



Shuswap Agricultural Strategy

June 9, 2014

Prepared by



Sustainability
Solutions
Group

DELIVERED BY

FUNDING PROVIDED BY



Investment
Agriculture
Foundation
of British Columbia



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Funding for this project has been provided by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the BC Ministry of Agriculture through programs delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the BC Ministry of Agriculture and the Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC are pleased to participate in the production of this publication. We are committed to working with our partners to address issues of importance to the agriculture and agri-food industry in British Columbia. Opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and not necessarily those of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the BC Ministry of Agriculture and the Investment Agriculture Foundation.

Vision

The Shuswap is known as a region of exceptional farms, farmers and food.

*The Shuswap community has cultivated an environment that guides and supports the responsible and sustainable use of farmland, innovative agricultural economic enterprise, contributes to its celebrated and international reputation, champions education and innovation, and instills a collaborative spirit.
It is the place to be.*

Acknowledgements

Many people who are passionate about agriculture in the Shuswap contribute their time and efforts to this project. We thank them for their contributions to this report.

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Glossary

Some acronyms used in this report and their meanings.

AAC	Agricultural Advisory Commission
ALC	Agricultural Land Commission
ALR	Agricultural Land Reserve
APF	Agricultural Policy Framework
BCAC	BC Agriculture Council
CAS	Climate Action Secretariat
CSRD	Columbia Shuswap Regional District
EFP	Environmental Farm Plan
FIRB	Farm Industry Review Board
IAF	Investment Agriculture Foundation
MA	BC Ministry of Agriculture
SD	School District

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Cliff Pedestrian Market





Agricultural Strategy open house at Harmonious Homestead

Introduction

Agriculture plays a key role in the economy and identity of the Shuswap region, contributing to the high quality of life in this area. The Shuswap Agriculture Strategy builds on previous regional discussions to solidify a vision for agriculture in the region, and identifies mechanisms to support food security and the sustainable growth of agriculture in the Shuswap region. Elements addressed by the Strategy include:

- Regional differentiation;
- Collaboration between organizations;
- Community engagement;
- Research and education; and
- Marketing.

The strategy addresses the municipalities of Salmon Arm, Sicamous, and CSRD Electoral Areas C (South Shuswap), D (Deep Creek/Falkland), E (Malakwa/Eagle Valley) and F (North Shuswap). It does not address Electoral Areas A (Golden) and B (Revelstoke).

This is a high-level document that is meant to guide policy, action and investment on agriculture in the Shuswap. It provides context and background on the state of Shuswap agriculture, solidifies a vision for agriculture in the Shuswap and makes recommendations for action. The recommendations reflect public and Steering Committee inputs and direction. An agricultural strategy is different from an agricultural plan. An agricultural plan document is usually a policy piece that sets responsibility for governments and makes recommendations on changes in land use (i.e.: land use inventory, soil capabilities, zoning, etc.).

Project Process

The Agricultural Strategy Steering Committee assisted CSRD staff, the Salmon Arm Economic Development Society, Shuswap Economic Development, and the consulting team in guiding the process and delivering the final recommendations for approval to the CSRD Board of Directors. The Committee represented diverse community members working directly in the agriculture industry as well as CSRD Electoral Area Directors (elected politicians).

Project activities included:

- Compiling a situational analysis (Appendix A) yielding a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis (Appendix B) of agriculture in the CSRD;
- Mapping agricultural assets by the public;
- Hosting a public project website with project information, outputs and updates;
- Composing a best practices guide with examples of successful agricultural elements from other jurisdictions (Appendix C);
- Consulting with focus groups on an agricultural vision for the Shuswap, and actions to achieve it (Appendix D);
- Preparing a draft list of recommended agricultural strategies;
- Surveying Steering Committee members for their strategy priorities (Appendix E); and
- Preparing the CSRD Agricultural Strategy report.

An overview of the project process can be found in Appendix F.

This report was presented to and accepted by the Project Steering Committee May 9, 2014. It was presented to and approved by the CSRD Board of Directors June 19, 2014.

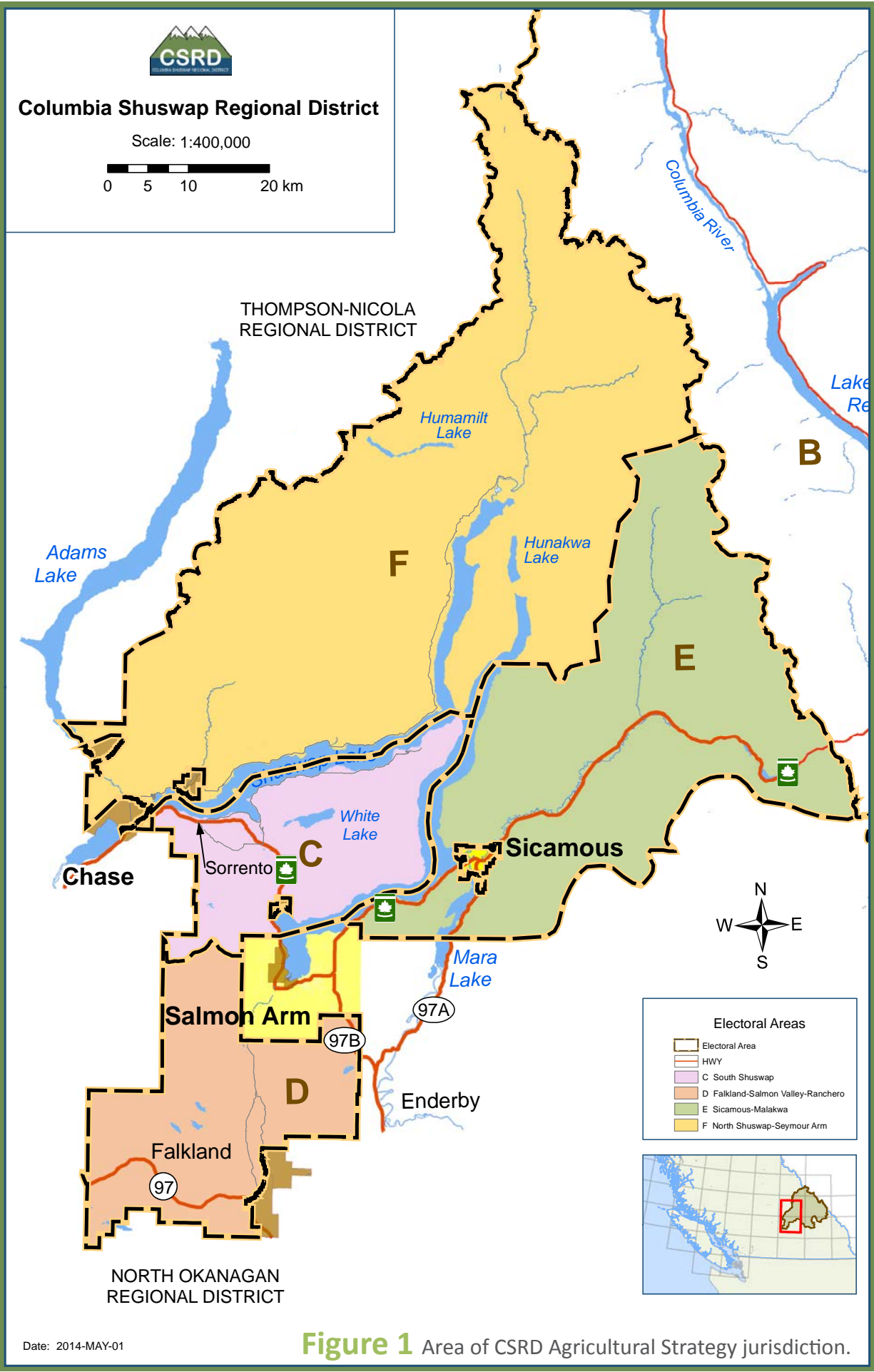


Figure 1 Area of CSRD Agricultural Strategy jurisdiction.

Context

Agriculture has been a key part of the Shuswap identity since the early days of outside settlement of the region over a century ago. With growth of the region since, development pressures and other interests have placed increasing pressure on the agricultural land base. In spite of this, the agriculture sector continues to thrive and innovate; recent trends show average profitability increasing, and the number of farms is holding steady.

The most recent agricultural census was conducted in 2011. The numbers provided below describe agriculture across the entire CSRD¹ (i.e.: including Electoral Areas A & B, which are not part of the area covered by the Agriculture Strategy).

Agricultural Land Base

The CSRD has 54,566 ha of Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) (as of 2012), compared to 67,409 ha in 1974, when the ALR was established. There were 38,413 ha of actual farmland² as of 2011, down from 41,549 ha in 2006, and up from 33,691 ha in 1996. The number of farms in the region has been quite consistent over the past decade, with 616 farms reported in 2011. This is fewer than the 685 farms reported in 1996. About 10% of farmland in the area is irrigated (3,809 ha, spread across 225 farms). Nineteen farms in the CSRD were using organic practices in 2011 (15 certified, 4 transitional).

Agricultural Activities

11,448 ha of CSRD agricultural land were crops (hay, field crops, vegetables, fruits, nuts, sod and nursery products) in 2011, up from 9,383 ha in 2006. Most of this was hay (8,995 ha). 116 ha was fruit and 77 ha was vegetable production. An additional 94 ha was summer fallow. A larger proportion was tended and natural pasture land (17,896 ha), with another 8,975 ha in other types of production or idle.³

Farm size & characteristics of farmers

The average farm size in 2011 was 62 ha. This was a drop from an average size of 68.6 ha in 2001, and up from 49.2 ha in 1996. In total there were 940 farm operators in 2011, whose average age was 56 years (compared to the Canadian average of 54 years). The average age of farms with a single operator was higher, at 58.6 years old. Roughly half of farm operators in the CSRD (445) derive their only income from farm operations.⁴

Economic characteristics of farming

Gross farm receipts for CSRD agriculture in 2011 totalled \$52,619,759. This was substantially greater than 2006 (624 farms, \$40,394,994), and 2001 (616 farms, \$34,035,317). Likewise, the total wages and salaries paid in 2011 (\$6,394,776) were higher than in 2006 (\$4,529,068). Accounting for total farm operating expenses, net farm receipts totalled \$3,889,729 in 2011. This is an average net farm income of \$6,314 per farm, or \$101.26 per hectare. This is an improvement from average net losses in 2006 of \$13,359 per farm, and 2001 average net farm receipts of \$2,237 per farm.⁵ The ratio of expenses to receipts in the CSRD (0.92) was higher than the Canadian (0.83) and BC (0.89) average. In other words, CSRD producers paid \$0.92 in expenses for every dollar of income.⁶

However, the distribution of farm income varies considerably. In 2011 there were 450 farms in the CSRD with gross farm receipts under \$25 000 (334 of which were under \$10 000). In contrast, only 13 farms earned over \$1 million in gross farm receipts in the same year.

A 2012 market survey in nearby Kelowna and Kamloops showed that the twice weekly farmers market in each location contributes approximately \$10 million and \$5 million, respectively, to the local economy annually.⁷ There are eight farmers markets listed on the Shuswap Tourism site, operating in Salmon Arm, Sicamous, Enderby, Chase, Blind Bay, Sorrento, Falkland. The Shuswap is also home to an emerging white wine industry, featuring 6 award-winning wineries, along with the first certified organic microbrewery in Canada.

Governance

Agriculture exists in a complex policy and regulatory context, interacting with all levels of government on various elements of farming that range from food safety to habitat and fisheries management and land use. In addition to roles in policy and regulation, the provincial and federal governments also administer various services and support programming to the industry. Local government is not directly responsible for agriculture, but influences the industry particularly due to its role in developing and administering land use plans and bylaws.

The Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) in BC has jurisdiction over land uses on designated agricultural lands, where agricultural uses are prioritized and other activities are controlled. ALR regulation takes precedence over other legislation or bylaws in these areas, but does not replace them. Local governments must ensure that plans and

bylaws are in compliance with the ALC Act and Guidelines. Proposed exclusions of land currently designated as ALR must be approved by the ALC.⁸

Land Use Policies

While local government does not have particular jurisdiction over agriculture, many aspects of land use planning and local government operations affect the local agriculture industry. The CSRD is taking action to support agriculture as a core element of community character, values, economy, history, and prudent future planning. Increased understanding of the sector’s current issues and strengths, and stronger relationships across the agriculture sector also creates a foundation for meaningful engagement with provincial and federal governments to represent local agriculture interests at senior levels.

Economic Development

The Salmon Arm Economic Development Society (SAEDS) Economic Development Action Plan (2013-2017) is supportive of agriculture as a component of a vibrant local economy, highlighting the multiplier effect of agriculture for economic activity in the region. Three key strategies for local agriculture are identified, outlining the role that SAEDS will play in enhancing local agricultural economic development:

Regional Agriculture Strategy:

- Supporting the efforts of CSRD Economic Development to complete a Regional Agriculture Strategy;
- Improve workforce development, training and labour sourcing for management and seasonal labour positions;
- Work with local workforce development agencies to determine demand for specific skills; and
- Wherever possible, integrate these efforts with the Downtown Community Campus initiative and the talent attraction strategy.

Grassroots Agricultural Organizations:

- Support development of local agricultural groups and establishment of agricultural infrastructure through SAEDS’ supporting non-profits program.

Local and Organic Food Markets:

- Support new local market opportunities by connecting producers with cafes, restaurants, hotels and other food providers and/or supporting these connections through establishment of cooperatives, partnerships and storage facilities to meet year-round demand; and
- Encourage development of a local food procurement program for institutional buyers (e.g.: City of Salmon Arm, Okanagan College)

Crop Area by Agricultural Use

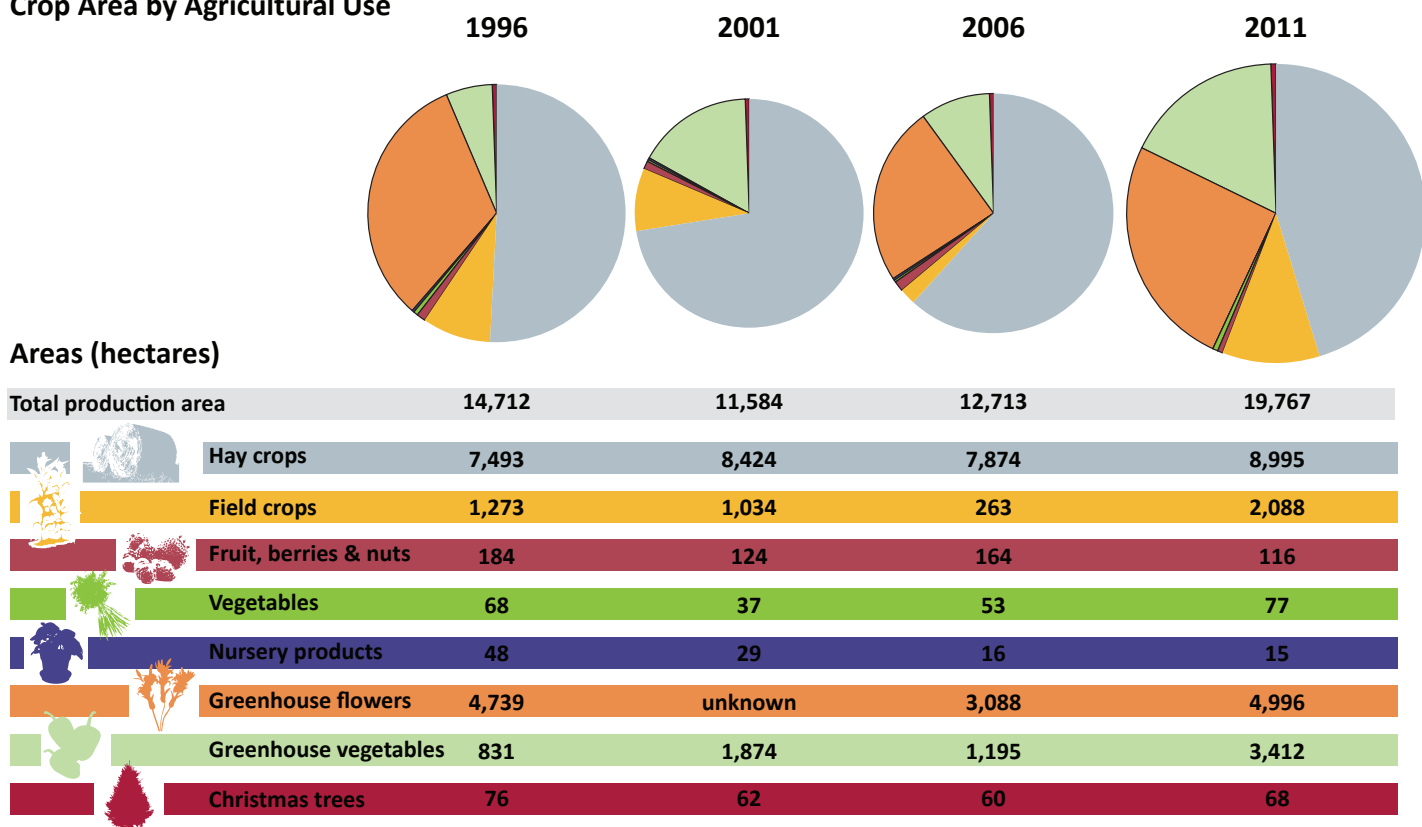


Figure 2 CSRD crop area by agricultural use.



Columbia Shuswap Regional District

Scale: 1:400,000

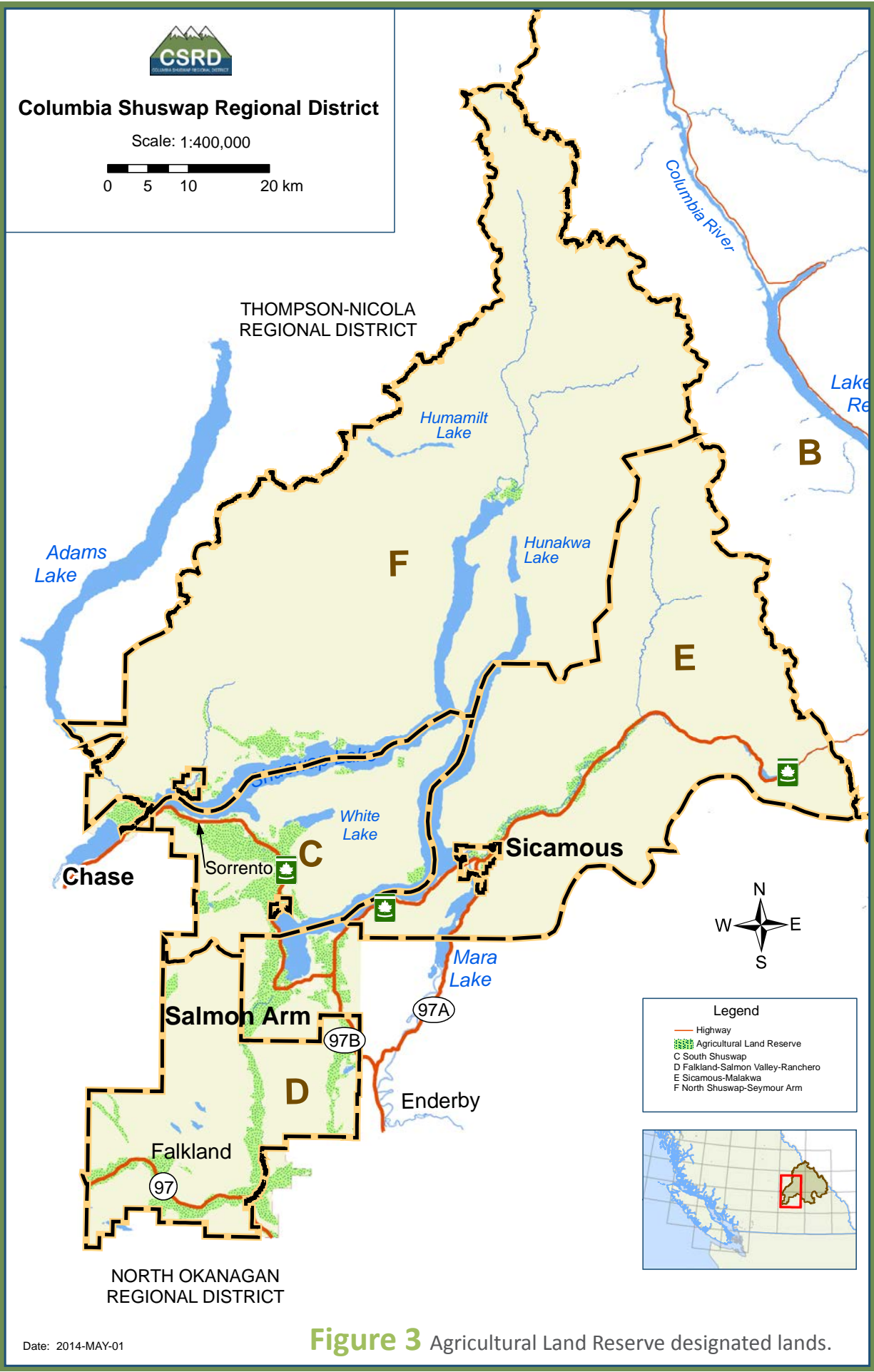
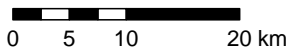


Figure 3 Agricultural Land Reserve designated lands.

Date: 2014-MAY-01

Shuswap Tourism Development Plan

The 2010 plan by Shuswap Tourism identifies Agriculture as one of the key strengths for development of the region's tourism industry. The Plan describes agri-tourism as a broad category that includes produce and craft food sales, farmers markets, u-pick farms, festivals and farm tours.

Actions relating to agri-tourism include:

- Encouraging interested producers to take advantage of BC Agri-Tourism Alliance (BCATA) programs;
- Approaching BCATA to provide resources and information to local producers; and
- Coordinating potential agri-tourism signage with broader tourism signage program, in support of a farm tour circuit.

CSRD OCP Economic Development Policies

Policies in support of local agriculture and its economic development vary widely across the OCPs. Examples include support for:

- Agri-tourism;
- Value-added agriculture;
- Small-scale related processing facilities;
- Marketing of local products;
- New farmers to access land;
- Incentives for farmers to stay on their land;
- Economic development initiatives;
- Farmers markets;
- Farm gate sales;
- Raising awareness (shop local campaigns, community gardens, signage program to promote local agriculture); and
- Alternative, smaller-scale agricultural businesses.

Agri-tourism is generally supported in agricultural areas (given that ALC requirements are satisfied), with some OCPs specifying ways that this will be furthered (eg: research, strategy development).

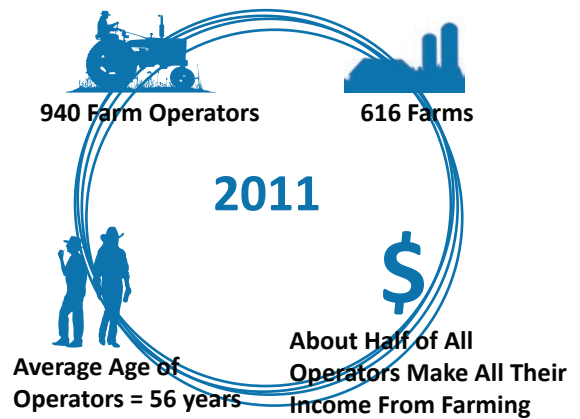
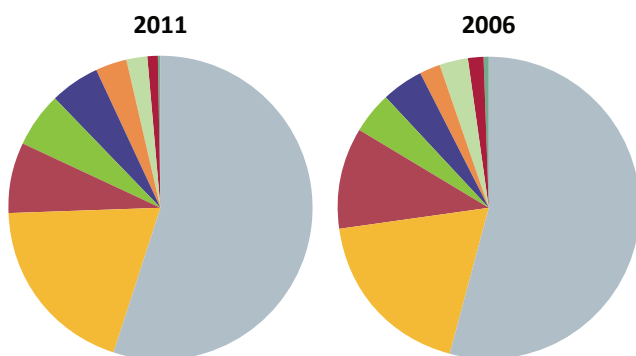


Figure 4 CSRD farming statistics.

Gross Farm Receipts

(2011 Census, entire CSRD area)



Gross Farm Receipts	Number of Farms	
	2011	2006
\$2 000 000 and over	2	1
\$1 000 000 - 1 999 999	11	7
\$500 000 - 999 999	18	14
\$250 000 - 499 999	15	21
\$100 000 - 249 999	27	33
\$50 000 - 99 999	27	35
\$25 000 - 49 999	66	48
\$10 000 - 24 999	116	121
Under \$10 000	334	344
Total Number of Farms	616	624

Figure 5 Gross farm receipts.

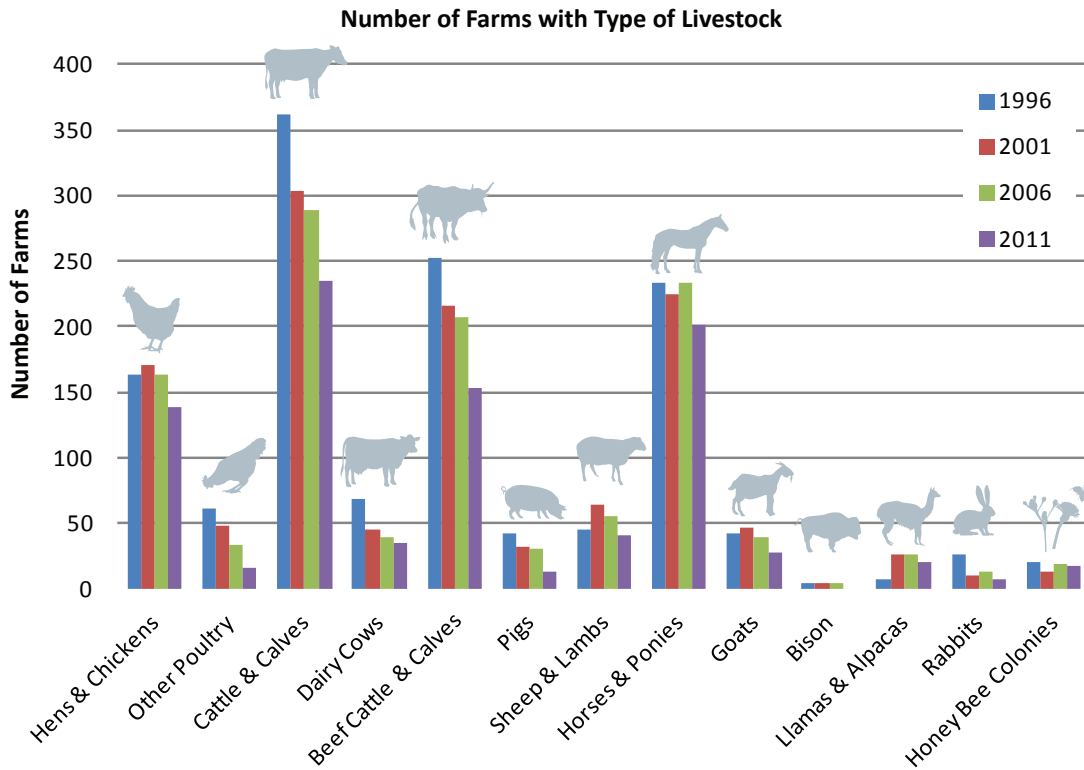


Figure 6 Number of farms by type of livestock raised.

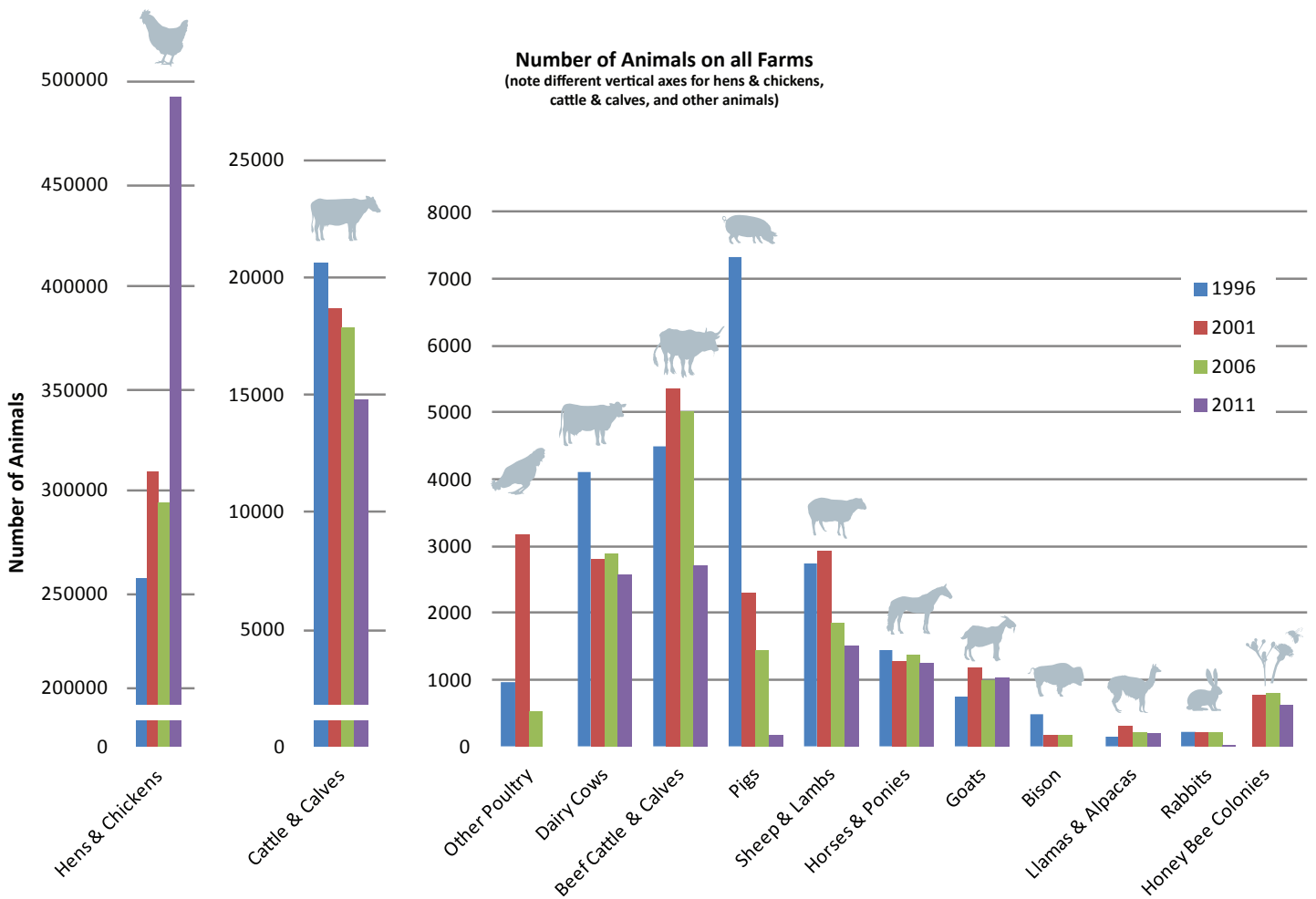


Figure 7 Number of animals on all farms.

Challenges and Opportunities

Based on background information, public engagement and discussions with the Agriculture Strategy Steering Committee, the following challenges and opportunities for the area have been identified. Some more specific challenges and opportunities were identified in the public engagement sessions and can be found in Appendix G.

Challenges

Aging producer population and succession

With the average age of farmers reaching 56.1 in the CSRD, and fewer children taking over the family farm, the transfer of knowledge and assets is a growing concern across the agriculture industry. High land values can be a barrier for new farmers to enter the industry and establish profitable businesses.

Farm profitability and access to labour

Gross farm receipts for the region increased between the 2006 and 2011 census. However, more than half of CSRD farms make less than \$10 000, and the ratio of expenses to receipts in the Shuswap (0.92) is higher than both the BC and Canadian average. In addition, securing farm labour can be a challenge, especially since most farm work is seasonal.

Markets

The small scale of production in the Shuswap could be a limitation to accessing larger markets requiring a minimum volume and year-round supply. Access and proximity could also be a barrier.

Economic and environmental change

Volatility of markets is an ongoing concern, while negative impacts on other growing regions may create opportunities here. Climate change impacts for agriculture will be significant, and taking advantage of opportunities will require proactive effort.

Water management

Water supply and irrigation is a long-standing concern and limitation to production in the region. Approximately 10% of agricultural land in the region is currently irrigated. Information about surface and groundwater supplies across the region is inadequate. The extreme variability of lake water levels can also be a serious challenge.

Protection of agricultural land

The limited base of agricultural land in the region continues to face pressure to be taken out of the ALR and developed for other uses. There are areas of agriculturally capable land inside and outside the ALR that are not currently being farmed, but could be used for production.

Development pressures

Increasing development of the surrounding land base brings with it a greater need to manage soil, land, vegetation and water impacts on surrounding areas, and from surrounding areas. Groundwater protection and stormwater management are growing areas of concern for the CSRD.

Inconsistent bylaws

Certain bylaws can prevent actions that would be supportive of agriculture. For example, some business activities that could be used to augment farming income may not be allowed in all areas, even if these activities are approved by the ALC. As another example, some zoning may be incompatible with ALC-approved or restricted land uses.

Environmental values

There is a lot of concern in the region about water quality and other environmental values. In addition to managing agriculture's impacts on the environment, working collaboratively with other groups and raising awareness of good farm practices are increasingly important.

Awareness of the public and decision-makers

A general lack of understanding of the realities of farming and its importance to the local community and economy is a limitation. This is necessary for agriculture to become a greater political priority than it is currently.

Lack of supportive infrastructure

There is a shortage of distribution, processing and storage infrastructure in the region. The region has some great farmers markets but not all of them are in suitable locations and there is no year-round facility.

Opportunities

Collaboration

The Shuswap has a long history of an active and engaged civic culture, and ongoing local initiatives demonstrate the capacity for collaborative initiatives in this region and for agriculture in particular.

As stronger relationships and direction across local agencies and organizations related to agriculture develop, it will be possible to approach other levels of government from a strong position to work effectively on areas of shared interest or responsibility.

Entrepreneurship and innovation

There are many current and past examples of innovative and entrepreneurial producers and organizations in the Shuswap (e.g.: Farmers' Exchange, Askew's, Crannog Ales, and many more). These already demonstrate the potential in targeting niche markets and value-added production, as well as building a strong local food economy.

Engaged local government

CSRD land use policies are generally supportive of agriculture. The Sicamous OCP in particular, models proactive and positive support for agriculture and protection of agricultural lands.

Local Food Economy & Culture

Agriculture is a strong part of the Shuswap identity, and the rural and agricultural aesthetic is valued by local residents. Quality of life features could attract more management level workers, and new farmers.

Tourism

There is a desire to enhance tourism in the region, to the

extent that Sicamous is taking steps to become a resort municipality. An increase in tourism will include additional potential for agri-tourism. Agriculture and agri-tourism form a core part of the current tourism strategy, and could support a more robust local agricultural economy.

Support for adaptation to climate change

Local OCPs are supportive of addressing climate change impacts, and almost all identify local food production as a climate change mitigation and adaptation strategy.

Downtown Community Campus Initiative

The Downtown Salmon Arm Community Campus initiative for Okanagan College and new programming for agriculture are an opportunity to position the region as an agriculture innovation centre and offer a link between aspiring farmers and the existing farming community.

Location

While distance is a factor, the Shuswap may find ways to take advantage of its convenient location between two major cities (Vancouver, Calgary), and the major regional centres (Kamloops, Kelowna).

Water supply

While water supplies and irrigation capacity are limited and need to be carefully managed, this area is relatively water rich compared to nearby parts of the region.⁹

Scotch Creek focus group session



Our Vision

The vision for agriculture and food in the CSRD was distilled from discussions with the Steering Committee and the public.

The Shuswap is known as a region of exceptional farms, farmers and food. The Shuswap community has cultivated an environment that guides and supports the responsible and sustainable use of farmland, innovative agricultural economic enterprise, contributes to its celebrated and international reputation, champions education and innovation, and instills a collaborative spirit. It is the place to be.

Goals

The goals of the Agricultural Strategy and its implementation are to:

- Improve the economic health and viability of our local agriculture and food sector.
- Increase the productivity, health and recognition of our agricultural and food lands and the people, families and businesses that maintain them.
- Increase the awareness, understanding and support for our local agriculture and food sector and the products and services they provide.
- Involve and listen to our agriculture and food sector community members in community and regional decision-making processes.
- Recognize and improve the significant economic, social and environmental services that the agriculture and food sector provides to the region.
- Increase the region's local footprint, i.e.: the consumption and use of local agriculture and food products and services.
- Demonstrate and improve our ability to work together to realize our vision for agriculture and food.

Strategies and Actions

Promising Practices Summaries

Ten case studies were investigated to determine promising agricultural economic development, education and marketing practices in other parts of the world. The inspiring projects and outcomes of the projects helped inform the recommendations of this report. Highlights of each case study are summarized here. Complete documentation of the case studies is included in Appendix C.

The Maine Farmland Trust

The MFT protects farmland through agricultural easements and a Buy/Protect/Sell program (BPS). The BPS purchases farmland, permanently protects it by imposing an easement, and sells it (either as a whole or in parts) to farmers at the property's "farmland value" as opposed to its "development value". MFT's Beginning Farmer's program supports new farmers in assessing land needs and securing suitable land, provides business planning services, and coordinates events (educational workshops, policy forums and social gatherings).

Intervale Center, Burlington Vermont

The Intervale Center has several successful agricultural programs, including:

- The Farms Program: a farm incubator program that provides access to training, land, capital and markets, builds knowledge of equipment operation and maintenance, and prevents feelings of isolation in new farmers;
- Success on Farms: a business planning program that helps Vermont farm operations and value-added businesses improve their viability;
- The Intervale Food Hub: an online local foods market offering convenient, year-round delivery;
- The conservation nursery: grows native locally sourced trees and shrubs for riparian restoration projects; and
- The Abenaki Garden: honouring the agricultural heritage of the Abenaki people.

Harwick, Vermont "Agripreneurship"

The Centre for an Agricultural Economy (CAE) in Harwick helped transform a struggling town into an agricultural hub with programs like:

- The Hardwick Community Garden;
- Learning visits and tours;
- Food system research,
- The Vermont Farm Fund; and
- The Vermont Food Venture Center, a multi-use processing facility offering food business incubation and support.

FarmStart, Hamilton Ontario

FarmStart's Start-Up Farm is a 5-year program that provides new farmers with access to land, infrastructure and equipment; coordinates technical and business planning skills training; and offers mentorship. This incubator model incorporates four participant groups:

- Test Farmers: Potential farmers access ¼ acre of land for one year to grow and test market products of interest while developing business goals and plans;
- Start-Up Farms: New farmers access a land parcel corresponding to their business needs for three years, during which they receive a 20% cost sharing discount;
- Enterprise Farms: Following their third season new farmers present a renewed business plan and are allowed to stay on site for another two years, during which they pay full costs; and
- Mentor Farms: farms can be granted permission to stay on site for a longer period provided they contribute mentorship to incoming program participants and are involved in running the farm facility.

Salt Spring Island Agriculture Infrastructure Projects

Salt Spring Island's (SSI) Area Farm Plan (AFP) was a community-driven efforts that recommended the establishment of three community facilities to bolster the local food industry: an abattoir, a produce centre and a community composting facility. The abattoir opened in 2012 and accommodates red meat and poultry. The local produce centre will be a multi-purpose facility with storage, processing facilities and distribution capacity. The composting facility could produce energy while creating fertilizer products.

Équiterre Farm to Daycare Program, Montreal

From 2002 to 2005 Équiterre piloted an “Organic Daycare” program by linking four farms to 37 daycare centres in 9 different regions of Quebec. From 2007 to 2009, Équiterre piloted À la Soupe, another program linking CSA farms with schools, campuses, daycares and healthcare facilities. À la Soupe participating institutions were spread across 7 regions and included 12 daycares, 15 primary schools, 2 high schools, 1 college, 1 cafeteria hospital (for personnel and visitors), 1 residential and extended care centre and 19 CSA farms.

FarmWorks Investment Co-operative Limited, Nova Scotia

Started in 2012, FarmWorks has a “blind pool” Community Economic Development Investment Fund (CEDIF) that provides equity and subordinated debt financing for farms, farm-based secondary processing, and value-added food products. FarmWorks aims to raise \$5M after 5 years, invest strategically in enterprises to increase sustainable local food production and profitability by 10% per year, provide mentoring support for new businesses, facilitate farm and food-related innovation and diversification in partnership with government and non-government organizations; and monitor and evaluate emerging and existing investment tools and opportunities.

Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust, Delta BC

The Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust:

- Administers and raises funds for its Stewardship Programs;
- Works with farmers to assess and improve agricultural management practices;
- Conducts research on the quality of wildlife habitat resulting from the Stewardship Programs; and,
- Coordinates educational activities pertaining to the role of local farmland for local food production and wildlife conservation.

The Stewardship Programs provide \$325,000 of cost-sharing funding to establish wildlife habitat and/or to invest in long-term farm soil fertility on farmland.

North Saanich Agriculture Economic Development Strategy

An Agriculture Economic Development Strategy was undertaken for North Saanich in 2011/2012. It has 5 key objectives:

- Promote and educate about the value of agriculture in North Saanich by building points of contact with the food and farming community that contribute to growing public demand for local food;
- Leverage investment in and build the agri-food sector, and the infrastructure it needs to thrive;
- Support retention and access to land for new farmers and for scaling up of food production;
- Support sector development to invest in current and future generations of innovative and successful farmers; and
- Create an enabling policy environment for agriculture.

Threshold to Maine Project

The Threshold to Maine Research Conservation and Development Area is a non-profit corporation supporting natural resource protection through community restoration. The Threshold to Main Area has focused on agricultural development by:

- Assisting communities in rebuilding their local farm sector by supporting farm surveys and farmland inventories;
- Establishing Shared Use Commercial Kitchens;
- Working with local farm groups and organizations on web-based direct marketing initiatives; and
- Helping communities establish local Agriculture Commissions and assisting those organizations to develop strategic initiatives.

Recommendations

Strategies and associated actions have been proposed to address the identified challenges and achieve the goals of the Agriculture Strategy with the desire of achieving the vision. They are grouped by theme in this section.

Responsibility for implementing the Agriculture Strategy rests with the Columbia Shuswap Regional District. As a result, most of the proposed strategies and actions are those that the District itself can implement. A few exceptions include strategies that are outside of the District's jurisdiction, but if realized would greatly help the District achieve its agricultural vision and goals. These advocacy strategies also involve actions that the District could undertake.

In this section, **Supporting Actions** are listed for each **Recommendation**, which are grouped by **Theme**

Proposed Key Strategies

There are three strategies that will have a transformative impact and are important first steps in the Shuswap realizing its agricultural vision. They begin to establish the conditions that will improve the health and viability of the local agricultural economy:

- Establishment of an independent, non-political Shuswap Agricultural Organization, with staff, to represent the region's agricultural interests;
- Initiation of an Agricultural Economic Development process, including the marketing and branding of Shuswap-grown products; and
- Provision of agricultural education services through Okanagan College's Salmon Arm campus.

Salmon Arm focus group session



Economic Viability

Agricultural economic viability means providing conditions that stimulate and support the development of a healthy, appreciated and diverse local food and agricultural economy.

Recommendation 1: Take a strategic approach to local economic development for agriculture.

a. Develop a coordinated marketing approach for Shuswap agricultural products.

This should include the development of a common identity or brand to identify and differentiate agricultural products grown or produced in the Shuswap. The development, application and application guidelines for users of the branding would be guided by the Agricultural Economic Development Process. This action and approach pairs nicely with the CSRD's current economic development initiatives and the manner in which they are marketing the region. Tag lines developed to date include "Grow Shuswap" and "Shuswap-Grown". This effort should be coordinated with existing CSRD Tourism work.

b. Initiate an agricultural economic development process.

The process would consider individual farm opportunities as well as larger, longer-term region-wide approaches. Such a process would provide:

- Clear, supported direction for local agricultural economic development;
- Innovative approaches that are tailored to local needs, situation and values;
- Support for existing CSRD and Electoral Area policies and regulations; and
- Additional Agricultural Strategy work.

Recommendation 2: Pursue coordinated and cooperative approaches that benefit local agriculture.

a. Establish an independent, non-political Shuswap Agricultural Organization to represent the region's considerable and diverse agricultural interests.

This body would:

- Provide non-partisan representation of and support to the region's agricultural activities;
- Provide a point of contact and a resource centre for local agricultural matters;
- Assist with the implementation of the Agriculture Strategy, and coordination and delivery of

agricultural initiatives;

- Secure and manage sources of funding and resources to support agriculture; and
- Participate in, and possibly lead, agricultural economic development efforts including the marketing and promotion of agriculture and food activities in the Shuswap.

This task builds on the relationships and trust that has been developed through the Shuswap Agricultural Strategy process. Currently, there is no existing regional organization—other than this Strategy's Steering Committee—that represents local agricultural interests and organizations. Established as a not-for-profit, this new Agricultural Organization would be a representative body, including members of the region's agricultural associations and organizations. Elected officials could be assigned to it as well, although the organization would not be a political body. Rather, it would be representative of the region as a whole. Funding could come from CSRD and its member electoral areas and municipalities, as well as the member agricultural organizations and agricultural funding bodies. The major organizational costs would go towards funding a staff position. The position could start at half time, if desired, and the need for full time staff or additional staff could be assessed after the first year of operation. The staff person would be primarily in charge of coordinating the Agricultural Organization and implementing elements of the CSRD Agricultural Strategy. Ultimately, the type of organization established, its functioning and its actions are to be determined by those creating the structure, with input from the appropriate partners and interests.

b. Pursue coordinated approaches that address common needs.

Building on the work and direction achieved through the Agricultural Strategy process and through the proposed Shuswap Agricultural Organization, consider other approaches and activities as a community of interest that could benefit the local food and agriculture sector i.e.: processing, marketing, labour, and funding. It is anticipated as the community works together to implement the Strategy it will begin to identify opportunities for collective action and impact.

Recommendation 3: Establish key facilities and infrastructure that stimulate and diversify local agriculture.

a. Establish a permanent 4-season market/food hub in Salmon Arm, with support from the City.

This market could act as the connecting hub for a number of existing or imagined seasonal markets located throughout the region. This would:

- Reflect and support Shuswap’s agricultural and artisanal identity and vision;
- Provide an effective direct marketing outlet for the agricultural community within the region;
- Meets the needs and concerns of local residents;
- Increase the number of customers; and
- Accommodate growth (customers and producers).

Establishment of a 4-season market/food hub should be another key outcome of the proposed Agricultural Economic Development process, which would produce a viable business case and plan for the operation.

The market/food hub would be the first step in establishing additional agricultural infrastructure (e.g.: community kitchens; cold storage, processing and composting facilities). The local agricultural economy requires the provision, maintenance, and development of supportive infrastructure.

Recommendation 4: Address the issue of access to skilled farm labour.

a. Study the issue of local skilled farm labour availability.

There is a challenge accessing and retaining skilled farm labour within the CSRD. The reason for this is unclear but is likely due in part to farm jobs generally paying less than jobs in other sectors. They also tend to be seasonal. Interest and investment in the agricultural sector has also appeared to diminish in recent years. There is a need to better understand this issue so that appropriate and effective strategies can be taken to remedy it.

Leadership & Governance

CSRD agriculture will benefit from leadership and governance that values, includes and supports the Shuswap agricultural community.

Recommendation 5: Protect and represent the community’s agricultural interests.

a. Maintain supportive policies and bylaws.

Ensure that land use policies and bylaws reflect and support the CSRD’s agricultural vision and the Agricultural Strategy. This would involve:

- A regular review and update (as required) of the CSRD’s OCPs, bylaws and administrative policies every 5 years by staff and the associated committees to ensure that they reflect the region’s increasing interest and commitment to local food and agriculture, and to highlight new developments or plans;
- Clear direction and support from the Board to District staff and associated committees or commissions to undertake these activities; and
- Providing CSRD’s committees and commissions with opportunities to regularly review and comment on policies, bylaws and regulations so that they remain familiar, to address any misunderstandings and ensure that they protect the agricultural land base and support the growth and diversification of local agriculture, food production, and food and regional marketing.

b. Participate in regional, provincial and national agricultural discussions.

Encourage regional, provincial and federal governments to establish food and agricultural policies and protocols sensitive to the needs, situation and limited resources of the Shuswap’s producers and processors. Given the significant and growing agricultural interest of the CSRD there is an increased requirement to advocate for local interests to:

- Represent the CSRD’s interest in food security and agriculture;
- Raise the profile of the CSRD’s food and agriculture interests provincially; and
- Encourage the discussion and development of provincial food and agriculture policies that benefit local agricultural efforts.

c. Research and Consider Establishing a CSRD Agriculture Advisory Commission.

An Agricultural Advisory Commission (AAC) would be able to advise on matters and decisions affecting the CSRD's food and agriculture sector and community. This would be a body of the Board and consequently would be structured and administered according to the procedures outlined in the Local Government Act.

Recommendation 6: Provide knowledgeable local agricultural information services.

a. Ensure that existing staff has an appropriate level of understanding of agriculture and associated legislative/regulatory framework.

Ensure that CSRD employees and members of the proposed AAC have the appropriate level of understanding of agriculture and associated agricultural legislative and policy frameworks that allow them to effectively address the needs and concerns of the community and Board.

Recommendation 7: Pursue strategies and policies that support farming and increase the extent of "active" farmland within the CSRD.

a. Establish clear, supportive guidelines for on-farm activities.

Guidelines for a number of on-farm activities (processing, on-farm housing, agri-tourism, etc.) can improve the viability of farming and farmland in a manner that support primary agricultural pursuits while maintaining the integrity of the farm and local community, its soils and land base.

Development of the guidelines may be challenging and will likely require the involvement of:

- Adjacent local governments jurisdictions; and the
- Agricultural Land Commission and MA staff.

b. Establish a local food procurement policy for all CSRD events.

While annual food purchases are relatively small, such a policy would allow the CSRD to demonstrate its commitment and support for local and ethically produced foods and services.

Recommendation 8: Maintain a local agricultural information database.

a. Improve and maintain the CSRD's current agricultural information base.

Review and expand the scope of the District's current agricultural information base including conducting an Agricultural Land Use Inventory (ALUI). Activities could include:

- Maintaining the baseline agricultural information database. Once completed, updating the agricultural census and ALUI every five years, following the Federal Agriculture Census;
- Expanding the range and frequency of agricultural information recorded and tracked; and
- Working with the agricultural community to identify information needs.

b. Monitor changes to the CSRD's agricultural sector and land base.

Identify and track key indicators to monitor the health and viability of the CSRD's food and agricultural community and associated land base. Monitoring can also be used to determine the effectiveness of the Agricultural Strategy over time and may help to identify where potential adjustments are needed. The effectiveness of this work will be greatly enhanced by the completion and maintenance of an Agricultural Land Use Inventory and the establishment of the proposed Agricultural Extension Position.

Potential performance indicators include:

- Amount of land in production (ALR + non-ALR land);
- Number of applications, approvals, and rejections for exclusion, non-farm uses and subdivisions of ALR;
- Number and age of farm operators;
- Total number of farms; and
- Average net returns for CSRD farms.

Protection & Stewardship

Prosperous and sustainable agriculture means actively farming, protecting and enhancing our agricultural land base in perpetuity.

Recommendation 9: Actively protect farmland.

a. Protect and maintain the ALR.

Continue to support and protect land within the Agricultural Land Reserve. Work with the Agricultural Land Commission to identify and re-zone ALR land with limited agricultural potential as well as land not zoned ALR that has agricultural potential.

b. Establish a land bank or trust that could accept farmland donations and actively purchase and manage farmland.

Support the creation of a local land bank or trust either as a regional district or in collaboration with adjacent jurisdictions or a local non-profit organization, to accept farmland donations and actively purchase and manage farmland in perpetuity. This will likely require establishing management protocols, leaseholder agreements, and additional legal instruments that ensure that entrusted farmland is actively farmed in a manner that meets the identified objectives.

Recommendation 10: Pursue strategies that increase land available for farming.

a. Identify alternative models and methods that support farming.

Identify long-term land tenure, financing and management options that encourage farming locally.

b. Establish a database or service that links available farmland with potential farmers.

Establish a Regional database service that connects farmland with potential farmers. This service could be provided either through the proposed Shuswap Agricultural Organization or the CSRD and hosted on a dedicated online platform. This service will require ongoing database maintenance.

c. Provide farm succession planning information and services.

Assist farms with succession planning. Help connect them with professional support services and information. Depending on the need, work with

government agencies, financial institutions, local organizations, and interested neighbouring regional governments and municipalities to provide this service.

Recommendation 11: Increase agricultural appreciation in new and future residents.

a. Develop information materials for new or future residents who have or are considering purchasing property on, adjacent to, or near farmland.

Work with local realtors and associated businesses and agencies to develop information materials for new or future residents—particularly those who have or are considering purchasing property on, adjacent to, or near farmland. Materials could include:

- A brochure describing the CSRD's agricultural situation and history;
- A directory of farms in the Shuswap area with their location, products and contact information;
- CSRD contact information including a link to a Shuswap agriculture web site (developed and maintained by either the CSRD or the proposed Shuswap Agricultural Organization); and
- The Ministry of Agriculture publication, *The Countryside and You*.

This would help increase understanding, appreciation and support of local agriculture and reduce conflicts between farming and non-farming communities. This strategy can tie in with Shuswap agricultural branding and marketing efforts.

Recommendation 12: Establish programs that reward farms for the environmental services they provide.

a. Investigate the effectiveness of existing programs that reward farmers for the environmental services that they provide (tax incentives, carbon credits, subsidies, direct payments, etc.).

Identify and research potential incentive programs that could generate rewards for providing environmental goods and services. Potential incentives include tax reductions, carbon credits, subsidies, and direct payments. One area worth investigating is the possibility of generating returns for carbon sequestration.

Recommendation 13: Encourage the use of ecological farming practices.

a. Encourage beneficial farm management practices.

Improve local participation in programs that result in the implementation of beneficial farm management practices such as the Environmental Farm Program. Help farmers access other sources of information and funding that result in the implementation of environmental farm management practices including:

- Water conservation;
- Manure management; and
- Retention of forested, riparian and wetland habitats.

b. Explore the value of a voluntary CSRD eco-agricultural code of practice that identifies farms and farmers using environmental farm management practices.

Some stresses exist between farming operations and the public or environmental community groups over farm practices and environmental concern. The Environmental Farm Program has had minor success in the area. A regional program that addresses the local context may have more uptake.

This undertaking would increase understanding, benefits and implementation of beneficial and ecologically sensitive and sustainable farm management practices.

Education, Training & Support

Local agriculture will benefit from a better, widespread understanding and appreciation of agriculture. This would lead to improved and advanced agricultural abilities and techniques, and securing support services for farmers.

Recommendation 14: Support the development of local food and agriculture skills and abilities.

a. Support the delivery of agriculture courses, workshops and programs through post secondary institutions like Okanagan College.

Encourage the establishment of local post-secondary agricultural programs. This could involve the establishment of a local advisory body to help with the identification, and successful marketing and delivery of educational programs that attract students while meeting the needs of local industry and the community.

b. Provide a range of needs-based training opportunities for local farmers.

These could include courses and workshops such as farm management, business development, marketing, financial management, identification of new crops, and crop management practices. Provision and organization of these courses would benefit from the establishment of the recommended AAC.

Malakwa focus group session



c. Increase mentorship opportunities for new and young farmers.

Encourage the provision of local farm internships or apprenticeships for people interested in agriculture. Coordination and support for these mentorship opportunities would benefit from the establishment of the recommended local agriculture organization.

Recommendation 15: Connect agriculture and food with youth.

a. Integrate agricultural/food education in local schools.

Encourage the growth and development of school and youth-based agricultural education opportunities. Potential opportunities include:

- School-based curricula available from Agriculture in the Classroom program and others;
- Farm-based service or experiential learning for credit for high school students;
- 4H programs;
- Hands-on, applied learning opportunities; and
- Food and gardening programs offered through local community recreation facilities.

Events and activities involving or featuring agriculture should also work to attract and connect with young people.

b. Support the establishment of more school gardens.

Support and endorse the establishment of more school gardens and other agricultural teaching facilities that can be used to expose youth to gardening and agriculture. Connect and work with the School District to determine how to best support them in this effort.

Recommendation 16: Increase local understanding and appreciation of agriculture.

a. Celebrate agriculture.

Provide, support and encourage agriculture-focused public education activities, events and celebrations. Identify existing activities and events that could feature local agriculture. Involve or include local food and agriculture at every opportunity. Identify existing activities and events that could feature local agriculture. Delivery of these activities and events would be greatly assisted by the establishment of the proposed Shuswap Agricultural Organization.

b. Provide opportunities for productive dialogue between members of the farming community, and between farmers and the non-farming community.

Building on the success of conversations that happened during the Shuswap Agricultural Strategy process, provide opportunities and situations where members of the farming and non-farming community can come together to consider and discuss food and agriculture topics of shared interest or concern.

c. Establish supportive signage.

Establish signage that:

- Identifies the Shuswap as an agricultural area;
- Celebrates and reveals the region's agricultural features and heritage to visitors and residents; and
- Takes advantage of the major transportation corridors and centres in the community.

A signage plan should be part of the proposed Shuswap Agricultural Economic Development process and connected to the branding strategy.



Community Health

Local agriculture will benefit from improved community health and resiliency by encouraging and supporting the production and consumption of Shuswap-grown food.

Recommendation 17: Increase local food production capacity.

a. Increase the number, extent and diversity of active farms producing food.

Encourage and support efforts to increase the number of farms producing food. This could be done by the CSRD and the proposed Shuswap Agricultural Organization.

b. Increase the number of community, home and school gardens.

Encourage and support efforts to increase the number of community, home and school food gardens as a way of supporting agriculture, encouraging development of local cultural and therefore economic activities, and building community resilience.

Recommendation 18: Encourage healthy, local food choices.

a. Support local food growing and eating initiatives that emphasize health.

Support local food growing and eating initiatives that emphasize health. Increasingly, local governments are supporting initiatives and approaches that emphasize the connection between healthy eating, personal health and a healthy agricultural sector. As an example, information on IH healthy food initiatives could be provided through a link on the District's website. This initiative is linked with the Strategy's economic development, marketing and educational activities.

b. Underscore the connection between healthy eating and healthy local agriculture.

Work with IH and other local and provincial organizations and groups involved with the development and delivery of local food and healthy eating initiatives.

Recommendation 19: Grow Shuswap's local food system.

a. Support the development of a more resilient local food system.

Support and endorse efforts and activities that lead to a more complete, diverse and therefore more sustainable and resilient local food system (food growing, processing, cooking, seed-saving, composting, and sharing). This includes encouraging the development of businesses that use and champion local food and have a local food procurement policy.

b. Conduct a local food system assessment to understand the current situation.

Undertake a comprehensive assessment of the CSRD's food system (from field to compost) to develop a more complete understanding of the current situation. Such an assessment would provide a baseline that would reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the system and suggest where efforts and resources would result in the greatest gains. It would also provide a better insight into the nature and health of the local food system—in a way that is not possible to achieve through an agriculture plan or strategy process. Such an assessment may receive support from the local health authority and the provincial government as it is increasingly seen as an important tool for improving the health of a community's food system.

Implementation

Many of these recommendations will be relatively straightforward for the District to implement while others require the support and involvement of other agencies, groups and individuals. To assist with the implementation of the Agricultural Strategy the following tables identify potential partners and participants, timing, relative priority and potential sources of funding for each of the supporting actions associated with the 19 recommendations.

Proposed Key Actions

- Establishment of an independent, non-political Shuswap Agricultural Organization, with staff, to represent the region’s agricultural interests;
- Initiation of an Agricultural Economic Development process, including the marketing and branding of Shuswap-grown products; and
- Provision of agricultural education services through a secondary education institution, like Okanagan College’s Salmon Arm campus.

Implementation details for all 19 recommended action areas are in the tables on the following pages.



Shuswap cattle ranch

Recommendations	Associated Actions	Partners & Participants	Resources	Priority & Timing
Economic Viability				
1. Take a strategic approach to local economic development for agriculture	a. Develop a coordinated marketing approach for Shuswap agricultural products (to be done in conjunction with 2a)	Lead: Shuswap Ag. Organization or CSRD (EcDev) Local Ec Dev orgs, champion producers and processors	See 2a	Priority: Very High Timing: Immediate
	b. Initiate an agriculture economic development process	Lead: CSRD Ec.Dev.	Funding Requirements: Significant – requires outside expertise Potential Sources: IAF, CSRD contribution, other grants	Priority: High Timing: Immediate
2. Pursue coordinated and cooperative approaches that benefit local agriculture	a. Establish an independent, non-political Shuswap Ag. Organization to represent the region's considerable and diverse agricultural interests	Lead: CSRD to initiate Local Ec Dev orgs, electoral areas, municipalities, food and ag. reps	Funding Requirements: Depends on the nature and activity of the organization Potential Sources: IAF, membership dues, project grants, fund raising events	Priority: High Timing: Immediate
	b. Pursue coordinated approaches that address common needs (processing, marketing, labour, funding, etc.)	Lead: Shuswap Ag. Org. Farm community, interested individuals	Depends on the nature of activity Potential Sources: IAF, grants, others?	Priority: Medium Timing: Medium-term
3. Establish key facilities and infrastructure that stimulate and diversify local agriculture	a. Establish a permanent 4-season market/food hub.	Lead: Shuswap Ag. Org. or CSRD (EcDev) BCFPA	Funding Requirements: Significant \$\$ required. Potential Sources: IAF, Grants, donors, others. Ec.Dev. process should confirm need/business case, timing and identify sources of funding	Priority: Medium Timing: Medium-term
4. Address the issue of access to skilled farm labour	a. Study the issue of local skilled farm labour availability to understand the situation and create a suitable approach to remedy the issue.	Lead: Shuswap Ag. Org. or CSRD Farming community: commodity, and marketing groups, fed./prov. employment agencies	Funding Requirements: Depends on nature and extent of process and who is the lead Potential Sources: IAF, MA, Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)	Priority: Medium Timing: Medium-term

Recommendations	Associated Actions	Partners & Participants	Resources	Priority & Timing
Leadership & Governance				
5. Protect and represent the community's agricultural interests	a. Maintain supportive policies and bylaws.	CSRD with MA and ALC	Funding Requirements: Existing resources. Requires an internal review of existing bylaws and regulations. Would benefit from dedicated staff.	Priority: Very High Timing: Immediate and ongoing
	b. Participate in regional, provincial and national agricultural discussions.	CSRD, UBCM, BC Ag Council	Funding Requirements: Existing resources. Would benefit from dedicated staff.	Priority: High Timing: Immediate and ongoing
	c. Establish a CSRD Agriculture Advisory Commission	Lead: CSRD MA, ALC	Funding Requirements: Some additional resources.	Priority: Medium Timing: Short – Medium term
6. Provide knowledgeable local agricultural information services	a. Ensure that existing staff have an appropriate level of understanding of agriculture and associated legislation/regulations	Lead: CSRD MA	Funding Requirements: Some (minor) resources required for internal training.	Priority: High Timing: Immediate and ongoing
	a. Establish clear, supportive guidelines for on-farm activities (processing, on-farm housing agri-tourism, etc.)	Lead: CSRD ALC, MA	Funding Requirements:	Priority: High Timing: Short-term
7. Pursue strategies and policies that support farming and increase the extent of "active" farmland within the CSRD	b. Establish a local food procurement policy for all CSRD events	Lead: CSRD	Funding Requirements: Fairly easy to implement. May result in slightly higher costs for events and meetings.	Priority: Medium Timing: Medium-term
	a. Improve and maintain the CSRD's current agricultural information base	Lead: CSRD MA, IAF, RDs	Funding Requirements: Review can be done for limited cost. Expansion will require developing partnerships and may require additional funds. ALUI requires significant additional resources as it has not been done before. Funding is available. Potential Sources: IAF, MA, CSRD.	Priority: Medium Timing: Short-term - ongoing
8. Maintain a local agricultural information database	b. Monitor changes to the CSRD's agricultural sector and land base	Lead: CSRD, MA	Funding Requirements: Existing resources.	Priority: Medium Timing: Medium-term - ongoing

Recommendations	Associated Actions	Partners & Participants	Resources	Priority & Timing
9. Actively protect farmland	a. Protect and maintain the ALR	Lead: CSRD ALC and MA	Funding Requirements: Existing resources	Priority: High Timing: Ongoing
	b. Establish a land bank or trust that could accept farmland donations and actively purchase and manage farmland.	Local ag. community	Funding Requirements: Significant. Amount depends on approach taken. Potential Sources: Donors (land, \$\$), investors, financial institutions, conservation organizations.	Priority: Low Timing: Medium-term - Long-term
	10. Pursue strategies that increase land available for farming	Lead: Shuswap Ag. Org.	Funding Requirements: Potentially significant – depends on the nature and extent of the process. Potential Sources: IAF, MA, ALC, grants	Priority: Medium Timing: Medium-term - Long-term
11. Increase agricultural appreciation in new and future residents	a. Establish a database or service that links available farmland with potential farmers.	Lead: CSRD or Shuswap Ag. Org.	Funding Requirements: Some funding required for est. and ongoing maintenance of service Potential Sources: IAF, CSRD, grants	Priority: Medium Timing: Medium-term (could be relatively easy to implement)
	b. Provide farm succession planning information and services.	Lead: Shuswap Ag. Org.	Funding Requirements: Depends on how action is implemented. Potential Sources: MA, financial institutions, FCC	Priority: Low Timing: Medium-term - Long-term
	12. Establish programs that reward farms for the environmental services they provide	a. Develop information materials for residents who have or are considering purchasing property on, adjacent to, or near farmland.	Lead: CSRD Local realtors, MA	Funding Requirements: Limited Potential Sources: CSRD, local sponsors,
13. Encourage the use of ecological farming practices	a. Investigate the effectiveness of existing programs (tax incentives, carbon credits, subsidies, direct payments, etc.)	Lead: Shuswap Ag. Org. CSRD, MA, ALC	Funding Requirements: Depends on the extent of the investigation Potential Sources: IAF, MA, grants	Priority: Med. Timing: Medium-term - Long-term
	a. Encourage beneficial farm management practices.	Lead: Shuswap Ag. Org. CSRD, BCAC, MA, IA	Funding Requirements: Depends on the effort made. Potential Sources: BCAC - ARDCorp	Priority: Med. Timing: Ongoing
	b. Explore the value of a voluntary CSRD eco-agricultural code of practice that identifies farms and farmers using environmental farm management practices.	Lead: Shuswap Ag. Org. CSRD, MA, IA	Funding Requirements: Depends on the extent of the investigation Potential Sources: IAF, MA, grants	Priority: Low Timing: Long-term

Recommendations	Associated Actions	Partners & Participants	Resources	Priority & Timing	
Education & Training	14. Support the development of local food and agriculture skills and abilities	a. Support the delivery of agriculture courses, workshops and programs through a secondary institution like Okanagan College	Lead: Okanagan College Shuswap Ag. Org.	Funding Requirements: Requires interest. Potential Sources: Self-funded and perhaps assisted initially by grants.	Priority: Very High Timing: Short-term - ongoing
		b. Provide a range of needs-based training opportunities for local farmers	Lead: Shuswap Ag. Org. MA, Okanagan College?	Funding Requirements: Depends on the extent to which the action is implemented. Potential Sources: Self-funded and perhaps assisted initially by grants.	Priority: High Timing: Short-term - ongoing
		c. Increase mentorship opportunities for new and young farmers	Lead: Shuswap Ag. Org.	Funding Requirements: Depends on the extent to which the action is implemented. May only require a website or online bulletin board initially. Potential Sources: Grants, IAF?	Priority: High Timing: Short-term - ongoing
15. Connect agriculture and food with youth	a. Integrate agricultural/food education in local schools	Lead: SD83, IH, AITC	Funding Requirements: Yes – amount depends on the extent to which this is done. Potential Sources: SD83, IH, AITC, MA	Priority: High Timing: Short-term	
	b. Support the establishment of more school gardens	Lead: SD83 IH	Funding Requirements: Yes - amount depends on the extent to which this is done. Potential Sources: SD83, IH, AITC	Priority: High Timing: Short-term	
16. Increase local understanding and appreciation of agriculture	a. Celebrate agriculture and local food	Lead: Shuswap Ag. Org./ CSRD Ec.Dev.	Funding Requirements: Amount depends on the extent to which this is done. Potential Sources: CSRD, grants, sponsors	Priority: Med. Timing: Medium-term - ongoing	
	b. Provide opportunities for productive dialogue between members of the farming community, and between farmers and the non-farming community.	Lead: Shuswap Ag. Org./ CSRD	Funding Requirements: Amount depends on the extent to which this is done. Potential Sources: CSRD, grants, sponsors	Priority: Med. Timing: Medium-term - ongoing	
	c. Establish signage identifying the Shuswap as an agricultural community, celebrating features and heritage to visitors and community.	Lead: CSRD	Funding Requirements: Potentially significant. To be determined by proposed Ag. Economic Development Process (1b).	Priority: Low Timing: Long-term	

Recommendations	Associated Actions	Partners & Participants	Resources	Priority & Timing
Community Health 17. Increase local food production capacity	a. Increase the number, extent and diversity of active farms producing food	Lead: Shuswap Ag. Org. CSRD	Funding Requirements: Through SAS actions. Would always benefit from additional \$\$ Funding Requirements: Requires funding support Potential Sources: IH, SD83, grants, MA	Priority: High Timing: Immediate (recognizing multiple steps are required) Priority: Medium Timing: Medium - ongoing
	b. Increase number of community, home and school gardens as well as food retail venues, Community Supported Agriculture opportunities and ways to share food.	Lead: IH Shuswap Food Action Co-Op, IH, 4H, SD83	Funding Requirements: Depends on the extent to which the action is implemented. Potential Sources: IH	Priority: Medium Timing: Medium - ongoing
18. Encourage healthy, local food choices	a. Support local food growing and eating initiatives that emphasize health	Lead: IH Shuswap Food Action Co-Op	Funding Requirements: Depends on the extent to which the action is implemented. Potential Sources: IH	Priority: Medium Timing: Medium - ongoing
	b. Underscore the connection between healthy eating and healthy local agriculture	Lead: IH Shuswap Food Action Co-Op	Funding Requirements: Depends on the extent to which the action is implemented. Potential Sources: IH, grants	Priority: Medium Timing: Medium - ongoing
19. Grow Shuswap's local food system	a. Support the development of a more resilient local food system.	Lead: CSRD	Funding Requirements: Significant but very useful. Potential Sources: IAF, IH, CSRD, grants	Priority: Low Timing: Long
	b. Conduct a local food system assessment to understand the current situation			

Ensuring Success

The Shuswap Agricultural Strategy identifies 19 recommendations that will be implemented over the next few years. To assist with their realization, four important initial implementation steps have been identified:

- Establishing a Shuswap Agriculture Organization to help implement the Strategy;
- Securing implementation funding;
- Initiating the proposed agriculture economic development process; and
- Establishing a monitoring/evaluation program.

Implementation Funding

Funding support will be critical for the successful implementation of the elements of the Agricultural Strategy. While a number of the Strategy’s recommendations and associated actions can be undertaken by the Regional District with existing resources, some will require funding support from outside sources such as the Investment Agriculture Foundation. While a number of potential funding sources are identified in the Implementation Table, it will be important to finalize and secure the sources of funding necessary to initiate these strategies. Having completed an Agricultural Strategy, the CSRD will be eligible for funding for Agricultural Plans and implementing actions from organizations like The Investment Agriculture Foundation.

Economic Development Process

One of the key recommendations of the Agricultural Strategy is the initiation of a local agriculture economic development process that considers individual farm opportunities as well as larger, longer-term, region-wide and potentially cross-regional approaches. Initiation of the economic development process is important because economic viability is one of the primary concerns in the CSRD and considered to be essential for the long-term health of agriculture. Economic viability is also a necessary precondition for a number of the other proposed recommendations and actions. The economic development process will help address a number of remaining questions and will provide the CSRD and the agricultural community with the required strategic direction as it moves forward to effectively support and develop its agricultural resources.

Monitoring/Evaluation Program

A monitoring and evaluation program that includes a number of key indicators is also recommended to help the CSRD determine the effectiveness of the Strategy and to make adjustments as necessary. The identified

indicators will help the CSRD determine if the Strategy is being effectively implemented and if its proposed recommendations and actions are meeting their stated objectives. The results provided by these indicators will help the CSRD make adjustments, either to the way the strategies are being implemented or to the strategies themselves. They may also help justify the need for additional funding.

It is expected that success will be indicated by:

- Application of the Agriculture Strategy in land-use decision-making and incorporation of its recommendations in CSRD bylaws, policies and regulations;
- More local government support for agriculture;
- Increased agricultural activities and use of farmland;
- More educational opportunities;
- Increased public support for and participation in agriculture, food production and farmers markets; and
- Recognition of the Shuswap as an agricultural community and area.

The following table identifies the specific measurable indicators associated with each of the six desired outcomes.

Desired Outcomes	Measurable Indicators	Data Sources
Ag. Strategy guides CSRD's decision-making processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural Strategy is referenced in Electoral Area's OCP and other CSRD land-use bylaws • Agricultural Strategy informs CSRD Board's decision-making • Regular review of CSRD's agricultural bylaws, policies, regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSRD Municipal and EA OCPs • Board minutes • Staff reports
More local government support for agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of supportive bylaws and regulations • Establishment of the a Shuswap Ag. Org., AAC, additional staffing and training, Ag. Economic Development Process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendments to the bylaws and regulations throughout CSRD • CSRD
Increased agricultural activities and use of farmland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More farmland being farmed • Increasing numbers of young farmers • Decreasing average age of farmers • Establishment of a permanent farmers' market site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistics Canada, proposed Land Use Inventory • Presence of permanent farmers' market site
More educational opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural activities in schools • Agricultural courses and workshops through Okanagan College 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SD83 • Okanagan College
Increased support for and participation in local agriculture and food production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More home gardens • Increasing farmers' market sales and visitation numbers • Increasing net farm returns per hectare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Use Inventory • Farmers' market statistics • Statistics Canada
CSRD recognized as an agricultural community/area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition in media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media clipping service

In Conclusion

The Shuswap has a rich history of agriculture and a strong farming base continues to be its central identity. Several factors have challenged agricultural development and recognition in the area in recent years, some global, others regional and local. Many opportunities exist to bolster agriculture in the region, however, and there is momentum within the community, the Regional District Board and offices, producers and local economic development organizations for action. Key to the success of agriculture in the Shuswap is a coordinated approach. Performing an agricultural economic development plan (including establishing a Shuswap agricultural brand) and establishing a Shuswap Agricultural Organization with staff are all coordinating approaches. Strategies that bring the farming community together, and at times the non-farming community as well, to focus efforts on specific issues will be the most successful in achieving the vision for agriculture in the Shuswap.



End Notes

1. Data in this section was compiled from: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census of Agriculture, Farm and Farm Operator Data, catalogue no. 95-640-XWE; and BC Ministry of Agriculture (forthcoming), Agriculture in Brief: Columbia Shuswap Regional District.
2. A census farm is defined as “an agricultural operation that produces at least one of the following products intended for sale: crops (hay, field crops, tree fruits or nuts, berries or grapes, vegetables, seed); livestock (cattle, pigs, sheep, horses, game animals, other livestock); poultry (hens, chickens, turkeys, chicks, game birds, other poultry); animal products (milk or cream, eggs, wool, furs, meat); or other agricultural products (Christmas trees, greenhouse or nursery products, mushrooms, sod, honey, maple syrup products)” <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/95-640-x/2012005-eng.htm>
3. This includes woodland, wetland, Christmas tree land, land for farm buildings and other structures, greenhouses, mushroom houses, and idle land.
4. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/95-640-x/2012002/02-eng.htm>
5. Data source: 2001 Agriculture Census (Farm and Farm Operator Data), accessed 30/08/13 at <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/95f0302x/2001001/4122713-eng.htm> and Ministry of Agriculture (forthcoming)
6. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/95-640-x/2012002/02-eng.htm>
7. Connell, D. and J. Frisque. 2012 “Economic and Social Benefits Assessment.” Prepared in collaboration with the BC Association of Farmers Markets) <http://www.bcfarmersmarket.org/resources/subpage/economic-and-social-benefits-study>
8. Agricultural Land Commission (undated) ALR & Community Planning Guidelines. Accessed 18/08/13 at http://www.alc.gov.bc.ca/publications/Community_Planning_Guidelinescolour.pdf
9. <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/soils/landscape/3.4interior.html>