

**As I see it...on farmland**  
**Submitted by Bob Maxwell**  
**Fieldstone Farm**

A major concern as I see it is the availability of sizable and good quality growing land for young aspiring farmers. It is really a shame that so much land on the peninsula just lies as unimproved pasture or hay land. This land use is fine as far as keeping the land reserve and providing the haying people with work, but if only some of it was in vegetable. The average age of farmers and landowners on the peninsula might be around 62 so there could be a lot of farm land changing hands over the next decade.

There needs to be some work in establishing a regional land trust where local groups, individuals, the regional district, municipalities and the province all kick in to buy good farm land. Maybe the Federal 'carbon saving' programs could help as well. Possibly some effective long term leases (10 to 15 years) could be drawn up on such 'trust lands' for new farmers. This program might train new farmers and introduce 'new' techniques for agriculture; the produce could go to many areas including food banks, schools and retail sales. We could get into new methods of organic matter management and recycle a lot of the organic waste in the region. There might be an opportunity to research and use an agri char process, which chars organic matter. This was a system used by an Amazon civilization to sustain their societies on topical soils. That advanced agricultural society died-out from Spanish introduced diseases about 600 years ago. See the WEB site <http://www.biochar-international.org/ibiprojectsandprograms/iai2007conference.html> and the site [http://www.computare.org/commentary.htm#Terra%20Preta%2006\\_09](http://www.computare.org/commentary.htm#Terra%20Preta%2006_09) maybe we could do a local research project on all of this.

Ramona Scott of the TLC sent us a note to follow up...

TLC is a farmland trust and is the only land trust in BC specifically working to address the very issues you describe. In our joint venture (Community Farms Program for BC) with Farm Folk City Folk, we are securing farmland and helping new farmers access this land to establish their own businesses in local food production.

To read more about the work the TLC is doing on Farmland visit their website at [www.conservancy.bc.ca/](http://www.conservancy.bc.ca/)

Click below to return to the Making Food Matter newsletter:  
[http://www.communitycouncil.ca/crfair\\_nl/crfair\\_nl\\_issue3\\_index.html](http://www.communitycouncil.ca/crfair_nl/crfair_nl_issue3_index.html)

