



## Community Farms Program



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

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

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

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

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

**Support local food systems** by supplying locally grown food;

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

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

Provide supportive and **flexible labour pools**.

### What's a Community Farm?

A community farm is a multi-functional farm where the land is held "in trust" for community rather than owned privately. A community group or cooperative governs the land use agreements, and agricultural uses of the land are shared by a community of farmers. The primary focus of a community farm is local food production using sustainable agricultural practices. Land holders, land managers, and farmers work together by mutual agreement. Farmers are housed on or near the land.

### Farming in BC

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

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

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

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

### What is the Community Farms Program?

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

### Community Farms Program Goal

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

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

## Community Farms Program Activities

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

The Community Farms Program is a multi-phase initiative. Phases 1 and 2 develop and test program models and resources, and Phase 3 will establish a business model for ongoing program sustainability. Every activity is a building block in the development of the Community Farm program and the future services it can provide.

### Project Activities

2009/2010 project activities in the Community Farms Program include:

- Research and explain how existing government regulations on land ownership and farming businesses affect the development and operations of community farms on agricultural land;
- Complete a CFP web site that houses community farm resources and links to partners and programs
- Design a “Whole Farm Planning process” to set conservation and sustainable agriculture objectives specifically for community farms;
- Work with community farms in various stages of development to test, evaluate, and revise Whole Farm Plan models, templates, and planning process;
- Share project results with farming and other BC communities to help support existing community farms, stimulate the formation of new community farms, and increase awareness and support among members of the public.

We continue to:

- Facilitate formation of community groups (societies and cooperatives) that support farms and farmers
- Help groups develop capacity in their communities to support community farms and farmers
- Identify potential new farmers and survey their needs and assets
- Link farmers with mentors, training and land
- Provide informational resources
- Support a Council of partners, stakeholders and farmers to guide and develop the Community Farms Program

## Who are we?

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

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

## Contact Us!

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

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