



**A Wider Lens: SGI Food Resilience Considerations
for the CRD's Southern Gulf Islands Community Economic
Sustainability Commission (CESC)**

Galiano Community Food Program

The Galiano Community Food Program (GCFP) is a non-profit that strives to ensure that Galiano Island is a thriving, livable, food-secure community, where every resident feels included, welcome and empowered to build a deeper connection with their food system. In so doing, the Program improves Galiano's ecological sustainability and community resilience in the face of climate change and uncertainty.

Report Purpose

The purpose of this report is to review two recent local GCFP projects through a regional lens, and identify which issues raised on Galiano might resonate on other Southern Gulf Islands, and also which might best lend themselves to being addressed at a regional level.

The first project was a pair of surveys that were sent out in the early days of Covid, and the second was a networking event for Galiano food producers and vendors. This report reviews each of the projects and then recommends actions the SGI Food Resilience Alliance (SGI FRA) might take to expand this work to a regional level.

Part 1: Covid Impact Surveys

Background

In May of 2020, the GCFP and the Galiano Farmers' Institute conducted two surveys to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on Galiano's food systems. There was one survey for growers, and another for restaurants and grocers.

We invited 20 farms to participate and received responses from 15. We were very happy with this level of response. The results provide qualitative information to help better understand what challenges our growers and producers are facing and what supports might be needed. Although the results can't be extrapolated beyond the individuals who responded due to the very small sample size, they may help identify some themes that might be useful.

Survey 1: Galiano Island Grower and Vendor Covid Impact Survey Summary

Context

Galiano's food security was already challenged before the additional impact of the pandemic. These challenges are shared by the other SGIs and are well-covered in the SGI Food And Agriculture Strategy (2017).

Galiano's farmers are mostly small operations, on 5+ acres, practicing organic, regenerative, or other methods of farming. None are certified organic, nor identify as conventional. Most farmers are over 55 years of age and have been in operation for over 10 years. There are some young farmers as well—four of the respondents are between 35 and 54 years of age. Most earn under 15% of their incomes from their farms.

Survey Results

For the most part, the concerns and perspectives summarized below continue to be a concern on Galiano, and are likely to resonate for Pender, Mayne and Saturna growers as well. One exception is that a significant concern for respondents at the time of the survey was the issue of ferry service disruptions. For the most part, these service and capacity issues have since been resolved and sailing schedules have been restored. Findings relating to this issue have therefore been left out of this report.

Covid Impacts

Galiano farmers are adaptive and creative, and most estimated it will take them less than a month to get back to business as usual once the pandemic is over. They saw opportunities presented by the pandemic situation, including an increased interest in local food in the community. This included both an interest on the part of consumers to purchase more local food, as well as an interest in growing more food themselves, as evidenced by an increase in sales of starts and a new gardening community via social media. They mentioned hope for the development of more agricultural land, the nurturing of new farmers, and strengthened community relationships to food producers. Most of the farmers indicated that they are making changes to what and how much they produce as a result of the pandemic.

Examples included:

- Increasing production
- Offering skills training and education
- Buying extra yearlings for beef sales next year
- Fewer edible flowers and more hearty fare
- Higher value-added stock

However, they were facing significant hurdles that challenge their operations. Their top concerns were:

- Market volatility and global recession
- Disruption in the supply chain (eg seed shortages)
- Personal/staff health and safety
- Decrease in consumer spending

The main financial obstacles they were facing at the time were:

- Lost revenue/reduced consumer spending
- Reduced cash flow
- Labour constraints
- Inability to conduct business as usual
- Increased cost of inputs (primarily feed and seed) and services and transportation

Hay

Hay is classified as dangerous cargo for transport on BC Ferries, and access in the SGIs is always challenging. In the context of the pandemic, there is increased uncertainty about ensuring a hay supply for the winter and getting it shipped here.

“Hay supply is an issue here regardless of Covid 19. Over numerous years of personally organizing the bringing of semi loads of interior 2nd cut hay to Galiano it worked well, but quite consistently the providers were hassled in one way or another by BC Ferries when they got to Tsawwassen terminal. This increased in the more recent years. Last year none of the remaining mainland hay haulers would bring us hay, claiming understaffed or too busy, or not interested. Previous suppliers were always paid on receipt of goods and without complications. In some years the quality of the hay was not always what was desired for sheep, but because well cured interior hay it kept well through the winter. Supply from Vancouver Island hay dealers of interior hay adds greatly to price because of ferry costs to Vancouver Island and then more cost back to Gulf Islands making it unaffordable.”

Meat Processing

Meat processing was particularly concerning while growers were coping with reduced ferry service. However, it is always a challenge for Galiano producers, as there is no licensed abattoir on Galiano, and the ferry schedule means significant travel time to reach the processors on either Salt Spring Island, Saturna Island or Vancouver Island. This is logistically challenging for producers and stressful for the animals.

Markets

Nearly all farmers report that in past years they have usually been able to sell everything they produce. At the time of the survey, growers expressed concern that their usual local purchasers (restaurants, Saturday Market shoppers) would be able to afford to continue to shop locally during these economically challenging times. The Saturday Market restricted participation to food vendors when they first re-opened, which reduced the traffic at the market (it has expanded since), and not all growers were comfortable participating—some opted to sell via local grocery stores or via farmstands and pop up stores instead, and not all have returned to the Saturday Market, so the impact has been enduring.

Labour

Most Galiano farms are too small to rely heavily on labourers, however, some farmers reported labour shortages due to pandemic distancing requirements. These include both paid labour and WWOOFers/interns. Galiano also faces a critical lack of affordable housing, which is always challenging when hiring staff.

Looking Ahead

When asked about the main challenges they foresaw for the coming months, farmers mentioned the same concerns above continuing, as well as:

- Uncertainty, fatigue
- Time required to create health & sanitation protocols
- Wanting to educate local consumers about local food

Solutions

When asked they'd rate how important proposed support options would be in the coming months, respondents indicated a strong desire for:

- Support with marketing products cooperatively with other farmers on Galiano or in the region, to Galiano grocery stores as well as other markets. As a result, in the months since, the GCFP has ramped up promotion of the Galiano Grown label program and has seen much higher uptake of this program (see the Recommendations section for more info about this program).

- More information from Galiano's vendors about the types of products they are interested in buying, in what volume, at what price, and how they expect it to be processed/packaged, delivered and invoiced. As a result, the GCFP coordinated the Meet Your Maker event in Jan 2021 - see next section for more details.

Three respondents were interested in each of the following:

- A space where you can drop off produce for sale and your produce will be sold for you (the GCFP has since helped to connect more Galiano growers with the Gulf Island Food Co-op, which offers this service).
- Support setting up a CSA (The GCFP has since connected interested Galiano growers with a webinar series for growers on Community Supported Agriculture Programs from Farmfolk/Cityfolk. The feedback was that this was a very worthwhile resource.)

There was only very limited or no interest in:

- support with online marketing
- support selling to restaurants on Galiano
- low interest loans with flexible repayment
- an online forum where experiences, questions and answers can be shared with other farmers in the region.
- Support accessing government emergency financial programs
- Marketing to Salt Spring grocery stores.

Galiano Island Grocery and Restaurant Covid Impact Survey

Galiano has a very high number of restaurants given the size of our population—14 at the time of the survey. As a result, the impacts of Covid may be slightly different on the other SGIs which have fewer restaurants per capita. (Mayne has 4 restaurants and 4 groceries; Saturna has 1 store and 4-5 restaurants.) The principle takeaway from this was that the restaurants and, to a somewhat lesser extent, the grocery stores, are keen to source more locally grown products and interested in making an effort to do so.

See Appendix A for details of the Grocery and Restaurant Survey.

Part 2: Meet Your Maker Event Summary

Background

The project was a gathering for Galiano farmers, fishers, foragers, markets, restaurants and grocery stores to come together, make connections, discover opportunities and find new partners. This event was an attempt to address some of the needs that were identified via the Covid Impact surveys. Growers had identified that they were interested in support for marketing products cooperatively with other farmers on Galiano or in the region, to Galiano grocery stores and other markets, as well as obtaining more information from Galiano's vendors about the types of products they are interested in buying. As well, both restaurants and grocers indicated that they would like to be able to carry some locally-produced products that aren't currently available.

On January 30, 2021, the GCFP hosted this 2-hour event via Zoom. (We also hosted a couple of attendees at the South Galiano Community Hall so that we could support their technical needs.) In attendance were 15 growers, 3 grocers, 3 farmers' market reps and 9 restaurateurs. The 6 growers that didn't attend included 2 medium producer growers and one large meat producer. We also reached out to three fishers but were not successful in that outreach—this may be because the GCFP's relationships with the local fishers is not as established as with the growers.

Before the event, attendees submitted information about their operations via a survey, and the answers were circulated to all the attendees ahead of time. These profiles helped jumpstart the conversation on the day of the event. (See samples in Appendix B.)

Although the event itself was only 2 hours, it required a fair amount of preparation and coordination. We worked hard to ensure that there was adequate attendance to make the event a success. We promoted the event to our email mailing list, via social media, and in person. We reached out to each of the restaurants and grocery stores, and some of the growers, to better understand what would make the event worthwhile—these discussions were very informative and helped us shape the event to better meet the needs of the participants. It also included quite a bit of chasing people down to ensure they RSVP'ed and filled in the pre-event survey. We relied heavily on the GCFP's existing strong network and in the end we were very happy with the attendance. In retrospect, it's apparent that raising awareness of the event itself served to increase the profile of food security and local food as issues of concern in our community, and get growers and vendors thinking about the role they play in this area.

Event Outline

- Introduction
- 4 breakout sessions with each of 4 groups of growers meeting in turn with
 - Grocers
 - Markets
 - Restaurants with seasonal menus
 - Restaurants with year-round menus
- Whole group discussion and intro to Galiano Farmers Institute

Overview and takeaways

Even though the event was held over Zoom, the event provided an opportunity for connection at a time when such opportunities are limited because of the pandemic. There were a lot of comments both during and after the event about how great it was to actually see and connect with other members of our community.

During the event itself there were lots of discoveries of possible new partnerships. e.g. *'We'd like to try your melons this season', 'I'll take your compost!'*. There were rich conversations of what each side needs from the other—both growers and vendors came away with a much clearer understanding of the limitations and requirements for potential partners.

There was also collaboration between growers—they shared things that work for them that might help address other growers' challenges (i.e. "This has worked well for us, might work for you.") Participants also identified challenges they see in improving food security on the island. There was a shared desire all around to increase partnership and availability of local food.

One basic assumption of the event was that there were untapped opportunities for growers to serve the markets of the restaurants and grocery stores. It was apparent from the event that in fact, Galiano doesn't have anywhere near enough growers or land in production to meet the needs of those markets. The growers who are here are able to find markets for all their food, (though often not at a viable price). The restaurants and grocery stores need far greater volume than our growers can provide, across a very long season, and in many cases, it just doesn't make sense or isn't possible for the growers to try to serve this market. There were exceptions, and it will be interesting to see if these new partnerships are sustainable. There also does seem to be an opportunity for farmers to provide value-added products, especially if they are shelf stable, to some vendors. Some examples that seemed promising were tea blends and flavoured honey. As well, although the restaurants may have been disappointed that there weren't more growers able to meet the demand, the event did help them to better understand the needs of and constraints for the growers, an important first step.

Perhaps the most important theme of the event was the desire for ***improved cooperation and communication***. Growers expressed a wish for an online platform and more opportunities to connect, in order to collaborate with one another, to share knowledge and resources, to coordinate so as not to duplicate offerings, and to better meet the demands on the island. They'd also like to better collaborate on setting more consistent pricing. There was talk of a more cooperative approach, so farmers could collaborate to try to fill one order, which would reduce the communication overhead for the vendors. Galiano's new Farmers Institute gave a presentation at the event and invited more Galiano growers to join as members.

Another need is for a way for the growers to better communicate with the grocery stores, restaurants and market shoppers about what they have available for sale, generally and when there is a surplus, and at what price. In addition, restaurants and grocery stores could share what they're looking for, so growers could try to meet the need.

In retrospect, the event itself served a huge outreach need, and helped our growers see themselves as more of a connected community, as well as built bridges between our growers and the restaurants, grocery stores and markets. It also helped the Food Program deepen its relationship with the growers and the food businesses.

See Appendix C for comments from attendees about the event.

While much of this event involved discussions about opportunities for business partnerships between individuals, there was also a significant amount of discussion devoted to challenges to increasing food

security that are likely highly applicable to the other islands and to the region as a whole. See Appendix D for detailed discussion notes from the event.

Next Steps

It was clear that this event served a need and was a valuable exercise for the participants. The GCFP intends to coordinate a second annual *Meet Your Maker* in the winter of 2021 (likely in person).

The need for communication tools is a clear area where action is needed to support Galiano's food producers and vendors. At this time it is unclear who might have the capacity to coordinate this. Over the next few months, the GCFP plans to explore possible solutions, including what has worked well for other communities, and see what might fit within the capacity of the organization, possibly in collaboration with other local organizations.

The GCFP will also look into offering a microgreens workshop that might provide a stepping stone for one or more local growers to launch an operation that would serve this need that was identified in the local market.

Part 3: Recommendations

Much of what was worthwhile about these two projects could likely have impact on the other Southern Gulf Islands as well. The recommendations below are divided into those that would likely resonate on the other individual islands, and those that could be addressed at a regional level.

Recommendations for other Southern Gulf Islands

1. Surveys

Much of the success of these GCFP projects was because they involved significant consultation with Galiano's food producing community to determine what action would be effective. As such, the CESC may want to start by conducting outreach on the other islands to assess what needs are the highest priority. This could build on the GCFP work in one of two ways: using the survey templates that the GCFP used (e.g. "Which of the following 10 challenges are you facing?"); or rolling out a simplified survey that aims to confirm if the issues and priorities identified on Galiano (as well as the suggestions for action items below) resonate on the other islands (e.g. "Rate the following 3 challenges in order of priority for you.").

2. Farmfolk/Cityfolk Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Webinar Series

In the surveys, Galiano growers identified an interest in getting support setting up a CSA. Growers on the other islands may also be interested in learning more about this marketing model. Although the Farmfolk/Cityfolk Webinar Series has ended, perhaps they could be persuaded to run it again if there is sufficient interest on the other islands. Alternatively the series may have been recorded and could be distributed for people to watch on their own time (but with less interaction).

3. Gulf Islands Food Co-op Table (GIFC) promotion

In the surveys, Galiano growers expressed interest in a space where they could drop off produce and it is then sold for them. The GIFC already offers this service but it seems as though some Galiano growers weren't aware of it, or didn't have enough information about it. This might be true on the other islands as well. The GCFP was able to raise the profile of the GIFC via the Meet Your Maker event, where growers were able to connect directly with GIFC personnel, but other approaches that would also be effective might include an (in person or online) open house with GIFC for all growers in the region.

4. Local Label

In the surveys, Galiano growers indicated a strong desire for support with marketing products cooperatively with other farmers on Galiano or in the region, to Galiano grocery stores as well as other markets. As a result, in the months since, the GCFP has ramped up promotion of the Galiano Grown label program and has seen much higher uptake of this program. The other islands may benefit from rolling out similar label programs in their communities.

The Galiano Grown label was launched in 2018, after design and wording consultation with growers, and saw modest uptake in the first few years. There is one version of the label for growers to use, with a call to action to ask for more information about growing practices, and another version for restaurants and grocery stores. The label is available as a poster, a table-top tent card, a rack card (used on grocery shelves), and as stickers for products.

The purpose of the label is to promote buying local, to spark educational discussions between buyers and growers about growing methods, and to raise awareness and appreciation of the sustainable growing practices that Galiano's growers are using. A side benefit of the label is that, to some extent, it holds farmers accountable for their growing practices bringing them to the forefront of discussions with customers.

One Galiano grocer has used the labels regularly since the program rolled out, and it's also used at the Saturday Market and farm stands, and various restaurants. (See Appendix D for pictures of the label.) The feedback has been positive—residents say that they love knowing which products are raised and grown right here on the island. The pandemic has brought a renewed interest in local food which has made this a great time to refresh this program. This year, as a result of the promotion of the label (in our local paper, by email, and as part of the *Meet Your Maker* pre-event surveys), there are 15 restaurants, growers and grocers who have requested labels. As some other vendors may have labels leftover from previous years, the number participating in the program this year may well be higher. As the use grows, the recognition of the image grows, and the impact increases accordingly.

5. Support Accessing Government Emergency Financial Programs

Although growers didn't express a desire for support in this area, restaurants responding to the Covid survey did indicate that they could use support accessing government emergency financial programs. The GCFP hasn't done much to assist in this area, but perhaps the Community Resource Staff on each

island could reach out specifically to island restaurants to offer assistance with accessing government programs.

6. *Meet Your Maker* Events

Events held on each island that were roughly equivalent to the event held on Galiano would likely be of similar benefit in those communities, providing an opportunity for networking and collaboration both among growers, and between growers and food vendors. The specific focus of the event might vary from island to island, depending on the life cycle of the food community on each island. Themes might include:

- Meet and greet, so that growers can connect with other growers, and also so that growers and vendors can connect with one another and explore opportunities for partnership.
- What does each party (growers/fishers/foragers and grocers/restaurants/markets) need from the other to increase local food access?
- How to improve communication and collaboration among growers, including ways that growers could share information and tips, coordinate growing plans (so as to not duplicate timing and varieties), discuss pricing, and/or explore co-operative approaches to marketing.
- How to improve communication between growers and vendors, so that vendors know what is available and growers know what products are desired.

Late fall 2021, in the growers' and vendors' off-season, is probably an appropriate target window for these events. The Ministry of Agriculture offers funding through their Knowledge Transfer program that may be available to cover expenses for these events event:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/programs/knowledge-transfer-events>

Recommendations for Regional Action

1. Regional Meet Your Maker Event

There was interest in the surveys for support with regional marketing. Once island by island Meet Your Maker events have been held, it may be beneficial to host a region-wide event with a similar focus. This would provide a forum for restaurants and grocery stores to learn what products they can't source on their own islands might be locally available, and to start to build connections with those growers.

Although some kind of catalogue could also serve this need, the relationships are at the heart of these partnerships and an initial face-to-face connection will go a long way to fostering those relationships.

2. Bulk Buys of Inputs

Some agricultural inputs are hard to access from the islands, and the overhead of travel is a drain on both time and finances for growers. Coordinated purchasing, with delivery, would help reduce those burdens on growers. In particular, the issue of hay is very much one that warrants consideration at a regional level. Addressing the hay needs of all four SGIs at once might provide the economy of scale needed to find a viable solution. Similarly to this, there may be equipment that could be purchased for use across the region.

3. Training Opportunities

Some training and professional development could be coordinated regionally. Our communities' new facility with remote tools (e.g. Zoom) as a result of the pandemic provides an opportunity to offer such opportunities to the entire region and take advantage of economies of scale that may be available. For example, the Microgreens workshop that GCFP is considering offering could be offered to growers on Pender Island. (Mayne has an established microgreens business, and Saturna might not be a large enough market to sustain a microgreens business.) This is especially suitable because the transportation challenges mean that a grower who launches a microgreens business on one island isn't likely to be competing with growers on other islands who may be interested in a similar venture. A valuable side benefit of this type of activity is that it is likely to offer opportunities for regional connections between participating growers, and the event could be coordinated in such a way as to foster those relationships (e.g. meet and greet component built into the schedule). The Mayne Island microgreens business, Christina's Garden, is run by Christina Petchloff, who has also offered to provide a session on her experience.

4. Meat Processing

The lack of an on-island meat processing facility that Galiano growers deal with is a challenge also faced by growers on Mayne and Pender, and is another area that needs regional consideration. The Pender Island Farmers' Institute recently applied for CERIP funds to support a mobile abattoir that would serve all three islands, however, their application wasn't successful. (CERIP opted to fund improvements at the SSI abattoir.) Perhaps a second application to another funding program or intake would be successful.

5. Veterinary Services

Saturna and Galiano don't have on-island vets. While Pender and Mayne Islands do have veterinarians, (and the Mayne Island vet offers a regular clinic on Galiano) none of the four islands have a vet that specializes in large animal care. The large-animal vet on SSI does come to Galiano (and perhaps to the other islands as well) but her visits are sporadic and there is no one currently coordinating with the growers to ensure that they are aware of these visits and able to take advantage of them. Preventative medicine (vaccinations, worming treatments) are required on a fairly predictable schedule. Husbandry producers on all four islands might benefit from some coordination of these services, scheduling them well in advance on a regular schedule, and ensuring growers know about them and can access care if needed. In addition, vets are limited in their ability to offer over-the-phone emergency support for patients they haven't seen face to face within the last year, but having had a single in-person appointment means there may be options such as prescription medicine, without the requirement of an emergency visit.

There are other long-standing issues that are well-known within the region, and that came up again during these two GCFP initiatives. Although there are no specific suggestions about how to tackle these concerns, it is important to keep them at the forefront of any discussions about how to address regional agricultural needs. They include:

6. Aging farmers
7. The lack of affordable housing
8. Limited access to arable land

9. Limited and expensive transportation options, especially between the Southern Gulf Islands

One final thought - For the most part, this report is focused on professional growers. There are also opportunities to increase local food security through amateur growing as well. The GCFP has a lot of experience encouraging this, and a possible next step might be a presentation on what we've done and what's worked, to organizations on the other islands that may wish to use the GCFP model.

The GCFP mandate does not support work to advance food security outside of Galiano, so we would not be able to directly coordinate surveys and events for the other islands. However, given the GCFP experience with these two projects, we believe that these two projects will be most successful if there is a local island project coordinator for each island. (As a reference, the *Meet Your Maker* event took over 40 hours of coordination for Galiano alone.) The GCFP would be more than willing to share our material and provide support to these coordinators to facilitate the rollout on the other three islands. Further discussion is needed to work out these details (hours, rate, etc.)

Note: the Gulf Islands Food Coop Asset Mapping project may also dovetail well with the surveys. It's possible that the surveys should be drafted so as to gather information to also support the asset mapping project. Further discussion with the GIFC is required.

Appendix A Galiano Island Grocery and Restaurant Covid Impact Survey

We invited 14 restaurants to participate and received responses from 6. These included 2 high-end dining restaurants, 3 casual/family restaurants, which also included take-out options, and 1 catering/events establishment. We invited 6 grocery stores to participate and received responses from 5—these included the Fishery Afloat and the Saturday Market.

Covid Impacts

At the time of the survey, the grocery and restaurant respondents were very concerned with significant immediate economic impacts of the public health orders—four restaurants and one grocer had to close completely (though have since re-opened), two delayed their seasonal openings—while others have had to significantly adjust their business models (e.g. to take-away, pre-packed grocery items made in house at restaurants, renovations to move operations outside, reduced hours.)

Survey Results

Retailers reported the following main impacts to their operations:

- Lost revenue/reduced consumer spending
- Reduced cash flow
- Inability to conduct business as usual
- Increased expenses
- Market volatility and global recession
- Increased costs, including for Personal Protective Equipment
- Personal and staff health and safety

Revenue

Revenue impact varied. One grocer and one restaurant reported slight initial increases in revenue. The decreases faced by grocers ranged in amount, but for the restaurants it was high: 50-100%. The main area where respondents reported increased expenses was in wholesale groceries and retail groceries.

Customer Habits

Grocery retailers have observed changed habits in their customers—shoppers were stocking up on non-perishable goods, produce and coffee, but tourist numbers were low. Local shoppers weren't traveling off-island to shop as much as usual, which brought more local business at first, though that is reduced now.

Supplies

When it comes to interruptions to goods and services, the primary issue was with supplies. Respondents reported challenges sourcing products such as signage PPE, flour, other grains, meat/fish and produce. They also reported significant price increases because of demand and interruptions in supply chain due to disruptions such as migrant worker travel restrictions and other public health implications.

Staffing

Staffing considerations are likely to have shifted significantly since the time of the survey, due to changes in government supports available. At the time of the survey, respondents reported varying staffing considerations: increased staffing needs for some to meet the public health requirements, but not for

others as their business overall was reduced. One restaurant did comment that “Staff receiving CERB do not wish to come to work until government support stops”, while another restaurant said “Suddenly we don’t have any staffing problems as everyone is looking for work. Sadly we have nothing to offer.” There were concerns that staffing challenges would result if the workforce was facing significant rates of illness.

Looking ahead

Restaurant respondents were anticipating it would take them more than 12 months to get back to normal if the pandemic ended today. Grocers were more optimistic, estimating 3 months maximum. Respondents anticipated the following challenges in the months to come that are likely still pertinent:

- High demand combined with local concerns about exposure to Covid resulting in a lot of pressure from the community.
- Border closure and reduced tourism significantly lowering visitor traffic.
- Inability to host large groups reducing revenue.
- Three restaurants indicated that they could use support accessing government emergency financial programs.

Respondents anticipated the following opportunities in the months to come that are likely still pertinent:

- Local traffic is up.
- More interest in buying local products

Local products

Both restaurants and grocers indicated that they would like to be able to carry some locally-produced products that aren’t currently available. (See the following section for more detail about this.)

Three out of five grocery stores were aware of the Galiano Grown label program.

Appendix B: Sample *Meet Your Maker* Attendee Profiles

Lisa Gauvreau BABES IN THE WOODS

Does sell Galiano products.

Would like to sell more Galiano products.

Priorities: Quality, consistency, then price.

I'd like local growers to know: I would tailor my menu to offer more variety if I knew what/when their products would be available. It's laborious to have a whole bunch of zucchini show up and deal with too much at one time. (summer is busy, and I've already planned/costed the menu, there isn't time to make adjustments) If there was a rollout of what and when it's available, I would have more time to use more products from the island. I say variety because I'm finding that I am only making room on my menu for items that I already bring in through my supplier. Therefore I am using local items to substitute for menu items that I have already cost and use. I want the opportunity to give the local farmers a standing order, a list that captures how much of each product I will use over a fixed time. Knowing which/when the products are available could extend the period that I am buying locally if I were more organized. Planning is everything! I wonder if there could be an option to buy off-season the items that store well over the winter, onions, potatoes, and squash. I would keep buying, though the year. I can see that the risks outweigh the benefits since I would be buying less and storing may be problematic, but maybe I could commit to buying a fixed amount for even a 3-month period?

Contact Info: 250.539.2817

Jessica Kirkwood SEA TO SEED FARM

Produce Farm, Forager

Main Products: Eggs, greens, veg, tree fruit

Farming for: less than 20 years

Delivery: It depends

Looking to grow business.

I'd like vendors to know: That we are here, trying to establish ourselves as a farm & trying to find which specialty crops to grow.

Contact info:

Cedana Bourne GALIANO CONSERVANCY FOOD FOREST

Produce Farm, Forager

Main Products: Greens, berries, edible flowers, Forest Garden Tea.

Farming for: Less than 20 years

Delivery: It depends

Looking to grow business, but have labour considerations.

I'd like vendors to know: We are growing a wide variety of produce in Forest Gardens which mimic the architecture and beneficial relationships of forested ecosystems, resulting in thriving, productive growing spaces rich in biodiversity and beauty.

Contact info:

Appendix C - Select Event Feedback Survey Comments

Farmers

What was your favourite part?

- *Access to restaurants and other growers I will now contact*
- *Talking to the growers*
- *Being able to talk directly with everyone - the growers, and to restaurants to learn what they need.*
- *Seeing other peoples faces! and learning about their needs and roadblocks to success.*

Other comments from the Farmers:

- *I recognize the forum was the first step in meeting a challenging need... as far as I'm concerned, it was a very successful first step. It highlighted for me that many of us are in the same boat... and gave me ideas about cooperation that would help all of us. Thanks for this... I look forward to taking advantage of the contacts and doing what I can to make things better.*
- *Thank you for organizing! I think it is valuable to see each other and hear a bit about their situations and to get people to think about other possibilities because it is easy to just do what is already (sort of?) working.*
- *I thought it was a great learning experience. I wish we were able to do meat sales by piece*
- *It was great and hope to do it again!*

Vendors:

What was your favourite part?

- *The welcome package was brilliant. It was good to know that there is hope of figuring out a system that works for everyone. Great to get to meet the newcomers to the island too.*
- *As a vendor, I enjoyed hearing the different needs of the growers, trying to figure out how I can be helpful*
- *Learning the varied experiences of how folks are taking on small farming practices.*
- *Restaurants owners and growers were able to meet and discuss the needs and availability*
- *Getting to connect with so many people*

Other comments from the Vendors:

- *Well thought-out. Info sent out ahead of time was useful. Seemed to me people walked away from this with some clarity, new ideas and connections. Thank you.*
- *Very grateful for the opportunity to get this discussion going. I think this will greatly benefit producers and consumers alike*
- *Great event, learned a lot, very glad to have taken part*

Appendix D Meet Your Maker **Discussion Notes**

General Challenges

- Growers have no trouble selling most of their food (plus or minus zucchinis / garlic at the height of the season). The issue is making it economical.
- Timing - very important for grocers and restaurants, but hard for growers to predict, because it's so dependent on the weather
- Pricing. Growers need to get a fair price. Hard to figure out how to price things. Prices come from the source of planting resourcing. Buyers want to know the price ahead of time. Growers can't say specifically how much it is before the season, but they can give a range and it shouldn't change too much over the season. Easier for more experienced farmers.
- Commercial kitchen - hall kitchen cleaning fee is too high during covid

General Discoveries

- Not everyone knows about Galiano Grown. Has tourism value.
- Microgreens, gourmet greens, tender greens, herbs, edible flowers - all better to buy local because of price and quality. There isn't much in the way of microgreens production on the island. The Galiano Conservancy does grow pea shoots, edible flowers and herbs.

Grocery Notes

- Marina shoppers are high-end. First stop across the border. Attractive packaging is a big deal for Marina shoppers
- Grocers could buy the animal on the hoof and specify the cuts/grind they want
- Marina location has high overhead so everything we sell needs to be profitable
- Thursday is the day Daystar wants to receive orders, to make sure the right staff are there to receive it.
- The larger boxes are wonderful for smaller farms, they are a great idea, they work for the restaurants, but they work even better for families.
- Packaging size - Marina needs small units, esp for meat
- Storage/shelf life is tricky, especially in shoulder season.
- Daystar will take very small orders, doesn't need to be pre-sorted or pre-sized.
- Grocers are really open to local producers, but tend to just default to more traditional sourcing because it can supply the volume consistently and it takes a lot less work.

Restaurant notes

- It's intimidating for newer growers to try to commit to a whole season for a restaurant.
- Some restaurants like to be able to haggle for the price
- Restaurants need such a high volume of product, it's challenging for local producers to meet the need and ensure the consistency.
- In general, price is not the problem for restaurants because they can charge it to the customers.

Meat and eggs

- There is meat produced on island that is processed at a licensed abattoir
- Local meat products can even be better priced than products from Vancouver Island.
- Timing is tricky - meat is usually ready in the fall, after the rush
- Meat and egg demand is very high and there is limited supply.
- Restaurants can't always use the whole animal.
- Storage space is also an issue with meat.
- Livestock producers demand for their product overwhelms their supply, so currently, quantities of meat currently being produced on the island are still not nearly enough to supply even one restaurant;
- Grocers don't have a butcher on staff, or the facilities or the equipment
- More people and businesses are interested in buying meat sold "off the hoof" (ie without middle-persons, selling quantity versus cuts)
- Some restaurant can purchase a whole chicken if they have time to cut it and aren't in a rush, but restaurants in a rush can't deal with a whole chicken
- Galiano needs a butcher shop
- Some growers don't want to increase their production
- Growers would like to know what other growers are pricing things at.
- Growers need a way to coordinate orders, deliveries, pickups with grocers, restaurants.
- Consistency is so important for restaurants with a fixed menu, and 1-2 wks' notice
- Reliability - summer is so hectic, can't deal with producers backing out part way through the season or changing their prices half way through the season.
- Restaurants need early communication and consistency, or they will lose interest in supporting island businesses
- It is easier for big farms to provide consistency, harder for small farms.
- One barrier is that everything from the farmers is ready July, August, and September. It is ready all at once. Storage can be difficult both for growers and restaurants. The only solution to providing produce year-round would be a greenhouse, but that is expensive.
- Produce is picked in the morning so it's not fresh for the evening north end market
- Small scale growing of crops to sell at market is time-consuming and physically gruelling, although worthwhile because of the "guarantee" to sell out. Adding diversity to crop selection complicates the process of growing enough that it may not prove to be worthwhile
- It's "such a monumental task" to get ready for market (picking, prep, transport, etc.) that it is so much simpler to just stick to what works - barrier to growing different varieties
- Early start of the Saturday Market means a big hustle in the morning

Market notes:

- Eggs are allowed for sale at markets now
- Producers need to talk together about how to handle margins related to the best abattoir, because you can only mark things up so much.
- Chickens and eggs are easy to sell via word of mouth, but markets could be useful pick up points

- Some growers would like to see the Saturday market start in April instead of May, for early greens and plant starts
- Childcare at the market may be helpful
- Maybe shortening the hours of the market would be better for the vendors as the last hour is usually not very profitable
- Consistent, weekly meat purchasing at the Saturday Market may not be realistic but there may be room for the Saturday Market to help connect consumers with meat producers via preordered pickups and a shared freezer for small amounts of meat. Meat sellers can also take pre-orders at the market, which is less risky than bringing the product in the hopes it may sell.
- GIFC Co-op Table could be helpful to small scale growers
- Market will be using the bigger field this year may allow for expanded opportunities (ie—trunk sales)
- Is alcohol allowed for sale at market?
- Without enough inventory, not worth having a market table; if \$100 profit could be made at the North Hall Market, it would be worth coming for the exposure;
- The Saturday Market is a viable sales venue for small scale growers.
- The North Hall Market could be a viable sales venue if enough vendors participated to create a lively atmosphere.
- Very large scale growers have an understanding of the scale necessary to supply restaurants, grocers and a demanding public, so there is little need for a market as a sales venue.
- When attempting to scale up crop and livestock production, small scale growers may not consider the market as viable a sales option as supplying a restaurant or grocer, as consistency in sales is vital to success.
- Some value-added food items may not sell as successfully as produce at all markets, so strategic participation is important. However, even a slow sales day on these items may prove worthwhile in terms of long-term marketing.

Cooperation and communication

- Henny's weekly list is really helpful and can serve as a model for other growers.
- Most growers aren't getting the word out about what they have.
- Discussing orders earlier in the season would be a big help.
- Should have meetings like this to connect again later in the season when farmers have a better idea of timing and what they are producing
- A list of the products restaurants are using, and a list of the products farmers have would be really useful to match people up
- An online platform on which growers can let restaurants know how much they will have, and restaurants can make a list too showing what they need. The online platform can act as the mediator between the growers and the restaurants. Going to each grower individually takes a lot of time, this platform would save a lot of time.
- Having a list from restaurants ahead of time about what they need and in what quantities would be really helpful to growers. It would allow growers to plan out each crop accordingly.

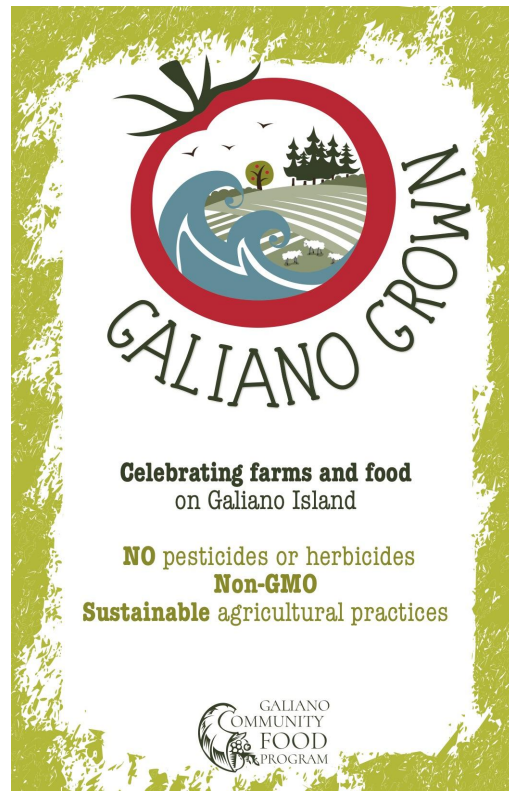
- Most farmers have such a small place, they were thinking of reducing variety and having larger quantities of fewer crops. Instead of everyone having small amounts of lots of things, it could be useful to coordinate and have each farmer grow fewer things in larger quantities. Farmers want to coordinate so everyone is growing different things and meeting the demand of restaurants.
- It would really help restaurants if farmers were willing to get a cooperative going.
- If the restaurants owners want to stick local, it would be useful for multiple different farmers to produce one product, so that together they can meet consistency and share in providing that one product.
- Some farmers are producing small quantities of a lot of things to sell at markets, they would be open to modifying production as an experiment if they knew what restaurants needed grown.
- Billboard at south hall to communicate what is needed and what is available
- Could hall be a rendezvous point for pick up?
- If farms could consistently share lists (like Henny does) with restaurants before the restaurants order from their larger suppliers, more food from Galiano could be used as ingredients, but this effort needs co-ordination (by whom?);
- if a grower has a surplus, they may be able to reach out to the restaurants, who could then run a special featuring the ingredient
- Platform would also allow farmers to collaborate on eg medications, bulk buys
- Helpful for farmers to know what restaurant are paying their vendors for products, a monthly forecast is helpful, it can help farmers plan their business
- Important for early communication on (1) the needs of the restaurants so growers can plan, and (2) what the growers can produce so the restaurants can plan. It is too time consuming to do individual one on one reach out, there should be a list for restaurants and a list for producers that is shared.
- Is there a 3rd party who can coordinate this, maybe an online platform?

Appendix E Galiano Grown labels

Grower



Grocer/Restaurant



Product or Menu Sticker

