

Clayoquot Biosphere Region Food Action Plan

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Prepared by:



In partnership with:



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An initiative of these
BC Healthy Living Alliance members



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Executive Summary

The Clayoquot Biosphere Region Food Action Plan is the culmination of the Clayoquot Biosphere Food Action Planning Project, led by the Ucluelet Community Food Initiative in partnership with the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust and funded by the BC Healthy Living Alliance.

The main focus of the project was to identify actions to address food security challenges across the region and to create networking and partnership opportunities.

The Plan comprises information gathered through a series of stakeholder engagement meetings and interviews held throughout the Clayoquot Sound region in January and February 2010, as well as broad community input gathered at community events, through a community survey and literature review.

A number of challenges to local food security were raised across stakeholder sessions including transportation, remoteness, high food and land costs, difficulty accessing seafood, Government regulations and, in some cases, demand for local food exceeding supply. Many of these issues are not new to residents of the Biosphere Reserve region and impact many aspects of their lives.

Opportunities to increase food access and security include:

Community Gardens – Almost all of the communities in the region are in the process of starting a community garden. There is an opportunity to bring all of the key people together to share resources, plans, policies and to brainstorm solutions.

Economic Development – There are many opportunities to develop more local food products, including wildcrafting, as well as developing and connecting with local markets. There is a longstanding need for a shellfish processing plant in the region.

Education – All stakeholder groups talked about the importance of education, especially youth education. Access to affordable, healthy food needs to be paired with basic cooking skills and nutrition knowledge. First Nations see an opportunity to teach language at the same time as healthy living. Farmers are keen to educate kids about where their food comes from. School gardens, career days and curriculum are all available educational opportunities.

Infrastructure – There are many specific infrastructure needs from stakeholders within the region, including a mobile food bank, community boats to harvest traditional foods, storage facilities for seafood and produce, as well as a regional composting program.

Networking – While there are already many informal partnerships and relationships, many stakeholders felt they would benefit from additional opportunities to network with both their peers, as well as other stakeholder groups.

Raising Awareness – There are many opportunities to profile best practises and local foods. Residents are keen to learn more about foods that are

currently available throughout the region and to celebrate local foods through community events.

Regulation & Food Policy Development – Many chefs, grocers and consumers are uncertain about the regulations that surround purchasing local foods. There is a strong appetite amongst local government leaders to develop a Good Food Charter.

In addition to these themes, the opportunities have also been organized by stakeholder group in the body of the report. Please see these sections for further information.

The Ucluelet Community Food Initiative has received funding to create a regional food website (eatwestcoast.ca). Participants in this project were asked what they would like to see on the site and what tools and resources they would use. Key areas include information about healthy eating, networking opportunities and a virtual market.

This document is intended to be a living document that will guide future food security work in the Biosphere Reserve region. It is our hope that groups within the region will implement different aspects of the plan, as is relevant to the goals and mandate of their particular community, business or organization. By working with the needs and opportunities identified in this plan we hope to accomplish greater food security for the West coast as a whole.

With respect to the funding awarded for this regional plan and the scope of the opportunities identified, it is clear that additional funding will be necessary in order to take action on the opportunities presented. In addition, there are opportunities that will require time rather than great financial contributions. While the current project partners will continue to dedicate time and seek funding to further aspects of the plan, other groups are encouraged to take on pieces of the plan that they feel passionate about.

Rebecca Hurwitz
Clayoquot Biosphere Trust

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Ucluelet Community Foods Initiative

Introduction

This Food Action Plan is the culmination of the Clayoquot Biosphere Food Action Planning Project, led by the Ucluelet Community Food Initiative in partnership with the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust and funded by the BC Healthy Living Alliance.

The main focus of the project was to identify actions to address food security challenges across the region and to create networking and partnership opportunities. The Plan comprises information gathered through a series of stakeholder engagement meetings and interviews held throughout the Clayoquot Sound region in January and February 2010, as well as broad community input gathered at community events, through a community survey and literature review.

The Plan has been organized into a number of sections, both by theme and also by stakeholder group. While this has resulted in repetition, it makes it possible to find opportunities that relate to a specific interest group, as well as connecting common themes that were raised across groups.

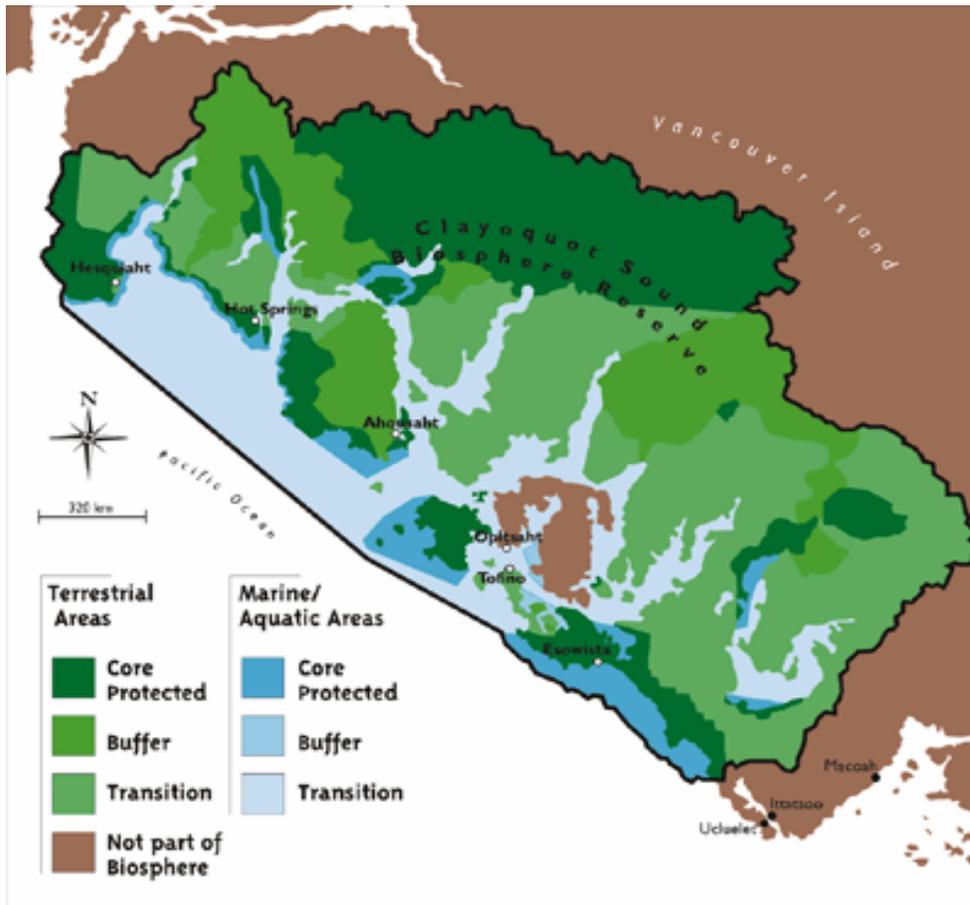
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Background

The Biosphere Reserve Region

The Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Reserve region is located on the west-coast of Vancouver Island. Nine distinct communities are located in the area, including seven First Nations communities and two non-First Nations communities, composing a population of approximately 4,846.



Purpose

The purpose of the project was to develop a food action plan that assesses the challenges, assets and opportunities for food security in the Clayoquot Biosphere region. This work has been approached at the regional level, as the communities in our area function at both an individual and regional scale. By sharing strengths between communities, we can hope to learn from one and other, create efficiencies and reduce duplication.

To this end, the project has included:

- conducting research,
- engaging in networking and outreach activities,
- organizing and hosting a series of community engagement meetings,
- developing a regional food action plan,
- and developing content for the 'Eatwestcoast.ca' website.

Participants

Eleven key stakeholder groups were engaged in the project and contributed to the food action plan. These groups included:

- Emergency Food Providers & Program Clients
- Farmers
- First Nations
- Grocers
- Institutional Food Buyers
- Local Government
- Restaurants
- Seafood Providers
- Seniors
- Service Providers
- Youth

This project has also been informed by broad community input that was previously collected including:

- Ucluelet Community Food Survey, 2009
- Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Region Community Food Survey, 2009
- Ucluelet Community Potluck, 2009
- George Fraser Day booth, 2009
- Ukee Days booth, 2008, 2009

Assets

The following list of assets was generated through the input sessions, as well as one on one interviews. The definition of assets has been approached in the widest sense to include programs, key documents, physical assets and organizations, amongst others.

Physical Assets

- Ample natural resources including wildfoods, seafood and pristine waters
- Community gardens (including the Ahousaht 'Roots and Shoots' garden, Wickaninnish Community School Garden and the Tofino Botanical Garden)
- Food Safe kitchens (Wickaninnish Community School, Ucluelet Community Centre, Ittatsoo 6-Plex, Tofino Community Hall, Ucluelet Secondary School)
- Marine assets (fishing vessels, oyster farms, ice plants, unloading facilities, fuel docks)
- Port Alberni assets (good climate, long growing season, fresh water and lots of agricultural land)
- Tourism and place branding

Intangible Assets

- Canning, harvesting and fish-smoking skills
- Enthusiasm and tenacity
- Experienced and knowledgeable farmers and fishermen
- Growing buy-in from consumers
- Local ethics, knowledge and will
- Local knowledge of gardening and history

First Nations Assets

- Ability to trade resources
- Access to seaweed for gardening and soil building
- Cranberry bog in Ahousaht
- Elders knowledge, creativity and skills, including harvesting techniques, fish smoking, canning and recipes
- New community garden initiatives
- Tla-o-qui-aht Traditional Food Network

Emergency Food Programs

- BC School Healthy Fruits and Vegetable Nutritional Program – Act Now BC
- Community lunch - Yu?u?i?ath First Nation
- Food bank - Food Bank on the Edge
- Food voucher - Family Ties
- Food voucher - Westcoast Community Resources Society
- Soup kitchen - Fishes & Loaves
- Ucluelet Community Lunch - Westcoast Community Resources Society

Key Documents

- Alberni Valley Agricultural Land Reserve maps, Alberni Clayoquot Regional District, Lori Wilson - lwilson@acrd.bc.ca
- Best of Care: Getting it Right for Seniors in BC; BC Ombudsperson; www.ombudsman.bc.ca/images/resources/reports/Public_Reports/Public_Report_No_46.pdf
- Central Westcoast Dual-Language Literacy Plan, 2009
- Community Needs Assessment, Westcoast Community Resources Society, 2003

- Dig It - Community Garden Guide: How Local Governments Can Support Community Gardens www.toolkit.bc.ca/resource/dig-it-community-garden-guide-how-local-governments-can-support-community-gardens
- Eat Smart, Meet Smart: How to Plan and Host Healthy Meetings, Events and Conferences, 2009, www.actnowbc.ca/media/08-024%20Eat%20Smart%20Meet%20Smart%20Booklet%20-%20May%2026.pdf
- Emergency Social Services, www.gotofino.com/tofinoemergencyinfo.html
- The Food Carbon Story: A Background Paper on Carbon Accounting Practices for the Food System
www.nanaimofoodshare.ca/downloads/igfi/Food_System_Carbon_Accounting_Practices_FINAL.pdf
- Nuu-chah-nulth Traditional Foods Toolkit, Uu-a-thluk, 2010
- Summary of Water Source Options & Treatment Study, Koers & Associates Engineering Ltd, 2010, www.beavercreekwater.ca
- West Coast Vancouver Island Shellfish Development Project, 2003, www.agf.gov.bc.ca/fisheries/reports/WCVI_Shellfish_Development_Report.pdf

Organizations and Networks

(Please see Appendix A for a detailed contact list)

- Canadian Diabetes Association
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Clayoquot Biosphere Trust
- Coastal Family Resource Coalition
- Economic Development Port Alberni
- Ecotrust Canada
- Family Ties
- Fish & Loaves
- Food Bank on the Edge
- Green Table Network
- Island Chefs' Collaborative
- Nuu-chah-nulth Economic Development Corporation
- Nuu-chah-nulth Seafood Development Corporation
- Port Alberni Agriculture Advisory Committee
- Raincoast Education Society
- Tla-o-qui-aht Traditional Foods Network
- Tofino Botanical Gardens
- Tofino Community Food Initiative
- Tofino-Ucluelet Culinary Guild
- Ucluelet Community Food Initiative
- Uu-a-thluk
- Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Indigenous Foods Network
- Vancouver Island Health Authority
- West Coast Aquatic
- West Coast Community Resources Society
- Women's Food and Water Initiative

Key Local Positions

- Central Region Wellness Worker, Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council
- Community Nutritionist, Vancouver Island Health Authority
- Community Outreach Worker, Westcoast Community Resources Society
- Doctors, nurses and other health care professionals
- Emergency Services Manager, District of Ucluelet
- Family Ties programs in Tofino and Ucluelet, Vancouver Island Health Authority
- Healthy Living Coordinator, Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council
- Homelessness Outreach Worker, Ministry of Housing and Social Development

- Mental Health Outreach Worker, Ministry of Children and Family Development

Educational Programs & Projects

- Act Now BC Healthy Schools - www.actnowbc.ca/healthy_living_tip_sheets/healthy_schools
- Clayoquot Sound Salmon Round Table
- Cool Cooks and Family Cooking Programs, Wickaninnish Community School
- Ecotrust Seafood Traceability Project – www.ecotrust.ca/fisheries/traceability
- First Nations Seafood Cookbook – Uu-a-thluk, <http://uuathluk.ca/cookbook.html>
- Food Skills for Aboriginal Families, Canadian Diabetes Association
- Food Skills for Families on a Smart Budget, Canadian Diabetes Association
- Life skills classes and career days at local schools
- Malaspina College – training opportunities for agriculture, culinary arts and more
- Master Organic Gardener Program, GAIA College
- North Island College – training opportunities for greenhouse management, culinary arts and more
- Parenting workshops, Westcoast Community Resources Society
- Raincoast Sustainable Living Program
- SOIL – Canada’s Sustainable Farm Apprenticeship Program - www.soilapprenticeships.org
- Sustainability Camp – Tofino Botanical Gardens
- The Nisma Project youth program
- Tofino and Ucluelet Recreation Program cooking classes
- Traditional Feasting Project – Uu-a-thluk
- Winter Harvest Vegetable Workshop in Ucluelet and Tofino

Events

- Annual Mothers Day plant sale - George Fraser Society, Ucluelet
- Arrowvale Farm Market – 9am–2pm at the Collins Farm, Port Alberni
- Canadian Chefs Congress - <http://canadianchefscongress.com>
- Clayoquot Oyster Festival – November, Tofino
- Evan Touchie Legacy/A Tournament of Health Basketball tournament - Annually the first weekend of November at the Ucluelet Secondary School gym
- Port Alberni Farmers Market, year-round on Saturdays at the downtown Harbour Quay from 8:30 am – 12:00 am
- Tofino Food and Wine Festival – June, Tofino
- Tofino Public Market, Saturdays at Village Green, Tofino
- Tofino-Ucluelet Culinary Guild Dinner
- Ukee Local Benefit – Saturday Market 11am-2pm, St. Aidens on the Hill, Ucluelet
- Gardening for Market workshop– June 2010, Tofino

Retail and Service

- Grocery stores stocking local products
- Landscaping & gardening supply stores
- Poultry abattoir in Port Alberni – Al’s Feathers Be Gone
- Restaurants featuring local products
- Seafood stores selling local catch

Media

- eatwestcoast.ca
- Ha-shith-sa Newspaper
- No tulips! blog - <http://notulips.blogspot.com> – Tuula Rebhahn, SOIL apprentice who worked in Port Alberni, Summer 2009
- Tofino Community Food Initiative blog - www.tofinofood.blogspot.com
- Tofino Times

- Vicky Lee's newspaper column in Port Alberni – AlberniValleyNews.com
- West Coast Gardens blog - <http://wetcoastgardens.blogspot.com>
- Westcoaster.ca
- Westerly News

Current Status

Based on the stakeholder input sessions and interviews, it is clear that food security is a global issue that resonates locally. The following is a snapshot of the current status of food issues and access.

Food issues are gaining momentum – A great deal of volunteer effort is driving food-related projects forward in the region. Two communities have recently established food-focused groups. Almost all communities in the region have community gardens established or in the planning stages. Consumers, chefs and grocers are very keen to support local food. Local governments are keen to implement policies to increase food security. Organizations have identified food security as a core priority and have dedicated staff time to related projects.

Food is a connector – The Nuu-chah-nulth cultural importance of food continues in contemporary lives. This philosophy also resonates within the non-First Nations communities, where food is a central element of many community events. Participants recognize that being able to provide our own food makes the region more resilient and self-sufficient.

Appetite for local food – Chefs, grocers and residents are keen to purchase local food products. People feel a sense of pride about lessening their environmental impact by purchasing food that has travelled fewer miles.

Different communities in different situations – With nine separate communities in the Biosphere Reserve region, many of our assets and challenges are unique. There is an opportunity to share strengths and learn from one and other. The opportunities present in the remote communities of Hot Springs Cove (Hesquiaht First Nation) and Ahousaht (Ahousaht First Nation) are different than the more accessible communities.

Tough economic times – High food and fuel prices are motivating people to look at their purchasing habits. This can be a driving force for innovation and change.

Salmon crisis – Historically low salmon returns and a lack of access to fishing resources are impacting eating habits. Demand for seafood remains high, while supply is low.

Community Gardens – Community gardens are an important opportunity for residents who want to get their hands in the dirt, especially given the cost of land in Tofino and Ucluelet, as well as the high portion of renters in those communities. Access to land is also an issue in the Nuu-chah-nulth communities. Currently, almost all communities in the region are establishing a community garden, thereby increasing community ownership of the food supply. There is an opportunity to bring together all of the proponents of community gardens to share thoughts, best practices, policies and practical solutions.

Nuu-chah-nulth Fisheries Litigation – In November 2009, the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations were awarded an Aboriginal right to harvest and sell all species of fish found within their territories. Canada has since appealed the decision. While waiting for Canada to enter into negotiations, Nuu-chah-nulth Nations and the Tribal Council continue work developing Nuu-chah-nulth fisheries that will benefit fishermen and communities in accordance with the decision.

Emerging Network – People and organizations focused on food have met once to consider forming the “Eat West Coast” network. Initial efforts included introductions and sharing goals. Future meetings are planned to follow the release of the Food Action Plan.

eatwestcoast.ca website – The Ucluelet Community Food Initiative has received funding to design and implement a website. They have taken a regional approach and want to create a site that will be a food-issue resource for all residents in the region, as well as a home for other groups.

Challenges

The following challenges to local food access were raised at several of the stakeholder sessions. Many of these issues are not new to the Biosphere Reserve region and impact many aspects of resident's lives.

Transportation – There is currently limited public transportation throughout the region. Water taxi's to Ahousaht (Ahousaht First Nation) and Hot Springs Cove (Hesquiaht First Nation) are particularly expensive and add to the cost of food. In the remote communities, people often feel they are disabled by access issues, infrastructure and maintenance of transportation routes. For those without transportation, food is heavy to carry, especially if travelling with young children. Healthy food is especially heavier to carry, as fresh vegetables weigh more than many dried, processed foods. It can be impossible to buy large quantities of food, which are typically better value. For those closer to major grocery stores but without access to a vehicle, transportation can be an issue given the rainy weather in the winter months.

Remoteness – Our isolated location adds to the cost of food and can make it difficult to access supplies when needed. The weather can also add to the isolation, when boat travel is not feasible.

Few local food options – Residents, chefs and grocers perceive few local food products. People are frustrated that they cannot purchase more locally grown and harvested foods, including seafood.

High food costs – The cost of food, especially healthy food, is particularly high throughout the region. Grocery stores are limited and there is not a great deal of competition. No grocery stores exist in the remote communities of Hot Springs Cove and Ahousaht. For those in crisis, there is a need to buy food with the highest caloric content, which may mean not choosing fresh, healthy food.

High land costs – The value of land, especially in Tofino, makes it difficult to afford purchasing land for agricultural purposes. Many individuals and families cannot afford to purchase property that allows them the space for a personal garden.

Regional coordination – In many instances, the nine small communities scattered across the Biosphere Reserve region function independently, with no economy of scale or central point.

Facilities – There is a need for food safe kitchens in some communities. Some communities lack food-safe kitchens in key community locations. There is also a need for more community cooking equipment, such as community dishes and cooking implements. In many cases, the existing kitchens are not equipped with the supplies needed to run nutritional education programs. Some people lack kitchen amenities in their own home, such as a large freezer, stove or space to store large quantities of food.

Accessing local seafood – There is a strong demand for local seafood, especially salmon. Residents, chefs and visitors would like to be able to purchase seafood directly from fisherman. In many cases, food inspection regulations prohibit sale prior to inspection. Local processing of seafood is limited.

Sustainability – Many programs and projects depend on uncertain funding from different levels of government and other funders. Alternatively, volunteer efforts and community-level fundraising can lead to high turnover and burnout.

Overcoming perceptions – There is a perception that it takes longer to cook healthy food and that vegetables don't taste as good as prepared foods. Some people expect their vegetables to be perfect and many farmers are frustrated by this lack of knowledge and understanding. People need first hand experiences of how fresh vegetables and fruits should look and taste.

Government Regulations – A number of different aspects of food regulation make it difficult for small producers to sell their products. Nutritional labelling is cost prohibitive. The lack of animal inspection facilities on Vancouver Island is a challenge for meat producers. Food safety regulations also impact community events. While these regulations play a central role in food safety, it is important to find practical solutions to these barriers.

Demand exceeds supply – Farmers in Port Alberni are currently not able to produce enough food to provide for the needs of the region. There is a need to get more land into food production in the Alberni Valley.

Literacy – For those that are unable to read, it is difficult to gather information about healthy eating. As well, people may not be able to calculate costs of produce and bulk purchases if they are not able to use the scale and calculate the cost of foods. Following recipes is also not possible without literacy and numeracy.

Engendered issue – In most households, healthy eating and food purchasing is generally the responsibility of women. Inversely, fishing and hunting is mainly the work of men in our communities. It can be hard to get people to try activities and learn skills that are not traditionally attributed to their gender.

Knowledge – People need to have knowledge and skills to provide themselves with healthy food. If people do not know how to cook, they will not buy foods to prepare themselves. If people do not know how to garden, most will not try to grow their own food.

Major Themes

The following themes and the resulting opportunities were most discussed during the stakeholder sessions and interviews.

Community Gardens

Emergency food program garden plots – Emergency food program providers expressed an interest in taking ownership of a plot in a community garden. This could be used as an opportunity to educate program users, increase the clients' personal food security and provide for the programs fresh vegetable needs.

First Nations community gardens – Traditional gardens and gardening skills have not been used in recent years and this is an area in which resident knowledge and skills can be accessed to renew existing sites and share knowledge. Almost all Nuu-chah-nulth communities are in the process of building a community garden or greenhouse.

Gardening skill building - Gardening education could focus on household composting, hanging baskets and growing from seed. GAIA College recently held one session of the Organic Master Gardener course and another is planned. A Winter Harvest Vegetable Workshop has also been running in Ucluelet.

Sharing within the region – Currently, almost all communities within the region are in the process of creating a community garden or greenhouse. It would be a good time to bring all of the key people together to share resources, plans, policies and brainstorm solutions.

Related Documents

Dig It - Community Garden Guide: How Local Governments Can Support Community Gardens

"This report provides an introduction to community gardens and offers some background information designed to help local governments understand the benefits and challenges of community gardens. It also provides some practical tools and templates that can be used or adapted by local governments."

<http://www.toolkit.bc.ca/resource/dig-it-community-garden-guide-how-local-governments-can-support-community-gardens>

Economic Development

Developing more local food products – There is demand for local products, including non-timber forest products, wildfoods and farmed mushrooms. It is important for producers to have control over the distribution and marketing of their product, as that is where the greatest portion of profits are generated. Economic development opportunities exist and should be pursued. Funding is currently available for developing new products through the Vancouver Island Heritage Food Coop. Products developed for the food service industry (i.e. packaged soup for restaurants) can be most profitable as they are easier to market, do not require expensive packaging and are recognized for their value.

Wildcrafting – There is demand for sustainable-harvest wildfoods from both visitors and locals. Kelp is a nutrient-rich seaweed that can be both dried and pickled. There may be commercial potential for kelp products. Assistance is available to develop local products and linkages should be made with local economic development organizations, such as then Nuu-chah-nulth Economic Development Corporation. Wildcrafting techniques can be learned from harvesters in the region. Participants were also interested in learning how to prune berry bushes to obtain more berries.

Develop market opportunities - Local market opportunities for foods can be further developed. Currently one farmer from outside the region regularly participates in the Tofino Saturday Market. A weekly market has begun in Ucluelet and one Ucluelet farmer participates.

While more than one farmers market currently exists in Port Alberni, some farmers feel that more diversity in market opportunities would be valuable. Pocket markets, farm gate and urban farm gate purchasing and food buying clubs are all worthwhile exploring. A farmer expressed interest in a storefront that purchases local products and is open seven days a week to engage consumers directly.

Connecting with local markets – Food producers will soon be able to use the eatwestcoast.ca website to connect directly with consumers to sell their products. They will be able to announce delivery schedules so that local markets can be filled first. Residents are keen to buy directly from fishers and want to support local and sustainable-harvest fisheries. A food directory for restaurateurs and suppliers will also be a valuable service making it easier for chefs and restaurateurs to connect with local fishers, farmers and other food producers.

Local food supplier – There is a demand for a local food middle man, who would deliver food to grocers and restaurants. This would save the grocers time and take the onus for distribution away from the farmers and fishermen. The quality of goods must be maintained during shipping, while keeping the prices low.

Land opportunities – Local governments have jurisdiction over municipal lands. In the case of First Nations, each Band has Reserves which are set aside for the use and benefit of the Band. These lands should be used to the maximum benefit of our communities and could be made available for community gardens and other projects support local food production.

Agriculture, Farming and Hunting – Interest was expressed in the “ranching” of wild game to supply meat in Hesquiaht Nation and possibly to create a tourism opportunity. Hunters (duck, geese, deer, seal and grouse) felt that in addition to

fresh meat, they could produce deer jerky if a market existed. They also felt that excess fish and vegetables could also be put to market.

Community supported agriculture – Some farmers in Port Alberni are keen to build relationships with consumers through a CSA program. Consumer input would help with crop planning and guarantee that farmers get fair value for their product over the course of the season. It may be effective for an independent person to take this on, as they could coordinate supply of produce amongst farms and schedule the delivery and pick up.

Community supported fishing – While this business model has not worked to support salmon fishing in the past because of the lack of fishing openings, customers are keen to support fishers and take on some of their inherent risks. It is possible that this model could be applied to different fisheries or multiple fisheries.

Shellfish processing plant – This infrastructure need is a major pivot point to increase local food security. Alternative business models, such as the cooperative model, need to be considered in order to realize this opportunity. Perhaps a partnership with a municipality or First Nation could help to attain land at little or no cost. A valid processing plant for salmon is also in demand, as only whole fish can be sold currently. Local validation of catch is also an issue. Ucluelet has a number of empty fish plants that are currently for sale. It would be unfortunate to see this marine infrastructure lost to redevelopment.

Branding – Through branding, food producers can capitalize on our pristine ecosystem reputation and distinguish their products for added-value. One form of branding that links a product with a specific place through legislation is known as a “geographical indication.”

Geographical indications are intended to designate product quality, highlight brand identity, and preserve cultural traditions. Examples of well-known geographical indications include Champagne and Kalamata olives. The use of geographical indications allows producers to obtain market recognition and often a premium price. With the increased internationalization of food and product markets, geographical indications have become a key source of niche marketing. Geographical indications are also often associated with non-monetary benefits such as the protection of knowledge and community rights.”
www.geographicindications.com

Value added – Fishermen are able to add value to their catch through processing and active pursuits of markets. As food trends change often, there is risk involved. Funding is currently available for developing new products through the Vancouver Island Heritage Food Coop. Suggestions include salmon pate and salmon-roni.

Grocery stores – Although small, convenience-style stores operate out of homes in outlying communities, there are no true grocery stores that carry fresh fruits and vegetables. People who have freezers buy bulk frozen vegetables. Some community members preserve and can food. A mobile food store is an economic opportunity.

Education

All stakeholder groups talked about the importance of education, especially youth education.

Community events – Community events are an opportunity to reconnect culture with food and to set an example of good food choices. Food-focused events and community potlucks are also an opportunity to share recipes, information and showcase local options.

Recreation programming – Some people hesitate to purchase certain foods because they do not know how to cook or handle them. Seafood processing and cooking classes could be offered as a part of local recreation programming. New residents may find this learning opportunity particularly interesting, as they typically lack experience with locally available foods.

People are interested in learning about storing, smoking and other means of preserving food, so that foods can be harvested in season and eaten year round. Harvesting wild foods is also of interest. Community gardens need to be matched with education so that people know how to harvest, prepare, can and store the foods they are growing.

Chefs and nutritionists are keen to be involved in recreation programming such as cooking classes and already are in some cases. They are keen to assist in life skills programs teaching cooking. This would be a great opportunity to expose youth to different career paths.

Community kitchen program – Almost all emergency food program users expressed an interest in participating in a community kitchen program where they could learn skills and cook food to take home with them. Such a program could include nutrition education, skill building, intergenerational teaching, Nuu-chah-nulth language and literacy. Service providers identified a need for more nutrition education, although it can be difficult to fill classes. The Cool Cooks program is a community kitchen program where kids learn how to cook a meal and are sent home with enough supplies to cook the same meal again at home for their families.

Youth and children – The participants were very much aware of the importance of these food issues for the younger generation. It is important to engage youth in all aspects of community for knowledge transfer and capacity building. Healthy cooking programs can provide an opportunity to teach Nuu-chah-nulth language and pass on cultural teachings. In addition to creating opportunities to teach youth and children about traditional healthy diets and food skills, the participants inquired about parenting classes and school lunch programs. The Cook Cooks program is an example of a well received program that could be offered in other schools.

Apprenticeship and mentoring programs – Farmers have a wealth of knowledge and experience to share with younger generations. It is important to pass on this information in order to sustain food production. Subsidy programs for summer students and apprenticeships can help offset the farmer's costs. Canada Summer Jobs and the SOIL Apprenticeship program are two options that can be pursued.

Consumer Education – Farmers felt that consumers need to be educated about the real costs of food. Consumers need to know what vegetables should look and taste

like. People also need to be exposed to a range of vegetables, as they rarely purchase different foods or foods that they don't know how to cook.

Consumers are also keen to know more about how seafood is caught. One example of consumer education is the oyster tank at the Ucluelet Aquarium. The tank hosts a string of oysters from a local farm, educating both visitors and locals about local foods. A traditional foods tank is being created in conjunction with Uu-a-thluk capacity building staff. Field trips to visit oyster farms may be an additional tourism opportunity as gastro-tourism becomes increasingly popular and visitors look for new experiences on the West coast.

Safe handling protocols – Farmers want to ensure that the food they sell at markets and farm gates meets safe handling regulations. A course to certify that farmers are educated in food safety and handling could help to limit liability.

Infrastructure

Mobile Food Bank – Many food bank clients from Tofino face transportation issues. Food hamper drop off could be coordinated with food bank donation pick up. Perhaps a sponsorship or donation of free travel to emergency food programs could be arranged to support participants. Many identified the need for a food bank in Tofino. Lack of affordable program space is a major inhibitor.

Community Boats – Seafood harvesting is limited due to difficulties getting on the water. Boats are cost prohibitive for the vast majority of people in First Nations communities. Individuals expressed a need for community boats that could be used for harvesting traditional foods.

Agriculture infrastructure needs – Port Alberni Farmers have a unique set of infrastructure needs. Fulfilment of these needs would help to increase food production quantity, variety and supply. These needs include:

- Storage facilities, including large freezer space
- Soup/bouillon producing facility
- Pet food manufacturing
- Farm labour pool
- Regional composting program for fertilizer production
- Mobile slaughter unit or abattoir
- Secondary processing and cleaning for grain
- Seed sharing program

Seafood storage facilities – In some instances, storage facilities for seafood could help to create market stability by avoiding flooding the market, which can drive down prices. Some fishers have already addressed this issue at the individual level by purchasing large freezers or walk-in freezers to store their catch and allow them to sell locally on an ongoing basis. Sysco Foods has a large holding facility for seafood and may be able to store local catch.

Composting and waste program – Many individuals and businesses expressed an interest in participating in a composting program. Most institutional food buyers would be willing to participate in a composting program that picks up kitchen waste on a daily basis. Many restaurants and grocers would be keen to separate their food waste for a composting program if pick up occurred daily and separating the food waste was efficient for staff. Some municipalities outside of the region are now requiring that all food waste be separated from garbage for the purpose of composting. By adding composting to the current suite of waste removal programs, local governments could divert waste from the landfill, create a much-needed source of fertilizer and ensure that bear safe precautions are followed. New technologies are also available to utilize wood waste in creating new products.

Shellfish processing plant – This infrastructure need is a major pivot point to increase local food security. Alternative business models, such as the cooperative model, may need to be considered to realize this opportunity. Perhaps a partnership with a municipality or First Nation could help to dedicate land at little or no cost. A valid processing plant for salmon is also in demand, as only whole fish can be sold currently. Local validation of catch is also an issue. Ucluelet has a number of empty fish plants that are currently for sale. It would be unfortunate to see this marine infrastructure lost to redevelopment.

Networking

Emergency Food Program networking – There are many informal partnerships between emergency food programs, businesses and service providers. More face-to-face meetings would help to improve networking, collaboration and partnerships. Many of the volunteers see value in a network or forum for emergency food providers.

Strengthen and support food networks – Continue to work with established networks, such as the Coastal Family Resource Coalition, the Vancouver Island Indigenous Food Network and the new Eat West Coast network.

Relationship building – Some chefs are willing to put together an order list of what products they require. They could then establish relationships to buy exclusively from farmers who can provide for an agreed upon price. Chefs are keen to participate in a buyers trip to Port Alberni to visit farms and see what is available. Purchasing local meats can be difficult on the supplier because restaurants only buy certain cuts of meat, based on demand, but restaurants could work together to complement one and others orders.

Institutional food buyers have unique needs that must be met in order to maintain efficiencies. If food buyers had a means of placing requests and giving feedback to farmers, farmers may be able to produce for their needs. For example, one purchaser noted that he prefers jumbo carrots because they are easy to work with, but no one grows them.

eatwestcoast.ca – The new regional food website will be an asset for networking and sharing information. Producers will be able to list their local products. Restaurants and grocers will be able to highlight their local choices. Food groups can list their projects and activities. Individuals will be able to connect with others for land share arrangements.

New media – New forms of media, such as blogs and social media are making it easier to connect with people and share information. A number of blogs currently focus on gardening on the west coast and one food group has established a blog.

Tofino-Ucluelet Culinary Guild -- Nearly 20 West Coast restaurants and resorts plan to promote the use of Vancouver Island foods and sustainable farm-to-table practices through a new culinary guild. The guild, which now has at least 18 members, plans to work with Island farmers, foragers and fishermen to create a unique culinary experience for patrons. The guild will help members access smaller Island growers, buy products in bulk and reduce transportation costs. Member restaurants will also have the chance to meet and discuss what products are coming into season.

Raising Awareness

Highlight local best practises – There are many local examples of best practises such as composting and gardening. Spotlighting cases that are already succeeding is a good way to share information, model and teach. Hosting field trips to local best practise sites can give people an opportunity to learn from example and ask questions first hand.

Local food features – Chefs have an opportunity to spotlight local food on their menus. Information about the farmer or fishers can be provided for consumers and already is in many instances. Events connecting food source to plate can help to showcase farmers and fishers.

Listing of available products – Chefs, grocers, institutional food buyers and individuals would like to know what local food is available in what quantities from whom. Many in the food service industry find they do not have the time to source new and seasonally available products. The eatwestcoast.ca website will provide a listing of available local products.

Celebrate local food – A community event to celebrate locally caught and harvested foods could help to raise awareness of local products. Ideas include rejuvenating the Fisherman’s Ball or creating a Fall Harvest Festival or Spot Prawn Festival. Oyster Festival is an example of a thriving community event that celebrates a local product. More affordable, family events would be welcomed.

Collective advertising – Food producers do not have the funds or time to run individual advertising campaigns, but value could be seen through a collective advertising program that highlights different local products. The eatwestcoast.ca website will provide one avenue for food providers to advertise at no cost.

Emergency food program advertising – Participants identified a need to know when and where emergency food programs are provided. It would be useful to have one listing that provides details on all programs on public bulletin boards. As all of the services are provided in small windows of time, clear advertising is essential. This information also needs to be accessible to new residents, as they represent a significant portion of program clientele.

Regulation & Food Policy Development

Good Food Charter – Local governments are keen to initiate bylaws that support local foods and increase food security. This work could be done at the regional level and adopted by all local communities. There are many examples of Good Food Charters from across Vancouver Island.

Local food policies – Support at the institutional and organizational level for purchasing local food is mostly informal. Local purchasing and healthy food policies for municipalities, First Nations, organizations could be developed and adopted. This would help formalize practices.

Regulation uncertainty – Many chefs have questions about regulations governing purchasing of foods, especially seafood and wild food. Chefs want to uphold high standards but have uncertainty about what the regulations are. A “regulation fact sheet” with links to relevant Government websites would be helpful. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is the first place to begin gathering this information.

Some grocers have questions about regulations governing purchasing of foods, especially seafood and wild foods. A regulation fact sheet focused on grocers concerns would also be helpful.

First Nations government role – Participants identified a need for Chief, Council and Band staff to assist by adopting regulations for their communities for recycling and composting, assisting with community gardens and finding funding sources for programs and projects.

Wildfoods harvesting standards – While there is a great deal of interest in purchasing wild foods, residents want to be sure that harvesting does not damage the wild stocks. Sustainable harvesting standards could be developed for a range of wildfoods.

Backyard chickens – Local governments can develop guidelines for raising backyard hens, as well as other animals, and bringing forward any appropriate amendments to animal control bylaws.

Lobbying – Community food security is impacted by a number of Government regulations including food safety and inspection regulations. Local governments are mandated to lobby for the good of their communities and are in a position to take messages forward to both provincial and federal representatives.

While farmers are busy farming, they do not have the time or expertise to successfully lobby in pursuit of their collective best interests. For example, the number of laying chickens allowed for small production is set quite low and many farmers expressed an interest in lobbying to have the number increased. Other issues that could be furthered by a collective lobbyist are water concerns and engaging local food retailers in furthering food security.

Emergency preparedness – In the event that the region is cut off from outside food sources, emergency plans can include local food producers such as fishermen and farmers who may be able to provide food for residents.

Stakeholder Input

The following pages summarize the information received by stakeholder group, including opportunities for increasing food security and access.

Emergency Food Providers & Program Clients

Interviews were conducted with emergency food program staff and volunteers, as well as clients of many of the programs.

What's going on?

There are five primary emergency food programs that provide services in Ucluelet and Tofino:

Program	Details	Resources	Challenges	Sustainability
Westcoast Community Resources Society Food Voucher	Provides participants with a \$20 voucher to offset the cost of housing. Criteria established by Ministry of Housing and Social Development.	Canadian Mental Health Association Homelessness Outreach Program	Making sure the vouchers are used appropriately.	Funding uncertain.
Family Ties Food Voucher	Provides participants with a \$10 voucher to local Co-op, as well as snacks during the program.	Federal Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program funding	transportation is a challenge for many which inhibits participation	Ongoing, two year funding agreement
Fish & Loaves	Soup kitchen Tofino Legion basement 11am - 1pm Tues & Thurs	Donations from small businesses & coop	Stigma of a soup kitchen program.	Funding provided by Tofino Bible Fellowship. Private donations and District of Tofino
Ucluelet Community Lunch	Soup kitchen UAC Hall 1-3pm Thurs	Westcoast Community Resources Society	Not enough time or funding. Increased demand during winter and especially Christmas.	Mixed program funds. Free space. Discount from local grocery stores. Community volunteers.
Food Bank on the Edge	Sea Plane Base Road, Ucluelet Tues 1-3pm	Donations & volunteers Adequate space.	High demand in summer. Tapers off till Dec. Jan & Feb increase again. Transient & fish plant worker demand.	Donations from businesses and individuals.

There are also community lunches in the Nuu-chah-nulth communities (Ittatsoo, Yu?lu?i?ath First Nation), as well as elders lunches (Ahousaht, Ahousaht First Nation; Ittatsoo, Yu?lu?i?ath First Nation). No formal emergency food programs are known to exist in the Nuu-chah-nulth communities.

What we heard

The cost of rent and housing interfere with people's ability to buy food. In addition to emergency food programs, people rely on their friends, roommates and families to meet their food needs. Disabilities impact program use and individuals ability to garden. Transportation to Ucluelet to access the Food Bank is an issue for many.

Opportunities

Program advertising – Participants identified a need to know when and where services are provided. It would be useful to have one listing that provides details on all programs on public bulletin boards. As all of the services are provided in small windows of time, clear advertising is essential. This information also needs to be accessible to new residents, as they represent a significant portion of program clientele. If possible, programs should coincide with any available public transportation so that clients from other communities can access services.

Community kitchen program – Almost all emergency food program users expressed an interest in participating in a community kitchen program where they could learn skills and cook food to take home. Such a program could include nutrition education, skill building, intergenerational teaching, Nuu-chah-nulth language and literacy.

Education and raising awareness – There is an ongoing need for education around healthy eating. Suggestions included a "Turn off the TV" advertising campaign to encourage family meals. People are interested in learning about storing, smoking and other means of preserving food, so that foods can be harvested in season and eaten year round. The Food Skills for Families on a Smart Budget course is currently planned for four communities. This program includes a tour of a grocery store with a nutritionist focusing on different themes such as family meals and healthy snacks.

Community garden plots – Program providers expressed an interest in taking ownership of a plot in a community garden. This could be used as an opportunity to educate program users, increase their personal food security and provide for the programs fresh vegetable needs.

Mobile Food Bank – Many food bank clients from Tofino face transportation issues. Food hamper drop off could be coordinated with food bank donation pick up. Perhaps a sponsorship or donation of free travel to emergency food programs could be arranged to support participants. Many identified the need for a food bank in Tofino. Lack of affordable program space is a major inhibitor.

Program networking – There are many informal partnerships between programs, businesses and service providers. More face-to-face meetings would help to improve networking, collaboration and partnerships. Many of the volunteers see value in a network or forum for emergency food providers.

Volunteer Training – Some volunteers suggested that further training and policies could support their work and help to standardize procedures. Interpersonal

communication skills and understanding the needs of clients were two suggestions for training topics.

Program donations – Some individuals are uncertain about how or why there is a need make donations to various emergency food programs. An educational campaign to help people to understand how poverty is perpetuated and how the cycle can be broken could highlight the importance of donations and raise the level of community support. Purchasing donation bags at local coops is one way people can donate.

Related Documents

Community Needs Assessment, Westcoast Community Resources Society, 2003

Central Westcoast Dual-Language Literacy Plan, 2009

Farmers

An input session with farmers was held in Port Alberni. Participants included both meat and vegetable farmers. Interest and attendance was very high. While the remainder of the project focused on the West Coast region, an extension to Port Alberni was necessary to focus on connections with regionally-grown meat and produce.

What's going on?

Alberni Clayoquot Regional District Farm Plan – The Farm Plan will focus on current and potential land uses of the Alberni Valley Agricultural Land Reserve, with a specific view to economic potential. The project is expected to be completed in spring 2011 and will scope out suggested land uses, new product development and market access, including possible linkages with the West coast. A contractor is currently being sought to work with the Agricultural Advisory Committee.

Port Alberni Farmers Market – Open from year round, Saturdays from 8:30am to 12:00am in downtown Port Alberni at the Harbour Quay. Fifty vendors with twenty selling primary farm product.

Arrowvale Farmers Market – Hosted at the Collin's farm at 5955 Hector Road, Port Alberni every Saturday, 9am – 2pm.

What we heard

In many cases, demand for local produce is already exceeding supply. Many Port Alberni farmers are able to sell all of their meat or produce at the Farmers Market and cannot meet the current level of demand. For example, the demand for locally raised poultry and lamb exceeds supply. The Alberni Valley has a bounty of suitable farming land and more needs to be brought into production.

Farmers are getting older. It is difficult for young people to enter into farming due to the high costs of land and the other assets required.

Opportunities

Infrastructure needs -- Farmers have a unique set of infrastructure needs. Fulfilment of these needs would help to increase food production quantity, variety and supply. These needs include:

- Storage facilities, including large freezer space and grain storage. Could an old fish plant be used?
- Soup/bouillon producing facility
- Pet food manufacturing
- Farm labour pool
- Regional composting program for fertilizer production. Can fish offal be utilized?
- Mobile slaughter unit or abattoir
- Secondary processing and cleaning for grain
- Seed sharing program

Collective advertising – Farmers do not have the funds or time to run individual advertising campaigns, but value could be seen through a collective advertising program that highlights different local farms. In particular, advertising on the west coast could connect farmers with new customers. The eatwestcoast.ca website will provide one avenue for farmers to advertise at no cost.

Developing restaurant opportunities – Farmers are keen to build relationships with chefs and restaurants on the west coast. A workshop on restaurant – farmer agreements and organized buying trips would be welcomed.

Develop market opportunities - While more than one farmers market currently exists in Port Alberni, some farmers feel that more diversity in market opportunities would be valuable. Pocket markets, farm gate and urban farm gate purchasing and food buying clubs are all worthwhile exploring. A farmer expressed interest in a storefront that purchases local products and is open seven days a week to engage consumers directly.

Apprenticeship and mentoring programs – Farmers have a wealth of knowledge and experience to share with younger generations. It is important to pass on this information in order to sustain food production. Subsidy programs for summer students and apprenticeships would help offset the farmer’s costs. Canada Summer Jobs and the SOIL Apprenticeship program are two options that can be pursued.

Education of consumers – Farmers felt that consumers need to be educated about the real costs of food. Consumers need to know what vegetables should look and taste like. People also need to be exposed to a range of vegetables, as they rarely purchase different foods or foods that they don’t know how to cook.

Collective lobbying – While farmers are busy farming, they do not have the time or expertise to successfully lobby in pursuit of their collective best interests. For example, there was consensus that the number of laying chickens allowed for small production was set too low, but no one volunteering to take on the task of lobbying for change. Other issues that could be furthered by a collective lobbyist are water concerns and engaging local food retailers in furthering food security.

Safe handling protocols – Farmers want to ensure that the food they sell at markets and farm gates meets safe handling regulations. A course to certify that farmers are educated in food safety and handling could help to limit liability.

Rainwater capture – Water is an essential and costly input for farmers. Assistance outfitting farms with rainwater capture systems from a team of experienced individuals would be welcomed.

Well-subsidy program – Assistance offsetting the costs of water through a well-subsidy program would greatly help to make farming in the Alberni Valley more cost effective and sustainable. Water overages in specific districts are particularly prohibitive.

Community Supported Agriculture – Some farmers are keen to build relationships with consumers through a CSA program. Consumer input would help with crop planning and guarantee that farmers get fair value for their product over the course of the season. It may be effective for an independent person to take this on, as they could coordinate supply of produce amongst farms and schedule the delivery and pick up.

Related Documents

Summary of Water Source Options & Treatment Study, Koers & Associates Engineering Ltd, 2010,
<http://www.beavercreekwater.ca>

Alberni Valley Agricultural Land Reserve maps, Alberni Clayoquot Regional District,
Lori Wilson - lwilson@acrd.bc.ca

First Nations

A community lunch was held in the community of Ahousaht with approximately forty people attending. Members of other Nations were also invited to attend. Project team members also attended community consultations with Hesquiaht First Nation in Hot Springs Cove.

What's going on?

Nuu-chah-nulth Fisheries Litigation – In November 2009, the Nuuchah-nulth First Nations were awarded an Aboriginal right to harvest and sell all species of fish found within their territories. Since then, Canada has appealed the decision. While waiting to begin negotiations, Nuuchah-nulth Nations and the Tribal Council continue work developing Nuuchah-nulth fisheries that will benefit fishermen and communities in accordance with the decision.

Tsawalk Partnership - This multi-year coastal planning process is bringing governments, communities and businesses together to draft a vision and strategy for the protection and future development of the region. By providing the tools to balance the many uses of the coastal environment, the Tsawalk Partnership is focused on supporting a healthy economy and environment for current and future generations. Planning in Clayoquot and Barkley Sounds is gathering local knowledge and interests from different groups to identify key pollution sources, ensure sustainable fisheries and greater local access.

Tla-o-qui-aht Traditional Food Network - Providing traditional foods for members with the goal of improving peoples health.

What we heard

For the Nuuchah-nulth people, food is a cultural mainstay that goes beyond sustenance to include food as medicine, lifestyle and tradition.

Traditional and contemporary diets are very different. In the past, the head of the family was responsible for distributing food to family members. There was a great deal of respect for the food source. There is no longer an abundance of seafood in the Nuuchah-nulth communities as stocks have dwindled and few people own boats. Currently, people need to have a family member that harvests seafood in order to have access. Elders are provided seafood by generous individuals. Permits and licensing are added hurdles to food harvesting. Traditional food and seafood is still a focus at special community events such as weddings and Mother's Day in Ahousaht. Participants noted that traditional food creates a real feeling of community as feasting is a celebration of life.

Diabetes has become an epidemic amongst First Nations communities. Community leaders recognize the importance of health and want to see their people enjoying healthy lifestyles. There is a broad understanding of the role traditional and non-traditional nutritious foods play in decreasing the risk of illness and disease.

The food resources in some traditional territories have been contaminated by industrial and residential waste. Ucluelet Harbour has been under a shellfish closure since 1972 due to the presence of known pollution sources. Beaches in Ahousaht territory have also been closed for shellfish harvesting due to pollution, although permits for depuration fisheries have been issued under supervision.

The return of the sea otters has impacted food resources. This has negatively affected seafood harvesting and the ability to eat shellfish and other seafood.

Opportunities

Youth and children – The participants were very much aware of the importance of these food issues on the younger generation. It is important to engage youth in all aspects of community for knowledge transfer and capacity building. Healthy cooking programs can provide an opportunity to teach Nuu-chah-nulth language and pass on cultural teachings. In addition to creating opportunities to teach youth and children about traditional healthy diets and food skills, the participants inquired about parenting classes and school lunch programs.

Community gardens – Traditional gardens and gardening skills have not been used in recent years and this is an area in which resident knowledge and skills can be accessed to renew existing sites and share knowledge. Almost all Nuu-chah-nulth communities are in the process of building a community garden or greenhouse. There is an opportunity to learn from one and other throughout the region, as well as learning from successful projects beyond the region. Other gardening education could focus on household composting, hanging baskets and growing from seed.

Grocery stores – Although small, convenience-style stores operate out of homes in outlying communities, there are no true grocery stores that bring in fresh fruits and vegetables. People who have freezers buy bulk frozen vegetables. Some community members preserve and can food. Food storage (i.e. space and equipment) is an issue in some homes.

Agriculture, Farming and Hunting – Interest was expressed in the “ranching” of wild game to supply meat. This could also be a tourism opportunity by providing people with an opportunity to hunt game. Hunters (duck, geese, deer, seal and grouse) felt that in addition to fresh meat, they could produce deer jerky if a market existed. They also felt that excess fish and vegetables could also be put to market.

Education – Participants identified a need for education that focuses on healthy diet choices, cooking skills and parenting. This is also an opportunity to teach Nuu-chah-nulth language and pass on medicinal teachings. Many bachelors identified that they are not excited about cooking so it will take a unique approach to interest single men.

Government role – Chief, Council and Band staff can assist by adopting regulations for the communities for recycling, composting, assisting with the development of community gardens and finding funding sources for programs and projects.

Community Boats-- Seafood harvesting is limited due to difficulties getting on the water. Boats are cost prohibitive for the vast majority of community members. Individuals expressed a need for community boats that could be used for harvesting traditional foods.

Wildcrafting – There is demand for sustainable-harvest wildfoods from both visitors and locals. Kelp harvesting has not been done in over 50 years by some estimates. Kelp is a nutrient-rich seaweed that can be both dried and pickled. There may be commercial potential for kelp products as well. Assistance is available to develop local products and linkages should be made with local economic development organizations, such as then Nuu-chah-nulth Economic Development Corporation. Wildcrafting techniques can be learned from harvesters in the region. Participants were interested in learning how to prune berry bushes to obtain more berries.

Restoration -- There is interest around restoring traditional clam beds to historical abundance. Restoration of berry gardens, root gardens, mussel beds, *t'úcup* (sea urchin) gathering locations, kelp and seaweed beds and drying areas are also important, as well as salmon restoration.

Tree Farm Licenses – As controlling owners of all local tree farm licenses, First Nations are in a position to manage those licenses with a goal to maximize local benefit, including employment, encouraging non-timber and wildcrafting opportunities and other means of supporting local food production.

Related Documents

Nuu-chah-nulth Traditional Foods Toolkit, Uu-a-thluk, 2010

“The Nuu-chah-nulth Traditional Foods Toolkit promotes the wisdom on Nuu-chah-nulth elders by recording and sharing their experiences, language and knowledge around the harvest and preparation of traditional foods. The information and activities in the toolkit promote food sovereignty and security, encouraging healthy, sustainable communities for current and future generations”. There are five booklets in the series: Eelgrass “Candy of the Sea”, *Quu-as* Tips for Drying and Smoking Salmon, *nuch?aa* Steam Pit Cooking. *kwaq'mis* Herring Roe and Low Tide Foods. A traditional foods reference guide book is also being developed.

Grocers

What's going on?

There is a great deal of demand for local food products, especially produce. Grocers currently feature many Vancouver Island cheeses, wild foods, locally-roasted coffee, honey, milk products, some seafood and greens on grocery store shelves. Other local products, such as dish soap and bath products are also featured.

One Tofino grocer has begun offering an organic veggie box program. Grocers are providing food waste to local emergency food programs and offer discounts to those programs, as well. Some make donations to school lunch programs.

Large grocery stores receive assistance with marketing from large food companies, which offset their advertising costs. This encourages purchasing from the large food companies, rather than local options which cannot provide the same incentives.

What we know

Time to source new suppliers and place orders is a limiting factor for grocers to make local food a bigger part of their businesses. Purchasing food from local providers needs to be efficient, as it takes time to deal with more suppliers. This work cannot be delegated to new staff, which is a challenge due to high staff turnover.

It is easier for grocers to purchase a product when the farmer or fisherman comes directly to their door. The Dahaliwal blueberry distribution is an example of how this can work well.

Cost is a major factor in purchasing decisions, as the product needs to move off of the shelves. Storage is an issue for small grocers. Some local produce is too highly priced for retail. Seafood needs to be in a form that customers want. Canadian regulations require nutritional labelling, including ingredients lists.

Opportunities

Local food supplier – There is a demand for a local food middle man, who would deliver food to grocers and restaurants. This would save the grocers time and take the onus for distribution away from the farmers. Shipping would need to maintain quality of goods in cooling trucks, while keeping the prices low.

Branding, labelling and advertising – Farmers and grocers need to be able to recoup costs, which in some cases can be higher due to the added value of local production. One way to attract interest and explain cost is to spotlight local farmers and fisherman in advertising and on shelves. Nutritional labels on food products are required for grocers to retail products.

Composting – Some grocers are willing to participate in a food waste program if everyday pick up was available, as they cannot risk pest problems. Produce that is past its prime is sometimes donated to the food bank or other local programs. Outer layers of lettuce and other veggies could be easily composted.

Food regulations – Some grocers have questions about regulations governing purchasing of foods, especially seafood and wild foods. A regulation fact sheet with links to relevant Government websites would be helpful.

Scales – Some people, especially those with literacy and numeracy problems, are intimidated by having to weigh their food and may not be able to calculate the cost

of foods that are sold by weight. People can become embarrassed when they have to ask the price of food or put foods back at the checkout. This leaves people with fewer choices at the grocery store, limiting their purchasing power. In some countries, grocers provide digital scales with pictures of the foods. People then place their food on the scale, push the appropriate button and the scale calculates the cost of the food for them. It is also possible to mark fruit and vegetables with a unit prices, rather than selling them by weight, although grocers are concerned that the foods would be picked over leaving all of the smaller pieces.

List of available options – Grocers would like to know what local food is available in what quantities from whom. Many find they do not have the time to source new and seasonally available products. A registry, website or email alert for available local products would be a useful service.

Institutional Food Buyers

Institutional food buyers include people purchasing food for community events, children's programs that provide lunches and snacks, hospitals and seniors homes. Institutional food buyers were interviewed individually.

What's going on?

BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program – Students and school staff receive a fresh fruit or vegetable snack twice a week every other week. Eating the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables improves children's health and improves children's ability to concentrate. The fresh and nutritious fruits and vegetables to be served in the Program are grown in BC, subject to availability, with funding provided through Act Now BC.

Ucluelet Elementary School lunch program – Currently funded by Community Links, funds are provided to the School District and then divided between schools. Local Principals advocate strongly for lunch programs.

Strong Start – This program provides snacks for toddlers and families during their drop in program which is offered five days a week in Ucluelet and one day a week in Tofino. Stable funding is provided by the Provincial Government.

What we know

Food buyers have a willingness to buy local food and support local businesses, but struggle to find options beyond local seafood. In some programs, there is a need to improve access to healthy food with a range of choices, yet maintain affordability. Price is a key factor in decision making, as well as purchasing ease. Many of these programs and services are organized with few staff hours, so food ordering, receiving and cooking must be efficient. Demand for local food from clients is low, except in the case of serving wild fish.

Opportunities

Buy-local and healthy food policies – Support for buying local and providing healthy food needs to come from high up on the institutional ladder, so that resources can be provided to cover the costs. Institutions can formalize support for healthy food and local food options through policies and agreements with contractors. For example, the Elementary Schools are not allowed to sell anything with sugar or salt as a main ingredient. Time also needs to be allocated to process, store and freeze food in season, which can help to bring down costs, but requires more labour.

Composting and food waste – Most institutional food buyers would be willing to participate in a composting program that picked up kitchen waste on a daily basis. Wickaninnish Community School recently received a new composter.

Available options – Institutional food buyers need to know what food is available in what quantities from whom. They do not have the time to source new and seasonally available products. A registry, website or email alert for available local products would be a useful service.

Food waste – Unused food from institutional programs needs to be refrigerated and eaten very quickly. This food could be provided to emergency food providers or other programs, such as after school programs. Although some partnerships already

exist, discussions and networking amongst providers could initiate unique partnerships.

Networking – Institutional food buyers have unique needs that must be met in order to maintain efficiencies. If food buyers had a means of placing requests and giving feedback to farmers, farmers may be able to produce for their needs. For examples, one purchaser noted that he prefers jumbo carrots because they are easy to work with, but no one grows them.

Related Documents

The Food Carbon Story: A Background Paper on Carbon Accounting Practices for the Food System

“Food purchasers in public institutions on Vancouver Island have significant purchasing power, but are limited in their ability to privilege local over imported foods in procurement contracts. Institutional purchasers are, however, able to give purchasing preference to goods with a lower carbon footprint. Information on the carbon footprint of local versus imported foods could help to demonstrate the ‘carbon advantage’ of Vancouver Island food products, thereby increasing institutional purchasing capacity on the Island.”

http://www.nanaimofoodshare.ca/downloads/igfi/Food_System_Carbon_Accounting_Practices_FINAL.pdf

Local Government

Members of local Band and town councils, as well as their staff, economic development leaders and other key organization staff attended an information session in Tofino. Attendance was very good.

What's going on?

Nuu-chah-nulth Fisheries Litigation – In November 2009, the Nuuchah-nulth First Nations were awarded an Aboriginal right to harvest and sell all species of fish found within their territories. Since then, Canada has appealed the decision. While waiting to begin negotiations, Nuuchah-nulth Nations and the Tribal Council continue work developing Nuuchah-nulth fisheries that will benefit fishermen and communities in accordance with the decision.

What we heard

Participants unanimously agreed that community food security is an important issue for the region. There is a strong base of political and community support to build upon. Awareness of food issues is high and our local politicians are listening.

Participants agreed that it is important for all communities in the region to work together. Furthermore, the current economic downturn can be motivating force to work together creatively.

Our region is populated by a number of great organizations who are continually working together.

Local government representatives appreciate having the opportunity to network and discuss opportunities with representatives from throughout the region. It is important to encourage those that are not at the table to participate. Future "leadership summits" would be welcomed.

Timing is critical for working with elected First Nations governments. Many nations will be holding elections in the coming year. Hereditary Chiefs are key decision makers in communities and also need to be invited to participate in discussions. Traditional rights have to be acknowledged to have all Nations on board.

Opportunities

Nuu-chah-nulth Fisheries Litigation – It is important to participate in discussions around how this historic decision will be enacted. Trade and barter rights could bring greater food security to the region as a whole.

Engage with Alberni Valley – The Alberni Valley is home to the rich soils of the Agricultural Land Reserve. As a region, we need to connect better with this resource which is a part of the Alberni Clayoquot Regional District. Better linkages can also be made with Port Alberni Economic Development.

Land opportunities – Local governments have jurisdiction over municipal lands. In the case of First Nations, each Band has Reserves which are set aside for the use and benefit of the Band. These lands should be used to the maximum benefit of our communities and could be made available for community gardens and other projects support local food production.

Good Food Charter – Local governments are keen to initiate bylaws that support local foods and increase food security. This work could be done at the regional level and adopted by all local communities. There are many good examples of Charters from across Vancouver Island.

Backyard chickens – Local governments can also develop guidelines for raising backyard hens and bring forward any appropriate amendments to animal control bylaws.

Local food policies – Support for purchasing local foods within institutions and organizations is mostly informal. Local purchasing and healthy food policies for municipalities, First Nations, organizations could be developed and adopted. This would help formalize practices and set a good example for residents.

Develop local markets – Local market opportunities can be further developed. Currently one farmer from outside the region regularly participates in the Tofino Saturday Market.

Composting and waste program – Many individuals and businesses expressed an interest in participating in a composting program. Some municipalities outside of our region are now requiring that all food waste be separated from garbage for the purpose of composting. By adding composting to our current suite of waste removal programs, local governments could divert waste from the landfill, create a much-needed source of fertilizer and ensure that bear safe precautions are followed. New technologies are also available to utilize wood waste in creating new products.

Lobbying – Community food security is impacted by a number of Government regulations including food safety and inspection regulations. Local governments are mandated to lobby for the good of their communities and are in a position to take messages forward to both Provincial and Federal representatives.

Grant writing – Applying for funding is most successful with dedicated and trained staff. Local governments, as well as other key local organizations, are fortunate to have staff that is able to research funding opportunities.

Recreational opportunities – Community events are an opportunity to reconnect culture with food and to set an example of good food choices. Food-focused events and community potlucks are also an opportunity to share recipes, information and showcase local options. Recreation programming can also focus on harvesting, processing and cooking healthy food.

Emergency preparedness – In the event that the region is cut off from outside food sources, emergency plans can include local food producers such as fishermen and farmers who may be able to provide food for residents.

Related Documents

The Food Carbon Story: A Background Paper on Carbon Accounting Practices for the Food System

“Food purchasers in public institutions on Vancouver Island have significant purchasing power, but are limited in their ability to privilege local over imported foods in procurement contracts. Institutional purchasers are, however, able to give purchasing preference to goods with a lower carbon footprint. Information on the carbon footprint of local versus imported foods could help to demonstrate the ‘carbon advantage’ of Vancouver Island food products, thereby increasing institutional

purchasing capacity on the Island.”

http://www.nanaimofoodshare.ca/downloads/igfi/Food_System_Carbon_Accounting_Practices_FINAL.pdf

Dig It - Community Garden Guide: How Local Governments Can Support Community Gardens

“This report provides an introduction to community gardens and offers some background information designed to help local governments understand the benefits and challenges of community gardens. It also provides some practical tools and templates that can be used or adapted by local governments summarizes the report, makes recommendations for further work, and offers a variety of resources related to community gardening.”

<http://www.toolkit.bc.ca/resource/dig-it-community-garden-guide-how-local-governments-can-support-community-gardens>

Eat Smart, Meet Smart: How to Plan and Host Healthy Meetings, Events and Conferences

This guide “will help you plan meetings, events and conferences that are healthy for your participants – and healthy for your organization. Meetings, events and conferences are a central part of today’s work world, and many involve food and drinks as well as long periods of sitting. This guide provides ideas for how you can make healthy food choices and add physical activities that will help keep participants alert, productive and engaged while at work, and encourage healthier choices at home, too.”

<http://www.actnowbc.ca/media/08-024%20Eat%20Smart%20Meet%20Smart%20Booklet%20-%20May%2026.pdf>

Restaurants

Local restaurateurs and chefs from deli's to high-end restaurants were interviewed individually.

What's going on?

Restaurateurs are proud to purchase the best quality local foods from foragers, fishers and gardeners who approach them. Island cheeses, wild foods, locally-roasted coffee, honey, milk products, regional chicken and pork, wines, oysters and greens are some of the local foods that are currently featured on menus. The demand for local seafood is most pronounced and chefs work to maintain a local supply when possible.

Local food is difficult to feature for those businesses aiming to be affordable to all. Price constraints factor largely into purchasing decisions when restaurants want to keep their prices accessible.

Both consumers and chefs prefer to purchase local food in part to lower their carbon footprint. Chefs also want to support their neighbours and their community, but find that demand from consumers depends on price. Availability, affordability and distribution are the key factors in making local food a bigger part of their businesses.

Local chefs have a strong sense of community and enthusiasm to work together.

What we heard

Chefs are keen to offer more local choices on their menus. Challenges include paying extra freight costs, logistical difficulties and maintaining a consistent supply. It is difficult to feature an item on the menu if the supply is not consistent.

Chefs and restaurants are very involved in community events and regularly make donations to fundraisers, silent auctions and emergency food programs.

Restaurants do not have exclusive contracts with suppliers, rather they can purchase from any supplier at any time, as long as they meet the minimum order to qualify for free delivery.

Purchasing local foods needs to be very efficient in order to compete with big distributors who make it easy to purchase foods. Products must be consistently delivered to their door with sufficient quantities to supply restaurant demand. Farmers need to knock on doors to build relationships and educate restaurateurs about their products. Chefs noted that they find it challenging to work with farmers, as they have built relationships only to see the farms go under. The cost of local seafood needs to be comparable with large distributors, while recognizing the added value of sustainable local fisheries.

Opportunities

Tofino-Ucluelet Culinary Guild -- Nearly 20 West Coast restaurants and resorts plan to promote the use of Vancouver Island foods and sustainable farm-to-table practices through a new culinary guild. The guild, which now has at least 18 members, plans to work with Island farmers, foragers and fishermen to create a unique culinary experience for patrons. The guild will help members access smaller Island growers, buy products in bulk and reduce transportation costs. Member

restaurants will also have the chance to meet and discuss what products are coming into season.

Farmer-Restaurant relationships – Produce needs to be delivered on a consistent basis. Some chefs would be willing to put together an order list of what is needed. They could then establish relationships to buy exclusively from farmers who can provide for an agreed upon price. Chefs are keen to participate in a buyers trip to Port Alberni to visit farms and see what is available. Purchasing local meats can be difficult on the supplier because restaurants only buy certain cuts of meat, based on demand. It may be possible for restaurants to work together and purchase complementing cuts of meat from farmers.

Food waste – Many restaurants would be keen to separate their food waste for a composting program. Pick up would have to occur daily, so that there were no concerns about pest problems. Separating the food waste would have to be efficient for kitchen staff.

Food regulations – Many chefs have questions about regulations governing purchasing of foods, especially seafood and wild foods. Chefs want to uphold high standards but have uncertainty about what the regulations are. A “regulation fact sheet” with links to relevant Government websites would be helpful. Questions include: is it legal to buy local oysters, what do I need to do in order to buy seafood directly from a boat, seafood inspection and licenses to vend, regulations on buying eggs and donations to food bank. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is the first place to begin gathering this information.

Local food features – Chefs have an opportunity to spotlight local food on their menus. Information about the farmer or fisherman can be provided for consumers and already is in some instances. Events connecting food source to plate can help to showcase farmers. Slow Food dinners could promote local food.

School lunch programs – Chefs are keen to take on a role in the school lunch programs. They have a willingness to help with menu planning; increasing money and time efficiencies based on their experience and are dedicated to our communities’ kids.

Community programs and education – Chefs are keen to become involved in more aspects of our community, including recreational programming such as cooking classes. They are keen to assist in life skills programs teaching cooking. This would be a great opportunity to expose youth to different career paths.

Green Table Network – The Green Table Network is a sustainability program that acknowledges restaurants for their efforts and provides expertise and contacts to assist in minimizing environmental impacts. Membership is open to Vancouver Island restaurants.

Seafood Providers

Oyster farmers, tuna, salmon and prawn fisherman attended an input session in Tofino, as well as a number of people who have other involvement with the seafood industry, such as food distributors and researchers.

What's going on?

Ecotrust Traceability Project – Consumers are growing increasingly concerned about where their food comes from, both for their own safety and the sustainability of the planet. Traceability will include a system to tag seafood at-sea or as it is landed, and then to track the seafood using the coded tags through every stage of the value chain, from the fishing boat to processor, wholesaler and retailer. A centralized, digital hub for tracking seafood will allow each operator in the value-chain to access and input information about the seafood. Ultimately, at the retail end, fishmongers could market the seafood as coming from specific vessels, fishermen and fishing communities.

Clayoquot Sound Salmon Roundtable -- Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, DFO and Uu-a-thluk are hosting a series of meetings to develop a forum for local interests to consider management and recovery issues for Clayoquot salmon. The meetings are ongoing and include representatives from local First Nations, enhancement, and recreational and commercial fishing.

Nuu-chah-nulth Fisheries Litigation – In November 2009, the Nuuchah-nulth First Nations were awarded an Aboriginal right to harvest and sell all species of fish found within their territories. Since then, Canada has appealed the decision. While waiting to begin negotiations, Nuuchah-nulth Nations and the Tribal Council continue work developing Nuuchah-nulth fisheries that will benefit fishermen and communities in accordance with the decision.

Tsawalk Partnership - This multi-year coastal planning process is bringing governments, communities and businesses together to draft a vision and strategy for the protection and future development of the region. By providing the tools to balance the many uses of the coastal environment, the Tsawalk Partnership is focused on supporting a healthy economy and environment for current and future generations. Planning in Clayoquot and Barkley Sounds is gathering local knowledge and interests from different groups to identify key pollution sources, ensure sustainable fisheries and greater local access.

What we heard

Fishing has long been a way of life on the coast. Nuuchah-nulth communities are intrinsically linked to the sea. Many of the first non-native settlers were brought to the coast by fishing and local harbours once boomed with fishing vessels. Although the fishing industry has declined, fishermen remain a vital part of our communities. They are recognized for providing much-appreciated food for residents and seen as a resource in times of crisis when they can feed our communities.

Two separate fishermen's co-ops (Ucluelet Fishermen's Co-operative and the Tofino Trollers Association) were successful in helping Japanese trollers to mutually acquire assets and pool their fish to garner higher prices in the early 1940's.

Historically low salmon returns and a lack of access to fishing resources are impacting eating habits. Demand for seafood remains high, while supply is at an all-

time low. Many people are asking if we are now beyond the threshold of recoverability.

Fishermen find that their quality fish is not able to be distinguished for its value. They need to be able to get a price that represents fair value for the sustainable methods they are utilizing.

Fishermen face a number of issues that negate more involvement in the local food system. These include a lack of predictability and volume required for markets, prices too high for the local market and regulations governing the sale of fish.

Fishermen are getting older. Now is the time to train new fishers and pass on the knowledge and skills that that the older generation have gained.

There is an enduring need for a local shellfish processing plant on the west coast. Benefits would include both primary and secondary processing jobs, as many value-added products could be produced. Currently all oysters that are grown in the region have to be shipped across island to be inspected. The main barrier to date has been the cost of the initial investment, especially given the cost of land. Regularity of work would also be a challenge, as shellfish closures occur on a regular basis.

Opportunities

Place branding – Through branding, fishermen can capitalize on our pristine ecosystem reputation and distinguish their catch for added-value. One form of branding that links a product with a specific place through legislation is known as a “geographical indication.”

Geographical indications are intended to designate product quality, highlight brand identity, and preserve cultural traditions. Examples of well-known geographical indications include Champagne and Kalamata olives. The use of geographical indications allows producers to obtain market recognition and often a premium price. With the increased internationalization of food and product markets, geographical indications have become a key source of niche marketing. Geographical indications are also often associated with non-monetary benefits such as the protection of knowledge and community rights.”
www.geographicindications.com

Shellfish processing plant – This infrastructure need is a major pivot point to increase local food security. Alternative business models, such as the Co-op model need to be considered in order to realize this opportunity. Perhaps a partnership with a municipality or First Nation could help to dedicate the land at little or no cost. A valid processing plant for salmon is also in demand, as only whole fish can be sold currently. Local validation of catch is also an issue. Ucluelet has a number of empty fish plants that are currently for sale. It would be unfortunate to see this marine infrastructure lost to redevelopment.

Connecting with local markets – Fishermen will soon be able to use the new eatwestcoast.ca website to connect directly with consumers to sell their catch locally. They will be able to announce delivery schedules so that local markets can be filled first. Residents are keen to buy directly from fishermen and want to support local and sustainable-harvest fisheries. A food directory for restaurateurs and suppliers

will also be a valuable service making it easier for chefs and restaurateurs to connect with local fisherman.

Community supported fishing – While this business model has not worked to support salmon fishing in the past because of the lack of fishing openings, customers are keen to support fishers and take on some of the inherent risks. It is possible that this model could be applied to different fisheries or multiple fisheries. It was noted that one halibut may be too large for one person, but could be split through a CSF program.

Storage facilities – In some instances, storage facilities for seafood would help to create market stability and help to avoid flooding the market, which can drive down prices. Some fishers have already addressed this issue at the individual level by purchasing large freezers or walk-in freezers to store their catch and allow them to sell locally on an ongoing basis. Sysco Foods has a large holding facility for seafood and may be able to store local catch.

Tsawalk Partnership - This multi-year coastal planning process is bringing governments, communities and businesses together to draft a vision and strategy for the protection and future development of the region. By providing the tools to balance the many uses of the coastal environment, the Tsawalk Partnership is focused on supporting a healthy economy and environment for current and future generations. Planning in Clayoquot and Barkley Sounds is gathering local knowledge and interests from different groups to identify key pollution sources, ensure sustainable fisheries and greater local access.

Salmon abundance – The availability of commercially and recreationally caught salmon is a key concern of residents across the region. Pursuing answers to questions of salmon stock abundance and restoration through the Clayoquot Sound Salmon Roundtable will affect the long-term health of the species and contribute positively to the related food issues. Support for local enhancement efforts has been strong and will undoubtedly continue. New and creative means of leveraging funds for salmon enhancement should be considered. A local “conservation stamp” program could be voluntarily enacted by sports fishing guides, although recent efforts were not successful in a similar endeavour.

Celebrate local food – A community event to celebrate locally caught and harvested seafood could help to raise awareness of local products. Ideas include rejuvenating the Fisherman’s Ball or creating a Fall Harvest Festival or Spot Prawn Festival. Oyster Festival is an example of a thriving community event that celebrates a local product.

Value-added – Fishermen are able to add value to their catch through processing and active pursuits of markets. It is important for fisherman to have control over the distribution and marketing of their product, as that is where the greatest portion of the profits are generated. As food trends change often, there is a risk involved. Funding is currently available for developing new products through the Vancouver Island Heritage Food Coop. Suggestions include salmon pate and salmon-roni. Products developed for the food service industry (i.e. packaged soup for restaurants) can be most profitable as they are easier to market, do not require a expensive packaging and are recognized for their value.

Knowledge transfer – Some customers hesitate to purchase certain species or products because they do not know how to handle them. Seafood processing and cooking classes could be offered as a part of local recreation programming. New

residents may find this learning opportunity particularly interesting, as they typically lack experience with locally available foods. YouTube videos are already available to teach people how to fillet a fish, shuck an oyster and clean a crab.

Consumer education – Consumers are keen to know more about how their food is caught. One example of consumer education is the oyster tank at the Ucluelet Aquarium. The tank displays a string of oysters from a local oyster farm, educating both visitors and locals about local foods. Field trips to visit oyster farms may be an tourism opportunity as visitors look for new experiences on the West coast.

Emergency preparedness – In the event that the region is cut off from outside food sources, emergency plans can include local food producers such as fishers who may be able to provide food for residents.

Key Documents

West Coast Vancouver Island Shellfish Development Project, 2003

“Increased activity in the shellfish sector since the mid-1990's has highlighted several barriers to growing a sustainable, successful industry on the West Coast of Vancouver Island. Maximizing opportunities for the successful development of a regional shellfish industry will require actions on a number of fronts.”

http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/fisheries/reports/WCVI_Shellfish_Development_Report.pdf

Seniors and Elders

Two stakeholder input sessions were planned for seniors in Ucluelet and Tofino. Unfortunately, only one person attended the sessions, which had been advertised in the local newspapers, doctor's offices, seniors home, Tofino Legion and at a number of churches. Therefore, further research is needed before drawing any conclusions.

The major challenge to participation seemed to be that seniors don't always identify themselves as seniors.

Suggestions for future engagement include:

- Hosting interviews to gather information.
- Exploring the historical archives to get insight into the history of food in the region.
- Advertising for participant by age (eg. 65 and older).
- Hosting a social event with a discussion, rather than a meeting or input session
- Attending a regularly scheduled event and starting the conversation there (i.e. elders lunches and the Sunshine Club).
- Working with people who already have established relationships with elders and seniors.

In addition to engaging seniors directly, working with their caregivers and close family supports is key to understanding their food access and security issues.

The Ucluelet Community Food Initiative would happily provide local contacts for anyone working to engage seniors.

The Best of Care: Getting it Right for Seniors in BC; BC Ombudsperson; http://www.ombudsman.bc.ca/images/resources/reports/Public_Reports/Public_Report_No_46.pdf. This report makes recommendations to ensure seniors' rights, which include the right to proper food and to live in an environment that promotes their health, safety and dignity.

Service Providers

Service providers were engaged via the Coastal Family Resource Coalition.

What's going on?

The Coastal Family Resource Coalition meets monthly to share program updates, discuss community needs and develop programs. Within this framework, individual service providers are able to get input to their programs and learn about other opportunities. The Coalition is a leading a regional service consultation in Spring 2010. The related Management Resource Team is a key resource for funding new programs and driving service mandates.

Vancouver Island Indigenous Food Network is creating linkages across the Island and cultivating renewed interest in traditional foods.

Educational programs, such as the "Food skills for Families on a budget and Food skills for Aboriginal Families" courses are being funded on a program by program basis, without overarching long-term planning. All educational programs are appreciated, welcomed and valuable, although it can be hard to get people to sign up.

What we heard

Service providers often have stable funding for core programs. Funding opportunities often arise for one-time programs and projects.

Service providers are committed to their work and strive to work together, often across organizations and mandates.

Opportunities

Education & Awareness Raising – Service providers identified a need for more nutrition education, raising awareness at existing community events and through local media.

Expand healthy cooking programs – There are many excellent school and community programs already happening that could be expanded or introduced in other communities, such as the Cook Cooks program (Wickaninnish Community School). Programs that connect youth and elders in community kitchens would provide an opportunity to pass on skills, language, history and culture.

Community events – Community and school events are an opportunity to set an example of good food choices, share recipes, information and showcase local food. Affordable, family events are always welcomed.

Strengthen and support food networks – Continue to work with established networks, such as the Coastal Family Resource Coalition and the Vancouver Island Indigenous Food Network.

New program development – Suggestions for new programs to fill service gaps include:

- A Good Food Box program, which puts together fresh, healthy, local food to provide a monthly basket at a reasonable rate.

- Fruit Tree Project (Adult mental health) which pays adults on work program to pick unneeded/unwanted fruit for homeowners and donates it to a community kitchen or food bank.

Related Documents

Community Needs Assessment, Westcoast Community Resources Society, 2003

West Coast Emergency Information and Preparedness,
<http://www.gotofino.com/tofinoemergencyinfo.html>

Central Westcoast Dual-Language Literacy Plan, 2009

Youth

The Ucluelet Secondary School Global Education class (Grade 11/12) acted as youth leaders to engage other secondary school classes. They surveyed a number of other classes and also signed up youth to participate in the new school garden.

Based on the information gathered, there is an opportunity to educate youth about food security. Some youth indicate an interest in knowing where their food comes from and already make an effort to eat healthy food. Most youth overestimated the amount of our produce that is grown on Vancouver Island. While they supported eating local food in general, most had no idea where their food actually originated.

All youth were able to identify many foods that can be grown and harvested locally, including wild mushrooms, berries, seafood and home-grown vegetables. There was also interest in learning about harvesting wild foods, hunting and fishing.

There was much support for community gardens amongst youth, who identified the health benefits of eating fresh vegetables, as well as the positive social impacts of building community and the environmental benefits.

Ways to involve students and teachers in the Ucluelet Secondary School Garden:

- Grad volunteer hours (community service portfolio)
- Detentions, punishments
- Include a reward or incentive or a prize for most work done
- Give students a portion of the vegetables that are grown
- Videos, class visits, field trips, posters
- Pizza lunch incentive or other free food
- Use food from the garden in the lunch program and snacks
- Let students help choose plants

How can the school garden be used to increase interest and awareness of food issues among students?

- Provide first hand experience of how fresh organic vegetables and fruits should look and taste.
- Educate students who are participating in the garden about issues and they can share the info with other students.
- Set up a booth to sell produce from the garden and tell people where it came from and why it's important.
- Use the food from the garden in the lunch program, the cooking class and even as snacks around the school.
- Students can learn about what is in season and where foods in the school garden usually come from.
- Take away snacks at the school for a day to bring attention to food security.
- Offer tours of the garden.

Ideas for increasing awareness or getting youth interested or involved in food issues:

- Show movies and documentaries in the school
- Field trips to visit Jane Hunt's farm
- Take kids to see another school or community garden. "Maybe one smaller one and one larger scale to show students that it really can be done and is an achievable goal." Virtual field trips could also work.
- Add a page to the school website about food issues
- Create a class in school
- Put posters up in the school

- Host a cook-off and/or potluck
- Host a 100 mile diet lunch or use a food mileage calculator so they can be more aware of where their food really comes from
- Show YouTube videos and podcasts

Produce from the school garden could be used in the school or school programs:

- In the lunch programs and foods class. Prepare complete dishes just from garden produce.
- Sell the veggies at a weekend market. Money could go towards school functions, such as dances.
- Provide food for events at school.

Opportunities for integrating the school garden and food issues into school curriculum:

- Study food in biology, science etc., earth science in grades 8-10
- Global ed – food security
- Social studies – food security
- Get social studies classes, biology, etc. working in the garden when studying a related topic.
- French – learn about foods that come from France.
- Science – the chemistry of cooking
- Woodwork – building structures for the garden
- Math – how much fuel does it take to transport x amount of food from y place and menu planning including calculating nutritional values and serving sizes.
- Include farmers, food producers in Career Days

A number of other opportunities for youth were suggested at other stakeholder input sessions, such as:

- Could the schools have their own laying chickens that different classes take turns caring for
- Horticulture course already create that can be used for high school curriculum

Opportunities

Food safe kitchens – There is a strong need for a food safe kitchen at Ucluelet Elementary School. There is space at the School and the kitchen could be used for an applied skills program for all grade 6 & 7's.

More youth education – Expand the Cool Cooks program to other schools in the region.

School breakfast programs – Students are better able to learn when they have eaten breakfast. There are confidentiality issues around asking students if they have eaten breakfast.

School lunch programs – Local restaurateurs and chefs are keen to volunteer their time to assist the school lunch programs.

Youth involvement – The older participants in all stakeholder groups were very much aware of the importance of these food issues for the younger generation. Many identified that it is important to engage youth in all aspects of community for knowledge transfer and capacity building.

Website Development - Eatwestcoast.ca

The Ucluelet Community Food Initiative has received funding to design and implement a website focused on local food. They have chosen to take a regional approach and want to create a site that will be a food-issue resource for all stakeholders. Participants were asked what they would like to see on the site and what tools and resources they would use. All feedback is summarized below.

Healthy eating

- Cool applications about healthy food, such as coloring pages with fruits and vegetables, games, recipes and cookbooks.
- Links to the Canada Food Guide, nutritionist, registered dietician, farmers/agriculture and gardening.
- Healthy snack ideas for lunches and recesses for parents.

Networking

- Networking with other service providers and organizations
- Advertising fundraisers
- Posting funding opportunities
- For farmers, a labour pool including applicants backgrounds
- Link to SOIL program and assistance applying
- Lend/lease program with downloadable templates for land share arrangements
- News on meetings and what they entail
- Board of people to contact for questions

Virtual Market

- Connections to local seafood providers including where and when
- Classified page or bulletin board for give aways, items needed and volunteers required
- Sustainable foods market page
- Home garden swap – barter system to trade produce
- Farmers and fishermen need to note what their minimum order is
- Link local products to restaurants that are offering them and cooking with them
- Advertising for local grocers including their projects and initiatives

Other input

- All emergency food programs and community services should be listed in one place.
- Forum and Q&A pages
- Use multi-media such as videos to connect people to the process
- Link to agri-tourism websites such as the Collin's Farm -- www.arrowvale.ca
- Link to Ecotrust Seafood Traceability project -- <http://www.ecotrust.ca/fisheries/traceability>
- Gardening "tip of the month"
- Links to regulations for grocers, chefs and restaurateurs, farmers, fishermen and consumers

Next steps

By working with the needs and opportunities identified here, we plan to accomplish greater food security for the West coast as a whole. The Eat West Coast network will create a forum for discussing food security at a regional level. It is hoped that this group will keep an eye to this Food Action Plan and further the work outlined. The document is intended to be a living document that can be updated as work evolves. The Food Action Plan and all updates will be hosted on the eatwestcoast.ca website.

Groups, individuals, organizations and institutions are encouraged to implement different aspects of the plan, as is relevant to the passions, goals and mandate of their group.

Additional funding will be necessary in order to take action on the opportunities presented. In addition, there are opportunities that will require time rather than great financial contributions. While the current project partners will continue to dedicate time and seek funding to further aspects of the plan, other groups are encouraged to do the same.

Appendix A: Contact List

Organization	Contact	Details
Canadian Diabetes Association		www.diabetes.ca
Clayoquot Biosphere Trust	Curtis Cook Executive Director	curtis.cook@clayoquotbiosphere.org 250-725-2219 www.clayoquotbiosphere.org
Coastal Family Resource Coalition	Norine Messer	norrinemesser@hotmail.com 250-735-4111
District of Ucluelet	Emergency Services Manager	award@ucluelet.ca 250-726-4784
Economic Development Port Alberni	Patrick Deakin	patrick_deakin@portalberni.ca 250-720-2527
Ecotrust Canada	Stephanie Hughes Clayoquot Project Coordinator	stephanie@ecotrust.ca 250-725-2536
Fishes and Loaves Soup Kitchen	Jenn Brierley	thetis492@gmail.com
Food Bank on the Edge		250-726-6909
	Hanne Bruhwiler Community Nutritionist	hfbruhwiler@hotmail.com 250-725-2865
Island Chef's Collaborative		www.iccbc.ca
Ministry of Children and Family Development	Mental Health Outreach Worker	Holly Stowell
Ministry of Housing and Social Development	Homeless Outreach Worker Port Alberni/North Island	Andrew Borbas Andrew.Borbas@gov.bc.ca Direct Phone: 250-720-2627 CELL: 250-618-1106
Nuu-chah-nulth Economic Development Corporation		www.nedc.info
Nuu-chah-nulth Seafood Development Corporation		www.ncnshellfish.com
Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council	Healthy Living Coordinator	Matilda Atleo matilda.atleo@nuuchahnulth.org 250-724-5757
	Central Region Wellness Worker	Melody Charlie Melody.charlie@nuuchahnulth.org
Port Alberni Agricultural Advisory Committee	Mike Irg Manager of Planning & Development	mirg@acrd.bc.ca 250-720-2710
Raincoast Education	Josie Osborne	info@raincoasteducation.org

Society	Executive Director	250-725-2560
Tla-o-qui-aht Traditional Food Network	Nora Martin	nmartin@tla-o-qui-aht.org 250.725.3233
Tofino Botanical Gardens	Eileen Floody Executive Director	info@tbgf.org 250-725-1220
Tofino Community Foods Initiative	Leah Austin	tofinolocalfood@yahoo.ca 250-725-2594 www.tofinofood.blogspot.com
Tofino-Ucluelet Culinary Guild	Shawna Gardham	shawnagardham@shelterrestaurant.com
Ucluelet Community Foods Initiative	Chantel Gemmel	ukeelocalfood@yahoo.ca 250-726-2940
Uu-a-thluk	Norine Messer	norrinemesser@hotmail.com 250-735-4111 http://uuathluk.ca
Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Indigenous Foods Network	Nitanis Desjarlais Network Coordinator	viccifn@gmail.com 778-421-2100 250-730-1098
Vancouver Island Health Authority	Hélène Dufour, RD Community Nutritionist	Port Alberni Health Unit 250-731-1315 Ext: 41767
	Margaret Morrison Family Ties Ucluelet	250-726-2224
	Vickie Hayes Tofino	250-725-2172
West Coast Aquatic		www.westcoastaquatic.ca
Westcoast Community Resources Society	Marcie DeWitt Community Outreach Coordinator	250-726-2343 ext 55 communityoutreach@wccrs.ca
	Karla Strickland Womens Outreach Coordinator	250-726-2343 ext 50 womensoutreach@wccrs.ca
Women's Food and Water Initiative, Port Alberni	Jenn Fisher-Bradley	wfwi@shaw.ca

Appendix B: Literature Review

This literature review is aimed at helping widen the scope of the Food Action Plan.

Existing Background Food Documents

The UCFI completed a food survey of the CSBR communities, with an appendix of Ucluelet-specific information. The survey was intended to assess residents' interest and ideas about food security, with the hope that the document would provide a starting place for future CFAs and initiatives. The survey had a 14 per cent completion rate, and represented about 7 per cent of the region. Nearly 24 per cent of those who chose to identify themselves, identified as First Nations and the majority of respondents were residents of either Tofino or Ucluelet.

A problem highlighted by many of the community as a hindrance to maintaining a healthier diet, were issues of access to fresh vegetables (51.1 per cent) and to fresh fish/seafood, poultry and meat (49.8 per cent)ⁱ. While reason for difficulty accessing are not specified, one could infer that cost may be a key factor, as 26.3 per cent identified their household income as less than \$25,000 per yearⁱⁱ. Another 37.5 per cent identified as produce being too expensive as a significant hindrance to their ability to improve their dietⁱⁱⁱ. High cost of living in the CSBR is often mentioned as a hindrance to retaining long term families, and the survey reflects this as 14.8 per cent of individuals who answered the survey and indicated they had previously sacrificed groceries for other expenses, all indicated rent as a reason.

Background – Non-Food Specific Documents

EcoTrust, with support from McAllister Opinion Research, surveyed 303 (six per cent) residents throughout the CSBR. The survey is estimated to have a margin of error of 5.1 per cent, accurate 19 times out of 20^{iv}. The survey asked questions of resident varying from use of social networking sites to concerns for their communities.

The survey was telling as to how transient the population was. In Marktosis, 71 per cent indicated that they had lived there their entire life, and while in other First Nation communities 62 per cent indicated that they had lived there their entire life^v. These rates are varied from those in Tofino or Ucluelet, where only between 13 and 14 per cent of respondents indicated that they had lived there their entire lives^{vi}.

When combined with the Quality of Life survey part of the document, these statistics are more telling. Only one out of every five respondents rated local schools positively (good or excellent)^{vii}. With those who have lived in the CSBR their entire lives, access to further education may limit their ability to access nutritious food. This theory is addressed further in Michelle Schoffro Cook's article "Cancer Rates in Clayoquot Sound Communities". In this section, local First Nations positively rated their quality of life between 47 and 49 per cent, while 80 – 88 per cent of Ucluelet/Tofino residents felt they had a good or excellent quality of life^{viii}.

All communities shared the same concerns; cost of living was identified as a significant concern by 67 per cent, protecting the environment was identified by 71 per cent as a significant concern and affordable housing was identified as the top concern by 72 per cent of respondents^{ix}. Within protection the environment, 88 per cent identified protecting against fish stock depletion as their most significant environmental concern^x. Again, food security could assumed to be hindered by cost of living issues, as the top two concerns identified in the Community Concern section related to affordability in the CSBR (Affordable housing and cost of living).

Socioeconomic Factors

The Central Vancouver Island Assessment of Aboriginal People (2006) raises some interesting issues relating to aboriginal health. As with EcoTrust Community Survey,

the Assessment finds that Aboriginal populations are largely non-migratory, with only 13.8 per cent of those On Reserve indicating that they had migrated during the last five years, compared to 25.8 per cent of non-aboriginals in the Central Vancouver Island region^{xi}. The age composition of those On and Off Reserve on Central Vancouver Island is also significantly different from non-aboriginal populations. Only 5.6 per cent of aboriginal peoples who lived on reserve were over the age of 65, while only 4.9 per cent of those who lived off reserve were over the age of 65. In non-aboriginal peoples in the Central Vancouver Island region, 19.9 per cent were over 65 years^{xii}. This data points to serious health and quality of life concerns that could be traced back to access to nutritious foods

The education statistics of aboriginal peoples in this profile indicates that 50.3 per cent of those between 25-64 years on reserve did not have any educational certification, diploma or degree. Twenty-six per cent of those off reserve did not have any certification, diploma or degree. In the region for non-aboriginals, 13.4 per cent did not have any educational certification, diploma or degree^{xiii}. It is important to link these to aboriginal earning profiles as well. Sixty-three per cent of employed on reserve aboriginals 15 years or older earned less than \$20,000 per year. The average income of those 25-34 (full time and part time) was \$7,431, only increasing to \$15,783 when working more than 40 weeks mostly full time^{xiv}.

These factors could be hindrances to accessing nutritious food. Low earnings combined with minimal education profiles limits the ability to purchase fresh produce and meats and poultry. There is no indication about the amount of traditional hunting and harvesting being done in these communities, something that would counteract the assumed food insecurity.

In Michelle Schoffro-Cook's article "Cancer Issues Scan in the Clayoquot Sound Region", she highlights a lot of the information from the "Local Health Area 70 Alberni" statistical profile. Emphasis is placed on the remoteness of the region hindering access to health technologies and services (cancer detection) and lack of access to fresh local produce: "There are few regional farms in these communities, causing a substantial dependence on processed and packaged food^{xv}". These points to both significant food insecurity in the region, as well as to significant health insecurity. Food insecurity is a key factor to health issues, which compromise work force engagement, productivity and quality of life.

Schoffro-Cook also places emphasis on the inability to easily access fresh local fish, including wild salmon:

"Provincial regulations require shipment of most catches to a government-certified processing plant – none exists on the Island. While there is a seeming abundance of sea vegetables, little is harvested or eaten in the diets of residents, including aboriginal populations whose traditional diets would have included these items."^{xvi}

Such issues are concerning as some of the key principles of food security revolve around sourcing local fresh foods, and hindering access to healthy local foods is not in local policy makers' best interest from a healthy community point of view.

The "Atlas of Wellness" is a reference tool put together by BC Stats in conjunction with the University of Victoria^{xvii}. The tool graphs BC by health district (again lumping CBSR communities with Central Vancouver Island) and has indicators ranging from chronic disease to nutrition level to community involvement. With the ability to cross several different variables and compare by region across the province, trends are easily identifiable and inconsistencies by region stick out

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- ⁱ *Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Region Community Food Survey*, 10.
- ⁱⁱ *ibid.*, 7.
- ⁱⁱⁱ *ibid.*, 11.
- ^{iv} Gentles, Nichola, and Angus McAllister. *Clayoquot Community Survey*. Rep. EcoTrust Canada and McAllister Opinion Research, 2009. Web. Oct. 2009. <http://www.ecotrust.ca/clayoquot/survey_method>: "Survey".
- ^v *ibid.*, "Survey 1".
- ^{vi} *ibid.*
- ^{vii} *ibid.*, "Survey 2".
- ^{viii} *ibid.*, "Survey 2".
- ^{ix} *ibid.*, "Survey 3".
- ^x *ibid.*, "Survey 4".
- ^{xi} BC Stats. "Health Service Delivery Area - 42: Central Vancouver Island Statistical Profile of Aboriginal People 2006: With Emphasis on Children, Labour Market and Post-Secondary Education Issues." BC Stats, Apr. 2009. Web. Oct. 2009. <<http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/cen01/abor/hsda06/ABORHSDA42.pdf>>, 6.
- ^{xii} *ibid.*, 4.
- ^{xiii} *ibid.* 7.
- ^{xiv} *ibid.*, 15.
- ^{xv} Schoffro-Cook, Michelle. *Cancer Issues in the Clayoquot Sound Region - an Overview*. Issue brief. Print, 2.
- ^{xvi} *ibid.*, 2.
- ^{xvii} BC Stats, and University of Victoria. "BC Atlas of Wellness." *BC Atlas of Wellness*. BC Stats, 2008. Web. Oct. 2009. <<http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/instantatlas/wellness/atlas.html>>.