

# Farmland, Facilities, Food, and a Renewed Future for Farming on Salt Spring Island



a collaboration of The Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust Society and  
The Salt Spring Island Agricultural Alliance

# The Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust

The Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust is part of a broader community initiative to revitalize agriculture on Salt Spring Island. It was established especially to help the community turn the corner on the eroding farm base on Salt Spring and provide opportunities for farmers. It is the vision of the Farmland Trust to help create access to affordable land, while offering other compatible agricultural uses for the community.

Island farmers once produced most of our food supply, now it is less than 6%. With a rising cost in fuel, a changing climate and a recognition of the health hazards of industrial agriculture, a return to safe, fresh, locally-produced sustainable food production is critical. Precious farmland zoned for agricultural use requires protection and hard-working farmers seeking long-term tenure should be supported. The Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust Society has everything to do with meeting these needs.

Our goals are consistent with the existing agricultural zoning regulations, the Salt Spring Island Area Farm Plan and the Official Community Plan. The Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust offers a model that islanders, the surrounding Gulf Islands and the Province can feel proud to support.

Research to establish The Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust Society was started in 2008. It was incorporated as a Society in 2009 and received charitable status in 2011.



Our constitution was created to facilitate a diversity of strategies such as

- the purchase and leasing of farmland,
- education and training,
- sustainable farming practices and
- enhancing the island's agricultural capabilities.



The Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust Society believes that the values we hold and the work we will do will serve this greater community as well.

The purposes of this Society are exclusively charitable and are:

- To promote agriculture on Salt Spring Island and Southern Gulf Islands by acquiring, managing and leasing land for farming.
- To educate farmers and the public on the benefits and practices of locally-produced agriculture.
- To develop and maintain community gardens on Salt Spring Island for the benefit of the community.

# Burgoyne Valley Community Farm



Administered by the Farmland Trust, the Burgoyne Valley Community Farm is a 60-acre parcel of farm land in the Agricultural Land Reserve, located at 2232 Fulford Ganges Road. This property has been continuously farmed since 1887 and will continue to be protected by the Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust Society for agricultural use.

In 2005, Three Point Properties purchased the property and transferred it in 2011 to the Salt Spring Island Farmers' Institute in exchange for an amenity in Fulford Harbour granted by the Islands Trust. Title to the property was transferred to the Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust Society in January 2013.

Most of the land is rented on contract to local farmers whose farm operations are an interesting mix of produce production, high-quality livestock feed, ecological enhancement and protection, and exploratory cropping techniques. The farm also includes the Shaw Family Community Gardens.

# Shaw Family Community Gardens

The Farmland Trust has developed 96 family garden plots (20 x 50 ft) on a portion of the Burgoyne Valley Community Farm. The community gardens area is drained, tilled, fenced and readied for planting. Generous funding for the initial infrastructure, including deer fencing and water irrigation, was provided by the Salt Spring Island Foundation, the Salt Spring Lion's Club, and the Shaw Family Fund. The Shaw Family operated a dairy farm for many years near this area of the valley.

Occupying three and a half of the 60 acres of agricultural land available, the gardens provide opportunities for Salt Spring residents to grow more of their own food and to increase food security on the island. A portion of the land is reserved for use by the Community Services Society to increase access to higher-quality, nutritious food for the people using their services. Food security programs have steadily grown at Community Services to include gardening, food preserving, and meal preparation.

The plots are currently all in use by local growers; a waiting list is maintained by the Farmland Trust. Plots rent out for only \$40 a year.



# The Salt Spring Island Agricultural Alliance

The Agricultural Alliance is a coalition of community organizations: the Farmers' Institute, Island Natural Growers, Chamber of Commerce, Transition Salt Spring and the Salt Spring Community Markets Society. It is an umbrella organization dedicated to the implementation of the Area Farm Plan and the development of agriculture. The Agricultural Alliance has received funding assistance from VanCity for planning its community agricultural projects.

## The Salt Spring Abattoir

*A Project of the Salt Spring Island Agricultural Alliance*

The Salt Spring Abattoir is a community facility managed by the non-profit Salt Spring Abattoir Society. The abattoir was built to eliminate the need for farmers to leave the island for slaughter services, ensure humane treatment of animals, and increase local food production and food security.

The facility opened in late 2012, offering poultry and lamb service. The introduction of beef and pork service is forthcoming.

This project was made possible with generous donations from many individuals, businesses and organizations in our community including major contributions from the BC government, Vancity Credit Union, the Salt Spring Island Farmers' Institute; The Berman Foundation, and The Salt Spring Island Foundation.

The Agricultural Alliance is actively raising funds to pay off the remaining debt from the construction of this specialized facility, as well as to assist the Salt Spring Abattoir Society in implementing a long-term, cost-recovery operational model. Successes of both efforts will significantly increase the resiliency of our island's food system.



# The Produce Centre

The Salt Spring Island Farm Produce Centre is a future project of the Agricultural Alliance and the Farmland Trust. This planned community facility is intended to provide quality-controlled storage, handling, and distribution of locally produced food. The Produce Centre will give small-scale farmers access to the commercial equipment they need to expand the availability of local value added food, and increase local food security.

The Produce Centre was identified in the Area Farm Plan as an important component in establishing a stronger local food system. By reducing our reliance on imported food, it will also help our community reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2012, ownership of a property on Beddis Road was given to the Salt Spring Island Farmland Trust Society as part of a rezoning agreement with Beddis Development (Slegg Lumber).

In late 2013, a Produce Centre Planning Committee was initiated by the Agricultural Alliance and the Farmland Trust to oversee a Feasibility Study and eventual Master Plan for the site. Discussion groups continue to meet and plan the design and operation of the Produce Centre.



SKETCH VIEW FROM SOUTH EAST

# How You Can Help Grow Agriculture on Salt Spring Island

There are many ways that community members can help improve the future of farming on Salt Spring Island, and increase our local food security.

## **Do you have agricultural land that is not being used for agriculture?**

Consider donating land to the Farmland Trust, or contact the Farmland Trust to find people willing to work your land and bring it into production.

## **Are you considering starting a farm, or expanding a farm operation?**

Bring your poultry or lamb to the abattoir for processing.

Consider how you could make use of the Produce Centre to expand your food processing.

## **Can you make a financial donation?**

The Farmland Trust is a registered charity that can issue tax receipts for donations that support its various projects.

The Agricultural Alliance is paying off its debt from the building of the abattoir. You can help retire that debt and help the work of the Alliance.

## **Do you have time to volunteer?**

All of our agricultural organizations rely heavily on the work of volunteers.

## **Join Us!**

The Farmland Trust at: [www.ssifarmlandtrust.org](http://www.ssifarmlandtrust.org)

The Agricultural Alliance at: [www.plantofarm.org](http://www.plantofarm.org)

The Farmers' Institute: [www.ssifi.org](http://www.ssifi.org)

Island Natural Growers: [www.cog.ca](http://www.cog.ca)