

# Interview/Questionnaire/Focus Group Compiled Answers

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## General Consumers (n=12)

### **Where we're at:**

#### **How and where do you access your food? (grocery stores, farmer's markets, garden, etc.)**

- Summer – primarily farmer's market, some from own garden (when it grows successfully), rest from grocery store. Winter – some from local producers who have winter supply of root veggies, rest from grocery store.
- CSA basket from pilgrim's produce during summer months, sometimes also farmer's market, bought bulk beef from vale farms, and eggs and nuts from another local farmer. Other than, save on foods (look for grocery stores with good selection of Canadian and organic produce)
- Grocery, garden
- Grocery stores, farmer's market, garden, local producers
- Grocery store, farmer's market, local stores
- Grocery store, bit from my garden, farmer's markets, delivery of organic produce.
- Eggs dropped off weekly. Couple times/year join coop purchase for nuts, dates, raisins, and misc dry goods. Spring/summer/fall participate in veggie bag program with farm in Armstrong – pick up at rec centre weekly. Visit farmer's market 1-2x a month. Purchase at nature's fare and sometimes at simply delicious and quality greens. Will go to save-on to stock up for parties, frozen juice, etc. Meat orders 1-2x/year with coop purchase from farm in Falkland, Lumby or Sicamous.
- Farmers markets and good food box. I always cut coupons. Go to the store that has the lowest price. Have free lunch at the AECD centre.
- Farmers markets, local stores e.g. green grocers, health food stores, bakeries, fish shop, butchers (rarely supermarkets). Grow some of my own.
- Superstore
- Summer – veggies, CSA program – organic delivery from pilgrim's produce, farmer's market, garden. Winter – grocery stores. Meats – I order from local farms or a bit farther away sometimes – Vale farms in Lavington, Mitchell's Mountain – Barriere meats
- Mainly grocery store, some at farmer's market, sometimes friends who grow locally

#### **Do you consider local products when purchasing?**

##### **What products and where do you buy them? If not, why?**

- I prefer to buy local and organic. If I can't find both then I'll chose natural and local, otherwise just local. Mostly buy at farmer's market, some purchases from people I hear about word of mouth. If there is an option in a grocery store to buy something made in Canada vs USA I'll choose Canada, or made in BC vs AB, I'll choose BC
- Yes see above
- Veggies local. Have a garden at home for this. Sometimes out of season
- Yes. I buy as many local products as possible. Buy only bc apples. Grow berries, grapes, vegetable garden. Buy when fruit & veg in season to freeze and preserve.
- I buy only local produce and buy beef from a family farm.
- Yes, mostly veggies and fruit during the farmer's market times.
- Yes – as above. Will go to farms as well when purchasing with others.
- Yes I believe in supporting our own. So farmers markets and the good food box. I have gone to local farms. My family eats a lot of fruit and vegetable every day.
- Yes if I can buy local I will. I also buy seasonally. Fruit and vegetables – farmers markets and local green grocers. Dairy (yogurt, mild, cream & some cheese) – small independent stores. Other cheese – looking for different products which are not produced locally. Meat – I wish I could but not good access to it. Although get Armstrong lamb through fish shop and gourmet to go. Grains –

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health food store (most is Canadian but not local). Not aware of a lot of local grains. Wines – both local and non local, as I am looking for wider variety and styles.

- If available at the superstore. If not, why – cost and location.
- Yes I do consider where products come from and will buy locally grown/raised or produced over foreign whenever possible/available.
- Yes but perhaps not often enough. Local products she buys – fresh produce, some locally produced meat, eggs. Sometimes cost/convenience is a consideration as to why she doesn't buy local.

### ***Where we'd like to get to and how we will get there:***

#### **What would it take to increase the amount of local products you purchase?**

- Easier access to local products in winter (once a month market in winter maybe), a current list of what producers are in this area and what they have available.
- More availability, accessibility and reasonable costs (willing to pay some extra if necessary, but not a lot more). Seeing more local food in supermarkets would be wonderful.
- Prices. Off-season availability
- Curb my appetite for exotic tastes. Removal of imported products from our grocery stores where they could be Canadian products i.e. apples, canned products.
- More products and stores.
- Farmers market hours can be a little difficult for me – I get there when I can and do seed out local produce at fruit stands, etc. will be seeking the home delivery option of organic veggies this spring/summer.
- It would just take more suppliers located downtown. Encourage establishing a coop grocery store in Vernon similar to Nelson model.
- Lower prices more accessible closer to town or delivery, have farmers markets more often, its hard to save money for the days they have farmers market. How about the 20<sup>th</sup> of every month most people with children get child tax. That is a good day to sell produce. The good food box is a god-send for my family, we get produce and it can be delivered a long with an affordable price.
- More access at regular retail stores. More access to farmers markets on weekend morning. Access to farmers directly – publish where and when you can visit the farms (weekly newspaper listing). Higher profile of the benefits of buying local – taste, sustainability,...
- More convenient location for purchase.
- Grocery stores stocking local products first and pricing them competitively. I have heard that there is a marketing mechanism where by stores can get foreign produce cheaper than local stuff if they refuse to stock local produce. This needs to change.
- Availability in grocery stores likely would be the most honest answer

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## Food Insecure Consumers (n=15)

### *Where you're at now:*

#### **How and where do you get your food now?**

- Walking to grocery stores (safeway, wholesale club), food bank
- Real Canadian wholesale club, real canadian superstore
- Grocery store
- I have limited money to buy food so every two months I go to the food bank
- Buy it from grocery store and food bank
- I go to the food bank when I need to – a parent with three teen – I get by
- We drive & get food at walmart and superstore
- Shop around for sales, AECD, good food box, food bank
- Buy it from grocery store usually once a month then supplement weekly staples when money allows for it
- From the grocery stores. In summer I get a lot of fresh veggies and fruit from the farmers market
- Superstore in Vernon
- Grocery stores, access food bank for moms and tots
- Superstore, wholesale club warehouse shopping, safeway, he takes care of his school age children as well. He used to go to the food bank but he doesn't get there in time to get food because his car doesn't run in the mornings
- Worker gives safeway cards, mission, food bank – on disability pension
- Wholesaler twice per month using welfare and family allowance. Salvation army but tries to do without – there are restrictions with only getting bi monthly. Neighbourlink is restrictive because you can only call in the morning.

#### **Is it enough? (Do you have to skip meals or eat less than you could, Do you worry about running out before next payday)**

- no
- yes and no skipped meals
- no
- with a 2 & 3 year old it is never enough & I have ended up eating 1 meal a day; I always worry about running out before next payday
- yes, sometimes
- I worry a lot cause three teen – have a good [appetite]
- Yes it usually runs out before payday – not enough
- Sometimes, if I do bulk shopping we do ok
- Try to plan food that are simple to make and cost efficient – rather than for nutritional intake. Try to include fresh veggies & lighter meats (e.g. fish); lots of pasts & brown rice
- Sometimes it is not enough
- No but getting healthy and fresh produce is a problem from the superstore but I don't have time to find food elsewhere
- Yes the majority of the time
- Usually they run out before the next cheque. He has to eat every 2 hours and sometimes he can't do it – he doesn't have good food all the time so this is harmful too. He can't sleep at night – has arthritis – his feet and legs hurt at night – he tries to eat during the night. He's on disability
- All the time faced with this – can only do so much with 24 cans of beans from food bank hamper. Food bank box only covers 2-3 weeks for a single person.
- All the time. Basics are all they can get – no variety. Can't buy simple things that would make eating better. Always one week per month where she goes hungry so she can feed her son. She wants to

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exercise but can't because she's hungry. She gets vitamins for her son but she goes without them. Its hard to be upbeat when you're hungry. She eats just to eat – not because its enjoyable.

### How easy is it to get?

- Within walking distance - easy
- Very easy
- Its easy to get
- Some months it seems harder to get food; things seem to go by a lot smoother on the months I can get food from the food bank
- Pick it up and bring it home
- Its not easy unless you have a family to help you
- Pretty easy
- Not have to make appt – wait for good food box day
- Accessibility is not a concern (i.e. grocery store) – money is more of issue
- It is very easy in the summer
- Food? It this its easy to get food from the superstore but finding local food is difficult because I'd have to go to a different place to get produce and I don't know where. I find also that eating a healthier diet is very costly (i.e. I like to buy organic but can only when we have enough money)
- She can get to the store – they just went over a month without peanut butter – you have to prioritize what you need
- When the air is warmer his car runs so then he can get to things (getting gas is also a problem)
- Food bank hours are not long enough and conflict with what other services offer
- She doesn't have a vehicle so lack of transportation. She uses taxi when she does her big shop but that digs into the budget as well. Hampers are hard to transport

### Do you know if it is safe?

- Yes at grocery store; not sure at food bank
- Yes as all labels have date packaged on them
- Yes it is safe
- Some times I wonder myself if it is
- yes
- some of the can food are out of date and you don't know until you open the can
- n/a
- I check for expiry date
- Is it organic? – no too expensive. Is it cooked & prepared properly? – yes (to the best of my ability)
- Sometimes yes and sometimes no
- I try to eat well with whole grains veggies and protein like tofu or chicken
- I believe my food is safe
- If he buys from a store he feels safe. Other food he checks dates (food bank) – his son reads it and he will. His dr complained to welfare about the cans – he can't eat them due to the health factors involved. He used to get boost but not any more.
- Don't care because its not as important as getting food – he will check expiry date sometimes – there are tricks to make things last. They trade outside the food bank because food hampers don't take into account allergies or medication challenges.
- Its an issue with the hamper around canned stuff – food tastes like the can. She always checks her food from the hamper. She doesn't really have a choice because of hunger.

### Is it a balanced diet?

- Yes
- Yes all four food groups
- Yes
- For myself it isn't – my daughters eat well & my spouse sometimes eats well
- sure

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- yes
- sometimes
- yes
- probably not – though I try to include something from all the food groups throughout the day
- sometimes it is not a balanced diet
- most times
- not balanced – lacking fruits and veggies and fresh stuff (meat produce everything)
- no he doesn't get enough meat and veggies and fruit. They're hard to get because he doesn't get to the food bank. He doesn't have any veggies or fruit at all right now because he can't get there.
- Food bank box isn't really balanced because all the good stuff is eaten right away. Food allocation isn't enough – it needs to be adjusted for the time of year
- No – it's a major concern for her and her son. She wishes she knew how to shop better with her budget. Getting protein is important but lacks the rest (fruits and veggies). Doesn't have the \$ for the good food box at the end of the month. She has to prioritize and can't move forward.

### **Is any of it local (is this even an issue for you)?**

- Yes it is local – not an issue
- Fruits and vegetables
- Some fruit and veggies are local; some chicken too
- In the last 2 months we've been sponsored to receive a good food box & this helps to eat better foods
- Maybe yes
- n/a
- not very much
- fruits and veggies local
- if I can find local fruits & veggies I will try – mostly farmers markets – otherwise it is too costly to obtain
- in the summer, most of the fruit and veggies I get is local and it is a big issue as I believe local food is the freshest and most nutritious
- I would like to buy local but don't because of cost/convenience
- Yes some is local – they have a couple fruit trees in their yard – she does know and does care but when it comes down to it its about cost
- Not an issue
- Not an issue because of need – its icing on the cake if its local
- Not an issue at all. Its about just getting food. She'd love to have that choice

### ***Where we'd like to get to and how we will get there:***

#### **What would it take for you to eat a healthy diet all the time?**

- Cheaper food prices
- Better prices
- Less junky foods
- If I had more funds than I would eat more & more healthy
- More money
- n/a
- n/a
- depends on cost – I go to the majority of the stores in Vernon by bus; fresh fruit and veggies or sandwich
- more money to access organic local healthy food that is part of a balanced diet . perhaps to create each meal as a balanced diet
- make it easier to get good food during the winter and I need to get more freezer space
- awareness of more ways to cook healthy foods

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- more balanced income – she's married and her husband works full time but its not really a steady income – her husband works in a mill and his job isn't always steady
- he gets \$540/month on disability – his income doesn't cover everything he needs. When he needs to fix his car his other expenses suffer. He's not getting boost like he used to – the dr told them to do that but he's getting the run around. He has to go to lumby to get the boost because his dr is in lumby. All the running around is making him more sick.
- Access to healthy food all the time – quantity not an issue. Food safe rules are too restrictive – can't take cooked food home from agencies. Coordination of services needs to happen. Education on food preparation and storage needs to be included
- SA cheques should have a certain amount set aside for food like they do for shelter. People need food to rise about where they are. There is medical info that shows you need food to improve your situation.

### **What would it take to increase the amount of local food you eat? (if this is important for you)**

- More selection
- More fruit stands – “farmers markets”
- n/a
- In my situation food is food and whether it is local or not is not of importance to me – its just how much quantity I can get for my money
- Nope it isnt
- n/a
- n/a
- more \$
- more access – especially meats, milks & grains. Veggies & fruits are not that accessible in winter but easier to obtain overall
- either grow my own food and/or to be able to preserve more fruits and veggies so they won't spoil
- a place where I can buy it and information about if it is that much more expensive than the superstore
- cost is a big issue. They're a working family. The one thing that bugs her is there isn't anything else besides the food bank. They're drilled when they go there and she's frustrated that she has to prove where she has to put her money – the judgement keeps her from wanting to go there. Her dignity is hurt because of the judgement. She feels like she needs help and who are you to decide if she needs help. With the gfb – for her family of 6 they finish it in a couple days. She could take her money and go to quality greens and selectively choose what she can buy. More staple foods in the box based on what she needs rather than having it strictly the variety – partly quality and the amount of certain thing (too many onions)
- not an issue
- include information on how to prepare food and on long term storage. Is really a mute point in some cases because local is less important than just getting food.
- She thinks about doing it but her limitations (transportation, time, organization & money) keep her from eating local. She's not organized enough to even get to the farmer's market.

### **Notes:**

- More gardening initiatives locally (especially in town!)
- Need to find ways to help people prepare & store so they are more self sufficient
- Self respect and dignity are casualties when workers follow rules and regulations rigidly
- The mission and the shelter changing their hours over the winter was really helpful

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## Service Providers (n=5)

### *Where you're at now:*

#### **Who are your clients?**

- Public health – overall community. Mostly families with young children
- Families with young children newborn to 6. mostly low income – many single parents
- Our clients are mostly first nations who come to us for training or employment opportunities
- Single families, families, grandparents, children 0-6, teens, all walks of life
- Aboriginal and Métis youth

#### **What services do you provide and are any of them specific to food security? (service type, policies, accessibility)**

##### ▪ **If food security service, where do you get your product, how much is local, food quality?**

- No services specific to food security – public health services
- 2x per week hot lunch program, snacks during programs. We buy all food at local grocery stores – due to budget restraints can't often shop sales. Use real Canadian wholesale club, superstore, save-on and quality greens. Buy local fruits & veg in season
- we provide both one-on one employment counselling and workshops. When we do workshops we always provide food as we recognize hungry people can't learn well. Many of our clients are on income assistance so affordable housing is a major problem. Many spend most of their income on accommodation so have little money left for food. The amount of money people receive on income assistance means food security is an issue especially for families. Poor health and susceptibility to colds, flu, etc also results.
- Lunch provided during programs. We try to buy all veg fruit local. The rest is bought on sale. We try to provide all food groups at every meal
- Provide after school snacks obtained by local retailers

#### **What is the demand for your services?**

##### **How easy are they for clients to access?**

- Immunizations & prenatal are most in demand. Everyday is busy. Services are easy to access – they do home visits. Some clients are showing food insecurity. Its hard to say – for a lot of clients it is tight and hard to make ends meet. Its not just about amount but quality as well.
- Great demand. Easy access as our centre is right downtown (easily accessible on food and transit)
- Transportation is an issue for many clients. Homelessness or poor quality housing impacts ability to utilize services.
- Clients are able to access most everything through our program and if they can't we help them to find what they are looking for somewhere else
- Kids come to programs hungry

### *Where we'd like to get to and how we will get there:*

#### **What would it take overall to improve food security for your clients?**

- Gleaners is a good idea as well. Good food box – quality isn't always there so isn't consistent quality. Don't know if its necessarily organic as well. Improved communication and ability to store food is important.
- Increased income (to have enough \$\$ to buy healthy food). Competitive food prices within all grocery stores. Possibly a food cooperative & greater access to farmers market.

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- Increase access to income assistance and the amount people receive. Invest in affordable housing projects in our community.
- If their income was higher and food was cheaper and easier for them to access. Donations are also a great help.
- More money.

### **What are the untapped or underutilized resources within our community that would improve food security?**

- In terms of food waste, what happens to that? The services in enderby are there but not enough to meet the degree of the problem.
- Orchard gleaning. Good food box. Farmers market.
- In many ways we are already overtapped and overutilized and always doing more with less. Poor core funding and lack of long term funding for non profit agencies in Vernon community are contributing to the problem.
- Good food box, programs that provide lunch such as our program.
- n/a

### **What would your vision of a food secure Vernon be and what are you willing to do to make this happen?**

- There needs to be better connection between the food going to waste and those who need it. Basic how to use food – inexpensive and healthy food. I see a lot of people who use fast food. Better utilization of community kitchens but need to ensure people get there. We need more people (a team) dedicated to food security – she can refer but doesn't have time to do this work on her own and it doesn't seem to continue without a driving force. She doesn't have anywhere to refer to.
- Lobby gov't to increase social assistance income. Improve bus service to cheaper stores and farmers market. Educate public on healthy nutrition. Access to healthy food – e.g. bus service – work with school district.
- I am willing to lobby at all levels of gov't to take responsibility for these issues.
- I think advertisement is a good start. Make resources more available – the food bank is only accessible every three months. If possible serve lunch more often or snacks every day.
- n/a

### **Given limited resources, where do you think Vernon should focus its efforts?**

- Getting people eating local. Linking people who have food with those who need food. Agricultural land becomes more and more valued. If we can keep the growers growing here then we're not dependent on other areas e.g. natural disasters. Freezing and storing. Drying. We live in a food growing area, why is food a problem?
- Take junk food out of schools. Have breakfast program in all schools (ensure each child has at least one healthy meal a day).
- Food security does not stand alone. It is related to affordable housing, to health issues, etc. I believe municipal, provincial and federal governments must commit money to solving these issues in Vernon and other areas.
- On the homeless and the families on low income. That means the working and not working.
- n/a

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## November 16, 2006 Focus Group with Food Insecure Service Providers (n=10)

### *What Services Do You Provide Specific to Food Security:*

#### **Upper Room Mission**

- 100% clients worried about food – most hungry
- drug/mental health issues
- living on street or low cost housing
- often just \$20 left for food /month
- receive food donated from businesses and farmers
- offer breakfast and lunch 5 days per week (breakfast not so nutritious)
- offer produce when it is donated; give out leftovers from lunch
- food hampers given 1x/month
- Concern: too much baked goods and sweets donated

#### **Alliance Church**

- serve a mix of people from low income to welfare
- open Mon to Friday
- give freezer meals and donated food to those in need
- through Neighbour Link the church gives voucher to particular grocery stores (Superstore, ? if others)

#### **North Okanagan Childcare Society**

- 40% would have no food issues
- 60% would likely express some degree of food insecurity (teen parents, social housing)
- some parents not working and some are dealing with addictions
- if parent doesn't send adequate food, centre will provide child with nutritious food

#### **Literacy**

- just starting out – no comments at this time

#### **Family Resource Centre**

##### Healthy Families

- 20% don't worry about food
- 40% worried about running out of food
- 20% run out of food
- have no money for food and Health Canada not seeing need to provide them with money to provide food

##### Building Blocks

- does have money to provide food as part of programming – breakfast is given and parents can take extra food home

#### **Community Kitchens**

- wide range of income levels, but people who are well-off generally don't come to CK
- service families, singles, Mental Health clients, etc
- don't ask about finances when people join so difficult to know their exact situation
- Participants charged \$0.75 per portion of food taken home
- challenge – can't get Lumby CK up and running after trying several times – no commitment from participants
- Diane noted that all participants in the CK she runs are worried or do run out of food

#### **Good Food Box**

- probably 20% don't worry about running out of food
- about 80% worry about not having enough food

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- GFB offers boxes free of charge to some individuals (these have been sponsored by donors in the community – by groups or individual donations)

## **Village Centre**

- 100% would be running out of food
- offer coffee and sometimes a bowl of soup
- coordinates the Blanket Give Away at Polson Park each night at 10:30

## ***What Would Your Vision of a Food Secure Vernon be?***

- focus on eating locally, produce our own food; buy local foods – needs to be accessible and affordable
- place for food insecure families to grow own food – community garden
- teaching around preserving
- attract families that don't want to be stigmatized by food handouts
- step back in time and regain skills
- children to get info on healthy eating and food prep from a young age – parents supporting
- A Kitchen Community Centre where people could come together and cook a meal together and stay for entertainment; facility would have storage for local foods; it would be a teaching centre around buying and preparing food; cooking classes including ethnic food classes; attract higher income people to participate to get a mix of participants to promote community building; would be a no stigma place to learn how to feed your family
- there is enough food in Vernon – it's just getting wasted (some donated food not utilized or not being cooked into a meal for people who need it)
- more gleaning happening
- grocery stores with just real food – better store layout
- farmers market downtown and accessible
- transportation and access
- bus passes to low income individuals
- bus system improved to get to food sources – timing of routes – need increased usage (someone gave Dial-a-Bus St. Albert example for off hours)
- taxi drivers to pick up unused food at end of night and redistribute
- collect fresh road kill/fish, etc.
- pizza oven idea in the park

## **Themes emerging around the vision –**

- redistribution of food (gleaning, from restaurants, stores, wildlife, etc)
- transportation and access to food – location of services, buses, etc.
- skill building and bringing people together - preserving, cooking, eating, gardening etc.

## ***Untapped Resources***

- edible food that cannot be sold from grocery stores, restaurants (has anyone already explored this in Vernon)
- backyard produce and fruit
- talk to Kamloops re. FoodShare – food truck to redistribute food
- people – the church community, the coalition
- church kitchens/members (there is also the kitchen at People Place)
- (idea for fundraising – 1 day/year - \$1 extra on a meal at restaurants goes to fund soup kitchen)
- offer tax receipts to encourage restaurants and stores to donate food for the “Centre”
- schools are empty – home ec rooms
- empty lots – turn grass landscaping into edible landscaping or community gardens
- buses

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## ***Where Should We Focus Our Efforts***

### **What are you/your organization willing to do to make it happen?**

- start small – add to Food Program pamphlet – describe the dream
  - focus on maintaining/bolstering existing programs like the GFB
  - awareness of poverty and food insecurity in Vernon - direct to who you will be requesting resources and funding from
  - maintain partnerships – use the Safe and Healthy Community committee
  - develop ways to reach the working poor – they are invisible, stigma
  - low cost/free evening meal – doesn't currently exist as "Dinner Tonight" funding ran out
  - food related fundraisers
  - involve the business community – they have working poor employees
  - focus/gather food programs under one umbrella and work on keeping them safely funded. Apply for funding collectively. Be a coalition/society.
  - concern noted around burnout
- 
- Upper Room Mission would support the Community Centre concept
  - Alliance Church – partnering; sharing resources, focus on skills/teaching
  - Village Centre – support teaching workshops (2 day)
  - Literacy – partner with high schools – make soup – home ec. class

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## Food Producers (n=5)

### **Where we're at:**

#### **What do you produce?**

##### **Which products are easier to sell? Why?**

- 40 different veggies (asparagus to zucchini) – most are minor crops. He knows how much he can grow that he will be able to sell – he only grows what he knows he can sell. 1 acre of potatoes, salad greens, strawberries, plums, cherries, will do apricots next year. Organic. It depends on the consumer – there are ethnic differences. Demand is limited in some things. Easier is not really the word – it depends on the demand of the consumer – e.g. selling 1 ton of potatoes vs. 1 ton of rutabagas – what will the consumer want to eat on a regular basis. Farmers market type sales are only a certain amount of the demand. There is always consistent demand for potatoes but e.g. at the beginning of spring he will sell lots of radishes and spinach but the demand lessens as the summer goes on. Same with fruits – e.g. strawberries are pretty consistent but other fruits change demand as the year goes on. Strawberries – he may be decreasing the amount he grows due to global warming – berries are ripening too early. He's planted things like Saskatoons when there was a demand. People get certain cravings at certain times of year depending on temp, season, etc. E.g. root crops in colder weather vs. raw crops in the heat.
- We produce certified organic, grass-fed beef, lamb, certified organic chicken, sea buckthorn juice, garlic.
- Fast grown meat with the help of hormones and antibiotics – today's people are not any more used to the flavour of organic, natural raised meat. Meat has to be extremely soft and fat covered – as they are used to for many years. Once it is natural and lean there are no future orders. We raise large number of lambs, beef, and some chicken.
- Organic beef, lamb, chicken, dairy, organic garlic, berries for heath drink – unpasturized and easy to sell – chicken – already seen a demand for all of them. Undersupply of demand for chicken. They produce but don't process. Demand for raw milk is an issue because of CFIA rules – there's a guy in Ontario who is on a hunger strike and is only drinking raw milk to right these rules. Raw milk is not truckable over long distances but would work fine locally. In California it is legalized – they got young mothers rallying behind the issue due to nutritional concerns. Not showing lactose issues with raw milk because natural enzymes – is a very political issue.
- Apples – most difficult, too many on the market and people don't know how to cook them & too lazy. Sweet corn and pears sell easily – limited local supply of these.

#### **What things are affecting your ability to produce and/or sell your product?**

##### **e.g. environmental concerns, changes to the ALR, availability of farm workers**

- there are only certain areas of the Okanagan that are good for growing – e.g. his land is sandy and is only good for certain crops. Also he can't expand because his neighbours are now small acreages with large houses (e.g. hobby farms with pet cows and small gardens). He has the machinery to farm more land but he can't do it because he doesn't have access to more land close by. Labour situation – everybody's got jobs around. As long as big stores can bring stuff in without tariffs it keeps them buying stuff from china etc. where wages and production costs are lower. They will have to continue selling under their costs and lose money just to move product. Up until now there was no continuity of what was "organic" – they may not be organic as per our (Canadian) rules but they can call it that and we buy it. Rules on what is organic on a national level are going into place so this may improve things but the US rules are fairly strict and people will still accept that standard.
- Cost of production, cost of labour, market to sell into, permission to produce (e.g. with chickens), ability to sell product without selling at a loss

# Interview/Questionnaire/Focus Group

## Compiled Answers

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- We should have the right to process meat at the ranch as it happens in Europe. No stress for the animals and much cleaner. The only we have been able to make it through BSE and US border closing was subdividing our land. It is important that the farmer in difficult times has the right to sell land. Most farmers in our area gave up – out of 34 farmers only 8 are still producing. I prefer to raise certified organic but it is impossible in long term – cost too high. Out of other provinces, trafficked meat is brought in (I know it for sure as they asked me to funnel beef into my operation). Environment – it is important to cut down on artificial fertilizer, on the other hand we need more tolerance to natural or organic farming. If a cow is fed hay 10 feet of a creek, no problem. If someone puts 80 tons of N close to a creek, which is permitted and done, big impact. Our society is not well informed about the real problems in nature.
- Availability of processors that are compliant with the laws. They have one processor that they use but he may not be around as of next year with the changes in the laws. Sometimes the red tape around the whole slaughter situation is an issue. With the processing of milk the natural ingredients are killed and then put in again after. They are a member of an organization called Western A Price Foundation (our of Wash, DC) – not a gov't org – provides members info on grazing and grass finishing of cows. Grain finishing of cows makes red meat unhealthy – acidity in it changes. The mutated e. coli can live in the acidity of the stomach this way. If we have the cow and the calf here (5.5 months) that calf is really expensive by the time they start finishing because grazing takes 2 years to finish them. If they can find a calf that is raised in the same ethical background as them they could finish them and be able to say they are still organic. And would be cheaper in the end keeping the price affordable. All their farm would be used in keeping these young cows rather than grazing with costs too much. A lot of producers don't have market access but if they organized that would work.
- To switch to organic farming would help sales considerably. However apple production is difficult in the north with higher rainfall than in the south Okanagan.

### **How easy/hard is it to sell your product locally? What factors effect this?**

- He is able to sell locally because he is able to pick and choose what he can grow. He has a customer base already because he has been around for 16 years. Newer growers have a harder time because they have to get to know people.
- The certified organic products are in demand but the high cost of our meat compared to grocery stores makes it harder to sell. Not all families think they can afford it but they forget the cost of their health when they eat feed-lot grocery store meat!
- Very difficult. Livestock processed at local abattoir has often a bad smell (have plenty of proof). When getting a lamb or beef back, too much weight lost, where did the meat go? As well, often young pork for example sent in, meat of old show back. Ask our realtor, our lawyer, politics, whoever in town, each one made experience with local processing!
- Got to move your product and do your advertising and publicity yourself – costs and time that the larger system would do for you.
- I just grow enough to meet demand

### **What happens with product that isn't sold?**

- They have worked to minimize that – their first option is not to have excess – he organizes his crops to do this. Excess that is already paid for but not picked up is donated. Small amounts are also given to employees. They will take it to the Salvation Army or one of the other food programs – so they are processing it as well which costs extra. They compost anything that isn't given away or sold.
- Put it on sale and if it's still not gone by the time our new meat arrives we donate it to the food banks.
- n/a
- after a year their frozen product is given to the food bank (even though it could be used of another 6 months)
- apples are fed to deer and neighbour's pigs – these are always Macintosh apples.

# Interview/Questionnaire/Focus Group

## Compiled Answers

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### *Where we'd like to get to and how we will get there:*

#### **What needs to change to increase the amount of product that is sold locally? What would help?**

- Land prices going down. People would be motivated to rent their land to a farmer – access to leased land is hard to do because these owners don't need money so the farmers end up being their "unpaid gardeners". He hasn't used other land because most people won't give him a lease longer than a year and it takes 3 years for the land to become "organic" – he needs at least 15 years for a lease to work plus the infrastructure that needs to be built. He doesn't want to be a landlord as well which would happen with most leases because he'd have to manage the house as well as the land.
- Increased consumer education on the true cost of producing food without government subsidies. Increased awareness about the benefit of organic, grass-fed meats and how bad conventional, feed-lot beef is for you. More exposure to the public about our products and a push to promote local consumerism would be good too!
- n/a
- costs involved need to be helped with. Competing with the convenience of going to one store. Vernon's farmers market is good and accessible so there is one good way. Consciousness of consumers is improving. In the winter they drive to Kelowna to distribute. They have a freezer in a store in Vernon that people can access their product from. They are looking into house deliveries but may be an issue around costs/policy. Unofficially they do deliveries to seniors. The producers have to try harder and the consumers need to be more organized. Some people choose not to have cars so they are difficult to deal with but they want to buy in bulk – if they organized a bit more it would be easier for them to set up deliveries. They have doubled their production this year and have had to rest freezer space and bought another trailer with reefer. They would like to keep up with demand but they don't have the product because of storage and space. Causes issues with sourcing stores when they don't have the infrastructure to store extra. Their profit margins aren't very high due to the infrastructure costs. If you want intelligent people in charge of your food supply we need to pay them a fair wage but there isn't the profit to do that. The work is way more complicated than anyone can imagine. Personal engagement is important.
- More bad weather in California and Californian farmers get paid better for produce so they can pay their workers a living wage – then we can't compete.

#### **What would it take to redistribute product that isn't sold?**

- He didn't find it hard to do this – most of the community groups are well known and he made contact easily.
- A store that wouldn't mind stocking oru product seasonally and not minding if we sell out for a short period before slaughtering begins again. Also getting stores, restaurants, and people to buy a better proportion of an animal, not just ground beef, and steaks, but ribs, roasts, organs, etc.
- They have good contacts already that they are able to do this quite easily. They don't just give excess – they give 5% of their Christmas sales to the food bank during that time of the year.
- Not enough unsold product to worry about. I advertised \$5 for 30lb box – few takers. People don't want to be bothered in processing their own apples.
- n/a

#### **Would you be interested in supplying local retailers and restaurants if the demand was evident? (if you don't already)**

- He used to supply retailers locally but their protocols have changed. He quit doing that because of the issues around policy. Produce managers don't stay so they can't stay on top of who's doing this at the stores – why would you bother with farmer's who can't supply everything? They don't wat to buy at the full retail price. Restaurants he would work with but he comes up with the same issues as the stores – here is the price we'll give you, how much we want and when we want it – no negotiation – e.g. price of industrial salad mix from us is so cheap the local farmers can't compete.

# Interview/Questionnaire/Focus Group Compiled Answers

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- We do now and we would like to continue to do so as well as possibly expand to more restaurants or stores in our local area.
- n/a
- n/a
- No they don't pay enough. Unprocessed food is too cheap; it is easier to buy from the USA. Noticed the price of produce from US lately, the price of relying on others to provide food.

## Notes:

- We have this split personality overall – we want to buy low but we want high wages. E.g. we don't have any manufacturers any more because they're not financially viable. Local labour rates – he's paying 10 to 15 per hour – plus the costs of land plus the low cost of food.
- We need to feed people healthy food and not junk food – e.g. the hospitals will not buy local organic food. They want industrialized – cheapest. IVMA – he's heard complaints about them – they are wanting to sell things at lower price rather than promoting the quality of the goods. Gov't doesn't protect veggie and fruit farmers like they do other foods.
- We need to convince people to buy local and not just organic. Local and sustainable. Get people thinking about health and food and choices.
- Creative ways to buy food year round.
- Locally grown co-op in Atlanta, Ga – website – a farmer's co-op
- Local growers would like a central covered/heated area to sell their wares.
- Storage is a good idea but the demand lessens in the winter and wouldn't be cost-effective. Would come on if the outlets were there and a steady demand.
- Food sector is considered industrial and there's no planning around this – only 2 planning schools in North America include food sector information.
- The big stores have cut off local farmers even from the local stores.

# Interview/Questionnaire/Focus Group Compiled Answers

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## Retailers (n=1)

### *Where we're at:*

#### **What local products do you sell?**

##### **Which products are easier to stock/sell? Why?**

- Beef, lamb chicken garlic, sea buckthorn nectar (all certified organic, grass-fed). The garlic and sea buckthorn are easier because the meats take up more space and need to be frozen! Garlic sells easiest; the meats are a little harder because they are frozen (people want fresh). They're a little pricier than regular grocery store.

#### **Is there a demand for a local product that you can't stock?**

##### **What factors affect this (e.g. environmental concerns, availability, food safety)**

- Yes there is demand for turkey (certified organic), game meats, processed foods (sandwich meats, ready-made meals, pre-marinated meats...). We are constricted by the cost of storage for the meats, the cost of production, labour costs, and facilities to make more processed certified organic foods.

#### **What do you do with product that isn't sold? Is it redistributed?**

- Donate to food bank or put on sale.

### *Where we'd like to get to and how we will get there:*

#### **What needs to change to increase the amount of local product you stock/sell? What would help?**

- To sell more we would need to lower our prices which we can't because the cost of production is so high, or the public needs to be educated on the difference between regular grain fed grocery store meat and our grass-fed certified organic free-range meats! Having the consumer understand the true cost of producing food would be nice and not be influenced by subsidized prices!

#### **What would it take to redistribute product that isn't sold or to increase the amount of unsold product you redistribute?**

- It would be great to have an outlet that doesn't mind seasonal supply. When we have excess meat, usually June-July, we could sell it to another store to make room for the new meat coming in Aug-Nov. But most stores want a consistent year round supply and their demand isn't constant.