

the real cost of food

growing dependencies and shrinking resources call for changes to our food system

What is food security? In a *food secure* community, the growing, processing and distribution of healthy, safe food is economically viable, regionally produced, socially just and environmentally friendly. A *food system* is the combination of industries that bring food products from farms to your table.

Local food production matters. 50 years ago, Vancouver Island farmers produced an estimated 85% of the Island's food supply. Today, Island producers grow less than 10% of our food.

Our farmland is shrinking. In the Capital Region, 2,000 hectares of land were removed from the Agricultural Land Reserve between 1974 and 1999. Our farmers are leaving and are not being replaced.

We can only control what is close to home. Local food may sometimes cost more, but we know where and how it has been produced. Local food production means local jobs.

Good food is the basis of health. We live longer and healthier when we choose good nutrition. Locally produced food is fresher, more flavourful and less likely to contain harmful additives.

People in our community are hungry. More than 50,000 people in the Capital Region live in poverty, including 9,000 children. Many are unable to meet their basic nutritional needs. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights includes the right to food.

here's what you can do:

Support your local growers. Request more local foods at your grocer, eat at restaurants that feature locally produced food and support local farmers' markets.

Support community food programs. Donate some time, money or food to community kitchens and food box programs for low-income households.

Make it an issue. Ask your municipality to include food security in their agenda by planning to protect agricultural land and support local food production.

Grow your own. Start a vegetable garden in your backyard or the local community garden.

For more ideas visit www.communitycouncil.ca and click on the What's New link.

Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria
1144 Fort Street, Victoria, BC V8V 3K8 tel: 250-383-6166
email: info@communitycouncil.ca web: www.communitycouncil.ca

