

# SALT SPRING ISLAND FOOD SECURITY

## A DISCUSSION AND PLANNING PAPER

prepared by  
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for the  
**SSI Community Food  
Security Project Steering  
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Salt Spring  
Island  
Community  
Services

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This document is a work in progress. It is intended to lead and support discussion about food security in our community and to generate interest and involvement in developing a food security plan for Salt Spring Island. The process is open to everyone who wants to participate, including individuals, groups and businesses.

This phase of the project was carried out between February and March 2006. The partner groups overseeing the project are: Salt Spring Island Community Services Society (lead agency); Island Natural Growers; Gulf Islands Coalition for Children and Families; the Earth Festival Society/Community Energy Strategy; Salt Spring Island NatureWorks; Lady Minto Hospital; and Salt Springers for Safe Food.

## **2. SCOPE OF THE PROJECT**

The project was funded by the Vancouver Island Health Authority as part of the Community Food Action Initiative. This initiative is providing funding for food security projects in communities throughout the region. While the communities are at different stages of development the priorities to build a stronger and more equitable local and regional food system are similar.

Although the time frame was short because of the funding requirements, it was possible in the project here on Salt Spring to accomplish several key objectives and, most importantly, to launch a process that is ongoing. The project has focused on three areas:

- a. Drafting a preliminary assessment of the current status of the community's food security using a range of community relevant food security indicators;
- b. Identifying a range of potential community food security action priorities;
- c. Developing of a food security planning framework that will form the basis for creating a food security plan that takes a broad systems approach.

### 3. WHAT DOES FOOD SECURITY MEAN ?

Food security is a broad and complex concept. If you think of a “food shed” as being comparable to a watershed, food security encompasses everything that affects the flow of food from where it is grown into the place where it is eaten. From this perspective, the issues affecting food security arise out of a number of factors:

- a. Inequities in access to healthy nutritious food due to a variety of social and economic circumstances including poverty, insufficient income, rising housing costs, illness.
- b. Loss of control of the production and quality of food within the community.
- c. A focus on industrial food production in national, provincial and local government policies and legislation, and corresponding neglect of local food systems.
- d. Food safety regulations that are designed for industrial food production and that create barriers and obstacles for local food production and distribution.
- e. Global hardship and inequities created by shifting from local responsibility and control for food to food as an industrial trading commodity. One result is that farmers in non-industrial areas of the world are required by trade agreements and international debts to put aside the traditional crops that they grew to feed themselves and turn more and more land over to growing food for export to people in the northern hemisphere.
- f. Loss of knowledge about food production and the seasonality of food.
- g. Degradation of the environment and ecosystems caused by global industrial food production and long-distance transportation of imported food.

Some places, for example, Toronto, Vancouver and Kamloops, have organized policy centres within their city government structures to provide a focus for food security issues. Most communities, however, are only beginning to consider food security in any sort of coherent way.

Defining “food security” is part of the process of developing a food security plan for the community. There is no one definition of “food security.” The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization focuses its definition primarily on individual access to healthy food. By comparison food security is recognized as a much broader concept by agencies and groups across Canada. The Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiatives Roundtable (CR-FAIR), for example, takes many elements into account in its definition ranging from access through to local and sustainable food production.

Draft definition of Salt Spring Island Food Security presented for discussion with a view to building common understandings:

*FOOD SECURITY exists when all individuals have access to adequate, nutritious food regardless of their income and their abilities. In a food secure community, most of the food is grown, processed and distributed on a local and regional basis. Food production and distribution is conducted in a manner that is environmentally and economically sustainable and local food access and production are an integral part of governance decisions affecting the community.*

## 4. ASSESSING FOOD SECURITY ON SALT SPRING

Indicators fall into four general categories:

- 1. Food Production and Processing:** Where and how food is grown and where and how it is handled (picked, caught, slaughtered), processed and/or preserved.
- 2. Food Distribution and Marketing:** The system, resources, food services that bring food from the producer to the community.
- 3. Food Policy and Safety:** Laws and public policies that regulate, enhance, control and limit food production and distribution.
- 4. Individual and Household Access to Nutritious, Culturally Appropriate Food:** Various factors including the effects of income, age, health on access to food.

## 4.1 Assessing Food Security-Food Production and Processing

### a) **Availability of farmland for food production**

Just over **20%** of the island is in the Agriculture Land Reserve (ALR). Only about 60% of land in the ALR is being farmed. Since 1994, 7% (700 acres) of ALR has been removed. Soil quality is variable.

About **9,600 acres** are being actively farmed; 36% of this land is not in the ALR. The amount of land that is farmed has declined by 8% since 1994. There are an estimated **120** farms in commercial food production on the island.

Land values have increased by more than 60% within the past decade putting market pressure on farm land.

### **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

- *The amount of farmland on Salt Spring Island is decreasing.*
- *Farmland that is not in the ALR is most vulnerable to residential and other development.*
- *Access to capital and return on investment are large deterrents to expansion and new investment.*
- *The Farmers Institute, Island Natural Growers and the Islands Trust are undertaking an Area Farm Plan which will provide a detailed description of farm land, the current uses and use options. The information that is gathered could contribute to the Official Community Plan review.*

## 4.1 Assessing Food Security-Food Production and Processing

### b) **Commercial food production volumes**

In 2004 there were about **232,000 pounds** of vegetables and fruit grown on Salt Spring, about **1680 sheep, cattle and pigs** were sold for food, and about **4100 poultry** were marketed by farmers.

A quick calculation shows that these volumes would provide about 23 pounds of vegetables and fruits and less than ½ a chicken per resident per year.

There is no commercial dairy production on the island. There is one dairy that produces milk for its own on-farm cheese processing.

There is some commercial fishing and some seafood production on the island but data on volumes is not readily available.

There is no commercial human food grain and pulse production on the island and no other non-meat protein produce being grown.

Grocers are trucking more than 4 million pounds of produce onto the island annually. The hospital (the island's largest institutional food server) is trucking in about 95,000 pounds of produce and meat annually.

### **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

- *Farmers are producing enough meat and produce to provide only about 5% of the total amount of food eaten by Salt Spring residents and visitors. Most of this food is only available seasonally.*
- *Island Natural Growers is organizing a series of workshops aimed at helping commercial growers to increase their production.*



## 4.1 Assessing Food Security-Food Production and Processing

**c) Adequacy of farm incomes**

The majority of farmers are not earning a living wage from their farming. The majority of wages paid to farm workers are part-time and the hourly rate is just above minimum wage.

### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- *There is a general perception that local food is much more expensive than imported and that it is unaffordable for many. Yet at current volumes and prices farm incomes are very low.*

**d) Availability of skilled farm labour**

The ING Produce Study (2005) found that Salt Spring produce growers have farming experience that spans 1 to 28 years, and the average is 16 years. Most farmers do all the work themselves and do not hire any labour.

### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- *Increased production requires an increase in skilled workers. There is very little skilled casual farm labour available and very little affordable housing for labourers.*

## 4.1 Assessing Food Security-Food Production and Processing

### e) **Sustainability**

More than 80% of produce farmers indicate they are using organic practices but only 25% of commercial produce farmers are certified organic. A smaller proportion of meat producers are certified organic.

Water capacities for increased agriculture are unknown.

Most farmers are middle-aged and older.

#### **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

- *Sustainability is dependent on good stewardship of the land and water and on attracting new farmers to the land.*
- *The Area Farm Plan will address long-term food production sustainability issues, including water use effects.*

### f) **Community gardens and backyard gardens**

There are no community gardens on Salt Spring.

There are many backyard gardens on Salt Spring but there is no data on the estimated volume of food produced for personal use.

There is an active Garden Club that promotes home gardening of all kinds.

#### **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

- *There is a growing interest in organizing a community garden centre that includes gardening education, composting and other related services. What resources are required?*
- *Can home-based food gardening be increased and if so what support do home gardeners need?*
- *Land may come available for a community garden.*

## 4.1 Assessing Food Security-Food Production and Processing

### **g) Food processing**

There are about 20 different food processors on Salt Spring, including fish smoking and canning, cheese, tofu, frozen dinners, flour, gelato, jams & jellies, spices, wine vinegars, bread & baked goods.

Anecdotal information suggests that meat production on the island is diminishing due to the lack of affordable and accessible abattoir facilities. The Farmers Institute is following up on the implementation of the new regulations governing abattoir facilities and meat processing.

#### **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

- The medium to long-term impact on meat production and farm incomes due to not having any meat and poultry processing facilities on the island are unknown..*
- Information is not available on the potential and feasibility of increasing value-added food processing on and off farms.*
- There are some commercial, licensed kitchens but no assessment of whether these facilities are adequate to meet the demand if processing expands.*

## 4.1 Assessing Food Security-Food Production and Processing

### **h) Agriculture/food production education for children**

There is no formal agricultural content in the school curriculum. Some classrooms have various projects that provide some information about food production. For example, one of the schools has a garden that the children tend and harvest.

There is no formal program that connects local farmers and children in an educational exchange.

#### **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

- *What priority does the community want to place on increasing agriculture education among the children in our community?*

### **i) Agriculture education for new farmers**

New farmers can participate in the apprenticeship program organised by Stewards of Irreplaceable Land (SOIL)

ING and the Farmers Institute each provides some educational opportunities and tours, as resources are available.

The federal government has funding to assist farmers in some educational activities.

Some farmers provide mentoring on an informal basis.

#### **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

- *Are these initiatives effective and are they enough to create a new generation of farmers?*
- *What can be done to improve access to the skills-development resources that are available?*

## 4.1 Assessing Food Security-Food Production and Processing

### **j) Public education**

Seedy Saturday and the Fall Fair provide some general information about agriculture and farm production for the general public.

The Garden Club has an education component in its program, some of which focuses on food production.

There is very little public education specifically about food security.

### **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

- *An increase in public education is needed in order to bring to people's awareness the link between food production and food security.*

## 4.2 Assessing Food Security-Food Distribution and Marketing

- a) Wholesale food outlets** There are no Salt Spring Island-based wholesale distributors, or wholesale warehouses.  
There is no central storage for local food distribution.

### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- *Local wholesale infrastructure is considered to be not financially feasible at current levels of production and in the current environment.*

- b) Retail food outlets** There are 2 large grocery outlets, 1 medium-sized (organic) outlet & 6 small outlets (3 are in Ganges, 2 are north of Ganges and 1 south).  
It is estimated that less than 2% of the larger grocers' inventory is local food.

### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- *Several of the grocers are looking to handle more local food but low production volumes are a significant obstacle.*

## 4.2 Assessing Food Security-Food Distribution and Marketing

- c) Food service outlets** There are more than a dozen restaurant outlets on SSI, ranging from fine dining to cafes, pubs and lunch bars. There are also several caterers and dozens of bed and breakfasts.

Several food service outlets have arrangements with local producers to supply a limited amount of product but generally use of local produce is low.

### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- *Low production volumes are an obstacle.*
- *The Chefs Collaborative in Victoria provides a successful example of restaurants and producers working together.*

- d) Institutional outlets** The largest institutional food services on the island are the combined health facilities, including the hospital, nursing home, newly constructed assisted living facility, and meals-on-wheels. These facilities are serving more than 300 meals per day. All the food for these facilities is ordered through the hospital. 100% of it is trucked from off-island sources, contracted by VIHA.

Other food services, including the high school and Meadowbrook, are primarily supplied from off-island.

The Ministry of Agriculture is introducing a fresh snack program in schools throughout the province — all the fruit and veggies will be provided from off-island sources. It is not known when the local schools will be participating in this program.

### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- *Do we want our institutions to serve locally produced food?*
- *Can enough food be produced to meet their needs?*

## 4.2 Assessing Food Security-Food Distribution and Marketing

- e) Direct farm distribution** The majority of local produce and meat on Salt Spring is marketed directly from farms and farm stands (ING Produce Study, 2005). A small proportion is distributed off-island (primarily specialty foods)
- Both the farmers market section at the Saturday Market (organized by PARC) and the Tuesday Market (a food-only market organized by Island Natural Growers) provide outlets for farmers to sell their products directly.

### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- *While local patronage is increasing at the Tuesday Market, it is still a fledgling operation, managed and operated entirely by volunteers.*
- *Farmers are not allowed to use Centennial Park for the Tuesday Market. What can be done to allow use of this more central and accessible location for the benefit of the local farm economy?*

- f) Food inventories** Local grocers carry very small inventories because of the cost of storage. It is estimated they have enough food to last about 3 days.
- It is estimated that the hospital has about a 2-week inventory of dry goods.

### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- *Increased inventories would require increasing storage facilities on Salt Spring.*



## 4.2 Assessing Food Security-Food Distribution and Marketing

### **g) Food transportation**

It is estimated that about 95% of the food sold on SSI is trucked onto the island by large, international distributors.

The Community Energy Strategy estimates that fossil fuels could be reduced significantly if local food replaced even a small proportion of current consumption.

#### **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

- *The Salt Spring Island Community Energy Strategy includes recommendations specifically related to food transportation. Current local production is not sufficient to achieve those goals.*

### **h) Emergency plans**

The Emergency Planning Operations estimates there is enough food on SSI to last about 3 days. If a state of emergency is declared the operations group has the authority to control the distribution of food from grocers.

#### **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

- *Planning is required in order to ensure emergency food supplies in case of a disastrous event that would close off food supplies from off-island.*
- *Plans are in the works to facilitate neighbourhood emergency food plans.*

## 4.2 Assessing Food Security-Food Distribution and Marketing

### i) **Public education**

Salt Springers for Safe Food provides some public education about global food issues, as resources are available.

The annual Salt Spring Film Festival usually includes films about global food issues in the program.

The community energy strategy provides some public education about the effects of current food distribution systems on energy use.

Public education about the implications of things like trade agreements and marketing boards on food distribution and marketing is done on an ad hoc basis and depending on specific issues.

Information about the effects of climate change on food distribution is not readily available.

### **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

- *There is a large role for public education in increasing food security. Resources are needed to focus and coordinate a coherent approach in the community.*

### 4.3 Assessing Food Security-Food Policy and Safety

**a) Food safety regulations**

Local food production is subject to the same policies and regulations that are developed for industrial food operations, despite the distinct differences in production methods, needs and issues. Examples include, new abattoir regulations and egg regulations.

The benefits of small scale and local accountability are generally not taken into account in the development of food safety regulations.

Vancouver Island Health Authority and federal officials inspect regulated processing facilities on SSI. All operating facilities must meet required standards.

#### **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

- *What avenues are available for local food producers and processors to have input into food safety policies and regulations?*
- *How will the new meat regulations be implemented on Salt Spring? Can they be implemented in a way that saves meat production on Salt Spring?*

### 4.3 Assessing Food Security-Food Policy and Safety

#### b) Facilities

As noted above, there is no abattoir for meat slaughtering on SSI. The increased cost of taking animals off-island is reducing production. And going off-island raises concerns about stress levels in the animals and how this affects meat quality.

There are several commercial kitchens on the island but there is no infrastructure to coordinate access, or assess adequacy and capacity.

#### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- *Access to capital to develop commercial facilities is a large issue for small scale food producers and processors.*

#### c) Food security education

Food Safe training is available periodically on SSI. Special efforts are being made to increase food safe training among primary producers.

Most public education about food safety is ad hoc and issue-based.

Because most food eaten on SSI is from off-island, Salt Springers are subject to the same risks of genetic engineering and chemicals in foods as the population at large. Local food tends not to be genetically engineered and certified organic local food is not genetically engineered. Salt Springers for Safe Food has informally declared SSI as a GE food-free zone.

#### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- *As food is becoming more and more industrialized, the need for food safety education increases exponentially — the issues are more complex and specialized.*

### 4.3 Assessing Food Security-Food Policy and Safety

- d) **Organic production and processing** There is general support for organic food on SSI but only a very small proportion of all the food available for sale on SSI is certified organic.

Soil amendments are a constant challenge for commercial growers and home gardeners.

There are numerous people on SSI who have expert knowledge and experience in organic production.

#### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Generally speaking, certified organic food costs more than non-organic food. While there is growing demand for organic food, its affordability for people with low incomes is a serious issue.

- e) **Seed protection** The seed sanctuary on SSI is producing and protecting a broad selection of seed from industrial manipulation and multinational patents.

ING holds an annual Seed Saturday event to promote seed saving and exchange of seeds.

The use of patents to deny farmers the right to save and use their seed is increasing but the impact here is not known.

#### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- *What are the most effective ways in which our community can affect government policies having to do with seed patents, industrial ownership of seeds and associated loss of seed diversity on the planet?*

### 4.3 Assessing Food Security-Food Policy and Safety

**f) Food policy**

Food policy crosses the full spectrum of local, provincial and federal government jurisdictions. This makes it very difficult to develop coherent food policies that reflect local priorities.

#### **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

- *There is an increasing interest in taking food into account at the local government level. For example, the CRD Roundtable on the Environment recently created a Standing Committee devoted to food security. The Capital Region Food and Agriculture Initiative Roundtable, an ad hoc food security group, is working with the CRD Roundtable to bring local needs and ideas into the planning process.*

#### 4.4 Assessing Food Security-Individual & Household Access to Food

- a) **Transportation to food shopping** For the most part, grocery stores are centralized in Ganges. SSI doesn't have a public transportation system; people who don't have their own vehicles are dependent on getting rides from friends or hitchhiking.

##### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- *Can transportation planning on Salt Spring take food security and the problems that some people may have getting to and from grocery stores into account?*

- b) **Adequate in-home food preparation facilities** A recent study of homelessness on SSI confirms that there are a significant number of people on the island living in accommodation that does not have regular food preparation facilities, including travel trailers, cottages/shacks, and lean-tos.
- There isn't a community kitchen on SSI – one was organized four or five years ago. Despite an identified need the program was not well attended and eventually closed.

##### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- *What are the needs for a community kitchen and how could a kitchen best be organized?*

#### 4.4 Assessing Food Security-Individual & Household Access to Food

**c) Affordability of food** There are approximately 4,200 households on SSI and 50% of them have incomes below \$40,800. This is \$6,000 less than the median of all BC households.

The poorest households on the island are those on income assistance. For example, the maximum annual benefits of a single person receiving income assistance in 2005 was \$6456 or \$538 per month; the maximum for a person who qualifies for disability benefits was \$10,656 or \$888 per month. These rates are among the lowest in Canada. They represent 70% and 50%, respectively, below the poverty line.

About 50% of all one-person households have annual incomes of less than \$22,440 (\$1,870 per month); About 50% of all single parent households on SSI have incomes of less than \$29,914 (\$2,500 per month).

It is estimated that the average household spends about 10% of net income on food. Poor people spend up to four times this proportion for a minimally nutritious basic diet. For example: if a single person on welfare purchased a basic minimum diet it would cost about 40% of his or her total monthly assistance allowance. The working poor are only marginally better off. For example, a single parent with two children and an income of \$2,500 per month would have to spend about 21% of total income in order to purchase a basic minimum diet.

#### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- *If local food costs more than imported food, it is a luxury that people with low incomes in our community cannot afford. This is likely the case for about 25% of all households on the islands.*
- *What role can the community play in addressing affordability issues?*



#### 4.4 Assessing Food Security-Individual & Household Access to Food

- d) Hungry children** Day care facilities and schools are key in identifying hungry children in our community. For the most part this is done in an ad hoc way, as is providing food for the children who are identified. For example, some emergency food is available at the elementary school level including donations from the IODE. The high school provides cafeteria tickets for students who need a meal and can't afford to pay themselves

##### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- *What can the community do to identify hungry children and address their needs in the most effective way?*

- e) Food services for vulnerable individuals** Meals-on-wheels are provided through Home Support based on a qualifying assessment. The Food Bank serves anyone in need; it has regular hours on Tuesdays and emergency service as needed. The food baskets take nutritional needs into account to the extent possible but cannot provide enough nutrition for those who need to use the food bank on an on-going basis. The food also prepares & distributes over 200 Christmas hampers.
- There are also 2 lunch programs: one on Thursdays at the Anglican Church and the other the Yellow Submarine, a program for people with mental health issues; and a dinner program at the Community Gospel Church.

##### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- *What do people do for food on the days when there is no food program available to them?*

#### 4.4 Assessing Food Security-Individual & Household Access to Food

- f) **Food and nutrition education**
- The Ministry of Health has developed Food and Beverage Guidelines governing the types of foods that could or should be available through the vending machines for students in all schools in the province. The benefits of local food is not highlighted. The public health nurses on the island have introduced the guidelines to school staff and PACs. At this time, however, there is no plan for monitoring and follow-up.
- Food and nutrition are part of the Healthy Choices curriculum developed for use in schools. Its use is optional, however, and for the most part is not given priority in an already busy curriculum.
- The Canada Food Guide is being revised. Currently, the guide does not speak to the nutritional value of local food. Nor is there an obvious link in nutrition education between nutrition and food security.

#### **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

- *What can the community do to increase public awareness about hunger and under-nourishment experienced by some people.*
- *What can the community do to profile food security and local food in nutritional education?*

## 5. COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN FRAMEWORK

Following is an outline of the elements that make up a Community Action Plan. It summarizes the ideas for action that came out of the interviews and focus groups that were conducted during this part of the planning project. These ideas are a starting point for developing and implementing a Salt Spring Food Security Plan.

**Goal:** To develop and implement a multi-dimensional plan that provides:

1. A coherent approach to achieving the community's food security objectives; and
2. An effective way of monitoring and assessing the status of food security in our community.

### Draft Action Plan for Discussion

Objectives	Actions	Key Partners
<p>1. To increase local food production and processing in a manner that promotes sustainability, bio-diversity and best practices in organic production methods.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the Area Farm Plan actions when the plan is completed and its link to the revised OCP</li> <li>• Support the ING's objective to increase commercial produce production</li> <li>• Support the Farmers Institute abattoir plans</li> <li>• Support establishment of community farm project on donated land (Fulford-Ganges Rd.)</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for LLAF on Salt Spring</li> <li>• Organize a program that will systematically teach people how to grow food for their family.</li> <li>• Link people who have food garden space with people who don't</li> <li>• Develop a community garden that is a focal point for teaching food production skills, and coordinates services that promote food gardening (e.g. community composting, sharing transplants, community chipper)</li> <li>• Support the development of a vibrant and sustainable mid-week farmers market</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Island Farmers Institute</li> <li>• Island Natural Growers</li> <li>• Salt Spring Garden Club</li> </ul>

## 5. COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN FRAMEWORK

continued

Objectives	Actions	Key Partners
2. To increase local priorities and participation in food policy and regulations at all levels of government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify current public policies and regulations that are relevant to a local food system and identify the areas that are obstacles for local food security priorities</li> <li>• Develop community food policies and work with governing bodies to implement</li> <li>• Provide public education about food policies and regulations</li> </ul>	
3. To reduce fossil fuel use related to long-distance food transportation to Salt Spring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the Community Energy Strategy fossil fuel reduction food-related targets and actions</li> <li>• Coordinate development of a plan for increasing the sale and use of local food across the retail grocery and food service providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earth Festival Society — Community Energy Strategy</li> <li>• Retail grocers</li> <li>• Food service sector including restaurants, caterers and supportive housing for seniors, high school,</li> <li>• Lady Minto Hospital</li> </ul>
4. To increase food safety from production to plate that focuses on local food culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review food safety requirements and issues that relate to local food system and identify issues</li> <li>• Identify priority actions that will promote community food security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vancouver Island Health Authority</li> <li>• Salt Springers for Safe Food</li> </ul>
5. To support and increase equitable access to nutritious, local food, especially for vulnerable groups in our community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review extent to which food service programs are meeting the needs and identify ways of increasing and improving food access</li> <li>• Identify the need for a community kitchen program that links directly to other programs and services.</li> <li>• Organise community fruit-picking project (see Lifecycles model)</li> <li>• Address transportation issues that limit access to food programs</li> <li>• Assist in linking food programs with sources of local food</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salt Spring Community Services: Food Bank; Seniors Wellness</li> <li>• Vancouver Island Health Authority: Home Support Services; Meals-on-Wheels; Nutritionist; Public Health Nurses</li> <li>• Churches</li> <li>• IODE; School District #64</li> </ul>

## 5. COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN FRAMEWORK

continued

Objectives	Actions	Key Partners
6. To develop and implement an emergency food inventory and distribution plan in case of disaster or crisis that affects the supply of food to the island.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the Emergency Operations neighbourhood food planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency Operations Program</li> <li>• Vancouver Island Health Authority</li> <li>• Capital Regional District</li> </ul>
7. To increase knowledge and awareness among children and youth in our community about nutritious food and food production.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide leadership in finding ways of introducing more food production and policy information into the curriculum.</li> <li>• Encourage the use of curriculum materials that are available in the schools</li> <li>• Encourage SD#64 to participate in the Healthy Snack program</li> <li>• Encourage Ministries of Health, Education and Agriculture to use local foods in the Healthy Snack program</li> <li>• Develop food production program for children and youth (perhaps in connection with the community garden)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School District #64, Coalition for Children and Families, Core Inn, Island Natural Growers, Island Farmers Institute</li> </ul>
8. To increase public awareness of food security goals, issues and actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold public events that launch the food security plan</li> <li>• Produce food security information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See #9</li> </ul>
9. To increase public involvement in improving food security in our community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate involvement of people from across the community, encouraging and enabling broad participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration of all agencies and groups listed above</li> </ul>
10. To provide a focal point for carrying out, coordinating and tracking food security policies and actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a food security council that encompasses: public education, coordination services, policy development, support for domestic food production, links with other communities in the region, training and skills development, promotes local food in institutions, supports local commercial food production and processing, builds and promotes a local food culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital Regional District</li> <li>• Islands Trust</li> </ul>

## 6. GOING FORWARD

This paper provides basic information about the term **food security** and describes the diverse elements and factors that make up food security as part of the **food shed**. Comparable to a water shed, a food shed begins with the source of food and all that is involved in producing and processing food. The quality and quantity of production affects all other aspects of the security of our food system through to the distribution of food, public policies and regulations that govern food production and safety. It concludes with the eaters and how the community ensures access to good quality, nutritious food for everyone.

This paper suggests that a full and useful assessment of community food security must take all aspects of the “food shed” into account. This food security project on Salt Spring Island initiated this kind of thorough assessment, a first for our community and in the region more broadly. Based on this preliminary assessment and with input from focus group discussions, the paper offers a draft action plan for identifying actions that could be undertaken to address key food security planning priorities. It identifies several community groups which are already involved in various activities that are consistent with food security goals.

Since this plan was drafted the Vancouver Island Health Authority has approved funding to undertake the second phase of the food security project on Salt Spring Island. Phase 2 provides an opportunity to begin implementation of the plan. In this second phase, emphasis will be placed in three areas:

1. Increasing public awareness and education about food security issues, challenges and opportunities on Salt Spring.
2. Facilitating coordination of food programs for vulnerable groups in the community and identifying gaps in service and ways of addressing those gaps.
3. Facilitating discussion among many different groups to refine food security priorities, to clarify respective roles and to identify opportunities for coordination and shared actions.

Phase 2 of the Salt Spring Food Security Project will continue through to April 2007. It will be managed by Salt Spring Island Community Services Society and directed by a community Steering Committee. Everyone is invited to get involved. For more details contact Rob Grant at 537-9971 or Patricia Reichert at 537-4282.