

Meet Your Maker 2022 Report

In 2021, the Galiano Community Food Program hosted our first *Meet Your Maker* event, which was held virtually. The most important theme to come out of the event was the desire for improved cooperation and communication, and so in support of that goal, in January of 2022, the Food Program hosted a 2nd annual *Meet Your Maker*, with a modified format: this time a series of events aimed at connecting Galiano growers with each other and with restaurants and grocery stores. There were three parts over two days:

Part 1	Growers Collaboration	Wednesday Feb 2, 2022 1:00, Zoom
Part 2	Presentations for Growers	Wednesday Feb 2, 2022 2:00, Zoom
Part 3	Tradeshow Meet & Greet	Wednesday, Feb 14, 2-22, 3-5, South Hall

Below is detailed information about each event, feedback, and next steps.

Part 1 Growers Collaboration Wednesday Feb 2, 2022 1:00, Zoom

Attendees (8 farms, 2 organization representatives)

1. Roger Pettit
2. Henny Schnare
3. Cedana Bourne, Galiano Conservancy Association
4. Patrick Van Holderbeke
5. Bryn Latta
6. Barry New
7. Laura Gerlach
8. June + Becky Beckford
9. Nancy Goodman, Gulf Island Food Co-op
10. Emily Carmichael, Regional Agrologist, Ministry of Agriculture

Promotion

We emailed all Galiano growers, fishers, and beekeepers, a total of 24 island operations. We also asked the Galiano Farmers Institute to help get the word out. We followed up by email, phone, text and direct message to those that didn't reply. The target audience was definitely aware of the event. We are happy with the number of attendees but would love to see even more growers, and would really like to find a way to make the event more enticing for the beekeepers and the fishers, none of whom attended except Galiano Seafood.

Event Outline

- 1:00 Welcome, Territorial Acknowledgement, Intros, promotion of upcoming events
 Collaboration Discussion
- Product Bulletins
 - Growing Planning
- 2:00 Wrap up, thank yous

Product Bulletins Discussion Notes

The idea from last year was brought forward, of a communal bulletin of what's available each week.

Contributions from the group:

- Some growers are already creating their own bulletins and aren't interested in participating in a shared bulletin.
- Some growers don't need to promote what they have every week but do have some weeks when it would be helpful to spread the word more widely. The GIFC tables are one good solution for one-off distribution.
- Getting the word to restaurants is better done one on one to develop those relationships.
- Growers don't have the capacity to coordinate something communal, and then it becomes unreliable.
- It can sometimes be surprising for the growers to discover that restaurants are still not aware of all the products that are available.
- A seasonal directory would address that. If it included contact information, growers could also use that to reach out to restaurants for one-off promotions throughout the season. This would be especially useful if it gave info about who does the ordering rather than the public contact info.

Growing Planning Discussion Notes

The idea from last year's event was brought forward, of growers working together to plan growing so there wasn't overlap.

Contributions from the group:

- Some growers felt this was too reminiscent of a marketing board. How do you keep it fair to everyone? Who would decide what you get to grow? Growers want to try to compete and carve out a niche. Some growers couldn't imagine growers saying 'I'm not going to grow that because you said you were going to grow it'. What if that person's crop fails? There were concerns that it was unwieldy and top-down.
- Some growers were open to the idea, and would find it helpful for others to share what they're planning, and are willing to adjust their growing schedule. Knowing what others are growing helps know what niche remains.
- Others like the idea of collaboration and talking more with the other growers, but don't find there to be an obstacle to doing so independently, and invited growers to approach them. The market was also mentioned as a good venue for this.
- Some growers would find it more helpful to know what the restaurants are looking for at the beginning of the season. However that leaves the risk that if a restaurant says they're looking for a specific item, growers end up overlapping trying to meet that need.
- Growers are doing their planning at the end of the previous season - Sept/Oct.
- Farmer to farmer visits would be a great thing to develop - The Regional Agrologist thought this could be a Knowledge Transfer event.
- A formal discussion about pricing could be helpful - some growers would appreciate some guidance on how to do that.

Survey responses for Part 1

What was your favourite part(s) overall?

- Chance to talk and listen to everyone together.
- Announcement of the staging of an in-person Meet & Greet Convention designed exclusively for Galiano's growers/producers and the Island's commercial customers
- I love everyone getting together..

What parts didn't work well?

- At the beginning it took a while to follow or retain everything that was being said about the program, so . . .
- n/a
- N/A
- We are all so used to doing our own thing. Seems impossible to get people to work together.
- It was nice to hear what some of the other farmers had to say about the topics in the first part, but it seemed like no one was really that excited about the topics themselves, or maybe the way they were framed was turning people off? I found I was interested to have a discussion about pricing, marketing, or even about what everyone is planning to grow, but the idea that some sort of system needed to be set up was a non-starter.

What should we do differently if we do it again?

- it might have been useful to have to powerpoint slides or other a/v to reinforce the presentation.
- n/a
- ♥ Hopefully have a greater number of Galiano's growers participating is all ♥
- Have a structured list of topics with everyone sending in questions. Have a specific time frame for each topic. With ideas, questions and solutions we can all discuss.

Is there anything else you'd like to share about the event or the topics discussed?

- It was great to get together again.

What would you like to see as concrete next steps from today's discussion?

- The contact/profile information made available to restaurants and also back to growers... restaurants need to be clear about what they want from us in the early Fall for the next year.
- Already made! The February 16th in-person aforementioned Meet & Greet ~ a terrific idea.
- More on how we can work together to extend our growing season for all. Get veg producers to rotate main crops?

Part 2 Growers Breakout Presentations

Wednesday Feb 2, 2022 2:00

Promotion was as above for part 1.

Room A Meat Inspection Program Karl Martinson, Ministry of Agriculture

Attendees (2 farmers)

1. Laura Gerlach
2. Bryn Latta

Karl shared information about the recent changes to the rural meat processing rules to two local meat producers. He shared his slides by email afterwards. Participants said:

- “This session was very informative. I have many links to read up and learn more.”
- “The information presented was fairly easy to find online and I had already read it, but it was useful to chat with a person to get a better sense of what is actually happening "on the ground".”

Room B South Island FarmHub Colleen Popyk & Erika Preece

Attendees (4 farms)

1. Pat van Holderbeke
2. Henny Schnare
3. Becky + June Beckford
4. Barry New
5. Nancy Goodman

Colleen shared information about Farmhub, and growers were able to ask their questions.

Attendees' Feedback

- “good session; many questions discussed with clear conclusions”
- “It was good... I was interested in the response from other farmers to the idea.”
- “Sadly I believe our Galiano Island is too small for another buying platform to join as we already have our weekly Saturday Market; direct farm to customer sales and our handful of small grocery stores. Add to that equation the fact of our Moat (added expense coming or going and its effect on prices) together with our very small population and this platform is not sustainable”
- “Farm hub was interesting, but as usual we are all so used to doing our own thing. Staggered planting would work if everyone got on point. This will create more products to be available for longer periods on the Island.”
- “Would like to see details about the farm hub: eg, location for produce drop-off”

Feedback from FarmHub:

- Galiano growers don't seem to have any surplus and seem hesitant to move beyond their current models of the Saturday market and selling directly to restaurants.

- There are some ways in which the current system is quite vulnerable - there is a risk to an individual grower of being dependent on any one restaurant (which could close) and/or being too committed to one buyer (e.g. crop failure) that FarmHub could possibly alleviate.
- Galiano might just be too small since you really do need a handful of anchor farmers to carry the FarmHub system along, so that as smaller farmers pop in and out with their supply, there is still something steady on offer.
- There does still seem to be an opportunity for growers to sell shelf stable items directly to the Victoria FarmHub warehouse.

Room C BC Land Matching Program Azja Jones-Smith, Young Agrarians

Attendees (7 farms, one organization representative)

1. Sheila Anderson
2. June + Becky Beckford
3. Laura Gerlach
4. Mike Hoebel
5. Roger Pettit
6. Dana Weber
7. Pat van Holderbeke
8. Nancy Goodman, Gulf Island Food Coop

Azja outlined how the Land Matching program worked.

Attendees' Feedback

- "This was a good introduction to the topic, and provided the necessary links to get more detailed information if we choose to follow up. Participants used their own situations to help the presenter make illustrative points without digressing too much into detailed tangents."
- "very informative and thought-provoking...also relevant to our local situation"
- "Also interesting.. not really relevant to me other than it is an opportunity to have more growers on the island."
- "Very interesting, but Land matching will not work for our needs."
- "There were concrete examples of the kind of contracts and leases the land matching program enters into, and it was clear that you don't necessarily need a lot of land to participate in the program."
- "The session planned for March should be helpful, but i also think landholders who are interested in matching need to take their own initiative to contact the program co-ordinator so they can discuss specifics of their situation that may not apply to everybody else."

Part 3 Tradeshow Meet & Greet Wednesday, Feb 14, 2-22, 3-5, South Hall

Attendees

Growers (7 farms)

1. Henny Schnare, Cable Bay Farms + Seafood Galiano
2. Pat Van Holderbeke, Mt Sutil Farms
3. Jonathan Schmidt, Haywood Farms
4. Bryn Latta, Valley Fold Farm
5. June Beckford, Hollow Log Farm
6. Becky Beckford, Hollow Log Farm
7. Cedana Bourne, Galiano Conservancy Association

Vendors (7 restaurants)

8. Shelley Okepnak, Flying Black Dog Restaurant
9. Shauna Anderson, Daystar Market
10. Guglielmo Loria, Sturdies Bay Bakery
11. Kat Woolgar, Sturdies Bay Bakery
12. James Langford-Smith, Bodega Ridge Resort
13. Amrei Hunter, Bodea Ridge Resort
14. Ross Mills, Valley Mills Foods
15. Erin Howell, Valley Mills Foods
16. Martine Paulin, Galiano Inn
17. Josh Blumenthal, Oxeye Galiano

Promotion and Accessibility

We emailed all Galiano growers, as well as the Gulf Islands Food Co-op and the Galiano Farmers Institute, to invite them to attend. We followed up by email, phone, text and direct message to those that didn't reply. We also emailed all vendors (16 restaurants, 4 grocery stores, 1 caterer and 3 markets), and followed up in person or by message. I definitely would have liked to see more of both the growers and the vendors in attendance on this day.

Event set up

Growers were set up around the room market-style, and at 3:00 we opened the doors to the vendors, who made their way around the room to chat with the growers. At around 4:15 we wrapped up the formal portion of the event, and the group gathered for a reception, which almost everyone stayed for.

Before the event, I asked all of the island's growers and vendors to submit information for a 15-page industry directory which I circulated at the event. See Appendix A for an example. Attendees were also asked to register for the event online and there was some confusion between the two online forms.

Attendee Feedback

There were 9 respondents to the post-event survey we sent out, consisting of 1 grocer, 5 growers and 3 restaurants. There was one grocer and one value-added producer who RSVPed but then canceled at the last minute.

All respondents said the event was the right length. When asked to rate the event on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being great, 6 respondents selected 1, and 1 respondent selected each of 2, 3 and 4.

Attendees Feedback

What was your favourite part(s) overall?

- Making connections, meet and greet after
- Getting to exchange ideas around creating a Foodie Package for our hotel and including a farm visit :)
- One on one with potential and established commercial customers as well as seeing fellow farmers and producers
- Getting to put faces to names
- Being able to connect with people from a business standpoint (rather than social)
- Meeting face to face with folks I may have spoken to before but don't supply... finding out Ross and Erin need 90 bunches of cilantro a week. Yikes.
- getting feedback from potential customers
- Networking with keen and supportive attendees
- Meet all the farmers

What parts didn't work well?

- Waiting times between talking to people
- Can't think of one. It was a great event.
- Missing attendees who were described in the introductory commercial clientele pamphlet - wondered why they did not make it. Some vendors did not appear as well.
- I wish the attendance was better
- For me, the informal set up was great, but sometimes people can have a hard time knowing where to start.
- No problem with any of it.
- Missing restaurants, eateries listed

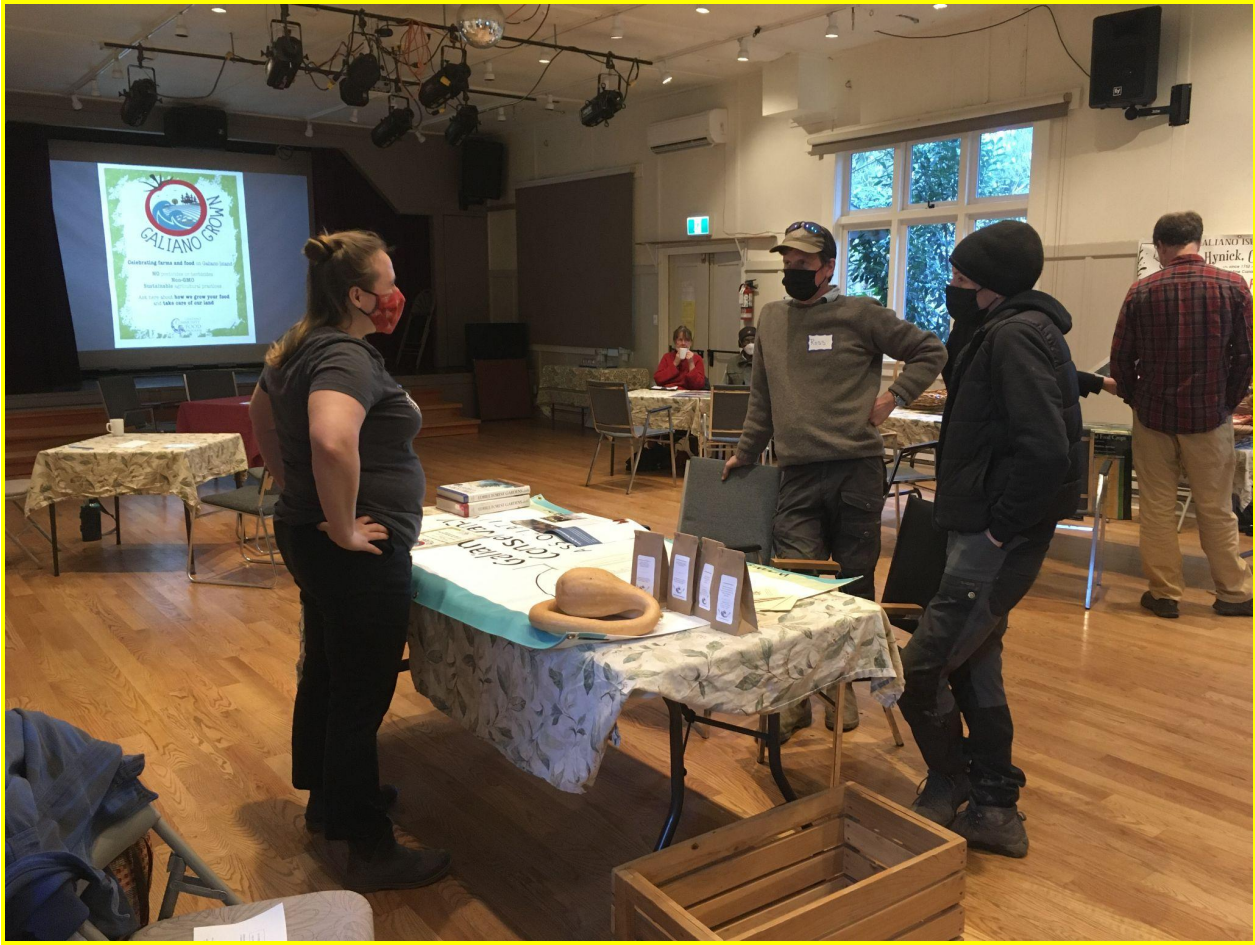
What should we do differently if we do it again?

- Maybe a few more purchasers, but difficult to do
- n/a
- Full attendance of those "written up" if at all possible
- I like the format and thought the event was great, I just would have liked to see more people attend
- Maybe some set questions to help people along because it can be a little awkward
- Maybe include a few more local retail outlets
- Just to have as many attendees as possible

Is there anything else you'd like to share about the event?

- Great idea~!
- I LOVED the addition of the cider and food offered. It created a convivial atmosphere.
- Marvelous Wine & Cheese hors d'oeuvres and a brief and most welcome moment to relax and chat. Our organizers from the Galiano Community Food Program Emma and Alison were amazing
- Thank you for all of the hard work and for putting on the event! I get a lot out of them each year.
- These events, for me, are interesting and useful. I'm very much interested in the big picture issue of the supply problem and demand... the idea of self sufficiency for Galiano and food security. What tends to happen in discussions between growers is we reduce it down to the needs and capacity of our individual farms and systems that are set up already in a way that "we can't grow enough..." and that's where it seems to stop. I'd like to try and be more collaborative with smaller growers to meet restaurant needs together (idealistic, I know.) I want to try Farmhub as a way of giving people who don't go to Saturday market or vendors a source...
- I really appreciate the big picture thought that is at the root of these events and think we might be able to keep chipping away at the individual farm perspective. My two or three cents worth right there.
- Thanks.
- Great food and beverages, and these helped lubricate a positive & enjoyable social atmosphere.
- Very well organized; enjoyed handouts which contained useful feedback from the commercial customers together with their contact information

Images from the Feb 16 Tradeshow Meet & Greet event







GALIANO ISLAND'S
Schnare, Hynick, Crouse & Sons
since 1752
Purveyors of Fine Canadian Fish
Salmon Fillets
Smoked Salmon
Smoked Junco





Funding

Project-specific Revenue

\$1070 Ministry of Agriculture Knowledge Transfer

Expenses

\$973 33 coordinator hours

\$200 facility rental

\$245 Refreshments

\$1336 total

Takeaways and Notes for Next Year

The pair of events took roughly 30 hours to coordinate - it takes a lot of time to follow up and get RSVPs, and hunt down the information needed from each participant. We relied heavily on the GCFP's existing strong network. The attendance was good for both days but for the second one in particular it would be great to see more growers and vendors participating. This year we got funding support from the Ministry of Ag's Knowledge Transfer program (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/programs/knowledge-transfer-events>) to cover most of the coordination hours and printing costs for the handouts.

Splitting this year's event into 2 parts, one over zoom and one in person, was done with the goal of increasing access and inclusiveness. That part worked well – people were able to choose what level of gathering they were comfortable with. That said, there are still some participants (namely the fishers, who are primarily of First Nations' background) who we have so far not managed to entice to participate. I offered to cover transportation costs for some, but that didn't work out. I'm not sure how else to change the event to lower the barriers.

The event served an 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 both the growers and the food businesses.

Growers-only event

The second part of the first day - the breakout room for subject specific presentations - worked really well. People were able to choose the event that aligned with their interests. There was at least one grower who would have liked to attend both of the 2 concurrent sessions, so it might be worth trying to find a way to do them in sequence rather than concurrently, although that risks losing people who have to wait for the session they're most interested in. Maybe the presenters could be booked for a wider window of time and then the events could be slotted in in order of interest, so only those interested in all of them had to stay till the end.

The first part of the first day - the collaboration discussions - got a more mixed response. The growers are interested in collaboration, but are really unsure how to move forward and it's not clear that the Food Program is the right actor to take this. It's very challenging to move from

theoretical discussion to concrete steps. The farmers aren't one homogenous group, and there are many different perspectives and considerations within the group. One clear example of this from this year's event is that there is a different risk-tolerance between those farmers who are employees (of a non-profit or of a landholder) versus those who are owner-operators of their businesses.

One grocer said they'd be interested in exploring retail versus wholesale pricing as a discussion topic.

Farm tours were very much of interest and that might be something to try.

It might help to try a more focused discussion: Have a structured list of topics with everyone sending in questions. Have a specific time frame for each topic. Start with ideas, questions and solutions everyone can discuss.

Meet & Greet event

There was clearly some disappointment that more people weren't in attendance from those who did come. There was also some confusion between the 2 forms (one to RSVP and one to submit info for the Directory). It would be great to find a way to differentiate these two requests for response.

It might be good to have some finger food right from the very beginning, so people have something to do with their hands - might help things feel a bit less awkward. Cookies or squares to go with the coffee.

One value-added producer who didn't attend said they already have the relationships they need on Galiano, but if it ever happens on another gulf island they would be interested in participating.

Try providing participants with sample questions to get the conversation started, and possibly also time-limit the conversations so that no one vendor ends up dominating the discussion with any one producer.

The reception after the event was a real hit - people loved having some unstructured time to chat and that supports the event's goal of building connections. Local cider was much appreciated - next year we could skip wine altogether.

Next steps

The Galiano Community Food Program has already carried out two of the next steps requested by the growers (the directory and the Meet & Greet event). As follow up, the Galiano Community Food Program will also be:

1. Revising and circulating the Directories (appendix A) to all invitees
2. Sharing this report with all invitees

3. Continuing to support growers through the Galiano Grown label program and the Stock Up Market.
4. Planning next year's event

Growers also requested more support on working together to extend the growing season, and exploring the idea of getting veg producers to rotate their main crops. This is an area that doesn't have as clear of a path forward and needs some more consideration.

Growers are encouraged to continue discussions with South Island Farmhub. The Gulf Islands Food Co-op is definitely willing to explore using the Saturday Market table as a drop-off/pick-up location for growers using FarmHub.

Appendix A - Directory Samples

Restaurant	Producer
<p>BUSINESS NAME Staff Names, Titles Currently carrying local products? Yes Looking to carry more? Yes We look for: Consistency, Quality & Inventory, followed by Price Shop at Saturday Market? Yes Ordering: In the summer, our orders are placed twice-weekly Delivery? A great perk but not required More info: We are most likely to want baby vegetables and lettuces, but local availability and reliability is critical for us Contact: Email and phone</p>	<p>Producer name BUSINESS NAME Produce Farmer Main Products: Greens, root vegetables, berries Saturday Market: Yes Delivery: Yes More info: We are a small organic, no-till market garden...We are experimenting all the time with produce varieties, composting and soil building, and grow all of our produce from seed. Will offer an email bulletin this year to any restaurant interested Contact info: Email and phone</p>