

What's on the Plate for 2008? Priorities for CRFAIR

Submitted by Linda Geggie

2007 saw our work to bring people together in the Capital Region to plan and take action to increase food security in the Capital Region flourish. After working away for the past decade it is exciting to see the amount of interest around food, health and sustainability!

Every year CRFAIR members meet in November to undertake an "Annual Review and Work Planning" session. The purpose of this session is to spend some time to reflect on our work and achievements of the previous year and then to set out the priorities of our workplan for the coming year (2007/2008).

Some notable achievements of 2007 were the:

- completion of the Regional Food and Health Action Plan Process and Report
- research and development of a proposal for a Regional Food Policy Council
- Introduction of a Resolution on Urban Agriculture that was supported by the City of Victoria
- Participation in a project to develop centralized food recovery and distribution for emergency food providers
- Increasing awareness and action around food issues in the region through a quarterly newsletter Making Food Matter, as well as a series of working groups focused on key food issues, and the Food Matters Forum that was attended by over 100 people from the CRD region.

In the coming year we would like to see the galvanization of much of the momentum that has been created over the past two years working together with the Healthy Communities Subcommittee of the CRD. This work has had a strong focus on gathering information on a **vision** and **plan** for creating better food security in the Capital Region. Some key issues that we are going to put energy into are the preservation of farmland and viability of farming and also in working with emergency food providers to encourage greater food recovery and distribution in the region.

Key achievements we would like to see in 2008:

- Finalize the Regional Food Charter and have it adapted/adopted by a number of municipalities and the CRD
- Establish a Food Policy Council in the CRD
- Release and disseminate Regional Food and Health Action Plan
- Reissue Food Resources Directory for emergency food in the CRD
- Host Forum on Farmland
- Expand Quarterly Newsletter Distribution and hold Annual Forum
- Launch Collaborative Education and Awareness Campaign

Following is our Action Plan 2007/2008

Our five year plan is focused on five key areas. In each of these areas we have identified our activities for 2007/08.

1. Continue Baseline to Assess and Report on Regional Food Security

(clearly define our progress indicators, conduct research and produce updated Status Report on Food Security in the Region):

- Constitute “action group” to support this work
- refine and test baseline indicators to reflect what we need them to measure and what we can realistically measure-small contract to undertake this work
- Work with academic institutions to support research needs (ie. Office of Community Based Research, Aleck Ostry, Martha Mahon etc).
- Look to publish next Status Report in 2009

2. Food Planning and Policy Work (Food Charter, Plan, Council)

a) Food Charter

- Finalize Food Charter
- Review what we are trying to accomplish with Food Charter
- Redefine strategy and enact

b) Food and Health Action Planning

- Draft plan needs to be rewritten in a useful format for decision makers and others.
- Articulate the tangible actions Municipalities can take
- Key meetings to continue to build awareness and buy in as per Putting Food and Food Policy on the Table project (CRD, Municipalities, VIHA, UVIC, Chamber of Commerce etc.)
- Hold Forum to continue process and highlight progress

c) Regional Food Policy Body

- Further discuss Food Policy Proposal with CR-FAIR membership
- Move proposal forward to establish Regional Food Policy Council in 2008

3. Support implementation of collaborative initiatives identified in action planning

(increasing food access and distribution, health and wellness, and local food production and processing infrastructure).

3.1. Access

- bring together actors involved in food distribution and assess current assets, gaps, opportunities, reissue Food Directory

3.2. Food Producing Lands

- work with other groups and agencies to support a regional forum on the topic of accessing and maintaining farmlands and follow up opportunities
- Follow up with review of Assessment Authority current farm assessment polices and reviews targeting CRD (starting with Saanich and Central Saanich)

3.3. Urban Agriculture:

- work with local groups to look at revision of residential zoning to allow for commercial food production, work to undertake zoning by-law changes with City of Victoria.

3.4. Purchasing Policies

- continue to follow Esquimalt and look at ways to support and highlight their work
- follow up with UVIC purchasing, document and explore opportunities to link to proposals for centralized food distribution

3.5. Distribution

- continue to look for, explore models of food processing, storage, transport and distribution

4. Network, Communicate and Educate across sectors to build stronger regional social infrastructure

- Continue to develop and utilize quarterly Making Food Matter e-newsletter and interim bulletins
- Promote what CR-FAIR is doing better.
- Build a targeted campaign
- Look at what other regional districts are doing in terms of food policy and link CRD with other RD's on food security issues and policies (ie. Food Safety)
- Hold annual forum

5. Strengthen the effectiveness, governance and sustainability of CR-FAIR as well as our ability to work in partnership and understand our role in the community.

- Review and revise structure, make simpler and easier to engage. Possible shift to Action Groups instead of Working Groups
- Complete Agreement with Community Council, maintain as legal entity/secretariat
- Co-Chairs to clarify roles and commit to stewardship of ongoing CR-FAIR meetings
- Continue to evaluate and shape CR-FAIR role/structure within process to develop local Regional Food Policy Council
- Continue to use Newsletter as main communication tool, introduce bulletins for interim announcements
- Build stronger relationships with key partners, develop MOU's

Click below to return to the Making Food Matter newsletter:

http://www.communitycouncil.ca/crfair_nl/crfair_nl_issue3_index.html

