

BC Food Systems Network

Final Report for OSDP Project I-083 “Going Organic Day”

October 26 2007

Introduction

Going Organic Day was a project funded in part by the Organic Sector Development Program. This day long workshop was dedicated to providing answers and clarification concerning organic farming and organic regulations to participants of the BC Food Systems Network's 8th annual gathering (September 15 2007). This field to fork workshop emerged after members of the BCFSN requested a workshop to demystify organics for their members and interested participants.

The event

30 participants attended this day-long workshop (though the event had been limited to 25). The day began with a visit to the Sorrento Farmers' Market where workshop participants were able to see the range of organic food available from the local area, including value added products.

The group then visited Left Fields Farm for a seed saving workshop by Patrick Steiner. This hands-on experience provided an opportunity for participants to learn about seed saving along with some of the politics of seed. Patrick Steiner is an excellent speaker and teacher.

After an organic lunch at the Sorrento Centre, Paddy Doherty gave a talk about the new Organic Products Regulation for Canada. Paddy Doherty explained the implications of the new regulation for consumers, farmers (large and small) and for processors, distributors, and retailers. Paddy answered many questions from an audience that had little knowledge of the new organic law in Canada.

The group then visited Sudoa Farms and were hosted by Sue Moore. Sue provided a tour of her commercial organic garden and explained about how she grows and markets her produce. Participants were also shown her washing and packing house and her storage facilities. Sue explained that weeds were one of her biggest obstacles and offered some of her strategies to deal with them.

The day was completed by a hands-on session working with Chef Heidi Fink to prepare organic food for the evening. Participants were allowed to assist Heidi with organic food preparation and learn how to make simple and elegant organic dishes.

Participant response

Here are some of the responses to the Going Organic Day from workshop participants:

- New to the BC region I was appreciative to learn more about policies affecting local, organic production in the province.
- I learned about community gardens, organics, seeds, coops. This info will go out to my community through the Food Coalition.
- Good information. Well organized Seed saving workshop and food prep with Heidi = great tips.
- Too much to list. I will pass on everything to the group I represent and am inspired to innovate services in my community.
- Impression: what a great group of impassioned and creative agents for agricultural change.
- Food is THE vehicles for cross-cultural sharing and understanding.
- Overall impression- great gathering. Very glad I could come. Try to get younger people out participating and passionate about food. Co-op farms. Local food systems, TLC, hopefully I can network and potentially work on a farm for a year to determine if this is my direction.
- Food is very important for survival and health. We should buy local produce and support farmers.
- The variety of views around local/organic and the way they were allowed to have a voice was really valuable

Financial report

Income

Item	Proposed	Actual
Administration fees paid by BCFSN	\$ 500.00	\$ 529.59
Participant registration fees	\$ 1,150.00	\$ 1,380.00
OSDP	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00
Total income	\$ 3,150.00	\$ 3,409.59

Expenses

Item	Proposed	Actual
Administration	\$ 500.00	\$ 510.00
Hall rental	\$ 250.00	\$ 432.00
Honorariums	\$ 1,100.00	\$ 400.00
Presenters' Registration		\$ 1,100.00
Food	\$ 700.00	\$ 902.86
Printing	\$ 200.00	\$ 150.00
Childcare	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00
Materials/supplies	\$ 200.00	\$ -
Gas mileage for drivers		\$ 100.00
Total Expenses	\$ 3,150.00	\$ 3,794.86

In kind Support

Item	Proposed	Actual
Organic Day facilitator	\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00
Printing	\$ 50.00	\$ -
Sheep Mountain Dairy		\$ 150.00
Presenter honorariums	\$ -	\$ 400.00
Total in-kind support	\$ 550.00	\$ 1,050.00

Conclusion

Thanks to support from the Organic Sector Development Fund, the BC Food Systems Network Organic Day was a great success. Participants were enthusiastic, as were the presenters. Chef Heidi Fink especially enjoyed the opportunity to mix with farmers and foodies and to create great dishes from fresh organic ingredients.

This is to confirm that the BC Food Systems Network fulfilled all of the obligations set forth in the proposal and contract for the OSDP Project I-083 Going Organic Day. Some of the expenses differ in the amount of the proposed budget, but the end resulted as proposed.