

## CR-FAIR Check-in



**How are groups in the region working together? Here are some key highlights of work CR-FAIR has been involved in since our last newsletter:**

### **What's hot?!**

#### **The Provincial Election!**

On May 12 BC voters choose our Provincial Government. CR-FAIR has been working with groups like the BC Food Systems Network to get the word out about the election. A toolkit was developed for citizens to get food issues on the election radar (available at [www.fooddemocracy.org](http://www.fooddemocracy.org)).

In the Capital Region a Farm and Food Security Rally was held and attended by over 300 folks. On April 30, FoodRoots and CR-FAIR co-hosted a public event where all BC political parties were invited to talk about their party's platform related to food and agriculture. [Please get out and vote](#). It is probably the single most important thing you can do for food security during the election!

#### **A Regional Food Policy Council is in the Works at the CRD!**

Much work has been done to sow the seeds for a Food Policy Council at the CRD by CR-FAIR and the Food and Agriculture Sub Committee of the CRD Roundtable on the Environment. CR-FAIR is providing input to CRD staff who are developing recommendations for creating a strategy to be initiated for the coming year. VIHA is engaged in discussions around this initiative. CRD Board members have expressed support for the idea of a Regional Food Policy Council. If you are able to express your support to your CRD Board members, that would be a great help!

#### **The Monthly Roundtables!**

Rotating around the region are monthly roundtable meetings that are bringing people together to discuss issues and share information about their food security work. This year Colwood, Saanich and the City of Victoria have been sites with planned meetings for the Gulf Islands, Central Saanich and Langford set out for the coming months. Please feel free to attend! For more information and the Roundtable schedule, contact [annar@communitycouncil.ca](mailto:annar@communitycouncil.ca).

### **What else is going on?**

#### **Annual Food Matters! Forum...another year goes by!**

This year's forum was held at Burnside Gorge Community Center on March 13, 2009. The goal of the forum is to be an annual milestone where we look at the achievements and struggles of the last year. It is also a celebration of regional Food Security Champions with awards presented to those doing outstanding work in this area. The focus this year was our Regional Food Basket and Farmer Tom Henry and Diane "the Seaweed Lady" Bernard provided the keynote address. We also held three workshops:

- Year round public markets in BC's Capital Region
- Increasing access to food for households living on low income – two models of food distribution.

- Hooking up! Potential in community-university partnerships on food issues

**Make sure to check out**

[A Visual Year in Review](#) - a collection of images that is a sampling of the last year in food around BC's Capital Region

[2009 Food Security Champions](#) – CR-FAIR congratulates and thanks this year's Food Security Champions for the continued hard work in advancing food security in BC's Capital Region.

**Update on Key work areas for CR-FAIR :**

**Emergency food services provision**

CR-FAIR continues to work with a broad range of resource agencies in the region to explore ways to better coordinate food recovery and redistribution. Groups had hoped that Quest Outreach Society would be setting up a central site in Victoria to receive donations and develop a grocery store offering food at 1/3 the cost. Due to the current economic environment and staffing changes at Quest, these plans have been waylaid. Local groups plan to reassemble in the late spring to re-look at collaborative efforts to get more local and healthy food to a growing population needing to access these types of food resources.

This spring we will also see the groups come together to review the updated Food Resource Directory that provides people with a listing of the broad range of food resources available in our community.

**Access to farmland and farm viability**

A report entitled *Our Farmlands Our Foodlands Our Future Findings* is being drafted and should be completed and circulated by the end of May. It outlines the broad range of strategies explored at the November 2008 Farmlands Conference to ensure that farmland is accessible for farming and that farming is viable today and into the future. Watch for the announcement and the link to it in our next newsletter!