

CR-FAIR: Looking back on 2008 and kicking off 2009

Don't forget to mark your calendar for the fast approaching **Food Matters! Annual Forum on Regional Food Security- March 13, 2009** (details to be announced shortly).

Looking back on 2008

Over the past year CR-FAIR continued to focus efforts on information sharing and strengthening networks working on food issues in the region. We also had opportunities to link the work in BC's Capital Region to work on the Island, in BC and beyond.

Networking and Information Sharing:

- **Regional Food Security Hub:** CR-FAIR worked alongside the five VIHA Food Security Hubs to support food groups in the region, including supporting groups to access Community Food Action Initiative funding
- **Making Food Matter Newsletter:** the quarterly newsletter saw well over 200 submissions from groups around the region as well as a few articles from as far away as Manitoba!
- **Launched the Monthly Food Roundtable Meetings:** groups met monthly to share information about key regional issues and the work they are doing. This year the Food Roundtable will "take it on the road" and have the roundtable meetings rotate between hosting groups from around the region.
- **Annual Food Matters! Forum:** The March 2008 Food Matters! Forum tackled the subject of increasing local food supply, and had the **best turn out ever**. The event actually had a waiting list, so we are planning ahead for more this year.
- **Food Security Champions 2008:** Over 30 groups and organizations were nominated as food security champions, and 14 awards were presented.

Working With Governments

- **Regional Food Charter and Food and Health Action Plan:** The Regional Food Charter and Food and Health Action Plan were officially released. They can be accessed on line at <http://www.communitycouncil.ca/initiatives/crfair/index.html> or a hard copy can be picked up at the Community Council.

- **Regional Food Policy Council proposed:** One of the key recommendations of the Food and Health Action Plan is to establish a Regional Food Policy Council to enhance regional policy, planning and cooperation. In 2008, CR-FAIR worked with the Food and Agriculture Subcommittee (FASC) of the CRD's Roundtable on the Environment to move this proposal forward. To find out more contact info@communitycouncil.ca.
- **Central Saanich Farmland Economic Viability Review Committee:** CR-FAIR was invited to be part of this committee to create, and establish within the mandate of the updated 2008 Official Community Plan (OCP), a methodology for Central Saanich to remain a supportive, nurturing environment for encouraging sustainable agriculture in our community. Many of the committee's recommendations were included in the OCP, along with the recommendation to develop an Agriculture Plan. [Central Saanich Farmland Economic Viability Review Committee Report](#)
- **Farm Tax Assessment Review Panel:** CR-FAIR and many others presented to the Farm Tax Assessment Review Panel as they seek input into Farm Classification and related taxation issues. An ad hoc committee was also formed and discussed and created the [Farm Tax Issues document](#). This document was vetted by participants in the Farmlands Conference and was used as a backgrounder for input into the Review Process.
- **CRD Roundtable on the Environment's Food and Agriculture Sub Committee (FASC):** FASC undertook a number of initiatives around agriculture and worked with CR-FAIR in particular on the establishment of a Regional Food Policy Council, the Annual Food Matters! Forum, the Food and Health Action Plan, and the November 2008 Farmlands Conference.

Supporting Local Collaborative Initiatives:

- **The Farmlands Project:** Working in partnership with LifeCycles and other regional groups this project looked at farmland viability with a specific focus on farmland access and affordability. In the spring there was a meeting of the "key players" who then worked to hold a Conference "Our Farmlands Our Foodlands, Our Future" which was a roaring success and attended by over 180 people from around the region. See <http://www.lifecyclesproject.ca/conferences/focusonfarmlands/> for more info.
- **Access to adequate and healthy diets:** Working alongside VIHA and other partners, CR-FAIR worked on the development of an updated **Food Resources Directory** which will list available emergency food resource agencies and distribution outlets in the

Capital Region. As well, CR-FAIR is involved in supporting local groups to explore a partnership to create a **centralized emergency food distribution center**.

What's planned for 2009

On December 9, 2008, CR-FAIR Steering Committee members and advisors from the Food Security sector came together to discuss the issues, opportunities, and priorities for our work. At this meeting the group identified [current issues, opportunities and priorities for 2009](#).

2009 Activities

- Develop work as a regional hub, and increase communication and coordination with Island VIHA Hubs, as well as participate in the Food Foundations Forum in Courtenay, March 20.
- Continue information sharing and networking strategies: Quarterly Newsletter, Annual Food Forum, Rotating Food Roundtable Meetings
- Move forward Regional Food Policy Council with the CRD
- Move forward Regional Food Charter work, with a focus on Food Charter adoption by the City of Victoria
- Publish Food Access Directory and host Food Access Forum for groups working on access to healthy, adequate diets in the region
- Work with partner groups to report the findings of the Farmlands Conference with an emphasis on concrete Tools and Strategies we can employ at all levels in the region.
- Work with the Office of Community Based Research to continue to build capacity for Community University Partnerships, and host "Sharing Food and Knowledge" networking meeting in April at Uvic.
- Continue to work on indicators for Food Security compatible with health, community development, and local and regional government initiatives, as a step in the creation of the Food Security Assessment of the Capital Region.

Thank you to all CR-FAIR partners for an inspiring 2008. We would also like to recognize the Vancouver Foundation, the Vancouver Island Health Authority, Vancity and the Islands Agri-Food Trust for their support of this work. Without the hard work of these partners, and the sources of funding, CR-FAIR's work would not be possible.