

Coastal Agriculture Roundtable aka “the Harvest Table”

May 24th, 2023
via zoom



1. Welcome!

Erika called the meeting to order and introductions were made around the table. She set the context referencing the rural and remote region, acknowledgement of indigenous food sovereignty, and the many ongoing food security challenges and opportunities that come with these.

Erika provided a brief refresher on the history of the Roundtable and its purpose - connection to the ACRD and its agriculture committees but grounded on the west coast. The systems change funds provided via the ACRD will be ending in 2023, but the CAR will continue with the CBT.

Erika reminded that there will be honoraria available for Coastal Agriculture Roundtable members, as well as travel expense reimbursement.

2. Roundtable Introductions and Updates on Local Projects

Louise Rogers - Operators of Long Beach Farms at the Long Beach Airport

Nicky Ling– representation ACRD Area C and grower on off grid property

Erika Goldt– Lead of Eat West Coast, CBT and Director, TUCG

Rachel Dickens (*joining later*)– Dietitian, Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council

Randy Oliwa – Ucluelet resident supported of local growing projects

Adrienne Mason – Board of Directors, Tofino Community Food Initiative

Amy Needham– ACRD planner

Niamh O'Reilly - Yuuʔuʔiʔath Foods Coordinator

3. Key Areas of Discussion

- Composting now underway – have not yet secured a sifter to be able to redistribute final product to the community
- Still a major issue of securing funding for paid positions working in growing food – need a more holistic approach (per the community traditional foods overall coordinator?) or a business minded approach (Erika and Niamh discussed some option to seek consultation)
- But a bigger problem is being able to secure people in word – lack of staffing, pay competition, commuter issues, oversight capacity
- New indicators or measures out of the Vital Signs work – how to demonstrate the return on investment, especially with the cost of food increasing so much
- Education and training can only go hand in hand with employment opportunities for community growing
- Climate justice an increasing importance in food security discussion
- How can food be connected more strongly with resource development and economic development pursuits
- Larger scale equipment for community use like freeze drying could be a shared resource – see Erika notes on biosphere centre, Erika to share any upcoming infrastructure grant opportunities

- As per the previous survey results, the group confirmed focus on ‘Supporting and increasing food production projects’ is still seen as a priority under the strategic plan

4. CBT Updates and CAR Moving Forward

- Biosphere Centre – an update on the plans including community and processing kitchen and outdoor area for warriors program including food activities
- Provincial Budget Consultations – in collaboration with Island Food Hubs – submitting on food security as one of three priority areas, as well as identification as our MP priority to a federal level
- Climate Change and Biodiversity – reference to Island Health new department, a focus on climate change and food and health, the conference for this year postponed, the CBT OECM and IPCA work moving forward, there may be a role for identified food resources
- Vital Signs 2023 underway – looking for ideas on representing food security including Cost of Eating
- Participants worked in small groups to review priorities and goals outlined in the Strategic Plan
- Honoraria offered for participants who would like to advise on the plan for the CAR moving to the end of 2023 and beyond, past ACRD funding
- Some unspent funds through the CAR fund and EWC funds are available – Erika will be reaching out to gather ideas to collectively spend the fund (\$2-\$3000). Initial ideas included: business consultations, courses (such as Organic Master Gardener, VIU course, NIC course), investing in small funds (like NSG) for the late summer and fall harvests,