

The Keating Farm – A New Model of Food Security
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Keating Farm Co-op

Food security is an issue of great concern these days, particularly for residents of Vancouver Island. People are questioning the source of their foods, the transportation costs and the manner in which food is produced. Thanks to this growing awareness, more consumers are choosing to buy local organic produce, stimulating a greater market for local farmers.

The historic Keating Farm, located in the Cowichan Valley is a new venture dedicated to organic and integrated methods of farming. This idyllic 27-acre property was purchased in 2005 by The Land Conservancy who want to preserve the heritage aspects of the farm, along with its farming potential. The farm is leased to the Keating Farm Co-op, which consists of more than 100 individuals and several businesses who have purchased 68 shares to date.

Many co-op members bought shares out of concern for saving this bit of heaven for future generations, while others have actively engaged in farming activities, rejuvenating the old heritage orchard, nurturing a new colony of bees and planting a variety of vegetables and fruits. We've already had several successes - Keating Farm honey, flavoured with overtones of linden and hazelnut, won first prize at the Saanich Fair this year, and John Erlich, vegetable farmer extraordinaire, has fully reached his subscriber limit for his weekly veggie program..

A number of Keating Farm Co-op memberships are still available. The \$5,000 shares can be bought as a self-directed RRSP, and the cost of a share can be covered by an individual or spread among several people. A "layaway" plan is also available, with the cost payable over several months.

The Keating Farm is truly a new model in farmland preservation, and its success will encourage further such projects.

Want to learn more about the Keating Farm? Come visit us at the TLC website at <http://www.conservancy.bc.ca/> and click on the Keating Farm Estate link. Feel free to contact us any time. We'd love to hear from you!

Click below to return to the Making Food Matter newsletter:
http://www.communitycouncil.ca/crfair_nl/crfair_nl_issue3_index.html

