

# OSDP Project Completion Report and Claim

**Date:** July 3, 2009  
**Project Name:** The Future Farmers Project (Community Farms)  
**Submitted by:** Heather Pritchard  
Executive Director FarmFolk/CityFolk  
Barbara Joughin  
Coordinator, Community Farms Program, FarmFolk/CityFolk

This Project Completion Report describes the Future Farmers Project (Community Farms) project activities and outputs, and results and conclusions. It explains variances from the approved work plan and schedule, and provides a project financial statement which identifies project funds received from all sources and expended on the activities of the project.

The Future Farms Project (Community Farms Program) is a joint venture between The Land Conservancy of British Columbia (*TLC*) and Farm Folk/City Folk (*FFCF*).

The Community Farms Program was developed as a creative, proactive response to the ongoing numbers of inquiries received by *FFCF* (from people who want to farm) and *TLC* (from people who have farm land and want to preserve it).

There is growing recognition of the importance of local, organic food to the economic, social and environmental health of communities in BC. At the same time, people are voicing concern about food security and the need for sustainable, local food systems.

Community farms are part of the solution.

They supply local food systems with organic, locally-grown food. Community farms can protect farmland for long-term food production through land trusts, covenants, and other mechanisms, and give new farmers access to affordable land through long-term leases.

The Community Farms Program connects organic farms through a supportive network and creates a larger community that can share knowledge and experience. This project brings those interested in farming organically together with existing organic farms, and helps establish mentoring relationships.

## A. Approved project objectives

The Future Farmers Project (Community Farms) will expand local organic food production in BC by:

- helping new farmers access affordable land
- researching the best practices of existing community farms
- creating a network of potential farmers, landowners, and community organizations

By bringing these parties together to share their experiences and knowledge, the program will create viable alternative agricultural models that can be replicated throughout British Columbia.

## B. Description of activities and results

With the support of the Organic Sector Development Program, we helped farmers access affordable farmland, researched best practices of existing community farms and developed valuable resources, and created a network of farmers, landowners, and community organizations.

We continue to be affirmed and encouraged by farmers and communities for our efforts to protect farmland for farming, increase opportunities for organic farming information and education, and develop resources that support small and medium scale organic farmers.

Specifically, we completed the following activities:

### 1. Survey and map existing Community Farms on best practices and needs

More than 20 BC farms were identified by TCL and FFCF as leaders in sustainable organic farming practices, cooperative farm management, and commitment to farmland protection.

#### **Results**

We created a map of existing community farms, and are currently determining relevant information to link to the map and designing the information links and supporting database. This map will be available on the Community Farms web site.

Dr. Hannah Wittman (SFU) surveyed existing community farms for operational strategies practiced by existing 'community farms' in BC, and to identify challenges for the implementation of new community farms. Community Farms in BC: Building Local Food Systems for Sustainable Communities is available online at <http://ffcf.bc.ca/NewSiteFiles/programs/farm/cf/buildinglfs.html> .

In her report, Dr. Wittman concludes that community support for agricultural land protection, increased opportunities for agricultural education and apprenticeship, and clear but flexible tenure and governance models for farm business operation are essential for building the capacity of community farms in BC.

She recommends further research, evaluation, and sharing of experiences on how to best build and assess community capacity for farm development. And because there is no one replicable model for community farms, research focused on further exploration of these diverse models of agricultural cooperation will help evaluate how each example works in diverse situations.

## 2. Establish and meet with reference group

### **Results**

We formed a Community Farm Program Council to guide the management of CFP projects and the development of the overall Community Farms Program. In the formation of the Council, we carefully considered and met with people who we felt could contribute high levels of experience, wisdom, and practical knowledge about community and organic farming.

We meet by conference call because members live in different regions of BC. The Council has proven to be a huge benefit to the Community Farms Program. We will continue to meet monthly to give feedback and direction to the activities of the Future Farmers/Community Farm project.

## 3. Host a Roundtable meeting

### **Results**

Community Farms Program partners FFCF and *TLC* hosted a Roundtable gathering on February 19-20, 2009. Twenty-five farmers and community farm supporters gathered in Vancouver (from Vancouver Island, Cortes Island, 100 Mile House, and the Fraser Valley) to explore common ground and mutual challenges, talk about what community farms need to be successful, and create a network of new and existing community farms in the province.

The first Roundtable gathering became the first meeting of the CF Network.

The Community Farms Network shares best practices in sustainable organic agriculture and cooperative farming and living through a mutually supportive association of community farms in BC. Members can access a broad, inclusive network for ideas, information, and inspiration without obligation to join the Community Farms Program and making a commitment to more specific conditions.

Members of the network will benefit from:

- Information and resource sharing
- Face-to-face gatherings for celebration and sharing
- Mutual mentorship and inspiration
- Advocacy on zoning and housing policy and legislation
- Linking initiatives, costs, equity

Interest is high, and we are currently developing a process to invite and expand membership in the Community Farms Network. Ongoing Roundtable meetings will create opportunities for sharing inspiration, information, and ideas.

## 4. Profile model community farms

We want to share the stories about community farms through photographs and text.

### **Results**

We surveyed existing BC community farms and will conduct further on-site interviews of organic community farmers. Information about selected BC community farms will be collated into profiles that tell the stories of the community farm experience. Stories will be published in the FFCF newsletter, posted on the CFP website, and shared through other organizations' information networks.

## 5. Contact potential collaborators and allies

In addition to our ongoing partnership with The Land Conservancy of BC, we hosted and attended meetings that helped us build alliances and partnerships.

Heather Prichard is on the Metro Vancouver Agricultural Advisory Committee, is a founding member of the Vancouver Food Policy Council, serves as Treasurer of the BC Food Systems Network, is the co-chair of ALR-PEC (Protection and Enhancement Committee), and serves on the steering committee of the UBC farm apprenticeship program.

In addition, FFCF staff liaise with Local Food First, the Colony Farm Park Association, and the Vancouver Food Policy Council. We continually share information about the Community Farm Program and its projects, and seek opportunities to build and enhance relationships.

## 6. Develop program/services

Each activity and deliverable in this project is a building block in the development of the Community Farm program and the future services it can provide. As we speak with farmers, groups, and interested individuals, we learn and understand what is needed, and begin to develop resources. We are examining our organizational capacity in order to determine what we can do, and we are exploring how the overall program can be supported.

We are very interested in developing cooperative communities, and are seeking project support for this important work.

A business plan for the Community Farms Program and its services will develop as we continue to design the program and incorporate the elements of support that are identified by organic community farmers and farming communities. We expect this process to continue beyond the completion of the Future Farms project.

We continue to develop our relationship with The Land Conservancy. Currently, TLC is acquiring land and researching and developing land-related resource materials. FFCF is recruiting farmers and researching and developing farming-related resource materials. In the next phase, we will work together through the Whole Farm Planning process with several community farms in various stages of development to test its models and templates.

## 7. Inventory new farmers and match with farms

We designed a Community Farms farmer survey and database for capturing and tracking potential community farmers and their needs and assets. We have catalogued 27 farmers to date. Many more people have contacted us, but have not completed the Community Farms farmer survey. Due to the private nature of the information involved, the database is not open to public viewing. The Community Farms Farmer Survey is found at [http://207.232.113.107:82/farmer\\_survey/](http://207.232.113.107:82/farmer_survey/) .

When an interested farmer completes the survey online, a copy is sent to program staff for review and potential matching with other interested farmers.

Once we compile sufficient interest from farmers in a specific geographic region, we facilitate a meeting to discuss the potential of forming a community farm. We encourage the group to find a small temporary plot to work together and learn about each other. At this time, the group can

conduct a more detailed asset/needs assessment. As we coach and encourage new groups, we also seek suitable land to match their needs.

By 2010, we aim to have three incubator groups on Vancouver Island (Comox Valley, Cowichan Valley, and Capital Regional District) and three on the mainland (Peace Country, Lower Mainland, Southern Okanagan Valley).

**Results**

We helped form two new groups to date: Lohbrunner Farm, Langford (Vancouver Island), and Growing Opportunities Cooperative, also on Vancouver Island. Please see following Sections 8 and 13 for more information about both these groups.

**8. Build farm communities**

We are assisting four groups to develop and support community around the farm and farmers.

**Results**

At Nicomekl Farm in Langley, the community is a non-profit society comprised of the farm's CSA customers. The Board of the KALE Society has mapped out and is undertaking a planning process, and FFCF provides strategic planning resources and ongoing support with their group process.

The land cooperative at Horse Lake Farm near 100 Mile House is in a farm planning process. We met with them in February to discuss potential business enterprises, and we continue to provide ongoing support.

Members of the Growing Opportunities Cooperative on Vancouver Island are collaborating with Providence Farm to create opportunities for members of the wider community to work on in the farm's market garden. Providence Farm has a well-established social network and a 'ready-made' community, but does not currently provide opportunities for volunteers who want to farm. The farm will benefit from Growing Opportunities Cooperative's efforts to create community involvement in on-site farming activities, and the group will benefit from their contact and interaction with the existing Providence Farm community.

In Kaslo, a community formed around local food security and requested our support in their efforts to increase local food production in their region. Community Farms Program staff travelled to Nelson to facilitate connections between farmers, community members, and potential land holders, and we continue to provide them with resources and support.

**9. Identify farmer training programs and opportunities**

Farmer training programs in BC are not currently integrated into a holistic farming experience. BC lacks training programs that include access to land for project incubation, as the FarmStart program does in Ontario. Two groups, OUR Ecovillage, and EarthWise Society are developing accreditation programs that will include some access to land, but both programs are very preliminary.

Horticulture Education BC recently assessed a proposal to develop an apprenticeship program for organic farming. They subsequently asked the organic farming industry to organize a committee to address key issues of seasonal employment and low wages for apprenticeships. Ultimately, this process may create an apprenticeship program for organic farming in BC.

### **Results**

We connected the three groups already working in these areas together, and will continue to monitor the development of their programs.

We researched training programs and other existing opportunities for people to learn how to farm. We created an annotated database of farmer training programs, apprenticeships, and on-farm learning opportunities. A list of relevant farmer training programs will be available on the CFP web site. Farmers may learn about training opportunities by contacting FFCF directly and by visiting the CFP web site.

Some existing community farms provide work and training opportunities for new farmers, and most others are interested in doing so. However, capacity to do so is constrained by limited housing for farm labour. Farms that provide work and training opportunities will be included on the list of apprenticeships, and in individual farm profiles.

### 10. Create farm business templates

We created business tools and information products tailored for small-scale farms, and where to go for financial and training support.

### **Results**

Robin Tunnicliffe (Saanich Organics) interviewed farmers in different agricultural sectors, including organic producers of grain, poultry, livestock, vegetables, mushrooms, sprouts, and seeds. Case studies prepared from these interviews provide new farmers with concrete examples of how to operate a small-scale, organic, farm-based business.

Robin also researched business and financial information and developed a business plan template for smaller farming operations. The business plan template is available online at [http://ffcf.bc.ca/NewSiteFiles/programs/farm/community\\_farms.html](http://ffcf.bc.ca/NewSiteFiles/programs/farm/community_farms.html) .

In addition, Robin prepared annotated lists of farmer training and business grants, evaluated to include only those programs that have application requirements suitable for small scale farming.

### 11. Compile/ create organic farming resources

### **Results**

We provide an explanation of sustainable and organic agriculture on the CFP web site, and the principle links to organic certification bodies in BC. We list resources and training opportunities that are specific to organic farming on the draft CFP web site. We focus on BC resources that would be most relevant and useful to new farmers, but also include useful national and international links.

### 12. Develop governance models

People work together in several different ways on community farms. Individuals and groups collaborate to acquire and manage the land, develop and manage diverse farm activities, and acquire and manage capital and other assets. In many situations, people also live together on the land.

### **Results**

We gathered reference materials about governance and examples from existing community farms and other sources, and are using this information to develop reference materials for small- and

medium-scale community farm groups. Information about governance models, policies, and sample agreements are available from program partners.

### 13. Facilitate and support groups

We facilitate the formation of community groups that support farms and farmers.

#### **Results**

We continue to assist Lohbrunner Farm. Originally, we helped to create the short-term three year lease between TLC and two farm groups. In March, we facilitated the first meeting of community members who want to form the support group for this farm. The new community group continues to meet to support the Lohbrunner farmers.

We provide ongoing support to the Growing Opportunities Cooperative. To date, we have assisted them by providing information about forming a cooperative, acquiring land, where to access grants, and ownership models. Most recently, we provided land lease templates so they can arrange access to land for food production in the coming season.

In addition, we are assisting a group of individuals and diverse agencies to organize a community farm on municipal land in Abbotsford.

### 14. Create/maintain/promote website

A Community Farms Program web site is under construction, and will provide information about the program, house community farm resources, and link to partners and other programs. Once the site is complete, we will formally launch it through several listserves, including FFCF, BC Food Systems Network, Food Secure Canada, and others.

#### **Results**

The Community Farms Program web site has been fully mapped, and upon completion will contain approximately 60 information sections under five main themes: Program, People, Land, Activities, and Resources. As of April 30, 2009, content for over half the sections is complete. The site's graphic design has been developed, and we are currently completing content and formatting it for html.

### 15. Research farmland trusts

Our program partner, The Land Conservancy (TLC), researched 26 existing farmland trusts in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the US. Findings will be summarized in a table and used to inform TLC's Farmland Trust goals, activities, governance and financial structure, make recommendations for the operation of TLC as BC's farmland trust, encourage other BC land trusts to protect farmland for farming, and facilitate new farmland trusts where possible.

#### **Results**

This research will be completed by July 2009.

### 16. Micro-Loan Fund

This is a new activity and deliverable that we are developing to support new community farms. Funds raised from FFCF's annual Island Feast of Fields (\$7500 per year) will be placed in a low-interest revolving loan fund available to new farmers on the Gulf Islands and Vancouver Island.

### **Results**

The proposed loan fund has been reviewed by the FFCF board of directors and legal counsel, and funds will be available after the 2009 Island Feast of Fields event.

### **17. Community Farms Endowment Fund**

FFCF stewards an endowment fund on behalf of the Community Farms Alliance. The interest on 50% of the principle on the CFEF has been allocated by the donor for projects by Glen Valley Organic Farm Cooperative. The rest of the interest is available for projects by other community farms.

### **Results**

Application criteria and a process for accessing these funds have been defined and funds are available for granting to eligible community farms projects.

## **C. Conclusions**

### **Short-term indicators of success**

Results of the Future Farmers Project (Community Farms) met the proposed short-term indicators of success. We:

- surveyed existing Community Farms;
- formed a working reference group that meets regularly to inform and direct the program;
- identified a range of successful (working) models;
- placed new farmers on farms;
- formed community groups to support the farms and farmers.

The Future Farmers Project (Community Farms) brought together landowners, farmers, local communities to develop and support organic farming in BC. It also created important resources and information for small-scale, organic farmers, and connected organic farms through a supportive network that can share knowledge and experience.

Dr. Hannah Wittman (SFU) surveyed existing community farms for operational strategies practiced by existing 'community farms' in BC, and to identify challenges for the implementation of new community farms.

We established a Council of partners, stakeholders and farmers to guide and develop the Community Farms Program. We hosted a Roundtable meeting to share information about community farm experiences, and created a network of new and existing community farms in BC, which has requested our continuing support.

We're creating tools and information products tailored for small-scale farms (business planning and development, working together/ governance, training and grant programs). A Community Farms Program website is almost complete, and will provide information about the program, house community farm resources, and link to partners and other programs.

Interested farmers can complete a survey on their needs and assets, and become part of a process that helps bring farmers together with each other and land. With our program partner The Land Conservancy of BC, we continue to offer links between new farmers and farmland, and facilitate the formation of community groups that support farms and farmers.

## **FUTURE FARMS PROJECT (COMMUNITY FARMS)**

---

In summary, FFCF's work in the Community Farms Program supports organic farming in BC by recruiting farmers, facilitating the formation of community groups, and researching and developing a wide variety of farming-related resource materials.

### **Next steps**

We'll continue to help groups develop capacity in their communities to support community farms and farmers. We're getting ready to work through the Whole Farm Planning process with several community farms in various stages of development to test its models and templates.

We are very interested in developing cooperative communities, and will continue to seek project support for this important work. We'll also research and explain how existing government regulations on land ownership and farming businesses affect the development and operations of community farms on agricultural land.

We'll finish informational resources that are currently in development, and complete the Community Farms Program web site so that people who are creating community farms can easily access the information and resources we're offering. And, we'll make sure communities and farmers in BC know about the Community Farms Program to help stimulate the creation of new community farms, and increase awareness and support for organic community farms among members of the public.

**FUTURE FARMS PROJECT (COMMUNITY FARMS)**

---

**E. Financial report**

**Community Farms Program Revenue: May 1, 2008-March 31, 2009**

<b>GRANTS</b>	
Vancity Community Foundation - Community Farms Program	22,000
OSDP - received	22,500
OSDP - receivable	7,500
	<b>52,000</b>
<b>FARMFOLK/CITYFOLK CONTRIBUTION</b>	
<b>TLC Fee for Service</b>	
TLC Consultation	700
TLC-Community Farms Honorarium	450
TLC Contract Services	5,000
A/R TLC	5,000
	<b>11,150</b>
<b>Other</b>	
Interest from Community Farms Endowment Fund	2,970
Heather honorarium for speaking	100
Donation	175
	<b>3,245</b>
Short fall	<b>14,190</b>
<b>FarmFolks'CityFolk's Contribution</b>	<b>28,585</b>
<b>Total Revenue received</b>	<b>80,585</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>80,585</b>

**FUTURE FARMS PROJECT (COMMUNITY FARMS)**

---

**Community Farms Actual Expenditures: May 1, 2008-March 31, 2009**

Where actual expenditures exceed estimates or activities are partially completed, variances have been or will be funded internally.

	<b>Activity/deliverable</b>	<b>Cash Total Est</b>	<b>Cash Actual</b>	<b>In-kind Total Est</b>	<b>In-kind Actual</b>	<b>Total Est</b>	<b>Total Actual</b>
1	<b>Survey/Map</b> existing farms	3,500	4,667	10,000	10,000	13,500	14,667
2	<b>Meet</b> w/reference group	2,000	2,816	1,500	1,680	3,500	4,496
3	<b>Host</b> Roundtable Meeting	4,000	5,287	4,000	4,400	8,000	9,687
4	<b>Story/Photos</b> model farms	5,000	2,543	500	500	5,500	3,043
5	<b>Contact</b> and work with allies	1,000	1,632	500	500	1,500	2,132
6	<b>Develop</b> program/ services	3,000	4,678			3,000	4,678
7	<b>Create/maintain</b> database	6,000	5,095			6,000	5,095
8	<b>Match</b> new farmers and farms	6,000	3,955			6,000	3,955
9	<b>Build</b> farm communities	8,000	8,644	400	400	8,400	9,044
10	<b>Identify/critique/refer</b> training programs and grants	8,000	8,617			8,000	8,617
11	<b>Identify and create</b> business templates	6,000	5,030	400	400	6,400	5,430
12	<b>Compile/create</b> farming resources	6,000	5,831			6,000	5,831
13	<b>Survey</b> governance models	2,000	2,140			2,000	2,140
14	<b>Facilitate</b> and support groups	8,000	7,105			8,000	7,105
15	<b>Create/maintain a website</b>	11,500	12,544	400	400	11,900	12,944
	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>80,000</b>	<b>80,585</b>	<b>17,700</b>	<b>18,280</b>	<b>97,700</b>	<b>98,865</b>

## F. Project activities and outputs

Project activities and outputs:

	<b>Output</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Estimated Time</b>	<b>Sta</b>
1.	Fam survey and map	<b>Survey/map existing community farms</b>	May-Sept 08	Com
2.	Reference group (Council)	<b>Establish and meet w/ reference group</b>	May 08-March 09	Com
3.	Roundtable meeting	<b>Host a roundtable meeting</b>	Nov 08	Com
4.	Fam profiles	<b>Profile model community farms</b> Story/photos model farms	Sept 08-March 09	Com
5.	List of meetings and contacts	<b>Contact and work with allies</b>	May 08-March 09	Com
6.	Program development recommendations	<b>Develop program/services</b>	May-Dec 08	Ong
7.	Database of interested farmers	<b>Create/maintain database</b> Inventory new farmers	May-Sept 08	Com
8.	Description of new farm groups	<b>Match new farmers and farms</b>	Ongoing	Com
9.	Description of new farm communities	<b>Build farm communities</b>	Ongoing	Com
10.	Annotated list of farmer training programs	<b>Identify/critique/refer training</b> Identify farmer training programs Connect farmers to training		Com
11.	Fam business resources	<b>Identify and create business templates</b>		Com
12.	Organic farming resources	<b>Compile/create farming resources</b>	Apr-June 08	Com
13.	Fam governance resources	<b>Survey governance models</b>	Jan-March 08	Part
14.	Support program for groups	<b>Facilitate and support groups</b>	Ongoing	Com
15.	CFP website	<b>Create/maintain a web site</b>	May-Dec 08	Part
16.	Famland trusts	<b>Research farmland trusts</b>	new activity	Part
17.	Micro-loan fund	<b>Establish micro-loan fund</b>	new activity	Part
18.	CF Endowment Fund	<b>Launch Community Farms Endowment Fund</b>	new activity	Com