



Interim Report

Coastal Addendum to the Alberni Agriculture Plan

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Drafted by Heather Shobe, Eden Tree Farm and Gardening
for the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District



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1) Executive Summary

The *Coastal Addendum to the Alberni Agriculture Plan* will deliver practical information and suggestions to residents, organizations, businesses, and governments that support agricultural development within coastal regions of the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD). This Interim Report introduces the coastal context and current situation, summarizes findings from public surveys and forums, and offers a draft vision to guide the implementation plan.

The Addendum project ‘sets the table’ for the coastal community. What does our community table look like? What food is on it? Who produces it? Who cooks, who serves, and what do we do with the waste? More importantly - how do we ensure that everyone has a seat?

Environmental, economic, and social considerations are equally important, and traditional soil-based farming is only one picture in the coastal food system puzzle. Marine and forest harvesting have historically provided a substantial portion of residents’ dietary intake, and the geographical picture of the coast makes conventional agricultural production difficult. In developing an appropriate plan, it will be important to search for innovative techniques, to lobby for support for non-conventional and non-soil based agricultural practices, and to make use of wider supportive networks and local traditional knowledge.

While it is unlikely that a local food production system can fully support the area’s high tourist levels, there are notable benefits to supporting the residential market, and the tourist population and restaurant culture offers a strong opportunity for niche local branding and upscale products. Agricultural opportunities also include the production of fibre, fuel, compost, flowers, and the related processing and distribution systems. Each of these will be considered.

An increase in individual awareness, desire, and active participation in greater food production is legless without societal support through external policies and action, and vice-versa. The Addendum aims to guide decisions and change at both levels.

“Supporting producers is hard,
but we don’t have food without them.”

2) Acknowledgements

This project was funded in part by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Government of British Columbia through programs delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Government of British Columbia and the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC, are pleased to participate in the delivery of this publication. We are committed to working with our industry partners to address issues of importance to the agriculture and agri-food industry in British Columbia. Opinions expressed in this report are those of author and surveyed public and not necessarily those of the Investment Agriculture Foundation, the Government of British Columbia or Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

Other funding partners, including the ACRD, the Tofino Community Food Initiative (TCFI), and Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (CBT), allowed for inclusion of food security related context. A special thank you to the project’s Steering and Advisory Committees and to the residents, businesses, and government representatives who shared their feedback and input.

3) Project Process

The Addendum's development is a 3-part process.

- 1) Stakeholder surveys and interviews
- 2) Background audits and research
- 3) Implementation Plan development and final document publication

The ACRD's Agricultural Development Committee provides additional support to project Committees. The Addendum is anticipated to be published prior to the end of 2018.

Figure 1: Project Committee Members

Name	Organization	Steering Committee	Advisory Committee
Heather Shobe	Project Lead	✓	✓
Erika Goldt	Clayoquot Biosphere Trust	✓	✓
Leah Austin	Tofino Community Food Initiative	✓	✓
Hannah Roessler	Professional Agrologist	✓	✓
Tina Windsor	Picnic Charcuterie	✓	✓
Cathy Burkosky	Avalon Farm	✓	✓
Al Anderson	District of Tofino		✓
Bruce Greig	District of Ucluelet		✓
J.P. Hastey	Nova Harvest Ltd.		✓
Ashley Hawker	Area C - Long Beach		✓
Bobby Lax	Tofino-Ucluelet Culinary Guild		✓
Anna Lewis	Healthy Harvest Farm and Hupacasath Community Farm		✓
Melanie MacLeod	Clayoquot Organics (Past Coastal Producer)		✓
Amy McConnell	Area A - Bamfield		✓
Dan Price-Francis	Bodacious Oasis, Coastal Producer		✓
Gordon Taylor	Yuułu'it̓ First Nation		✓

4) Related Background Documents

Alberni Agricultural Plan, 2011

- Outlines the Alberni Valley agricultural industry and sets out an action plan for its expansion and support
- Describes much of the policy and background relevant to coastal agricultural initiatives
- The mother document for the Coastal Addendum

West Coast Garden Guide

- Provides general tips and a month to month guide to growing vegetables in the region

Clayoquot Sound Biosphere Region Community Food Survey, 2009

- Community survey gauging interest, taking stock, and assessing barriers to food security

- Cost was seen as a prohibitive factor to accessing healthy food
- Most cited recommendations were to increase involvement with the local food system through food policy, local small-scale processing, and community greenhouses & gardens

Clayoquot Biosphere Region Food Action Plan, 2010

- References a desire to establish more community gardens and increase access to seafood
- Support for larger-scale agriculture was geared toward Alberni Valley producers
- Opportunities were noted for non-timber forest products and kelp
- Infrastructure needs noted for shellfish, seafood, and composting initiatives

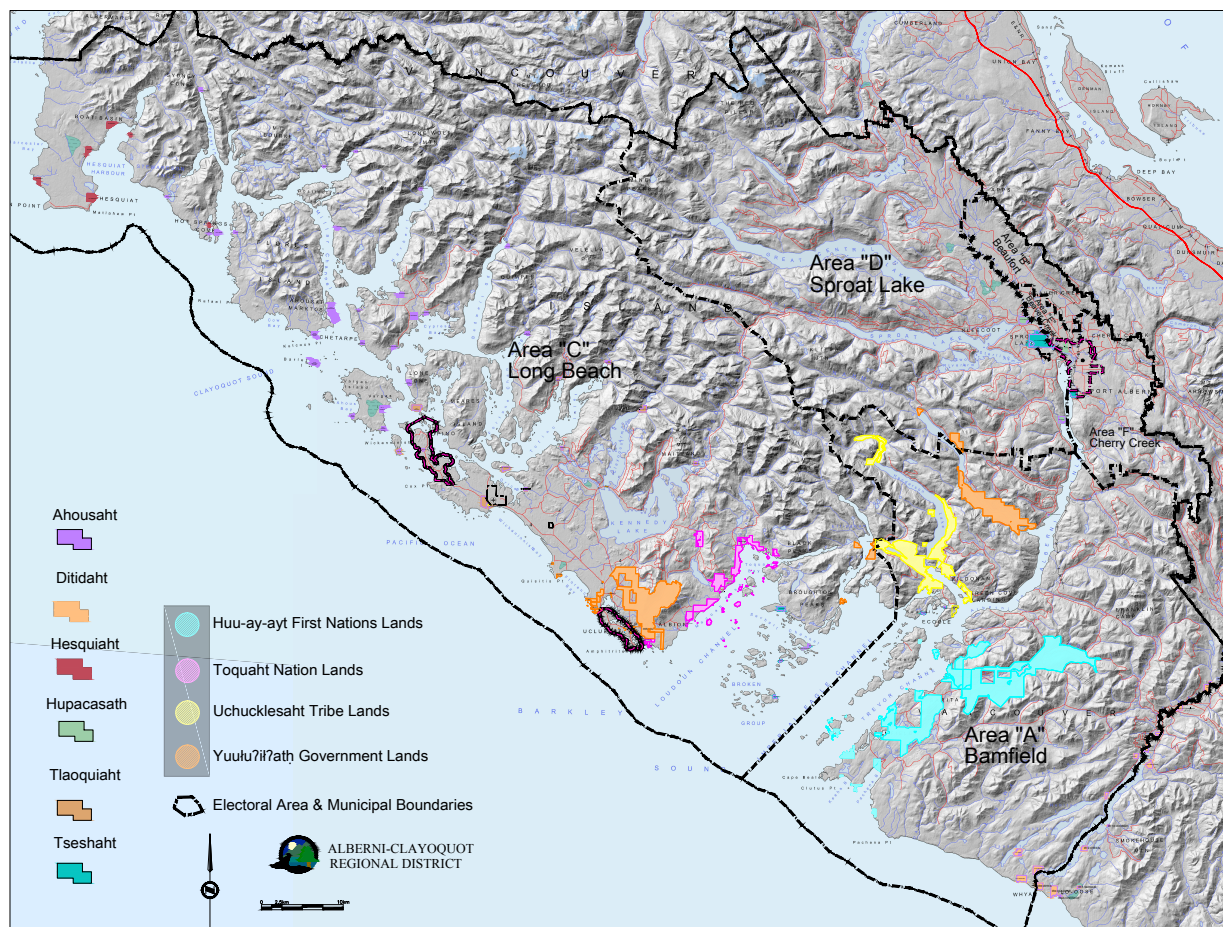
Marine Culture Within the ACRD, 2016

- Describes marine production and related challenges and offers suggestions for support

5) The Coastal Context

The coastal region of the ACRD includes 3 municipalities and 8 First Nation governments. It is spread across an extensive geographical land base, much of which is disconnected to roadways and accessible only by marine transportation. The northern section includes the municipality of Tofino and the Hesquiaht, Ahousaht, and Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations. The Central portion includes the municipality of Ucluelet and the Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ and Toquhaht First Nations, and the Southern most portion includes the municipality of Bamfield and the Anacla, Ditidaht, and Uchucklesaht First Nations. The total population is approximately 5800 people.

Figure 1: Topographical Map of ACRD with Community Overlay



Questions of Context and Scope

Marine and “wild” or “foraged” food sources are an important part of the discussion around the coastal food systems. Limitations to funding streams make it difficult to capture all the nuanced and detailed information about them in this particular study, but it is expected that recommendations will be made for these parallel systems in order to support a wholistic overview of coastal food systems. While the primary focus of the Coastal Addendum will be traditional land based agriculture, we will use the coastal context to integrate marine and forest systems, hoping to bridge the silos within which these industries currently operate, particularly within the respect of governmental frameworks.

We must consider the terms and definitions we use and our ultimate aim. What constitutes ‘farming’ or ‘agriculture’ within the coastal context, and should it include so-called ‘wild harvesting’ and marine production? Who is a producer? Is a home gardener a relevant producer? In terms of our aims, do we focus on small, community-scale agriculture or on strong businesses and scaleable industry. Are we feeding residents or the tourist population? These questions are explored in interviews with the intention of developing a relevant and place-based perspective to guide the plan for coastal agriculture.

The Addendum will not offer a complete objective and numerical analysis of current production as it lacks the financial and data resources to do so. There is very little existing agricultural data from Statistics Canada in the region and producers and businesses are hesitant to share financial information. To attempt a full accounting of the areas’ production would be very time consuming and require significant public participation, which is not guaranteed. As such, the Addendum will be based mostly on the anecdotal, observed, and qualitative evidence provided through surveys and discussion. Anecdotal evidence has the additional benefit of pointing towards gaps in knowledge and creating space for opportunity to fill them.

“We don’t think big enough. As much as we need to develop and promote small scale we need to also be identifying scalable opportunities to develop economically sustainable operations that add to the local economy and employment which will result in increased visibility of local food production and its fundamental importance.”

Environment and Geography

The region has unique climatic factors which create some benefits and some drawbacks for growers. The general coastal ecology is categorized as Coastal Western Hemlock (CWH - biogeoclimatic zone designation). Soils here are typically found where the mean annual precipitation is above 700mm, and are dominated by coniferous plant communities. The region boasts a relatively mild climate throughout the year, with very few days dropping below zero degrees. This climate is ideal for growing a variety of cool season crops (particularly vegetables in the brassica family, such as kale), but is not ideal for crops that require high heat and a longer growing season. There is an abundant of rain during the winter months, while the summer months can usher in significant drought, with resultant water restrictions. These fluctuating extremes between an abundance of water and a lack of water can be challenging.

The coastal geography, fragmented by marine areas and with shallow soils and rocky outcrops in many areas, does not offer the land base of more contemporary systems. Geographically, the

area is remote and requires extensive land travel through a single mountain pass and/or significant boat travel to reach, limiting the import and export of products and resources.

People

The coastal population has a strong food culture, with numerous food-related events, educational programs, and traditional harvesting practices. The many high-end restaurants regularly promote a unique west coast flavour and style. Generally high food prices and geographic isolation increase residents' interest in self-sufficiency, but the high pace of life during the summer growing season is a challenge.

Municipal and First Nation governments are looking to support food sovereignty and increase economic opportunities in agriculture. First Nations peoples have the right to harvest from Parks within their territories, and food is a strong centrepiece in their cultural practices.

Finance

Existing coastal food production operations, with the exception of those that are marine based, are generally very small scale, however the food industry is vibrant. Top restaurants and chefs charge premium prices, and the many food processing operations have proven the market for niche products and local branding. Tourism is a huge economic driver and creates a market for high-end agricultural products. The largest area exports are forest and fish products (mostly cultured salmon) and the shellfish industry has strong presence and infrastructure.

Marine Culture

While there may be challenges in integrating marine production into the Provincial agricultural framework, it is a trending opportunity, and marine production is extremely important within the coastal context. The 2017 Islands Agriculture Show, an agricultural trade show serving the Vancouver Island farm community, was held in Port Alberni and was the first to include aquaculture and seafood as part of its programming. Adjacent to the event, a boat tour of Barkley Sound was conducted to help participants to understand economic opportunities and challenges within the seafood sector. The tour sold out and included a stop at a fin fish license site, an oyster operation, and a shellfish seed production facility.

Marine culture offers a significant economic opportunity to the ACRD's coastal regions. The waters are pristine, uncrowded, and less subject to some of the disease pressure afflicting growers on the East coast of Vancouver Island. The market and price for shellfish and marine products is high. A shellfish seed producer in Bamfield provides a key piece of infrastructure, and a number of farm tenures sit unused in Barkley Sound.

However, these opportunities are buffered by a number of challenges. Marine farms are extremely remote and challenging to find labor for. Funding is difficult to secure and has very high interest rates, while marine leases are expensive but can't be used as collateral for loans. There is regulatory overlap between Federal and Provincial governments, and marine culture is not generally funded or considered within the Province of BC's agricultural framework. Atlantic Canada has access to Federal funding programs for aquaculture that BC doesn't, creating competition disadvantage and reducing access to larger markets. Organizations report that they are going around in circles trying to secure funding, expertise, and equipment to start or enhance operations, even though the tenures, markets, and processing facilities exist.

Many coastal products, like salmon, hake, and shellfish, are being sent directly overseas, and processing opportunities might significantly contribute to local employment and economic growth. Marine products and byproducts like kelp and offal could be utilized as valuable local inputs for soil-based agricultural operations. Introducing employment opportunities that keep people working on the water will reinforce the traditional livelihoods and culture of the region while enhancing appreciation and stewardship for sensitive coastal habitats.

“We must find a way to develop an economically important use for our coast line or we will lose it to oil and gas. This is already happening up and down the coast.”

Forest Harvesting

Aboriginal peoples recognize that traditionally, all land was cared for and that there was no concept of ‘wilderness’. Practices remain that involve gathering food and other products from forests and land that have not been ‘agriculturally cultivated’ in a contemporary manner. These practices are a vital component of coastal culture and contribute to ongoing care and stewardship of the region’s ecosystems and the health and wellbeing of its people.

Language is a challenge when addressing this subject. A reflection on the terms used offers the opportunity to engage in socially important conversations and creates a space for vitally important indigenous perspective and involvement. Is ‘wild harvesting’ better stated as ‘foraging for food you didn’t plant’? More deeply, we could consider the earth’s production of food and products that support human well-being as an integral part of her nature. We impact her and her yields in various ways, including both cultivation and through acts of respect.

There are practices which align more closely with indigenous harvesting practices than does contemporary agriculture. Permaculture (permanent agriculture) design concepts, such as food forests, focus on providing for human needs while regenerating depleted environments and creating self-sustaining systems with reduced need for human interference. In considering how to incorporate ‘non-timber forest products’ (NTFP) into agricultural practices, the emphasis could be on teaching people to get to know the land and tending it in a way that it enhances and regenerates its products. Coastal stakeholders have noted the importance of regulatory frameworks and guidelines for NTFP harvesting practices, in order to ensure their sustainability while increasing the diversity of economic benefits for forest land shareholders.

The line between ‘agriculture’ and native or ‘wild’ foods becomes even more blurred when questions or interest are raised about the development of commercial operations on private lands through the tending and harvest of native berries, mushrooms, and shoreline products. Within the Provincial agricultural framework, this type of operation is borderline. For example, when applying for Farm Property Tax Status, areas in a ‘natural’ state but covered with native berries are not considered ‘cultivated’ or eligible for inclusion when calculating applicability in some circumstances. At the same time, harvest and marketing of native berries could be a strong and lucrative niche market for an agricultural producer.

Finally, traditional plants and harvesting strategies could offer significant ‘agricultural’ opportunities for First Nation governments. These could benefit on many levels, such as agri-

tourism income, a fostered cultural identity, passed down cultural knowledge, and employment. Opportunities may exist in learning to produce more from naturalized areas through innovative techniques. If the goal of the Coastal Addendum is to support appropriate and long term food production avenues on the coast, the western concept of agriculture must be bridged and linked with tradition, conservation, and environment in order to be relevant.

“Food is very much a cultural matter, and food sustainability will be as much about cultural change as growing plants”

6) Overview of Existing Initiatives

Governmental

The municipalities of Tofino and Ucluelet are currently working to update their Official Community Plans, and both municipalities have indicated that a local food economy and production opportunities are being considered. The District of Tofino is completing a Flood Mapping project and food access is widely being considered as an important aspect to Emergency Preparedness. The Bamfield Community Plan includes an agricultural section where the production of food for personal consumption, particularly through innovative techniques, and the protection of water for agriculture are encouraged.

Of the 8 First Nations within the ACRD's coastal region, many or all are working on agricultural initiatives to some degree, and a strong interest in the economic development opportunities of agriculture has been expressed. Existing projects range from bees to cranberries to aquaponics. Community gardens exist in many of the communities and ensuring members' access to healthy food is of high priority.

The Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD) continues to work towards implementation of the Alberni Valley Agriculture Plan through its Agricultural Development Committee and contracted Agricultural Support Workers. The request for support from various coastal stakeholders and the lack of reference to coastal communities in the Alberni Agriculture Plan were the catalysts for the Coastal Addendum project.

Non-profit and Community Organizations

The Tofino and Ucluelet Community Food Initiatives (TCFI/UCFI) are non-profit organizations in operation since about 2009. Both have become well known for their support of food and agriculture related events, workshops, and programs. The TCFI has facilitated logistics that allow coastal residents and Alberni farmers to sell extra produce at their Public Market booth. The UCFI conducted food security research projects in 2009/2010 and recently lobbied for and successfully established a new community garden.

The Clayoquot Biosphere Trust, through their Eat West Coast programs and funded in part by Island Health, also supports access to healthy, affordable, and local foods, with a particular emphasis on outreach, planning, and support for schools and First Nation communities.

The Tofino-Ucluelet Culinary Guild (TUCG) supports the distribution and access of healthy Vancouver Island food products by acting as a buying and transportation agent. Members include Island farmers, foragers and fishermen, as well as restaurants, grocery outlets, and residents. The program now includes Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) weekly food boxes and market stands at the weekly public markets on the coast.

Business

Other businesses and organizations offer various levels of support to coastal agriculture. Ordinary Corner Nursery in Tofino shares knowledge while selling plants and garden supplies. The Tofino Botanical Gardens offer daily public access to a 12 acre interpretive site, which demonstrates the successful cultivation of a variety of native and cultivated plants in the coastal temperate rainforest. Tofino Urban Farm Co. currently operates a small compost pick-up, processing, and redistribution program for Tofino residents and businesses.

A number of primary processors are tapping into the local food market and seeking local inputs. Products range from beer and spirits to cured meats, preserves, popsicles, kombucha, breads, kelp products, and even soaps and shampoos that utilize primary agricultural products.

Soil-based producers run very small operations generally, ranging from about 0.2 cultivated acres to the 8 hectare Medicine Farm. Many 'backyard farmer/gardeners' have committed buyers for their products as well. Products reported include micro-greens, vegetables, eggs, fruits, rabbits, chickens, and pork. Clayoquot Organics, which shut down in 2005, offers a snapshot of what is possible for a small-scale intensive vegetable producer, having sold \$60,000 worth of vegetables and employed 2.5 people in their last year of business Tofino.

7) Site Surveys and Preliminary Agrologist Findings

A professional Agrologist was contracted to conduct physical site assessments of a sampling of properties in order to evaluate their feasibility for agriculture and offer suggestions for potential opportunities. The public was invited to submit applications, and a total of 8 properties were selected for a survey in May 2018. A follow-up survey will be completed in October, 2018.

Figure 3: Map Showing Agrologist Survey Sites



Figure 4: Overview of Preliminary Site Survey Findings

Site Survey Overview				
Site	Name/Authority	Size and Description	Observations	Hopes for the Site (per site authority)
#1	District of Tofino	1.6 acre park in residential subdivision. Cleared and levelled	Compacted. Poor drainage in some areas. Mostly grass and other species.	Community garden beds or individual plots
#2	Dan & Jennifer Price-Francis, Bodacious Oasis	1.5 acres within District of Tofino	Container beds with purchased soils	Continued expansion of growing vegetables to sell for market
#3	Michael Poole, Poole's Land	17.5 acres, mostly old growth forest. 2 acres of gardens spread over multiple locations	Various raised beds and vegetables growing with various success.	For sale. Hope to continue growing food on it, and mix use with camping
#4	Tom Greig	37 acres total, 4-5 acres with farm status (hens, meat birds, vegetables)	Most land is in pasture. Beds are growing variety of vegetables successfully	Continue current operations
#5	Tofino Urban Farm Co., ACRD Airport Authority,	1/4-2 acres, leased to Airport Authority, potential sub-lease to Tofino Urban Farm Co.	Mostly alder on compacted ground. Very sandy and gravelly	Composting facility to serve the community need for compost
#6	Ucluelet First Nation, Junction Garden	5 acres. Cultivated garden site with some buildings and infrastructure	Soil has been built over time. Compost, manure and soil are purchased	Continued community garden use, as well as a outdoor eating area
#7	Ucluelet First Nation, Lost Shoe Creek	14 acres raw land	Very sandy soil. Sparse vegetation, but includes some large trees.	Aquaponics operation and market front
#8	Douglas Booker, Medicine Farm	8 hectares, working farm	A lot of vegetables and herbs. Many (60+ trucks) loads of soil brought in years ago	Continued growth of vegetables for coastal markets
Crops included: Kale, Spinach, Parsley, Mint, Plums, Figs, Peppers, Tomatoes, Basil, Salad Greens, Asparagus, Edible flowers, Mustard greens, Berries, Onions, Potatoes, Bok Choi, Mushrooms, Kiwis, Parsnips, Valerian				

Figure 5: Agrologist's General Observations and Projected Opportunities

Agrologist Initial Observations		
	General Observations	Projected Opportunities
Economic	• Strong market for produce: "everything that can be grown here can be sold here" • High demand for local produce from the tourist industry, restaurants, and local community • Need to identify the particular market being targeted (is it restaurants, groceries, lodges, etc.?) • Interest shown in doing a cost analysis of how many food trucks come into to the region every year • Challenges around raising affordable local meats because of distance to licensed abattoirs	• Agritourism, including marine food sources as well • Developer requirements to set aside landscaping space for food production every time a new development goes in (could even be a couple of fruit trees). • Growing various unique crops that are adapted to the zone, or that thrive in the region (developing terroir) • Starting small and scaling up • Aquaponics

Agrologist Initial Observations		
	General Observations	Projected Opportunities
Social	• Many community members are keen on strengthening the local food system • Concerns about the lack of resilience and fragility of the current food system • Desire to develop food growing and educational initiatives in eight First Nation communities – the Octopus garden • While many are offered through local initiatives, there remains a desire and need for more educational opportunities related to growing food	• Community kitchen spaces • Education initiatives around composting • Education initiatives around wild harvesting, conservation and restoration • Chicken co-op initiatives • Setting aside more areas designated for community gardens or community farms
Ecological	• Need to find a solution to challenges related to water restrictions, which are increasingly earlier each year • Questions about water restrictions in the summer and intense rain in the winter, with desire for educational initiatives to address these extremes • Recognition of the dwindling fish stocks, making aquaponics of particular interest • Interest in incorporating fish wastes into soil building initiatives. How could this waste could be accessed and processed? • Discussion around how “wild harvesting” or “foraging” fits into agriculture, and how to ensure that this practice is being carried out in a way that is sustainable, if not regenerative	• Increase availability of local compost through community composting initiatives • Restaurant food waste pickups • Discounts at farmers markets for home compost drop-offs • Fish waste for composting • Fostering naturalized edibles on farms and in public parks • Permaculture design • Larger-scale rainwater capture during rainy months through government assisted programs • Season extension techniques (greenhouses, row covers, etc.) • Crops for compost fodder • Growing more native food plants as specialty crops

8) Summary of Open House Discussions and Survey Data

As part of the project’s initiation phase, public forums were held in Tofino, Ucluelet, and Bamfield, and surveys were launched through the internet platform Survey Monkey. Interviews were conducted with various stakeholders including producers, processors, and governmental representatives. The general objectives of the surveys and interviews were to: assist with the generation of a comprehensive coastal inventory of agriculturally related operations and organizations; receive feedback about challenges, barriers, and needs; and solicit a Community Vision for agriculture and a thriving coastal food system. Though the results are generally subjective and qualitative, they do offer insight into trends, commonalities, and community perspectives. The results are compiled here into sections.

Perception of Agriculture on the Coast

When asked to name coastal agricultural operations, many responses included marine producers and processors (oyster, shellfish, salmon, fish processing, seaweed). Marine culture was shown to play an important role in the public’s perception of their local food system.

Also referenced widely were supportive organizations such as Tofino Community Food Initiative and Tofino-Ucluelet Culinary Guild (TUCG). Processors and forest or ‘wild’ harvesters

were referenced as well, including mushroom pickers. The soil-based producers noted included backyard gardeners, community gardens, Medicine Farm, and farms from the Alberni Valley.

“The visitor economy is competing for land & labour. This will be an expensive and therefore niche area for agricultural production.”

Markets or Market Opportunities

Market opportunities noted included the weekly public markets, grocery-type stores (with many residents referencing the Co-op - the largest grocery stores in both Tofino and Ucluelet), restaurants and food trucks, and TUCG. Also suggested were school lunch programs, intra- or inter-community trading, summer students at the Marine Science Centre in Bamfield, direct fish sales from the wharf, and Community Supportive Agriculture.

“Everything that can be grown here can be sold here”

Supportive Organizations

The most recognizable agricultural organizations for coastal residents were TUCG and the TCFI, UCFL, and CBT. Also noted were grocery stores/markets, industry associations (shellfish growers and Farmers’ Institutes), municipal and regional government bodies, producers/processors, the Food Bank on the Edge, and the Westcoast Community Resources Society.

Opportunities

Many residents spoke to opportunities in the oyster, shellfish, and marine industries and to forest products or a related niche and branding. Hydroponics, aquaponics, and greenhouse growing received significant attention, as did community based initiatives such as community gardens. Small, bio-intensive mixed operations were seen as viable, as were poultry operations, bees, mushrooms, salad greens, winter produce, semi-tropical crops. Hemp, sea salt, and cannabis were mentioned as potential industrial scale crops.

In general, agriculture initiatives were perceived to benefit the area’s overall food security and environmental stewardship. They were noted as offering employment, educational, and therapeutic opportunities and contributing to the availability of fresh and nutritious produce. Community composting initiatives were seen as beneficial on a number of levels and community planning processes were identified by many as a place to ensure increased production potential and foster community by including food production spaces in neighbourhood planning.

Coastal assets noted included the long growing season, thriving food scene, high tourist population, and lack of competition. Some respondents pointed to the abundance of land and existing markets. Tugwell Field on Forbes Road in Ucluelet was noted multiple times as a public land space on high ground that could be used as an agricultural production and support space. Other specific suggestions are listed in a following section.

“Transitioning what have been local wild harvest products to cultivation and more concentrated production. Expanding the range of foods cultivated in and harvested from the sea.”

Challenges to Coastal Agriculture

Environmental:

- Weather (low light levels and precipitation/humidity) and soil conditions (salinity)
- Insect and wildlife concerns
- Access to fresh water in the dry season
- Geographic isolation
 - Difficulties in importing supplies (hay, feed, soil, and other) and exporting products
 - Rough and single highways (Hwy 4 in the North/Central, and The Bamfield Road in the South) which are subject to routine delays, construction, and closures
 - Long transport time, even in good conditions, particularly where refrigerated trucking is required.
 - High cost and limitations of boat transportation

Human:

- Transient population
- High cost of living
- Lack of skilled labor and expertise
- Fluctuations in market between high and low seasons
- A “lack of vision” in terms of creating scaleable opportunities rather than small, micro operations that were seen by some as unsustainable
- “People just don’t care”

“Urban spaces will be very small scale and not likely a significant contributor to agricultural production.”

Financial and Economic:

- High land costs and a lack of available large parcels or parcels within the Agricultural Land Reserve
 - One 10.5 acre farm property is currently for sale for \$938,000
 - While land sharing was seen as an option, there were concerns about logistical arrangements and relationship challenges leading to operational demise
- Lack of start-up capital and infrastructure (greenhouses, etc.) or machinery
- Regulatory hurdles, particularly within the marine industry and livestock processing sectors
- Global industrial agriculture and ‘cheap food’ reducing viability of smaller-scale production
- Lack of manure and compost were barriers to soil fertility and productivity
- Small, private businesses are often not eligible for grants or low-interest loan
- It is very expensive to live in the coastal communities
- Hard to find markets in winter, but can’t pull back because of the overall costs of business (high rents for example)

Resources

The available resources noted included land and water (fresh and salt), wild foods, and seaweed. It was also widely believed that there many knowledgeable growers and educational events within the major communities as well as high-caliber chefs and supportive restaurant scene. Traditional knowledge was held in high esteem and elders were valued as knowledge keepers. Some infrastructure was noted, including a variety of market avenues, a plant nursery and botanical garden, the TUCG, fish/ice plants, a shellfish seed production facility, and supportive non-profit organizations. General human resources included an able work-force, high level of entrepreneurship, community spirit, and strong support for local food.

“A diverse, energetic and creative population who tend to be focussed on health and the natural environment. And a strong entrepreneurial streak.”

Values and Agriculture

When questioned about their values and the value of agriculture, there was an even balance between those related to human (food self-sufficiency, social networks, access to food, and emergency preparedness), Environmental (stewardship and fostering connection to the natural world), and economic (supporting local producers, local jobs, and economic development) benefits. By a very slim margin, supporting local producers, environmental stewardship, and access to healthy food were seen as most important, and economic development, emergency preparedness, and fostering connection with the natural world were least. Numerous people also pointed to the importance of teaching dietary health and food growing skills. They also referenced resource-sharing, self-reliance, and the pleasurable aspects of growing food.

Specific Public Suggestions for Industry Support

Specific suggestions for industry support are divided into three categories.

Figures 6-A/B/C : Public Suggestions for Industry Support

A) Public Suggestions: Community / Organizational Supports

- Implement a farm to school program which includes crop production, local lunch menu, and a teaching program for children
- Establish teaching/commercial kitchens
- Increase number of community gardens
- Provide more education opportunities, events and workshops
- Facilitate support for wildlife mitigation options (fencing, electric fencing, education initiatives)
- Increase food literacy, including cooking and nutrition
- Develop a seed bank
- Include elders in developing programs to share traditional FN techniques/knowledge of native plants and harvesting practices

B) Public Suggestions: Governmental Support

Infrastructure

- Tugwells Fields, Ucluelet: develop a community facility on this high ground to house a food bank, community garden/farm, and other food and community infrastructure
- Community owned greenhouses, or greenhouses erected on community land
- A community-owned van that businesses can use for out of area transportation
- Community kitchen for producers and processors
- A community facilitator who can help arrange joint transportation, kitchen use, educational opportunities, and resource sharing
- Develop a community composting program
- Route fish plant offal to a composting program
- Grow crops as carbon fodder in a composting program

Funding and Business Supports

- Implement a restaurant tax to pay for a farm/production facility, similar to the hotel tax, but managed locally
- Subsidies for farm workers - child care, employment, massages, benefits, bookkeeping, ect.
- Grant/loan opportunities for small start-ups
- Funding for start ups for one year so owner can focus on business rather than having to work part or full time on the side
- General marketing and business supports (increase Community Futures programs)

Regulatory Amendments

- Food production spaces being a requirement within new developments
- Changes to regulatory framework so it is scaled-down for start-ups and micro-businesses but can be scaled-up upon growth (property farm tax, organic certification, etc)
- Lower sales requirements for Farm Property Tax Status
- Allow for on-farm meat processing and easier dock sales of marine products

Economic Development

- Therapeutic farm with training and employment opportunity for First Nation community
- An Octopus garden - Coastal First Nation communities and Municipal governments develop community farms within a joint initiative, sharing resources like knowledge, equipment, labor, and marketing initiatives and conducting inter-community trades
- Develop a agriculture project that supports and trains First Nation women and youth

Planning

- Use District of Tofino Park on Lone Cone road for permaculture food forest and/or to run a program connecting elders to children, sharing production and harvesting knowledge
- Shift focus of municipal plantings to edible species Neighbourhood nodes for composting and food production that staff or TCFI could maintain (have municipal employee tend to food gardens and compost, just like they tend to parks)

Land

- Make public land easily available for farming
- Reduced income requirements for farm property tax status on parcels less than 2 acres
- Ensure some land is secured for perpetuity for agriculture use, such as through ALR status or Food Land Trusts

C) Public Suggestions: Business and Industry Opportunities

- Feed local institutions (hospital, schools)
- Develop value added processing business opportunities - fish sticks, nettle sprinkles, etc.
- Develop a small urban farm on high ground, combined with an agri-tourism operation
- Propagation of local berries and native plants
- Section of co-op to be dedicated to local food only, where residents can sell their extras
- Land-based fish farming
- Use traditional foods in processed product, develop brand around it (ie: garlic-clam pizza)
- Grow some crops for high end/high price specialty (pea shoots) but also grow lower-priced staple crops for residents so that producer income is sustainable.
- Use shipping containers for aquaponics/salad greens
- A moveable boat-based abattoir or other infrastructure
- Develop cooperatives to unite micro-producers and increase efficiency and profitability

General Themes and Feedback of Note

- Lower sales requirements for property tax farm status on smaller parcels and better access to slaughter services were strongly requested by producers
- Strong food-related businesses and organizations, particularly TUCG and TCFI, have significant impact and are well known within the community
- There is a very high interest in 'non-timber forest products' and local branding initiatives
- Marine production is an important part of the coastal communities and shellfish producers report strong markets and high industry potential
- The salmon farming industry is not commonly noted as a prominent agricultural organization. The industry is not perceived to be very 'local', as many companies are foreign-owned, and product is sent out of the community. It is perceived to benefit economically, through jobs, but less so socially or environmentally.
- There is high interest in social initiatives that connect people with food and offer educational opportunities about food.
- There were two distinct market streams noted - that of the local population and that of the tourists. A common question was - who are we trying to feed?
- Community compost was identified repeatedly as a priority and needed piece of infrastructure, with potential input streams from restaurants, fish waste, and crops
- There is political will and public interest and support for agricultural initiatives
- There is a lack of local markets for fresh seafood and it's hard to buy right from the dock
- Scaleability is a major hurdle. There are few supports for small start-ups, and existing programs are expensive and require large production - organic certification as an example
- Supporting a staffing base of full-time employees is hard due in part to lack of housing, training requirements, low farm wages, and transient nature of population
- "If people aren't making money its not sustainable". While community and residential gardens were seen as strongly desirable and useful, there was also a strong sentiment that small gardens aren't scaleable, sustainable, or productive enough and that strong and scaleable business models were essential.
- Poverty and mental health have an impact on people's ability to farm or garden, but it also is a therapeutic activity if included in a wellness program
- Strong interest in designating areas for residential food production in new developments

9) Draft Vision

The Coastal Addendum's Implementation Plan will suggest the most potent pathways of influence towards the community's vision for agriculture. A clear vision encompasses the communities strongest shared values.

Examples of visions that were offered by various publics included:

- Food/agriculture is the backbone of community and central to culture
- Gardening contributes to people's health, in body and mind
- Food is valued from a cost and nutrition perspective
- Everyone is fed and has dignified access to appropriate food
- Agriculture is important economic contributor to the coastal community
- We have a strong production system and thriving producers
- We use resources we have on hand
- We have seeds for resilience (resources/production/knowledge)
- There is a high level of knowledge about growing food, and more people are growing
- Knowledge is shared (it empowers, increases efficiency, is passed down from FN tradition and community elders)
- There are many meaningfully productive public spaces
- Food is prioritized in planning
- Agriculture is resourced and supported
- Food Sovereignty gives us the right to define and develop our own localized systems (both as a coastal community and as individual communities within that coast)
- Branding increases the sense of place, the 'terroir' contributes to the coastal culture
- We are known for our food
- Respectful, wise, and ethical use of resources and territory
- Our biosphere is protected and pristine
- We model a pacific northwest diet and lifestyle
- "The tendril goes to the restaurant, and the pea goes to the people"
- We work harmoniously within our environment and communities
- The earth is our garden

Using these and other statements, the following draft vision statement was crafted:

"Our food is celebrated and recognized for its role in nourishing individuals, livelihoods, and relationships. A strong and localized food system provides dignified access to food for our people, a sense of place for our communities, and the seeds of resilience for future generations. The earth and its waters are our gardens, and we respectfully use the resources we have on hand while preserving our ecosystem through responsible stewardship."

10) Next Steps

The Implementation Plan will include the 'low-hanging fruit' where momentum and opportunities pre-exist within the community. Concurrently, it will recommend some slower and more systemic strategies that integrate diverse values in order to enhance long-term viability. Opportunities for continued community input are imperative, as without public commitment to the vision, it is doubtful that the implementation process will move forward.

Implementation Plan

From a planning perspective, it is useful to note which of the challenges we can reasonably do anything about. While we won't change the environmental climate, for example, we can use adaptations or innovations that allow us to work within those constraints (ie: greenhouses, aquaponics, winter crops). As a community, we could facilitate transportation options that reduce the cost and challenge of isolation or provide training, wage incentives, and business mentoring to production operations. While we can't easily change the fluctuations in population and markets, perhaps we could provide supports for primary agricultural operations in the slow season. Community land could be used/leased/set aside to mitigate the high cost of land in the region, and infrastructure such as community kitchens or processing facilities could be spearheaded and financed through government programs. These potential strategies offer a preliminary roadmap to an implementation plan.

Opportunities for Input

The next project Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for October 30, 2018. The public is invited to reach out to the project consultants or Committee members to discuss the project or content of this report. We welcome your input.

Heather Shobe, Project Lead
heather@edentreefarm.ca
250-724-2175

Erika Goldt, Coastal Liaison
erika@clayoquotbiosphere.org
(778) 232-8360

Leah Austin, Community Outreach
tofinolocalfood@gmail
(250) 266-0527

