

FRESH



FROM THE ISLAND

The Rooster Tale

Spring 2008
Volume 1 Issue 2

Local Farmers + Local Business = A Happy Partnership

A small step toward Island food security

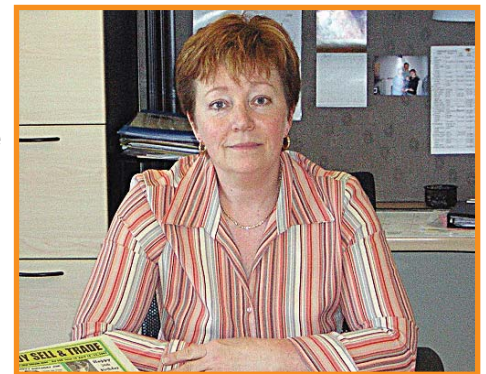
Global Food shortage", "soaring grain prices", "food security", and "record oil prices". These are just some of the shocking phrases being used in news articles over the last 9 months. Every economist and scientist you listen to has some explanation or other for this but the questions that arise for most of us include 'why is this occurring now?' and 'what can I do?' We at Buy Sell & Trade went in search of answers and we found them at the Island Farmers' Alliance.

Regular readers of Buy Sell & Trade will have noticed our ads offering support to the local farming community. We have long looked for a way to provide support to the farmers of the Island but, other than the offer of free advertising, we were really unsure of what else we could do.

A chance conversation with a farmer in Courtenay regarding her ad led me to be invited to the Annual General Meeting of the Island Farmers' Alliance in November of '07. It was there I learned about the growing movement among farmers, consumers and related businesses to advocate for agriculture on Vancouver Island. As one of the owners of Buy Sell & Trade I was delighted to accept the offer to run for their board of directors and now hold the position of secretary.

The Island Farmers' Alliance (IFA) was founded in 2000 by local Island farmers looking for a voice, with government and with consumers. The IFA mandate is to support and promote agriculture on Vancouver Island and partnership with Buy Sell & Trade allows them to get the word out like never before.

The Rooster Tale was born out of this partnership and Buy Sell & Trade is proud to be able to publish and distribute the IFA newsletter to our loyal readership, many of whom are farmers. We're happy to support the IFA and Island farmers by ensuring that information necessary to consumers, producers and growers is available through our paper and websites. Watch this spot as the Rooster Tale will appear with each season, giving our readers the opportunity to learn more about Island agriculture.



Best wishes,
Kathleen Erickson, Owner/Publisher
Buy Sell & Trade
"Bringing buyers and sellers together on Vancouver Island for 32 years"



IN THIS ISSUE:

- Environmental Farm Planning
- Farm Tax Changes
- Split Tax Assessments
- Complete Listing of Farmers' Markets and contact info for Vancouver Island and surrounding Islands



Grant Keefer of
Yellowpoint Cranberries

Rooster Logo Stickers and Farmgate Signs



By becoming a member of the Island Farmers' Alliance, you earn the right to proudly display the rooster logo on your products or at your farmgate.

Here's how to get yours:

Labels~ Barbara Grimmer: 250 629-3819 Signs (\$50)~ David Pollock: 250-743-4859

Split Tax Assessments The Simple Facts

Split Tax Assessments are the practice of applying different classifications to parts of a property for the purpose of tax assessment. Split Tax Assessments are being applied to farm properties not in the Agricultural Land Reserve. The following examples illustrate the situation.

Take a five-acre farm. The farmer farms 25% of it. The rest is treed lot and some part of the land is rocky and some is flooded in the spring time. The tax assessors deem 75% of the property to be not developed farmland and therefore zoned Residential. The farmer then pays tax on the base-line of 25% farm and 75% residential tax levels. That means that the 75% is classified and assessed (for tax purposes) as residential and taxed at that rate. The other effect this has is that when 75% of five acres is removed you are left with 1.25 acres as farmland under the tax assessment. Farms of 2 acres and more must produce

\$2,500.00 gross per year to retain farm tax status. Farms less than two acres must produce \$10,000.00 gross per year to retain their farm tax status. The acreage of the farm is determined by the acreage defined as farm by the tax assessment. Because the smaller farms requires a higher gross revenue per year, farmers lose the ability to apply for any farm tax status, as the gross per annum revenue requirements become impossible to meet.

Farmers are encouraged to embrace the "Value Added" concept. This means that if a farmer grows raspberries, that farmer is encouraged to take this produce (raspberries) and turn them into jam (raspberry jam). This is the "Value Added" concept. The theory is that this provides more revenue for the farmer from one product. All the land and the facilities (kitchen, building, space

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Bumper crop of
Yellowpoint Cranberries

Proudly Sponsored by Buy Sell & Trade

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ISLAND FARMERS

CLOSER IS BETTER ~ The Best

The Island's Good Food Initiative

Building infrastructure on Vancouver Island

The Islands Good Food Initiative is a partnership strategy aimed at increasing the sustainability of the local food system in the Vancouver Island/Coastal region. The lead organizations include the Island Farmers Alliance, Nanaimo Foodshare, the Nanaimo Association for Community Living and Edible Strategies Enterprises. Many other groups and businesses are coming on board as the plans develop. These groups are concerned that only 5% of the food we eat on the Island is grown here. They want to increase production but also ensure that farmers are properly paid and recognized for their work. The public wants more local food, but to meet demand we need to rebuild a lot of supports to make it possible.

OUR PLAN: Some of the key issues facing farmers were chosen for action by the partners.

MARKETING/DISTRIBUTION: The need for an island-wide marketing and distribution service has been identified over and over by farmers. As a result of a great deal of discussion and input, the Vancouver Island Heritage Foodservice Co-operative Association was incorporated in November 2007. The Ag Co-op Development Initiative has provided funding to help the co-op with its development plan. Watch for the new 'doing business as' name and logo. Funding from the Union of BC Municipalities is providing support for development of a community wide Harvest Box program in Nanaimo as a pilot project.

LABOUR: The lack of trained, skilled labour hampers farmer's plans. The Nanaimo Association for Community Living received funding from Service Canada, the Vancouver Foundation and the Canadian Worker Co-op Federation to develop a Labour Market strategy and to work towards creation of a labour contracting organization. 'Good Food Works' advocated with others to begin the process of creating a farm worker apprenticeship program in BC. An active Workforce Development Committee is planning a pre-apprenticeship program. Recruitment is beginning for people ready to be trained. Intensive interviews with farmers in the Nanaimo Regional District

are taking place through "From the Ground Up" consulting as well as an on-line survey of farmers throughout the region. Gary Rolston and Simon Pritchard are working on this study. Their results will help us design the training and support plans to match farmers' exact needs.

ACCESS TO FINANCE: Farmers are often over-committed financially but need access to capital in order to expand operations, buy new equipment etc. Several activities are under way to try and open up the options for farmers and ensure that the financing of growth will be possible. Watch for news!

VALUE ADDING: To see the best return, farmers recognize that they need to be able to capture more value—

there has long been a need for more food handling and food processing facilities on Vancouver Island. A business plan for these facilities is in active preparation with funding support from Coast Capital Saving Credit Union.

INSTITUTIONAL PURCHASING: Research sponsored by Nanaimo Foodshare showed us that if publicly funded institutions in the region would come on as partners, their purchasing power could be directed to really help local farmers. We appreciate the support of the BC Medical Services Foundation and the Vancouver Foundation in helping us build these plans. Vancouver Island Health Authority is providing funding to support this process.

by Sandra Mark
IFA Director



Our children trying to bond with new calves.



Farm Tax Changes

Recently, the BC Assessment Authority came to the opinion that the present farm tax system is unfair and needs to be restructured so that only land that is modified for agriculture and used for agriculture be taxed at the agricultural rate. It started the re-assessment process with 204 Saanich properties not in the ALR. Farmers found their taxes doubling, tripling, and quadrupling as those parts of their property that were woodlot or bush were taxed at the full residential rate even though the zoning did not allow them to place residences on them.

A loud outcry ensued, for if the program as initiated were allowed to continue, numerous farms in British Columbia would have been put out of

business and our agricultural production reduced yet further. The Province put the program on hold and appointed a review panel to examine the principles for assessing farms. This panel is to report by July of 2009 so its recommendations might determine the 2010 assessment roll. That may sound a long way in the future, but those who submit earlier will have a greater effect on the progress of the review. The more the submissions, the more attention the Province will pay.

by Bob Mitchell,
IFA Vice President
seabluff@shaw.ca



You can register your opinions by emailing the panel at farmassessmentreview@gov.bc.ca or by visiting the Provincial website at www.sbr.gov.bc.ca and clicking on Farm Assessment Review.

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FARMERS' ALLIANCE

On the Market is Locally Grown!

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FROM THE ISLAND

Environmental Farm Planning

Environmental Farm Planning (EFP) is a program sponsored by the BC Agricultural Council.

It is funded through the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC by Agriculture and AgriFood Canada. The Island Farmers' Alliance coordinates delivery of this program to local farmers and we are proud to be able to continue this service through 2008. It is essentially about reducing environmental hazards, is voluntary and there are no fees to pay.

When I first became aware of EFPs several years ago, the cynic in me said, "Here is another bureaucratic intrusion into my autonomy on my farm." After a more reasoned second look an opportunity suggested itself and I am glad that I chose to participate.

"I hope that you will give this program serious consideration. I am glad that I did."

David Pollock

The opportunity is in having an accredited standard of healthy environmental practice in place when and if anyone decides to be critical. It also sets a standard to work toward if there are issues that need to be addressed. In any case, the storage of fuel and pesticides needed significant attention and I had no procedure in place to deal with a spill of either. I had known about this problem for years but simply put off doing anything about it (a management practice I learned from my dad). Another problem area was our manure pile, which I am told is a status symbol in some part of the world, but viewed as a potential hazard around here.



The objective of Environmental Farm Planning, to use the words from the planning booklet, is to help farmers develop and implement a practical plan that uses beneficial practices to protect and enhance the environment. It applies to all sizes of farms throughout BC and there is no cost to the farmer for participation. Its key elements involve doing a risk assessment and developing a plan to mitigate any identified risks. A

workbook and the assistance of an EFP planner make this relatively easy. I have never accepted criticism from non-farmers gracefully but my EFP planner was easily recognized and accepted as a true colleague.

My costs for the necessary corrections were minimal. I bought a steel cabinet from a local scrap yard and installed it in a lockable building for pesticides. I built a spillage basin to go under the fuel dock. I had my soils tested and found that my fertilizer applications were good. I cross fenced an area where cattle might gain access to a creek and contacted the local forestry agency about rules surrounding burning in proximity to forested lands. I relocated the manure pile and covered it with a tarp. I then completed the planning guide checklist and called for inspection. David Tattum, an experienced farmer, gave his approval, and I was able to display my EFP sign with pride.

On two occasions now, I have pointed out to local officials that by terms of the EFP agreement I am held to a higher standard of environmental care than the local municipality (and why are they not doing their part?). My customers see the EFP sign and it raises their awareness of what a farmer actually contributes to the community's well being.

The Island Farmers' Alliance is pleased to be able to offer access to Environmental Farm Planning for 2008 for all Island Farmers. From its inception, Peter Versteeg has ably administered the program. Should you be interested in participating or if you have other questions, please contact Peter Versteeg at 250-701-2739 pversteeg@shaw.ca



by David Pollock
IFA Treasurer

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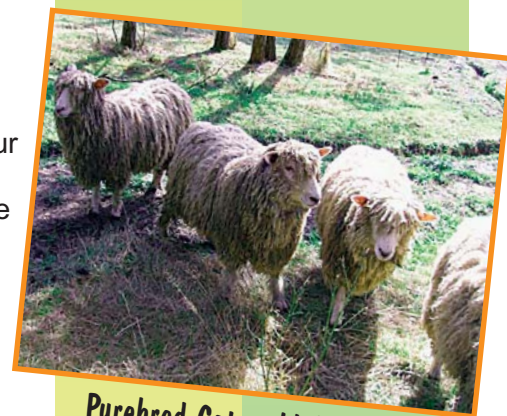
Minister Rick Thorpe established a Committee of Farm Tax Assessment Review earlier this year. Surprisingly, there are no agricultural organizations represented on that committee. It is my belief that political erosion of farmland by tax legislation will simply result in more land available to urban entities and to land developers and further degradation of our environment. The composition of this tax review committee is crucial to the survivability of small-scale farms throughout BC. Liberal MLA Blair Leckstrom who is heading the review of the assessments gave a presentation in Prince George last week about the review committee's mandate. Despite the fact that this issue is relatively straightforward the timetable for reporting back to the government is September, 2009 some four months after the election date of May 2009. It is extremely unusual for a committee to report back after an election. I believe that is how reports get buried.

Considering the issues to be dealt with there is no good reason that this committee should take more than eight months to assess the situation and make recommendations. After all, the debate leading up to the review has already identified the issues and their ramifications.

By Jenny Macleod, IFA Director
(hughjenny@shaw.ca)



David Pollock at U Vic with one of Mike Finnerty's apple trees. John Finnerty (his greatgrandfather) and brother Michael cleared and farmed what is now the campus of U Vic.



Purebred Cotswold Sheep at Inis Eile Farm on Pender Island

Split Tax Assessments

required for making jam) are then assessed as commercial and taxed at the commercial rate (even higher than residential), further splitting the farm property into another classification and raising the tax burden.

Using these two examples you can see how the Ministry of Small Business and Revenue are targeting farmland and farmers. They began this practice years ago but there was a backlash in November of 2007 that caused The Hon. Rick Thorpe, Minister of Small Business and Revenue to announce a tax assessment policy review in November 2007. This was caused by the reaction of farmers on the Saanich Peninsula who by December 2007 had filed over 200 assessment appeals. The farmers in that area lost all of these appeals early this year. Split tax assessments are now being made all over BC with extremely harmful results. The newest sector to experience this impact is in cattle production. The cattlemens' grazing lands are being reviewed and assessed with the same result. If 100% of the land is not in use, the land is taxed residential.

There are Federal & Provincial programs in place that encourage environmental stewardship. This means areas set aside for wildlife habitat. None of that is available as options to the BC tax assessors. In their work there are no classifications other than farm, residential and commercial. There is no environmental tax classification for exemption purposes.

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The Islands' Farmers' Markets

Covering Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands & the Sunshine Coast

FRESH



FROM THE ISLAND



COMOX VALLEY FARMERS' MARKET Courtenay

April to December
Saturday 9:00 am to noon
Wednesday 10 am to 1 pm
Saturdays: April to October Exhibition Grounds, Headquarters Road
Wednesday: 4th & Duncan, downtown
Ph: 250-218-0321

SALT SPRING ISLAND SATURDAY MARKET Ganges, Salt Spring Island

April 7 to October 27
Saturdays 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
At Centennial Park in Ganges
Ph: (250) 537-4448
www.saltspringmarket.com

PENINSULA COUNTRY MARKET Brentwood Bay

June 16 to October 6
Saturdays 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
At the Saanich Fairground (1528 Stelly's Crossroad), across from Stelly's Secondary School, near Brentwood Bay
Ph: (250) 216-0521

SIDNEY SUMMER MARKET Sidney

June 7 to August 30
Thursdays 5:30 pm-8:30 pm
On Beacon Avenue (closed to traffic)
Ph: (250) 655-6433

ESQUIMALT COMMUNITY MARKET Esquimalt

May 16 to September 26
Wednesdays 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Esquimalt Town Square behind the Municipal Hall/Library
Ph: (250) 385-7658
esquimaltcommunitymarket@hotmail.com

MOSS STREET COMMUNITY MARKET Victoria

May 5 to October 13
Saturdays 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
At Sir James Douglas Elementary School, at the corner of Moss Street and Fairfield Road
Ph: (250) 361-1747
www.mossstreetmarket.com
See website for winter & holiday markets

JAMES BAY COMMUNITY MARKET Victoria

May 5 to October 6
Saturdays 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
At the corner of Menzies and Superior Streets in James Bay
Ph: (250) 381-5323
www.jamesbaymarket.com

VIC WEST FARMERS' POCKET MARKET Victoria

April 25 to October 31 (outdoors)
Nov 1 to Apr 24 (indoors for winter)
Wednesdays 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
winter hours 3:00 to 7:00 p.m.
Outdoors: Corner of Craigflower Road and Raynor Avenue by the community garden Winter: at the Vic West Y
Ph: (250) 385-7974
www.foodroots.ca

GOVERNMENT STREET MARKET Victoria

Mid June to mid September
Sunday 11 am to 4:30 pm
Located between Pandora and Figgard on Government Street, downtown

LUXTON STATION MARKET Langford

June 2 to October 6
Saturdays 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
At the Luxton Fairgrounds in Langford, next to the Galloping Goose Regional Trail (1040 Marwood Avenue)
Ph: (250) 507-5767
www.luxtonstationmarket.ca

METCHOSIN FARMERS' MARKET Metchosin

May 13 to October 28
Sundays 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
At the Metchosin Municipal Grounds (4450 Happy Valley Road)
Ph: (250) 478-7871

SOOKE COUNTRY MARKET Sooke

May 12 to September 29
Saturdays 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
At 2047 Otter Point Road (turn right at the lights in downtown Sooke)
Ph: (250) 642-7528

DUNCAN FARMERS' MARKET Duncan

March 15 - December 20
Saturdays 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Forest Discover Centre, corner of the Trans Canada Hwy and Drinkwater Rd (across from Cowichan Commons Mall)
Ph: 250 748-4630
www.duncanfarmersmarket.com

MARKET IN THE SQUARE Duncan

April 7 to October 20
Saturdays 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Downtown Duncan City Square
Ph: (250) 746-7396
www.marketinthesquare.net

CEDAR FARMERS' MARKET Cedar

May 13 to October 7
Sundays 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
In front of the Crow & Gate Pub on Yellow Point Road in Cedar (2313 Yellow Point Road)
Ph: (250) 722-3526

NANAIMO DOWNTOWN FARMERS' MARKET Nanaimo

April 13 to October 5
Fridays 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
At the Pioneer Waterfront Plaza, by the historic bastion (Front Street)
Ph: (250) 754-1998
www.nanaimofarmersmarket.com

NANAIMO NORTH FARMERS' MARKET Nanaimo

May 3 to October 11th
Saturday 10am to 12 pm
Located inside the former Rutherford Mall. Will move into the parking lot in June.
4750 Rutherford Road, Nanaimo
Carlene Patenaude 758-8111 ext 122
marketfresh@nanaimonorth.com

ERRINGTON FARMERS' MARKET Errington

May 5 to September 29
Saturdays 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
At Errington Community Park on Errington Road
Ph: (250) 951-0558

QUALICUM BEACH FARMERS' MARKET Qualicum Beach

May 19 to October 6
Saturdays 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
At Memorial and First Streets in downtown Qualicum Beach (north of the railroad tracks)
Ph: (250) 752-3087

GABRIOLA ISLAND FARMERS' MARKET Gabriola Island

May to October
Saturday 10 am to noon
Agricultural Association Hall, 465 South Road, Gabriola Island
Ph: 250-247-8216

HORNBY ISLAND FARMERS' MARKET Hornby Island

July and August
Wednesday and Saturday 11 am to 2 pm
3500 Shingle Spit, Hornby Island
Ph: 250-335-0987

MAYNE ISLAND FARMERS' MARKET Mayne Island

July to October
Saturday 10 am to 1 pm
Fernhill Road, Agricultural Hall, Mayne Island 250-539-9925

POWELL RIVER OPEN AIR MARKET Powell River

April to September
Saturday 10:30 to 12:30
Sunday 12:30 to 2:30
McLeod road, Paradise Valley Exhibition Park, Powell River Ph: 604-483-4923

QUADRA ISLAND FARMERS' MARKET & BAZAAR AND THE VILLAGE SQUARE MARKET Quadra Island

May to end of September
Saturdays 10 am to 2 pm
Quathiaski Cover, West Road, Quadra Island

TEXADA ISLAND FARMERS' MARKET Texada Island

Mid June to mid September
Sunday Gillies Bay

PENDER ISLAND COMMUNITY HALL MARKET Pender Island

Easter Weekend to November's Christmas Craft Fair
Saturday 9:30 am to 1 pm
Ph: (250) 629-6700

MACDONALD FARM MARKET AND FARM HERITAGE MUSEUM Pender Island

Farm Store & Museum open year round
Saturdays 10 am- 2pm
Ph: (250) 629-3817
Farmer's Market Co-Op
May long weekend to Thanksgiving
Tues, Fri, Sat 10 am to 2 pm
Located at 4415 Bedwell Harbour Rd. A stone's throw from the Community Hall, right next to the Nu-To-You Thrift Store. Contact (250) 629-3817

Eat Fresh... Buy Local!



I.F.A. ~ we're growing for you!



Proudly Sponsored by Buy Sell & Trade

Did we miss your market? Please let us know by emailing farmers@bstonline.com

