

Salt Spring Farm Produce Centre  
**Consultation Summary: March 5, 2014 Storage + Wholesaling Focus Group**

Facilitator: Judi Stevenson  
 Reorder: Elizabeth FitzZaland  
 PCPC Reps: Anne Macey and Marguerite Lee

Participants in attendance: 18  
 RSVP regrets: 4

**Introductions and Interests**

Aaron	<i>Will be going to market for 1<sup>st</sup> time this year. How can the PC benefit me?</i>
Sue	<i>Interested in storage.</i>
Mark	<i>Owner of Wavehill Farm with 23 years experience' Interested in how it will work and offered help although may not use it. .</i>
Bejay	<i>Growing business. Producing hazelnuts and walnuts. Looking for co-op type of place for packaging, shared marketing, storage, cleaning and wholesaling.</i>
Larry	<i>Representing SSISFTS</i>
Val	<i>Currently using two properties to access potable water to clean produce. Could PC streamline her operations?</i>
Melanie	<i>Grows and ferments vegetables. Requires more storage, especially for cabbage. Interested in wholesaling and coordinating off-island sales (perhaps through cooperative).</i>
Belinda	<i>Owner of Pipe Rabbit Farm. Interested in freezer storage and off-island delivery/sales.</i>
Rod	<i>Involved in planning process. Interested in an economic storage option to allow increased squash production.</i>
Conrad	<i>What would PC look like? What will it provide the community? Interested in alternative storage options for apples and maybe garlic.</i>
Marcus	<i>Small, organic caterer going to market. Interesting in sourcing local, organic produce.</i>
Kaleigh + Ben	<i>Interested in opportunities for BVCF farmers and how the PC will shape up. Also representing other interested farmers.</i>
Janis	<i>Interested in discussing other uses such as bulk grain for poultry and tool sharing – these are some of the current obstacles to good, efficient growing.</i>
Myna Lee	<i>Supports energy and optimism created at 2012 consultation meeting. Interested in squash storage to reduce waste produce.</i>
Brett	<i>Background in produce distribution and present as a resource person.</i>
Kitsu	<i>Wants to increase production of his miso business and create Salt Spring Miso. Exploring where to grow produce and process product.</i>

## **Discussion: How could your storage needs be met at the Produce Centre?**

### *Design*

- Collective “apple room” approach vs. individual “storage stalls” approach? How much space per stall? How much space in “rooms”?
- “Self-storage” approach allows individual control and could expand as needed
- “Self-storage” will be too pricey
- Start with something simple: some short term storage and a kitchen
- Create an adaptable design to evolve with need, in stages (2)
- Everyone’s needs are different – we need a dynamic hub
- Storage is contentious – should we focus on other components to move project along?
- Start simple: chest freezers in barn

### *Management and Operations*

- Need an employee to maintain quality, enforce standards, cull
- Person onsite is essential for long term and medium term storage
- Important to figure out marketing component

### *Quality and Contamination*

- “Tricky to store produce for a long time”; can lose 60% if not good control of temperature & humidity
- Concerns for contamination in a shared area; need quality standard for crops being stored
- Standards agreement. Organic? No GMOs?
- Who is liable and who pays compensation for contamination?

### *Cost and Fees:*

- What is the cost of operating this facility?
- What is the cost based on? Be transparent.
- Chicken/egg issue of figuring out costs and fees
- Need to focus on big \$ crops
- What is economical?
- How much will storage cost per lb? 20 cents?
- Chest freezers at \$25/month? Shared utilities?
- Will people pay \$50/month to store 4000 lbs of apples?
- Needs to work for farmers working at a small scale (econ. + logist.)
- Least expensive way to get started:
  1. Pool storage
  2. Agree on which produce to store
  3. Set standards
  4. Hire employee to oversee/manage

### *Training and Education*

- What's worth storing?
- Price difference between wholesale and retail (time vs. price)

### *Food Co-op (Retail)*

- Address lack of winter market
- Create PC oversight
- What produce/products are offered?
- Tainted recent history of Gasoline Alley co-op
- Needs lots of energy to be successful
- Have the market conditions changed?
- Interest in getting involved (3)

### *Storage Priorities*

- Fridges and freezers; short & longer term (7)
- Long term winter storage (6)
- Short term humidity/temp control (4)
- Root storage only unless PC is marketing (3)
- 1 degree C. room for apples, boxes 3 deep on shelves (3)
- Freeze and store berries (3)
- Meat and Poultry (3)
- Should not be "too picky" in the beginning
- Simple rodent/weather-proof warehouse (2)
- Flash freezer -berries
- Wholesaling
- Garlic
- Cool and dry miso storage
- Bagging and storing poultry grain
- 4 degrees C. + humidity control for cabbage
- Some might change crops if storage avail.
- Storage time needed - 2-3 months

### *Wholesaling*

- Wholesaling and co-op not so different
- Someone on the phone (PC) with knowledge of price and demand who arranges all logistics (farmers just drop-off and invoice)
- Make wholesaling easy – online functions
- Maintain brand integrity
- Off-island wholesaling through PC or co-op
- "Love to grow, hate to sell"
- Large volume required to make worthwhile
- Requires consistent ability to fill quotas/demand
- As customer/purchaser: Easier way to connect with local farmers/source local with ease (2)
- Wholesaling is big business – complex and competitive
- Can wholesale without PC, arrange directly with stores/customers

- Requires great manager to make it easy/straightforward
- Some interest in just off-island distribution
- No time for marketing small quantities
- Need year-round wholesale and retail component
- Is there community support?
- Need for Salt Spring brand (on and off-Island)
- How does this work for small farms? Crop rotation + wholesale OR variety + retail?
- Interest in selling to co-op only
- "Vegetable box" pick-up /delivery? with no sign-up/membership
- Direct selling to PC would relieve producers from worrying about daily management and return visits

Salt Spring Farm Produce Centre  
**Consultation Summary: March 13, 2014 Processing Kitchen Focus Group**

Facilitator: Judi Stevenson  
 Reorder: Elizabeth FitzZaland  
 PCPC Reps: Anne Macey and Marguerite Lee

Participants in attendance: 7  
 RSVP regrets: 9

**Introductions and Interests**

Myna Lee	Grows at FVO. Wants to see more SSI produce for sale. PC and food industry can revive economy
Belinda	New farm on S. End will be productive in 2015. Will need better processing facilities over time. Interested in flash freezing, large tables, trays, etc.
Beekeepers (Belinda)	Interested in building a honey house on PC property to extract honey. Beekeepers will fundraise capital and manage facility.
Mark	Resource person from GISS
Sue H.	<i>Developing product ideas/not yet processing. Interested in dryer, ovens, racks, large scale canning. Wondering about booking process and availability</i>
Denise	<i>Sold onion crackers at market. Too expensive to rent current kitchen spaces. Passionate about healthy foods. Interested in fermenting food</i>
Paul	<i>Representing George Braun. Growing olives, blueberries, grapes and cherries. Looking to expand. Industrial juicing, flash freezing and freezer storage needed. Maybe canning? Future plans to produce olive oil</i>
Aaron	<i>First year going to market. Wants to use PC to process surplus produce. Current kitchen rates are too high</i>

**Discussion: How could your business needs be met at a community facility?**

*Design*

- Kitchen size: as big as Fulford Hall? GISS? Stowel Lake? All Saints? PCPC should tour current kitchens to better understand space requirements.
- Current list of desires requires a lot of space.
- Identify the different areas
- Separated dehydration area required
- Plan for all future venting/duct work
- Consider an RFP for potential users. Compare and prioritize.
- Look into passive energy/systems options. See UVic examples of roots cellars, etc.

### *Management and Operations*

- Someone has to be in charge
- Hire a chef to manage facility, create products and train
- Oversight to ensure cleanliness and regular maintenance, prevent cross-contamination
- TO example... see attachment
- Consider produce merging to create a new product, or hiring a processor (chef)
- Swipe cards for twilight/after hours access
- Online sign-up process/schedule
- Determine access times and prioritization
- Night access is important
- Before market days will be busy
- Fulford Hall downstairs kitchen is getting certified – how can the two facilities coordinate/compliment?

### *Cost and Fees*

- Feedback from market sellers that kitchen rental at \$80-100/day and \$10 - 25/hour is too high. May not include equipment, pots, etc.
- Used refurbished equipment to bring down costs (dryers, choppers, freezers, etc.)
- Financial success lies in marketing to off-island buyers – this will make the biggest difference to farm/processors viability – shared facility makes this more possible
- Where does the \$ come from for equipment and operations? It's a lot of \$!
- Fundraise for equipment
- Consider yearly memberships with discounted use fees
- Kitchen rental fees and storage fees should be separate

### *Target Users*

- Who is the kitchen for? Big producers vs. startup businesses
- Processing plant vs. multi-use kitchen
- What does the “processing year” look like? Different needs at different times.
- There will be yearly, seasonal and specific users
- Frequent users may require on-site storage
- Processing surplus/“emergency” produce should take priority to avoid waste
- Need to determine which small businesses get to use the space in what priority?
- Develop criteria that meet PC objectives and give priority to users who meet criteria
- Is the PC for value-added of LOCAL produce exclusively?
- Most producers grow a lot of variety in small quantities – how do they fit into the PC picture?

### *Training and Education*

- Education/training needed re: food costing, marketing and efficient production techniques
- All users must be Food Safe trained (Mark can setup program and protocol)
- Education is needed ahead of facility opening/during planning process
- Youth job training opportunities
- "Value-added" value is in not wasting produce
- Public education on value, health benefits, etc.

### *Equipment/Function Priorities*

- Industrial/large dehydrators (lots of interest in food community) (5)
- Large scale canning (4)
- Two steam kettles (4)
- Large stainless tables/room to work (3)
- Flash freezing (3)
- Cold storage (3)
- Storage for boxes, products and ingredients (3)
- Bread/pizza ovens (2)
- Vacuum packing (2)
- Convection oven (2)
- Pots and utensils (2)
- Rack and Roll (2)
- Honey house with proper space and hose-down setup
- Industrial juicing
- Freezer storage
- Temp controlled short term storage for product cool-down (important)
- Big stove/8 burners
- Storage for value-added products is not viable
- Teaching kitchen setup
- Walk-in freezer
- Walk-in cooler
- Steam table
- Seed processing/shelling



Admin SSIAA <plan2farm@gmail.com>

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## The Stop Community Food Centre in Toronto

2 messages

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**Aaron McConnell** <aaronanmcconnell@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 13, 2014 at 10:18 PM

To: plan2farm <plan2farm@gmail.com>

**The Stop Community Food Centre's Green Barn** is operated by The Stop Community Food Centre and houses a year-round temperate greenhouse, sustainable food education centre, sheltered garden, outdoor bake oven and compost demonstration site. As a leader in sustainable food systems education, The Stop Community Food Centre brings hands-on programming to the Green Barn component of the Artscape Wychwood Barns. Children and community members of all ages will learn about ecological growing practices and healthy eating through classroom visits, workshops, community kitchens and volunteering in the year round temperate greenhouse and sheltered gardens.

*It is a place where people of all ages and backgrounds can grow, eat, celebrate and learn about healthy, sustainable food.*

<http://www.thestop.org/programs>

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**Admin SSIAA** <plan2farm@gmail.com>

Tue, Mar 18, 2014 at 8:55 AM

To: Aaron McConnell <aaronanmcconnell@gmail.com>

Awesome - thanks, Aaron.

I will be back in touch with you in the next day or so with more info about the Produce Centre Planning Committee. The next meeting is scheduled for next Wednesday, March 26th but may move to the 27th.

Warmly,  
Elizabeth

[Quoted text hidden]