



## **NOTES FROM SEED GROWERS - WHAT ACTIONS NEED TO BE TAKEN TO STRENGTHEN LOCAL SEED SYSTEMS**

### **Topic: Land Access**

- From a Working Group on this topic
- Let's get some big donors to buy land or facilitate collaborations to buy land. Land access is the necessary first step before skills can be cultivated. We need to throw our "collective weight" together to buy ahead of individuals who can buy alone and we need to get donors to support this.
  - Suggestions for funders: Banks, industry associations, BC Real Estate Fund + realtors association, private donors (individuals)
  - Take from the American Land Trust development work. They get huge private donations at times. Talk to a development director at US Land Trust.
- Collaborate with BC Ag Land Trust
- Collaborate with Young Agrarians
  - Land matching in a way is a dependent position to go towards. It is not as independent/empowering as ownership. It should be done but its limitations also recognized
- Check out the Vancouver Food Strategy for ideas. Maybe promote them in other jurisdictions. Talk/send delegations to Metro Van (GVRD) regional planning committee re: aspirations
- Lobby city to keep a cut of money from developer permits with a fund to buy farmland

### **Topic: Training/Mentorship**

- scholarships/bursaries to attend online course
- encouraging more mentorships between farmers & students for longer periods of time
- keeping on with developing mentorship/apprenticeships
- More interacting with KPU/UBC students inviting in/engaging with
- More on farm workshops with reputable seed producing specialists
- Partnering with academic/other institutions to deliver seed programming
- Seed "chat/text" with fellow/experienced seed growers
- Forum for mentorship "graduates" to continue to deepen learning
- Continue seed mentorship program!
- Meetup events for new seed growers A la YA
  - Show & tell seed projects
- Is it feasible/reasonable to expect working farmers to take up what full time paid government extension agents used to provide (at least partially). Maybe we need to



- move towards allocating funds for mentors who agree at the beginning of the season to do X number of hours or X number of farms? A proven mentor in this case.
- Cooperative breeding projects (\*)
  - Select a crop, variety and breeding goals on multiple sites, perform selections and review results together
  - The whole group could use the same or different breeding methods, select for the same or different things
  - Establish working group on this
- **BCESC:** give out contact list which includes areas of expertise/interest and can people contact you for mentorship Q's

**Topic: Customer Engagement**

- Feature crops/varieties, storytelling
- colourful , exciting communications, newsletters and social media
- Freebies!
- Cool & free PSAs (public service announcements) in media educating public about seeds
- Outreach to media for stories
  - Tell seed stories to inspire and educate
- Public demos at farmers markets
- Farm visit days
- Education on the value of genetic diversity and preservation of seed/crop varieties (e.g. hybrid vs. OP)
- Featuring seed farmers bios in high traffic/public engagement
- In depth growing guides with pictures/videos
- Connecting with community gardeners/plots to educate and engage backyard growers (or seed savers) (\*\*)

**Topic: On Farm Research**

- Seed trial exchange network
- Equipment sharing
- On/off training on variety improvement and variety development and education
- Seeding date recommendations
- Compile research priorities and delegate trials, experiments (\*)
- Regional researchers who will visit nearby farms
  - List them somewhere public/online



- Guidance (and funding?) for farmers to conduct their own research towards their own interests
  - And link with college/university programs
- Farm workers to help with farming/research endeavours
- Collaboration between farmers doing breeding/research
- Make it worthwhile for the farmer (\$)
- Managing weed pressure -- mulches, flaming, hoe, no-till

**Topic: Quality Assurance**

- Tools, expertise, other resources to cut down costs for QA/testing
- Mobile seed lab (in a van or trailer)
- Stock seed production training
- Variety trials - different regions
- Trial reports from a wide range of regions
- Germination testing: best practices (methods & equipment protocols) (\*\*)
- Growing guidelines and education
- Supply great varieties to start with trialling
- Develop a set of standards to assess “growers credentials”
- Website/listserves of seed growers listing their credentials, expertise, etc.
- Seed borne disease and pest management

**Topic: What Actions Need to be Taken**

**General**

- Further collaboration with First Nations re; mindful spiritual connections re: land stewardship, cultural/culinary reciprocities
- Sample seeds given to farmers (e.g. BCESC seeds or other BC grown seed) to try out and provide feedback/testimonials
- Educate people about the cost/value of locally produced seed/food (And preserving diversity in food system).
- Formations of working groups around particular issues

**Dan Brisebois/Seed economics session**

- Start developing seed growing contracts (templates, relationships...) Develop a bank of potential growers (criteria to be put on this list)
  - For seed companies
  - For farmers, seed growers



- Leverage the BC Eco Seed Coop business statistics to show there's a case for more land needed for BC Seed
- Time to develop seed growing contracts

**Topic: What Resources Can Be Shared**

**General**

- What equipment is available and who/how do we access it?
- Seed sorting/cleaning
- Germination/incubation - portable temp/ humidity control
- Bulk purchase of crop tunnels = better price?
- Weed management tools?
- Sharing knowledge & teaching one another: seeds, favourite varieties, equipment
- Public list of contacts that are willing to be called about seed growing (i.e. specific topics) e.g. you can call me about overwintering vegetables -- put on a website

**Topic: UBC's Quality Assurance template for field grow outs**

- Include a Q re: were there any unusual climatic events/conditions that may affect the crop. Ex. late season, wet/drought, ... etc.
- This will probably be subjective but...
- Could it also be passed on to a researcher who could add geographical climate data?
- Or maybe this isn't actually relevant enough to bother :)

**Topic: Other/misc. topics**

- Talking about seed in the Canada national food policy that is being developed
- Government and non profit grants and support/education
  - Learn from US style of raising money which is often less dependent on government and more on individuals (private donors rather than public)