

1. INTRODUCTION

The Agriculture Sub-Committee of Community Futures Development Corporation contracted Insight Research, Salmon Arm, to prepare an agricultural strategy for the Shuswap.

The first report submitted June 14, 1999, detailed an inventory of all agricultural products in the Shuswap according to the census data from Statistics Canada. The second phase of the project involved a consultation in the form of primary research among local farmers, producers, representatives from community groups and professionals. The second report, dated October 14, 1999, is a compilation of the results from the second phase and includes recommendations and next steps. The third report, dated November 12, 1999, contains information from secondary research and Internet searches to explore next steps arising from the consultation process in the second phase of the project.

This fourth and final report contains recommendations and next steps for three different groups: 1) Community Futures Development Corporation, 2) farmers/producers and the agricultural industry and 3) value-added food producers and resource groups such as Economic Development Corporation, OUC, etc. This report also provides highlights from all the research results reported in previous documents.

2. METHODOLOGY

Members of the Agriculture Sub-Committee met on November 3, 1999, to discuss the details they would like to see included in the agriculture strategy in the fourth and final report. They suggested to Insight Research that the strategy be broken down as follows:

- 1) a strategy or a list of tasks for Community Futures for follow-up
- 2) a strategy for people involved in agriculture
- 3) a strategy for value-added food producers/resource groups such as First Nations, Ethnic/Traditional Food Resources, etc.

The projects and items which were considered to constitute a follow-up included;

- Processing
- Marketing
- Waste/Unutilized products
- Specialty/niche products
- Training.

The Sub-Committee also suggested that the report identified projects that can be accomplished. Included are ways in which the project can be pursued with timelines and an identification of projects that require funding, as well as identifying funding sources.

Bob Holtby, the agrologist on the Insight Research team, reviewed the three reports written by Insight Research for the Agriculture Strategy, and has summarized the highlights of all the results in this fourth report. These results are contained in the following Executive Summary.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The comprehensive findings of the study team in the second report dated October 14, 1999 confirm the trend findings in the first report of June 14, 1999, that the agricultural industry is continuing the maturation and intensification discovered in the 1996 census. None of the findings seem to be threatening to the continued health of the industry. Rather, they emphasize the continuing search for means to enhance the farm income of the producers through value-added processing, reduction of wastes, or the reduction of production costs.

The farmers who were interviewed tended to be younger (mean age of 46.5 years versus a mean age of 51 years in the 1996 census). Twenty-two percent of the respondents have been farming for ten years or less. One can infer from those statistics that some form of farm transfer is occurring, new farmers are replacing old, financing is available for transfers, and land is available for sale or rent.

Therefore, one can assume that the agricultural industry in the Shuswap has a bright and stable future.

In the development of strategies for the development of the agricultural industry, one must be constantly aware of the nature of the innovative farmer in the attributes he or she shares with other entrepreneurs. These attributes can be illustrated in the table below:¹

Theme	Attitude or Behaviour
Commitment and Determination	Tenacity and decisiveness, able to decommit/commit quickly Discipline Persistence in solving problems Willingness to undertake personal sacrifice Total immersion
Leadership	Self starter; high standards but not perfectionists Team builder and hero maker; inspires others Treat others as you want to be treated Share the wealth with all the people who helped create it Integrity and reliability; builder of trust; practices fairness Not a lone wolf Superior learner and teacher Patience and urgency
Opportunity Obsession	Having intimate knowledge of customers' needs Market driven Obsessed with value creation and enhancement
Tolerance of Risk, Ambiguity, and Uncertainty	Calculated risk taker Risk minimizer Risk sharer Manages paradoxes and contradictions Tolerance of uncertainty and lack of structure Tolerance of stress and conflict Ability to resolve problems and integrate solutions
Creativity, Self-reliance, and Ability to Adapt	Non conventional, open minded, lateral thinker Restlessness with status quo Ability to adapt and change; creative problem solver Ability to learn quickly Lack of fear of failure Ability to conceptualize and "sweat details"
Motivation to Excel	Goal and results orientation; high but realistic goals Drive to achieve and grow Low need for status and power Interpersonally supporting (versus competitive) Aware of weaknesses and strengths Having perspective and a sense of humour

¹ Timmons, Jeffrey A., *New Venture Creation; Entrepreneurship for the 21st Century*, Irwin Press, 1994, Page 191

These people are the leaders in a community who are inclined to follow suggestions from public agencies only when they are consistent with those attributes. However, as earlier literature suggested, “The rank and file follow the leaders but changes in attitudes and practices come more slowly. One generalization ... (is) the importance for adult educators of seeking out the influentials or innovators as well as the leaders in the communities.”²

For example, the study identified both spent hens and trout entrails as unutilized waste products.³ Both items are ingredients in feed for fur animals in a fur farm. A recommendation by any public agency of this availability would not be expected to produce any action until an entrepreneur saw the opportunity, brought previously acquired expertise to the opportunity, and managed the risk that was involved in this venture creation.

The important consideration is that change is a process rather than an event. It is effected by the kinds of changes involved as well as the individuals involved. In the past, the Ministry of Agriculture was involved as a change agent when it took agricultural extension as part of its mandate (consistent with the constitutional division of powers). This role has been abandoned. Then, a District Agriculturist was stationed in Salmon Arm to work with the farmers of the Shuswap to provide timely research information, conduct workshops and educational programs, and to be a communication conduit throughout the district. Now, a District Agriculturist comes from Vernon infrequently and does not have as his mandate and expectation that he will meet with farmers.

The Ministry professes a mission “to foster a competitive, economically viable and environmentally responsible agriculture and food system throughout British Columbia.”⁴ It commits to operating principles of “development of policies and programs that result in economic opportunities; ... forging partnerships with industry that result in value-added investment, diversification and market development opportunities; ... improving communication with industry, stakeholders and government agencies to identify mutually satisfactory solutions to

² Brunner, Edmund, et al, *An Overview of Adult Education Research*, Adult Education Association of the U.S.A., 1959, page 186.

³ Insight Research, *A Qualitative Research Study on Agriculture in Subdivision C, Columbia Shuswap Regional District*, October 14, 1999, page 8

⁴ «hyperlink <http://www.agf.bov.bc.ca/ministry/mission.htm> », November 25, 1999

issues facing the industry; ... and delivering programs and services of high quality, that meet client expectations, in a courteous and professional manner.”⁵ However, it does not address the issue of providing services that meet the educational and communication needs identified by this study⁶ in a manner consistent with the attributes of the participants and the theory of information diffusion.

In spite of a plethora of agencies concerned about a vibrant agricultural industry, (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Community Futures, Districts of Sicamous and Salmon Arm, Shuswap Business Development Centre, Salmon Arm Economic Development Corporation) no agency seems interested in fulfilling this function. Furthermore, there is little evidence of an integrated approach among the agencies.

Perhaps a first step would be for producer associations to identify specific extension needs from their membership and draft an association based business plan to deal with those needs. Funding for the plan could come from the producers themselves as a check-off on farm sales or on a fee for service basis; from government through special taxation; or by direct government involvement.

A proposal has been made for the formation of Agricultural Advisory Committees to work with the two districts in the study area as well as the Regional District. In the opinion of this writer, this is an excellent idea. To date, the farm community and the residential community have lived in relative harmony. The existence of a major shopping centre across the road from an active dairy farm is evidence of this harmony. One need only look to the central Okanagan or the eastern Fraser Valley to see cases where that harmony has broken down. The odors from animal manure on the farm or when spread on the field are negatively viewed by residential dwellers. Farmers negatively view the straying of residential pets to the farm. Agricultural Advisory Committees would be a vehicle for mutual concerns to be discussed. Participants from one group can make input into the plans of another before disharmony is created.

⁵ <hyperlink <http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/ministry/principles.htm> >, November 25, 1999

⁶ Insight Research, *op. cit.*, pp 11, 12, 13, 16, 17

4. DETAILED FINDINGS

A. DETAIL OF ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED FOR THE AGRICULTURAL STRATEGY

There were four phases of the agricultural strategy:

Step One involved an inventory of all agricultural products in the Shuswap. The report gave a detailed description of the product inventory, changes which had occurred between 1991 and 1996, and a short summary of the agricultural industry in the Shuswap.

Step Two consisted of a consultation in the form of focus group discussions and in-depth interviews among local farmers, producers, agricultural professionals and representatives from community groups. The main purpose of the second step was to obtain information from the respondents on a wide range of agricultural issues and problems including marketing and unutilized wastes, and to obtain input and reactions to value-added agri-food production, agri-tourism and herbal and medicinal plant growth potential for the Shuswap. This report included recommendations and next steps.

Step Three explored a variety of ideas for new products and services and the next steps arising from Step Two. The methodology used for this phase included secondary research and Internet searches. Internet searches were conducted on topics such as unutilized wastes, farmers' markets, community gardens, and gleaning projects. Secondary research took place in the form of telephone calls to individuals and reports written on specific subjects such as agricultural co-ops, fruits presses, community gardens, gleaning projects, and other agricultural research projects which had taken place in other locations in Canada.

Step Four contains an overall summary of the agricultural project with recommendations and next steps for three different groups.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS THAT WERE EXCLUDED

Some of the recommendations which were included in Step Three, Insight Research report, October 14, 1999, have been excluded from this final report after further secondary research and Internet searches were conducted on them. These excluded recommendations include;

i) Unutilized Waste Products

Colostrum

An Internet search showed that there are colostrum creams on the market for sale, although the market for this product at the present time is probably small and not fully developed. It is recommended that no further action is required at this time until the market is more fully developed and the number of sheep increase in the Shuswap.

Unutilized Grape Seeds

Although there are two commercial wineries in the Shuswap there is no contract processing of grape seeds at the present time. This potential unutilized waste relies on an extraction facility and until this facility is built in the Okanagan the opportunities for the grape seed products cannot be realized.

Agricultural Plastic Wrap

Agricultural plastic wrap does not appear to be a recyclable item as there is no place equipped to take the plastic as it is too dirty. There is potential for combining the plastic with wood residue to produce products such as lumber, however, additional research would have to be conducted in order to more fully explore this idea.

Heads and Entrails of Trout

There are two commercial aquaculture operations in the Shuswap at the present time. Although there may be possible opportunities for products derived from the heads and entrails of trout, the equipment and amount of money required to develop new products may be too expensive for the two aquaculture operations at this time. Additional research would have to be conducted on this unutilized waste product to determine its feasibility.

ii) Marketing Agricultural Products

The idea of a Shuswap marketing and distribution co-operative was recommended in Step Three of this agricultural project. This idea has definite potential and may develop as a result of farmers attending workshops offered in the Shuswap on agricultural co-operatives (see Recommendations for Ministry of Agriculture).

A restaurant or catering service that primarily uses Shuswap grown products was an idea recommended in Step Three. This idea has been implemented by De Montreuil Restaurant in Kelowna and has been successful. The population of Salmon Arm probably needs to increase substantially before this idea is pursued further.

iii) New Agricultural Products/Services

Many different new agricultural products and services were suggested in the report from Step Three of this project. We have outlined the ones we feel have the most potential at this time in the following recommendations for Community Futures Development Corporation. They will need to be researched further by anyone interested in pursuing the potential opportunities for those products. Those ideas which we have not recommended for further exploration still offer opportunities in the future but need additional research. In some cases, the market for some of these products may not be developed fully yet and the timing for entering these markets is not appropriate.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The recommendations are broken down by three different groups and contain the recommended projects, action required and timeline for each project. The three groups are as follows:

i) Community Futures Development Corporation and the Shuswap Business Development Centre

The following chart in Appendix A outlines the suggested recommended projects for Community Futures Development Corporation, the Shuswap Business Development Centre, and Shuswap Coordinating Training Society to pursue, the action required, the timeline and any potential funding, if it is required.

ii) Resource Groups

The following chart in Appendix B outlines the suggested recommended projects for resource groups to pursue, the action required, the timeline and any potential funding, if it is required.

iii) Farmers/Producers and the Agriculture Industry

The following chart in Appendix C outlines the suggested recommended projects for farmers, producers, and the agriculture industry to pursue, the action required, the timeline and any potential funding, if it is required.

In addition to the recommendation charts three different diagrams were developed to graphically portray the recommended projects and the integration of the groups and the ideas involved with the projects. The diagrams in Appendix D include:

- 1) Diagram A: Integrated Approach to Community Agriculture
- 2) Diagram B: Shuswap Agriculture Awareness
- 3) Diagram C: Shuswap Agricultural Web Site

