s)? _____
Other _____
 4. Is this portion in production leased to another farmer? YES NO
a) Land lease
b) Crop lease
 5. Is your agricultural production quota belonging to a marketing association? YES NO
If yes, what? _____
 6. Portion that could be in production: _____
 7. Are you certified organic? YES NO
 8. Are you virtually organic without the certification? YES NO
 9. Portion used for non-agricultural purposes: _____
 10. Does your land include a body of water?(ie. slough, ditch) YES NO
 11. What type and size of buildings do you have? _____

 12. And what are their uses? _____

 13. Are you interested in leasing your land to another farmer? YES NO
 14. If not leasing, are you looking for land to lease for agricultural goods? YES NO
 15. Are you leasing First Nation's land? YES NO
 16. Are you a First Nation undertaking an agricultural activity? YES NO
- Comment: _____

17. Do you provide an agri-tourism component? YES NO
 18. If yes, what type? _____

19. Would you like to take part in an agri-tourism opportunity? YES NO

20. If yes, what type? _____

Inputs for Production:

21. What resources do you currently have/use for your agricultural activities?

Utilities:

- ☐ Electricity
- ☐ Natural Gas
- ☐ High speed internet

Water:

- ☐ Irrigation
- ☐ Deep well specifically for farming

Soil:

- ☐ What is your soil type? _____ Don't know _____
- ☐ Do you test your _____ regularly? (check the following below)
 - ☐ Soil
 - ☐ Manure
 - ☐ Leaves

☐ Do you have a nutrient or environmental plan in place? YES NO
 YES NO
 In Progress?

☐ Other? (specify) _____

22. Do you have a problem with any of the following?(Rate low – high)

- | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soil quality | Low | Med | High |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Size of land | Low | Med | High |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seepage impacts | Low | Med | High |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Labour | Low | Med | High |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation requirements | Low | Med | High |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Storage(machines, goods)
(Do you have enough?) | Low | Med | High |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing (where to sell)
(Do you need help with?) | Low | Med | High |
| <input type="checkbox"/> What to grow? | Low | Med | High |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extension services
(Do you need the 'how to'?) | Low | Med | High |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Location of farm | Low | Med | High |

☐ Other (specify) _____

23. Do you require food processing? YES NO If yes, do you need:

- ☐ Certified kitchen
- ☐ Freezer storage
- ☐ Processing equipment
- ☐ Other _____

Marketing:

24. Where do you sell your product, and at what percentages?

- ☐ Local thru direct sales %
- ☐ Markets outside of Canada %
- ☐ To a friend %
- ☐ To a farmers market %
- ☐ To a marketing board %
- ☐ To a retail store %
- ☐ Lease land %
- ☐ Other _____

25. How did you find your market?

- ☐ From word of mouth
- ☐ Internet or personal research
- ☐ Industry association
- ☐ Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Fisheries (MAFF)
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

26. Which would be the most helpful in creating your agricultural endeavor?

Check three:

- ☐ News letters
- ☐ Website/Internet help
- ☐ Coordinated marketing group (like a 'Kent Co-op')
- ☐ Accessing established commodity group
- ☐ To be engaged at a committee level
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

27. Do you want internet resources specifically geared for your agricultural activity? YES NO

28. Are there any agricultural opportunities or projects that you have thought of that need developing? _____

Agricultural Planning:

29. Do have trees, shrubs, greenbelts or waterways as buffers between you and urban development? YES NO

30. Do you feel there is a need for a buffer between agricultural lands and urban development? YES NO

31. Have you ever experienced conflict with rural neighbours? YES NO

32. Have you ever experienced conflict with urban neighbors on your farm or dyke? YES NO

Comment: _____

33. If yes,

- ☐ With non-farm boundaries (buffer zone)
- ☐ Pollution, environmental concerns
- ☐ Nuisances like dust, noise, odor, loose dogs, etc.
- ☐ Parking
- ☐ Other

Comment: _____

34. Transportation: In the course of your farm operation, have you experienced any transportation concerns within rural areas?

- ☐ Dangerous moments (like crossing highway or?)
- ☐ Traffic flow problems
- ☐ Long wait to be able to pull out onto road
- ☐ Problem accessing field with equipment
- ☐ Other (specify) _____

Comments: _____

Name: _____ Phone number: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

Appendix I

Acronyms

ALR	Agricultural Land Reserve
CFIA	Canadian Food Inspection Agency
FBC	Fraser Basin Council
KAAC	Kent Agricultural Advisory Committee
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
NIRF	Near Infrared Testing
PARC	Pacific Agriculture Research Canada
SLA	Small Lot Agriculture
SLAI	Small Lot Agriculture Initiative