

**CRESTON AGRICULTURE FORUM MARCH 16, 2010
MEETING NOTES**

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES EXIST FOR LOCAL PRODUCERS?

Emphasize Sustainability: seed saving, storage facilities, soil improvement, farming knowledge, mentoring youth, keeping families on the land
Regional branding. Promote our uniqueness.
Stay rural.
Farmers market, year round
Good, fertile land
Good weather- warmer in winter, cooler in summer (less extreme)
Water- quality, amount availability
Co-op where we could buy fruit, veggies, meat, milk, cheese- currently such a co-op could not compete with cheap imports
Umbrella Organization or Cooperative for distribution and marketing
Let entrepreneurs know what Creston has to offer.
They can do the marketing
i.e. milk for ice cream shop.
Pump local awareness and education

Connect groups- artist, farmers
Land reserve has advantages and disadvantages

Form a subcommittee of the Agriculture Society
"Big Business" universities need to come down to the farmer
More advertising/marketing; increase accessibility to consumer, local farm guides

Food quality- nutritional value, traceability, 'ingredients'

Agri-tourism- promote and market farms

Canning factory
Second largest fruit growing area in BC
Beneficial location- people travel to get here (from Nelson, Trail, Cranbrook, Kimberly)
Could grow your own fuel
Start Local (Kootenay Region): Farm Fresh Guide, Farmers Market Support, Local Producer identification, logo, winter harvest, harvest share, incubator kitchen.
Access federal programs for funding, "Growing Forward'
United Voice between farmers- Agriculture Society needs to deal with agriculture issues and include more voices
Get voices out and be heard. We are a food destination. We need to develop that.
Winter harvests, hydroponics
Decrease waste in fruit by encouraging juice, jam, dried fruit factory
Feed Mill- rebuild Sunset Seed
Local Farm Marketing Program- branding

Need to realize there is a British Columbia past the Okanagan

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES YOU ARE CURRENTLY FACING?

"Bad" years- production, delay in claims (payments come 18 months later
Loss of bees
Lack of local government support for marketing initiatives
Enslaved by the ALR
Need more regional focus
Cheap imports- NAFTA, globalization

Wildlife Problems: elk, deer, geese, crows, Wildlife committee needs to be started again
Don't have local place to sell
Rest of the world subsidizes producers and growers; BC does not
Subdivisions are expanding and breaking up the land
Access to outside markets
Big supermarkets

Climate Change and future water resources
Farming population is growing old
Ridiculous regulations for corporations that don't fit
small farm; don't fit for meat and poultry producers

Price of Land
Pollution- chemical fertilizers, Monsanto

WHAT CAN THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT DO TO HELP?

Less bureaucracy on organic farms
Regulations- many are over regulated
Grocery stores could get incentives to sell BC
Long-term thinking- gas tax impetus for local
consumption/production
Protect the farmer- support through bad years, timely
payment of insurance
ALR- We need it, but it needs to be reviewed, look at
areas individually, not as a blanket

Agriculture Irrigation- incentive programs,
communication between realtors and buyer of land
Label GMO's

Encourage companies to can/freeze extra fruit

Colony collapse, studies on pesticide spraying on
highways

Lessen regulations regarding farm gate sales
Imports causing trouble when our crops are on
Change "Made in Canada" labeling down from 95%
Encourage better transportation system from
producer to consumer
NAFTA- reevaluate as it is now, reinstitute protection
(free trade)
Pressure politicians for supportive policy, especially
the ALR; make it more realistic in terms of land in and
land out, incubator programs for ALR use
Consider paying the farmer to protect the land (ALR)

CFIA- abattoir issues- there is a disconnect between
inspectors and producers

Support schools- eating healthy, include agriculture in
curriculum