

Building a Resilient Food System for the Alberni Valley

A Community Food Assessment

Alberni Valley Transition Towns Society

Building a Resilient Food System

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Endorsements and Support

This document has received endorsement from:

- Alberni Valley Transition Towns Society

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Introduction

“A community food assessment is a participatory and collaborative process that examines a broad range of food-related issues and resources in order to inform actions to improve community food security.”

Community Food Security Coalition. Community Food Programs: What Do They Look Like? Available online at: http://www.foodsecurity.org/CFS_projects.pdf

Background

The Community Food Assessment (CFA) began in the Fall of 2012, as an undertaking of the Alberni Valley Transition Town Society (AVTTS) with funding assistance from the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA).

The intent of the CFA is to develop a profile of general community food-related characteristics and resources in the Alberni Valley and to assess household food security, food resource accessibility, food availability and affordability, and community food production resources. The assessment will provide necessary information to guide, support and raise awareness for Community Food Action Initiative activities.

This assessment complements other regional assessments that have been done by the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust and local First Nations which together form a broad picture of food in the Alberni Clayoquot Regional District. Other communities, such as Bamfield, need to be looked at as well to gain a complete picture of food for our regional Food Hub.

As a working document the CFA will be used to develop the Community Food Action Plan for the Alberni Valley. Please refer to Appendix B - Community Food Security Continuum.

Goal/Purpose

The goal of this report is to develop a community profile of our local food system and to act as a benchmark for improvement in local community food security.

Community Food Assessment Project Objectives:

1. To identify key community food resources by developing an inventory.
2. To encourage community residents to support local food systems.
3. To act as a local food hub to promote local food systems.
4. To communicate the CFA findings to all stakeholders, i.e. producers, distributors and consumers in the Alberni Valley.

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Method

Information Collection

The AVTTS consulted with representatives of the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust to coordinate discussions and share information on initiatives taken within the region.

The AVTTS also participated in meetings with the Vancouver Island Food Security Hub Network. The Vancouver Island Food Security Hub Network is a coalition of groups and individuals established to form regional food security hubs with an aim of achieving food security on Vancouver Island.

Information was collected by several methods including a literature review of key documents and reports which reflect local or regional data. A meeting was held with community stakeholders to help define the goals and objectives of the report.

Many sources of existing documentation and data are utilized including:

- Statistics Canada, Census and Census of Agriculture
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
- Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Planning Services
- Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Agriculture Development Committee
- Yuułu?it̓'ath First Nation
- Hu-ay-aht First Nation
- Vancouver Island Health Authority and dietician
- Clayoquot Biosphere Trust
- Alberni Valley Farmers institute
- AVVTS Food Group
- Food Action Coalition steering committee
- Vancouver Island Food Security Hub Committee
- Alberni Valley Community Food Initiative: Household Survey
- Outlook 20/20
- Port Alberni Community Assessment:
Taking Action for Community Sustainability Planning
- City of Port Alberni: Corporate Strategic Plan 2012-2016
- Climate Change Committee-Final Report
- other non-profit agencies

Alberni Valley Community Food Initiative: Household Survey

As part of the Community Food Assessment the AVTTS conducted a household food survey of 2300 residences. The Vancouver Island University developed a survey (Shaw, 2012) to measure local food production and get a sense of citizen interest in supporting more localized production in the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD). The ACRD assisted with resources and logistics to complete the survey. Please refer to the Community Food Survey for more information.

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Alberni Valley Agricultural Plan 2011-2031

This report describes the type of agriculture in the area, the resources used, and the capacity of the land, soils, water and other resources to enhance production in the future and the regulations and policy that affect the local industry.

As identified in the Agricultural Plan, The Alberni Valley produces between 5.3% and 11% of the food consumed. This is the estimated value of production versus consumption of food in the Alberni Valley. Many of the key indicators identified in the Agricultural Plan have been incorporated into this document where appropriate.

The mission of the Agricultural Plan is to develop the capacity of the resources (land, people and capital) to allow the community to produce 40% of the food consumed locally.

City of Port Alberni OCP

The OCP noted that urban agriculture is important in achieving a more sustainable food source and creating a secure food supply for the residents of the city.

Related policy includes encouragement and support for market gardens (especially in low-lying areas), urban agriculture, production, processing, distribution and sale of locally grown products as well as public education related to urban agriculture, composting and water conservation. The city is committed to supporting (and potentially expanding) the Port Alberni Farmers Market.

Policy also states that “the city will work with the Agricultural Land Commission in an effort to identify opportunities to enhance and/or promote agriculture in the community”.

Vancouver Island Food Security Hub

Members of the Community Food Action Initiative committee have participated in hub meetings and attended the Vancouver Island Food Security Hub conference in Duncan this year. The following priority island wide food action priorities were identified and have been integrated into the recommendations section of this document.

- Invest in agriculture
- Support Small Farmers
- Link farmers to markets
- Create open trade
- Protect the poor
- Help the hungry
- Develop local purchasing policies
- Changing urban poultry and farming bylaws
- Create edible landscapes
- Education programs for consumers on growing food, for farmers in marketing
- Public lands utilized for food production
- Collaboration between public, private and non profit

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- Buy local campaign
- Farmers being mentors to new farmers
- Explore mobile abattoir
- Increase local storage, processing
- Improve food distribution
- Agriculture Land Trust
- Access to land to young farmers
- Skills education for young farmers
- Protect aquifers and watersheds
- Access to local fish in stores and restaurants
- Protect indigenous foods
- Map of seasonal available foods

Climate Change Committee

The following priorities relating to food security were identified by the Climate Change committee in their final report and have been considered in the recommendation section of this report:

There has been a decreased ocean capacity to produce protein rich foods and vulnerability and disappearance of First Nations' indigenous food supply. More locally produced food will become a key resource in the face of rising transportation costs, and global food security issues. Local non-marine sources will be affected negatively due to specific extreme weather events. The carbon sinking capacity of organic soils will be a big plus in the creation of carbon offset markets in the rural and urban farming mix. Independence and projects that promote community resiliency should be considerations in choosing ways to promote local food production.

Port Alberni Community Assessment: Taking Action for Community Sustainability Planning

Between April and May 2008, the International Centre for Sustainable Cities worked with the City of Port Alberni to engage community stakeholders and city staff in discussions about long-term sustainability planning. Approximately forty people representing city staff and a range of stakeholders from community organizations, business and the local First Nations participated. This process built upon earlier meetings held in 2007 between the City of Port Alberni, the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District, and the Tseshaht and Hupacasath First Nations to discuss regional collaboration in sustainability planning.

The following points of collaboration were identified and have been considered in the recommendation section of this report:

- education system
- farmers
- First Nations
- local government

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- media
- local grocers and restaurants
- landscaping contractors

The following Priorities were identified and have been considered in the recommendation section of this report:

- distribution
- participants
- finding a work force
- advertising
- utilizing existing infrastructure
- develop a farm fund
- education on food security
- baseline measurement and energy savings initiatives

The following challenges were identified and have been considered in the recommendation section of this report:

- workforce wages
- communication
- space
- funding to raise awareness
- local grocer contracts (need new model for food procurement)

Key Informant Interviews

In addition, informal interviews have been conducted with individuals involved in various aspects of the food system including farmers, organizers of food access programs and food distributors.

Interviews were also held with a variety of key stakeholders including those living in poverty, service providers and the farming community. The interviews helped identify available services; number of community members reached through programs; as well as challenges and barriers they or their clients are experiencing.

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Report Structure

The report is structured in three parts each describing the current state of food security in our region.

Part 1 - Community Food Security

Part 1 of the report evaluates household and individual food security, primarily focused on the presence of hunger and malnutrition in the Alberni Valley. The evaluation of household food security is based on secondary indicators such as poverty, access to emergency food resources and challenges meeting basic needs.

Part 2 - Local Food Production

In Part 2 community food production resources, primarily agriculture are described. Indicators include farms and farmers, as well as major agricultural products identified in some detail. More abstract indicators such as agricultural education opportunities are included, as well as supplementary urban agriculture production resources such as community and backyard gardens. Due to constraints in the scope of the report, some important elements of local food production, such as the fisheries industry and food processing are not included.

Part 3 - Alberni Valley Food Distribution Network

The final part of the report focuses on the distribution network including retail, restaurants and community food programs. Currently there is limited data available for examining how the distribution network influences food security. As a result, the evaluation is focused on the assets and challenges for different modes of distribution.

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Part 1 - Community Food Security

The following is a widely accepted definition of community food security adapted from M.W. Hamm and A.C. Bellows: “Community food security exists when all citizens obtain safe, personally acceptable, nutritious diets through a sustainable food system that maximizes healthy choices, community self-reliance and equal access for everyone”.

Food is no longer seen as a human right, but a commodity. No longer is it a political or a societal priority. The main barrier to community food security is poverty.

Poverty – insufficient money for food = inadequate nutrition = a variety of health and social problems. Focus on local food production and consumption is a key part of the solution, as is access to that food.

The most pressing concern in relation to food security is the need to increase the amount of food being grown within the Alberni-Clayoquot Region and on Vancouver Island. There is a considerable quantity of agricultural land not under cultivation in the Alberni valley and there are not enough professional farmers (particularly young farmers) to bring land into production. Ensuring that agricultural land is not lost to development and that farmers can afford land, either through purchase or leasing arrangements, is paramount. Currently it is citizen and non-profit efforts that are making the difference in these areas. Governments are lagging behind in taking responsibility for a consistent approach to protecting farmland.

Another challenge lies with the subsidized low prices of imported food, compared with locally grown food. Considerable marketing and consciousness raising is required for consumers to recognize the real costs of sustainable food production. The increased production of vegetables over the past decade shows that producers within the Region recognize the potential to market locally grown produce. There are, however, many challenges facing farmers on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. More infrastructural support is required for meat and poultry producers both with respect to processing and regulations.

Increasing the ability of local people to access local food will help to ensure the continued viability of local farms, while improving the freshness and nutrition of food consumed by vulnerable sectors of society.

As outlined in the report Cost of Eating in British Columbia 2011.

“The goal of food security is to eliminate these barriers for every single individual in the province.

Barriers to accessing food include:

- income level,
- purchasing power,
- proximity to places where food is sold (especially those in remote locations),
- mobility, and
- lack of knowledge or space for food preparation and storage.

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Prolonged food insecurity can lead to

- poor pregnancy outcomes,
- poor growth and development in children,
- learning deficits,
- poor school performance,
- increased illness and susceptibility to disease for people of all ages,
- increased medical costs, and
- decreased life expectancy.

Mental anguish also troubles food insecure individuals and families.”

Food Charter

A food charter was recently adopted by the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District.

A food charter is a document to help guide a community’s strategies for providing access to safe, healthy foods to everybody. A food charter addresses a community’s policy toward agriculture, food distribution, access to food, sustainability, citizens’ health and other issues relating to food.

The community food charter provides guidance and vision for the agricultural initiatives in which the Regional District is actively involved, including:

- Supporting the Islands Agriculture Show to be held February 1st and 2nd, 2013 in Cowichan where the Alberni Valley will be the feature farming community.
- Developing new agricultural policies and objectives in the updated Official Community Plans.
- Supporting the Transition Towns Society with a comprehensive survey of residents’ eating habits in the Alberni Valley.
- Continuing to implement the action items identified in the Agricultural Plan with priorities and direction provided by the Agricultural Development Committee.

Food Insecurity

Individual and household food security

In BC approximately 7.8% of households experience food insecurity (Statistics Canada, 2007/2008). The people experiencing food insecurity include working adults, unemployed and underemployed adults, youth, children and senior citizens. Individuals and families who are living on low income are far more likely to experience food insecurity. Charitable and emergency food services do not provide an adequate resolution to the challenges of food insecurity.

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Why does household food security matter?

Food insecurity is a stress that acts especially upon people who are already stressed by other related factors in their lives, for example by the struggle to survive on low incomes, by lack of mobility and/or by chronic illness. Food insecurity negatively impacts the health and resilience of individuals and communities, while food security strengthens individuals and communities.

(Of particular concern, inadequate intake of fruits and vegetables is common among people on low incomes. People requiring emergency food commonly consume insufficient amounts of nutrients such as vitamins C and A which are necessary for a healthy immune system. Food insecure seniors experience significantly lower intakes of many essential vitamins and minerals, and have lower Body Mass Index than their food sufficient counterparts (American Dietetic Association, 2002).)

The Cost of Poor Nutrition to our Health

We require good nutrition to maintain good health and to prevent disease - both deficiency diseases and chronic diseases. The latter include heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis and more. When nutrition is inadequate over prolonged periods, long term health impacts may result.

Inadequate nutrition among pregnant women has been shown to increase incidence of low birth weight babies, who have significantly higher risks of illness, disabilities, and death. For example, inadequate consumption of folate can lead to higher risk of babies born with birth defects (Child and Family Benefit Online Calculator, 2003-4).

Children who are poorly nourished are particularly vulnerable to illnesses such as colds, headaches and stomach-aches. They also function at lower levels academically and psychosocially than their peers who are well-nourished. In particular, there is an association in children between iron deficiency anaemia and problems in cognitive and motor development and behaviour (Grantham-MacGregor, S. & Ani, C., 2001).

Adults produce less at work or are less productive in seeking work when they are malnourished. In general, learning and productivity decline when people are malnourished and/or hungry.

Inadequate nutrition has an impact on the development and the treatment of chronic diseases, e.g. cardiovascular disease and cancer. Cardiovascular disease is more prevalent among people living in poverty (Raphael, D. & Farrell, S., 2002). The National Health Population Survey (Che, J. & Chen, J., 2001), found that several health problems were more common among people living in food insecure households, where 21% reported having three or more chronic conditions.

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Child Nutrition

Optimal health, growth, and intellectual development in childhood are associated with healthy eating, which also helps to prevent health problems such as eating disorders and obesity in the near term, and cancer and heart disease in the long term. Children should be encouraged by parents and by their community to develop healthy eating habits which will continue to promote health throughout their lives.

School also plays an important role in childhood learning about health and nutrition. School gardens can provide hands on experience in growing, preparing and eating healthy food. School meal programs and cafeterias can model and reinforce good food choices.

Who Are The Most Vulnerable?

The Household Food Insecurity Fact Sheet (2007/2008) of the Canadian Community Health Survey found that the demographic groups who rate highest for food insecurity include: lone parent families, working poor, seniors, Aboriginal people, people aged 20 years plus who have not completed grade nine, recent immigrants, people with disabilities, and school-aged children. A commonality across these demographics is a lack of sufficient income to purchase food. This is exacerbated by other factors such as lack of mobility.

Lone parent families have the highest incidence of food insecurity compared to other family groupings, but many two parent families or single adults with low incomes are also food insecure. Females were more likely than males to live in a food insecure household. Adults in a food insecure household tend to shelter their children, so the adults are more insecure than their children.

Nationally

Nationally, the age group experiencing the highest percentage of moderate food insecurity (peaking at 6.6%) is 12 to 19 years, while severe food insecurity is experienced fairly equally (at about 2.5%) by ages 12 to 44 years (Statistics Canada, 2007/2008).

Statistics Canada's National Population Health Survey estimated that three million Canadians, or one in ten people, lived in households where lack of money was a barrier to buying enough food or meant that lower quality, less healthy foods were bought (Che, J. & Chen, J, 2001).

The key findings of these studies include:

- 58% of Canadian households relying on social assistance reported food insecurity
- One-third of all single-mother households were food insecure to some extent and 28% of mothers suggested that they had to compromise their diet.

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- Children in nearly 40% of families accessing food banks experience hunger at least once per month, including more than one in ten families where children go hungry a couple of times a week.
- Two out of five food bank clients reported a disability that restricted their work and more than half of the clients with disabilities were not on the Disability Support Program.
- Nationally, 27% of the aboriginal population living off reserve experienced food insecurity, with one and a half times as many aboriginal as non-aboriginal people experiencing food insecurity. (6.7% population claimed aboriginal ancestry in the 2001 census.(Statistics Canada, 2001)

Alberni Valley / Alberni-Clayoquot

Lone Parent Families

Statistics Canada's Community Profile for Alberni-Clayoquot, 2006 Census, showed that 1545 out of 4835 families with children, or 32.0%, were lone parent families. The BC rate is lower, at 25.7%.

In Port Alberni, 1260 out of 7640 families, or 16.5%, were lone parent families.

Seniors

Older people on fixed incomes, such as pensions which are not keeping pace with the cost of living, are vulnerable to food insecurity. This risk increases for older people with other vulnerabilities such as lack of mobility, addictions and mental health issues.

Seniors may lack motivation to cook for themselves. Failing to adjust to cooking for one after cooking for a family may compromise nutritional needs of some seniors.

In Alberni-Clayoquot, 17.7% of the population in 2012 were over 65 years of age, expected to rise to 23.2% by 2021. This is higher than the BC average of 15.3%, expected to reach 19.0% by 2021. The dependency rate for elderly persons in our area was also higher at 28.0% compared to the BC rate of 23.2%. Moreover, our dependency rate is projected to rise to 41.2% by 2021, compared to 30.1% for BC. This would substantially increase the food insecurity for this growing sector of the population.

Aboriginal People

In 2006, Aboriginal people made up 16.2% of the population in the Alberni-Clayoquot Region, over three times the BC average of 4.8%. As of April 1, 2012, two new First Nations partners joined the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District: Huu-ay-aht and Yuułu?it?ath. Before 2021, Toquaht and Uchucklesaht First Nations will also join the ACRD. A process is ongoing for service prioritization and costing between partners.

Food traditionally has multiple holistic meanings to First Nations people. It is sustenance, medicine and it has a central place at social and spiritual gatherings.

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Eating together facilitates internalization of knowledge, or “eating our learning”. Lack of food thus has many consequences beyond the physical.

Profiles of specific First Nations living on reserve were created by Statistics Canada in 2001 and 2006. The Hupacasath Nation of Alberni-Clayoquot Region was profiled. In 2005, out of a population of 140 people, approximately 11% lived in overcrowded housing (compared to 0% in 2000, and 12% for all of BC), and 32% lived in dwellings needing major repairs (up from 26% in 2000, and compared with the BC average of 7%). Of 95 people aged 15 & over, 68% worked in 2005, but only about 11% had full time work year-round, (down from 17% in 2000; compare with BC average of 34%). Of those aged 25 to 64, 43% had post-secondary education (a drop from 53% in 2000), while 35.7% completed less than high school in 2005 (compare to BC average of 12%). In 2005, 25% were aged 55 years and over (up from 13% in 2000, and the BC average of 26%). Similarly, children and youth up to 14 years old comprised 25% of the population in 2005 (compared with 30% in 2000, and the BC average of 17%). 37.5% of children aged 14 and under lived with a lone parent in 2005, (compared with the BC average of 18%).

The Hupacasath statistics confirm that a higher than average percentage of Aboriginal people on reserve are included in other vulnerable categories than in the general population of BC. As noted above, a high percentage of Aboriginal people living *off* reserve are also food insecure.

Education

In Alberni-Clayoquot in 2006, 20.2% of the population aged 25 to 54 did not complete high school. That is almost twice the BC average for the same period, which is only 11.1%. Unfortunately, from 2008/09 to 2010/11, the percentage of 18-year-olds in our region who did not graduate was 42.5%, well over the BC average of 27.9%. On this criterion, Alberni-Clayoquot ranked 4th worst of 26 regional districts in the province.

People with Disabilities

Nationally, two out of five food bank clients reported a disability that restricted their work and more than half of the clients with disabilities were not on the Disability Support Program (Che, J. & Chen, J, 2001).

In 2012 in BC, 61% of cases of income assistance involved persons with disabilities (BCCPD). As the Persons with Disability (PWD) benefit in BC has fallen to 6th place in Canada, while rental costs increase, this group's available food money is dangerously squeezed.

An alternative way of looking at this issue is in terms of activity restrictions, with Central Vancouver Island reporting 34.7% of its population affected, the highest area on the Island (VIHA, 2006). Over 60% of people in this group fall into the two lowest quartiles for income in BC.

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In the Alberni Local Health Area in 2005, 2.04% of the population received social assistance for disabilities. This was the third highest percentage area on Vancouver Island, after Lake Cowichan and Greater Victoria.

Recent immigrants

Food security remains a challenge for many immigrants, who usually have limited resources, reduced social networks, cultural and language barriers, and become more vulnerable as they arrive in Canada. With regard to access to food, immigrants encounter processed food to which they are not accustomed in their country of origin. In other words, their food becomes culturally inappropriate, and they suffer from food insecurity.

Port Alberni has a relatively low number of recent immigrants, with 244 people arriving between 2007 and 2011, representing 0.8% of the total population. However, 69% of immigrants over 15 years and 31% of children 0 to 14 years were on income assistance in September, 2011.

Unemployment and Income Assistance Rates

In 2012, the number of people 19 – 64 receiving unemployment benefits in the Alberni-Clayoquot Region varied from month to month between 1.8% and 3.4% of the population. This represents a decrease from 2004 when Alberni Local Health Area reported 5.4% on unemployment assistance, placing the area in the 4th (worst) quartile in BC for percent of population on Employment Insurance. However the 2012 statistic continues to be higher than the average for all of BC, which varied between 1.2% and 1.8%.

Over the 12 months from March 2011 to March 2012, an average of 4.6% of adults aged 19 to 64 received basic income assistance. This is over twice the BC average of 2.0% for the same period (BC Stats webpage, 2012). These figures do not include people on continuous assistance, e.g. due to disability, old age, or children in the home of a relative. It also does not include Aboriginal people living on reserve. While this is a drop from the 2004 statistic of 7.1%, it consistently places this area in the 4th (worst) quartile for BC.

Number of Homeless

According to the summary report *At Home in Alberni Valley*, prepared by the Community Stakeholders Initiative to End Homelessness (November 2010), the number of “absolute homeless” people here may be next to nil. “Sheltered homeless” numbers were in the neighbourhood of 27 to 32 people, and there are larger numbers of “transitional homeless”, and people “at risk” of homelessness.

Indicators of homelessness include numbers of people using Bread of Life services, housing-related calls to Kuu-us Crisis Line, and other interactions with Kuu-us workers. Identified needs for serving the homeless included a safe-sobering service, emergency

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youth shelter, sustainable low-barrier shelter, transitional housing for families, second stage transition housing for women, and increased sheltering capacity.

Overlap between Categories of Demographic Indicators of Poverty

It is important to remember that the above groupings of people are not separate and distinct, but are overlapping. People often simultaneously or over time belong to more than one of these groups. For example, in 2003, 29.9% of Aboriginal persons, 24.5% of Immigrants, 55.4% of single parents, 23.4% of the working poor, and 52.7% of social assistance recipients were also in the group who experienced activity restrictions because of a chronic health condition. Each grouping that a person belongs to may further compound the difficulty that a person has in affording and accessing sufficient and nutritious food.

Income

According to the 2012 BC Child Poverty Report (FirstcallBC.org), a family of four in Qualicum with two parents working full-time at 35 hours per week would have to earn \$16.94 per hour to meet their basic needs. This is the closest community to Port Alberni for which an estimate is provided. Average family incomes in Alberni-Clayoquot continue to be lower than the BC average. For example, female lone parents earned on average \$33,077 here compared to \$43,491 for all of BC. This continues the trend reported in 2000, when the Alberni Local Health Area placed in the 3rd lowest quartile in terms of percent of families having low income, at 13.3% of families.

Cost of housing

“The Survey of Household Spending showed that the average B.C. family spent 43 percent of its income from all sources after federal and provincial income taxes on food, clothing and shelter. In an after-tax situation, families are considered to be in “straitened circumstances” if they spend 63 percent or more of their income on these three items.”
– BC Child Poverty Report (2012).

In Alberni-Clayoquot region, families fare better than elsewhere in BC for housing rental and ownership costs. Here, in 2005, 20.3% of families spent 30% or more of their income on housing, compared to the BC average of 29.0% of families (Socio-Economic Profile by District, Stats Can).

Social housing providers should support the development and maintenance of Community Food Security (CFS) programming such as community gardens, farmers' markets, good food boxes and community kitchens by incorporating them into food security policy frameworks that focus on community building. Port Alberni Shelter Society is in the process of expanding their current homeless shelter. There may be potential to develop a community garden on the site across from the RCMP building.

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Cost of Nutritious Food

The report Cost of Eating in British Columbia 2011 states that a family of four would pay on average \$868.43 per month for an adequate “nutritious food basket” (Dieticians of Canada BC Region, 2012). The cost of this basket on Vancouver Island is estimated at \$873.08 but this varies regionally. According to this report, 12% of British Columbians cannot meet basic needs, including nutrition, and 7.7% were considered “food insecure” in 2007-2008 (Health Canada statistic).

In the report, reference families living on various incomes are given as examples. For every reference family who lives on income assistance of any kind, there was a negative balance after living expenses were taken out of monthly income. In other words, the nutritious food basket was not affordable along with rent, medical services and other basic needs – one of the basic needs had to be compromised. The basket represented anywhere from 33 to 47% of monthly income for these families.

Getting to the Stores

“Food deserts,” “poor urban areas where residents cannot buy affordable, healthy food” are central-city neighbourhoods from which the last conventional supermarkets have departed, leaving neighbourhoods with more affluent households.

Low-income neighbourhood residents without automobiles must either travel long distances by public transportation to reach a grocery store in another neighbourhood or depend on convenience stores and liquor stores within walking distance for access to fruits and vegetables. The ‘fresh’ produce sold at these outlets, however, is typically of limited selection and poor quality and offered at high mark-ups.

The neighbourhood has a few fast food restaurants that are a source of inexpensive food, but the oversized menu portions are laden with fat and salt. Low-income neighbourhood residents find themselves with few healthful food options and are at increasing risk for diet-related health problems such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity (Campbell, 2004: 348).

Transportation Barriers

Port Alberni Transit serves neighbourhoods unevenly. Routes do not extend west of Falls Road, into First Nations reserves and out to rural areas. The city enjoys 3 weekday/Saturday routes, and a fourth Northside/Southside evening and Sunday route. Transit routes #1, #2 and #4 stop close to or at major grocery stores. The fare is \$1.75 per ride for an adult and \$1.50 per ride for students and seniors, with children 4 years or under riding free. Riders save on HST and are eligible for non-refundable tax credits for monthly bus passes. There are Family Pack Day passes (at \$7.00), for 2 adults and up to 4 other persons, as well as Family Pack Monthly Passes which offer one adult and one free student for the same price (\$48.00) as one Adult Monthly Pass. BC Transit also operates a handyDART door-to-door shared service for people unable to take

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fixed-route transit. handyDART operates 6 days per week, Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and Sunday 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. A handyDART fare is \$2.00 per one-way trip. Customers pre-register for free.

Some grocery stores may offer delivery programs for food purchases. For example, Quality Foods will do “picking orders” for a fee of \$9.99 for purchases over \$30, and will deliver same day if ordered early in the day, or next day.

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Part 2 - Local Food Production

Local agriculture and food production resources play an important role in community food security.

Citizens of the Alberni Valley are fortunate to have farmers who provide the community with fresh produce: a variety of meats; milk; and cheese; fruits and vegetables.

However, the farming community faces many obstacles: a short growing season; high costs of production; new rules and regulations; children leaving the farm; and difficulties getting products to market. As well, not all products are immediately available to buy in the Valley, e.g. milk is sent to an Island wide collection and distribution system.

Members of the farming community feel that the public is unaware of the difficulties experienced by them to provide their products – or even where their food comes from. This is a concern that must be rectified through public education.

Excerpts from the Sustainable Cities – Port Alberni Community Assessment

Local Agricultural and Renewable Energy Potential

- develop areas where high potential for growth i.e. agriculture potential
- enhancing branding of the community
- develop trades
- diversify resource reliance (i.e. forestry)
- economically difficult for small operations
- getting people interested
- economic disincentive being on the Island away from major markets

Number of farms

There are 89 farms in the Alberni Valley – up from 81 in the 2001 census. Most of these, 49 (or 55%), are in Alberni B – the Beaver Creek area.

Types of farms

68.5% (61 of 89 farms) of the farms report some form of livestock as the main enterprise. The most common type of livestock is horses (31 farms), followed by cattle (19), poultry and eggs (8) and sheep and goats (3).

Availability of Land

The Regional District of Alberni Clayoquot Consolidated Zoning Bylaw - Zoning district and use regulations

There are several zones in the zoning bylaw that permit and encourage agricultural activity within the Regional District. For accurate and more in-depth information please consult the zoning bylaw.

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Agricultural Land

As of March 2009, there was 7,702 hectares of land in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) in the Alberni Valley. The 2006 Census reported that 3,171 ha (about 41.1%) were used for crops. Of this, it is important to note: 2,932 ha (92.5% minimum) is used, specifically, for production of livestock and/or livestock feed 239 ha (7.5% maximum – and the land use inventory suggests it is much lower) are used for vegetables, berries, fruits, nuts – horticultural crops but nursery, Christmas trees and sod are included in this acreage.

The total area farmed has increased from 2,480 ha in 1996 to 2,535 ha in 2001 and, up again, to 3,171 ha in 2006 – a 10 year increase of 28%. However, it is suggested that the area farmed has, at best, stayed the same since 2006.

41% of the land is used for agriculture but a much lower percentage is used to its potential.

The Tseshaht First Nations purchased approximately 120 hectares of agriculture land from Catalyst Paper. A substantial portion of the land is treed with hybrid poplar, but is not considered as being used to its growing potential. While the Tseshaht have not determined the ultimate use of the land, they have indicated that this property represents an important economic development opportunity in their Comprehensive Community Plan. As such, the Tseshaht are open to ideas to create economic diversity through the use of this property, but only if it makes good economic sense and if the concept is embraced by the community as a whole. Ideas discussed, but not developed, include using the property in some form of marine based agriculture.

The BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, assesses food self-sufficiency based on the area of irrigated and dry land required to produce a healthy diet for one individual. The area required is estimated at 0.524 ha per person of which 0.471 ha is non-irrigated and 0.053 ha is irrigated.

Cost of agricultural land

This ad is included as an example:

177 acres were once part of the Pine Del Ranch. Very private valley with approximately 75% pasture (needs some tending), seasonal creek, rocky outcropping, several great building sites and a fantastic view of the Beaufort range. Located near both Great Central Lake and Sprout Lake plus an access available to the adjacent airport.

Listed for \$1,150,000.

Such pricing puts the prospect of buying farmland for the purpose of making a living from farming out of reach for new entrants to the industry, especially for young people.

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Cost of leasing agricultural land

The reduced tax rates available on farm property are an incentive for owners who are not currently farming any or all of their land. Often they will lease a part of their property, for a minimal fee, for agricultural use, in order to realize tax reductions. The minimum eligible area to lease is 2 acres, and there are minimum requirements for income earned from the land. These leases are most often used for hay or livestock range, but could also be used for SPIN gardening or other farming purposes.

Farming Employment and Income

Agriculture employs about 2771 weeks of paid labour – equivalent to about 55 full-time jobs. 36%, or 20, of these jobs are seasonal. The remainder are full-time, year-round. Reported employment is down from 3178 weeks of paid labour in 2001. This drop in employment is likely related to the loss of dairy farms in the area.

Farmers

The “Alberni Valley Food Map”, together with development of a list of food resources in our community will be of value to service providers and the general public.

Food Directory: <http://www.avtransitiontown.org/resources/localfood>

Overall Trends in Production

The agriculture industry on the island is shifting away from commodity type production towards niche market, agritourism, and direct market type farming operations.

The livestock industry is declining fairly rapidly. Swine production disappeared a decade ago. The dairy industry has been shifting over the past 10 years. Quota is leaving the island; the remaining dairy farmers are increasing production. Meat inspection regulations and related policies have reduced access to slaughter and increased the price of processing.

There has been a sharp decline in the number of livestock enterprises (with the exception of horses) and a significant increase in crop farms since 1996.

TLC Community Farms Program

The Community Farms Program aims to expand local food production in BC by: helping new farmers access affordable land; researching the best practices of existing collectively-owned farms; and creating a network of potential farmers, landowners, and community organizations. By bringing these parties together to share their experiences and knowledge, the program will create alternative agricultural models that can be replicated throughout British Columbia. The program is a joint-venture between FarmFolk/CityFolk and TLC. At present the TLC is building a database of new landless farmers and acquiring land; and has already begun to place farmers on land.

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Agricultural Education

Overall, the opportunities to learn about farming through educational institutions in the Region are extremely limited.

NIC has a Landscape Horticulture Apprenticeship Training program in Courtney but doesn't offer courses locally.

VIU has a Horticultural Technician Foundation program that focuses on landscaping and greenhouse management.

Camosun College offers two farming-related (three if beekeeping is included) courses through their Horticulture Continuing Education classes. What is unique about these classes is that they offer formal education (from certified organic farmers) about organic farming practice – something that many large university agriculture programs fail to provide.

The Organic Master Gardener program has offered training and certification in Port Alberni in the past.

Alberni District Secondary School is considering offering a horticulture program pending sufficient interest, and is planning a school garden. E.J. Dunn is also planning a garden.

The Alberni Valley Transition Towns Society and the Environmental Coalition offer workshops in seed saving, soil blocks, aquaponics, composting, biodynamic farming and making biochar through the City of Port Alberni Parks and Recreation department and North Island College.

Leda Organic Farms offers short courses on Biodynamic gardening methods, including composting.

More education about earthworks for water retention and methods for retaining water in the soil would be valuable additions.

Small Plot Intensive SPIN

SPIN farming, or Small Plot Intensive Farming focuses on the business side of farming, from keeping overhead costs low to finding easy-to-access markets.

For more information visit the SPIN Farming website: <http://www.spinfarming.com>

There was recently a SPIN farmer located in Qualicum Beach offering a CSA Box program to Port Alberni: <http://faresfarms.org>. This program closed down in 2013.

Access to Seeds

FarmFolk CityFolk, through its BCSeeds project, is working with USC Canada and Seeds of Diversity Canada on a national project to work with farmers, gardeners, food

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activists, and community organizations to grow, conserve and spread locally adapted, biodiverse seed. <http://www.bcseeds.org>

Seedy Saturday combines food security through exchange and sale of seeds with education about seed saving and growing. It is in its fourth year at Arrowvale Farm.

Chickens and Bees By-Laws

City councillors directed city staff to include regulations allowing the keeping of honeybees and chickens on residential properties as part of an upcoming review of zoning bylaws. There was a public opinion survey conducted to find out what the citizens of Port Alberni thought about keeping chickens and bees in urban areas.

Results of the Opinion Survey

There were 1,500 surveys sent out randomly in city utility bills. There were 553 responses representing three per cent of the Alberni Valley's population.

On honeybees, there were 541 responses. Sixty eight per cent of respondents favoured keeping honeybees on residential lots while 32 per cent were opposed. Fifty three per cent of respondents noted that they thought there should be two to four hives allowed on a property, while 36 per cent indicated only one hive should be allowed.

Respondents reported that setbacks should be anywhere between zero to 30 metres.

There were 549 responses received regarding the keeping of chickens. Of them, 63 per cent supported keeping chickens while 37 per cent were opposed. Seventy per cent of respondents noted that 4-10 birds should be allowed to be kept while 23 per cent indicated fewer than four. Setbacks should be between zero and 30 metres, respondents reported.

Backyard Composting

Composting is an easy and economical way for individuals to convert their organic waste into a soil amendment that they can use to mulch landscaping, enhance plant growth, enrich topsoil, and provide other benefits to plants and soil.

The City of Port Alberni doesn't presently have a curbside composting program. City planners are considering a program in the future that would truck the collected compost to the Duke Point composting facility for processing.

Curbside Compost Collection Program

Cities have found that it is cheaper to compost than dump garbage, because it extends the life of landfills by saving space. Diverting food waste from landfills also reduces carbon emissions and the risk of potential groundwater pollution. Plus, the end product of composting can be reused and resold as fertilizer.

The City of Port Alberni: Corporate Strategic Plan 2012-2016 identified the following objectives regarding a composting program in Port Alberni.

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- Objective 1.3 Promote sustainable environmental practices.
- Initiative 1.3.3: Explore further opportunities for recycling and composting.

Biochar

Soil fertility and soil nutrient holding capacity is a significant limitation for many of the sandy soils found in the Alberni Valley. This is important because it is very expensive to import chemical nutrients and fertilizers from off island sources.

Biochar can be used as a soil amendment to improve yield. Biochar can improve water quality, reduce soil emissions of greenhouse gases, reduce nutrient leaching, reduce soil acidity, and reduce irrigation and fertilizer requirements.

Water Conservation

Excerpts from the Sustainable Cities – Port Alberni Community Assessment

Water Resources

- Fresh water will be preserved and Sproat Lake will still be pristine
- Drinking watershed within city limits and preservation of clean drinking water

Rain Harvesting

The Alberni Valley has hot dry summers and cool wet winters. The impact of this on agriculture is that, most perennial crops require irrigation in the summer as well as drainage to reduce the impact of flooding and high water tables during the wet season.

Rainwater can be captured and stored in tanks so that there will always be a water source for the irrigation of crops.

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Part 3 - Alberni Valley Food Distribution Network

Distribution options such as farm gate sales, farmers markets and box programs ensure that farmers engaged in sustainable (and labour intensive) practices can market their products for a fair price. Unfortunately, the small retail distribution resources are not accessible to the majority of consumers who continue to shop at large grocery stores and are not exposed to locally produced foods. The limited local food production described in Part 2 is a significant part of the problem.

Increased marketing and education about the importance of local food is a key factor in altering the food system. So long as the issues around local food (particularly pricing) remain invisible to the average consumer, there will not be a critical mass of public concern about the food system. At the same time, without access to local foods, consumers simply cannot vote with their dollars. Increasing local production is vital to increasing the amount of local food flowing through retail outlets.

Participants from the farming community reported that their products are being sold at the farm gate, farmers market, grocery stores, door-to-door/home delivery, wholesaler (mainly for tomatoes, cucumbers, and milk), and on a small scale to restaurants.

The increasing diversity of retail distribution resources in the region is a sign of growing consumer awareness about the superior quality of foods being produced locally. Some retailers argue that the limited availability of local food in grocery stores is due to consumers' unwillingness to pay the higher prices required to support local producers. Evidence to the contrary may be found in the tremendous popularity of organic foods (which involve a considerable premium) and in the aforementioned success of sales of local foods through other means.

Nonetheless increased marketing and education about the importance of local food is a key factor in altering the food system.

Creating new farming businesses or expanding present businesses in the region would require:

- Access to capital to buy land, equipment, etc
- Market research
- Information availability and education around starting a farming business
- Reinstatement of the Farm Advisor position

Profile of Community Food Resources

The approach to food security should be multi-pronged by linking several CFS programs such as community gardens and community kitchens. Multiple programs can work together in a symbiotic relationship while maintaining flexible strategies.

Partnerships are essential to the success of CFS programs. This includes affiliations with community centres and agencies, municipalities, food policy councils and local

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groups with expertise in food programming such as community gardening networks or other non-profit organizations. All CFS programs require sustained funding.

Access to Nutrition Services

Nutrition Education

Dietitians play a vital and ongoing role in increasing skill levels and knowledge around the area of nutrition and food security. The general public has limited access to nutrition professionals.

The Child, Youth & Family Community Health program of VIHA provides nutritional services to communities. Hélène Dufour, B.Sc, RD (Registered Dietitian) is a Community Nutritionist who visits communities to “promote, protect and improve nutritional health and help prevent nutrition related disease in order to achieve the best possible health outcomes. Activities focus on the interactions between the determinants of health, food systems, and nutritional status” (CYFCH, 2013).

A Healthy Living column by Sandra Gentleman, registered dietitian, is run by the Alberni Valley Newspaper.

The Hit-tat-soo Daycare and Adult Learning Centre in Hitacu (Yuulú?i?ath First Nation) was awarded the BC School Fruit & Vegetable Nutritional Program, which started in September 2012.

HealthLinkBC

HealthLinkBC Dietitians can answer questions about food and nutrition. The public can email a HealthLinkBC Dietitian at:

http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthyeating/emaildietitian.html?WT.ac=ead_banner

La Leche League Canada

La Leche League LLLC is a national organization whose trained volunteer Leaders provide experienced mother-to-mother breastfeeding support through a variety of programs. An acknowledged expert in breastfeeding, LLLC is a complementary adjunct to the health care system, valued by the health care system and society. The organization is an integral part of Canadian families' health care, connecting with every expectant mother and accessible in every community.

Wholesome Meals on Wheels Association of Port Alberni

This organization has been registered as a charity since 1981. It is active in areas related to health and social services. It has 1 full-time employee and 2 part-time employees. In 2011, it reported assets of \$78,549 and annual revenues of less than \$500,000.

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The Meals on Wheels (MOW) program provides one home-delivered meal per day (Monday - Friday) and a security check to eligible individuals in the community. To be eligible you must be an adult within the municipality who is unable to prepare adequate meals on a daily basis due to lack of physical disability; cooking facilities; or chronic illness. Meals cost \$5.35 each, limited subsidies are available to provide meals for \$3. Special diets such as renal, no added salt, and diabetic diets are available. The goal of the menu planning is to cover 40% of the recommended nutrient intake for an adult male, aged 70 years.

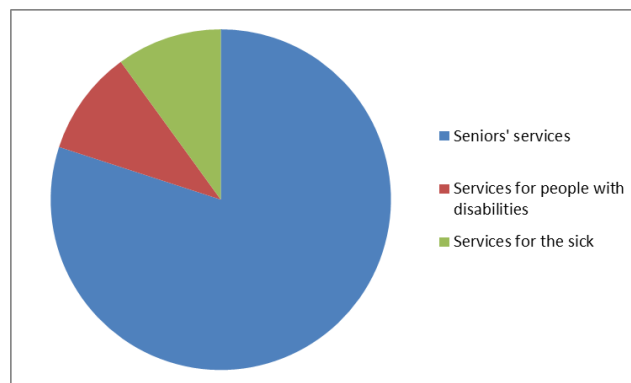
MOW serves approximately 140 meals a day (down from 170 last year). In the past they were serving 44,000 meals a year but are now down to 37,000. This same drop in number of meals seems to be a trend across the province.

Programming Activities

Seniors' services: 80%

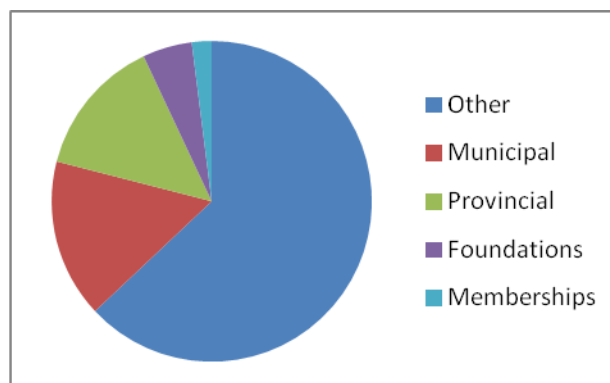
Services for people with disabilities: 10%

Services for the sick: 10%



Revenue Breakdown

Other: 63%



Municipal: 16%

Provincial: 14%

Foundations: 5%

Memberships: <1%

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Charitable Food Programs

Communities rise to the challenge of hunger in numerous ways. These include food hampers to supplement food intake, specific food items at food banks, hot or cold meal programs at schools and community centres, and community kitchen programs where adults learn to prepare nutritious meals. All work together to try to fill the gaps but unfortunately demand is increasing.

Citizens of Port Alberni donate generously to food banks and other food programs. However, the existing programs can only act as a band-aid solution to the problem of hunger. Factors such as lack of transportation and ineligibility can be barriers to accessing programs. As well, the amounts of food provided can sometimes be inadequate.

Food banks do their utmost to meet their clients' needs, but they cannot solve the problem of food insecurity. The reasons for this include:

- Food banks are generally not set up to meet the nutritional needs of their users. Most must restrict access. They depend heavily on donations from the community and from the food industry. Food bank users commonly receive more heavily processed food over fresh produce and dairy products - although change is being pursued by some, e.g. Salvation Army is seeking to provide fresh produce,
- Often families in need of food don't access food banks due to stigma attached to relying upon charity to feed their families,
- Access to food banks can be limited further due to transportation problems,
- The charitable model does not develop individual or community capacity and self-reliance. It also does not promote human dignity.

Bread of Life Soup Kitchen

Low income individuals are targeted, with about 2% of meals served to children /youth.

The total number of meals served per month has increased from 1435 as of June, 2009, to 2040 as of January, 2013, according to direct interview and data from the Community Food Atlas. This represents a 42% increase over 2 ½ years, or roughly 17% per year. The current numbers are equivalent to an average of about 93 meals served per weekday (i.e. 5 days per week). There is no cost to clients.

Port Alberni Integrated Health Network

The Integrated Health Network IHN partners with the patient, physician, dieticians, nurse, social worker and community supports to understand and manage chronic health conditions. These conditions include, but are not limited to diabetes, hypertension, heart

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disease, COPD, depression, HIV, HEP C, Kidney Disease, and stroke. For patients enrolled in the IHN by their family physician, support services include education, nutrition, activity, and counselling.

The Port Alberni Integrated Health Network works out 4711 Elizabeth Street. They have a Registered Nurse, two dietitians, a registered social worker and medical office assistant.

Healthy Food Box

The IHN and the Salvation Army have partnered up to provide education around fresh fruits and vegetables to clients who have demonstrated a need. Education includes: shopping on a budget, preparing and storing seasonal fruits and veggies. The box is \$12 per month and is picked up on the second Wednesday of each month.

Healthy Weight

This 3 week program looks at healthy eating and portion sizes, the reasons we make the food choices that we do, and provides tools and resources to help us on our paths.

Port Alberni Association for Community Living

Lunch Program

The lunch program runs three days per week, with focus on adults with developmental disabilities. Twenty-five to thirty participants at each meal enjoy delicious food and learn valuable life skills including nutritious menu planning, accessing recipes, budgeting, grocery shopping, meal preparation, and other important kitchen skills. The cost is \$10 per week.

We Cook

This program focuses on meal preparation/ cooking skills as well as nutrition education, for adults with developmental delay. At a cost of \$17.50 per week, 12 adults prepare 5 meals to take home each week. Organizers express a strong wish to access local fresh produce and to support local growers.

Port Alberni Health Unit

Lunch Club Programs

For families with babies under 6 months of age who would like additional support through the nutrition coupon program. Families get together weekly to enjoy a nutritious lunch and learn more about parenting.

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Alberni Literacy

Adult Nutritional Literacy Class

This program was introduced in late 2011, targeting low-income adult learners with low literacy levels, with several goals in mind:

1. To improve nutritional literacy levels
2. To provide information about cooking healthy and affordable meals
3. To improve reading, writing and financial literacy levels
4. To act as an outreach group for adult learners who have been reluctant / scared to 'go back to school' and study in a classroom setting

The program involves cooking affordable, healthy meals and is offered 2 to 3 times per month collaboratively with VIHA, ACAWS, and Bread of Life. The program has already attracted 48 individuals with an average attendance of 10 people per class, at no cost to clients. Alberni Literacy anticipates that the program will continue its success in 2012/13 and continue being an excellent outreach tool for the other adult programs.

Friendship Centre

The Friendship Centre offers a monthly Elders breakfast and lunch; a monthly community dinner; and a weekly youth pancake breakfast.

Knee-waas - Family & Health Services

Knee-waas provides weekly drop-in groups in which families can come and participant in and have lunch.

The Eating in Balance group is a learn to cook group. Eating in Balance is every Wednesday from 1030 to 1pm, this is open to the community and is drop-in, but have a cut off time of 11am to participate. In this group participants are provided with a recipe and the ingredients to prepare and cook. There is a child minder on-site for participants with children. All participants must help with preparing and cooking of food in order to eat.

On Thursdays from 11am to 1pm, a group called Nayi?ii focuses on Aboriginal Parenting in today World. The group has 9 values as topic that are on a rotation, we discuss each topic with participants, an Elder and sometimes guest speakers and after they have lunch.

Tuesdays a Brighter Futures program is offered. This is a parenting program that has 14 modules from conflict resolution, anger management and healthy living. This is also a drop-in group from 9am to 4pm with lunch provided for participants.

Two programs are sponsored by VIHA. One is for a weekly \$10 food vouchers that is given to prenatal and postnatal Moms until the baby is 6 months old.

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Another program that started last year and will continue this year from Spring until Fall, is weekly Farmer's Market coupons for families. This is a \$15 coupon booklet to use at the Market to buy fresh fruits and veggies, eggs, meat, nuts and cheese.

Transit tickets are not provided to get groceries, but in some special cases they take clients shopping to help them budget their money appropriately.

The Friendship Centre has monthly Community Dinners that is open to anyone in the community.

In the past there have been workshop on preserving food and canning salmon, there was a recent workshop on how to smoke fish, these come up whenever there is funding.

Salvation Army

In 2009, the Salvation Army served on average 317 adults and 195 children/youth per month, or about 17 meals each day of the month. Hampers are distributed at a rate of one per month per family, plus 2 emergency hampers per year and one Christmas hamper. In addition, produce and bread are available each Tuesday and Thursday for all who need them. No cost to clients.

The Salvation Army has also partnered with Nanaimo Foodshare Society to take orders for and distribute the 'Good Food Box' program to Port Alberni residents. Cost is \$12 per box, distributed monthly on second Wednesday.

St. Vincent de Paul Society, Port Alberni

Serving individuals or families in need, the society distributed 399 food hampers in 2012, of which 200 were shared with Salvation Army and Bread of Life. Fifty of the hampers were Christmas hampers. Families can access hampers 4 times per year, with some emergency hampers available. No cost to clients.

VIHA Early Years Lunch Club Program

This program focuses on 6 groups, including pre- and post-natal mothers, and their infants or toddlers. It offers food vouchers (\$10 per week for grocery stores and \$15 per week for farmers market), nutrition and health education, infant feeding support, vitamins and meal services. Between 100 to 120 adults and 90 to 100 children or youth are served per month. No cost to clients.

Kuu-us Crisis Line Society

This society runs a Saturday Night Outreach program that distributes approximately 100 food hampers per month, as well as about 13 hampers at Christmas. Snacks and coffee are provided during the educational program from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Saturdays. The focus audience is low income individuals and families who desire a safe, warm indoor place.

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Alberni Community and Women's Services

As noted above, Alberni Community and Women's Services Society (ACAWS) offers Cooking Classes in conjunction with Literacy Alberni, VIHA, and Bread of Life.

ACAWS also runs an emergency safe shelter called Transition House, where an average of 7.3 adults' and 4.3 children's meals were served per month, at no cost to clients. These meals are provided to families/ women/ children at risk of abuse, threats or violence.

Community Kitchens

Community kitchens are groups of people who come together regularly to cook and preserve food for themselves and their families and are "characterized by the pooling of resources and labour to produce large quantities of food" (Tarasuk and Reynolds, 1999: 13).

Presently there are no community kitchen programs in Port Alberni open to the general public.

Alberni Valley Community School - School Food Programs

School food programs seek to reduce hunger and enhance nutrition among children who are considered to be at risk of poor nutrition.

School Lunch Program

Is run by the Alberni Elementary School, Wood School, 8th Ave School, Maquinna Elementary School and EJ Dunn Middle School.

To enrol a child in the lunch program, a consent envelope is submitted for each month of participation. This envelope must be returned to the school by the stated deadline in order for your child to participate in the following month.

The cost of the program is \$60 per month. Partial payment is acceptable for those who cannot afford the entire \$60. Those who do not have the means to pay for the program are not required to do so. The program is run on an honour system. The only record kept is a list of the total number of lunches needed.

Cool Cooks Program

A Cool Cooks program was offered at schools in the Alberni Valley, but without a major funder the costs were prohibitive. It has been discontinued. The toolkit to put together the program is available from Cathy Cross, the contact, should there be renewed interest and capacity (Cathy Cross [ccross@sd70.bc.ca]).

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Breakfast Program

The Read and Feed Meal Service, run by Neighbourlink Society provides this service at several schools including Alberni Elementary. At Alberni Elementary the Breakfast Program runs from Monday to Friday. Breakfast is available to any students wishing to participate at no cost. It is run by volunteers and all the food is donated. Students can enter the kitchen through the field house door in the morning and are dismissed to their classes by 9:00.

An average of 39 breakfast meals were served per day on school days at 3 different schools in 2012, with no meals being offered July through September. Total meals served increased approximately 8% over 2011.

Yuulu?iŋ?ath First Nation Saturday Family Breakfast program

This program run by Community Services Division (CSD) serves up to 14 children.

Yuulu?iŋ?ath First Nation Teen Nights

Teen nights include cooking among other activities, hosted by CSD.

Alberni District Secondary School Breakfast Program

The program provides breakfast to students, including bagels, juice and fruit, in the morning and throughout the day, every school day. About 300 kids a day are fed.

The Alberni school district provides \$7,000 a year to the program. Local businesses and individuals also contribute. Staff and students raise money as well.

Farm-to-School Programs

Farm-to-school programs connect schools with local farms with the objectives of serving healthy meals in school cafeterias, improving student nutrition, providing health and nutrition education opportunities and supporting local small farmers.

We are not aware of any Farm-to-School programs in Port Alberni.

Community Gardens

Community gardens are part of a broader strategy to increase food security through CFS and access to food (Baker, 2004). They are understood to have a multitude of benefits. These include health benefits such as improved access to food, culturally appropriate food, better nutrition and cost savings (Dickenson et al., 2003; Wakefield et al., 2007), improved mental health and increased physical activity (Armstrong, 2000).

Note: It is especially recommended that perennial food plants – herbaceous greens and herbs, shrubs/ berries and fruit be grown for food security and resilience without

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intensive maintenance requirements. Include indigenous species also for their lower maintenance and better adaptation to our growing conditions.

Community gardens also provide opportunities for education, job skills training and income generation (Holland, 2004; Ferris, Norman and Semple, 2001) and improved security and safety (Ferris, Norman and Semple, 2001). Additional benefits include increased social interaction and social capital, and an increased appreciation of local diversity (Handcock, 2001). As Wakefield et al. note (2007), this is a particular benefit of community gardens, especially where social exclusion and marginalization are pervasive.

The Salvation Army has interest in supporting community gardens. Although they have a large area of land they were unable to commit the use of the land as they are a national organization and were uncertain regarding the future of the land. They had offered a small space of land for a community garden that would serve the needs of their food bank but would not be adequate for the needs of the community.

There is a small community garden on Wallace St. on 4th Ave. that was originally developed for assisted living. The garden has long been abandoned by the assisted living group. The garden has fallen into disrepair and has limited involvement by people in the neighbourhood. The small group of citizens that are gardening at this location were not open to having younger people involved with the garden.

Various other locations were considered as a possible site for a community garden but did not work out because of the difficulty of ensuring a long term commitment for the use of the land.

A grant request for community gardens was submitted by AVTTS to the City of Port Alberni's Community Investment Program Committee in December. The request was for the use of city owned land to be used as Community Gardens. The grant request was not successful, but the Committee had recommended that AVTTS make a presentation to City Council. The AVTTS will make a presentation to city council seeking support for a resolution to develop policy for community gardens.

The AVTTS is presently negotiating with the Shelter Society to develop a Community Garden where the new homeless shelter is going to be built. There is a large piece of land across from the RCMP building that is owned by VIHA. The Shelter Society and the Mayor of Port Alberni have expressed interest in lobbying VIHA for the use of the property as a community garden.

There is also a large piece of land on the other side of the site where the shelter will be built that is owned by the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church could also be lobbied to use this land as Community Gardens.

School Gardens

School gardens are another way to provide food and educational opportunities. Several schools have expressed interest in developing school gardens. There is presently a

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school garden at Alberni Elementary School. E.J. Dunn and ADSS are planning school gardens, and ADSS is seeking LEED 2 certification.

AVTTS submitted an application for grant funding of school gardens to the City of Port Alberni's Community Investment Program in December, 2012. The Committee declined the application, citing that the School District may be the appropriate funder.

Canadian Mental Health Association – Healthy Harvest Farm Program

Healthy Harvest is growing organic vegetables and herbs in the greenhouse, and on land leased from Hupacasath First Nation. Participants learn horticulture and employment skills and also sell produce at the Saturday Farmer's Market.

Healthy Harvest was established by the Port Alberni Chapter of Canadian Mental Health Association and is working at becoming an independent enterprising non-profit business. A long term lease has been negotiated with the Hupacasath First Nation.

Healthy Harvest aims to:

- explore and develop micro-business opportunities focussed in the production and sale of organic vegetable and fruit crops;
- offer instruction in environmentally sustainable and organic farming methods;
- provide participants with valuable and transferable employment skills;
- produce food for personal use and sale.

Plans are to develop a farm gate market across from the Beaver Creek CO-OP gas station and to develop a CSA box program in the near future.

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) – New Horizons Club House

New Horizons Club House is a community based rehabilitation program that optimizes personal, social and vocational competencies through focus on the work ordered day. Members are offered the opportunity for involvement in kitchen, clerical and maintenance units. A lunch program operates daily.

The Club House also has a small garden onsite that they grow fresh produce for their lunch program.

Meals are served throughout the week, with an additional 12 meals served each Saturday and Statutory holiday. On average in the 2011 fiscal year 492 meals were served on weekdays each month. Overall an average of about 557 meals per month were served in total. Extra meals are also offered for purchase for take-home to members. The need for this service has been building year to year. The director strongly wishes to support local growers, to source locally grown fresh foods, and to help build a local system for utilizing excess foods, such as gleaned produce and excess foods from catering large events, etc.

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Canadian Mental Health Association – Food Matters Program

Food Matters is a frozen food restaurant that feeds 35 people with mental illness or addictions. 3 frozen meals are provided per week at a cost of \$32.50 per month.

There is also a vocational training program for people with long term mental illness or addictions. This program provides kitchen training skills for job readiness in all aspects of commercial kitchen work. Trainees are paid a small hourly wage to work two, four hour shifts each week and they receive a certificate of achievement after 12 weeks. This program builds bridges with employment agencies and commercial kitchens in the local community to link prospective employers with potential employees.

Backyard gardens

Backyard gardens offer great potential for improving household food security and alleviating nutritional deficiencies. Gardening can enhance food security in several ways, most importantly through:

1. direct access to a diversity of nutritionally-rich foods,
2. increased purchasing power from savings on food bills and income from sales of garden products, and
3. fall-back food provision during seasonal lean periods.

Education programs must be developed to encourage people to grow food. Workshops are offered through the city of Port Alberni Parks and Recreation department. More education could be offered on selecting low maintenance/ high resilience species (see note under Community Gardens above).

Gleaning

Gleaning is the traditional practice of gathering crops that would otherwise be left in the fields after harvesting.

The Gleaning project started in 2012 by Eden Tree Farm. Since the project began individuals and their families have been able to access fresh fruit and vegetables. Many participants have discussed the positive experience of gleaning beyond just getting food. Much of the food that was gleaned was distributed to food banks and the friendship centre.

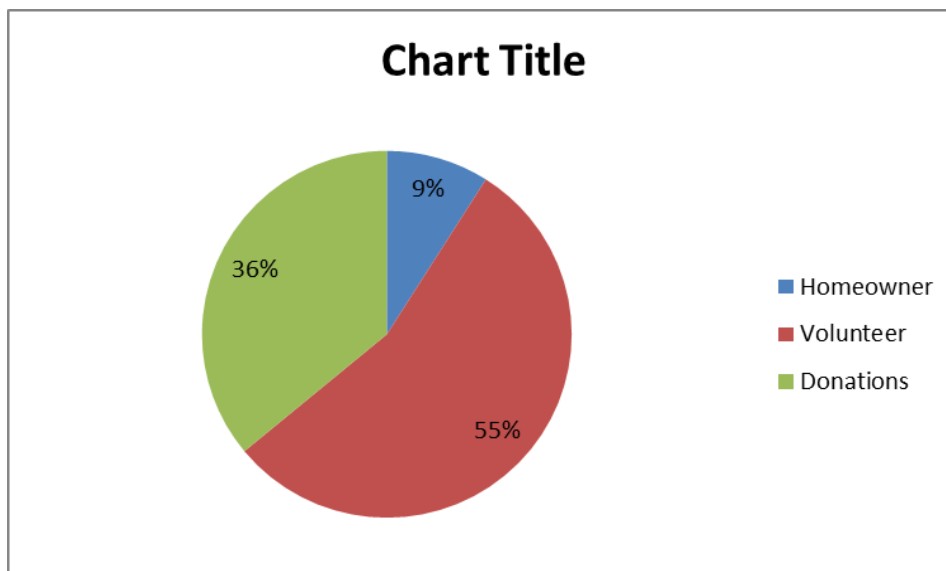
Alberni Valley Gleaning Project, Harvest and Distribution – 2012

- A total of 27 gleaning ‘events’ took place; over 20 volunteers participated in fruit picking, for an impressive harvest of 3800 pounds of fruit.
- Some events included the collection of large amounts of fallen/waste fruit.
- ‘Waste’ fruit was used for compost and livestock.

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- Agencies donated to were the Friendship Center and Salvation Army. Both agencies were able to pick up the fruit after notification.
- Very little fruit (about 20 lbs) was sold. This was disappointing; however Eden Tree hopes to increase the market next year in order to generate capital.
- Capital items still required include boxes, baskets, ladders and tools for harvesting.
- Most significant costs were for vehicles, gas and storage however these were not specifically accounted for.
- Currently soliciting non-profit agencies to apply for funding for a 'distribution and processing coordinator' to deal with the expected increase in donations next year.



Waste of Excess Food

According to the report Cost of Eating in British Columbia, 2011, “one-third of food that is produced in North America is wasted” (Dieticians of Canada BC Region). This represents a huge potential resource to allay hunger. At present, a great deal of food is wasted locally, according to local emergency food agencies. Regulations, bureaucracy, and limited time, infrastructure and human resources have impeded efforts in the recent past to organize a program to utilize excess produced foods, but the desire to do so remains. Food safe collection, storage, labelling and distribution are required as well as a simple, efficient notification system.

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Traditional Foods

Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Indigenous Food Network

(<http://www.indigenousfoodsvi.ca/>)

Membership in the network consists of “culturally knowledgeable food harvesters and gatherers, health professionals, community development workers and members of the scientific community”. The focus is on healthful practices rooted in traditional cultural values. The network organizes an Annual Vancouver Island Traditional Foods Conference, hosted alternately by various VI First Nations. At the conference speakers, vendors and public share stories, knowledge, and harvested foods and medicines.

Digital Harvest

Digital Harvest is an exciting project that brings together elders and youth to experience traditional foods, workshop and create digital stories of their experiences

(<http://www.indigenousfoodsvi.ca/digital-harvest>).

Traditional Food Knowledge for Future Wellness

A program developer was hired to conduct research, develop a curriculum and pilot workshops aimed to increase the capacity of local community members to become self-sufficient in food knowledge, collection and preservation through a traditional approach.

Uu-a-thluk, Nuu-chah-nulth Traditional Food Resource Kit

The kit will include a series of five instructional booklets for community members and schools/programs to help preserve traditional seafood harvest and preparation methods, including smoking salmon, harvesting shellfish and pit cooking, and promote them to a younger generation. The Nashuk Youth Council will document and photograph elder-led harvests for the kit to create a lasting resource for the community.

The guides are on sale through the Uu-a-thluk website in downloadable formats. Proceeds go towards education and training programs for youth and others in Nuu-chah-nulth Nations. Visit www.uuathluk.ca.

Hunting and Gathering

Another way people have traditionally fed themselves is through hunting and gathering practices. Gathering of fruits including wild strawberries and blackberries have always played a role in what people in our region eat.

First Nations Wildcrafters, BC

First Nations Wildcrafters, BC specializes in ancient and legendary wild forest food products managed and harvested directly from the rain forests in British Columbia.

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VIHA Coupon Program

VIHA coupon program run by the farmer's market was a success and has confirmed funding for 3 more years. The program will start up again April 2013. The coupons are distributed to single moms to provide fresh produce from the farmers market in co-operation with the Early Years program at the health unit and the Neewaas Friendship Center.

Research has pointed out that low-income farmers markets need to be subsidized to make them possible and to satisfy both farmers and low-income consumers (Guthman, Morris and Allen, 2006; Project for Public Spaces, 2003; Fisher, 1999).

The farmers market has asked VIHA to change their coupon program to issue \$2 coupons rather than \$3 coupons to make it simpler for customers. Another suggestion was to provide a box of food for a certain number of coupons.

For the next three years, 50 low-income families in Port Alberni will get a \$15 gift certificate, while 10 seniors will receive a \$12 gift certificate every week to buy fresh produce, meat, eggs, milk and other available items.

Buy Local Funds

Buy Local Funds have been received by the Alberni Farmers Market to create a cookbook featuring simple recipes that use local foods.

Good Food Box

Salvation Army has recently started a good food box program that is being supplied by Foodshare in Nanaimo. This is not the best scenario as it doesn't support local agriculture or the local economy.

Although all agencies and societies have their clients' interests at heart, there is a perception by some of "reluctance to share territory" between food distribution agencies. Undeniably, people in need must come first. We recommend more opportunities for food-related agencies to network and work together on solutions.

Food-related Community Economic Development

Food-related community economic development programs give people the opportunity to start or enhance food-related small businesses.

The City of Port Alberni, Council and senior administration are very supportive of promoting local food. The city of Port Alberni was recently featured at the Island Agricultural Show in Duncan. The city's presence at the Agricultural show greatly increased awareness of food-related small businesses in the Alberni Valley.

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Community-Supported Agriculture

Community Supported Agriculture is a partnership of mutual commitment between a farm and a community of supporters which provides a direct link between the production and consumption of food. CSA helps to establish a sense of community and encourages land stewardship.

CSA encourages communication and cooperation among farmers as well as supporting the bio-diversity of a given area and the diversity of agriculture through the preservation of small farms producing a wide variety of crops.

A CSA is a mutually beneficial relationship in which a farm supports the community's needs for fresh, nutritious, wholesome food, and community support allows a farmer to devote his/her energies to gentle, conscientious and sustainable farming practices. Members of a CSA share both the harvests and costs equally with other members and the farmers.

The community of members pledges to support the farm with an annual financial commitment. The amount of the commitment is determined by a detailed budget which is created to suit the needs of the community.

Eden Tree Farm is the only farm in the region offering a box program on a very limited scale.

Faires Farms formerly offered a CSA box program to Port Alberni from Qualicum Beach.

The CMHA Healthy Harvest farm was planning on offering a CSA box program in 2013 but lacks the resources to implement a box program that would serve the community's needs.

Food-buying Cooperatives

A food-buying cooperative is a group of people who get together to buy food from the "wholesale" market (the same place that super-markets and stores buy their food) which is not open to individuals — just businesses and groups. Because they sell in bulk, wholesale distributors provide low prices.

A food-buying cooperative can save money because they avoid the additional cost that a supermarket adds on to make a profit. A food-buying cooperative will place orders with distributors and buy for their own use. They can be organized to buy common grocery items or special types of products such as produce, natural foods, or canned goods.

Some local farmers are supplying produce to a food buying cooperative in Tofino in limited quantities. There is not a food buying cooperative available in Port Alberni at this time.

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Commercial Food Distribution Systems

Farmers' Market

The Port Alberni Farmers' Market operates Saturday mornings from 8:30 AM to 12:00 noon, year round. It is located at the Harbour Quay in downtown Port Alberni. There are about 50 vendors of which 20 sell primary farm products. It is a traditional farmers market promoting locally grown produce and locally made products from the ALBERNI VALLEY.

There is a small farmers market on Johnson Road but there are limited vendors offering fresh produce. Other farmers markets have operated in various locations around Port Alberni in the past with limited success.

Our Local Markets

The goal of this local partnership is to bring locally grown/produced food directly from producers to local consumers, via an e-commerce marketing website and very efficient distribution. Daily deliveries will be made of high quality local food, including farm-fresh, non-GMO, hormone-free, antibiotic-free, chemical-free, pasture-raised, and grass-fed food. Website: <http://ourlocalmarkets.com>

General Distribution

Farmers

The Alberni Farmer's Directory lists 46 farms that distribute their product as follows:

- 18 are vendors at the Port Alberni Farmers' Market
- 24 list "on farm sales by appointment". 7 of these also sell at the Farmers' Market
- 1 is listed as "weekly farm shares" – Community supported agriculture (CSA)
- 6 listings show only phone and/or email contacts
- 1 – Rage's Farm indicates that their product can be found in local grocery stores
- 6 listings indicate storefront or farm gate sales
 - Arrowvale Farms – on farm sales Saturdays
 - Naesgaards Farms – market on River Road
 - Pete's Mountain Meats – storefront on Johnston Rd., Port Alberni
 - Chase and Warren Winery
 - Gibson's Slaughtering and Custom Cutting

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o Eden Tree Farm

As well, Hertel's sells ham, bacon and other products from their plant on Bland Road.

The milk from the dairy farm is hauled to the Saputo (Dairyland) plant in Courtenay and either packaged there or shipped to the mainland for processing before distribution to retail outlets.

Greenhouse vegetables from Rage's Farm are delivered directly to the stores where they are sold. These are one of the few agricultural products that are not sent to a warehouse and redistributed. Vancouver Island Produce, the BC Vegetable Marketing Commission's agency on Vancouver Island, receives the orders for these products and notifies the producer who then delivers to the store. Virtually all other Vancouver Island products sold through the stores listed below, travel to a distribution center on the mainland and are distributed back to Island locations – two ferry trips to get to a store in the same town where it is produced!

Chain Stores

The Alberni Valley is served by 6 significant chain stores in Port Alberni, as well as a number of convenience and smaller stores in the City and surrounding area.

- Quality Foods – Central Vancouver Island chain with 11 stores. Distribution centre near Qualicum Beach, BC.
- Buy Low Foods – Western Canadian chain with 16 stores. Distribution centre in Surrey, BC.
- Fairway Market – Vancouver Island owned chain with 8 stores. Distribution from Victoria, BC.
- Extra Foods – one of 106 chain stores in Western Canada. Distribution for BC is from Pitt Meadows.
- Safeway – National chain store. BC distribution is from Vancouver.
- Walmart – Multinational chain store.

There are few local agri food products that could be found in these chain stores, including for example Hertel's Meats, Rage's Farm greenhouse vegetables, First Nations Wildcrafter products, and Van Isle blueberries.

Minor volumes of Alberni Valley products may be sold through local restaurants.

Conclusions

Community food security (CFS) is a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice.

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Poverty/ low income is the single greatest contributing factor to household food insecurity in BC. In this respect we concur with and defer to the analyses of the Community Food Security Coalition, Dieticians of Canada, and BC Coalition of People with Disabilities. The Alberni Valley population is particularly hard hit in this regard compared to BC generally. On many demographic scores of vulnerability, the Alberni Valley area is an area of high need. Community food security, first and foremost, must meet the food needs of low income families and individuals to reduce hunger and improve health

Community food security must also address a broad range of issues affecting the food system, community development, and the environment. Some examples that we find specifically within the Alberni Valley include disappearing farmland and family farms, loss of ALR to development, reliance on imported food, high numbers of people who are vulnerable to food insecurity, and air and water pollution from food production and distribution channels.

Community food security would require empowering individuals to increase their ability to provide for their food needs. This is especially important for Alberni Valley's disadvantaged and marginalized people. We have a broad range of emergency food providers in our community, and as evidenced by their usage, too many people struggling to afford food on a daily basis.

Community food security involves building upon community and individual assets, rather than focusing on their deficiencies. Community food security projects must seek to engage a wide range of community residents, and there is room for more coordination and cooperation in this region.

A stable local agricultural base is critical to a community responsive food system. There is excellent potential to grow food due to available and protected land, excellent climate, and a good supply of quality water. Much of the farmland in the Alberni Valley remains too costly for farmers to buy. Farmers need improved access to land and markets, and consumers need greater access to local food. Stronger ties between farmers and consumers could afford consumers a greater knowledge and appreciation for their food source.

Achieving food security in the Alberni Valley requires, beyond increasing access to food, a dramatic enhancement of the agricultural production of food, and a dramatic increase in the number of individuals, families, and households that grow and preserve food. It is becoming clear that to achieve food security in the Alberni Valley, more of us need to start growing food.

There is growing recognition and support for urban agriculture and the many benefits it brings communities beyond providing food. The Alberni Valley Transition Towns Society has prepared a draft resolution to present to city council to adopt a Community Gardens Policy.

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We lack sufficient community kitchens to complement other Alberni Valley food services by adding value and shelf life to donated and gleaned perishables, and providing skill-building and training for food service recipients. The canning/preserving workshops offered by Parks and Recreation for the past two years, and local agency-specific programs have been supported and form one piece of the picture. A lead organization is needed to spearhead a community kitchen initiative that would offer more kitchens with greater access and expanded programs.

Our food system presently redirects only a fraction of our excess foods. At present, regulatory barriers exist to prevent redistribution of excess prepared foods from local catered functions. Capacity is being developed to glean excess produce, but some logistical and financial barriers still prevent full realization of the Valley's potential harvest.

Global warming creates a great deal of uncertainty for food production worldwide due to a rise in sea levels, droughts, changing rainfall patterns/ water availability, and earlier Spring warming. Local farmers have to some extent adopted ecological farming practices that contribute to a resilient food system, but adaptation and ingenuity, as ever, are an ongoing necessity for resilience and for economic survival.

Vancouver Island Health Authority Community Food Action Initiative funds and supports food planning and food security. This CFA report will serve as the basis for the next step in developing a Food Action Plan for the Alberni Valley.

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Recommendations

"You cannot solve a problem from the same consciousness that created it.

You must learn to see the world anew."

Albert Einstein

Our recommendations for action are summarized into four main categories:

1. Food and Nutrition Skills
2. Promote and Support Local Food
3. Needs in the Community
4. Building Advocacy and Strategies

1. Food and Nutrition Skills

- Develop Community Gardens to provide opportunities for local residents to develop skills, meet new people, and grow their own food.
- Create edible landscapes by providing public lands to be utilized for food production
- Develop a Community Kitchen program to provide opportunities for local residents to develop skills, learn about nutrition, cook their own food, and meet new people.
 - o Operate a summer lunch program for low-income, school age children.
 - o Operate a food box program to provide access to affordable, nutritious food.
 - o Provide education focused on budgeting, canning and preserving and general cooking and shopping skills.
- Develop School Gardens to provide opportunities for young people to develop skills in growing their own food.
- Ensure sustainability of Community Nutritionist to aid in providing resources to individuals and families on food related programs.
- Work with Community Nutritionist and the Alberni-Clayoquot Health Network to promote health literacy.
- Encourage increased Dietician hours to provide counselling services to the general public.

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2. Promote and Support Local Food

- Promote local food production and consumption through education such as publishing a Farm Fresh Products handout.
- Promote and support procurement policies for municipal, Island and provincial institutions that source local food first.
- Promote the existing Farmer's Markets and encourage them to operate more often.
- Promote and support expansion of the Alberni Valley Gleaning Project to take greater advantage of the abundant local fruits, nuts and other produce that otherwise goes to waste each year.
- Promote the seasonal cookbook (how to cook simple recipes with locally grown food) being developed by the Farmers Market
- Work with local grocery stores and farmers to encourage policies on more local food availability in stores.
- Invest in the food industry/system through increased employment in our area.
- Explore the idea of establishing a federally inspected abattoir, or work with stores to encourage use of products from the provincial abattoir. Explore the feasibility of a mobile abattoir.
- Develop partnerships with organizations such as the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust to develop local markets in Tofino, Ucluelet and other communities and to develop markets here for foods and food products from the West Coast communities.
- Promote urban agriculture initiatives such as the CMHA Healthy Harvest program.
- Declare a local "Garden Day" – a sponsored free education event with tours of local edible gardens that feature many learning stations, similar to the annual Family Farm Day
- Support motions to protect local seed savers and local organic farmers, e.g. by declaring a GE free (free of Genetically Engineered food crops) Vancouver Island (a motion before the Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities (AVICC))
- Promote access to local fish in stores and restaurants
- Develop a local and seasonal food calendar.

The goal of the calendars is to make local and seasonal food more accessible. Each month would feature a photo from a local farm, a list of local seasonal produce for that month and a recipe using that month's seasonal produce.

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3. Needs in the Community

- Increase the number of child nutrition programs making them universal in all schools.
- Develop partnerships with local academic institutions such as North Island College, Alberni District Secondary School and Vancouver Island University to develop agriculture training programs and skills education in marketing for young farmers.
- Develop public policies and increase the number of supports to make breastfeeding more acceptable and possible for mothers.
- Improve access to fresh fruits, vegetables and other perishables at food banks/hamper programs.
- Explore solutions to issues surrounding transportation to and from food programs or grocery stores (i.e. area shuttle, co-op, bus ticket vouchers, delivery).
- Develop partnerships with grocery stores and city planners with respect to placement of stores to benefit low income neighbourhoods.
- Lobby the Land Conservancy of British Columbia and the FarmFolk/CityFolk Society to acquire agricultural land to develop a Community Farms Program in the Alberni Valley.
- Create a food security umbrella organization to operate as a food resource and referral centre and to accommodate the continuum from food banks to policy creation.
- Establish coordination of fundraising for local food-related projects with a paid coordinator.
- Facilitate gleaning and distribution of surplus foods in the community.
- Lobby for /Promote the legality, organization and coordination of a program to collect, properly store and redistribute excess foods which would otherwise go to waste, e.g. excess from catered events to be utilized by food banks/ gleaned produce for community kitchens, etc.
- Explore existing infrastructure that could be used to increase local storage and processing of locally produced food.
- Develop partnerships with First Nations local governments to provide continuity of services, programs and access to food.

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4. Building Advocacy and Strategies

- Work together to change policies to ensure that Social Assistance and minimum wage are adequate to support health and well-being. Lobby for a provincial poverty reduction policy.
- Present assessment results to the City of Port Alberni Community Services Committee to increase action and awareness of issues related to food and poverty.
- Present assessment results to the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Planning Services to increase action and awareness of issues related to food and poverty, including mandating a regional living wage, lobbying, zoning and providing incentives for affordable accommodation and access to food.
- Share results with the Port Alberni Chamber of Commerce to encourage involvement by the private sector in local food security initiatives.
- Community-based food and nutrition programs could create employment opportunities for presently unemployed individuals to help address the food insecurity they face (i.e. urban agriculture, small catering businesses, farming, composting, vermiculture, value-added production in community kitchens).
- Share assessment results with community organizations and groups that are working with low-income families.
- Promote policy changes to the ACRD regional community plan and the City of Port Alberni OCP to support multifamily community farms or eco-villages in our region.
- Monitor key indicators over time to determine if food security programs are having desired outcomes, and when economic, environmental or demographic conditions are changing, necessitating adjustments to programs and policies.
- In the absence of federal and provincial leadership, the ACRD must commit to preventing hunger and ensuring nutrition for its residents by setting up a Food Policy Council.
- Advocate for the adoption of community gardens policy by the City of Port Alberni.
- Advocate to City of Port Alberni for zoning and incentives for affordable housing and greater ease of access to food.
- Advocate for changing urban poultry and farming bylaws.
- Advocate for the protection of aquifers and watersheds.
- Advocate for the protection of indigenous foods.

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Appendix A - List of Food Resources and Food-Related Contacts

Organization	Address	Phone Number	Other
ACRD Agricultural Advisory Committee		(Chair) Bill Thomson farmer.bill@shaw.ca	http://www.farmerbills.com/
Alberni Clayoquot Health Network	Tanis Dagert Coordinator Sustainable Food Vancouver Island Project Coordinator	250.668.5159	tanisd@live.ca
Alberni Community & Women's Services Society	3082 - 3rd Ave., Port Alberni, BC V9Y 2A5	250.724.7111	http://www.acaws.ca/ office@acaws.ca
Alberni District Fall Fair	P.O. Box 32 Port Alberni BC V9Y 7M6	Ann Siddall 250- 723-9313	http://albernifair.com/index.p hp
Alberni Valley Gleaning Project	6220 Karen Place Port Alberni, BC V9Y 8K9	250-724-2175	hms14@shaw.ca
Alberni Valley Transition Town Society			http://www.avtransitiontown. org/
AVTTS Food Directory of Producers			http://www.avtransitiontown. org/resources/localfood/
BCSeeds project			http://www.bcseeds.org
Bee Keepers		John VanAppledorn 724-6639	
Bread of Life Centre Soup Kitchen	3130 3rd Avenue Port Alberni V9Y 4C8	Vera Seydel 723-4049	breadoflifesociety@shaw.ca
Canadian Diabetes Association		Bonnie McDougall 723-1752	

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Child, Youth & Family Community Health, VIHA		Hélène Dufour, Registered Dietitian Community Nutritionist 250-731-1315 Ext.41767	Oceanside, Alberni Valley & West Coast Communities
Community Farms Program	TLC The Land Conservancy of BC	250-479-8053	Ramona Scott, Manager, Agricultural Programs
Community Food Atlas			http://www.communityfoodatlasc.ca/modules.php?name=GIS&pa=intro&sectionid=11
Cool Cooks Program		Cathy Cross	ccross@sd70.bc.ca
Debra Hellbach	debra@dragonsolv.ca http://dragonsolv.ca	250-412-4645 C: 250-858-7658	BC Food Processors Association, Business Development – debra@bcfpa.ca
Eden Tree Farm Gleaning Education	6220 Karen Place Port Alberni, BC CAN V9Y 8K9	250-724-2175	http://www.edentreefarm.ca/edentreefarm/home.html heather@edentreefarm.ca
First Nations Wildcrafters, BC	7000-A Pacific Rim Highway Port Alberni, BC Canada V9Y 8Y3	Office: 250-720-8907 Fax: 250-720-8981	C. Anne Robinson at FirstNationsWildcrafters1@shaw.ca http://www.firstnationswildcrafters.com/
Food Matters Frozen Meal Program	3178 - 2nd Avenue Port Alberni, BC V9Y 4C3	250-724-7199	http://www.portalberni.cmha.bc.ca/how-we-can-help/food-matters-frozen-meal-program
Good Food Box The Salvation Army:	Bruce_mackenzie@can.salvationarmy.org	250-723-6913 ext 22 C: 250-730-2255	Bruce MacKenzie, Major

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Healthy Harvest Horticulture Program	3178 - 2nd Avenue Port Alberni, BC V9Y 4C3	778-421-0054.	http://www.portalberni.cmha.bc.ca/how-we-can-help/horticulture-program
Jenny Horn	jennifer.horn@viu.ca	250-740-6256	VIU Agriculture Programs
Kuu-us Crisis Line Society	4589 Adelaide Street, Port Alberni, BC V9Y 6N2	250-723-2323	http://www.albernihosting.com/kuu-us/ kuu-uscrisisresponse@shaw.ca
La Leche League Canada		Tina Revai 250-724-7325	Email: tina_west@hotmail.com
Neighbourlink Society	PO BOX 1346, Station Main V9Y7M2 Port Alberni British Columbia	John Bassingthwaite Chair 250-724-0793	neighbourlink@shaw.ca
Our Local Markets		Susan Roth & Wayne Smith 250-918-8920	ourlocalmarkets.com
P.A. Women's Resources Society		Anne Grabroski 724-7111	
Port Alberni Association of Community Living	3008 2nd Avenue Port Alberni, BC V9Y 1Y9	250-724-7155	http://www.paacl.ca/
Port Alberni Farmers' Institute			http://avfarmersinstitute.ca/
Port Alberni Farmers' Market Association		Vicki Lee 250 723 7472	http://www.portalbernifarmersmarket.com/ vickilee@telus.net
Port Alberni Friendship Center and Knee-waas	3555 and 3435 4th Ave, Port Alberni, BC	250 723 8281	http://www.pafriendshipcenter.com/

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Port Alberni Health Unit Lunch Club Programs	4227 - 6th Avenue Port Alberni BC	250-731-1315	http://www.albernichildrenfir st.ca/services/port-alberni-health-unit
Port Alberni Shelter Society		250-723-6511 C: 250-731-6767	Wes Hewitt, Administrator pashelter@shaw.ca
Salvation Army	4841 Redford St Port Alberni	250-723-6913	http://www.communityfoodatlas.ca/modules.php?name=GIS&pa=intro&sectionid=11
Small Plot INTensive SPIN			http://www.spinfarming.com
St. Vincent de Paul Society	4006 8th Ave, Port Alberni, BC V9Y 4S4	250-723-7721	
TLC The Land Conservancy of BC		250-479-8053	Ramona Scott, Manager, Agricultural Programs
Uu-a-thluk, Nuu-chah-nulth Traditional Food Resource Kit	P.O. Box 1383 Port Alberni, B.C. V9Y 7M2	250.724.5757	www.uuathluk.ca info@uuathluk.ca
Vancouver Island Health Authority	4227 6th Avenue Port Alberni V9Y 4N1	250-731-1315	sharon.anderson@viha.ca
Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities Indigenous Food Network		Erin Rowsell erin.a.rowsell@gmail.com	http://www.indigenousfoodsvi.ca/ viccifn@gmail.com
VIHA Coupon Program		Vicki Lee 250 723 7472	http://www.portalbernifarmersmarket.com/vickilee@telus.net
Vancouver Island Food Security Hubs			http://www.viha.ca/mho/food/food_security/VIHA+Food+Security+Hubs.htm

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Wholesome Meals on Wheels Association of Port Alberni	P.O. Box 323 Port Alberni, BC V9Y 7M8 Canada	250-724-1272	
Yuułuʔiłʔath First Nation	P.O. Box 699, Ucluelet, BC, V0R 3A0	250-726-7342	http://www.ufn.ca/

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Appendix B – Community Food Security Continuum

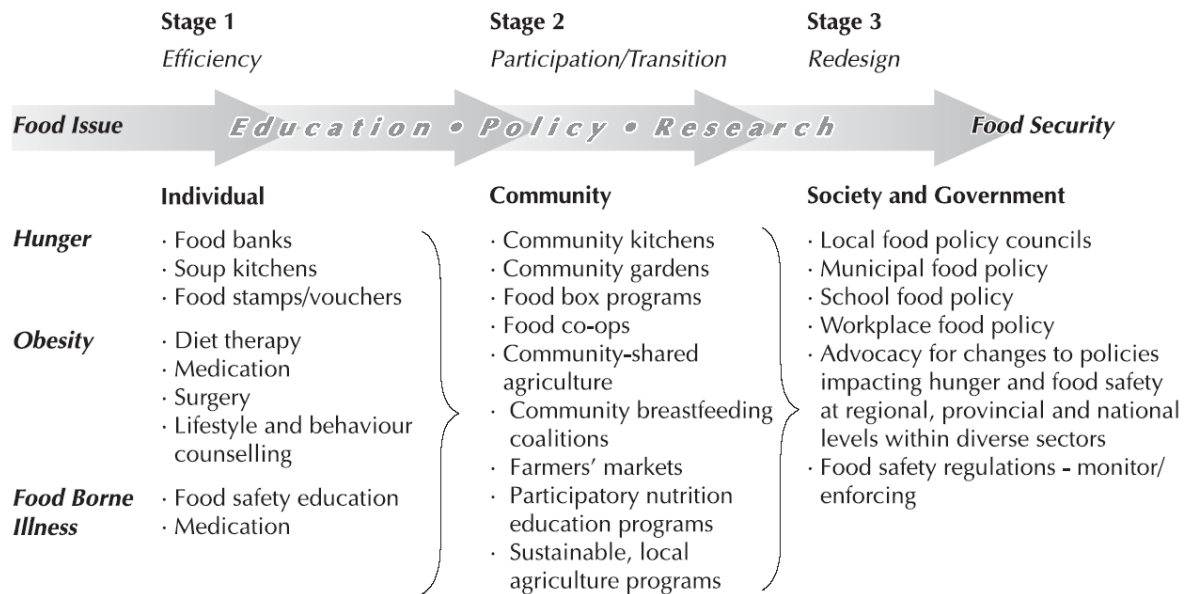


FIGURE 2 The community food security continuum depicting responses at local levels to the food security issues of hunger, obesity and food borne illness.
(Adapted from Houghton 1998 and 2003, Kalina 2000, and MacRae 1994)

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Appendix C – What's Growing in Our Region

Vegetables	Fruit	Meat	Dairy and Other
Tomatoes	Strawberries	Beef	Milk*
Potatoes	Raspberries	Pork	Cheese
Cucumbers	Apples	Lamb, Mutton	Eggs
Green Beans	Saskatoons	Chicken	Honey
Peas	Pears	Rabbit	Herbs
Cabbage	Plums	Turkey	Nuts
Cauliflower	Cherries	Emu	Milled grains/flours
Broccoli	Grapes	Bison	Hops
Beets	Blueberries	Duck	Wines
Radishes	Crabapples	Elk	Maple syrup
Onions	Blackberries	Deer	
Lettuce			
Spinach			
Various Squash			
Cucumber			
Kale			
Broad beans			
Asian greens			
Baby salad greens			
Pumpkins			
Corn			
Peppers			

*Not for direct local sale

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