

Vancouver Island Food Systems Network and Listserve Launched!

On December 4, 2009, a broad range of groups and individuals came together (farmers, fishers, processors, chefs, educators, policy makers, academics, health professionals and of course all of us eaters) to launch a Vancouver Island Food Systems Network as a means to connect with others on Vancouver Island working on food/farm issues.

A network listserv supported through the BC Food Systems Network was launched in February and you are welcome to join.

Vancouver Island Food Systems Network listserv - to Join listserv

http://bcfsn.org/mailman/listinfo/vifsn_bcfnsn.org

In January, a survey went out 156 groups and individuals responded providing their input into network development. The survey groundtruthed what was heard at the December 4, planning meeting in terms of the mission, vision and membership. It also asked the potential members for more specific information about the ways they would like to communicate and about their priorities for the network.

The survey results are currently being reviewed and summarized and it is clear that people are supportive of the network. Below are some of highlights that have been tabulated so far.

Preliminary Summary Survey results:

156 Responses, with 87% finished the survey. Although most respondents were from the South Island, every part of Vancouver Island was represented in the survey. The majority of respondents were either farmers or interested consumers, with high response also from urban gardeners.

Name: The top pick in a name was Vancouver Island Food Network with quite a bit of support for something shorter and snappier such as Food Connect or Foodlink.

Mission: 95% agreed with the stated mission and many suggestions were made to improve its clarity and readability.

Purpose: 98% agreed with the purpose, comments focused on making self-sufficiency, mutual support, indigenous food systems, and connecting with consumers more prominent. Other comments centered on wordiness and readability.

Priorities:

The greatest priority was to "Share information on Food System issues" (77% of respondents rated this the highest priority) with "connecting people to resources and funding" (69%) being the second highest rated priority

Ways to Share Information

Most people preferred to share information by listserves, websites, or by large gatherings or smaller meetings. Teleconferences were the least favorite option, and 20% of the people were not familiar with webinars.

Most people would like to access information through a searchable database (79%)

A map and contact list was also seen as useful, as well as face-to-face meetings. Over 50% of respondents indicated that facebook, and Google groups did not interest them.

Currently the Stewardship Team is reviewing the results of the survey in detail and meeting to determine next steps and look at options for partnerships and resources to move the network forward.