



## City Farms

Appraisal and Assessment  
of Non-Traditional  
Agriculture

By Kim Turik and David Zhang,  
BC Assessment

# The Rapid Consolidation of BC Agricultural Land

By Rudy Nielsen, Landcor Data Corporation

## Farmland Access in BC

Community Strategies to Link Land and  
Future Farmers

By Hannah Wittman, UBC

## Farm on the Block

Commercial Farming in Vacant Urban Lots

By Seann Dory, SoleFood Farms



# From the EO's Desk

Agriculture means different things to different people. For me, who grew up on a family farm, it means hard work and land that you live off of. To others, agriculture may be about orchards, community-based farms, farmers' markets, and, increasingly, growing food in urban settings.

To capture this range of meaning, we asked people involved in many different types of agriculture and related activities to write for us, and so—as always—we present to you an issue that is very diverse in its content. You'll read about agriculture in the context of land consolidation, maintaining farmland productivity and access, appraisal and assessment of urban agriculture, growing food in empty urban spaces, and municipal support for local farmers' markets.

It lately seems that *Input* has created more questions than answers for readers, and this is a good thing. It enables us to dig deeper into the topic and involve our readers and members in the conversation. As you read this issue of *Input*, it will likely raise a number of challenging questions. We hope that you write to us with these questions so that we can do a follow-up on this topic. The Climate Change article in this issue hits on a number of areas, for example, that could be looked into further. It is interesting how author Hannah Wittman has linked the challenging problem of land access to future farmers and has brought forward some problem-solving strategies. Also consider the findings provided by author Rudy Nielsen showing the rapid change experienced by BC's agricultural land market. Food for thought? I think so.

We're excited to share with you some research recently completed in collaboration with BC Housing and the Social Purpose Real Estate Collaborative Table. We again have our standard columns about an REIBC Chapter, Career Notes, Member Profile, Giving Back, and Ask a Lawyer. Thank you to all of our contributors.

Our next edition will be out in October 2013. Enjoy the summer, everyone!

Brenda Southam, CAE  
Executive Officer

## Drop us a line!

We want to hear from you. Please let us know your ideas for articles and how you like the magazine—and check out our LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter pages for up-to-the-minute information on REIBC activities.

[www.reibc.org](http://www.reibc.org)  
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Cover and above: Nulki Lake Ranch, photo by NIHO Group.





## President's Message

The Institute has been working diligently on its government relations program. During the past 18 months we have met with

dozens of MLAs and Deputy Ministers, from both the NDP and BC Liberal parties, as well as with the heads of major public corporations. Our goal? To ensure that the provincial government is aware of the Institute and that we are seen as a resource for its initiatives. I am pleased to report that we have forged links within the provincial government that we expect will be mutually advantageous in the future.

Another significant activity is our ongoing real estate research, supported by grants from the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia. Recently completed research reports include *Scoping a Registry of Accessible and Adaptable Homes in British Columbia* (completed in conjunction with BC Housing) and *Rent-Lease-Own: Understanding Real Estate Challenges and Opportunities Affecting the Not-For-Profit, Social Purpose and Cultural Sectors*. The completed reports are available from the Institute's website and I encourage everyone to review them for an informative perspective on these important real estate issues.

On June 19, 2013, we'll celebrate the twentieth anniversary of REIBC's Charity Golf Tournament. Last year's tournament raised a record \$27,000 in support of the Make-A-Wish Foundation of BC and Yukon. With your support we hope to make the twentieth-anniversary tournament even more successful!

With this update, my last as President, I'd like to reflect on the terrific experiences I've had over the past year. Having worked closely with members from all over BC, I am amazed at their depth of knowledge and passion for real estate. It has been a privilege to work with you and represent you. Through your collective knowledge I have learned a great deal and have enjoyed the camaraderie. I encourage all members to become involved with the Institute, as the rewards are directly felt—personally and professionally.

Andre Gravelle, RI  
President

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# WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS ...

## PROFESSIONAL



**Mosaddeque (Sami) Ahmed**  
Fortis BC



**Matthew Burns**  
BC Assessment



**Philip Chau**  
BC Assessment



**Jeffrey Dicken**  
BC Ministry of Forests,  
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**Joanna Romanowska**  
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**Evan Young**  
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Miguel D'Assumpcao *Sutton Group West Coast Realty*

## ASSOCIATE

Kathryn Britnell *Reliance Insurance Agencies Ltd.*

## STUDENT

Craig Bouwman, Angela Evennett *Homelife Benchmark Realty*, Hao-Heng Frank Fu, Dan Higgs,  
Haydn Johnstone, Michael Maughan *Traslo West Contracting*, Amandeep Singh

## SPRING 2013 SPONSORS THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

### New!

Sponsorship helps us to continue to provide industry-leading content, and helps you reach professionals in the real estate community.

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BC Fruit Growers' Association

High-density Ambrosia apples in Summerland.

# Production and Productivity in BC's Orchards

The BC Fruit Growers' Association represents 540 commercial tree fruit growers who take great pride in growing healthy, nutritious products. The association's mission is to create a healthy food system for the long-term prosperity of the tree fruit industry. The association celebrates its 125th anniversary in 2014.

## THE BC TREE FRUIT INDUSTRY

Each year BC's tree fruit industry creates enough work to employ 1,500 people year-round at the producer, packer, and processor levels. The harvest work is seasonal in nature, so the industry actually employs a much higher number of people during the summer and fall. It generates \$130 million in wholesale revenue and contributes \$270 million to the local economy.

Members of the BC Fruit Growers' Association (BCFGA) have voted to support the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), noting that there is a social compact to keep the land productive. BCFGa members want the Province of BC to honour the commitment it made in 1973 to ensure that farm businesses are viable.

*Glen Lucas, P.Ag*

General Manager, BC Fruit Growers' Association

Glen Lucas has been manager of the BC Fruit Growers' Association for 15 years. Prior to that, he managed the BC Hog Marketing Commission, which had sales of \$45 million per year. Glen also managed Dairy Herd Improvement Services, which gathered production information and milk samples for use in management advisory services, and contributed to genetic selection models. He is a husband and a proud parent of three children.  
[www.bcfga.com](http://www.bcfga.com)







The BC tree fruit sector is challenged by the immense increase in Washington State apple and cherry production, but the BC industry has survived by replanting to new varieties and producing products in which BC has a natural advantage.

The BC tree fruit industry has a number of competitive advantages, including the dry, northern climate. At the northern tip of the Sonoran Desert, the Okanagan and Similkameen valleys grow almost all of the commercially produced tree fruit in BC. The orchards range in size from one acre up to several hundred acres, with 17 acres as the average area farmed (though this might be on separate parcels of land). All tree fruit is irrigated, otherwise it would not survive in the dry climate. This gives growers a lot of control over the growth of trees and fruit.

Another benefit of the dry northern climate and relative isolation of the valleys is low pest pressure. The Okanagan-Similkameen is one of the last areas in North America to be free of apple maggot, a serious pest in apple orchards. The industry and regional governments have partnered on the area-wide Sterile Insect Release Program. This unique program rears insects and irradiates them to make them sterile before releasing them in orchards to interfere with the breeding activity of virile wild insects. The isolation of the area, which is restricted by mountains, allows producers to introduce effective area-wide programs that would not otherwise be possible.

Environmentally, our industry is advanced. Intensive management utilizes highly efficient irrigation systems to conserve and manage water, integrated pest management practices, and other innovations, such as area-wide programs for codling moth and starling control.

The BC tree fruit sector is challenged by the immense increase in Washington State apple and cherry production, but the BC industry has survived by replanting to new varieties and producing products in which BC has a natural advantage.

## TREE FRUIT PRODUCTION

Orchards require replanting to remain viable. Older orchards are replanted with new, improved varieties. One such variety is the Ambrosia apple, which was discovered on an orchard in Cawston, having sprouted from a seed. (All apple seeds grow to be different types of trees. Creating trees that produce the same type of apples requires the grafting of a bud from the “mother tree” onto a rootstock, where the bud will grow into a whole new tree producing the intended variety.) Other popular apple varieties are Sunrise (a summer apple that has a short shelf life), Honeycrisp (a challenging variety to grow well), and, of course, Gala. New varieties of apples and cherries, developed at the federal research station in Summerland, are gaining widespread acceptance throughout the world.

The BC apple sector has been shrinking as it competes with the expansion of Washington State’s apple sector. BC produces about 4 million boxes compared to Washington State’s record 130 million boxes produced in 2012. This compares with 80 million boxes produced in Washington State 15 years earlier, while BC apple production fell about 20% in the same period.

Many new cherry varieties have been introduced, and the industry has grown rapidly with the introduction of the new Summerland varieties. It is estimated that 80% of new cherry plantings in the world are varieties from the Summerland research station. Exports of late-season cherries have been increasing in volume. Asian and European markets pay premiums for the large, firm Canadian cherries. Recently, though, expansion in Washington State cherry acreage and the uncertainties this has introduced into the marketplace has cooled the enthusiasm of growers for planting cherries.



BC Fruit Growers' Association

A helicopter hovers to blow rain off a cherry crop.

Realtors can help keep farmland productive by ensuring that purchases of commercial farms are done with proper knowledge of the effort and experience required to be successful in the business of farming. Industry associations such as the BCFGA are a source of information for prospective commercial farmland purchasers to use in their investigation of the farming business.

Peaches, plums, prune-plums, nectarines, and apricots round out the types of tree fruit grown in the Okanagan, but the combined total area in production of these tree fruits is lower than that of either cherries or apples.

Common spacing in newly planted apple orchards is 2 feet by 10 feet, or 2,178 trees per acre. At \$8 to \$12 per tree, depending on variety and royalties for Plant Breeders' Rights (to the discoverer of the variety), plus irrigation, posts, and wire to support the dwarf trees, costs can escalate to \$30,000 per acre. Soft fruit trees such as cherries are planted at a lower density and are less costly, but still require substantial investment for orchard renewal.

farming neighbours. While beautiful and verdant, farming is an industrial activity. Urbanites with an idyllic vision of rural life who purchase lots or small properties next to farms may wake up to tractor noise, helicopters hovering to blow rain off of cherries, and other sources of noise, dust, and odours they would not have encountered in more urban environments.

This incursion of urbanites into rural areas will sometimes create conflicts between neighbours when urbanites view farming activities as nuisances. However, these "nuisances" are, in fact, protected under the *Farm Practices Protection Act*. Farmers will often accommodate neighbours' needs, so long as there is respect for the operational needs of the farm. Realtors can help keep things on track by making the urban purchaser of rural land aware that the purpose of the ALR is productive farmland, and that farming is an industrial, not bucolic, activity. Mutual respect resolves most rural-urban issues.

Farms that are purchased by urbanites—again, who hold the idyllic dream of rural life—often fail to keep the farm productive. The dedication, long hours, and the breadth of experience and knowledge required is too much for most would-be farmers to take on in a short period of time. Almost all successful farmers have been raised on a farm, or have worked on farms for several years. Realtors can help keep farmland productive by ensuring that purchases of commercial farms are done with proper knowledge of the effort and experience required to be successful in the business of farming. Industry associations such as the BCFGA are a source of information for prospective commercial farmland purchasers to use in their investigation of the farming business.

#### TREE FRUIT PRODUCTION IN BC (2011)

	Acres in Production	Tonnes	% of Canada Tonnes	Value (\$ thousand)
Apples	8,287	106,499	25%	37,807
Apricots	197	403	86%	501
Cherries	3,233	10,329	93%	30,838
Nectarines	188	889	27%	871
Peaches	1,055	4,473	18%	5,039
Pears	511	5,122	56%	2,500
Plums and Prunes	311	1,159	43%	880

#### KEEPING FARMLAND PRODUCTIVE

A land use issue related to farm productivity is the conflict that sometimes arises between farming activities and non-



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Nulki Lake Ranch in Vanderhoof.

# The Rapid Consolidation of BC Agricultural Land

Poets, theologians, and sensitive types might disagree, but we humans must eat to live. We have no choice. Unless you're skinned in chlorophyll or are a successful "breatharian" (supposedly able to live solely on fresh air and sunlight), we all need grub, calories. There are a lot of us—seven billion plus with more to come. Global population growth is finally trending down, but the UN estimates that 2045 will see nine billion hungry humans and by 2100 the global village will stabilize, sort of, at 10 billion. That's a lot of mouths to feed.

Our future survival is literally rooted in the soil. Here in British Columbia, the future of food growing is already taking shape in the consolidation of our most valuable and irreplaceable food-growing soils—our agricultural lands.

## NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE ACTIVITY

In late 2012, Deutsche Bank AG released a comprehensive report on foreign investment in farmland, citing the World Bank, Land Matrix, and others. It stated that between October 2008 and August 2009, private and multinational investors, hedge and pension funds, and foreign state-owned enterprises acquired 56 million hectares of farmland, mostly in Africa; acquisition spiked in 2009 (30 million hectares) and has since moderated (for now). In 2012, the Land Matrix project looked at the previous decade and determined the foreign-owned uptake was 83 million hectares of land in developing countries, again mostly in Africa.<sup>1</sup>

The International Institute for Sustainable Development tags the United States and Canada as the world's top two largest

<sup>1</sup> Deutsche Bank AG. Foreign Investment in Farmland, November 13, 2012, [www.dbresearch.com/PROD/DBR\\_INTERNET\\_EN-PROD/PROD00000000000296807/Foreign+investment+in+farmland%3A+No+low-hanging+fruit.PDF](http://www.dbresearch.com/PROD/DBR_INTERNET_EN-PROD/PROD00000000000296807/Foreign+investment+in+farmland%3A+No+low-hanging+fruit.PDF) (accessed April 2013).



sources of foreign investment in agriculture, with competition from the People's Republic of China, Saudi Arabia, and other cash-rich but food—and water—insecure nations who, fearing the specters of social discontent, seek long-term dependable sources of basic necessities.<sup>2</sup>

Canada is itself rich in farmland. With our crop prices now approaching what pundits call “near-historic” levels, our low interest rates and bearish stock market—combined with droughts in the United States and Australian breadbaskets—have led Canadian farmers to expand their operations and have prompted other domestic and international buyers and investors to get into the game.

Farm Credit Canada (FCC), this country's leading financial lender to the domestic agricultural industry, reported in its latest semi-annual report that national farmland values rose by an average 8% per annum from 2006 onwards, balanced between the 2.1% low in first-half 2011 and the 8.6% high of first-half 2012.<sup>3</sup>

FCC put Ontario first in price gains, up 16.3% in first-half 2012, compared to its gain of 7.2% in second-half 2011. Manitoba gained 10.3%, up from 1.9%. Saskatchewan gained 9.1%, down from 10.1%. Quebec gained 6.7%, up from 4.3%, Alberta 5.7% (4.5%), Prince Edward Island 3.1% (1.5%), and Nova Scotia 2.8% (3.2%). New Brunswick and rocky Newfoundland-Labrador were basically dead flat, value wise.<sup>4</sup>

BC was the only province where overall agricultural land values dipped, reports FCC. BC prices dropped by 0.3% in first-half 2012, on the heels of a paltry 0.2% gain in second-half 2011.<sup>5</sup>

2 *International Institute for Sustainable Development, Farmland and Water: China Invests Abroad, 2012, [www.iisd.org/publications/pub.aspx?pno=1687](http://www.iisd.org/publications/pub.aspx?pno=1687) (accessed April 2013).*

3 *Farm Credit Canada, Fall 2012 Farmland Values Report, October 2012, [www.fcc-fac.ca/en/Products/Property/FLV/Fall2012/index.asp](http://www.fcc-fac.ca/en/Products/Property/FLV/Fall2012/index.asp) (accessed April 2013).*

4 *Ibid.*

5 *Ibid.*



*Rudy Nielsen, R.I., FRI*  
President, Landcor Data Corporation

Rudy Nielsen is President and founder of real estate analyst firm Landcor Data Corporation and also NIHO Land & Cattle Company, one of the largest owners and developers of recreational land in British Columbia. For more than 40 years, Rudy has been involved in the BC real estate industry as a developer, appraiser, entrepreneur, well-respected speaker, advisor, and deal maker. In one ten-year period alone, Rudy sought and successfully closed more than 1,000 deals.

Landcor Data Corporation uses expertise and proprietary computer software to analyze BC Assessment data and other information streams, providing clients with the most comprehensive, accurate, and current real estate data available.



Far from being soft and moribund, BC agricultural land is undergoing rapid change and consolidation. In the last eight years, the average sale price of BC agricultural land has nearly doubled, even as total sales volume shrunk by almost two thirds.

It looks like pretty sad spuds for BC, but dig deeper and the longer-term figures show a far more dynamic trend. Although volume and total sales values are dropping, the average value of these fewer sales has been steadily rising. The data shows that BC agricultural land is undergoing rapid consolidation.

## TILLING THE DATA

Here at Landcor Data Corporation, our practice uses continually updated BC Assessment and other information streams, winnowing them through complex, proprietary computer software and a hell of a lot of expertise and analytics. To reveal the true state of BC agricultural real estate, we tilled this province's vast data and title fields from 2005 to 2012, winnowing the over 1.93 million property titles, pulling out everything designated as related to agriculture. From "grain/forage" to "poultry," from "tree fruit" to "beef," if that title grew food, it went into our data bin—which came to 51,647 property titles (for 2012).

The base year of 2005 saw 1,884 titles change hands, mostly to Canadian buyers (1,868 went to Canadian addresses, including 1,820 in BC; 14 went to US addresses; 2 went to Germany). Total value: \$902.58 million at an average \$479,044 per sale.

In 2007, sale values peaked at \$1.04 billion on a falling volume of 1,647 sales (1,540 BC), with average sale value up more than 30% to \$631,953.

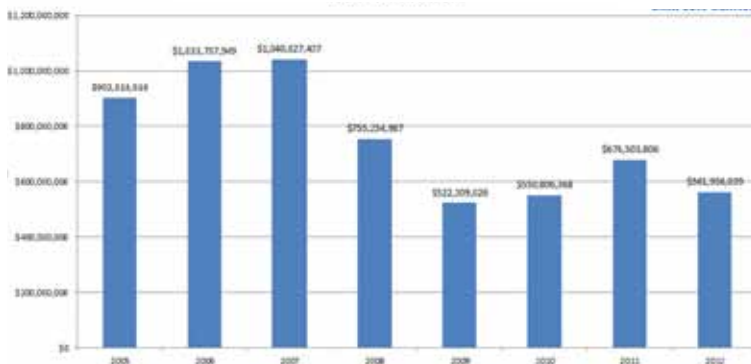
In 2008, volume fell 30% to 1,146 sales (1,136 Canada with 1,104 BC; 6 US; 4 Germany). Total value: \$775.24 million at an average value of \$659,036.

In 2009, volume fell by 38% to 705 sales (701 Canada with 678 BC and 20 Alberta; 2 US; 2 Germany). Total value: \$522.21 million at an average sale value of \$740,722—more than 50% over the 2005 baseline.

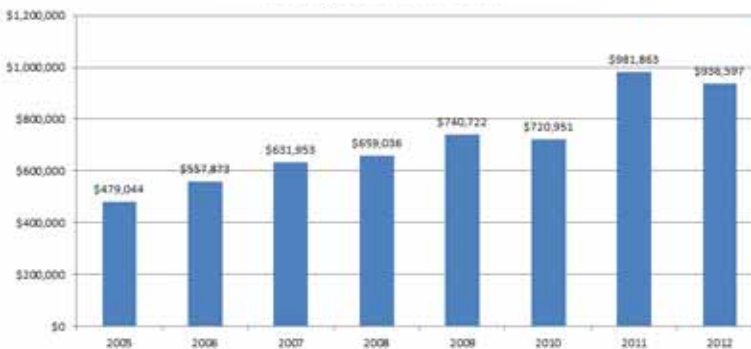
Numbers fluctuated during the next years but 2011 ended with volume down to 600 sales (589 Canada with 565 BC, 22 Alberta, 1 Saskatchewan, 1 Yukon; 9 Germany; 1 Saudi Arabia; 1 China). Compared to the 2005 base year's 1,884 sales, volume is down about 70%. Total 2012 value: \$561.96 million, down more than 40% from the 2007 peak of \$1.04 billion. However, the 2011 average sale value hit \$981,863. Although average value slipped the next year, at \$936,597 it is still almost double the 2005 comparable of \$479,044.

Our conclusion? Far from being soft and moribund, BC agricultural land is undergoing rapid change and consolidation. In the last eight years, the average sale price of BC agricultural

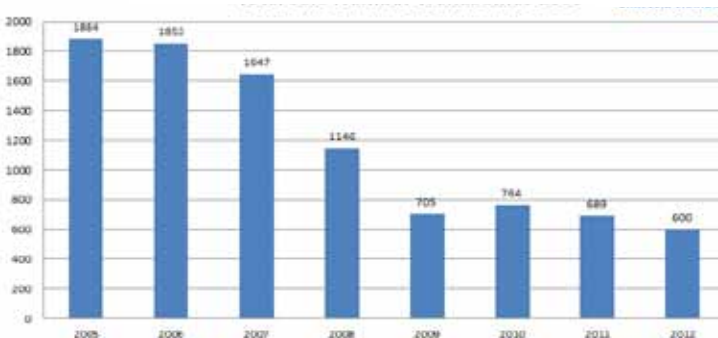
**Total Sale Amount**



**Average Sale Price**



**Total Sale Number**



Charts provided by Landcor Data Corporation.



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land has nearly doubled, even as total sales volume shrunk by almost two thirds.

BC currently has no restrictions on sales of agricultural land to foreigners, unlike certain other provinces in Western Canada. However, unlike the controversial alleged foreign investor activity in the Lower Mainland's residential market, BC agricultural land hasn't yet seen many foreign buyers. Most buyers have Canadian addresses, most of these are BC addresses, and these buyers are hungry. For example, in the last year or so, Landcor's sister company, LandQuest Realty, has presented and sold a number of large cattle ranches to canny, globally aware BC investors looking to beef up their portfolios, literally, for the long term.

### WHY IS CONSOLIDATION HAPPENING?

Unlike the rest of Western Canada, agricultural land in BC is not flat, not widely fertile, and not comparatively cheap. The fertile areas are relatively small and folded between barren mountains, high-country deserts, and mineralized soils. Adding to the challenge of farming such land, urbanization is putting on the squeeze. For example, rich alluvial farmlands outside and within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) are being pressured by Metro Vancouver's inexorable march up the

Fraser Valley, as is farmland in other growing regions of the province. The opposing forces of cultivation and urbanization are at play anywhere there is productive soil, and those who own agricultural land are realizing new values.

The September 2012 issue of *Maclean's*, citing a recent Re/Max report, reported "bidding wars" in southern Ontario where in the last two years, select farm acreage prices jumped 70% to \$15,000 an acre. In central Alberta, grain land (helpfully lying atop actual and potential oil and gas fields) is up 25% and "can sell virtually overnight."

Closer to home, just up the hollow from Metro Vancouver, orchards in BC's Fraser Valley now "command" \$60,000 an acre. In BC's Southern Interior wine country, competition is also intense.<sup>6</sup>

*Maclean's* quoted Tom Eisenhauer, head of Bonnefield Financial, focused investor of Canadian farmland. Although private investors currently have just "a few hundred million" in Canada's \$280-billion pool of farmland, Eisenhauer believes the uptake will grow along with the realization that, even if compared to gold, and certainly to the scary global stock markets, productive dirt is a solid hedge against inflation. Farmland traditionally

<sup>6</sup> *Macleans.ca*, "Real Estate: Today's Bidding Wars Are for Farmland," September 25, 2012, [www2.macleans.ca/2012/09/25/high-yield-stalks/](http://www2.macleans.ca/2012/09/25/high-yield-stalks/) (accessed April 2013).





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seen as “boring and safe and non-volatile [now] looks pretty good.”<sup>7</sup>

But tradition is yesterday and “boring” doesn’t fit the volatile times that await the world’s hunger for arable land. There are billions of us on this planet, and we’re blighting the land that feeds us: climate change, soil erosion, contaminated water, air pollution (tough luck, breatharians), shrinking aquifers, desertification, unchecked urbanization, herbicide- and pesticide-resistant insects and plant diseases. Technological fixes are failing, and modern plagues are eroding the globe’s finite stock of arable land.

Today: bad. Tomorrow? Stock up on optimism, we’ll need it. With more mouths, less land, rising food prices, and increasing social and political discontent, decent farmland becomes a strategic necessity. But as the demand for agricultural land is ramping up, land prices are rising, and supply is shrinking as owners husband what they’ve got. Real estate activity is mostly all home grown...so far. The math is inescapable: buy in while and wherever you can.

<sup>7</sup> Macleans.ca, “Real Estate: Today’s Bidding Wars Are for Farmland,” September 25, 2012, [www2.macleans.ca/2012/09/25/high-yield-stalks/](http://www2.macleans.ca/2012/09/25/high-yield-stalks/) (accessed April 2013).

## Sustainable Communities: What role does agriculture play?



### Just one of the questions we think about at the Real Estate Foundation of BC.

As a grant maker and connector on land use and real estate issues, the Foundation provides both funding and information to enable positive change. Our grants support non-profit organizations working to create more resilient, healthy BC communities and natural environments.

The Foundation’s grants program has three focus areas: Built Environment, Fresh Water Sustainability, and Sustainable Food Systems.

Learn more. [www.refbc.com](http://www.refbc.com)

Connect with us.



*Transforming land use attitudes and practices through innovation, stewardship, and learning.*

# Calendar of REIBC Events



## JUNE 13, 2013 | ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

All members are welcome to join us at the Annual General Meeting. Voting privileges are for Professional members only.

**Terminal City Club, Vancouver, BC 5:00 PM**

## JUNE 13, 2013 | RECOGNITION DINNER

Who will receive the 2013 Award of Excellence? Dinner, awards ceremony, and entertainment make this a great evening filled with fun and laughter. Sponsored by the British Columbia Real Estate Association.

**Terminal City Club, Vancouver, BC 6:00 PM**



## JUNE 19, 2013 | 20th ANNIVERSARY CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

REIBC's annual tournament in support of the Make-A-Wish Foundation of British Columbia and Yukon.

For more information: [reibc.org/golf](http://reibc.org/golf)

**Northview Golf and Country Club, Surrey, BC**

## SEPTEMBER 27–28, 2013 | VALUING DIVERSITY CONFERENCE

Held in partnership with the Appraisal Institute of Canada – BC Chapter

**River Rock Resort and Casino, Richmond, BC**



## DECEMBER 5, 2013 | PRESIDENT'S LUNCHEON

Guest Speaker – Rudy Nielsen, RI

**Four Seasons Hotel, Vancouver, BC**

## MAY 14–16, 2014 | 2014 BC LAND SUMMIT

Mark your calendars and watch for further information.

**Vancouver Sheraton Wall Centre, Vancouver, BC**

QUESTIONS?

For more information visit [www.reibc.org](http://www.reibc.org)



## What Could a **Registry** of Adaptable and Accessible Homes Look Like?

BC's aging population is a top-of-mind issue for service organizations and policymakers in the province, as the proportion of seniors increases from 16% in 2012 to an expected 24% in 2036. In part due to the increasing seniors population, the proportion of households where a member reports having a disability has also increased. Statistics Canada found that the proportion of households that have a member with a disability increased from 21% in 1996 to 33% in 2006. Over half of senior-led households reported having a household member with a disability in 2006, up from 38% in 1996.

This increasing proportion of households reporting disabilities has triggered several initiatives in BC, including a recent revision to the BC Building Code, to increase the supply of adaptable and accessible housing. But despite efforts to increase the supply, it can be difficult for those looking for appropriate housing to find it. This is more challenging in the case of adaptable housing, as many of the adaptable features are not visible. It has been suggested that a registry of adaptable and accessible homes in BC could benefit buyers and sellers.

BC already has some resources to connect people who need adaptable and accessible housing with homes that accommodate their needs. However, existing registries are limited in scope as they typically do not cover all of BC, or all housing options across the housing continuum, with a centralized registry.

Funding from the Real Estate Foundation of BC has allowed the Real Estate Institute of BC and BC Housing to conduct a joint research study, *Scoping a Registry of Accessible and Adaptable Homes in British Columbia*, to explore the ideal ingredients of an accessible and adaptable home registry. Heather Evans Consulting was hired to do the research with guidance from an advisory committee of representatives from BC Housing, REIBC, and Metro Vancouver. Through an environmental scan and interviews, the consultant identified examples of adaptable and accessible housing registries to determine best practices and lessons learned.

The study results will assist BC Housing and REIBC members with new information on what is happening in this area, and will help to identify opportunities for a more coordinated approach across the housing continuum for matching people with disabilities with housing that meets their needs. The research partners hope to collaborate again in the future on topics of interest to both organizations.

Findings from the study focus on the scope and format of a housing registry, and the resources and data it could draw from. The full study can be viewed at:

[www.reibc.org/research\\_study\\_scoping.html](http://www.reibc.org/research_study_scoping.html) OR  
[www.bchousing.org/resources/About%20BC%20Housing/Research\\_Reports/Final-Report-Research-Study.pdf](http://www.bchousing.org/resources/About%20BC%20Housing/Research_Reports/Final-Report-Research-Study.pdf)

*Rebecca Siggner*

Manager of Research, BC Housing



Rebecca joined BC Housing in 2009. She is responsible for conducting quantitative and qualitative research projects to help inform decision making and planning at BC Housing. Particular areas of interest include demographic research to support need and demand analyses, as well as conducting lessons-learned studies to improve program outcomes. Some of Rebecca's recently completed studies include looking at safe home and second stage programs for women fleeing violence, as well as lessons learned in modular housing construction. Rebecca also works collaboratively with non-profit housing providers, research institutes, and local governments to support community-based housing research. Rebecca previously worked with SPARC BC, conducting research on homelessness and child poverty issues.



# Exploring Real Estate Challenges in the Social Purpose Sector

Perhaps now more than ever, social purpose organizations are facing significant challenges in finding and maintaining secure, appropriate, and affordable spaces for their programs, services, and administrative offices. This is especially true for organizations operating in Metro Vancouver, which has been numerous ranked as one of the least affordable metropolitan markets in the world. To operate successfully in Metro Vancouver, the social purpose sector (community and social service organizations, arts and culture organizations, independent artists, and other related groups) needs affordable property appropriately designed to suit its needs. Real estate challenges threaten the sustainability of these organizations, limit access to needed services, and weaken community vitality.

Though there are commonly held understandings and anecdotal evidence about the real estate challenges faced by this sector, it is difficult to assist these organizations in their pursuit of affordable and suitable space due to the lack of comprehensive data that confirms these issues.

In 2012, the Social Purpose Real Estate Collaborative Table and the Real Estate Institute of BC undertook a shared research initiative to understand the current and emerging real estate factors affecting social purpose organizations within Metro Vancouver. Compared to other research studies, *Rent-Lease-Own: Understanding the Real Estate Challenges Affecting the Not-For-Profit, Social Purpose and Cultural Sectors in Metro Vancouver*

is truly unique in Canada because of its focus on social purpose organizations. The study aims to understand the root issues as to how real estate scenarios impact the effective delivery of social purpose organizations' programs and services, based on evidence derived from survey responses. With this direction, the *Rent-Lease-Own* study can confirm or disprove assumptions of the sector's real estate situation as well as identify opportunities to resolve key challenges.

City Spaces Consulting was engaged to survey social purpose organizations as a starting point to the study. The survey data was then compared with the overall real estate context and trends in Metro Vancouver; this served as a benchmark to compare the rents and operating costs that social purpose organizations are currently paying, as well as to compare the availability and suitability of space for these organizations. Building on these findings, the study identifies several opportunities that could be pursued to support this sector in real estate matters.

The study was generously supported by the City of Vancouver's Cultural Services division and Social Development division, the Real Estate Foundation of BC, Vancity, and the Vancity Community Foundation.

The study is available at: [www.reibc.org/social\\_purpose.html](http://www.reibc.org/social_purpose.html)  
OR [www.socialpurposerealestate.net](http://www.socialpurposerealestate.net)



*Jennifer Johnstone*

President and CEO, Central City Foundation

The Social Purpose Real Estate Collaborative Table (SPRE) is an informal consortium of funders and investors who came together in the spring of 2009 to develop a collective understanding of the use of social purpose real estate as a sustainability strategy for our not-for-profit partners and investees, and to help secure real estate assets for community purposes. Social purpose real estate refers to property and facilities owned and operated by mission-based and not-for-profit organizations and investors for the purpose of community benefit, and to achieve blended value returns. The consortium includes Central City Foundation, the City of Vancouver's Cultural Services, Social Development, and DTES Planning Group, the Real Estate Foundation of BC, Renewal Partners and Tides Canada Foundation, Vancity, and the Vancity Community Foundation.

## Linking Land and Future Farmers: Community Strategies for Farmland Access in BC

Consumers across North America are expressing an increasing preference for fresh, locally grown food. High-end restaurants and local foodies vie to obtain unique local ingredients for new dishes. Farmers' markets demonstrate the preference for local food by generating significant economic impact—sales and indirect benefits totalled \$3.09 billion in Canada in 2008,<sup>1</sup> with \$170.54 million generated in BC in 2012—up almost 150% from 2006.<sup>2</sup>

But there is a knot in the local food supply chain. The farmers that are responsible for producing this local bounty seem to be disappearing from the landscape, and now comprise less than 2% of the Canadian population. That's down from more than 30% four generations ago. Farm sizes are increasing, farm numbers are down, and farmers are aging; the average age of Canadian farmers is now well over 55, and less than 5% of farmers are under age 35.<sup>3</sup>

Rising land prices and urban sprawl limit the viability of small-scale farms located near urban centres, which supply local produce to urban consumers. Lack of access to affordable land

and few opportunities for training in sustainable agriculture and production for local food systems have made it difficult for new and young farmers to try their hand at farming as a career. In response, a range of new initiatives have emerged across BC to provide opportunities for farm training and shared land access to build a new generation of farmers.

### TRAINING NEW FARMERS

Training programs include the University of British Columbia's Farm Practicum in Sustainable Agriculture and the Richmond Farm School, which educate new and aspiring farmers in organic and sustainable agricultural practices, along with marketing, distribution, and farm management strategies. Sustainable agriculture training programs like these emphasize skills needed to implement economically viable, diversified farming systems that are aimed at local consumers and regional distribution networks. Graduates of these eight- to ten-month programs can apply to lease an "incubator plot" for three years to begin their agricultural enterprises, with access to technical support and shared equipment. Networks of aspiring farmers and community supporters include the Young Agrarians, a group that uses social media like Twitter and Facebook to "engage young farmers, would-be farmers and the public in the reshaping of our food system."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Farmers' Markets Canada, National Farmers' Markets Impact Study, Brighton, Ontario: Farmers' Markets Canada, 2009.*

<sup>2</sup> *Connell, D. J., Economic and Social Benefits Assessment of Farmers Markets: Provincial Report, Prince George: British Columbia Association of Farmers' Markets and School of Environmental Planning, University of Northern British Columbia, 2012.*

<sup>3</sup> *Statistics Canada, 2011 Census of Agriculture.*

<sup>4</sup> [youngagrarians.org/about](http://youngagrarians.org/about)



Shana Johnstone

Farm sizes are increasing, farm numbers are down, and farmers are aging; the average age of Canadian farmers is now well over 55, and less than 5% of farmers are under age 35... Lack of access to affordable land and few opportunities for training in sustainable agriculture and production for local food systems have made it difficult for new and young farmers to try their hand at farming as a career.

## FARMLAND PROTECTION AND ACCESS

Even armed with new farming skills and a supportive network, long-term secure land access can still be a significant barrier to building a viable and diversified farming landscape—a problem that is faced by farming entrants not just in BC, but across North America. Farmland protection measures, such as BC's Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), have saved more than 11.4 million acres from development (5% of provincial land area and almost 80% of prime agricultural land). But much of the best farmland in BC, in fertile valleys along eastern Vancouver Island and in the Fraser River Valley, is under increased pressure as non-ALR-protected working farms are converted to residential housing, country estates, and hobby farms, with an accompanying loss of market production. And, while the total land area within the ALR has remained roughly the same since it was initiated in the 1970s, the regional distribution of these lands has shifted drastically. Over 72% of the land removed from the ALR has been in the more populous regions of southern BC,<sup>5</sup> where fertile delta land has traditionally been

used for high-value vegetable crop and animal production. Designated replacement acreages have been placed in BC's northern regions, which are primarily used for grazing. Since almost all BC beef is exported to Alberta for feedlot finishing (and from there shipped back to BC or to export markets), this represents a clear shift from land-protection practices favouring local markets to those favouring export markets.

Finally, even when farmland is protected with an ALR designation, there is no legal requirement for ensuring that the land remains in active agricultural production. A recent study by Kwantlan University's Institute for Sustainable Horticulture<sup>6</sup> found that almost 30% of ALR land in the municipality of Surrey—totalling almost 4,000 acres—was underutilized for agricultural purposes. If this land was used for food production oriented to the local market, it could meet 100% of Surrey's seasonal demand for 29 local crops and animal products, create 2,500 jobs, and more than double the economic impact of agriculture in Surrey.

<sup>5</sup> Wittman, H., and H. Barbolet. "Super, Natural: The Potential for Food Sovereignty in British Columbia," in *Food Sovereignty in Canada: Creating Just and Sustainable Food Systems*, edited by Hannah Wittman, Annette Aurelie Desmarais, and Nettie Wiebe, Halifax, Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Mullinix, K., A. Fallick, and C. Dorward, Surrey's Underutilized ALR Lands: An Analysis of Their Economic and Food Production Potential in Direct Market Agriculture, report prepared by the Institute for Sustainable Horticulture for the City of Surrey, BC, 2012.

*Hannah Wittman, PhD*

Associate Professor, Faculty of Land and Food Systems and the Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability, University of British Columbia

Hannah Wittman is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Land and Food Systems and the Institute for Resources, Environment and Sustainability at the University of British Columbia. She conducts community-based research on sustainable agriculture, food sovereignty, land access initiatives, and agrarian citizenship with farmers and agricultural social movements in Canada and Latin America. In Brazil, she has worked for over a decade with small-scale farmers who are participating in land distribution programs to build local food systems. In British Columbia, she sits on the Advisory Council of the Community Farms Program and is an Associate of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Hannah is co-author of *Food Sovereignty in Canada: Creating Just and Sustainable Food Systems*.





Community farms, where land access for local food production is supported by and protected for community members, support the diversification of agricultural land use for community benefit. By linking land to future farmers, community farms offer an innovative solution.



Shana Johnstone

Community farm stand on Salt Spring Island.

## NEW INITIATIVES

To address the unique challenges of land access for future farmers to contribute to local and regional food system development, farmer groups, environmental movements, local and provincial governments, and other non-profit organizations across North America have developed a range of innovative farmland protection and access initiatives to create positive incentives for keeping land in food production. Agricultural land trusts, where land is protected permanently for agricultural use, have resulted in the protection of over 5 million of the 900 million farmland acres in the US,<sup>7</sup> and are increasingly an option in Canada. The Ontario Farmland Trust, for example, works with farmers, landowners, community groups, and municipalities to protect land for agriculture by managing land donations and coordinating farmland conservation easements on public and private lands. The Trust also matches new farmers looking for land and mentorship with farmland owners who are willing to share their land and experience.

In BC, the Community Farms Program was created in 2006 as a joint initiative of FarmFolk/CityFolk and The Land Conservancy of BC (TLC). TLC's Agriculture Programs division acquired several properties through donations and community mobilizations to purchase farms that were on the market and slated for development. These properties are now held permanently in trust for agriculture, which protects them from future development and facilitates land access through long-term leases (up to 30 years) for local farmers pursuing sustainable food production. As the lead outreach partner in

the Community Farms Program,<sup>8</sup> FarmFolk/CityFolk works to educate the public regarding the importance of protecting farmland, supports farmers interested in starting up community and cooperative farms, and connects farm and city in the cultivation of a local sustainable food system.

Public land is increasingly a resource for growing new farmers and local food production. The Terra Nova Sharing Farm, located on city parkland in Richmond, hosts farm interns, a community-supported agriculture box program, incubator plots for new farm businesses, and community gardens. Over the last decade, the sharing farm has donated almost 200,000 pounds of produce to the Richmond Food Bank and Community Kitchen. Similarly, the City of North Vancouver has supported the development of Loutet Farm, a community farm located on underutilized public parkland. The farm sells produce to nearby residents, while also providing farm- and food-related school programs to learners of all ages.

Community farms, where land access for local food production is supported by and protected for community members, support the diversification of agricultural land use for community benefit. By linking land to future farmers, community farms offer an innovative solution for diversified food production for local and regional markets, environmental education, agricultural mentorship and training, social services, conservation of natural and cultural heritage, outdoor recreation, and even co-housing.

7 American Farmland Trust: [www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org)

8 Community Farms Program: [www.farmfolkcityfolk.ca/community-farms-program](http://www.farmfolkcityfolk.ca/community-farms-program)

## EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY FARMS IN BC

### Glen Valley Farm Cooperative

A group of 60 community members jointly purchased the 50-acre diversified organic farm near Abbotsford in 1997, which was on the market and slated for conversion to a cranberry bog. The group formed a land cooperative and the farm was certified as a TLC Conservation Partner, maintaining almost 20 acres in mixed forest and utilizing a cooperative model “to steward the entire farm for the mutual benefit of the land, wildlife and people.” The farm currently hosts five independent farm businesses, which share access to farmland, infrastructure, and marketing responsibilities: Pitchfork Organic Farm, Close to Home Organics, Mighty Fraser Farm Goods, Glen Valley Herbs and Apothecary, and Mina’s Honey Pot. [glenvalleyorganicfarmcoop.org](http://glenvalleyorganicfarmcoop.org)



Glen Valley Farm Cooperative

### Haliburton Farm

In 2001, a citizen group called the Land for Food Coalition came together to develop an alternative land use plan to protect a nine-acre farm up for development in Saanich. The District of Saanich purchased the property and rezoned it to a Rural Demonstration Farm Zone. The farm is now managed by the Haliburton Community Organic Farm Society, which coordinates the operation of educational activities and provides support for six separate farm businesses on the land (five farming parcels and a greenhouse). The farm offers a popular food box program; see the website for details. [haliburtonfarm.org](http://haliburtonfarm.org)



Yadin Shaikovitz, Haliburton Farm



Rhona McAdam, Haliburton Farm

### Madrona Farm

In 2010, over 3,000 community members came together to raise almost \$2 million to purchase Madrona Farm, a 27-acre heritage farm just 10 minutes from Victoria. The farm was placed in trust with TLC, where it will be permanently protected for agricultural production, and is managed under a long-term lease by David and Nathalie Chambers. The farm currently produces over 105 crops, 12 months a year, which are distributed to 3,500 local customers through farmers’ markets, direct sales from the farm, and local restaurants. [madronafarm.com](http://madronafarm.com)



Shana Johnstone



## *Ric Woods, RI*

President, Citifund (Woods) Capital Ltd.



When Ric Woods believes in a cause, he gets involved. With the support of his family, Ric has made a commitment to fight cancer by raising donations to assist cancer research. In 2009, and again 2012, Ric Woods rode in the Ride to Conquer Cancer, raising \$10,000 each time. A survivor of two bouts of esophageal cancer, Ric does more than just raise money—he also provides invaluable emotional support to people who have been diagnosed with the same or similar cancer. Ric found

that it helped him to talk to others when he went through his ordeal; he says that if he can help even one person to feel better, he has accomplished his goal.

Ric is also committed to assisting seniors, and for the last three years has sponsored the Spirit of Caring Charity Golf Tournament in Kelowna, held by a non-profit society. The society operates 54 facilities, offering specialized health care services for the elderly and the physically and mentally challenged. Through his company, Citifund (Woods) Capital Ltd., Ric has taken the role of Title Sponsor and has been active in the marketing and operation of the tournament. Each year, the tournament has raised \$10,000 to \$20,000 from participants. The funds are used by the society to supplement the goods and services required to enhance quality of life for the 6,000 residents it supports across BC and Alberta.

Do you know some RI members who should be recognized for the good work they do giving back to the community? Please tell us about them!

Contact us: [info@reibc.org](mailto:info@reibc.org)

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[www.langara.bc.ca/cs](http://www.langara.bc.ca/cs)

## Langara.

THE COLLEGE OF HIGHER LEARNING.



**Q:** *What is the purpose of the Agricultural Land Reserve and how does a landowner remove land from it?*

**A:** The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) was established in 1973 to preserve British Columbia's limited agricultural land base in the face of expanding urban areas and non-farm development in rural areas. Through the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* (the "Act"), the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) is entrusted to uphold the integrity of the agricultural land base and to ensure the legacy of farmland for future generations.

All applications to add, subdivide, or remove land from the ALR are considered by the ALC and are carried out by provincially appointed commissioners.

The purposes of the ALC as set out in the *Act* are:

- to preserve agricultural land
- to encourage farming on agricultural land in collaboration with other communities of interest
- to encourage local governments, First Nations, and the provincial government and its agents to enable and accommodate farm use of agricultural land and uses compatible with agriculture in their plans, bylaws, and policies

The *Act* sets out the process for the inclusion and exclusion of land to and from the ALR, and for non-farm use and the

subdivision of land within the ALR. The *Act* is supported by the *Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivision and Procedure Regulation* (BC Regulation 171/2002), which provides procedures for applications and defines permitted land use and subdivision within the ALR.

## TYPES OF APPLICATIONS

There are four types of applications that a landowner may make under the *Act*. They are:

1. Include land into the ALR pursuant to Section 17(3) of the *Act* (there is no application fee)
2. Exclude land from the ALR pursuant to Section 30(1) of the *Act* (the application fee is \$600)
3. Subdivide land within the ALR pursuant to Section 21(2) of the *Act* (the application fee is \$600)
4. Use land in the ALR for non-farm purposes pursuant to Section 20(3) of the *Act* (the application fee is \$600)

All four types of applications require the landowner to complete an Application by Landowner form except for those applications where the landowner intends to place fill or remove soil, in which case the landowner must complete an Application for Non-Farm Use to Place or Remove Soil form.

*John A. McLachlan, BA, LLB*  
Lex Pacifica Law Corporation



John McLachlan is a lawyer at Lex Pacifica Law Corporation in Vancouver, British Columbia. His practice is focused on civil litigation with an emphasis on real property matters. John has appeared as counsel before the British Columbia Court of Appeal, the Supreme Court of British Columbia, the Provincial Court of British Columbia, the Federal Court, and various Administrative Tribunals, including the Employment Standards Tribunal, the Property Assessment Appeal Board, the BC Human Rights Tribunal, and the Workers' Compensation Appeal Board.

John represents and advises clients in a variety of areas, including labour and employment, real property assessment, real estate litigation, construction litigation, and commercial disputes.

The commission has a mandate to maintain a permanent farmland reserve. The guiding principle is that if the Agricultural Land Reserve is to be maintained in the long term, it cannot be eroded by encroachment of non-farm uses and subdivisions or by deleting land from the ALR.



Urban development encroaches on farmland in Richmond.

Prior to making an application, the landowner should inquire with local government to identify local government policies on agricultural land preservation, and determine if there are other regulations and policies relevant to the proposal. In addition, the landowner should determine whether other approvals may also be required, identify if there are requirements for publicizing a notice of the application, and obtain maps of the property that are required for the application.

Once these preliminary steps have been taken, the party should complete the requisite form and enclose the required documents, including: Certificate of Title, a map or sketch showing details requested on the application form, proof of completion of the application, and agent authorization (if using an agent).

## EXCLUSIONS

If the property owner is intending to exclude land from the ALR, then the owner is required to provide notice to the public prior to filing the application with the local government. The application must be advertised on at least two separate occasions not less than seven days and not more than 14 days apart, in a newspaper that is published or circulated in the municipality or regional district where the property is located. The wording of the notice must be as specified in the Regulation.

In addition, the property owner must serve a signed copy of the application and the notice to all registered owners of land in the ALR that share a common boundary with the property, including owners of a property separated by a public road. It is important to remember that the notice must be served on the registered owner of the land, who is not necessarily the occupant.

Further, a copy of the notice and application for exclusion must be posted on a sign covering a minimum area of 60 cm by 120 cm and the wording of the notice must be the same as the newspaper advertisement. The sign must be placed at the midpoint of the property along a public road so it is visible from the road and so that vegetation does not hide it from view.

The application will not be considered by the local government until 14 days have passed since the date of publication, posting, and service of the application.

When submitting the application to the local government, the property owner must also submit proof that the notice requirements have been met by including with the application:

- an original copy of each advertisement in the local newspaper with the date of publication clearly noted
- a signed statement declaring the names and addresses of the adjacent property owners served, the date of service, and the method of service
- a photograph that clearly shows the sign posted on the property

The applicant should also forward any responses that are received on the application to local government as soon as they are received so that this information may be considered with the application. While the notice specifies that comments should be forwarded to the local government office, in some instances members of the public inadvertently send their comments directly to the applicant.

Once the application is completed it is sent to the local government office, which will review the application to ensure that the application is complete and all documents are included.



Steven Olmstead  
Farmland in Pemberton.

The local government will then complete a local government report.

As part of that process, the local government may refer the application to various committees, hold a public information meeting, and determine whether the proposal requires a bylaw amendment. The application will then be referred to the local government board or council for recommendations or comments. If a public information meeting is held, the local government has 90 days after receiving the exclusion application to submit the application and report to the ALC. If no public information hearing is held then the deadline for submission to the ALC is 60 days.

If authorization is granted, the application process continues and the application, along with the report from the local government, is then received by the ALC. The ALC will provide the applicant with written notice as to when the application will be heard. The ALC will also provide the applicant with a copy of the material received from the local government, along with a copy of any other information that the ALC will consider at the hearing.

The commission has a mandate to maintain a permanent farmland reserve. The guiding principle is that if the Agricultural Land Reserve is to be maintained in the long term, it cannot be eroded by encroachment of non-farm uses and subdivisions or by deleting land from the ALR. Factors that the ALC will consider include the agricultural potential of the parcel and the agricultural potential of the surrounding lands. The ALC will consider whether or not the proposal will benefit agriculture, is in support of agriculture or in conflict with it, or will permanently damage the capability of the land for agricultural use. The ALC will examine how the existing and proposed parcel sizes relate to the type of agriculture in the area and whether there are physical restrictions that significantly interfere with farm use on the property. Finally, the ALC will consider the impact the

proposal would have on existing or potential agricultural uses on the surrounding lands.

The ALC's decisions are focused toward maintaining a permanent farmland reserve. In addition to the factors above, the commission will consider:

- present use
- existing parcel size
- local government zoning and land use bylaws
- personal circumstances of the owner

Less than 5% of land in BC is suitable for farming. In considering the agricultural potential of the land, the ALC will look at the Land Capability Classification System for Agriculture in British Columbia and the Canada Land Inventory. Both systems classify land into seven separate classes according to the land's potential for agriculture. The classification systems consider climate, soil characteristics, topography, drainage, and other landscape characteristics. In addition to looking at the land classification, the ALC may also look at factors related to productivity, yield, and suitability. The ALC is concerned with the agricultural potential of the land, and will not consider the market value of the land when reviewing any application.

If the application is rejected, any person affected by the decision may, pursuant to Section 33 of the *Act*, submit a request for reconsideration on the basis of new evidence coming to light that was not available at the time of original decision, or on the basis that the evidence used to inform the decision was in error or false.

There are no appeal provisions to the Supreme Court except on a question of law or whether the ALC has exceeded its jurisdiction.



# CHAPTER REPORT: VANCOUVER



From the celebration of hosting a major global event (referring to the Olympic Winter Games, not the Justin Bieber Concert) to the self-inflicted anguish caused by a riot, we really do experience a little bit of everything in Vancouver. The region has also seen a little bit of everything when it comes to the real estate market over the past few years. Vancouver has been voted the least affordable city yet has been included in numerous lists as the best place to live. Thanks to the City of Vancouver's sustainable and green initiatives, Vancouver has been consistently on the top of the list for most eco-friendly city and simultaneously voted as one of the worst cities for traffic. We've endured spikes in demand to recessions, and the pending doom of a housing "bubble burst."

Vancouver's wide array of characteristics can be directly attributed to the diverse group of people living here. As a melting pot of ethnicities and cultures, Vancouver is constantly changing and never homogenous. Analogous to a portfolio with diverse investments, the city has stayed relatively sheltered from global economic woes. Even with the budget issues south of the border, the cooling of China's production, and credit concerns in the EU, Vancouver remains resilient and demand for real estate is still strong.

This is evident with the number of communities and villages springing up. Developers are jumping on the City's sustainability and densification policy by creating communities with multiple phases of development. The Olympic Village is the core of a larger plan in Southeast False Creek. By 2020, the area is looking to hold 16,000 residents, have its own school, and provide all necessary services within the village. Another example is the Oakridge Centre community, where a proposal is in place to add over 3.5 million square feet of retail, office, and residential

*Mario Lee, RT, BBA, PGCV*  
Chapter Chair, Vancouver Chapter



Mario Lee has been a Professional member of the Real Estate Institute of British Columbia since June 2010. As an Appraiser with BC Assessment since 2007, Mario's portfolio has included multi-family properties, golf courses, and hotels in the Vancouver region and Sea-to-Sky Corridor. He holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from SFU and a Post Graduate Certificate in Real Property Valuation from UBC.



Shana Johnstone

space. A lot of opportunities are being created on the strength of our real estate sector.

The Vancouver Chapter hosted a networking and social event at the end of this past February. The goal was to reach out beyond our members to attract other professionals in the real estate industry. Professionals from different areas registered for the event, from consultants and appraisers to realtors and mortgage brokers. The event was a success, with lasting connections made and the Institute gaining positive exposure to other members of the real estate industry.

In December 2012, the annual holiday reception was held at the Terminal City Club. Exclusively for members of the Institute, the holiday reception proved once again that only good things can happen when REIBC members gather and celebrate another year of achievements. Some walked away with chocolate, others with wine, and one lucky person with an iPod, but everyone left with some great memories.

What's next for the Vancouver Chapter? We are looking to hold some educational seminars and events in 2013. The goal is to give our members access to resources to learn more about the relevant topics and issues surrounding the real estate market in Vancouver. On the heels of the success of recent informal events, we are also planning to hold some more social gatherings to balance out the learning stuff. Stay tuned!



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Real Estate Division





Michael Ableman

SoleFood Farms, Vancouver.

# Farm on the Block

I'm standing in the middle of an abandoned parking lot in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. A yellow 1980s tow truck is being dragged off the lot located at the corner of East Hastings and Hawks. It's one of the last pieces of garbage and wreckage that needs to be cleared from a lot that has generally been used as a dumping site or as parking for the odd person that drives to the liquor store at the Astoria Hotel. The chain-link fence is being taken down behind me, and as dump trucks start to roll onto the site to dump the 400 yards of soil that I ordered, I start to question my sanity.

That was the first day of building SoleFood's first farm. SoleFood transforms vacant land into street farms that grow artisan-quality fruits and vegetables. Our goal is to create employment and training opportunities for people with limited resources who reside in the Downtown Eastside.

It's been over four years since SoleFood transformed the lot at East Hastings Street and Hawks Avenue into an urban farm. The chain-link fence now acts as the support beam for an 80-foot-long greenhouse. Four rows of perfect, eight-foot-tall French melon plants are trellised, reaching towards the plastic ceiling of the greenhouse where the old tow truck once rested. The fragrance from the melons is so intense it fills the lot with a sweet smell—a stark contrast to the East Hastings bus shelter just a few feet away.

The once-abandoned lot is now a focal point of the community. Bus commuters often stop to converse with the six farmers that are employed at the farm. All the farmers are Downtown Eastside residents, considered "hard to employ" by mainstream employers. This term, however, seems to take away from the hard work these farmers have put into transforming a space that now produces 10,000 pounds of vegetables a year. The farmers are trained by SoleFood Co-Director and Founder Michael Ableman, who leaves his 120-acre farm on Salt Spring Island every week to help the crew in the Downtown Eastside.

The project's humble half-acre beginning next to the Astoria Hotel is starting to shift the idea of how we use these vacant



urban spaces. Last year we added two new farms with unique microclimates and different challenges. Maybe you've seen the neat rows of planter boxes at Pacific Boulevard in the parking lot next to BC Place Stadium? These two acres, owned by Concord Pacific, now comprise SoleFood's largest farm. The third farm is located on Vernon Drive, on the north side of the overpass at East 1st Avenue and Clark Drive, and houses four 20-by-200-foot greenhouses. This site grows all the warm-weather crops that SoleFood produces: tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, cucumbers, tomatillos, and melons. Combined with the lettuce, arugula, kale, chard, carrots, beets, fennel, and strawberries from the other sites, we begin to name a few of the over 40 crops and 300 varieties that SoleFood now produces on its farms. Today, SoleFood employs 21 individuals from the Downtown Eastside, produces over 15.5 tonnes of food a year, and delivers to over 30 local restaurants and six farmers' markets.

The land that SoleFood Street Farms occupies is made up of both privately owned and city-owned properties. Each site has a three-year lease with the possibility for extension. This allows the landowners the opportunity to add a community amenity on their property that is impermanent, while waiting for the next phase of development. The impermanence initially posed a challenge for us because an expired lease could jeopardize the business. How could we build urban farms with the flexibility to move every three years and keep running? To answer this, we developed a moveable planter system that can be lifted onto flatbed trucks and moved to a new location when it is time to go. Because the planter system is built on pallets, which are several inches off the ground, the system isolates our growing medium from any contamination that exists in the native urban soils.

Urban farming has generally thrived in places where land values are depressed and there is no other possible use for the devalued land. For this reason, places like Detroit are experiencing a sort of urban-agriculture renaissance. But in cities like Vancouver, where land values remain very high, innovative strategies like moveable planter systems are needed



*Seann Dory*  
Co-Director, SoleFood Farms

Seann J. Dory is Co-Director of SoleFood Farms. Before starting SoleFood, Seann was a project manager at United We Can, a social enterprise that creates employment opportunities for inner-city residents through environmental enterprises. Seann is a founding member of the Young Agrarians, an initiative to recruit, promote, and support young farmers in Canada. Seann speaks regularly about food, sustainability, and inner-city development, and has presented at the EAT Vancouver Festival and the Projecting Change Film Festival. Seann is a card-carrying member of the National Farmers Union.



to gain access to land. Further, support from the community and landowner is vital to the success of these small enterprises.

Though the likelihood of an enterprise like SoleFood ever paying for the real estate on which it resides is not realistic, we may see urban farms as an amenity to developments as urban agriculture becomes part of the “common place.” This would be a leap beyond the community gardens and manicured landscapes that are now seen amongst new urban developments. This new vision sees SoleFood, and other similar projects, acting as working landscapes amongst the developments where they were once only interim tenants. Imagine market gardens at the foot of the entrance to your condo, or farm shares delivered from the farm next door. These are productive urban farms located in the communities they serve. A reimagining of city spaces as points of possible agricultural enterprise may allow farms like SoleFood to thrive into the future, in tandem with other urban development.

I’m back on an empty lot. This time it’s at the corner of Main Street and Terminal Avenue, kitty-corner from the Main Street Skytrain Station. The dump trucks have just pulled away after

dumping 800 yards of soil. This former gas station is getting ready for another SoleFood makeover and will soon be home to 1,000 planter boxes with a mix of fruit trees and perennial herbs. Apples, pears, quince, figs, plums, cherries, and meyer lemons will be planted this spring. The site is also slated to house SoleFood’s first farm stand. The stand will be open three days a week beginning this June and will be one of the first market farms in the City of Vancouver’s recent history.

New condominium towers are going up just west of the new Main Street farm. Twenty thousand new residents are expected to move into this area in the next two years. We’re hoping that these residents see the community farm next door as an integral part of their new community, a place they can stroll to just down the block to buy their weekly fruit and veggies.



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# CAREER NOTES: RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE BROKERS

## WHY ARE RESIDENTIAL MORTGAGE BROKERS IMPORTANT TO THE REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY?

Mortgage brokers assist clients in finding the mortgage product that best meets their needs. Brokers work for the client, not the lender. Our role is to ensure that clients are making a fully informed decision about their choice of mortgage, interest rate, terms, and lender. In addition to the recognizable brand names and sources for mortgages, mortgage brokers can access a large number of other residential mortgage lenders offering excellent rates and terms. Often lenders have unique programs that can match a client's particular needs. For example, a 35-year amortized mortgage is still available in the marketplace if you know where to look.

Many brokers are easily accessible and are prepared to meet with clients outside of regular work hours. We are equipped with the latest technology to facilitate the application, approval, and funding process. Essentially, a broker brings to the client the full spectrum of mortgage products available in the market, saving clients countless hours of contacting individual lenders and evaluating options.

In almost all cases, brokers are compensated by the lender that the mortgage is arranged through. For tougher files, it may be necessary to charge a client a fee. Brokers are paid on a contingent basis, which means we earn compensation only once our clients are fully satisfied with the terms of the mortgage and the application is fully approved and funded.

## WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BECOME A SUCCESSFUL MORTGAGE BROKER?

I believe there are two main components to the profession that are prerequisites for success: sales and mortgage underwriting. At the heart of the role is the ability to be an

effective, self-motivated, trustworthy salesperson. The ability to find opportunities, present solutions, and create a memorable customer experience is crucial for success. Understanding the differences between lenders' mortgage products, approval criteria, and how to work within their processes is paramount to demonstrating to clients that they can be confident in our recommendations.

Any education and experience that supports the two components above will shorten the time frame for creating a successful career. There are a few different pathways to entering the mortgage brokerage field. The experience of working in retail banking for a number of years cannot be overlooked. Mortgage specialists who work for financial institutions will often transition to mortgage brokerage through a desire to offer clients more options. Sometimes, we see mortgage underwriters leverage their experience to become involved in the mortgage brokerage side of the business. Finally, others will start working as a broker's assistant, and once enough experience is gained, they may transition to becoming a fully independent mortgage broker. There is no formal education required other than a sub-mortgage broker's license. However, education in finance, economics, marketing, and communications is an asset.

## WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR MORTGAGE BROKERS?

The future is bright. Presently, brokers account for about 30% of all the mortgage originations in Canada. That means 70% of mortgage seekers are not using a mortgage broker. Our challenge is helping the public understand the value we offer. There will always be challenges to face, but to be in a business where we help clients make important financial decisions about their real estate financing needs at no cost to them is a powerful combination for a rewarding career and business.

*Brad Currie, RI*

Broker and Owner, Verico Versa Mortgage Corporation



Brad Currie is the broker and owner of Verico Versa Mortgage Corporation, specializing in arranging residential mortgages on behalf of consumers. Brad is also a director of Accepted Financial Corp. (Mortgage Investment Corporation), which provides private second mortgages in Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley.

Brad has been involved in various capacities in the residential real estate market, including sales and management, over his 27-year career. He has worked for a number of firms, including Royal LePage, London Life Mortgage, TD Canada Trust, and Invis Financial Group. Brad is a Professional member and Governor of REIBC.





David Zhang

Hastings Urban Farm, Vancouver.

# City Farms: Appraisal and Assessment of Non-Traditional Agriculture

Organic. Non-genetically modified. Farmers' markets. 100-mile diet. Eat local. Historically, these food trends were simply the norm and necessity. There used to be many farms in what is now the urban core of Vancouver. McCleery Golf Course in the Southlands neighbourhood was once a farm. Avalon Dairy operated in East Vancouver on Wales Street; while its main production facility left the core long ago, Avalon sold off its last Vancouver land holdings only a few years ago. UBC has operated a farm on campus since 1915, a small part of which still exists today.

## WHAT IS URBAN AGRICULTURE?

Agriculture usually brings to mind a large parcel of rural land used for crop production or raising livestock, with barns and storage facilities and a family home. Agriculture in the city looks nothing like the traditional rural farm. Site sizes are very small, and crops may not be grown directly in the ground. Hastings Urban Farm is an example of an urban farm in Vancouver. This group uses a vacant lot in the Downtown Eastside to grow vegetables out of raised-box beds. The raised boxes avoid growing food in possibly contaminated ground and allow crop production on paved or gravel parcels.

Other urban farms operate on rooftops. The Fairmont Waterfront Hotel maintains a 2,100-square-foot food garden on its third-floor roof terrace. The hotel grows herbs, edible blossoms, fruits, and vegetables for use in its kitchen. In the summer, beehives are placed in the garden, resulting in honey

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Google Street View (image date May 2012)  
SPIN farm with garlic crop.

added to the kitchen's ingredient list. While the Waterfront Hotel grows food for its own use, other operators are using buildings to grow food crops for sale. Alterrus is using the roof of a downtown Vancouver parkade to hydroponically grow salad greens. The crops grow in vertical stacks of rotating trays using no soil. The product is available in local retailers, such as Choices, under the Local Garden brand, and six Vancouver restaurants use Alterrus's product in their menus.

A form of semi-commercialized urban agriculture uses residential yards. Backyard veggie gardens are nothing new, but the new take on the backyard veggie patch is individuals using sites owned by others to produce crops for wider consumption. SPIN (small plot intensive) farming is a system whereby a farmer grows a variety of crops on multiple small, dispersed sites. In exchange for the use of land, the farmer usually supplies the owners with a steady harvest throughout the year. SPIN farm customers can buy into a Community Shared Agriculture (CSA) program to receive a supply of produce throughout the year. Crops from SPIN farming are also sold at farmers' markets or to restaurants.

## WHY GROW FOOD IN THE CITY?

Due in part to increasing societal concern about the safety and quality of industrialized food production, interest in

producing and consuming locally grown food is rising. As a result, individuals and companies have been bringing food crop production back to the urban core.

Agricultural activity in the city has emerged via diverse groups, in multiple formats, independent of government support. However, local governments are beginning to view food production as an important aspect of urban life. Several local governments have started pilot projects or adopted guidelines to encourage urban farming. In 2007, the City of Victoria adopted an Urban Agriculture Resolution to support the growth of urban farms. In 2011, the City of Langley launched an urban agriculture demonstration project with Kwantlen Polytechnic University. The City of Vancouver released its *Vancouver Food Strategy* in January 2013; this 145-page document outlines the City's goals around food production, processing, distribution, access to food, and food waste management.

Much of the discussion around urban agriculture focuses on social benefits rather than economic profits. Social benefits include local food security, lower carbon emissions, community development, and job opportunities for people with employment barriers.

Municipalities, financial institutions, and social activists play important roles in the resurgence of urban agriculture. Vancouver has provided city-owned vacant land for urban

*Kim Turik, MA, RI*  
Appraiser, BC Assessment



As an Appraiser, Kim values residential properties in Vancouver's westside neighbourhoods, including the semi-rural Southlands area. Prior to joining BC Assessment in 2000, Kim was in the consulting field of real estate development, performing market and site feasibility studies across Western Canada for major retailers. Kim studied urban geography at the University of British Columbia and the University of Toronto. She holds a DULE from UBC's Real Estate Division.

*David Zhang, BA, RI*  
Appraiser, BC Assessment



David has been with BC Assessment since 2006 and is currently an Appraiser in the Vancouver Sea-to-Sky office. David has a DULE from UBC and a Bachelor of Arts from Shandong University. During his career in appraisal, he has been involved in strata residential, live-work, commercial, industrial, and special use properties valuation.





David Zhang

SoleFood farm, Vancouver.

farming use for little or no rent. Vancity credit union provides funding for local, natural, and organic food operations (some of which are urban farms) through financing, grants, equity investment, and other support. Some social activists freely contribute their time and labour to urban farms.

Although somewhat of a simplification, agriculture virtually disappeared from the urban core as Vancouver's population and economy developed. An increasing population meant increased demand for commercial and residential land use. Higher demand makes land more valuable, and land became too valuable for agriculture to be economically viable. High land values indicate that sites should be redeveloped to the uses driving value. Without political, social, financial, and philanthropic support, food crop production in a commercial sense would likely not make a comeback in the urban core because farming is not economically viable in the city.

## APPRAISAL AND ASSESSMENT

Appraisers use three methods to determine market value. The cost approach estimates the monetary investment required to create the land-building package in question. The income approach capitalizes the rental revenue stream into a present value. Direct comparison uses sales of similar properties to estimate the value of a subject property. The choice of one or a combination of approaches depends on the type of property. Appraisers only measure one type of value: monetary.

Property assessment is appraisal under legislation. In British Columbia, the *Assessment Act*, its regulations, other relevant acts, and precedential court decisions govern property assessment. The *Assessment Act* requires that most properties be assessed at market value. However, a small proportion of properties must be assessed by legislated methods. Farms are one such regulated type of property. BC Regulation 411/95 sets out the rules for qualifying farms.

The assessed value of farms is typically lower than market value. Certain site size and production criteria must be met for assessment as a farm. The qualifying criteria for farm classification are different inside and outside the Agricultural Land Reserve. Once qualified, farms receive a distinct classification (Class 9 – farm class) and a legislated land value. The legislated land rates are very low compared to market value. Lower assessment and taxation of farms is intended to encourage farming.

When appraising and assessing urban farms, the following factors must be considered:

- Does agriculture add value?
- What is the predominant use?
- Does the farm operation meet the criteria for farm class?
- What is the highest and best use?



The assessed value of farms is typically lower than market value. Certain site size and production criteria must be met for assessment as a farm.

Appraisers rely on market data like rents and sale prices to determine value. In the absence of market data, monetary value is difficult to measure accurately. Consider SPIN farming on residential sites. The value of single-family homes is determined using direct comparison: sale prices of similar properties determine a range of value for the subject property. An analysis of sales of similar properties, with and without farming operations, is required to determine the impact on value, positive or negative, of a farming operation. The scarcity of SPIN farming sites and lack of sales of such sites means that the value of the farming component cannot be determined. A logical approach would posit that some buyers would like the agricultural aspect while others would not. Difference in sales price attributable to the agricultural activity would likely be difficult, if not impossible, to extract from natural variation in market price.

The scarcity of market data for properties with urban agriculture activities would likely cause most appraisers to conclude that these activities currently do not add value. That is not to say there is not any sort of value associated with urban agriculture; there are many social benefits of growing food in the city that appraisers do not measure.

Assessors appraise property, but they must also classify it. Classifying properties allows local governments to charge different rates by type of property within their jurisdictions. BC has nine property classes described in BC Regulation 438/81. Property classification is based on current use.

One case where an urban agriculture operation has changed the assessment of property is the SoleFood farm located on Pacific Boulevard in downtown Vancouver. SoleFood leases the two-acre vacant site at a below-market rate from the owner, and grows food in nearly 3,000 raised garden beds. Farm class and legislated land rates apply to this parcel because the criteria in the farm regulation are met. In this case, the agricultural operation has changed the predominant use of a portion of the property, triggering a change in the assessment. Without the agricultural operation, the property would be valued based on its highest and best use and classed based on actual use.

BC Assessment has not seen any evidence that buyers are acquiring properties for urban farms. Most urban farms share the common feature of "free" land, since land in the core is still too valuable to purchase or lease at market rates to use solely for this purpose. There is currently no evidence indicating a lift in value for urban properties with a food-growing operation.

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*Local farmers' markets consistently draw a crowd.*

# Securing a Place for Farmers' Markets

Farmers' markets are community hubs where people meet, local food is celebrated, and innovative food businesses are born. When markets thrive, the business community around them thrives too, and municipalities reap the benefits.

## **COMMUNITY BENEFITS**

There are now more than 125 farmers' markets in BC, serving 90 municipalities. Three thousand vendors bring their wares to market, and a third of these are farmers. Farmers' markets provide the primary source of revenue for over half of farmer vendors in BC. Markets also offer a place for start-up businesses to test new food products. Local start-up Holy Crap launched its artisanal cereal company at the Sechelt farmers' market and now sells to over 600 retailers across North America and internationally.

The local economic benefits of farmers' markets for municipalities are substantial. According to the economic benefits study<sup>1</sup> led by Dr. David Connell of the University of

*Elizabeth Quinn*

Executive Director, BC Association of Farmers' Markets



Elizabeth Quinn grew up in Montreal, earned a Business Diploma, travelled the world, and obtained a BA from the University of British Columbia in Resource Management and Environmental Studies. Elizabeth's passion and interest in the politics of food is deep seated and has grown through her work with BC Parks, Metro Vancouver, Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw Nations, the Delta Recycling Society, and various other non-profit societies in education, social marketing, communications, fundraising, management, administration, and local food procurement. Elizabeth lives in Ladner-Delta with her husband James, who has been farming for nine years. They eat a lot of vegetables. She has worked for the BCAFM since 2008.





Brian Harris

A comprehensive and coordinated plan for farmers' markets that involves all necessary departments—including bylaws, zoning, parks, land use, and permits—can smooth the process not only for the market organizers but also for staff in those departments. Simply acknowledging farmers' markets in a downtown revitalization strategy or sustainability strategy can strengthen municipal support for farmers' markets.

Northern BC, shoppers in 2012 spent \$114 million at farmers' markets and an additional \$59 million at neighbouring businesses. Sales generated at BC's farmers' markets increased an incredible 147% from 2006 to 2012.

The social and environmental benefits of farmers' markets for municipalities are equally significant. In Naramata the major grocery store is 15 km away, but the farmers' market provides a convenient weekly source of fresh food. In BC, 77% of the produce at markets is sustainably grown. Because the food is grown locally, the transportation distances associated with this food are far shorter than those associated with most of the food sold in typical grocery stores.<sup>2</sup>

## PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

While farmers' markets provide a wide range of benefits and opportunities, not all municipalities have policies and systems

<sup>1</sup> Connell, D. J., Economic and Social Benefits Assessment of Farmers Markets: Provincial Report, Prince George: British Columbia Association of Farmers' Markets and School of Environmental Planning, University of Northern British Columbia, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Bentley, Stephen, Fighting Global Warming at the Farmer's Market, April 2005, <http://ftp.foodshare.net/resource/files/foodmilesreport.pdf> (Accessed April 2013). Food sold in Canadian grocery stores has an average travel distance of 5,364 km.

in place to support their success. A new publication from the BC Association of Farmers' Markets, *Planning for Successful Farmers' Markets in Towns and Cities: A Best Practices Guide for Municipalities*, explains how municipalities can plan for successful, vibrant farmers' markets. The guide elaborates on the need for collaboration between local government staff and market organizers to create supportive and aligned policies. A comprehensive and coordinated plan for farmers' markets that involves all necessary departments—including bylaws, zoning, parks, land use, and permits—can smooth the process not only for the market organizers but also for staff in those departments. Simply acknowledging farmers' markets in a downtown revitalization strategy or sustainability strategy can strengthen municipal support for farmers' markets.

The guide's best practices are drawn from innovative work happening in BC municipalities, where planners and market organizers are working together and realizing the long-term goals of their cities. The City of Kamloops is using its Strategic Plan to guide its relationship with farmers' markets. The plan describes the goal for Kamloops to be a place where citizens can enjoy good health and feel safe, and where there are abundant opportunities for work and play. Farmers' markets

*Erin Nichols*

Food Systems Optimization Consultant,  
BC Association of Farmers' Markets

Erin Nichols has worked in various capacities over the last 17 years to optimize the local food system. She is a founder of the Vancouver Farmers' Markets and has worked for SPUD, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Cowpower BC, and currently works for FarmFolk/CityFolk. Over the last two years her work through contracts with Metro Vancouver has focused on reducing food waste and increasing food recovery.

*Planning for Successful Farmers' Markets in Towns and Cities: A Best Practices Guide for Municipalities* is available from the BC Association of Farmers' Markets: [info@bcfarmersmarket.org](mailto:info@bcfarmersmarket.org)





address these community goals by providing healthy foods to residents, contributing to safer and walkable neighbourhoods, creating opportunities for small businesses, and providing a regular, fun community event.

The City of Langford has embedded support for farmers' markets in its Official Community Plan, and has found the Langford market to be a positive addition to the downtown centre and surrounding businesses.

In 2010, with encouragement from Vancouver Farmers' Markets, the City of Vancouver implemented a two-year interim policy to eliminate restrictions and streamline the approval process for new and returning farmers' markets. In February of this year, Vancouver City Council approved the Vancouver Food Strategy, which supports the doubling of farmers' markets in Vancouver to 22 markets by 2020.

### READY FOR MARKET?

The guide includes a Farmers' Market Score Card to measure how market-ready a municipality is. A number of specific areas have been identified to support the business requirements of farmers' markets:

1. Defining a farmers' market as a venue where products are sold directly by the producers is essential for municipalities to differentiate farmers' markets from other types of markets.
2. Securing an appropriate long-term location for markets provides stability so vendors can rely on the venue year after year. Parking lots, temporary street closures, and vacant lots can all become market locations if zoning allows. The City of Vancouver recently adjusted its zoning bylaws to be more market-friendly: all zones, with only one exception, are available for market sites.
3. Providing necessary infrastructure enables a successful farmers' market. This includes power, on-site storage, water, seating, and washrooms. Power is needed for frozen meats and refrigerated eggs. Washrooms add to the comfort of patrons and vendors alike. The City of Kamloops has provided storage for barricades, tables, and other market materials at one of its pump stations close to the market site.

Municipalities play an essential role in securing the benefits that a farmers' market provides the community. Working collaboratively with market organizers will help ensure the success of local farmers' markets for years to come.

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# MEMBER PROFILE

## *Eugen Klein, RI*

Principal, Klein Group,  
Royal LePage City Centre

Eugen Klein has specialized in the fascinating career of commercial real estate brokerage for the last 17 years. He currently leads Klein Group, Royal LePage City Centre, which represents approximately \$100 million per year in commercial investments, project marketing, and residential properties throughout Western Canada and the US. Eugen also manages a family-based holding and development company that operates an industrial and multi-family portfolio.

Eugen has won several industry sales awards from real estate companies, including Royal LePage's National Chairman's Club Award, Top 10 BC Team Award, Diamond Award, Director's Platinum Award, President's Gold Award, and the NAI Commercial Top 20 Producers Award. Eugen holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree in Urban Land Economics, an FRI from the Real Estate Institute of Canada, and the Certified Commercial Investment Member designation for commercial and investment real estate. In 2012, he also completed his ICD.D certification with the Institute of Corporate Directors.

When Eugen is not working in his business, he is making a difference in the world of organized real estate. He is currently the 2012-13 President of the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver (the youngest president in the REBGV's 93-year history), and has also been president of the REBGV Commercial Division. Eugen has served as a director of the BC Real Estate Association, was the inaugural chair of the BC Commercial Council and president of the Lower Mainland Commercial Council, director of the Canadian Real Estate Association's National Commercial Council, and director for the Institute of Real Estate Management-BC Chapter.



Eugen loves language and is known for his effective communication skills. While he regularly shares his insights on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, it is his group's newsletter, *Prosperitas*, that readers seem to enjoy the most. His incisive articles on commercial real estate, financial markets, economic growth, fiscal policy, and consumer behaviour have earned him an eager audience. For his work in this area, he was the recipient of the Bental Kennedy Literary Award in 2011.

A resident of Vancouver, Eugen can hold his own on the dance floor and likes to salsa. He is also a fan of the great outdoors—an avid fisherman, hunter, boater, and photographer—and an adventurous traveller whose most recent trip took him to India and Dubai.

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