



# Central Saanich Agricultural Area Plan

## Phase 2: Issues & Options

Submitted to:

**Agricultural Area Plan Steering Committee  
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## Executive Summary

This report, Issues and Options, is the second phase of a three-phase process to develop an agricultural area plan for Central Saanich. The report is a document intended to facilitate discussion about defining the crux of the issues and to assist in developing options to support agriculture. The discussion has been informed by consultation with the farming community in Central Saanich (Appendix A), and oversight of the Agricultural Area Plan Steering Committee and District staff. Based on this consultation, the most significant issues facing agriculture in Central Saanich have been articulated. The issues are complicated by the complexity of forces affecting Central Saanich agriculture and the overlapping levels of jurisdiction having influence over how agricultural lands should be should protected and farming operations supported.

Potential options are presented in this report and are intended to inform agricultural stakeholders on how issues could be resolved. The potential options have been derived from a scan of agricultural plans in other jurisdictions and the expertise of the consultant in similar projects. The next step of developing an agricultural area plan in Central Saanich involves consultation with agricultural stakeholders to determine those options that are most feasible to pursue for dealing with the issues in the District.

In order to address agricultural issues, it is necessary to articulate the objectives of agricultural policy in Central Saanich. The District is very supportive of agriculture as articulated in its policies contained in the Official Community Plan. Based on the OCP and consultations, this document proposes a number of guiding principles that should be used to guide the plan:

- Sustainable farming operations
- Productive use of the farmland
- Farming viability
- Protection of the agricultural land base
- Agricultural land use flexibility.

Several perspectives to developing the agricultural vision have emerged from consultations. These perspectives essentially represent challenges to the agricultural sector and should be used to craft the vision:

- Marketing
- Land Use Regulatory Flexibility
- Entry of New Farmers
- Maintaining Resource Capability
- Farmland Preservation
- Role of Agriculture

The Agricultural Area Plan also requires a vision for Central Saanich agriculture. This document is intended to assist in the crafting of that vision.

To facilitate analysis, the numerous issues facing Central Saanich agriculture have been grouped into an objective and issues framework. The preliminary assessment of agricultural issues in Central Saanich indicates five agricultural planning objective categories with a number of issues within each category, as indicated in the Executive Summary Table 1, below.

**Executive Summary Table 1: Key Objectives and Issues**

Objective		Issue	RFP Reference
2.1	Encourage Farmland Uses that Support Farming	2.1.1 Defining Bona Fide Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defining bona fide agriculture</li> <li>Farm labour/on-farm housing</li> <li>Conflicts among farm uses</li> <li>Permitted ancillary uses</li> </ul>
2.2	Increase the Productive Use of Farmland in the ALR	2.2.1 Non-Farm Use of Farmland 2.2.2 Barriers and Constraints to Farmer Access to Farmland 2.2.3 Wasteful Use of Farmland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land use issues relating to estate homes/non-agricultural accessory uses</li> <li>Land cost &amp; competing uses</li> <li>Outreach and support to farming community and new farmers</li> <li>Land tenure opportunities to facilitate agricultural development</li> </ul>
2.3	Improve the Viability of Agricultural Enterprise	2.3.1 Counteracting the Impact of High Farmland Values 2.3.2 Accessing the Local Food System 2.3.3 Limited Value-Added Agricultural Activity in the Region 2.3.4 Innovation on Farms 2.3.5 Regulatory Barriers to Farming 2.3.6 Managing the Rural-Urban Interface 2.3.7 Sustainable Rural Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost of farmland</li> <li>Sustainability of agricultural operations</li> <li>Ag-industrial land uses</li> <li>Minimizing farm/urban conflicts and encroachment of non-farm uses</li> <li>Environmental stewardship</li> <li>Agritourism and agri-accommodation</li> </ul>
2.4	Enhance the Agricultural Resource Base	2.4.1 Availability of Agricultural Water 2.4.2 Agricultural Drainage and Flood 2.4.3 Rural Transportation and Traffic 2.4.4 Wildlife and Invasive Species 2.4.5 Organic Nutrients for Agricultural Production 2.4.6 Golden Nematode Quarantine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Storm water management and ISMP</li> <li>Agricultural infrastructure</li> <li>Recycled organic material and composting</li> </ul>
2.5	Raise Public Awareness of Agriculture	2.5.1 Support for Local Agriculture 2.5.2 Role for Agriculture in the Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop #1 outcome</li> <li>Interview comments</li> </ul>

For quick reference, summary of issues and potential options contained in the report is presented in Appendix B.

## 1.0 Introduction

This report forms part of the process to develop an Agricultural Area Plan for Central Saanich. It builds upon the Phase I report which provided a profile of agriculture in the municipality.<sup>1</sup> This draft Phase 2 Report: Issues and Options report contains analysis based on:

- Issues identified in undertaking the Phase I report
- Interviews with key individuals and organizations involved in agriculture
- Input received from participants of the farm and food industry workshop held March 16, 2010.

The purpose of this report is to propose a full range of potential options for addressing the key issues affecting agriculture in Central Saanich. It is recognized that not all issues can be addressed by the municipality and not all options are within the jurisdiction of the municipality to undertake. In some cases, the District will need to work with agricultural interests both in the private and public sectors as well as advocating for changes and lobbying senior levels of government to implement actions in support of agriculture in the municipality. Once the list of possible options has been pared down to preferred options and identified actions, the analysis will articulate the lead and supporting agencies that might implement the actions.

A second purpose of the report is to develop a presentation for the public to review and comment on through a Workshop. At the upcoming Workshop, participants will be asked to assist in prioritizing the issues and to recommend options that are considered most feasible to pursue. The findings will inform the development of policies and actions in the Agricultural Area Plan (Phase 3).

### 1.1 Report Organization

This report is organized into 2 sections with 2 Appendices.

Section 1 provides background on the planning process, our consultations, strategic considerations and key perspectives that were identified in investigations. Strategic objectives have been crafted from the agricultural issues voiced by participants and a number of guiding principles are proposed to guide the planning process. The range of options presented is intended to address the agricultural issues in the context of the proposed overarching strategic goals. Table 1 explains in more detail where specific sub-issues are contained.

Section 2 presents the five issue categories. The discussion centers on the current situation, the issues, the rationale for action and possible options. At this stage, potential implementing agencies have not been specified, since future consultation in Central Saanich will be directed at identifying those actions that would most effectively implement the options.

Appendix A presents a reporting out of our interviews with Central Saanich farming community. The Appendix contains both a summary analysis and the detailed responses from survey participants.

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<sup>1</sup> Central Saanich Agricultural Area Plan. *Phase 1: Agricultural Profile*. Zbeetnoff Agro-Environmental and Quadra Planning. Prepared for District of Central Saanich. May 2010.

Table 2 is a condensed analysis indicating numerically the areas that survey participants were concerned about.

Appendix B is a table summary of the issues and options in Section 2. It is intended to be an easy reference to the issues and options discussed in the main body of the report.

## **1.2 How to Use This Report**

This report is meant to inform the preparation of an Agricultural Area Plan for Central Saanich. In using the report, consider the following:

- Have the majority of key issues affecting agriculture been identified? If not, what needs to be included?
- For the key issues identified, do the options listed adequately address the issues? Are there other options which should be included or should some be deleted?
- Think about implementing actions for addressing the issues/options. Which actions are most critical? Which ones are more important, which ones are less important? Who can implement the required actions? Over what time frame should they be implemented - immediately, 1 year, 2-5 years, 5+ years?

Each issue may be addressed in more than one way and the options are intended to reflect this potential. For example, some options to address a specific issue may suggest several types of action, e.g. regulatory, incentives, communication, investment, lobbying, one or all of which may be feasible or desirable to pursue.

It is anticipated that the analysis in this report will be summarized and presented at the upcoming Workshop to prime brainstorming into the significance of the issues, feasibility of the options, and actions required to pursue the most feasible options.

## **1.3 Planning Consultation Process**

Various consultations and investigations have been conducted specifically to develop the context and content of the Agricultural Area Plan. These efforts have included the following undertakings.

### **1.3.1 Phase 1 Report: Central Saanich Agriculture Profile**

The Central Saanich Agriculture Profile was developed to serve to provide baseline context for the Agricultural Area Plan, employing literature research, analysis of agricultural statistics, review of pertinent information, and incorporating advice from the Area Plan Steering Committee. The Profile also includes a scan of issues identified in the investigative phase and literature review.

### **1.3.2 Agricultural Stakeholder Workshop**

A Workshop was conducted with agricultural stakeholders using the issues identified in the Central Saanich Agriculture Profile as a starting point.

### **1.3.3 Interviews**

Approximately 40 interviews were completed with knowledgeable persons familiar with the industry and/or in positions to influence agriculture, to discuss strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in local agriculture. A summary of these responses is presented in Appendix A.

## **1.4 Guiding Principles**

In order to plan effectively for Central Saanich agriculture, it is imperative that a plan be developed in relation to guiding principles. The following guiding principles are proposed.

### **1.4.1 Sustainable Farming Operations**

Central Saanich seeks to support and promote agriculture that is sustainable in economic, environmental and social terms.<sup>2</sup> Pursuit of sustainability is the best way of creating conditions for a mutually beneficial coexistence between farms and urban residents and ensuring that agriculture is perceived by the general public as relevant to their wellbeing.

### **1.4.2 Productive Use of the Farmland**

There is strong support for the use of the ALR for farming purposes. With the notable exceptions (e.g., floriculture and tree nurseries), the markets for local agricultural products are local and regional. Local agriculture is seen as the answer to addressing food security while reducing society's carbon footprint.<sup>3</sup> Working agriculture<sup>4</sup> is the concept with the most long term opportunity for attaining community objectives for farmland. Acquisition of farmland for rural estates and other non-farm uses contributes no known advantages to farm productivity while hastening the decline of agriculture by allowing non-farming uses to consume far more land than necessary.

### **1.4.3 Farming Viability**

Interestingly, while the "buy local" movement is increasing, local products and associated storage facilities are not readily available in some part due to the limited profitability associated with growing, handling, and marketing them. The preferred economic model for long term farming viability<sup>5</sup> embraces the principle that farming should be assisted to be feasible from a business perspective.

### **1.4.4 Protection of the Agricultural Land Base**

In spite of the protection afforded by the Agricultural Land Reserve designation, there is general concern that the agricultural land base is being eroded by non-farming encroachment, parcel fragmentation and isolation, and competition for resources. The guiding principle should be that the ALR is reserved for agriculture and that agriculture is the highest and best use of the land.

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<sup>2</sup> Sustainable agriculture is: The application of husbandry experience and scientific knowledge of natural processes to create agriculture and agri-food systems that: a) are economically viable; b) meet society's need for safe and nutritious food; c) promote vibrant rural communities; and d) conserve enhance natural resources and the environment. (From: Agricultural Institute of Canada. 2005. Big Farms, Small Farms: Strategies for sustainable agriculture to fit all sizes.)

<sup>3</sup> Geggie, L. and K. Platt. 2009. Our Farmlands, Our Foodlands, Our Future: a findings report on tools and strategies for ensuring productive and accessible farmlands in the CRD. Victoria.

<sup>4</sup> The term "working agriculture" is defined as agriculture where an operator tries to make money on his/her land in contrast to a property owner who spends money on the land in a non-profit capacity. Revenue Canada uses the definition of agricultural activity carried out as a business with an expectation of profit.

<sup>5</sup> A farm is defined as being economically viable when it generates enough revenue from its operations to cover all variable and fixed costs of production, all appropriate family living expenses, and capital replacement costs. See Adelaja, S. 2005. Agricultural Viability at the Urban Fringe. Presentation at Emerging Issues along Urban/Rural Interfaces: Linking Science and Society. Atlanta, Georgia, March 15.

### **1.4.5 Agricultural Land Use Flexibility**

Farmers are challenged to adapt and respond to markets for local products in competition with global suppliers. Farmers need the ability to diversify their products, access new markets and add value in order to prosper. Regulators operating in these associated land use situations will be attuned to their regulation's purpose and farm effects to ensure that they are applied in a streamlined and cost-efficient manner, while protecting the capability of the agricultural land base. Support will consist of consideration under the umbrella of farm eligible activities (along with the exemptions such status confers) and agri-sensitive provisions at the local, regional and provincial levels to recognize the many faces and scales of farm-based activities.

## **1.5 Strategic Considerations**

Significant policies have already been adopted that are creating a regulatory environment for Central Saanich agriculture. However, the question remains of how to influence the agricultural sector in ways that will protect its integrity and promote its long-term viability into the future.

### **1.5.1 What is Bona Fide Agriculture?**

There is concern about whether the changing characteristics of agriculture in Central Saanich are consistent with the overall intent to promote the long term viability of agriculture. Of particular concern are:

- Which activities or land uses may be incompatible with long term agricultural viability and should be discouraged or limited (e.g., hobby farming, agritourism)
- The extent to which additional processing and agricultural-serving uses should be allowed on farmland
- The degree of emphasis on food production.

There is support in the Central Saanich farming community for a definition to include agricultural activities to support or drive the viability of permitted land uses that are becoming more prevalent in midst of urbanization, such as ability to add value to farm products on the farm through processing, host agritourism events, and bring people onto farms. At the same time, there is a preference that considerations should be targeted at land uses and activities that promote working agriculture<sup>6</sup>, without compromising the integrity of the land base or other agricultural pursuits.

### **1.5.2 Key Perspectives**

The following key perspectives regarding agriculture in Central Saanich were generated by the consultation process (see Table 1) and provided assistance in constructing a framework for the issues and options presented in Section 2.0.

Concern about the viability of farming in Central Saanich was one of the key pre-identified issues of the Agricultural Area Plan planning process. Farming operations and farm operators need more than a protected land base to operate in a sustainable manner in Central Saanich. One of the most effective ways to protect agricultural land is to make agriculture profitable to those who use the resource. The Phase 2 investigation and analysis reveals that the Central Saanich agricultural sector

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<sup>6</sup> The term "working agriculture" is defined as economically viable agriculture that can support an operator from the proceeds of farming.

needs a more viability-focused framework to enhance the use of the agricultural land base in Central Saanich. The following sections present key perspectives that stakeholders indicated would improve farm viability.

### **Marketing**

Marketing is a predominant topic of the stakeholder survey, reflected as one of the strengths of the agricultural sector. However, marketing is also considered a significant issue and constraint due to difficulties in accessing the mainstream market and in competing in the food system with global competitors. In addition to increased direct marketing, Central Saanich agricultural stakeholders express the need for support in attracting and developing value-added opportunities to make more efficient use of agricultural production.

### **Land Use Regulatory Flexibility**

In the search for viability, farmers are adopting new and multiple land uses that have not been a part of farming operations historically. As well, small scale and value-added farm-based entrepreneurs are responding to new markets by offering products and services that attract the public to farms. It is anticipated that non-traditional farming-related opportunities will increase, promote agriculture, and should be supported. Support may consist of consideration under the umbrella of farm eligible activities (along with the exemptions such status confers) and agri-sensitive provisions at the local, regional and provincial levels to recognize the many faces and scales of farm-based activities. At the same time, Central Saanich's bylaws need to protect the capacity of the agricultural resource base and the ability of other farmers to undertake their farming activities in an efficient manner.

### **Entry of New Farmers**

The need to attract new farmers and create conditions to facilitate their success is reported to be critical to the future of farming in Central Saanich. There is strong support for initiatives providing training, loans, knowledge transfer, improved access to land, and business development skills.

### **Maintaining Resource Capability**

Central Saanich agricultural stakeholders appreciate the favourable conditions related to climate, long growing season, good soils, and water availability that allow them to grow a wide variety of

**Table 1: Summary of Responses from the Central Saanich Agricultural Stakeholders Survey \***

Topic Categories	Issues	Strengths	Threats	Themes	What Should be Done	Other Comments	Total Times Mentioned
Regulatory	30	3	16		13	4	66
Entry into Farming	23		21	3	12	3	62
Agricultural Inputs	18					4	22
Infrastructure	17		7	4	4		32
Encroachment on Farms	15		7				22
Wildlife	14		3				17
Marketing	14	34	13	15		8	84
Productive Use of Farmland Base	13		11		13		42
Economics	13		10				23
Quality of (Access to) Resources	12	34	5	3	4		58
Services	10		5		10		24
Agritourism	8						8
Farm Practices	5		8				13
Value Added	4		6				10
Agricultural Planning	3		2			5	10
Vision for Agriculture	3		5				5
Public Awareness and Support		22	3		2		27
Farming Community		14					14
Food Trends		6					6
Business Prospects		13		2	9	2	26
Amenities		12					12
Climate and Environment			3				3
Communication and Education			3	6			9
Inspirational				3			3
More Defined Agriculture Focus				5			5
Conservation and Sustainability				4			4
Live and Work Together				3			3
Value to Community				7			7
Implementation Component				1			1
Agricultural Constraints						1	1
Farmland Preservation				5			

Notes: \* - See Appendix A for details

crops for a nearby urban market. At the same time there is considerable concern that the economic losses and loss of land capability related to wildlife damage and inadequate drainage and flood control have the potential to displace agricultural enterprise with underutilized farmland. A related issue is to seek relief from the nematode restriction to improve the range of cropping capability.

### **Farmland Preservation**

There is strong support for the use of land in the ALR for farming purposes. Rural-residential use of farmland is recognized to be one of the more significant threats to farming. The encroachment into rural areas causes rural-residential conflicts, reduces the land base for agriculture, affects the types of adjacent farming operations, increases price competition for land, and places more strain on rural infrastructure. It is also clear that the farmland taxation system provides non-farming rural-residential dwellers and speculators with the ability to use farm tax status to subsidize the cost of holding farmland. There is also support in some quarters for a more focused agricultural theme with food production being the highest agricultural use. Some of this support has been attracted by the visible signs of loss, compromise, and decline in productivity of the working farmland base in Central Saanich.

### **Role of Agriculture**

In an economy of about \$560 million annually (2007), agriculture accounts for about 3.3% of Central Saanich's tax filer income. Self-employment income amounts to about \$28 million annually (5% of the total) and agricultural gross farm receipts represent 66% of that (\$18.5 million in 2005).

The agricultural community appreciates the significant support that it receives from the community and recognizes that it needs to emphasize its value to the community to garner support. The themes emanating from the stakeholder survey clearly articulate the desire to target the local food economy through increased communication and awareness of the multi-functional role farmers and farmland play in the area.

### **1.5.3 Strategic Goals**

Based on the consultation process and the perspectives identified above, it is evident that an effective Agricultural Area Plan, reflecting a long term commitment to the sector, must have an interconnected, multi-pronged approach that pursues these key strategic goals:

- Improves the viability of agricultural enterprise
- Increases access to farmland by those interested in farming it
- Preserves the agricultural land base.

## 2.0 Key Objectives, Issues and Potential Options

The Agricultural Area Plan is intended to support the continued viability and enhancement of Central Saanich’s agricultural economy. The policies and actions within the Plan will address key issues facing agriculture, which have been distilled from preliminary consultation with the agricultural community. These issues are detailed below (see Table 2 for quick reference), along with options that respond to these issues.

**Table 2: Key Objectives and Issues**

Objective		Issue	RFP Reference
2.1	Encourage Farmland Uses that Support Farming	2.1.1 Defining Bona Fide Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defining bona fide agriculture</li> <li>Farm labour/on-farm housing</li> <li>Conflicts among farm uses</li> <li>Permitted ancillary uses</li> </ul>
2.2	Increase the Productive Use of Farmland in the ALR	2.2.1 Non-Farm Use of Farmland 2.2.2 Barriers and Constraints to Farmer Access to Farmland 2.2.3 Wasteful Use of Farmland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land use issues relating to estate homes/non-agricultural accessory uses</li> <li>Land cost &amp; competing uses</li> <li>Outreach and support to farming community and new farmers</li> <li>Land tenure opportunities to facilitate agricultural development</li> </ul>
2.3	Improve the Viability of Agricultural Enterprise	2.3.1 Counteracting the Impact of High Farmland Values 2.3.2 Accessing the Local Food System 2.3.3 Limited Value-Added Agricultural Activity in the Region 2.3.4 Innovation on Farms 2.3.5 Regulatory Barriers to Farming 2.3.6 Managing the Rural-Urban Interface 2.3.7 Sustainable Rural Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost of farmland</li> <li>Sustainability of agricultural operations</li> <li>Ag-industrial land uses</li> <li>Minimizing farm/urban conflicts and encroachment of non-farm uses</li> <li>Environmental stewardship</li> <li>Agritourism and agri-accommodation</li> </ul>
2.4	Enhance the Agricultural Resource Base	2.4.1 Availability of Agricultural Water 2.4.2 Agricultural Drainage and Flood 2.4.3 Rural Transportation and Traffic 2.4.4 Wildlife and Invasive Species 2.4.5 Organic Nutrients for Agricultural Production 2.4.6 Golden Nematode Quarantine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Storm water management and ISMP</li> <li>Agricultural infrastructure</li> <li>Recycled organic material and composting</li> </ul>
2.5	Raise Public Awareness of Agriculture	2.5.1 Support for Local Agriculture 2.5.2 Role for Agriculture in the Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop #1 outcome</li> <li>Interview comments</li> </ul>

## 2.1 Support Designated Farmland Uses

Most North American jurisdictions are encountering an agricultural landscape in the urban fringe that is new to cultural history and to public policy. This landscape contains three distinct elements: suburban life, agriculture and natural ecosystems.<sup>7</sup>

Agricultural land is being used in ways that were never contemplated in policies or regulations currently governing its use. Agricultural operators are pushing the frontier of farm-related land use to resist pressures that threaten to engulf them and to maintain viability. Support for and promotion of enterprises featuring more public access and interaction on farmland indicate that the public is being enlisted more directly to help sustain farming.

In this milieu, it is more difficult to see the implications of the applications of policy and regulation on longer term farmland use. New public policies appear to be required to deal with issues relating to the new landscape.

### 2.1.1 Defining Bona Fide Agriculture

Central Saanich agriculturalists have indicated that the conditions under which agriculture operates have become more complicated over time. Working out these conditions has contributed to inefficiency, extra costs, delays, uncertainty and complexity related to the business of farming. Shortages in seasonal farm labour have led to the use of foreign seasonal workers and the concomitant demand for accommodation. Small lot size may restrict activities normally allowed on bona fide farms as the impacts of setbacks and lot coverage on certain types of agriculture and agritourism are greater on small parcels. A proportion of farms has found profitable niches in farm-direct sales, specialty products, and agritourism, but may not qualify for farm status, based on the amount of income generated from the sale of agricultural production.

Bona fide agriculture is supported by conventions that indicate what is regarded as farming activity and ancillary uses, farm status for land, and minimum thresholds of qualifying farm income. Bona fide agriculture receives preferential treatment in several areas including:

- Preferential property and farm inputs taxation
- Preferential servicing rates
- National farm building code standards<sup>8</sup>
- Eligibility for federal and provincial support programs consistent with international trade laws
- Protection of farming activities under the Farm Practices Protection Act
- Eligibility for additional uses supporting the farming operation (e.g., bed and breakfasts, farm camping, farm worker housing, additional housing for a family member).

### *The Situation*

There are essentially four different systems used for identifying the presence of a farm in BC:

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<sup>7</sup> Wood, RE. 2006. Farmland Preservation and Agritourism in South Jersey: An Exploratory Study. Prepared for the Senator Walter Rand Institute of Public Affairs.

<http://wrand.rutgers.edu/pdf/publications/RandAgritourismReport.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> See Building in Canada. NFBC. <http://www.about-building-in-canada.com/NFBC.html>

1) BC Assessment Authority – defines farmland class for tax purposes based on a definition of primary agricultural production<sup>9</sup> and thresholds of income. Recent review panel recommendations and proposed amendments to Regulation 411/95<sup>10</sup> will set the minimum income threshold at \$3,500 gross farm income per year in 2011. Specifically excluded are: i) the production of manufactured derivatives from agricultural raw materials; (ii) primary agricultural production for domestic consumption on the farm; (iii) the production of agricultural by-products; (iv) agricultural services, or; (v) breeding and raising of pets, except horses activities. Farmland may be situated within or outside the ALR. There are provisions for land with no present use to qualify for farm class if part of the parcel is farmed.

2) BC Agricultural Land Commission – its Regulation<sup>11</sup> designates farm uses and permitted uses within the ALR. While designated farm uses can only be regulated by local governments<sup>12</sup>, permitted uses can be prohibited by local government bylaw. The ALC has developed an expansive definition of farm uses in the ALC Regulation, acknowledging the range of primary and ancillary land uses<sup>13</sup> that agricultural operators may employ to generate a livelihood. Some of these farm uses do not generate qualifying farm income for BC Assessment calculations and the operation will only be eligible for farm tax status if there is also a threshold level of qualifying income from primary agricultural production. ALC designations are regulated with respect various conditions, such as:

- The proportion of farm sales, raw product processing that must originate from the farm
- The proportion of stored product that must be used on the farm (e.g. compost)
- The footprint of structures for ancillary uses, and lot coverage
- Of a temporary versus permanent nature
- Number of horse stalls
- Number of sleeping units.

3) Statistics Canada – in the Agriculture Census conducted every five years, an agricultural operation (Census farm) does not necessarily have to make sales within the year but must have the intention to sell.<sup>14</sup> Designation as a Census farm has no regulatory significance other than the obligation to participate in the farm Census at 5 year intervals.

<sup>9</sup> Primary agricultural production is: apiculture; aquaculture; Christmas tree culture (plantation and cultured native stand); dairying; floriculture; forage production; forest seedling and seed production; fruit and vegetable production; grain and oilseed production; herb production; horse rearing; horticulture; Populus species and Salix species intensively cultivated in plantations; insects raised for biological pest control; livestock raising; medicinal plant culture; poultry and egg production; seed production; turf production; wool, hide, feather or fur production; and the raising of crops or animals for human or animal consumption.

<sup>10</sup> BC Assessment. Factsheet: Classifying Farm Land.

[http://www.bcassessment.bc.ca/pdf/publications/fact\\_sheets/FS12\\_Classifying\\_Farm\\_Land.pdf](http://www.bcassessment.bc.ca/pdf/publications/fact_sheets/FS12_Classifying_Farm_Land.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Agricultural Land Commission. Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivision and Procedure Regulation. <http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/>

<sup>12</sup> That is, they must not be prohibited by any local government bylaw except a bylaw under [section 917 of the Local Government Act](#)

<sup>13</sup> Designated farm uses include: farm retail sales; licensed winery or cidery and ancillary processing, storage and retail sales, tours, and food and service lounge; storage, packing, preparation and processing; agritourism; horse riding, training and boarding. Permitted ancillary uses include: accommodations; beds and breakfasts; pet breeding; education and research; and composting.

<sup>14</sup> An agricultural operation is a farm, ranch or other agricultural operation producing agricultural products for sale. Also includes: feedlots, greenhouses, mushroom houses and nurseries; farms producing Christmas trees, fur,

4) Revenue Canada farm – Revenue Canada recognizes three classes of operators:<sup>15</sup>

- Those whose chief source of income is farming
- Those whose chief source of income is not farming or a combination of farming and some other source of income, and carries out farming operations with an expectation of profit
- Those whose chief source of income is not farming or a combination of farming and some other source of income, and carries on some farming activities but with no reasonable expectation of profit.
- In order for a farming activity to be considered a source of income it must be a business carried on with a reasonable expectation of profit. Revenue Canada considers the qualification of the operator for some type of provincial farming assistance to be useful to determine whether the granting authority requires or presumes the recipient to be in the business of farming.

Various federal and provincial agricultural programs provide income insurance, exemption to farmers from PST on farm inputs, cash advances, and other benefits to farmers. The key to obtaining provincial tax benefits is eligibility as a bona fide farmer (BC Farmer identity card),<sup>16</sup> which is based on the holding or leasing of land classified as farmland under the *Assessment Act* of British Columbia.<sup>17</sup> The CRD provides agricultural rates for irrigation water to farmers, presumably to those on land with farm tax status.

Some examples of the current complications that occur include:

- Some designated farm uses are restricted by farm size, with onerous implications for small scale farming. Examples include the requirement that winery and cidery sites must be at least 2 ha in size,<sup>18</sup> lot coverage restrictions, and worker housing that must meet setback and minimum farm size criteria
- Agricultural structures<sup>19</sup> are regulated under the National Farm Building Code, the BC Building Code, and the District's bylaws. The BC Building Code provides authority to design

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game, sod, maple syrup or fruit and berries; beekeeping and poultry hatchery operations; operations with alternative livestock (bison, deer, elk, llamas, alpacas, wild boars, etc.) or alternative poultry (ostriches, emus, etc.), when the animal or derived products are intended for sale; backyard gardens if agricultural products are intended for sale; operations involved in boarding horses, riding stables and stables for housing and/or training horses even if no agriculture products are sold. Sales in the past 12 months not required but there must be the intention to sell. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2006/gloss-eng.htm#gt1>

<sup>15</sup> Revenue Canada Taxation. Interpretation Bulletin IT-322R. <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/tp/it322r/it322r-e.txt>

<sup>16</sup> Obtained through application to the BC Agriculture Council.

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.sbr.gov.bc.ca/documents\\_library/bulletins/sst\\_023.pdf](http://www.sbr.gov.bc.ca/documents_library/bulletins/sst_023.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> The Ministry of Finance provides bona fide status to beekeepers, egg farmers, mushroom growers, hog, fur, and rabbit farmers that perform their activities on land that is too small to qualify as farmland under the BC Assessment Act.

<sup>19</sup> A farm building is defined as "...a building or part thereof which does not contain a residential occupancy and which is associated with and located on land devoted to the practice of farming and used essentially for the housing of equipment or livestock, or the production, storage or processing of agricultural and horticultural produce or feeds".

buildings under the National Farm Building Code of Canada<sup>20</sup> while still meeting requirements for structural soundness, accessibility, fire safety and health considerations. In some cases code requirements are lower for farm buildings, under the assumption that they will be subject to “low human occupancy.”<sup>21</sup> Where occupancy rises above “low” (e.g., due to agritourism or on-farm housing), national and BC provincial building Code will be applied in the interests of public health and safety and these may apply to existing farm buildings.

- Agricultural activities and land use are regulated by provincial laws and municipal land use bylaw. These regulations govern activities, siting, building size, frontage and lot coverage requirements on the basis of permitted uses and lot area. Currently, Central Saanich has seven land use zones for agricultural land. The A-1 zone, applying to lots of at least 4 ha (10 ac) contains the most agricultural activity. The other five zones apply to special situations in the agricultural area. All zones permit agriculture and residential single family uses, with the exception of zone A-3 (fairground agriculture). Small scale agriculture is challenged by regulations based on farm size, and there needs to be discussion of whether farming can be facilitated on small lots through variances (e.g., modifying maximum lot coverage, setbacks, siting) that provide agricultural relief and still meet municipal needs.
- Municipal bylaws also regulate property access and other aspects of land activities that interact with citizens. Regulations affecting the general public in urban areas are more onerous than those in rural areas. However, the growth of rural residential has led to increased regulatory pressure on agricultural land use. For example, fences on farmed property have been regulated by the municipality.

### ***The Issues***

The central concern relating to defining a bona fide farm is that the benefits provided to farming be received by those that legitimately farm. There is interest in closing loopholes to “hobby” farmers and estate property owners that acquire farm status to gain what are considered to be unwarranted tax benefits. Abuse of farm status has direct impacts on the municipality’s tax base, competition for the farmland, and the amount of land in farming and food production. Unclear farm definitions lead to uncertainty, speculation, and fragmentation of the integrity of the farmland base.

The purpose of defining bona fide agriculture should also be to ease regulatory requirements for agricultural operations in the ALR. Farm building standards should be lower than non-farm standards. Ancillary uses on small farms may become primary uses that are not allowed under current provincial laws. Certain non-farm uses are reducing the area of farmable land, creating conflicts with agricultural operations, and causing regulatory responses that are being applied to agricultural operations as well.

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<sup>20</sup> BCMAL. 2004. Farm practices: Structures. [http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/fppa/refguide/activity/870218-55\\_Structures.pdf](http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/fppa/refguide/activity/870218-55_Structures.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Under the National Farm Building Code, low human occupancy is defined as a situation where the occupant load is not more than one person per 40 m<sup>2</sup>.

There is also opportunity to address some of the underlying factors that are creating demand for more flexibility in permitted agricultural activities in the ALR. Some portion of the demand is related to the need to add value to agricultural products in order to maintain or create farm viability. Policy options that might make value-adding off-farm more economically feasible have the capacity to lessen the demand for such facilities on the farm.

There are a number of issues related to the current determination of bona fide agriculture in Central Saanich, relating to size of operation, determination of threshold incomes, qualifying activities, and tax treatment of farmland. These include:

- Income eligibility requirements for preferential farm taxation that do not allow for on-farm value-adding and agritourism receipts as qualifying income
- Need, at a minimum, for farm tax status to apply to unused farmland protected by farmers
- Protection for appropriate agritourism under the Farm Practices Protection Act
- Farm size, lot coverage, and setback restrictions that constrain small farm development and viability
- Application of the National Farm Building Code to low occupancy buildings
- Exemption from some municipal bylaws or application of farm versions of the bylaws (e.g., farm fencing)

### ***Rationale for Action***

The underlying purpose of defining a bona fide farmer is to ensure that farming benefits are targeted to legitimate farmers. The concept of bona fide agriculture should be tied to the principle of viability since the best way of ensuring that agriculture persists over the long term is to ensure, through its profitability, the ability to maintain operations and attract new entrants. Other jurisdictions, e.g., PEI, have also included a requirement of time spent farming in the farming definition.<sup>22</sup>

Some characteristics of what bona fide agriculture could (should) look like include:

- Viable
- Sustainable
- Includes a diversity of farm types
- Includes a diversity of farm sizes
- Compatible with other agriculture in the designated agricultural area
- Productive use of agricultural resources
- Varying levels of human occupancy
- Threshold level of minimum investment of time in farming by the farm operator.

The current regulatory structure governing the definition of bona fide agriculture provides inadequate guidance for developing a strategy to support agriculture in Central Saanich. Farmers need to be supported in their diversification to farm types that are capable of being profitable in the urban fringe. At the same time, these farm types need to be deliberately included in regulatory standards that fit into the agricultural fabric of the community as a whole.

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<sup>22</sup> In PEI, for example, an individual who earns at least 25 per cent of their gross annual income from the sale of farm products and spends at least 25 per cent of their time engaged in working on the farm will be considered for bona fide status.

Where regulations prevent small scale farmers from pursuing bona fide farming operations, initiatives are needed to develop options that minimize constraints or circumvent barriers.

There may be an appetite in Central Saanich to more rigidly define bona fide agricultural operations so as to protect farmland for food and fibre production. Current provincial definitions of agriculture include various non-food and non-fibre operations (e.g., nursery, equestrian, agritourism, on-farm marketing and beds and breakfasts) as permitted agricultural uses. Some of these uses are must be ancillary to farm production; other are permitted outright. As such, existing permitted uses allow operators to legally conduct non-agricultural uses that infringe upon farmland. The municipality is justified in its concern that some enterprises may not represent “bona fide” agriculture, or the best interests of agriculture, and should not be supported, encouraged, or allowed to occupy land reserved for agriculture.

### **Options**

Options that would assist in clarifying the definition of bona fide agriculture include:

- Request review of the effect of ALC Regulation and BCMAF policies on small scale farmers and specifically, on agritourism and on-farm processing activities
- Lobby for changes in farm tax assessment to define acceptable products/processes and include value-added in determining primary production gross income
- Lobby the province to undertake a comprehensive assessment to identify appropriate types of agritourism products<sup>23</sup>
- Lobby the ALC to clarify agritourism so that the Central Saanich can create an efficient administrative process for reviewing and permitting proposed agritourism related ventures within the municipality
- Continue to lobby BCAA to develop a special tax classification for farmland that is held in natural states by farmers, providing environmental goods and services
- Lobby senior governments for support in the stewardship of natural capital and environmental resources through an Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) approach
- Encourage farmer participation in programs currently supporting mainstream agriculture
- Adopt a definition of bona fide agriculture that requires the enterprise to demonstrate it is run as a business with the intention of generating a profit
- Lobby the province to define bona fide farmer status in relation to a level of time commitment and proportion of annual gross income
- Lobby the province to develop a definition of bona fide farming that supports farming in relation to what is produced on the farm, e.g., food and fibre production.

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<sup>23</sup> Using a Pennsylvania model, guidelines for sustainable agritourism could include: 1) sustainable and authentic tourism products and experiences that are based on the unique natural, cultural and historical heritage characteristics that define Central Saanich; 2) develop appropriate types of authentic tourism products that would ensure the municipality remains a unique and competitive destination in the future; 3) any tourism venture or experience that would be permitted in the agricultural and rural areas of Central Saanich must be directly related to supporting the primary agricultural use of the farm by interpreting the agricultural heritage of the county and providing a distinctly Central Saanich experience; the visitor to the attraction, event or experience must leave the enterprise with a better understanding and appreciation of Central Saanich’s agricultural heritage, processes and culture. [http://www.co.lancaster.pa.us/toolbox/lib/toolbox/tools/agritourism\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.co.lancaster.pa.us/toolbox/lib/toolbox/tools/agritourism_guidelines.pdf)

## **2.2 Increase the Productive Use of Farmland in the ALR**

The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) is a zone created by provincial legislation in which agriculture is recognized as the priority use, where farming is encouraged and non-agricultural uses are controlled.<sup>24</sup> Permitted activities in the ALR span the range from soil-based to non-soil-based activities. Permitted uses cover a spectrum ranging from making use of the productivity of the land, to using agricultural land for its amenities, to ecological reserves, parks, protected areas, wildlife management areas and recreation reserves established under provincial Acts.

Agricultural enterprises focusing on produce production alone are facing economic challenges in Central Saanich, despite the apparent presence of a significant demand for locally produced food. Several operations have added farm-direct marketing, agritourism or bed and breakfasts to provide products demanded by the consumer public and supplement returns from primary agricultural production. Central Saanich agricultural land is also attractive to a segment of the population that desires to live in a rural residential setting.

Agriculture is deeply valued in Central Saanich. The Official Community Plan (OCP) clearly articulates the District's desire to protect the land base and to ensure the sustainability and economic viability of its farm community.

Vigorous initiatives to increase local food security, improve community health and increase food access are also ongoing in the Capital Regional District. Yet, while the food production sector is not responding efficiently to local food demand and security concerns, all of these goals are dependent on and support local food production.

### **2.2.1 Non-Farm Use of Farmland**

The policies of the ALC and the District notwithstanding, overall agricultural productivity in Central Saanich is declining in large part due the demand for agricultural land by competing uses. The growth in farmland demand for activities within ALR, unrelated to primary agricultural production, was not contemplated when the ALR was established.

#### ***The Situation***

Demand for residential properties on the Saanich Peninsula is driven by the attractiveness of the area as a place to live. Rural residential use of farmland is encroaching into farming areas, with the associated de-intensification or withdrawal of farmland for agricultural pursuit. As well, non-resident ownership of farmland is resulting in "holding" patterns of agricultural use (e.g., idle land, low intensity use, no new structures) prior to rural-residential development.

There are financial advantages for those who wish to use farmland in the ALR for rural-residential, estate, or speculative purposes. These advantages are related to a) the preferential tax treatment of land in the ALR and b) the further preferential tax treatment of land with farm status. With the high land values on the Saanich Peninsula, holding ALR property for speculative purposes is lucrative even without acquiring farm tax status. Farmland purchased for non-farm purposes is often associated with large building footprints and extravagant estate house sizes, located on parcels in ways that exacerbate the impact of access, roads and structures.

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<sup>24</sup> Agricultural Land Commission. [http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/alr/alr\\_main.htm](http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/alr/alr_main.htm)

### ***The Issues***

The issues associated with non-farm use of farmland include the following:

- Non-farm use results in the loss of farmland for agriculture
- There is a tax advantage associated with rural-residential use in the ALR that is reflected in farmland being sold at prices beyond its value based on agricultural productivity, challenging the growth of agriculture
- Demand for rural-residential use, unrelated to the farming operation, removes farmland from agricultural production, fragments the farmland base, and the encroachment often creates situations that compromise adjacent farming activity
- Rural-residential land use does not contribute its full share of the cost for services provided in the agricultural sector
- The size of the building footprint and the siting of the residence on the property usually does not conserve farmland or consider potential impacts on farming the residual or to adjacent farming activities
- The non-farming owner may not make the farmland available to farmers for farming but may keep the land idle and in an un-maintained state
- If farm tax status is pursued, the farm use is often under short-term lease provision and the owner may only allow the low intensity farming activities so as not to disrupt the pastoral setting
- Rural-residential development in the ALR has also resulted in challenges to neighbouring farming practices under the Right-to-Farm legislation.

### ***Rationale for Action***

Rural-residential use of ALR land has increased in response to spill over of urban residential demand and the purchase of ALR for estate purposes. At the same time, it is most efficient for farmers to live on their farms and, while doing so, enjoy the amenities provided by modern residences to meet their family needs. Removing the real and perceived financial advantages associated with owning farmland for non-agricultural purposes is ultimately the best way to ensure that farmland values are determined by working agriculture competing for the land base.

Precedence has occurred in BC wherein the Farm Industry Review Board (FIRB) ruling to mitigate the situation has led to creation of an agricultural non-development zone around a newly sited residence. The consequence is that future livestock establishment and/or barn expansion may be compromised by the application of regulatory mechanisms meant to protect agricultural operations from rural-urban conflicts. It would appear that developing mechanisms to prevent rural-residential land uses in farming areas, before they appear, is the best way to protect farming operations from the effects of encroachment.

### ***Options***

Encroachment of rural-residential into the ALR provides few if any benefits for agriculture and creates substantial impacts. However, there are no restrictions on who may own farmland nor whether it be employed in agricultural use. An appropriate strategy may be to reduce the windfall benefits associated with rural residential use of farmland. Options to reduce the impact of non-farming land use include:

- Lobby province to develop restrictions on new rural residential construction in the ALR to bona fide farmers with at least 3 years of average minimum threshold farm income

- Restrict ratio of non-farm residential acreage footprint to overall parcel size to 1:20<sup>25</sup> or some other suitable ratio dependent on the size of the parcel
- Encourage non-farm property owners to make their land available for farming activities, for example, by developing a database linking prospective lessees with potential lessors
- Increase the tax cost to land owners of not facilitating farming activity
- Discourage rural residential dwellings from being built in the ALR, unless specifically for a farmland owner engaged in agriculture by employing zoning to associate habitation with land use, possibly facilitated by a Farm Bylaw or a development permit area over farmland
- Consider developing limits on maximum dwelling size on farmland
- Consider tax breaks to those who limit house size on farmland
- Limit the size of the footprint and siting of structures and access in the ALR (e.g., home plate provisions) to conserve farmland for agricultural production
- Lobby the province to restrict land under a rural-residential dwelling from being eligible for farm tax classification unless the resident is employed in agriculture on the farm to which the residence is attached
- Lobby the province to create a taxation classification in the ALR that taxes rural-residential properties at a rate comparable to urban residential, based on a non-agricultural assessment
- Lobby the province to consider tightening stewardship responsibilities for property owners in agriculture areas on how their lands may be maintained, possibly using existing provisions of the Weed Control Act
- Lobby the province to require property owners to demonstrate a threshold level of agricultural income (this could be part of a definition of bona fide farmer) for a period of time before being allowed to build new residences and/or worker housing in the ALR<sup>26</sup>
- Lobby the province to require a lengthened lease term for farm rental agreements and place on title in order for landlord to acquire tax status for farmland
- Require a rural infrastructure impact assessment to accompany permits for new rural-residential construction.

### 2.2.2 Barriers and Constraints to Farmer Access to Farmland

Farmland adjacent to urban areas everywhere is subject to non-farming pressures that commonly result in farmland values that exceed their value based on agricultural production. In many cases, the property owner may not be interested in farming and has purchased the land for rural estate lifestyle, on speculation that zoning will change, for prestige reasons, or even simply as a real estate investment. In some cases, the land may be offered up for agricultural lease to area farmers.

It is the ad-hoc relationship between farmers looking for more land base, individuals wanting to start farming, and access to non-farming owners of farmland that leads to inefficiencies in the productive use of farmland.

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<sup>25</sup> For example, under Wisconsin's Farmland Preservation program.

<http://datcp.state.wi.us/workinglands/pdf/MinStdsForNonFarmResidences10-25-09.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> It is noted that the recent Worker Housing Report cites the BC Assessment Authority (BCAA) definition of a farm as a condition for considering a location for worker housing and recommends that the farm should have been in operation for 2 years, but with no requirement for a threshold level of income. It is anticipated that income threshold exceptions could be made for beginning farmers, as in currently done in by BCAA.

Various other jurisdictions have noted that this relationship can be improved through various kinds of initiatives:

- Connecting landlords with tenants
- Improving the skills of individuals wishing to farm
- Facilitating small scale farming access to farmland
- Implementing land ownership schemes that separate the capital cost of the land from the business of farming.

Most recently, the barriers and constraints faced by new small scale farmers in entering farming have been investigated in Abbotsford, BC.<sup>27</sup> The greatest barriers include: difficulty in accessing land, start up costs, lack of peer support, and lack of experience and knowledge. A consortium of community organizations<sup>28</sup> is spearheading a farmer incubator project to create opportunities, supports and resources to potential farmers.

### ***The Situation***

Despite the presence of the ALR and District policy not to encroach on farmland, maintaining undiminished access to the agricultural land base for working agriculture<sup>29</sup> in Central Saanich is one of the top challenges in the Agricultural Area Plan. A steady market for rural –residential properties in the ALR has been a public concern in Central Saanich for years.

Leasing farmland from non-farming landowners is one of the more affordable ways to obtain access to land in high real estate value regions, of which the Saanich Peninsula is one. Rental farmland is also attractive to new farmers who may not be a position to tie up large amounts of capital in land assets.

Non-profit groups have taken steps to make land accessible for agricultural pursuit. In one case, a parcel has been purchased by a philanthropist to pursue community causes (e.g., Woodwynn Farms) using agricultural activity as the vehicle. In another instance, a land trust (e.g., The Land Conservancy and its Farmland Preservation Program) has mobilized resources to purchase agricultural land (Madrona Farms) in the area to promote agricultural education and to make acreage available under lease to new farmers.

If the recent recommendations of the Farm Tax Assessment Review Panel are implemented, BC Assessment will exercise more diligence in ensuring that bona fide rental agreements are in place and that the land is, in fact, meeting the requirements for farm tax assessment. One of the proposals would use Canada Revenue tax returns to establish income levels from farming and serve to validate that the farm tax status is earned.

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<sup>27</sup> Abbotsford Food and Agriculture Connection Table. 2010. Supporting New Small Scale Farmers in Abbotsford. Feasibility Study. <http://www.southfraser.com/includes/documents/SupportingNewFarmersinAbbotsford.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> These organizations include the Chamber of Commerce, the Farm and Country Market, Agricultural Development Society, BC Farm and Ranch, BC Healthy Living Alliance, BCMAL, the City, Community Futures, Farm Credit Canada, Fraser Health Authority and MCC Employment and Community Development.

<sup>29</sup> The term “working agriculture” is defined as agriculture where an operator tries to make money on his/her land in contrast to a property owner who spends money on the land in a non-profit capacity.

New farmer entry is being enabled on the Saanich Peninsula at Madrona Farm and Woodwynn Farms, a therapeutic recovery community using farming activities. While there is interest in the community in local government purchase of farmland to enable new small scale farming enterprise, public costs would be significant.

### ***The Issues***

Access issues include the following:

- There are no rules on who may own farm land in Central Saanich and there are no requirements for the land to be actively farmed. For the most part, property owners have generally accepted that if they purchase land in the ALR, they have a societal obligation to farm it. However, there are some non-farm landowners that refuse to make their land available to would-be farmers.
- Some farmland landlords restrict the types of use to which their farmland may be put and the intensity with which it may be used. As a result, farmland may not receive manure nutrients if the land owner would prefer that manure not be spread on the land. Others may make it known they do not want livestock nearby, etc.
- Leases governing rentals tends to be informal and of year to year or season to season duration. Such terms give no assurance to the tenant that the land will be available in subsequent years, discouraging improvements or multi-year investment in the capability of the land.
- Some land uses allowed in the ALR may not compromise the actual land base into the future, but their presence fragments the farming area and creates impacts on the business of farming by farm operators on neighbouring parcels.
- High farmland prices are effective barriers to the entry of new farmers
- New farming entrepreneurs are appearing with limited agricultural skills.

### ***Rationale for Action***

Demand for farmland for non-farming purposes has contributed to price competition for farmland, creating conditions where the market price exceeds the value of the farmland based on its productivity in agriculture. These circumstances make it more difficult for established farmers to expand and restrict entry of new aspiring farmers.

A significant proportion of farmland qualifies for farm tax assessment by virtue of its rental to a bona fide farmer.<sup>30</sup> Improved leasing arrangements would reduce the holding cost to the property owner and provide increased access to the land by those wishing to pursue agriculture.

There is strong public support for outcomes that would ensure that farmland is preserved for agriculture and is not allowed to slip into non-farm usage.

### ***Options***

The objective is to ensure that the maximum amount of farmland is in its most productive use regardless of ownership. Non-farming property owners should be encouraged, by “carrot” and “stick”, to either farm their land or make their land available to those that will. In other instances,

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<sup>30</sup> Currently, a bona fide farmer is generally a farmer who can meet the requirements for farmland tax assessment status of the BC Assessment Authority, which entitles the farmer to a farmer identity card.

public actions should be considered to preserve land in its agricultural use. New willing farmers should also be equipped to become successful. Options include:

- Lobby the province to require landlords, in order to acquire farm status, to enter into formal leases with tenants, consisting of a minimum number of years, possibly registered against title
- Encourage landlords, possibly through tax benefits or other means, to enter into longer term arrangements that would provide security to would-be farmers and facilitate more intensive agricultural operations
- Create a website or organization-based farmland clearinghouse for linking a database of potential tenants to a database of potential landlords, partner with groups such as CR-Fair or other local/regional organizations
- Coordinate with community group(s), to facilitate rental access to idle farmland
- Continue to support lease agreement and terms templates for prospective landlords and tenants, e.g., such as the ongoing work of The Land Conservancy
- Conduct an awareness campaign to inform non-agricultural property owners of their responsibilities in the agricultural area
- Consider municipal or CRD purchase of farmlands to be put into a Farmland Trust for rental to new farmers, agricultural demonstration and education
- Encourage land trusts to participate in preserving farmland in the District for the purpose of supporting agricultural activity and making it available under lease agreement to farmers
- Investigate intergenerational schemes and succession plans that facilitate entry of new farmers
- Investigate investment fund instruments that would separate the equity in farmland from the business of farming
- Engage institutions and BCMAL in providing small scale farmer skill development and education programs
- Undertake a small scale agriculture needs analysis
- Engage community organizations in investigating the applicability of solutions being pursued in Abbotsford to Central Saanich<sup>31</sup>
- Encourage opportunities for farmer mentorship and new entrant apprenticeship
- Investigate the appetite for covenants on farmlands to ensure availability for farming in perpetuity.

### 2.2.3 Wasteful Use of Farmland

In addition to the use of farmland for non-farm rural-residential purposes, non-farm development tends not to consider the value of the underlying farmland beyond its real estate value. This may lead to excessive footprint and intrusive siting of buildings and access.

Farmers themselves need to be reminded that the land is a precious resource and should not be squandered for excessively large farm building footprints and multiple residences. Study in Ontario suggests that multiple residences of farms not only result in removing agricultural land from production but also fragment the agricultural and base. Whether these residences house retired

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<sup>31</sup> Abbotsford Food and Agriculture Connection Table. 2010. Supporting New Small Scale Farmers in Abbotsford. Feasibility Study. <http://www.southfraser.com/includes/documents/SupportingNewFarmersinAbbotsford.pdf>

farmers or non-farmers, there are long term implications for minimum distance separation of agricultural activities and constraints on the flexibility of agricultural producers.<sup>32</sup>

Local governments should be cognizant that centralized value-added facilities may have less impact on farmland than numerous small scale facilities on individual parcels.

### ***The Situation***

Farmland recently purchased for rural-residential purposes has been characterized by large building footprints and wasteful estate siting of access and structures. A recent recommendation of the Farm Tax Assessment Review Panel has been implemented to remove split classification from farms in the ALR, allowing the land under farm residences to be assessed at the farm rate. This provision may encourage larger footprints since it will shield the land tax on farm residences and make it cheaper to maintain larger residences on farmland.

Wasteful and inappropriate siting of non-farm uses can exacerbate good neighbour problems on adjacent farmland, leading farmers to be challenged under the Farm Practices Protection Act (FPPA). In at least one BC case, the Farm Industry Review Board (FIRB) ruling to mitigate the situation has led to creation of an agricultural non-development zone around a newly sited residence with the consequence that future livestock barn expansion has been compromised.

While agritourism is being promoted in Central Saanich, growth in the sector is occurring on an ad-hoc basis in the ALR, with requirements being determined on an application by application basis.

### ***The Issues***

The corresponding issues related to wasteful use of the farmland base include:

- The siting of non-farm development on parcels in relation to property boundaries and location of access
- The large footprint of buildings, gardens, and lanes
- FPPA challenges that lead to negotiated solutions that compromise the ability of farmers to farm
- Concern about the impact of soil filling.

### ***Rationale for Action***

The loss of farmland to extravagant residential development in the ALR has not abated. The changes, essentially irreversible and cumulative in effect, have not fully appreciated.

At the same time, pursuing the opportunities provided by agritourism is having uncertain spill over effects on the farmland base. There is concern about how much agritourism development is sustainable in the ALR and questions arise about the land use efficiency of the changing farm economy. It is noted that Central Saanich, under policy 3.2.1 (12) of its OCP, intends to limit the maximum size of residences in the agricultural areas to protect farmland. Examples are found in

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<sup>32</sup> Caldwell, Dr, WJ and C. Dodds-Weir. 2003. An Assessment of the Impact of Rural Non-Farm Development on the Viability of Ontario's Agricultural Industry. Rural non-farm development: Its impact on the viability and sustainability of agricultural and rural communities. Phase II Report. School of Rural Planning and Development. University of Guelph. <http://www.ontariofarmlandtrust.ca/sites/default/files/phasell.pdf>

several other BC municipalities, including Saanich, Metchosin, Spallumcheen, Pitt Meadows and Delta.

In some instances, farmers have also developed extensive footprints as their businesses requirements have evolved to include primary production and value-added functions.

### ***Options***

Options to reduce the wasteful use of farmland resources include:

- Limit the size of the footprint and siting of residential structures and access in the ALR (e.g., home plate provisions) to conserve farmland for agricultural production and reduce potential for conflict with adjacent farmers
- Set maximum house size limits for housing in the ALR
- Develop farm-friendly policies to protect farming operations from rural-residential encroachment
- Develop a strategy for farmer retirement in the ALR
- Lobby the province to undertake an agritourism investigation to assess incremental and cumulative impacts on adjacent neighbours, farmland fragmentation and conventional farming practices, so as to provide guidance to local jurisdictions experiencing diversification in agricultural operations
- Develop an on-farm value-added strategy that includes evaluation of farmland impacts and centralized community options
- Lobby the province (ALC) to require site plan coverage reviews for all development in agricultural areas
- Require site plan approvals for non-farm residential development to protect existing and potential agricultural activities
- Lobby ALC to increase vigilance in enforcing the intent of the ALC regulations and discouraging abuse.

### ***2.3 Improve the Viability of Agricultural Enterprise***

Farms are businesses that contribute significantly to local, regional and provincial economic development and security, job creation, tax bases, natural resource protection and quality of life. However, farms are also businesses that face challenges that are unique in the regional economy. Working lands are fundamental to the character of the Saanich Peninsula and the CRD, lending greater vitality to the larger tourism sector. Agricultural policy that does not consider the underlying farm business risks of investing funds in land, whether privately or publicly sourced, will not remain agriculturally viable into the future.

“A farm is economically viable when it generates enough revenue from its operations to cover all variable and fixed costs of productions, all appropriate living expenses, and capital replacement costs ... farmland preservation that does not address the viability of agriculture will be ineffective.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Adelaja, S. 2007. Urban Pressures and Farming: Positioning Agriculture for the Future. Presentation at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents. Grand Rapids, Michigan. July 17. [www.nacaa.com/.../land\\_use\\_decisions\\_and\\_the\\_dramatic\\_effect\\_on\\_agriculture.ppt](http://www.nacaa.com/.../land_use_decisions_and_the_dramatic_effect_on_agriculture.ppt)

Farm viability enhancement programs generally focus on several primary concepts based on the philosophy that the “...best way to keep land in agricultural land use is to make agriculture profitable for those who use the resource”.<sup>34</sup> These concepts include:

- Encouraging more value-added and direct retail
- Promoting vertical integration
- Enhancing product diversity
- Improving environmental practices used on farms
- Protecting agricultural land
- Increasing access to capital
- Providing access to technical assistance
- Improving business and management skills among farmers.

### ***The Situation***

Agricultural enterprise in Central Saanich is experiencing the same downward economic trend as BC as a whole since 2006, only more so, due to the absence of significant supply managed (e.g., dairy, poultry) farming in the municipality. About 44% of Central Saanich farmland is used for pasture, hay, and forage production.

The majority of farms are facing profitability challenges on an annual basis, and this does not include the value of the farmers’ time or capital replacement costs for equipment and buildings. The traditional agricultural system is failing Central Saanich farmers.

Table 3 presents a summary of findings of research into viability factors, key elements of success, suitable planning objectives, and potential associated actions. The Table provides a framework for the objectives presented in this section.

Studies on viability indicate that viable farms have common characteristics, such as:

- Low cost of production
- Earn an attractive income
- Have owners with positive attitudes
- Focus on income, rather than lifestyle
- Grow the appropriate commodity
- Take advantage of location and proximity
- Have appropriate managerial, financial and marketing practices.

Strategies that have the potential to increase the viability of farming need to encourage adaptations by farmers that generate improvement in the variables characterizing viable farms. As well, these adaptations need to meet sustainability criteria (e.g. respecting the environment, conservation of resources) in order to be viable over the long term.

### ***The Issues***

While the agricultural sector as a whole is challenged at this point in time, there are opportunities in agriculture that are being exploited by some farmers, particularly in direct farm marketing and

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<sup>34</sup> For example, see Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. Farm Viability Enhancement Program. <http://www.mass.gov/agr/programs/farmviability/>

**Table 3: Viability Factors in Relation to Suggested Agricultural Planning Objectives**

Viability Factor	Key Element	Planning Objective	Comments
Farmer Attitude and Experience	Farmer attitude and interest are important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create enthusiasm</li> <li>• Attract interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A proactive approach at the community level encourages interest</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
	Farmers with longer planning horizons are more profitable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include established farmers</li> <li>• Attract those interested in the business of farming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agri-tourism is anticipated to prime the market for <u>local</u> agricultural products</li> </ul>
	Education increases viability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create initiatives that promote experience and increase knowledge of appropriate technology for adopting new enterprises</li> <li>• Designing and providing educational programs in developing marketing skills, food safety practices, regulations, and requirements would have a positive impact in promoting alternative enterprises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A key to encouraging innovation is to be on the leading edge of knowledge</li> <li>• Capacity building in the education area supports viability</li> </ul>
	Viability falls with age (except for beginner farmers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target education on new entrants</li> <li>• Target innovation to younger farmers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeting successors is important</li> <li>• Transferring skills to new entrants is more efficient than starting from scratch</li> </ul>
	Farmers who complain about regulation and the farming environment are less profitable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop strategies to work with known constraints and regulations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify constraints and possible solutions</li> <li>• Engage partners to facilitate changes</li> </ul>
Business Climate	Agribusinesses with appropriate managerial, financial and marketing practices are more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information on cost of production and overall farm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop more readily available and less expensive liability</li> </ul>

Viability Factor	Key Element	Planning Objective	Comments
	viable	income will be helpful because cost and income are usually the main considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make available appropriate tools for cost-benefit analysis and managing risks associated with these enterprises</li> <li>• Provide extension and outreach programs should provide innovative information-delivery methods, including Internet and on-farm demonstration for small farmers</li> </ul>	insurance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase knowledge and skills of entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Seek increased awareness and support by community leaders</li> </ul>
	Farmers who direct market and utilize frontier marketing techniques are more profitable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address information gaps relating to higher cost of production and markets, issues that affect decisions to adopt new enterprises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop greater understanding of the industry</li> <li>• Coordinate with other agricultural sectors to increase capacity</li> </ul>
	Ecotourism, farm-based recreation, and value added products enhance profitability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information and support information providers in the most lucrative potential growth areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agritourism is an important component of a sustainable agricultural sector</li> <li>• Agritourism leads to increased market interaction with the consumer public</li> </ul>

Viability Factor	Key Element	Planning Objective	Comments
Regulatory Climate	Right-to-farm conflicts reduce viability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work to ensure that well managed farming operations are protected from urban harassment and unnecessary regulations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Ministry of Highways and local government to develop appropriate and cost-effective signage for farm enterprises</li> <li>• Develop agritourism self-regulatory protocols to avoid adverse impacts on farming operations and ensure minimal need for local regulation</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Ministry of Highways and local government to develop appropriate and cost-effective signage for farm enterprises</li> </ul>
Location/ Situational/ Environmental Characteristics	As land value rises, viability falls Farmers in areas where land values are increasing rapidly are less likely to stay in business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the pressure on farmland from non-farming land uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop mechanisms to ensure farmland competition is between those interested in using the land for farming</li> <li>• Investigate ways of securing land for farming at lowest cost to beginning/entry level farmers</li> </ul>
	Wildlife damage adversely affects viability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop solutions to wildlife control that protects or compensates farms for damages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers cannot continue to provide ecological goods and services at the expense of a profit line</li> </ul>
	Farmers with difficulty accessing inputs are less viable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate access to inputs required for the farming models being advocated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efforts to remove production constraints are critical</li> </ul>
	Farmers who are viable plan to stay in business longer than farmers who are not	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and support a longer range strategy to promote a vision for farming in the District</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate short-term opportunities with longer term goals in developing the strategy</li> </ul>

agritourism. While the scale and intensity of these diversifying farming activities is not sufficient to engage more than a fraction of the land base, agritourism and farm direct markets are fully consistent with creating demand for local agricultural goods and services. However, diversification is not deflecting non-farming pressure on Central Saanich farmland and initiatives are required to assist producers of primary agricultural production to improve viability.

The key viability issues include:

- Removing constraints to lower cost production
- Targeting commodities and markets where profitability can be an anticipated outcome
- Developing managerial capacity to respond to new markets
- Developing financial capacity to respond to opportunity
- Reducing constraints related to distribution and marketing.

### ***Rationale for Action***

Influences on agriculture in the region are complex. The presence of agricultural infrastructure and services, taken for granted historically, has disappeared as the farming sector has retracted in the face of off-shore competition for markets and population pressure for land. In this circumstance, many of the key viability issues require more coordinated action than can be provided by farmers working independently.

### ***Options***

The options for improving the viability of Central Saanich agriculture fall into the following categories:

- Countering the impact of high farmland values
- Integrating local agriculture into the community food system, including development of handling, distribution and marketing capacity
- Attracting local and/or regional value-added activity by various means, including tax exemptions, providing agri-industrial parks and services, promoting innovation
- Lobbying for farmland tax assessment changes that would encourage on-farm value added activities
- Supporting a definition of bona fide agriculture that relates farm status to the definition of viability in this section or to Revenue Canada's definition of an agricultural business
- Supporting sustainable rural tourism.

#### **2.3.1 Counteracting the Impact of High Farmland Values**

While farmland often constitutes the retirement fund of current farmers, high land values create barriers to farm expansion and may increase the cost of entry for new farmers to prohibitive levels. In addition, high farmland and housing values increase the property tax cost for farmers and may affect the viability of operations. Some escalation of prices is attributable to farmers competing among themselves for land, but a more important factor is that farmland is desirable for non-farming (residential) estates as well as a vehicle for profit from land speculation.

#### ***The Situation***

Strategies employed in virtually every jurisdiction in North America, including BC, have systems to reduce the property tax cost with the objective of reducing the holding cost of farmland by farmers, making farming more viable. One of the most pervasive systems is the use-value differential property taxation scheme, where the assessed value of the land for agriculture is assessed lower

than its value in competing uses to reflect its value for agricultural production. This form of preferential taxation is seen as a method of preserving land that compensates owners for maintaining socially desirable land uses. Land in the ALR in BC also receives a 50% value exemption for school and hospital taxes. Tax savings are significant, with farmland taxes in the range of 10% of residential land in Saanich. In urbanizing areas such as Saanich, demand for residential development is the primary impetus for rising farmland values and farm tax assessments are determined primarily in relation to the land's use as residential.

The preferential farmland tax system creates incentives for non-farmers as well as farmers. A significant contribution to high land prices is created by the demand for farmland for rural-residential, urban development and financial speculation. While land in the ALR is reserved for farming, there is no requirement that property owners farm the land themselves.

- Farm class tax assessment is often obtained by a rural-residential property owner to alleviate the tax burden on the land held for non-farm purposes. This status may be obtained by meeting farm production income thresholds, even if the land is simply leased to farmers in the area to obtain the farm tax status.
- For some non-farmer farmland property owners, farm tax status is not even that important as land holders can produce a higher return on investment by not using land for productive purposes but rather by holding it for a higher price from those willing and able to pay the higher price in the future. In these instances, the land may be held in an idle state, further fragmenting the farming area, and contributing to a perception of impermanency of the farmland base.
- There is also an incentive for speculation on farmland in addition to the general trend of farmland value appreciation over time. Where developers own properties within ALR in peri-urban locations and in rural locations, a successful strategy has been to swap property rights in the rural area (e.g., via covenants, re-zoning) in return for development in the peri-urban area, thereby creating a purported "net benefit" or "no-net-loss" for agriculture.

As such, strategies to reduce the property tax cost to farmers, while intended to preserve the land base for farming, may actually work to increase the competition from non-farming uses by:

- Making it cheaper for non-farm properties owners to own farmland, often insisting that it be leased for a non-intensive agricultural use
- Subsidizing the cost to the developer of holding land for speculative purposes. In these cases, the speculator is often reluctant to make farm improvements which could compromise the development potential at a later date.

Some jurisdictions have resorted to recapture tax policies, conveyance fees, or penalties if farm land is taken out of agricultural use. However, price appreciation bolstered by increased demand often compensates for accrued taxes, interest and penalties. In a few urbanized US states, the cost of conversion penalties has been raised so as to make the cost of development in non-farm use unprofitable.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Kashian, R. 2004. State Farmland Preferential Assessment: A Comparative Study. Journal of Regional Analysis and Policy 34:1 <http://www.irap-journal.org/pastvolumes/2000/v34/34-1-1.pdf>

### ***The Issues***

Ideally, affordable farm land values are determined by the value of the land when used for agricultural production. When farmland values exceed the values that can be supported by agricultural endeavor, prices become an obstacle to renewal in the sector and farming no longer can compete with non-farming uses of the land. Farmland loss is highly correlated with high farmland values. As such, the central issue for Central Saanich, as for most urbanizing municipalities in BC and North America, is how to ensure that mechanisms are created that favour the pricing of farmland for farming.

### ***Rationale for Action***

Escalating farmland prices are interrelated with many of the issues identified in this report. The Central Saanich agricultural sector is faced with the following challenges related to the escalating price of land:

- Purchase of farmland for farm expansion is more and more unaffordable
- Demand for agricultural land by non-farm uses, specifically rural residential, is reducing the supply of land available for agriculture
- Non-resident land purchase is creating higher land values
- Willing new farmers are finding it difficult acquire land for farming.

### ***Options***

Options to counteract the impact of demand for farmland reflected in high farmland prices range from stalling or delaying development to strategies that ensure farmland is preserved in perpetuity. Many of these options would likely require policy action with financial implications at the provincial level, while the tools available at the local level generally require a level of commitment and/or expenditure that many municipalities would be challenged to provide. These options include:

- Develop a strict interpretation of urban containment to restrict non-farm rural residential expansion into ALR farming areas, effectively “hardening “ the ALR boundary
- Investigate the feasibility of a farmland income fund based on pooled farmland resources into an active farming enterprise
- Create a public regional farmland trust to purchase of land or covenants by municipal and/or regional governments for lease or resale to farmers, using a designated property tax to generate funds
- Support private farmland trusts to acquire land and support farmers in the municipality
- Lobby provincial government to consider setting up an agricultural land bank to purchase farmland from retiring farmers and sell to new entrants
- Consider making public lands available for agriculture
- Lobby the province to create financial deterrents, profit recapture taxes, or penalties applied to farmland sales for non-agricultural land use
- Develop zoning to control how non-farming homeowners can use their land in the ALR
- Investigate recapture taxes as a way to deter land conversions to non-farm uses
- Lobby province to develop farm tax classification for structures used in primary and value added agricultural production in bona fide agricultural enterprises.

### 2.3.2 Accessing the Local Food System

Regardless of the novelty of agritourism, food production for the local food system is seen as the highest use of farmland. Regional food security, low carbon footprint, and local food access resonate with the consumer and are clearly considered to be concepts marketable to the public.

#### *The Situation*

Most food produced in Central Saanich is marketed locally in its fresh state to local wholesale/retail, competing in undifferentiated form with imports (but with exceptions). The seasonality of crop production has a significant depressing effect on pricing since imports are readily available when local product is in supply.

Over 40 farm-direct markets operate in Central Saanich as part of a south Vancouver Island Association comprising almost 80 vendors. In addition, some of these vendors participate in Farmers' Markets in the CRD and various festivities during the course of the year. While these venues improve returns to participating farmers (and this include most farmers), it is still unclear how lucrative the farm-direct markets are, whether they could stand further participation, and doubtful that they can be the marketing channel panacea for Central Saanich agricultural food producers.

Other food channels also exist in the form of non-profit food share cooperatives, urban delivery, allotment gardens, and backyard gardening. These enterprises satisfy niche markets in the CRD.

#### *The Issues*

Growth and development of the local food system is constrained by several issues:

- Fresh market only, very limited regional processing capacity
- Little information on the feasibility of developing/attracting small scale processing
- Lack of identity for Central Saanich (and peninsula) products
- Lack of local produce storage, handling infrastructure
- Complications due the nematode quarantine.

Issues related to processing are addressed in section 2.3.3, below.

#### *Rationale for Action*

Access to the local food system is constrained by the low returns received in mainstream markets. The sector as a whole has to differentiate itself and pursue market niches in the fresh and processed markets in order to command higher returns. While local production is currently mainly oriented to the fresh market, the same principles are likely to be applicable to processed products as well.

#### *Options*

Options to address gaps in accessing the local food system include:

- Assess the market feasibility of a Saanich Peninsula brand<sup>36</sup>, possibly in collaboration with North Saanich and other local jurisdictions

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<sup>36</sup> It should be noted that North Saanich's Agricultural Plan recommends a branding strategy to reinforce the municipality's agricultural identity.

- Investigate the feasibility of developing centralized infrastructure to support local marketing channels, such as handling and staging facilities, cold storage
- Support initiatives to conduct marketing intelligence to identify what customers want and what they will pay for
- Identify opportunities to develop alliances with retailers, restaurateurs, and other end users to produce custom and specialty products
- Investigate ways of partnering with local government to increase access to customers through direct marketing channels
- Support initiatives to research ways to reduce the economic costs of produce handling in dealing with the nematode quarantine
- Continue to support the expansion of pocket markets in the CRD<sup>37</sup>
- Lobby the provincial government to bring back the BUY BC program
- Lobby the CRD to establish a year-round covered farmers market(s) in Victoria or some other central marketing location

### 2.3.3 Limited Value-Added Agricultural Activity in the Region

The economic attraction of farm-direct marketing is in at least some part encouraged by the lack of investment required to establish operations and on the ability to squeeze intermediates out of the sales transaction process. While increased interest in a localized diet is spawning opportunities for direct marketing in the local food system to counter global competitors in the marketplace, competition in fresh produce markets is still among the most “commodity driven” market segments, subject to the lowest margin, and provides the least opportunity for adding value. In contrast, on-farm wineries and cideries and small scale food processing have been more successful in adding value to farm production, in combination with agritourism activities (e.g., wine-tasting).

The need to encourage farm product processing and other value-added opportunities has been recognized for some time as a way to increase economic viability.<sup>38</sup> In many jurisdictions, agricultural value-added is part of an economic development strategy for the rural area. Where agritourism is prominent, the concept of value-added is expanding beyond the notion of processing primary production to include other marketable benefits such as cultural experience, local healthy food, agricultural diversity and resilience, rural setting, food safety, and protecting farmland.

Value-adding increases the potential profits of agricultural products and has other beneficial impacts on local food producers:

- Makes possible the creation of specialty products catering to food trends
- Develop product value chains targeting specialty markets
- Extends the market for local produce
- Uses second grade product and culls that might otherwise be discarded.
- Increases demand for raw products
- Allows farmers to better afford the costs of inputs such as land, labour and energy.

<sup>37</sup> [http://www.foodroots.ca/pmtoolkit\\_index.htm](http://www.foodroots.ca/pmtoolkit_index.htm)

<sup>38</sup> Brown, K., P. Hesje and R. Scott. Strategic Working Group Report: Strengthening local agriculture – farmland and farmers.

***The Situation***

The cornerstone of those agricultural enterprises in Central Saanich that are experiencing growth in local markets is marketing fresh produce to the public. On-farm meat products markets are under increasing food safety regulation that makes it infeasible for most producers to participate in them. Moreover, it is anticipated that new health and food safety rules for handling fresh produce are forthcoming.

Local processing, which would increase the marketing window of many agricultural products, has further declined in response to competitive pressures exerted by globalization of the food supply system and the higher costs of local processing. Nonetheless, some entrepreneurial farm operators have found niche markets for their products and these types of initiatives could become more prevalent in Central Saanich.

Farm value added opportunities related to agritourism are regulated generally in relation to whether the activity is permitted and impacts on public health, safety and services. A strategy for agritourism value-added growth and enhancement has not been articulated.

***The Issues***

Farmers need to get into the processing part of the food business because that is where profit margins and stability are maximized. But it is also clear that the current economic climate and the small scale of farming in Central Saanich need to caution the willingness and capacity of operators to make value-added investments.

Gaps in the supply chain are manifested by inadequate local commercial food processing of meats and produce. Additional opportunities to exploit home-made preserve markets are under-achieved due to a lack of local private or community kitchen facilities.

The value-added component of many aspects of agritourism is not appreciated in regulatory circles. This opportunity should be promoted and developed in a manner that supports the agricultural sector as a whole.

***Rationale for Action***

Growth and revitalization of valued added opportunities offer the best chances of long term economic viability in both local food and service markets.

On—farm processing and agritourism value-adding also have changed the perception that modern agriculture is only a production-oriented business. Policies need to be developed that catch up to this new reality by providing the means to provide more farm-direct opportunities to sell value-added agricultural goods and services. Efforts to attract food processors in support of the local farming sector through a strategy that promotes efficiency in servicing, reduces costs, and provides opportunities with the least pressure on farmland will bolster farming profitability.

Agritourism value added opportunities need to be carefully thought out to ensure that the opportunities contribute to the longer term viability of the primary agricultural production.

***Options***

Options to attract and enhance value-added opportunities include:

- Encourage collaboration of farmers, CRD, Small Scale Food Processors Association, Heritage Foodservice Cooperative, Investment Agriculture Foundation, institutions, and senior governments to identify value-added agricultural opportunities supporting local rural economic development
- Support an investigation of appropriate value added opportunities in relation to the scope and scale of local agriculture
- Promote agricultural processing in the District's economic development strategy
- Pursue funding and partners for a pilot project to test a community based value-added initiative
- Investigate the feasibility of developing appropriate agri-industrial capacity in Central Saanich, possibly with incentives to attract investment<sup>39</sup>
- Request the ALC to develop, in consultation, a modern definition of agriculture that embraces those elements that are considered the vanguard of future agricultural prosperity, such as the scale of value –added associated with farm direct and agri-tourism enterprises
- Consider the regional feasibility of a community kitchen other incubator to encourage local value –added opportunities
- Develop programs and policies to assist value-added to work through the regulatory regimes associated with food processing
- Sponsor courses on value-added business planning, food safety, and set-up
- Lobby senior governments to instate value-added extension services to the farming sector
- Engage the Small Scale Food Processors Association to assist in identifying opportunities and challenges
- Develop a municipal strategy for attracting and retaining farm services.

### 2.3.4 Encouraging On-Farm Innovation

The essential approach to improving viability is to encourage and facilitate agricultural innovation.<sup>40</sup> Innovation, occurring in distribution and marketing, including farm-based recreation and tourism, and value-added products, enhances farm profitability and viability and utilizing the ability of farmers to develop entrepreneurial ideas, gain useful marketing and business management skills, and access capital that will help to enhance their farming business.

Other jurisdictions have found that there is a need to encourage agricultural enterprises to change to meet new marketing opportunities.<sup>41</sup> Coordinated action, with the transfer of knowledge, holds a higher prospect of success.

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<sup>39</sup> Section 3.2.2 (policy 10) of the OCP anticipates an opportunity develop an agricultural-industrial zoning designation to protect and encourage agriculture related industries in the Keating Industrial area and at other appropriate locations throughout the District.

<sup>40</sup> Adelaja, S. 2005. Preserving Farmland and Achieving Agricultural Viability in the State of Michigan. Policy Analysis Report. Michigan State University.

<sup>41</sup> For example, see Vermont Council on Rural Development. 2003. Vermont Agricultural Viability Council Final Report. [http://www.vtrural.org/files/vavc\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://www.vtrural.org/files/vavc_final_report.pdf)

### ***The Situation***

A significant amount of innovation has occurred in the Central Saanich agriculture sector in response to consumer appetite for local produce, emerging trends towards wine tourism, and agritourism. In fact, Central Saanich is a leader in the concentration of such enterprises in the area.

However, for the portion of the agricultural sector represented mostly by the larger scale operations, catering to niche farm-direct markets has not resolved their viability issues to date. These operators are still looking for market opportunities and innovative ideas that make sense for the scale of their operations.

Larger scale operations are absolutely vital to the sector as a whole since they represent the bulk of the capacity in the system and control the largest land holdings.

### ***The Issues***

Innovators generally lack experience and appropriate technology for adopting new enterprises. In Central Saanich, there is also an element of interested farmers that are new entrants to the sector.

The main issues are:

- Limited knowledge base about how to pursue new ideas
- Absence of readily accessible databases on innovation questions
- Lack of tools to undertake business planning and assess the business case
- Concerns about risks associated with new enterprises
- Absence of a network of investors from the financial community.

### ***Rationale for Action***

Given the public desire for the locally produced food products and the positive contribution of farming and farmlands to the environmental health and social well-being, there should be public interest in investment in initiatives to assist innovation. These initiatives are anticipated include identification of any impacts on farming in relation to viability criteria, appropriate modifications and adjustments to improve viability indicators, and support for regional structures that facilitate responses to the emerging business opportunities.

If the profitability of Central Saanich farmers continues to be uncertain, and farmers cannot access the resources that would help to make their farms more viable, more and more farms will be lost to development pressures. Conversely, increasing the profitability of farmers will inevitably contribute to the preservation of the farmland base.

### ***Options***

Several local farmers have already shown how innovation may lead to more viable farming operations. A large body of literature also indicates the types of smaller scale agricultural responses that are likely to be successful by increasing profitability. In urbanizing areas, these options include value-added production and processing, direct to consumer farm marketing, and agritourism.

The options pursued should focus on the success characteristics of the new farmer of the future and would include expanding the knowledge base for large and small scale operators:

- Advocate for provincial initiatives to encourage established farmers to take on apprentices so that skills may be transmitted to the next generation

- Support the development of the analytical tools to assist operators in determining cost of production and overall farm income associated with new ideas
- Support provincial and industry initiatives to deliver programs to assist in the preparation of business plans
- Lobby the province to re-instate the regional agriculture extension function of BCMAL
- Support programs to provide coaching and industry contacts
- Engage FCC to sponsor new affordable financial supports for innovators in new farm types, including low asset new entrants requiring operating loans
- Lobby the province and industry to produce handbooks of good business practices related to new enterprises
- Explore ways to make the community the focal point for agriculture innovation by exploring new ways of promoting interaction with the consumer public
- Support initiatives to develop innovative information-delivery methods, including Internet and on-farm demonstration for small farmers
- Engage the agricultural sector to develop cost-benefit analysis and identify tools to manage risks associated with these enterprises
- Lobby the province to develop outreach and educational programs in developing marketing skills, food safety practices, regulations, and requirements would have a positive impact in promoting alternative enterprises
- Engage farmers proactively in streamlining the regulatory climate to assist innovation
- Assist investigations to find ways to address gaps in the local food system, e.g., staging, handling, storage, marketing
- Support study to investigate the feasibility of developing food safety infrastructure to meet new standards for produce linked to nematode mitigation
- Provide access to public venues for new innovations
- Solicit support for local and regional forums and conferences to bring new partners, new business practices, new markets, new forms of entrepreneurship, and new funding mechanisms to the attention of the agricultural sector
- Advocate to the province and FCC for initiatives that identify succession strategies for farmers leaving the sector and continuation strategies for their successors in high land costs conditions.

### **2.3.5 Regulatory Barriers to Farming**

Most agricultural areas face increasing regulation as non-agricultural populations increase and competition for the land base intensifies. As demand for services increases in urbanizing rural areas, agriculture is caught in the mix and there is pressure to charge for improvements.

#### ***The Situation***

Farmers have identified a spectrum of federal, provincial, regional and municipal regulation governing agricultural uses. In many cases, the requirements affecting the multiple land uses conducted by farmers are scattered in legislation, various bylaws, zoning regulations and guidelines. Farmers have to keep abreast of provisions and definitions governing farm retail and advertising signage, health and fire codes, agri-tourism, labour and housing, permits for assembly, farm stands, directional signage, and setbacks. Farmers attempting to work their way through the regulatory system can be shuffled from regulation to regulation, from department to department, and from

agency to agency, often by those with incomplete understanding of the effects of the process on working farms.

Farm worker housing has been a controversial issue in Central Saanich. A recent report<sup>42</sup> on farm worker housing is currently being implemented, with criteria that would apply to all workers regardless of origin and allow additional dwellings to meet the legitimate needs of bona fide farmers.<sup>43</sup> It is anticipated that the criteria will allow for a more streamlined approval process for farmers to obtain worker housing with clear criteria that supports farm enterprise, protects the land base and provides decent housing for workers.

### ***The Issues***

The issues include:

- Lack of continuity between what the province wants to promote in the agricultural sector and how other provincial agencies (e.g., BCAA and ALC) regulate agriculture
- In the absence of a provincial food strategy, inconsistency in what the farmland base should be used for (food, fibre, residential, and/or other), and rationale for ALC regulatory provisions, e.g., respecting composting, value adding
- Inadequate guidance from provincial agencies on the type of diversification that should be supported on the farm
- Numerous costs and time required for local permitting and application processing
- Regulatory requirements for farms that have not been “agriculture proofed” and which could be more facilitating, less onerous, more reasonable, and explainable to the agricultural sector
- Regulatory quagmire related to developing solutions to wildlife and waterfowl depredation
- Overlapping bureaucracy, e.g., with respect to food safety, crop protection that add to farmer costs and jeopardizes the competitiveness of Central Saanich farmers
- Regulation constraining diversification opportunities, with respect to maximum lot coverage on small lots, types of conditions permitted with agritourism activities
- Local regulations perceived to be constraining to viable small farms, not farming-friendly
- Amenities that would assist agriculture are not allowed or facilitated on farmlands, e.g., sewer hook-up, water lines, water supply lines, agritourism facilities
- Inadequate monitoring and enforcement of existing regulations, e.g. land filling, overland flows, non-farm business uses of farmland
- Municipal staff not perceived to be working with farmers to provide agricultural solutions
- Onerous paperwork, regulations, permitting, and fees for farm structures, e.g. engineering drawings for temporary structures
- The excessive amount of “red tape” respecting health, safety and the environment liability is threatening the viability of small farming operations
- Inconsistencies between ALC and local government regulations
- Perceived lax and inconsistent enforcement of bylaws and permits in support of minimizing impacts on agricultural operations
- Lobby for practical small scale meat processing solutions for the local market

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<sup>42</sup> Community Social Planning Council. 2010. Farm Worker Housing Policy Review: Final Report

<sup>43</sup> Bona fide farmer is defined as an operator that farms land classified as farm under the BC Assessment Act.

- Perception of regulatory regime as supporting lifestyle and green space values, not working agriculture

### ***Rationale for Action***

While agriculture contributes significantly to the local economy, job creation, tax base, natural resource protection and quality of life, the sector is often regulated in ways that may needlessly limit the full potential of working farms because the practicality for farming operations and impact on viability are not understood. Farmers require clear rules from regulators so that they may plan farming efficiently. These rules need to provide flexibility, allow response to opportunity, and equipped to respond to societal concerns with science-based arguments.

### ***Options***

The desired focus is to make the regulatory system more responsive to the needs of the agricultural sector while meeting its regulatory objectives. Options to improve this system include:

- Create an "agricultural" section in the land use bylaw that consolidates all regulations concerning agriculture, not only relating to permitted uses in the agricultural zone
- Promote and support completion of Environmental Farm Plans (EFPs) and implementation of Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) to improve agricultural management and provide benefits to the environment
- Clearly articulate and communicate the purpose of each regulation and how it contributes to working farms and farm businesses, so as to provide a basis for permitting and enforcement actions
- Lobby the province to develop an expanded "agriculture" definition, including agritourism, so that the full range of permitted farm activities is considered when planning for and regulating agriculture
- Ensure municipal bylaws are consistent with the Ministers Bylaw Standards<sup>44</sup>
- Create a Central Saanich Agricultural Advisory Committee to advise the municipality on issues affecting agriculture
- Consider creating an agricultural variance sub-committee or hearing board to consider and adjust special requests for variance to bylaw application, taking into consideration the size, scope, seasonality and overall impact of the proposed agricultural uses, and the cost, impact on agricultural income, and alternate ways of meeting municipal requirements
- Improve accessibility to Municipal Hall by establishing a 'Farm Liaison' in the planning department with agrologist credentials
- Increase municipal agricultural understanding through information sessions, tours and dialogue
- Develop a more proactive role for agriculture in promoting local economic opportunities
- Establish a Municipal policy of assessing the agricultural impacts of new regulations in determining feasibility
- Use science based criteria to determine if regulations should be applied in specific situations

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<sup>44</sup> Ministers Bylaw Standards have been developed by BCMAL to provide guidance on municipal farm regulation to allow the largest number to agricultural options over the largest area of the ALR. <http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/publist/800Series/840000-1.pdf>

- Seek joint municipal-farm sector investigation and modification of bylaws that reflect unique farming risks and issues and that are efficient and practical for farming enterprises, possibly with advisory input from a Central Saanich Agricultural Advisory Committee
- Form an ad hoc committee of operators and municipal staff that meets regularly to review development codes and looks for ways to streamline and simplify the process for operators
- Obtain training for municipal staff about the realities of farming and ranching and the potential of and challenges facing small scale agriculture.

### 2.3.6 Managing the Rural-Urban Interface

The public policy challenge at the local level is to minimize negative interactions and create the conditions for long term and mutually beneficial coexistence between farms and urban neighbours. Successful management is characterized by avoiding the clash of incompatible land uses and enhancing the compatibility of coexisting land uses.<sup>45</sup> The most promising policy approach lies in making the planning policies and land use practices of local governments and private developers more sensitive to farm activity.<sup>46</sup>

#### *The Situation*

Central Saanich is essentially a mature municipality in that it is built out within its urban containment boundary. It has a long rural-urban boundary, or edge, with little in the way of historical buffers separating agriculture from suburban residential land use. Parcels are generally small with increased potential for land use impacts between property owners. Higher density developments along the edge may burden farmers with litter, theft, vandalism, trespass, harassment, unleashed dogs, and other situations that force changes in practices as well as increase the difficulty in farming.

Incompatible land within farming areas are increasing as rural-residential encroaches into the ALR. Challenges to farming practices and people conflicts are also increasing and adding to the stress of farming.

#### *The Issues*

The main rural-urban interface issues consist of:

- Concerns that dust, odours, chemicals, and other irritants from conventional agricultural practices will drift onto neighbours' properties
- Damages and impacts to farm property associated with higher population density
- Stress created by unwarranted claims against and challenges to good farming practices
- Encroachment of non-farm farmland uses into farming areas.

#### *Rationale for Action*

Protecting agriculture in the rural-urban interface is critical to creating conditions allowing for the efficient farming practices. If the ability to farm is unfairly compromised, the farmer operation will suffer and the agricultural use of the farmland may be put in jeopardy, creating further opportunities for intrusion into farming areas.

<sup>45</sup> Smith, B. 1998. Planning for agriculture. BC Provincial Land Commission.

[http://www.landcommission.gov.bc.ca/publications/planning/Planning\\_for\\_Agriculture/index.htm](http://www.landcommission.gov.bc.ca/publications/planning/Planning_for_Agriculture/index.htm)

<sup>46</sup> Sokolow, AD. 2000. Agriculture in urbanizing communities. Presentation to USDA Policy Advisory Committee on Farmland. <http://aic.ucdavis.edu/research1/USDA%20ls%207-21-00.pdf>

## Options

Numerous options are available to improve management of the rural-urban interface in support of more productive use of farmland. These options fall into broad categories consisting of disclosure to non-farmers, good management practices by farmers, open communication to encourage peaceful coexistence, and planning tools to minimize potential for conflict. These options include:

- Encourage farmers to complete environmental farm plans and implement beneficial management practices to benefit the environment and reduce the potential to affect neighbouring properties
- Support permitted farm uses in the ALR under good management practices with streamlined regulatory processes (this may require more specific definitions of non-traditional farm uses)
- Promote organic, eco-friendly and natural agricultural production systems through tax incentives
- Continue to prevent residential from locating close to agriculturally designated areas through designation of urban settlement areas
- Require disclosure of agricultural practices to prospective builders in the ALR at the time the building permit is issued, and making prospective builders aware of the Farm Practices Protection Act and Regulations<sup>47</sup> and that the ALR is a working agriculture zone where good farm management practices, including sight, smells and sounds, are supported
- Request that realtors disclose and that new rural-residential property owners accept a covenant, registered on title, normal impacts associated with adjacent agricultural operations
- Create a Development Permit Area covering the rural-urban interface with planning provisions for setbacks, buffering, screening, landscaping, siting, and fencing on the non-farm side as redevelopment occurs
- Implement setbacks as per BCMAL's guide to edge planning<sup>48</sup> and ALC guidelines for developments on land adjacent to farms in the ALR
- Encourage farmers to notify neighbours of upcoming activities/farming operations that may create unexpected situations
- Establish rural block watches to monitor good neighbour behaviour
- Where non-farm uses in the ALR are allowed, require non-farm property owners in the ALR to construct buffers on their properties so as not to infringe on adjacent agricultural operations.

### 2.3.7 Supporting Sustainable Rural Tourism

Rural tourism is the act of leaving the urban environment and traveling into the rural regions, for the purpose of experiencing and enjoying the natural beauty, the agricultural diversity, the quaintness of small towns, the cultural richness, and to escape the pressures of urban lifestyles in order to have pleasurable experiences and improve the quality of life."<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Central Saanich currently requires covenants for new developments adjacent to the ALR and increased setbacks to provide buffering from agricultural operations.

<sup>48</sup> BCMAL. 2009. Guide to Edge Planning: Promoting Compatibility Along Urban-Agricultural Edges. [http://www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/publications/823100-2\\_Guide\\_to\\_Edge\\_Planning.pdf](http://www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/publications/823100-2_Guide_to_Edge_Planning.pdf)

<sup>49</sup> Buck, R. AgriTours North America Inc. Rural tourism and agri-tourism: A practical approach to niche tourism. Report to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Agritourism is “...travel that combines agricultural or rural settings and products within a tourism experience.” It includes providing visitors with a broad spectrum of agriculturally-based experiences ranging from fruit and vegetable stand shopping (direct farm marketing) to winery, orchard, garden and alpaca tours, from farm-based bed and breakfast accommodation, to participation in harvest festivals, farmer's markets and cattle drives.”<sup>50</sup>

As such agritourism is one component of rural tourism, which also includes natural resources tourism, historical tourism, cultural tourism, farm tourism, green tourism and alternative (e.g., ecotourism, adventure, thematic, authentic atmosphere and cuisine) tourism. Studies indicate that agritourism casts a larger net than strictly farm tourism, reflected in the patronage of urban tourists with no knowledge of agriculture and the fact that most people combine more than one types of tourist activity into their excursions. It is also worth noting that virtually all agri-tourism enterprises also market rural tourism.

Farmers worldwide have adjusted to changing times by diversifying into agritourism, with the targeted objective to create additional income in support of working farms. In Europe, the core meaning has always centered on farm-based accommodation. In contrast in Canada and the US, agritourism is more clearly associated with markets for farm products, education tours, and agri-entertainment. In most cases, agritourism makes an important economic contribution to farming in the urban fringe by responding to broader public preferences than farmland protection.

However, it is useful to distinguish between opportunities created for individuals to financially sustain a rural lifestyle from opportunities to carry on the business of farming. Sustainable agritourism would enhance the business of farming.

Agritourism enterprises are often not regarded as bona fide businesses. This is because:

- Many start small on a “shoe-string” budget with no long-range vision
- There are problems obtaining the necessary “equity” position to acquire funding
- The enterprise is not based on a business planning framework
- Financial institutions have limited awareness of the value and benefits of agritourism and are often reluctant to support funding such operations
- Agritourism operators may be unsure of how to approach financial lenders.

### ***The Situation***

Agritourism is an activity designated separately as a farm use in the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) Act Regulation. Agritourism accommodation and bed and breakfasts are permitted uses subject to regulation under the ALC Act and local government bylaw. In addition, other agritourism activities such as farm retail sales stands, licensed winery or cidery, and horse-riding are designated as farm uses.

The Southern Vancouver Island Direct Marketing Association has a strong presence on the Saanich Peninsula and particularly in Central Saanich, with over 40 members participating in farm-based

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<sup>50</sup> BC Agritourism Alliance Definition – [www.bcagritourism.org](http://www.bcagritourism.org)

agritourism. In addition to farm retail, major venues include the Farmers' Market at the historic Saanich Fairgrounds, fall fairs, farm festivals, farm tours and bed & breakfasts.

Types of allowed agritourism activities are regulated by local government, primarily with respect to public health and safety, permits, parking, signage, setbacks.

Agritourism is implicitly supported in the BC Agricultural Plan. There is notable emphasis in the Plan on the promotion of BC food products, reconnecting British Columbians with locally grown food, bridging the urban/agriculture divide, and ensuring the regulatory structure to support the sustainable growth of farming.

### ***The Issues***

While implicitly agritourism should benefit the agricultural sector, there is concern that it is causing negative spill over impacts into the farming community. These impacts include:<sup>51</sup>

- Loss of privacy
- Intrusion of people into farming settings and disruption of rural lifestyles
- Trespass and vandalism
- Increased noise, litter and trash
- Over loading of rural infrastructure, such as water, roads
- Loss of farmland to building development
- Deterioration in the visual quality of the landscape
- Creating a false image of farming
- Devaluing the farmers' role as a food producer
- Conflict between agritourism and conventional agricultural production and operations

On the other hand, agritourism is an accepted farm use in the ALR. The corresponding issue is how to accommodate it through farmland use so that the desired economic contribution to the agricultural economy can be realized. In this respect, agritourism needs guidance on what will be appropriate on farmland, a streamlined process for determining appropriateness in specific situations, and an efficient agritourism-friendly regulatory regime governing speedy implementation. An expanded definition of agritourism needs to be developed to address use of land issues.

### ***Rationale for Action***

The limits of agritourism, encompassing farm retail, agri-entertainment, agri-lodging and agri-education are uncertain. While more tourist traffic is generally regarded as a "good thing", the targets of agritourism promotion are not articulated.

Studies indicate that agriculture is critical to agritourism, not open space or ruralness in general.<sup>52</sup> Important concepts related to agritourism are authenticity and experience, particularly in relation to the farm fresh feeling and attraction to agricultural activities. This suggests that it is vitally

<sup>51</sup> Ryan, S., K. DeBord and K. McClellan. 2006. Agritourism in Pennsylvania: An industry assessment. Centre for Rural Pennsylvania. <http://www.rural.palegislature.us/agritourism2006.pdf>

<sup>52</sup> Wood, RE. 2006. Farmland preservation and agritourism in South Jersey: An exploratory study. <http://wrand.rutgers.edu/pdf/publications/RandAgritourismReport.pdf>

important that steps be taken to ensure that authenticity of local production is enhanced and that the right kind of agriculture is in place to support agritourism.

### ***Options***

Several options to promote sustainable rural tourism initiatives have been identified:

- Incorporate the philosophy of preserving farmland into agritourism concepts by supporting initiatives that emphasize retention of raw farmland and highlight the productive capacity of the land
- Lobby the province to develop a classification of appropriate agri-tourism activities on farmland that should be protected under the Farm Practices Protection Act
- Develop a process for assessing the incremental and cumulative desirability of new applications
- Develop supportive agri-tourism friendly municipal bylaws and regulatory requirements, sensitive to seasonality and rural context
- Implement quality standards for agritourism
- Develop an agritourism handbook that assists operators to identify and address regulations and implement planning processes that will increase the likelihood of successful business development
- In light of the potential for certain farm operations to be inappropriate for specific areas, consider regulatory measures that would enable the municipality to regulate or prohibit farm operations that are not consistent with the Minister's bylaw standards.

## **2.4 Enhance the Agricultural Resource Base**

Much of the infrastructure for agriculture, with the exception of flood control, drainage and irrigation works, has developed historically in response to incremental increases in demand. Some of this infrastructure is in need of repair or improvement to maintain efficient operating conditions.

Planned infrastructure is more effective in delivering needed services efficiently and agriculture must have appropriate infrastructure works to maintain farm viability. As agricultural operations have intensified, infrastructure needs have risen and the scale of requirements has increased. A municipal responsibility is evident, specifically where services involve storm water flows and water supply and equitable capital and operating solutions are required.

Agricultural requirements now require more coordination with other resource uses and impending changes associated with climate change. Environmental and conservation considerations will influence how agriculture continues to utilize resources responsibly into the future.

### **2.4.1 Availability of Agricultural Water Resources**

#### ***The Situation***

Water is indispensable for crop and livestock production. The supply system for agricultural water in Central Saanich is capable of providing agriculture's needs.

#### ***The Issues***

However issues include:

- Restriction on the size of the water main to some agricultural areas

- Policy to restrict water supply as a means of discouraging rural residential expansion
- Potential water use and management conflicts between agriculture and fish/riparian management
- Affordability of agricultural irrigation water supply.

### ***Rationale for Action***

One challenge is to ensure that the drainage and flood control systems for farmlands are efficient in providing the conditions for productive agriculture. A second challenge is to ensure that adequate water is reserved to support agriculture into the future. This requires supply planning, identification and quantification of sources, and implementation of measures to conserve water resources to increase the reliability of water supply.

### ***Options***

Provision of well-functioning water supply infrastructure is a critical condition for ensuring the continued viability of agricultural production. Options include:

- Continue the water balance project with BCMAL
- Develop a municipal agricultural water supply plan to expand farmland access to water supply and increase capacity to irrigate
- Promote and advocate for implementation of best management plans for irrigation and water conservation on farms
- Support continuation of irrigation BMP grant funding under the Environmental Farm Planning program
- Support efforts to reserve agricultural water for farmland in the ALR including, where appropriate, on-farm storage.

## **2.4.2 Agricultural Drainage and Flood Control**

Drainage is one of the critical components of water infrastructure, as freeboard is mandatory to create conditions for root growth. Similarly, while some degree of off-season flooding is acceptable and even beneficial to agriculture, flood control on farmlands during the growing season is absolutely necessary to support productive agriculture.

### ***The Situation***

Current drainage on agricultural lands in Central Saanich varies from watershed to watershed. The Integrated Stormwater Management Plan<sup>53</sup>, which has the goal of restoring the dispersal of rainwater flows to near predevelopment levels, is in the process of being implemented. Through the Health Watersheds Committee, agriculture has a voice in developing solutions to the changes that urbanization has caused to the Districts storm water system and natural habitat.

However, agriculture has also had to compromise to satisfy new requirements related to habitat conservation and riparian zones. Protection of riparian area is a cornerstone of watershed management on agricultural land. The plan commits agriculture to watershed stewardship through the adoption of best management practices respecting farm ditches, ditch maintenance, stream bank re-vegetation, sediment control, livestock watering, and setbacks.

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<sup>53</sup> Worley Parsons. 2009. Integrated Stormwater Management Plan, District of Central Saanich. [http://www.centrialsaanich.ca/hall/Departments/Engineering\\_Public\\_Works/Integrated\\_Stormwater\\_Management\\_Plan\\_ISMP\\_Study.htm](http://www.centrialsaanich.ca/hall/Departments/Engineering_Public_Works/Integrated_Stormwater_Management_Plan_ISMP_Study.htm)

### ***The Issues***

Concerns about drainage and flood control management on agricultural lands include:

- Policies governing the routing of storm water through agricultural lands during storm events
- Increased public demand for riparian management in farmland areas
- Use of farmland as filter strips, constructed wetlands, water detention, and for constructed farm ponds
- Agriculture having to reach a new management balance with other stakeholders to reach common ground
- Quality of retained storm water for irrigation
- Potential for inundation of farmland by contaminated drainage water
- Drainage and flooding problems created on private farmlands by municipal storm water management systems
- Non-farming concerns that farming in lowland areas has decreased the natural capacity of watercourses to handle storm water flows.

### ***Rationale for Action***

Drainage and flood control have always been important management considerations in Central Saanich agriculture. As land use in the Municipality has intensified, systems for handling water have been altered by developments. There is a need for a balanced approach to ensuring that conditions for agriculture are provided while meeting other public functions of water management systems.

### ***Options***

Provision of well-functioning drainage and flood control infrastructure is a necessary condition for ensuring the continued viability of agricultural production. Options include:

- Fully implement the Integrated Stormwater Management Plan (ISMP)
- Ensure that improved storm water management at the expense of agriculture is adequately mitigated and/or compensated for and that ISMP recommendations are effectively monitored to provide intended results
- Have all drainage and flood control infrastructure plans subjected to agricultural impact assessments to identify drainage and flood impacts and mitigation measures
- Have riparian and conservation projects subjected to agricultural impact assessments to identify agricultural impacts and mitigation measures
- Lobby the BC Ministry of Transportation to exercise vigilance to eliminate the potential for degradation of farmland by contaminated runoff from highways (e.g., salt runoff from Pat Bay Highway)
- Strive to retain or implement ARDSA<sup>54</sup> drainage and flood control criteria for farmland, which accommodates flood events with timely drawdown
- Create water retention systems to moderate storm water flows and provide agricultural irrigation water, with least impact on farmland.

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<sup>54</sup> BCMAL. Drainage Factsheet: Planning for Agricultural Drainage. The regional drainage criteria for agricultural areas are: i) To remove the runoff from the 10 year, 5 day storm, within 5 days in the dormant period (November 1 to February 28); ii) To remove the runoff from the 10 year, 2 day storm, within 2 days in the growing period (March 1 to October 31); iii) Between storm events and in periods when drainage is required, the base flow in channels must be maintained at 1.2 m below field elevation; iv) The conveyance system must be sized appropriately for both base flow and design storm flow.

### 2.4.3 Rural Transportation and Traffic Routes

#### *The Situation*

The frequency of traffic through farmland has increased significantly. The increase is related to a variety of factors including: truck routing, increased rural-residential populations, agritourism, and commuters taking back roads through the ALR. Some areas are experiencing elevated levels of heterogeneous farm use as farms adapt to increased opportunities to market fresh produce and attract agro-tourists.

#### *The Issues*

The transportation corridors in Central Saanich are not designed to take high levels of vehicle traffic. Some forms of permitted farmland use are increasing traffic congestion and creating operating complications for farmers. Issues include:

- Restrictions on types and density of traffic on certain routes are not friendly to conventional farming operations
- Access and requirements associated with agritourism exceeds road capacity
- Rural residential development is increasing road requirements.

#### *Rationale for Action*

Well planned rural transportation corridors in agricultural areas are critical to ensuring that traffic through agricultural areas is channelled safely away from zones used by agriculture. In Central Saanich, land use in the ALR needs to be carefully considered in relation to traffic to ensure that the transportation systems are capable of meeting agricultural requirements in a safe and timely fashion.

#### *Options*

Provision of well-functioning transportation infrastructure is a necessary condition for ensuring the continued viability of agricultural operations and can be strategic to some degree in influencing, directing, and encouraging certain types of agriculture into specific areas. Options include:

- Develop a rural transportation servicing plan for agriculture
- Subject transportation proposals to agricultural impact assessments to identify impacts and mitigation measures
- Incorporate agricultural considerations in planning and designing transportation corridors in the ALR to facilitate farmland access and minimize farming operations disruption
- Develop initiatives to facilitate sharing of roads in agricultural areas by non-farm traffic and tractors/farm equipment.

### 2.4.4 Wildlife and Invasive Species

Burgeoning unchecked populations of wildlife are serious threats to profitable agriculture throughout North America. Invasive alien species of organisms are having devastating impacts on natural ecosystems and biodiversity as well as creating pest issues for agriculture.<sup>55</sup>

Well managed farmlands provide effective control of the spread of invasive species but are banquet settings for wildlife. Conversely, economically challenged farmlands are susceptible to deteriorated

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<sup>55</sup>Hinterland Who's Who. Issues and Topics: Invasive alien species in Canada.  
<http://www.hww.ca/hww2.asp?id=220>

management and can harbour undesired pests. Less intensively managed fields usually provide poorer quality wildlife habitat.

### ***The Situation***

Resident geese and habituated deer are creating significant impacts on field crops in Central Saanich. Other species that have become problematic where populations are over-abundant include starlings and raccoons.

Field specific actions to control wildlife impacts, other than by total exclusion or population control, are generally ineffective in dealing with regional populations of wildlife. While exclusion may provide site-specific relief from crop depredation, excluded wildlife is often channelled into a smaller unprotected area where impacts may be magnified. And while hunting continues to be an option, the activity typically only takes place for a short period of the year (providing little benefit at other times), may not target problem areas because of urban and human density constraints, and is often not perceived favourably by the general public.

Recent developments have resulted in communication between stakeholders in trying to find solutions problems caused by populations of resident Canada geese. Currently, the potential to control geese related to the need to protect public safety around Victoria Airport is being investigate. Other problem areas include deer, starlings and invasive species.

### ***The Issues***

Farmers understand and accept the general public's desire for wildlife benefits that originate from private farmland. In providing these amenities, agriculture sustains and faces current and future impacts that are beyond the best management or control of individual operators. As a principle, reasonable compensation and mitigation should be provided for the public ecological goods and services provided, in the interests of societal fairness and equitability.

The key issues are:

- Inadequate recognition that agriculture/farmers provide valuable ecological goods and services at a cost of threats to continued economic viability
- Absence of a carrying capacity model(s) for dealing with excessive and uncontrolled populations of wildlife
- Lack of an ecosystem approach to environmental management respecting , invasive plants and non-indigenous species of animals and birds
- Potential human health and safety issues related to wildlife overpopulation
- Maintenance of beneficial relationship between agriculture and fisheries and riparian areas management.

### ***Rationale for Action***

Agriculture is simply less economically sustainable when wildlife populations consume the fruits of production and environmental precautions compromise farming activities. The challenge is to seek the balance wherein agriculture can continue to provide habitat for fish and wildlife through adoption of mitigation measures and wildlife managers can take responsibility for the externalities that their management policies create by working with the agricultural sector to finding practical solutions.

### **Options**

Several options for addressing over-abundant wildlife population problems are identified and include:

- Encourage the Ministry of Environment to develop carrying capacity parameters and population management strategies for over-abundant indigenous species in the District, including consideration of strategies used in other jurisdictions
- Encourage the Ministry of Environment to develop a peninsula-wide management strategy for over-abundant alien and invasive species
- Lobby the province to re-instate the exclusion fencing BMP in the Environmental Farm Plan program to control deer predation of agricultural crops
- Continue to work with the Victoria Airport Authority to develop strategies and techniques to control resident geese populations to ensure the public safety<sup>56</sup>
- Engage with the Environment Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service and Health Canada to pursue resident geese carrying capacity parameters based on human health risks
- Engage with Environment Canada to establish a management protocol for a resident waterfowl category that allows culling to manage populations
- Investigate the feasibility of establishing a resident goose culling program in association with a local food access and security program
- Develop education information and materials to discourage the public from feeding migratory wildlife, which results in disruption of their migratory behaviour
- Encourage research on over-abundant resident geese populations and the potential food safety and public health risks associated with agricultural production contamination
- Encourage research on over-abundant starling populations and the potential food safety and public health risks associated with agricultural production contamination
- Support research into measures, techniques and devices to scare away problem wildlife while minimizing disruption of the general public
- Support the continuation of farm –based hunting as a management control strategy, and recognize the benefit provided by farmers by maintaining low licensing fees
- Lobby the provincial government to provide compensation for crop damage to farmers, through participation in federal –provincial waterfowl damage compensation programs
- Lobby BCAC to have Central Saanich included as a provincial waterfowl damage compensation area
- Seek out conservation groups with mandates to support and fund mutually beneficial stewardship relationships and programs with Central Saanich farmers (e.g., Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust) and like-minded organizations that acknowledge through their programs that agriculture provides valued ecological goods and services
- Partner with the Invasive Plant Council of BC to establish an initiative to control invasive species on the Saanich Peninsula
- Encourage research into integrated farm-level strategies to mitigate or eliminate the potential for damages during the growing season when susceptibility to loss or damage poses the greatest threat to farm viability.

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<sup>56</sup> Central Saanich is presently applying for funding to develop a management strategy to alleviate impacts from the high resident goose population.

### **2.4.5 Organic Nutrients for Agricultural Production**

Agricultural crop production typically requires the application of nutrients to enhance growth and yield. Soils become depleted in nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, as well as micro-nutrients, without replenishment. While many growers apply synthetic fertilizers to produce crops conventionally, the proximity of farmland to urban populations, presence of rural-residential holdings, and small parcel sizes have conspired to favour growing practices that do not employ other synthetic inputs, such as pesticides.

#### ***The Situation***

In recent years, agricultural operations in the Saanich Peninsula have increasingly embraced organic and “natural” production practices in response to local demand for these perceived safer and more environmentally friendly farm products. This trend has been augmented by increased farm-direct and agritourism marketing models.

Because of the limited representation of livestock operations in the Central Saanich agriculture sector, there is no abundant local source of farm-source organic nutrients to support local organic farming systems. Currently, household organics from the CRD, are of interest as a potential source of agricultural nutrients.

While biosolids and wastewater reclamation projects occur in the CRD, the suitability of these products for agricultural food production has not been determined at this time. As such, other sources of organic nutrients are preferred.

#### ***The Issues***

Central Saanich agriculture requires a reliable source of organic nutrients that meet certain specifications:

- Insignificant quantity to meet local nutrient needs
- Safe for use in human food production systems
- Available at affordable price.

#### ***Rationale for Action***

As other organic production systems in other jurisdictions have found out, the sustainability of organic and natural crop production systems is constrained by the availability of nutrients. In light of the imbalance between the needs food production systems and nutrient production in Central Saanich, steps need to be taken to ensure that agriculture has reliable access to locally produced crop nutrients.

#### ***Options***

Options to develop organic nutrient supplies for Central Saanich include:

- Investigate the feasibility of incorporating more green crop plow-under and legumes in the crop rotation to replenish nutrients, including implications for irrigation requirements
- Develop an inventory of livestock manures, in the District, such as horse manures, to determine if opportunities exist to better utilize this resource on farms in the area
- Continue to participate in the CRD household organics project to identify opportunity for Central Saanich agriculture to gain access to this valuable source of organic compost

- Coordinate with an organic fertilizer company, such as Bio-Fert in Langley, to identify and investigate precision in-the-row fertilization techniques requiring less fertilizer to optimize production
- Support continuing investigation of the health, disease and safety risks associated with using manure composts from conventional production for organic and “natural” crop production systems
- Create and support initiatives to attract livestock production and processing to the Saanich Peninsula
- Encourage development of local fish based fertilizers
- Investigate the feasibility of sourcing poultry and other organic manure composts from organic operations in the Lower Mainland.

#### 2.4.6 Golden Nematode Quarantine

##### *The Situation*

Cysts of the golden nematode were first found in the soil of Central Saanich in 1965. With soil fumigation, potatoes continued to be grown in the area in the 1970’s. In 1980, it was discovered that practices to control the golden nematode infestation had failed to stop spread of the pest. The Canadian government enacted the Golden Nematode Order,<sup>57</sup> banning the growing of nursery stock, root crops and other plants that could spread the pest and restricting the transportation and movement of any plants, soil, and materials that could contain the golden nematode. Regulations have been promulgated for controlling the commercial growing and movement of plants in Central Saanich of the nightshade family, including potato, tomato, eggplant and pepper.<sup>58</sup>

##### *The Issues*

The Golden Nematode quarantine has severely limited Central Saanich farmers in their cropping and rotation options, and required extra precautions to avoid the spread of the pest in the handling of produce, movement of equipment. These restrictions have prevented the exploitation of a range of marketing options and imposed extra costs on other farming operations.

##### *Rationale for Action*

It is time to re-assess the Golden Nematode situation. Central Saanich has little potential to supply some of the most extensively consumed produce items without modification of the ban. The risk management protocols associated with handling nursery and root crops need to be re-examined to determine if more proactive approaches are feasible. Discussion with CFIA suggests that there may room to negotiate a position that allows re-introduction of banned crops in the near future, under a set of conditions to be determined.

##### *Options*

There are options for creating the opportunity to re-introduce banned crops and change or adjust to current protocols:

- Enlist CFIA to conduct a survey to see if the pest can be detected

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<sup>57</sup> [Golden Nematode Regulation \(Reg. 253/79\)](#)

<sup>58</sup> The Potato Production and Sale (Central Saanich) Restriction Regulations (1982), the Eggplants and Tomatoes Production (Central Saanich) Restriction Regulations (1982), and a similar regulation affecting peppers in 1986 control the growing of these crops in Central Saanich.

- Investigate the status of research in The Netherlands and elsewhere where synthetic substances have created that mimic the presence of solanaceous corps, cause GN larvae to hatch and then die off in the absence of a host, leaving fields in which the pest has been exterminated
- Advocate to the province for the engagement a consultant to negotiate a position that allows re-introduction of banned crops in the near future, under a set of conditions to be determine
- Investigate the feasibility of installing phyto-sanitary processing capacity with the capability to eliminate the risk of spreading the nematode pest using vegetable food safety protocols.

## **2.5 Increase Public Awareness of Agriculture**

Virtually all jurisdictions in developed countries stress the importance of improving the public's awareness of agriculture, its role in modern society, and the issues it faces.

### **2.5.1 Promoting Local Agriculture**

#### ***The Situation***

While the presence of agricultural activity is significant in the community, Central Saanich agriculture lacks a clear identity among the majority of its population and specifically, urban residents. For non-farming residents, crops and agricultural land uses are green spaces that sustain wildlife and provide scenic landscapes in the midst of urbanization. For farmers, urbanization is often viewed as simply as encroachment into farming country. The incremental and growing threats to farming viability are obscured by the conspicuous historical investment in farm structures, equipment and land.

While there are ongoing efforts to inform primary grade school children about agriculture, these educational courses generally tail off into secondary school and in many cases provide the only exposure of urban-raised members of the population to agricultural themes.

CR-FAIR and other groups are engaged in public awareness and education on the importance of the local food system to food security in the CRD, and as a response to converging health, food safety, and food distribution challenges. Nevertheless, studies suggest that the general public has not yet figured out the connection that, as local farmers are challenged to compete with higher input costs, buying "cheap" imported food does not translate into demand for local products

In the grocery store, consumers are often oblivious to where the food has originated, how it was grown, whether it is in season, or the impact its production on the environment. Yet the public is highly attuned to concepts such as global warming, climate change, organic, GMO-free, no spray, low carbon footprint, and sustainability, without knowing the connection to local production.

#### ***The Issues***

In the competition for land and resources, agriculture cannot survive without public support and consideration. Current food trends are supportive of the concept of local agriculture and protection of farmland. Nevertheless, agriculture faces public relations challenges related to:

- General low agricultural literacy of the public
- Inadequate emphasis on agriculture in the classroom
- Limited understanding of how food, fibre and renewable resource products are produced
- Connecting diet and health to the nutrition of safe and healthy local agricultural products
- Attracting new entrants to career opportunities in agriculture
- Ensuring that decision makers make policies affecting agriculture based on informed knowledge.

#### ***Rationale for Action***

Support of local agricultures complements a range of other initiatives including improving public health, food security, quality of life, and community based income and employment. Increasing the profile of agriculture in the public's eye is instrumental to ensuring that agriculture is front and

center in the collective awareness of the community. Partnerships are needed to connect the contributions that local agriculture to community wellbeing. Improved awareness is anticipated to foster collaborations that are critical to the vitality of the agricultural sector and its long term prosperity.

### **Options**

The recent initiatives to support agriculture have been enthusiastically received by the public and the agricultural sector. Agriculture is also aware of the need to market itself after having assumed for too long that the public implicitly understands where their food comes and how important it is to be available locally. Other options to promote agricultural awareness, support local agricultural business, and increase public participation to support/celebrate the local food system include:

- Continue farmers' markets and Agricultural Fair events featuring local agricultural products
- Continue to work with local industry and neighbouring municipalities (e.g., North Saanich) to promote the Chef's Collaborative, 'taste of Central Saanich' food promotions, and other Peninsula initiatives to promote locally grown food
- Consider dedicating an agriculture-food webpage on District website, with 'operation/farmer of the month' features etc.; 'fact sheets', presentations to Council
- Develop a multi-partner communications plan to raise awareness of agriculture
- Develop annual 'State of Agriculture' reports
- Support community gardens/urban agriculture demos to promote agricultural awareness
- Promote road/neighbourhood signage to identify agricultural areas, sub-areas and what is grown in those areas
- Develop road signage to engage the public in respecting farm traffic, tractor signage, crop identification in fields
- Work with the farming community to enhance agriculture education at schools
- Provide an annual scholarship in agriculture to a Grade 12 student interested in pursuing agricultural studies
- Work with community organizations to promote connections among agriculture, health, and wellness
- Support the development of a community demonstration farm
- Disseminate agricultural statistics to the public on a regular basis
- Prepare an agricultural brochure highlighting Central Saanich agriculture and make available to the tourism sector.

### **2.5.2 Developing a Role for Agriculture in the Region**

Peri-urban<sup>59</sup> conditions in other jurisdictions have shown that the expanding urban fringe creates both pressures on, and opportunities for, rural economies. In Europe, the multifunctional role of agriculture as a guardian of cultural heritage, environmental manager, and preserve of rural landscapes is being recognized for its vital role in providing goods and services to urban populations.<sup>60</sup> The preferred policy response is to better integrate farmers and farmland in an

<sup>59</sup> "Peri-urban" refers to location in the perimeter of urban areas and under the influence of urban populations.

<sup>60</sup> See Peri-Urban Regions Platform Europe (PURPLE). 2007. PURPLE and CAP reform. Position paper. <http://www.purple-eu.org/Documents/policy%20documents/071107PURPLE%20CAP%20reform%20position%20paper.pdf>

approach focused on socio-economic vitality through providing innovative and diversified products and services that respond to the needs of urbanites.

These services include or could include:

- Aesthetics of the rural setting in proximity to the city
- Protection of the clean environment and biodiversity
- Reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions
- Protection and maintenance of ecosystem benefits
- Management of water quantity and quality
- Producing healthy food products
- Providing access opportunities for recreation and healthy lifestyles.

The implication is that the peri-urban region is a separate territory that needs to be managed in a sustainable manner with the needs of urbanites, farmers and the environment taken into consideration. In this respect, the Leader Community Initiative<sup>61</sup> which has been implemented since 1991 in the EU, targets specific rural territories for area-based strategic planning where a multi-sector approach, advised by a local action group, is used. The strategy is built on the concept of territorial competitiveness and considered the only way to ensure long-term viability of a rural area.<sup>62</sup> One revealing European insight notes that "...rurality near the city has become rurality of the city..." and the development of rural areas is likely to be driven more by the needs of the urban system rather than by the needs of farmers and the rural population.<sup>63</sup>

### ***The Situation***

While interaction between farmers and urbanites is increasing in an ad-hoc manner, Central Saanich agriculture operates in relative isolation to the resident population in the CRD. The content of this interaction is currently focussed mostly on markets for fresh food products, and only marginally on the multifunctional role that the peri-urban region could play in the lives of its non-agricultural neighbours.

Nevertheless, there is a strong market for the multi-functional attributes of farmland. This need is expressed in continued demand for many benefits that farmland provides including: rural non-farming estates, wildlife habitat, riparian habitat, storm water management, recreation, sight-seeing, and agritourism. The system is currently out of balance with costs and impacts being incurred at the expense of production agriculture.

### ***The Issues***

Central Saanich's agriculture sector is receiving intelligence from the consumer public about what they feel is important policy for farmland and farmers. Public interest is strongly focused on preserving the capacity for continued local food production along with appreciation of other amenities that farmland provides. However, an agricultural strategy and policy instruments for

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<sup>61</sup> Saraceno, E. 2008. Territorial strategies. Leader+ Magazine

<sup>62</sup> Leader European Observatory. 1999. Territorial competitiveness: Creating a territorial development strategy in light of LEADER experience. Part1. <http://www.fao.org/sard/static/leader/en/biblio/competitivity.pdf>

<sup>63</sup> For example, see Wauters, E. 2008. Farming near the City. Rurality Near the City. [http://www.vlm.be/SiteCollectionDocuments/Rurality%20near%20the%20city/rnc\\_ws\\_wauters.pdf](http://www.vlm.be/SiteCollectionDocuments/Rurality%20near%20the%20city/rnc_ws_wauters.pdf)

farmlands has not yet developed that balances these various demands in ways that reflect agricultural concerns about long-term viability and makes best use of farmland assets.

Currently, most farmers are having a difficult time in accessing these potential markets in the absence of a regional vision that articulates the role of agriculture in the urban fringe and policy that promotes developments in the desired directions. Policy needs to address how the urban population uses the community and how access of farmers' goods and services to consumers may be improved using this information.

### ***Rationale for Action***

Local producers cannot compete with mass production being imported from lower wage countries. However, agriculture has and can connect more with consumers in providing the types of products, regional diversity and the local identity they desire. This requires coordination and planning to communicate consumer needs and be able respond to them through innovation, policy and appropriate regulation while preserving the farmland base. One key component of the agricultural strategy is the demand for local food capacity in response to heightened concerns about regional food security and greater food-self-sufficiency. Pursuing this opportunity requires the development of a strategy that communicates a rounded product message, places it in the appropriate market channels, and backs it up with verifiable, desired, attributes.

### ***Options***

Options for better integrating agriculture into the peri-urban regional functions include:

- Develop a comprehensive vision in the agriculture plan that articulates the long-term role of primary agricultural production in the mix
- Undertake an audit of peri-urban resources and determine indicators that will be useful in assessing the status of assets, risks, and developing parameters
- Stimulate diversification and innovation while minimizing negative impacts
- Develop tools to manage farmland production in balance with other functions, and considering that agritourism can be a cohesive package engaging accommodation, rural attractions and farm retail enterprises as a family of activity
- Undertake an activity study of the urban population with the objective of identifying where consumers go and where agriculture can access them
- Investigate avenues for integrating agricultural production and distribution with the patterns of use within urban areas
- Pursue a pilot project to test integration strategy for integrating agricultural production with urban use patterns
- Seek IAF funding to investigate the regulatory constraints to accessing consumers in public venues and prepare a guide to compliance
- Seek IAF funding to develop venues, policy and regulations that facilitate the ability of farmers to participate in the local food system most efficiently
- Seek IAF funding to investigate the potential to create short food chains that magnify the positive attributes of local food
- Prepare brochure highlighting agricultural opportunities for value-added in Central Saanich and distribute to the business community and tourist sector.



## Appendix A: Agricultural Stakeholder Survey - Summary Findings

Agricultural stakeholders have been interviewed in the Central Saanich Agricultural Area Plan planning process. The list of interviewees was supplied by the District of Central Saanich.

Six questions were asked:

1. In your estimation, what are the top three issues facing agriculture in Central Saanich overall?
2. In your opinion, what are the 3 biggest strengths/opportunities that farming operations in Central Saanich possess?
3. In your opinion, what are the 3 biggest threats/weaknesses that farming enterprises in Central Saanich face?
4. In your opinion, what themes or principles does the agricultural plan for Central Saanich need to embrace in order to be successful? (e.g., local food security, pesticide free, work with IR, agro-tourism based, farm direct to retail)
5. In your opinion, what needs to be done to enhance and sustain viable agriculture in Central Saanich?
6. Do you have any other comments that would assist in developing the Agricultural Plan?

### **A.1 Report on Central Saanich Stakeholder Interviews**

Thirty-eight persons were interviewed in the course of identifying Central Saanich agricultural issues, threats, strengths, constraints and possible options to improve the viability of agriculture. Answers within the questions have been aggregated to assist the interpretation. The numerical results should be treated with caution since number of responses cannot be assumed to indicate the importance of the responses. The findings are reported by question.

#### **A.1.1 Top Three Issues facing agriculture in Central Saanich Overall?**

Some respondents gave more than 3 responses, with 197 responses received overall.

As seen in Summary Table 1, the top 3 issues are:

- Dissatisfaction with regulations,
- Barriers toward entry into farming
- Agricultural inputs (housing and labour related).

Other prominent issues include:

- Adequacy of infrastructure (drainage, water access, roads)

- Encroachment on farms (non-farm use, rural-urban conflicts)
- Wildlife (geese, deer, raccoons)
- Marketing (competing with imports, difficulty accessing the market, attracting the consumer to local food)
- Productive use of farmland (low intensity use of farmland, constraints in using lease land, non-farming land owners)
- Economics (low prices, high cost of production).

**Appendix A- Summary Table 1: The Top Three Issues Facing Central Saanich Agriculture**

Numerical Ranking	Issue	Number of Responses
1	Regulatory	30
2	Entry into Farming	23
3	Agricultural Inputs	18
4	Infrastructure	17
5	Encroachment on Farms	15
6	Wildlife	14
	Marketing	14
7	Productive Use of Farmland Base	13
	Economics	13
8	Quality /Access to Resources	12
9	Services	10
10	Agritourism	8
11	Farm Practices	5
12	Value Added	4
13	Agricultural Planning	3
	Vision for Agriculture	3

**A.1.2 Top Three Strengths/Opportunities that Farming Operations in Central Saanich Possess?**

Some respondents gave more than 3 responses, with 138 responses received overall.

**Appendix A – Summary Table 2: Top Three Strengths or Opportunities of Central Saanich Agriculture**

Numerical Ranking	Issue	Number of Responses
1	Marketing	34
	Quality /Access to Resources	34
2	Public Awareness and Support	22
3	Farming Community	14
4	Business Prospects	13
5	Amenities	12
6	Food Trends	6
7	Regulatory	3

As seen in Summary Table 2, the top 3 strengths/opportunities are:

- Marketing (large urban population, strong farm direct presence, educated and affluent consumers)
- Natural resources (favourable climate, good soils)
- Public awareness and support (public support for local food and agriculture)

Other prominent strengths/opportunities include:

- Farming community (work together, supportive)
- Business prospects (client loyalty, farmland available, well established operations)
- Amenities (rural ambience, low impact agriculture).

### **A.1.3 Top Three Threats/Challenges facing Central Saanich Agriculture**

Respondents provided 128 responses.

As seen in Summary Table 3, the top three threats/challenges are perceived to be:

- Entry into farming (high land prices, poor access to land, lack of support)
- Regulatory (unsupportive municipal regulation, increasing food safety requirements)
- Marketing (cheaper competition).

Other prominent threats/challenges concerned:

- Productive Use of Farmland Base (non-farming owner, idle land, fragmented land)
- Economics (low profitability, lease constraints)
- Farm Practices (soil fill degradation, pressure on pesticide use)
- Infrastructure (storm water control, access to water)
- Encroachment on farms (urbanization, agritourism operations).

### Appendix A – Summary Table 3: The Top Three Threats/Challenges Facing Central Saanich Agriculture

Numerical Ranking	Issue	Number of Responses
1	Entry into Farming	21
2	Regulatory	16
3	Marketing	13
4	Productive Use of Farmland Base	11
5	Economics	10
6	Farm Practices	8
7	Infrastructure	7
	Encroachment on Farms	7
9	Value Added	6
10	Quality of (Access to) Resources	5
	Services	5
	Vision for agriculture	5
11	Wildlife	3
	Public Awareness and Support	3
	Climate and Environment	3
	Communication and Education	3
12	Agricultural Planning	2

#### A.1.4 Themes the Central Saanich Agriculture Area Plan Should Embrace

Respondents provided 63 responses.

### Appendix A – Summary Table 4: Themes the Central Saanich Agriculture Area Plan Should Embrace

Numerical Ranking	Issue	Number of Responses
1	Marketing	15
2	Value to Community	7
3	Communication and Education	6
4	Farmland Preservation	5
	More Defined Agriculture Focus	5
5	Conservation and Sustainability	4
6	Entry into Farming	3
7	Quality /Access to Resources	3
	Inspirational	3
7	Business Prospects	2
8	Implementation Component	1

As seen in Summary Table 4, the top 3 themes suggested are:

- Marketing (promotion of direct sales, expand local food distribution system, agritourism)
- Value to community (local food security, healthy local community = healthy agricultural sector)
- Communication and education (increase awareness of local food by consumers, educate politicians)

Other prominent themes include:

- Farmland preservation (protect farmland and integrity of the ALR)
- More Defined Agriculture Focus (focus on bona fide farmers, value food production)
- Conservation and Sustainability (small ‘o’ organic, ecological goods and services).

**A.1.5 Actions Required to Enhance and Sustain Viable Agriculture in Central Saanich**

Respondents provided 67 responses.

As seen in Summary Table 5, the top 3 suggested areas for action are:

- Regulatory (restrict farm tax benefit to bona fide farmers , adjust regulations to favour food agriculture, introduce farm –friendly bylaws/zoning)
- Productive Use of Farmland (get land back into production, increase use intensity, increase farmer access to farmland)
- Entry into Farming (Business training, transfer skills of older farmers, encourage alternative models to access land base)

Other prominent action areas include:

- Services (hire an agrologist on municipal staff, re-establish BCMAFF extension, compensate farmers for wildlife damage)
- Business prospects (Succession planning, business training for farmers, educating consumers).

**Appendix A – Summary Table 5: Areas for Actions to sustain and enhance Viable Agriculture in Central Saanich**

Numerical Ranking	Issue	Number of Responses
1	Regulatory	13
2	Productive Use of Farmland Base	13
3	Entry into Farming	12
4	Services	10
5	Business Prospects	9
6	Infrastructure	4
	Quality /Access to Resources	4
7	Public Awareness and Support	2

**A.1.6 Other Comments that would assist the Agricultural Area Plan**

Respondents provided 128 responses.

As seen in Summary Table 6, the main other comments related to the following areas:

- Marketing (need to change cheap food attitude, engage consumers, increase ability to compete with global suppliers)
- Agricultural Planning (enough study, agriculture needs to be discussed in the community, real farmers need input)
- Regulatory (unsupportive municipal regulation, increasing food safety requirements)

- Agricultural Inputs (fear of biosolids and composts, shortage of feed and bedding materials).

#### Appendix A –Summary Table 6: Other Comments that would assist the Agricultural Area Plan

Numerical Ranking	Issue	Number of Responses
1	Marketing	8
2	Agricultural Planning	5
3	Regulatory	4
	Agricultural Inputs	4
4	Entry into Farming	3
5	Business Prospects	2
6	Agricultural Constraints	1

As seen in Summary Table 6, the main other comments related to the following areas:

- Marketing (need to change cheap food attitude, engage consumers, increase ability to compete with global suppliers)
- Agricultural Planning (enough study, agriculture needs to be discussed in the community, real farmers need input)
- Regulatory (unsupportive municipal regulation, increasing food safety requirements)
- Agricultural Inputs (fear of biosolids and composts, shortage of feed and bedding materials).

A total of 38 responses were tabulated. The following tables contain a detailed tabular summary of those responses. The tabulations are not intended to be used not as statistical measures but rather as indicators of relative concern by respondents.

#### Appendix A – Detailed Table 7: What are the Top Three Issues facing Agriculture in Central Saanich Overall?

Issues	Category	Number of Responses
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Water supply shortages	5
	Storm -water runoff causing flooding/lack of drainage	6
	Undersized irrigation water infrastructure	2
	Road system changes are antagonistic to agriculture, e.g., road calming leading to narrowing, recreational use of farm routes	1
	Truck routes are constraining to agriculture	1
	Overland runoff from neighbouring property	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Wildlife</b>	Canada geese damage	7
	Deer damage, raccoons	7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Farm Practices</b>	Use of pesticides - safety issues	2
	On-farm burning of diseased material	1
	Need a pickup system to reuse horse manure	1
	Farmland degradation due to soil fill	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Access to Resources</b>	Aquifer water levels are declining	2
	Review of the nematode quarantine	3
	Nematode restriction on nursery production	1
	Inadequate supply of compost, organic matter	5
	No room to grow	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Regulatory</b>	Overlapping bureaucracy	1
	Municipal regulators do not support agriculture, are inflexible	6
	Municipal regulators do not understand the industrial commercial and farm practices aspects of agriculture	3
	Municipal fees, paperwork, building codes, permitting, red tape	5
	Bad attitude by local officials towards agriculture, don't know how it works	2
	Farmer liabilities associated with food production, including costs	1
	Tax regime uncertainty	1

Issues	Category	Number of Responses
	Confusing regulatory inconsistencies between ALC, District and FPPA	2
	Inadequate protection under FPPA	1
	Wrestling with on-farm use challenges to the ALC Act	1
	Lack of enforcement of existing bylaws re: non-farm uses in the ALR	1
	Municipality is only a strong supporter on paper	1
	Inconsistent regulatory role by CS	1
	Municipal regulations are incompatible with small scale farming	3
	Inadequate protection under FPPA	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Services</b>	Loss of farm equipment services	1
	Succession planning	2
	Lack of extension services	3
	Service infrastructure has left the area due to declining numbers of farmers	1
	Lack of extension people	1
	Need more government support re: soils, climate, water supply, water rates	1
	Lack of sewer hook-up for farmers	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Agricultural Inputs</b>	Housing for farm families	2
	Lack of housing for farm workers	8
	Access to a local source of organic matter	1
	Costs of biosecurity all borne by farmers	1
	Costs of manure handling borne by farmers	1
	Labour difficult to find/red tape	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Vision for Agriculture</b>	Growth of non-working agriculture	1
	Need to support real farming, not hobby farming	1
	Lack of food self-sufficiency	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Productive Use of Farmland</b>	Hard to access and harvest small acreages	1
	People buying farmland but not interested in farming it	2
	Maintaining the integrity of the ALR	1
	People don't want to put the effort into farming any longer	1
	Restrictive conditions on lease lands	1
	Unproductive use of very productive land (e.g., hay and horses)	6

Issues	Category	Number of Responses
	Numerous small parcels	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Entry into Farming</b>	Absence of a leasehold system to facilitate access to starting farming	1
	Access to new land by new farmers	4
	Lack of farming knowledge	2
	Economics of small farms are not good	1
	Cost of land	14
	Lack of capital for business development	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Encroachment on Farms</b>	Re-alignment of properties	1
	Power line issue	1
	Development pressure	1
	Growth of non-working agriculture	1
	Encroachment of non-farm use around working farms	5
	Adjacent non-farm uses infringing on agriculture	1
	No backing from ALC on issues negatively affecting farming	1
	Rural-urban conflicts	3
	Urban containment policy re: Van Treight property	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Marketing</b>	Cancellation of the Buy BC program	1
	Access to market	2
	Consumer does not see the benefits of consuming local food	1
	Local hay is low protein, undesirable for horses	1
	Heavy competition in the local farm direct market	1
	Direct market farmers reluctant to establish quality standards in their operations	1
	Consumer does not see the benefits of consuming local food	1
	Unfair produce pricing by retail chains (loss leaders), pricing in general	6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Economics of farming</b>	Cost of regulatory compliance	1
	BC farmer cannot compete on price or quality in the commodity market	1
	Low prices for produce	3
	Cost of production	2
	No economics in farming - future in doubt	2

Issues	Category	Number of Responses
	Labour costs	1
	Cost of city water	2
	Farmers afraid of change	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Agritourism</b>	Agritourism is taxed like light industry but does not get the benefits that light industry does because it is in the ALR	1
	Most agritourism clientele are not local, create inconveniences to local population, with few benefits to the community - needs to change	1
	Absence of signage, road shoulders for horse trails	1
	Horse stables should be treated as agricultural businesses	1
	Municipal regulations antagonistic to agritourism	3
	BC Assessment is becoming difficult for horse owners to deal with	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Value Added Sector</b>	Smallness of the area restricts the density of on-farm activities	1
	Lack of slaughterhouse facilities, regulations related to small scale abattoirs	2
	Limited food storage infrastructure	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Agricultural Planning</b>	Lack of consensus in agriculture is resulting in lost opportunities to acquire funding to carry out needed projects	1
	CS has no supporting policy for agriculture	1
	Farmer connection to consumer is handicapped (public having trouble accessing goodwill of farmers)	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>

**Appendix A – Detailed Table 8: What are the Three Biggest Strengths/Opportunities that Farming Operations in Central Saanich Possess?**

<b>Strength or Opportunity</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
<b>Markets</b>	Close to big markets	20
	Many farmers markets	1
	Lots of demand for agritourism	1
	Strong isolated market for local	1
	Educated affluent consumers	2
	Haying is large contributor to agriculture in CS	1
	Strong horse business is lucrative for hay farmers and supports local business	1
	Direct marketing is well developed, good signage	5
	There are local food marketing channels	1
	Horses are good for hay production	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Natural Resources</b>	Climate	19
	Long growing season	2
	Good soils	10
	ALR allows wide diversity of crops	1
	Wide range of crops	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Public Support</b>	Lots of media support for local agriculture	1
	Public supports agriculture	7
	Public is educated about local food	13
	Presence of the TLC	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Farming Community</b>	Farmers work well together	5
	There are young farmers wishing to farm	2
	Smaller farms pooling product to make farm sales	2
	Skilled farmers are present and operating	2
	Communal farm models in place	1
	Presence of helpful organic support and local farmers	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Infrastructure and Services</b>	Good roads	1
	Strong core of agricultural infrastructure	1
	Water availability at reasonable rates	7
	Labour is nearby, including high school kids	2
	Close to airport and ferries	2

<b>Strength or Opportunity</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
	Labourers are available	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Food Trends</b>	Low miles diet	4
	Organic production	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Business Prospects</b>	Operation is well known/established	3
	Client loyalty	5
	Huge potential for farming in CS	1
	Land values are good for investment	1
	Availability of farmland	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Amenities</b>	Horse agriculture is providing the open green spaces many residents want	1
	Good trails and walking paths	1
	Rural ambience	7
	Lack of pollution	1
	Low environmental impact agriculture	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Regulatory</b>		
	OCP indicates support for agriculture - just not yet there	1
	Supportive municipal council	1
	Municipality has done well to keep land in farming state	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>

### Appendix A – Detailed Table 9: What are the Three Biggest Threats/Weaknesses that Farming Enterprises in Central Saanich face?

Threat or Weakness	Category	Number of Responses
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Run-off, drainage and storm water issues - some created by CS	5
	Inadequate water supply	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Wildlife</b>	Threats from geese, deer, raccoons	2
	Absence of wildlife density management and control program	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Farm Practices</b>	Damaging soil fill practices	3
	Damaging farming practices without reclamation	2
	Mismanagement of agricultural land re: fill	1
	Pressure not to use pesticides	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Access to Resources</b>	Tendency to want to maintain the farmland as green space	2
	Poor/difficult soils	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Regulatory</b>	Definition of farming is too narrow (needs to include on-farm processing, greenhouses, fish culture)	1
	Too much municipal regulation	2
	Municipality is planning fearful of development, not planning for agriculture	1
	CS not cooperative or supportive of farming, wants to dictate how farmers should operate	2
	Municipality is not cooperating with farmers	2
	Increasing food safety regulations, including for vegetables threaten the small scale sector	1
	Unlevel playing field with imports respecting pesticide use	1
	Lack of municipal support for the horse sector	1
	Loss of farm tax status for some horse breeders	1
	Enforcement of FPPA not benefiting farmers	1
	Local government is raising taxes and permit fees	1
	ALC regulation has contributed to creating a green space zone out of farmlands	1
	Paperwork is onerous	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Services</b>	Lack/shallowness of farm service infrastructure	2

Threat or Weakness	Category	Number of Responses
	Difficult to access BCMAL/ALC staff	1
	Lack of formal training for beekeepers	1
	No BCMAL support system on the Peninsula	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Agricultural Inputs</b>	Labour availability	1
	Inadequate manure/organic matter supply	4
	Potential for use of biosolids	1
	Access to good labour	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Vision for Agriculture</b>	Politicians in support of development	1
	Potential for changes in ALR status	1
	Need to change property tax regulations to favour food production	2
	Land in the ALR not being used for food production	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Productive Use of Farmland</b>	Lots of land not being farmed	3
	Non-farmers buying up farmland	7
	Fragmented and isolated land holdings makes them difficult to farm	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Entry into Farming</b>	High price of land	9
	Farmland rent prices too high	1
	New and young farmers have limited business acumen	1
	New and young farmers have limited production skills	1
	Young farmers have no access to land	3
	Inability to allow new farming models (e.g., communal, clustering)	2
	Lack of capital lending programs for low asset farmers	1
	Lack of capital to start new farms	1
	Lack of support to small farmers	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Encroachment on Farms</b>	Urbanization	1
	Pressure on farmland - urban sprawl	4
	Loss of agricultural land, e.g., Keating industrial park	1
	Interface between intensive agriculture and agritourism	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Marketing</b>	Only 1% of the market is willing to pay higher costs	1
	Market behaviour of large retail grocery stores selling local food	2

Threat or Weakness	Category	Number of Responses
	Some local food is over priced and of low(er) quality	1
	Cut throat pricing practices by some local farmers	1
	Lack of a distribution system for locally produced food	1
	Competition from cheaper imported foods/products	7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Economics of farming</b>	Not enough money in farming to sustain it	1
	On going mantra that farming is not profitable	1
	High cost of production - low profitability	2
	Loss of viability	1
	Farms don't know the business side of their operations	1
	Small operations	1
	Absence of long term leasing opportunities	1
	Lack of long term leasing system	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Value Added Sector</b>	Commercial use of farm land is too restrictive	2
	Commercial use of farm land is too restrictive	2
	On-farm taxation rates and mill rates for commercial are too high	1
	Lack of local processing will threaten food security	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Agricultural Planning</b>	Municipality does not have an implementation plan for agriculture	1
	There are not enough challenging projects	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Climate and Environment</b>	Threat of GMOs to the environment and food supply	1
	Climate change	1
	Bees sensitive to pollution	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Awareness of Agriculture</b>	Poor public perception of agriculture	1
	Public does not understand farming needs and politicians are not standing up for farmers	1
	Province doesn't take agriculture seriously enough	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>

**Appendix A – Detailed Table 10: What Themes or Principles does the Agricultural Plan for Central Saanich need to embrace in Order to be Successful?**

Themes	Category	Number of Responses
<b>Improve Agricultural Resources</b>	Need to address drainage and water supply	2
	Fix drainage and alleviate wildlife damage to make land farmable	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Attract New Farmers</b>	Need to get the next generation into farming	2
	Focus on access to the land	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Marketing</b>	Peninsula grown brand	1
	Buy local	2
	Need to focus on agritourism	1
	Local food and agritourism	1
	Need a year round farmers market	2
	Should direct farm plan to farm-based direct sale, not agritourism	1
	Agritourism ok on smaller farms but biosecurity is an issue on real farms	1
	How to get local food into local consumers hands	2
	Not too philosophical in approach - need to think outside the box to make things work	1
	Promote farm direct sales, especially with small farms	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Communication and Education</b>	CS as a food basket of the CRD, not a rural lifestyle community	1
	Key on local theme - fresh is best	1
	Need to get food and farmers valued by local community and consumers	3
	Need to educate staff and politicians	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Inspirational</b>	Improve the future of farming in CS	1
	Local food and the future of farming	1
	Should convey hope for the future and ways to do things better	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>More Defined Agriculture Focus</b>	Focus on bona fide farmers and elimination of “lifestylers” in the ALR	2
	CS should embrace horses as an integral component of agriculture	1
	Value food growing above other types of agriculture	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
<b>Protection of Farmland</b>	Keep CS rural	1
	Protect farmland and integrity of the ALR	3
	Need to protect the ruralness of CS (natural environment, pollination)	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Conservation and Sustainability</b>	Focus on land conservation	1
	Farmers have a duty to be good stewards of the land	1
	Focus on small 'o' organic	1
	Need to promote agriculture in relation to ecological goods & services	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Live and Work Together</b>	Farmers need to be respectful of neighbours	1
	Plan needs to be flexible	1
	More choice for farmers, less regulation, geared towards local food production	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Business Orientation</b>	Farm business diversification and agritourism	1
	Diversification in agriculture, with specialization of farmers on specialty crops	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Value to Community</b>	Local food security	2
	Food security and local food production	1
	Food security on the peninsula through sustaining local agriculture	1
	Focus on fostering a healthy local community by guiding a healthy agricultural sector	2
	Support local products, support local food supply	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>
	<b>Implementation Component</b>	Need strong implementation component in the Ag Plan
<b>Total</b>		<b>7</b>

### Appendix A – Detailed Table 11: What needs to be done to Enhance and Sustain Viable Agriculture in Central Saanich?

What Needs to be Done	Category	Number of Responses
<b>Productive Use of Farmland Base</b>	Underutilized lands need to be encouraged back into production	3
	Lots of land used in low intensity use to get tax break	3
	Land needs to be monitored to control degradation	1
	Get idle land into production	1
	Access land idled by non-farm owners	1
	Municipality needs to acquire farmland	2
	Protect the land base	1
	Convert forestry land to food production	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Resources</b>	Develop water conservation of storm water	1
	Recover horse manures for use in the food production cycle/integrate horse farms into the agricultural system	2
	Irrigation water needs to be protected from contamination	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Business Prospects</b>	Need seminars to train farmers	1
	Succession in farming	2
	Need to make agriculture viable	1
	Need to educate farmers about consumers (classroom tours, farmers markets, farm stays)	2
	Hobby farmers are forcing bona fide farmers out of the area	1
	Show profitability	1
	Need for a good multi-year leasing program to provide stability/security	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>New Farmers</b>	Need a school of farming	1
	Develop incentives for new farmers and farm operations	1
	Get people on the land	1
	Encourage group participation while emphasizing food production	1
	Pursue ways of making land more accessible to young willing farmers	2
	Need to transfer knowledge from older farmers to new farmers	1
	Create cooperatives or lease situations to make farming viable	1
	Develop a business plan model approach to farming	1
	Leases on farmland should be crafted to provide more flexibility/productivity	1
	Price of land has to come down	1

What Needs to be Done	Category	Number of Responses
	Control land prices	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Regulatory</b>	Have different bylaws for rural and urban areas	1
	Non-farm uses should pay a levy towards developing marketing in local products	1
	Tax estate use as urban	1
	Apply farm tax only to food production	1
	Government should provide tax rebates to farmers	1
	Should be a taxation differential between bona fide farmers and lifestyle hobby farmers	1
	Farmers need to know there is support at the political level in order to invest	1
	Put in farm friendly zoning	1
	Municipality needs to relax regulations affecting agriculture	1
	Adjust regulations to promote organic farming	1
	Adjust regulations to promote food production	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Dire need for slaughterhouse or acceptance of mobile abattoir	1
	Encourage on-site composting	1
	Need a municipally driven drainage plan	1
	More value added local processing	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Support Services</b>	Hire an agrologist onto municipal staff to understand agriculture needs, facilitate permits	2
	Need to support farmers	2
	Lobby province to bring back the Buy BC program	1
	Government needs to assist farmers in marketing	1
	Financial compensation to farmers for wildlife damage	1
	Need highway directional signage	1
	Farmers need to be flexible, need flexibility on the other end	1
	Re-establish BCMAL extension on peninsula	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	

**Appendix A – Detailed Table 12: Do you have any other Comments that would assist in Developing the Agricultural Plan?**

Other Comments	Category	Number of Responses
<b>Agricultural Inputs</b>	Feed very expensive	1
	Use of biosolids	1
	Lack of sawdust and shavings for bedding	1
	Stay away from composts and biosolids	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Business Orientation</b>	Farming must be seen as and treated as a business	1
	Look at farm viability separately from land ownership	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Young/New Farmers</b>	Very few young farmers are entering the business	1
	Need to address the needs of younger farmers more	1
	Leasing land to young farmers is important	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Government Initiative</b>	Cater training and skills development to small farm operators	2
	Need a government-sponsored technical support and training program for farmers	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Regulatory</b>	Bureaucracy is the biggest threat to agriculture in CS	1
	The ALR is not fair and equitable because it raises the cost of land	1
	Ag. Mayor has hands tied	1
	Farm tax contribution to CS is negligible	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Agricultural Constraints</b>	Loss of livestock operations is constraining	3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Planning Process</b>	Too much study - not enough action	1
	Plan must have a community discussion around agriculture ala Salt Spring Island	1
	Glad that a plan is being done	1
	Real farmers should have more influence on planning process	1
	Ensure that the plan is reviewed periodically	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Market Challenges</b>	Need to combat the global market to ensure success for local production	1

Other Comments	Category	Number of Responses
	Canadian growers compete against subsidization elsewhere	1
	BC can compete on a level playing field	1
	Public wants field crops, not greenhouse	1
	Thrifty's will not buy second rate fruits and vegetables	1
	Good time for zero mile diet	1
	Work to change the cheap food attitude	1
	Farmers need to be proactive in engaging consumers	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>

## Appendix B: Summary of Agricultural Area Plan Issues and Options

Objective	Situation	Issue	Possible Options
2.1 Support Designated Farm Uses	Agricultural land is being used in ways that were never contemplated in policies or regulations currently governing its use	2.1.1 Defining Bona Fide Agriculture (p.14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request review of the effect of ALC Regulation and BCMAF policies on small scale farmers and specifically, on agritourism and on-farm processing activities</li> <li>• Lobby for changes in farm tax assessment to define acceptable products/processes and include value-added in determining primary production gross income</li> <li>• Lobby the province to undertake a comprehensive assessment to identify appropriate types of agritourism products<sup>64</sup></li> <li>• Lobby the ALC to clarify agritourism so that the Central Saanich can create an efficient administrative process for reviewing and permitting proposed agritourism related ventures within the municipality</li> <li>• Continue to lobby BCAA to develop a special tax classification for farmland that is held in natural states by farmers, providing environmental goods and services</li> <li>• Lobby senior governments for support in the stewardship of natural capital and environmental resources through an Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) approach</li> <li>• Encourage farmer participation in programs currently supporting mainstream agriculture</li> <li>• Adopt a definition of bona fide agriculture that requires the enterprise to demonstrate it is run as a business with the intention of generating a profit</li> <li>• Lobby the province to define bona fide farmer status in relation to a level of time commitment and proportion of annual gross income</li> <li>• Lobby the province to develop a definition of bona fide farming that supports farming in relation to what is produced on the farm, e.g., food and fibre production.</li> </ul>
2.2 Increase the Productive Use of Farmland in the ALR	The policies of the ALC and the District notwithstanding, overall agricultural	2.2.1 Non-Farm Use of Farmland (p.19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lobby province to develop restrictions on new rural residential construction in the ALR to bona fide farmers with at least 3 years of average minimum threshold farm income</li> <li>• Restrict ratio of non-farm residential acreage footprint to overall parcel size to 1:20<sup>65</sup> or some other suitable ratio dependent on the size of the parcel</li> </ul>

<sup>64</sup> Using a Pennsylvania model, guidelines for sustainable agritourism could include: 1) sustainable and authentic tourism products and experiences that are based on the unique natural, cultural and historical heritage characteristics that define Central Saanich; 2) develop appropriate types of authentic tourism products that would ensure the municipality remains a unique and competitive destination in the future; 3) any tourism venture or experience that would be permitted in the agricultural and rural areas of Central Saanich must be directly related to supporting the primary agricultural use of the farm by interpreting the agricultural heritage of the county and providing a distinctly Central Saanich experience; the visitor to the attraction, event or experience must leave the enterprise with a better understanding and appreciation of Central Saanich’s agricultural heritage, processes and culture. [http://www.co.lancaster.pa.us/toolbox/lib/toolbox/tools/agritourism\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.co.lancaster.pa.us/toolbox/lib/toolbox/tools/agritourism_guidelines.pdf)

<sup>65</sup> For example, under Wisconsin’s Farmland Preservation program. <http://datcp.state.wi.us/workinglands/pdf/MinStdsForNonFarmResidences10-25-09.pdf>

Objective	Situation	Issue	Possible Options
	<p>productivity in Central Saanich is declining in large part due the demand for agricultural land by competing uses</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage non-farm property owners to make their land available for farming activities, for example, by developing a database linking prospective lessees with potential leasors</li> <li>• Increase the tax cost to land owners of not facilitating farming activity</li> <li>• Discourage rural residential dwellings from being built in the ALR, unless specifically for a farmland owner engaged in agriculture by employing zoning to associate habitation with land use, possibly facilitated by a Farm Bylaw or a development permit area over farmland</li> <li>• Consider developing limits on maximum dwelling size on farmland</li> <li>• Consider tax breaks to those who limit house size on farmland</li> <li>• Limit the size of the footprint and siting of structures and access in the ALR (e.g., home plate provisions) to conserve farmland for agricultural production</li> <li>• Lobby the province to restrict land under a rural-residential dwelling from being eligible for farm tax classification unless the resident is employed in agriculture on the farm to which the residence is attached</li> <li>• Lobby the province to create a taxation classification in the ALR that taxes rural-residential properties at a rate comparable to urban residential, based on a non-agricultural assessment</li> <li>• Consider tightening stewardship responsibilities for property owners in agriculture areas on how their lands may be maintained, possibly using existing provisions of the Weed Control Act</li> <li>• Lobby the province to require property owners to demonstrate a threshold level of agricultural income (this could be part of a definition of bona fide farmer) for a period of time before being allowed to build new residences and/or worker housing in the ALR<sup>66</sup></li> <li>• Lobby the province to require a lengthened lease term for farm rental agreements and place on title in order for landlord to acquire tax status for farmland</li> <li>• Require a rural infrastructure impact assessment to accompany permits for new rural-residential construction.</li> </ul>
		<p>2.2.2 Barriers and Constraints to Farmer Access to Farmland (p.21)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In order to acquire farm status, require landlords to enter into bona fide leases with tenants, consisting of a minimum of three years, registered against title</li> <li>• Encourage landlords, possibly through tax benefits or other means, to enter into longer term</li> </ul>

<sup>66</sup> It is noted that the recent Worker Housing Report cites the BC Assessment Authority (BCAA) definition of a farm as a condition for considering a location for worker housing and recommends that the farm should have been in operation for 2 years, but with no requirement for a threshold level of income. It is anticipated that income threshold exceptions could be made for beginning farmers, as in currently done in by BCAA.

Objective	Situation	Issue	Possible Options
			<p>arrangements that would provide security to would-be farmers and facilitate more intensive agricultural operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a website or organization-based farmland clearinghouse for linking a database of potential tenants to a database of potential landlords, partner with groups such as CR-Fair or other local/regional organizations</li> <li>• Coordinate with community group(s), to facilitate rental access to idle farmland</li> <li>• Continue to support lease agreement and terms templates for prospective landlords and tenants, e.g., such as the ongoing work of The Land Conservancy</li> <li>• Conduct an awareness campaign to inform non-agricultural property owners of their responsibilities in the agricultural area</li> <li>• Consider municipal or CRD purchase of farmlands to be put into a Farmland Trust for rental to new farmers, agricultural demonstration and education</li> <li>• Encourage land trusts to participate in preserving farmland in the District for the purpose of supporting agricultural activity and making it available under lease agreement to farmers</li> <li>• Investigate intergenerational schemes and succession plans that facilitate entry of new farmers</li> <li>• Investigate investment fund instruments that would separate the equity in farmland from the business of farming</li> <li>• Engage institutions and BCMAL in providing small scale farmer skill development and education programs</li> <li>• Undertake a small scale agriculture needs analysis</li> <li>• Engage community organizations in investigating the feasibility of creating a farmer incubator project to create opportunities, supports and resources to potential farmers</li> <li>• Encourage opportunities for farmer mentorship and new entrant apprenticeship</li> <li>• Investigate the appetite for covenants on farmlands to ensure availability for farming in perpetuity.</li> </ul>
		<p>2.2.3 Wasteful Use of Farmland (p.24)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit the size of the footprint, location siting of residential structures, and access lanes and roads in the ALR (e.g., home plate provisions) to conserve farmland for agricultural production and reduce potential for conflict with adjacent farmers</li> <li>• Set maximum house size limits for housing in the ALR</li> <li>• Develop farm-friendly policies to protect farming operations from rural-residential encroachment</li> <li>• Develop a strategy for farmer retirement in the ALR</li> <li>• Lobby the province to undertake an agritourism investigation to assess incremental and cumulative</li> </ul>

Objective	Situation	Issue	Possible Options
			<p>impacts on adjacent neighbours, farmland fragmentation and conventional farming practices, so as to provide guidance to local jurisdictions experiencing diversification in agricultural operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an on-farm value-added strategy that includes evaluation of farmland impacts and centralized community options</li> <li>• Lobby the province (ALC) to require site plan coverage reviews for all development in agricultural areas</li> <li>• Require site plan approvals for non-farm residential development to protect existing and potential agricultural activities</li> <li>• Lobby ALC to increase vigilance in enforcing the intent of the ALC regulations and discouraging abuse.</li> </ul>
<p>2.3 Improve the Viability of Agricultural Enterprise</p>	<p>The majority of farms are facing profitability challenges on an annual basis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farm viability enhancement programs generally focus on several primary concepts based on the philosophy that the “...best way to keep land in agricultural land use is to make agriculture profitable for those who use the resource”.<sup>67</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Countering the impact of high farmland values</li> <li>• Integrating local agriculture into the community food system, including development of handling, distribution and marketing capacity</li> <li>• Attracting local and/or regional value-added activity by various means, including tax exemptions, providing agri-industrial parks and services, promoting innovation</li> <li>• Lobbying for farmland tax assessment changes that would encourage on-farm value added activities</li> <li>• Supporting a definition of bona fide agriculture that relates farm status to the definition of viability in this section or to Revenue Canada’s definition of an agricultural business</li> <li>• Supporting sustainable rural tourism.</li> </ul>
		<p>2.3.1 Counteracting the Impact of High Farmland Values (p.32)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a strict interpretation of urban containment to restrict non-farm rural residential expansion into ALR farming areas, effectively “hardening “ the ALR boundary</li> <li>• Investigate the feasibility of a farmland income fund based on pooled farmland resources into an active farming enterprise</li> <li>• Create a public regional farmland trust to purchase of land or covenants by municipal and/or regional governments for lease or resale to farmers, using a designated property tax to generate funds</li> <li>• Support private farmland trusts to acquire land and support farmers in the municipality</li> <li>• Lobby provincial government to consider setting up an agricultural land bank to purchase farmland from retiring farmers and sell to new entrants</li> <li>• Consider making public lands available for agriculture</li> </ul>

<sup>67</sup> For example, see Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. Farm Viability Enhancement Program. <http://www.mass.gov/agr/programs/farmviability/>

Objective	Situation	Issue	Possible Options
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lobby the province to create financial deterrents, profit recapture taxes, or penalties applied to farmland sales for non-agricultural land use</li> <li>• Develop zoning to control how non-farming homeowners can use their land in the ALR</li> <li>• Lobby the province to investigate profit recapture taxes as a way to deter land conversions to non-farm uses</li> <li>• Lobby province to develop farm tax classification for structures used in primary and value added agricultural production in bona fide agricultural enterprises.</li> </ul>
		<p>2.3.2 Accessing the Local Food System (p.34)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the marketing benefit of a Saanich Peninsula brand<sup>68</sup>, possibly in collaboration with North Saanich</li> <li>• Investigate the feasibility of developing centralized infrastructure to support local marketing channels, such as handling and staging facilities, cold storage</li> <li>• Support initiatives to conduct marketing intelligence to identify what customers want and what they will pay for</li> <li>• Identify opportunities to develop alliances with retailers, restaurateurs, and other end users to produce custom and specialty products</li> <li>• Investigate ways of partnering with local government to increase access to customers through direct marketing channels</li> <li>• Support initiatives to research ways to reduce the economic costs of produce handling in dealing with the nematode quarantine</li> <li>• Continue to support the expansion of pocket markets in the CRD<sup>69</sup></li> <li>• Lobby the provincial government to bring back the BUY BC program</li> <li>• Lobby the CRD to establish a year-round covered farmers market(s) in Victoria or some other central marketing location</li> </ul>
		<p>2.3.3 Limited Value-Added Agricultural Activity in the Region (p.35)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage collaboration of farmers, CRD, Small Scale Food Processors Association, Heritage Foodservice Cooperative, Investment Agriculture Foundation, institutions, and senior governments to identify value-added agricultural opportunities supporting local rural economic development</li> <li>• Support an investigation of appropriate value added opportunities in relation to the scope and scale of local agriculture</li> </ul>

<sup>68</sup> It should be noted that North Saanich’s Agricultural Plan recommends a branding strategy to reinforce the municipality’s agricultural identity.

<sup>69</sup> [http://www.foodroots.ca/pmtoolkit\\_index.htm](http://www.foodroots.ca/pmtoolkit_index.htm)

Objective	Situation	Issue	Possible Options
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote agricultural processing in the District’s economic development strategy</li> <li>• Pursue funding and partners for a pilot project to test a community based value-added initiative</li> <li>• Investigate the feasibility of developing appropriate agri-industrial capacity in Central Saanich, possibly with incentives to attract investment<sup>70</sup></li> <li>• Request the ALC to develop, in consultation, a modern definition of agriculture that embraces those elements that are considered the vanguard of future agricultural prosperity, such as the scale of value –added associated with farm direct and agri-tourism enterprises</li> <li>• Consider the feasibility of a regional community kitchen other incubator to encourage local value – added opportunities</li> <li>• Develop programs and policies to assist value-added to work through the regulatory regimes associated with food processing</li> <li>• Sponsor courses on value-added business planning, food safety, and set-up</li> <li>• Lobby senior governments to instate value-added extension services to the farming sector</li> <li>• Engage the Small Scale Food Processors Association to assist in identifying opportunities and challenges.</li> </ul>
		<p>2.3.4 Encouraging On-farm Innovation (p.38)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for provincial initiatives to encourage established farmers to take on apprentices so that skills may be transmitted to the next generation</li> <li>• Support the development of the analytical tools to assist operators in determining cost of production and overall farm income associated with new ideas</li> <li>• Support provincial and industry initiatives to deliver programs to assist in the preparation of business plans</li> <li>• Lobby the province to re-instate the local agriculture extension function of BCMAL</li> <li>• Support programs to provide coaching and industry contacts</li> <li>• Engage FCC to sponsor new affordable financial supports for innovators in new farm types, including low asset new entrants requiring operating loans</li> <li>• Lobby the province and industry to produce handbooks of good business practices related to new enterprises</li> <li>• Explore ways to make the community the focal point for agriculture innovation by exploring new ways</li> </ul>

<sup>70</sup> Section 3.2.2 (policy 10) of the OCP anticipates an opportunity develop an agricultural-industrial zoning designation to protect and encourage agriculture related industries in the Keating Industrial area and at other appropriate locations throughout the District.

Objective	Situation	Issue	Possible Options
			<p>of promoting interaction with the consumer public</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support initiatives to develop innovative information-delivery methods, including Internet and on-farm demonstration for small farmers</li> <li>• Engage the agricultural sector to develop cost-benefit analysis and identify tools to manage risks associated with these enterprises</li> <li>• Lobby the province to develop outreach and educational programs in developing marketing skills, food safety practices, regulations, and requirements would have a positive impact in promoting alternative enterprises.</li> <li>• Engage farmers proactively in streamlining the regulatory climate to assist innovation</li> <li>• Assist investigations to find ways to address gaps in the local food system, e.g., staging, handling, storage, marketing</li> <li>• Support study to investigate the feasibility of developing food safety infrastructure to meet new standards for produce linked to nematode mitigation</li> <li>• Provide access to public venues for new innovations</li> <li>• Solicit support for local and regional forums and conferences to bring new partners, new business practices, new markets, new forms of entrepreneurship, and new funding mechanisms to the attention of the agricultural sector</li> <li>• Advocate to the province and FCC to develop initiatives that identify succession strategies for farmers leaving the sector and continuation strategies for their successors in high land costs conditions</li> </ul>
		<p>2.3.5 Regulatory Barriers to Farming (p.40)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create an "agricultural" section in the land use bylaw that consolidates all regulations concerning agriculture, not only relating to permitted uses in the agricultural zone</li> <li>• Promote and support completion of Environmental Farm Plans (EFPs) and implementation of Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) to improve agricultural management and provide benefits to the environment</li> <li>• Clearly articulate and communicate the purpose of each regulation and how it contributes to working farms and farm businesses, so as to provide a basis for permitting and enforcement actions</li> <li>• Lobby the province to develop an expanded "agriculture" definition, including agritourism, so that the</li> </ul>

Objective	Situation	Issue	Possible Options
			<p>full range of permitted farm <u>activities</u> is considered when planning for and regulating agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure municipal bylaws are consistent with the Ministers Bylaw Standards<sup>71</sup></li> <li>• Create a Central Saanich Agricultural Advisory Committee to advise the municipality on issues affecting agriculture</li> <li>• Consider creating an agricultural variance sub-committee or hearing board to consider and adjust special requests for variance to bylaw application, taking into consideration the size, scope, seasonality and overall impact of the proposed agricultural uses, and the cost, impact on agricultural income, and alternate ways of meeting municipal requirements</li> <li>• Improve accessibility to Municipal Hall by establishing a ‘Farm Liaison’ in the planning department with agrologist credentials</li> <li>• Increase municipal agricultural understanding through information sessions, tours and dialogue</li> <li>• Develop a more proactive role for agriculture in promoting local economic opportunities</li> <li>• Establish a Municipal policy of assessing the agricultural impacts of new regulations in determining feasibility</li> <li>• Use science based criteria to determine if regulations should be applied in specific situations</li> <li>• Seek joint municipal-farm sector investigation and modification of bylaws that reflect unique farming risks and issues and that are efficient and practical for farming enterprises, possibly with advisory input from a Central Saanich Agricultural Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Form an ad hoc committee of operators and municipal staff that meets regularly to review development codes and looks for ways to streamline and simplify the process for operators</li> <li>• Train municipal staff about the realities of farming and ranching and the potential of and challenges facing small scale agriculture.</li> </ul>
		<p>2.3.6 Managing the Rural-Urban Interface (p.42)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage farmers to complete environmental farm plans and implement beneficial management practices to benefit the environment and reduce the potential to affect neighbouring properties</li> <li>• Support permitted farm uses in the ALR under good management practices with streamlined regulatory processes (this may require more specific definitions of non-traditional farm uses)</li> <li>• Promote organic, eco-friendly and natural agricultural production systems through tax incentives</li> <li>• Continue to prevent residential from locating close to agriculturally designated areas through</li> </ul>

<sup>71</sup> Ministers Bylaw Standards have been developed by BCMAL to provide guidance on municipal farm regulation to allow the largest number to agricultural options over the largest area of the ALR. <http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/publist/800Series/840000-1.pdf>

Objective	Situation	Issue	Possible Options
			<p>designation of urban settlement areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require disclosure of agricultural practices to prospective builders in the ALR at the time the building permit is issued, and making prospective builders aware of the Farm Practices Protection Act and Regulations<sup>72</sup> and that the ALR is a working agriculture zone where good farm management practices, including sight, smells and sounds, are supported</li> <li>• Request that realtors disclose and that new rural-residential property owners accept a covenant, registered on title, normal impacts associated with adjacent agricultural operations</li> <li>• Create a Development Permit Area covering the rural-urban interface with planning provisions for setbacks, buffering, screening, landscaping, siting, and fencing on the non-farm side as redevelopment occurs</li> <li>• Implement setbacks as per ALC guidelines for developments on land adjacent to farms in the ALR</li> <li>• Encourage farmers to notify neighbours of upcoming activities/farming operations that may create unexpected situations</li> <li>• Establish rural block watches to monitor good neighbour behaviour</li> <li>• Where non-farm uses in the ALR are allowed, require non-farm property owners in the ALR to construct buffers on their properties so as not to infringe on adjacent agricultural operations</li> </ul>
		<p>2.3.7 Sustainable Rural Tourism (p.44)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate the philosophy of preserving farmland into agritourism concepts by supporting initiatives that emphasize retention of raw farmland and highlight the productive capacity of the land</li> <li>• Lobby the province to develop a classification of appropriate agri-tourism activities on farmland that should be protected under the Farm Practices Protection Act</li> <li>• Develop a process for assessing the incremental and cumulative desirability of new applications</li> <li>• Develop supportive agri-tourism friendly municipal bylaws and regulatory requirements, sensitive to seasonality and rural context</li> <li>• Implement quality standards for agritourism</li> <li>• Develop an agritourism handbook that assists operators to identify and address regulations and implement planning processes that will increase the likelihood of successful business development</li> <li>• In light of the potential for certain farm operations to be inappropriate for specific areas, consider regulatory measures that would enable the municipality to regulate or prohibit farm operations that are not consistent with the Minister’s bylaw standards.</li> </ul>

<sup>72</sup> Central Saanich currently requires covenants for new developments adjacent to the ALR and increased setbacks to provide buffering from agricultural operations.

Objective	Situation	Issue	Possible Options
<p>2.4 Enhance the Agricultural Resource Base</p>	<p>The agricultural system and associated infrastructure has developed in ad hoc response to incremental changes in supply and demand</p>	<p>2.4.1 Availability of Agricultural Water Resources (p.47)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue the water balance project with BCMAL</li> <li>• Develop a municipal agricultural water supply plan to expand farmland access to water supply and increase capacity to irrigate</li> <li>• Promote and advocate for implementation of best management plans for irrigation and water conservation on farms</li> <li>• Support continuation of irrigation BMP grant funding under the Environmental Farm Planning program</li> <li>• Support efforts to reserve agricultural water for farmland in the ALR including, where appropriate, on-farm storage.</li> </ul>
		<p>2.4.2 Agricultural Drainage and Flood Control (p.48)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have all drainage and flood control infrastructure plans subjected to agricultural impact assessments to identify drainage and flood impacts and mitigation measures</li> <li>• Have riparian and conservation projects subjected to agricultural impact assessments to identify agricultural impacts and mitigation measures</li> <li>• Ensure that improved storm water management at the expense of agriculture is adequately mitigated and/or compensated for and that Integrated Stormwater Management Plan (ISMP) recommendations are effectively monitored to provide intended results</li> <li>• Lobby the BC Ministry of Transportation to exercise vigilance to eliminate the potential for degradation of farmland by contaminated runoff from highways(e.g., salt runoff from Pat Bay Highway)</li> <li>• Strive to retain or implement ARDSA drainage and flood control criteria for farmland, which accommodates flood events with timely drawdown</li> <li>• Create water retention systems to moderate storm water flows and provide agricultural irrigation water, with least impact on farmland</li> </ul>
		<p>2.4.3 Rural Transportation and Traffic Routes (p.49)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a rural transportation servicing plan for agriculture</li> <li>• Subject transportation proposals to agricultural impact assessments to identify impacts and mitigation measures</li> <li>• Incorporate agricultural considerations in planning and designing transportation corridors in the ALR to facilitate farmland access and minimize farming operations disruption</li> <li>• Develop initiatives to facilitate sharing of roads in agricultural areas by non-farm traffic and tractors/farm equipment.</li> </ul>
		<p>2.4.4 Wildlife and Invasive Species (p.50)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the Ministry of Environment to develop carrying capacity parameters and population management strategies for over-abundant indigenous species in the District, including consideration of strategies used in other jurisdictions</li> </ul>

Objective	Situation	Issue	Possible Options
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the Ministry of Environment to develop a peninsula-wide management strategy for over-abundant alien and invasive species</li> <li>• Lobby the province to re-instate the exclusion fencing BMP in the Environmental Farm Plan program to control deer predation of agricultural crops</li> <li>• Continue to work with the Victoria Airport Authority to develop strategies and techniques to control resident geese populations to ensure the public safety<sup>73</sup></li> <li>• Engage with the Environment Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service and Health Canada to pursue resident geese carrying capacity parameters based on human health risks</li> <li>• Engage with Environment Canada to establish a management protocol for a resident waterfowl category that allows culling to manage populations</li> <li>• Investigate the feasibility of establishing a resident goose culling program in association with a local food access and security program</li> <li>• Develop education information and materials to discourage the public from feeding migratory wildlife, which results in disruption of their migratory behaviour</li> <li>• Encourage research on over-abundant resident geese populations and the potential food safety and public health risks associated with agricultural production contamination</li> <li>• Encourage research on over-abundant starling populations and the potential food safety and public health risks associated with agricultural production contamination</li> <li>• Support research into measures, techniques and devices to scare away problem wildlife while minimizing disruption of the general public</li> <li>• Support the continuation of farm –based hunting as a management control strategy, and recognize the benefit provided by farmers by maintaining low licensing fees</li> <li>• Lobby the provincial government to provide compensation for crop damage to farmers, through participation in federal –provincial waterfowl damage compensation programs</li> <li>• Lobby BCAC to have Central Saanich included as a provincial waterfowl damage compensation area</li> <li>• Seek out conservation groups with mandates to support and fund mutually beneficial stewardship relationships and programs with Central Saanich farmers (e.g., Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust) and like-minded organizations that acknowledge through their programs that agriculture provides valued ecological goods and services</li> </ul>

<sup>73</sup> Central Saanich is presently applying for funding to develop a management strategy to alleviate impacts from the high resident goose population.

Objective	Situation	Issue	Possible Options
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with the Invasive Plant Council of BC to establish an initiative to control invasive species on the Saanich Peninsula</li> <li>• Encourage research into integrated farm-level strategies to mitigate or eliminate the potential for damages during the growing season when susceptibility to loss or damage poses the greatest threat to farm viability.</li> </ul>
		<p>2.4.5 Organic Nutrients for Agricultural Production (p.52)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate the feasibility of incorporating more green crop plow-under and legumes in the crop rotation to replenish nutrients, including implications for irrigation requirements</li> <li>• Develop an inventory of livestock manures, in the District, such as horse manures, to determine if opportunities exist to better utilize this resource on farms in the area</li> <li>• Continue to participate in the CRD household organics project to identify opportunity for Central Saanich agriculture to gain access to this valuable source of organic compost</li> <li>• Coordinate with an organic fertilizer company, such as Bio-Fert in Langley, to identify and investigate precision in-the-row fertilization techniques requiring less fertilizer to optimize production</li> <li>• Support continuing investigation of the health, disease and safety risks associated with using manure composts from conventional production for organic and “natural” crop production systems</li> <li>• Create and support initiatives to attract livestock production and processing to the Saanich Peninsula</li> <li>• Encourage development of local fish based fertilizers</li> <li>• Investigate the feasibility of sourcing poultry and other organic manure composts from organic operations in the Lower Mainland.</li> </ul>
		<p>2.4.6 Golden Nematode Quarantine (p.53)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enlist CFIA to conduct a survey to see if the pest can be detected</li> <li>• Investigate the status of research in The Netherlands and elsewhere where synthetic substances have created that mimic the presence of solanaceous corps, cause GN larvae to hatch and then die off in the absence of a host, leaving fields in which the pest has been exterminated</li> <li>• Advocate to the province for the engagement a consultant to negotiate a position that allows re-introduction of banned crops in the near future, under a set of conditions to be determined</li> <li>• Investigate the feasibility of installing phyto-sanitary processing capacity with the capability to eliminate the risk of spreading the nematode pest using vegetable food safety protocols</li> </ul>
<p>3.5 Increase Public Awareness of Agriculture</p>	<p>In the competition for land and resources, agriculture cannot survive without public</p>	<p>3.5.1 Support for Local Agriculture (p.55)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue farmers’ markets and Agricultural Fair events featuring local agricultural products</li> <li>• Continue to work with local industry and neighbouring municipalities (e.g., North Saanich) to promote the Chef’s Collaborative, ‘taste of Central Saanich’ food promotions, and other Peninsula initiatives to promote locally grown food</li> </ul>

Objective	Situation	Issue	Possible Options
	<p>support and consideration</p> <p>Central Saanich agriculture lacks a clear identity among the majority of its population and specifically, urban residents</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider dedicating an agriculture-food webpage on District website, with ‘operation/farmer of the month’ features etc.; ‘fact sheets’, presentations to Council</li> <li>• Develop a multi-partner communications plan to raise awareness of agriculture</li> <li>• Develop annual ‘State of Agriculture’ reports</li> <li>• Support community gardens/urban agriculture demos to promote agricultural awareness</li> <li>• Promote road/neighbourhood signage to identify agricultural areas, sub-areas and what is grown in those areas</li> <li>• Develop road signage to engage the public in respecting farm traffic, tractor signage, crop identification in fields</li> <li>• Work with the farming community to enhance agriculture education at schools</li> <li>• Provide an annual scholarship in agriculture to a Grade 12 student interested in pursuing agricultural studies</li> <li>• Work with community organizations to promote connections among agriculture, health, and wellness</li> <li>• Seek support for the development of a community demonstration farm</li> <li>• Disseminate agricultural statistics to the public on a regular basis</li> <li>• Prepare an agricultural brochure highlighting Central Saanich agriculture and make available to the tourism sector.</li> </ul>
		<p>2.3.4 Role for Agriculture in the Region (p.56)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a comprehensive vision in the agriculture plan that articulates the long-term role of primary agricultural production in the mix</li> <li>• Undertake an audit of peri-urban resources and determine indicators that will be useful in assessing the status of assets, risks, and developing parameters</li> <li>• Stimulate diversification and innovation while minimizing negative impacts</li> <li>• Develop tools to manage farmland production in balance with other functions, and considering that agritourism can be a cohesive package engaging accommodation, rural attractions and farm retail enterprises as a family of activity</li> <li>• Undertake an activity study of the urban population with the objective of identifying where consumers go and where agriculture can access them</li> <li>• Investigate avenues for integrating agricultural production and distribution with the patterns of use within urban areas</li> <li>• Pursue a pilot project to test integration strategy for integrating agricultural production with urban use patterns</li> </ul>

Objective	Situation	Issue	Possible Options
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek IAF funding to investigate the regulatory constraints to accessing consumers in public venues and prepare a guide to compliance</li> <li>• Seek IAF funding to develop venues, policy and regulations that facilitate the ability of farmers to participate in the local food system most efficiently</li> <li>• Seek IAF funding to investigate the potential to create short food chains that magnify the positive attributes of local food</li> <li>• Prepare brochure highlighting agricultural opportunities for value-added in Central Saanich and distribute to the business community and tourist sector.</li> </ul>