



Community Farms Program



✓ *Are you interested in farming with other people?*

✓ *Do you want to make sure your farm remains farmland after you retire?*

✓ *Would you like to support a sustainable food supply in your community?*

If you want to farm, are concerned about farmland disappearing, and want to help build healthy, local food systems, you know there are some real challenges.

Community farms are part of the solution. They can help address some of the challenges faced by farmers and communities because they:

Support local food systems by supplying locally grown food;

Protect farmland for long-term food production through land trusts, covenants, and other means;

Give new farmers access to affordable land through long-term leases;

Provide supportive and **flexible labour pools**.

What's a Community Farm?

A community farm is a multi-functional farm where the land is held "in trust" for community rather than owned privately. The land is managed by a community group or co-operative, and is farmed by two or more farm businesses. The primary focus of a community farm is local food production using sustainable agricultural practices. Land holders, land managers, and farm businesses work together by mutual agreement. Farmers are housed on or near the land.

Farming in BC

In BC, communities face many challenges to preserving farmland and developing a local, sustainable food supply.

- Ongoing development pressures threaten farmland
- Average age of BC farmers is 57 years
- Knowledge about farming is disappearing
- Low incomes, long hours, and high risks discourage new farmers
- Demand for local, organically-grown food is up, and exceeds supply
- High cost of farmland

People who want to farm sustainably on a small scale are investing in community farming. There are currently more than 20 farms in BC that have experience and knowledge in sustainable organic farming practices and cooperative production and living.

With the Community Farms Program, we're helping create more farms like these in BC.

What is the Community Farms Program?

The Community Farms Program is a joint venture between FarmFolk/CityFolk Society (FFCF) and The Land Conservancy of British Columbia (TLC). We bring together landowners, farmers, local communities, and resources to develop and support community farm models in BC.

Community Farms Program Goal

The goal of the Community Farms Program is to actively secure farmland for present and future food production. We do this by:

- Facilitating farmland securement for local food production
- Helping new farmers access affordable land
- Providing an information hub of farm-related governance models, best practices, management tools, and training
- Assisting a network of farmers, landowners, local communities, and resources to support community farm development in BC

Community Farms Program Activities

The Community Farms Program supports people involved in farmland protection and community farming. We do this by providing information, resources, and assistance.

The Community Farms Program is a multi-phase initiative. Phases 1 and 2 develop and test program models and resources, and Phase 3 will establish a business model for ongoing program sustainability.

2008/2009 project activities in the Community Farm Program include:

- Establish and support a Council of partners, stakeholders and farmers to guide and develop the Community Farms Program;
- Identify potential new farmers and survey their needs and assets;
- Link farmers with mentors, training and land;
- Research and explain how existing government regulations on land ownership and farming businesses affect the development and operations of community farms on agricultural land;
- Research and describe existing training programs for small-scale farmers, and identify gaps
- Research case studies and develop models to help new and existing community farms finance, own, govern, and operate their community farms;
- Design a “Whole Farm Planning process” to set conservation and sustainable agriculture objectives specifically for community farms;
- Work with community farms in various stages of development to test, evaluate, and revise the models, templates, and Whole Farm Planning process;
- Facilitate formation of community groups (such as societies and cooperatives) that support farms and farmers;
- Create and promote a Community Farms Program website to house community farm resources and link to partners and programs;
- Share project results with farming and other BC communities to help support existing community farms, stimulate the formation of new community farms, and increasing awareness and support for community farms among members of the public.

Who are we?

FarmFolk/CityFolk is a non-profit organization that connects farms and cities across British Columbia to create and support local, sustainable food systems. Our projects protect agricultural land, help farmers access farmland, support local and small-scale growers and producers, and connect local food communities through education, communication and celebration.

The Land Conservancy is a registered charity and land trust protecting natural areas, heritage landmarks, and agricultural lands in BC. *TLC* offers long-term farming tenures and encourages agricultural stewardship practices that support healthy ecosystems and local, sustainable food production.

Contact Us!

For more information about the Community Farms Program for BC and to get involved, contact us!

FarmFolk/CityFolk

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