

## **Michelle Pentz Glave and Stuart Cole on behalf of OneDayBowen/BowFEAST with the Bowen Agricultural Alliance**

Population growth and climate change are creating new demands and constraints on food production systems worldwide. Though perhaps unrealistic in the near future to expect that Bowen Island would become self-sufficient for its food requirements, by expanding the island's agriculture capacity we stand to improve our community's resiliency, promote social and economic development, and reduce our environmental footprint.

Our priorities:

- Greater community self-sufficiency and resiliency with regards to food production. Building agricultural capacity to provide our community with healthy food for sustained periods at affordable prices.
- Support for small-scale, co-operative and family farms on the island.
- Encouragement of individuals and groups to pursue agriculture on Bowen by reducing or removing barriers to entry such as land ownership and housing.
- Protection and preservation of existing agricultural land and expanding the potential for agriculture across the island.
- Facilitating local food and agriculture education and public outreach
- An island that is sustainable and carbon-neutral, with a healthy local economy and affordable housing to support that economy

In general, we'd like to see agriculture develop here on a scale that would be familiar to many Gulf and Vancouver Island communities. Fundamentally we must encourage and support small-scale individuals, co-operative groups, businesses and families to build this capacity. This can be done through tax incentives, special programs/grants, non-profits that support the cause and public outreach/education. There's no reason why we can't feed ourselves, eat/grow more healthfully and create viable family businesses in the process.

Specifically, we would like to see an updated OCP incorporate the following tenets:

1. At a minimum, preserve for agricultural purposes land within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) AND land outside the ALR identified as having agricultural potential in the 1995 Official Community Plan (Bylaw 139, Schedule B-2).
2. Permit and encourage agricultural use of public and private land outside of these designated areas for purposes such as community gardens, Small Plot Intensive (SPIN) market gardens, family allotments, and demonstration gardens.
3. Renew discussions with GVRD "to plan and implement active farming uses for ALR lands in Crippen Park ... [such] as demonstration farming, allotments or recreational gardening" (section 3.3 of 1995 OCP).
4. Promote agricultural utilization of designated land by making it economically feasible for individuals and community groups to do so. Provide incentives to land owners to negotiate nominal lease or "profit à prendre" agreements with farmers and farm co-operatives. Remove barriers that would prevent multiple agricultural lease agreements on a single parcel of land.
5. Enact affordable housing policies that support the development of a vibrant local economy and a housing market accessible to a wide range of income levels.
6. Encourage residential densification to better preserve agriculturally designated land.
7. Within lots, encourage homebuilders and developers to situate buildings where there is the least agriculture potential (i.e. on rock or poor soil).
8. Integrate waste management policies that simultaneously reduce off-island transportation/disposal and improve soil infrastructure needed to increase agricultural productivity (a community compost and green waste system for example).
9. Improve sewage disposal and reduce septic field use across the island so that front and back gardens can be more fully utilized for growing food without fear of contamination.
10. Maintain and extend "right to farm" concepts to encourage beekeeping and backyard chickens within residential neighbourhoods, and other livestock on acreage.