

Advancing Food Sovereignty: Municipal Supported Agriculture and the Richmond Farm School

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Outline

- Discuss the MSA concept, the Farm School and how they support one another
- Most importantly- convey why the ISH is focusing on these kinds of efforts; the larger context and goals

Agriculture and food- a clear and primal manifestation of our worldview



The Jury is In on our agri- food system.

- Unsustainable resource use- energy ($\approx 10:1$), water
- Extensive environmental degradation; climate chaos
- Most value captured by input and marketing sectors
- Farmers indebted/ abandoned by young. Consolidation.
- Socially disengaged enterprise- an urban throughput.
- Growing food insecurity. No food sovereignty for anyone.

Bottom line- not a pretty picture

Evidence

Canadian inflation 2008



www.conservancy.bc.ca/imagecatalog/UBC-Farm.jpg

Overall-	1.2 %
Food overall-	7.3 %
Cereal products-	12.4 %
Fruits/ vegetables-	26.9 %

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation News, 2009

More evidence

Prohibitive farmland values-
\$100,000 +/- acre in the lower
mainland.

Based on speculation, not the
agriculture economy.



Richmond Farmland, Graham Osborne photo

Food sovereignty, security and system sustainability growing concerns

- Peak oil, water
- Climate change
- Lost knowledge
- Epidemic dietary disease
- Population growth/ urbanization
- Sustainable cities

Post-industrial agri-food system

- Economically robust and contributes significantly to local economy
- Farmers capture more, equitable value
- Creates many rewarding jobs, attracts a new generation focused on sustainability
- Impediment to land speculation and urban sprawl
- Environmentally sound – provides ecological services

Post-industrial agri-food system also

- Provides nutritious, wholesome foods for all- mitigate disease
- Diverse, multi-dimensional, adaptive
- Engages urbanity- creates connectivity/ community
- Addresses food security, sovereignty and urban sustainability

Metro-Vancouver primed and poised



Credit: Michael Marrapese via Farm Folk/City Folk

Human scale, ecologically sound,
in and around cities, for and by
residents, in all of its dimensions

Agricultural Urbanism

The full integration of the agri-food system within the planning, design, development and function of cities and vice-versa

We're talking about a lot more than community gardens and allotment plots

Municipal Supported Agriculture

- City owned lands leased for food production
- Municipalities procure land in and around the city
- Provide long (multi-generational?) and economically favorable leases
- Stipulate sustainable farming methods
- Require direct marketing to city residents
- Overseen by community steering committee
- Land owned by the people for common good



Particularly
appropriate on
the edge

Soften the line-
integrate
agriculture with
urbanity



Modeling Agricultural Urbanism and Community Trust Farming



Food sovereignty/ self-sufficiency a future municipal service priority?



Graphic by Ellen Pond, 2008

Richmond Farm School

A partnership:

City of Richmond

Richmond Food Security Society

Richmond Fruit Tree Sharing Project

Institute for Sustainable Horticulture



To prepare people to engage in post-industrial agriculture



- Integrated theoretical and applied studies
- Breadth of UA enterprises
- Appeals to a new/ different breed
- Incubator farm sites
- Not for credit/ but integrated with BSc. Sustainable Agri-food Systems

Students will transition to Incubator Farm Plots



then
to



Municipal Supported Agriculture

Richmond's motivation?

Institute's motivation?

Mitigate un-sustainability

(necessary but insufficient)

Create the potential for sustainability

(a completely different challenge)





“The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.”

Albert Einstein