

# Regional Food Cluster Review

**October 2008**

*Martine Piebiak*

Aussi disponible en français.



The Agricultural Policy Framework (APF)  
A FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL-TERRITORIAL INITIATIVE



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A big thank you goes out to the organizers, coordinators, founders and executive directors who took time to share their thoughts and experiences with local foods events and organizations: without their co-operation this report would not have been possible. This review, with its Smart Practices and individual project profile,s is based on information from interviews with the following people:

- Linda Reader
- Ron Mead
- Bonita Magee
- Jackie Hughes
- Jane Libby
- Peter Katona
- Susan Tychie
- Lee Fuge
- Arden Henry
- Ann Dougherty
- Magdalena Kaiser-Smit
- Jim Early
- James Murphy
- Anna Helmer
- Niki Vanerk

The other group who made this project possible was the steering committee of Carmen Andrew, Bill Reynolds and Marissa Verbeek. Thanks for your encouragement, further questions and edits that greatly improved the final product. For further information on ag-tourism and cluster development in the province of Alberta go to [www.ag-tourism.ca](http://www.ag-tourism.ca) or contact:

### **Bill Reynolds**

Ag-Tourism Initiative  
Agriculture and Rural Development  
2nd fl JG O'Donoghue Building 7000 - 113 Street  
Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6  
780-427-4424  
Email: [bill.reynolds@gov.ab.ca](mailto:bill.reynolds@gov.ab.ca)

or

### **Carmen Andrew**

Organization Development Specialist – Ag-Tourism  
Agriculture and Rural Development  
301 Provincial Building 4920 - 51 Street  
Red Deer, AB T4N 6K8  
403-340-5542  
Email: [carmen.andrew@gov.ab.ca](mailto:carmen.andrew@gov.ab.ca)

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>SMART PRACTICES SUMMARY FOR LOCAL FOOD EVENTS AND TRAILS....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>INDIVIDUAL PROFILES OF PROJECTS</b>	
<b>Butter Tart Trail</b>	
<i>Kenilworth, Ontario, Canada .....</i>	<i>11</i>
<b>Cooperstown Beverage Trail</b>	
<i>Otsego County, New York State, USA.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<b>Feast of Fields</b>	
<i>British Columbia, Canada .....</i>	<i>18</i>
<b>Food Fanciers’ Foray</b>	
<i>Amish Country, Indiana, USA .....</i>	<i>23</i>
<b>Food Hawke’s Bay</b>	
<i>Hawke's Bay, New Zealand.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<b>Food Link: Taste Local, Taste Fresh</b>	
<i>Wellington County, Ontario, Canada.....</i>	<i>32</i>
<b>Food Roots Distributors Cooperative – Sustainable Feasts</b>	
<i>Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada .....</i>	<i>37</i>
<b>Learn Great Food – Culinary Adventures</b>	
<i>Illinois, USA .....</i>	<i>41</i>
<b>Local Flavours</b>	
<i>Lansdowne, Ontario, Canada.....</i>	<i>44</i>
<b>Niagara Culinary Trail</b>	
<i>Niagara, Ontario, Canada.....</i>	<i>50</i>
<b>North Carolina Historic Barbeque Trail</b>	
<i>North Carolina, USA .....</i>	<i>54</i>
<b>SAVOUR Muskoka Culinary Experiences</b>	
<i>Bracebridge, Ontario, Canada .....</i>	<i>58</i>
<b>Slow Food Cycle Sunday</b>	
<i>Pemberton, British Columbia, Canada.....</i>	<i>63</i>
<b>COMPARISION OF TRAIL TERMS AND CATEGORIES.....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>MATRIX COMPARISION OF THE THIRTEEN GROUPS.....</b>	<b>70</b>

## INTRODUCTION

In 2005, initial project research was conducted with eighteen pre-selected ag-tourism project coordinators and stakeholders across North America. Through these interviews representatives were selected to present at the Harvest of Talent Grow the Cluster Conference which happened in February of 2006.

In the summer of 2006, as a follow up to the 2005 interviews, thirteen of the original eighteen participants were re-interviewed to create an updated report highlighting key areas of partnership and process development. The results of these efforts were documented in the report, *A Consolidated Guide to Ag-tourism Cluster Projects in North America*.

This report *The Regional Food Cluster Review* followed a similar process to the *Consolidated Guide*. This time the groups to be interviewed were singled out, because of their work, to promote local foods, agriculture awareness and/or ag-tourism in North America and beyond. With consumer demand for local food increasing and the commencement of Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development's Local Market Enhancement Project (Shop, Eat & Experience Local Foods), it was timely to further research the smart practices of collaborative local food events and promotions. Information gleaned from this research and review will be used to "seed ideas" to cluster operators and stake-holders. Smart practices will be shared in the Cluster newsletter and Cluster operator meetings. There is also the potential to utilize people from the projects researched as guest speakers here in Alberta.

## **SMART PRACTICES SUMMARY FOR FOOD EVENTS AND TRAILS**

### **Themes and trends**

- Local Food Focus:
  - Concerned with the sustainability and security of the food supply
  - Local food for local people
  - Educates about local food and agriculture issues
  - Demonstrates cooking, offers tips and food for sale
  - People learn new ways to source food in their area
  - After the event participants shop differently
  - Food producers and processors increase direct local sales as a result.
- Culinary/Regional Cuisine:
  - Local food enhances visitors' experience
  - Assumes people have money to spend on experiences and souvenirs
  - Builds regional identity based on local ingredients, food preparations and cultural traditions
  - Chefs headline and showcase food
  - White tablecloth events often include wine and beer
  - Might be more expensive with some snob appeal
  - After the event visitors find new restaurants to try, restaurants increase sales and profile, creates pull for local food.

### **Goals and purposes of food organizations**

- More dollars in farmers/food producers' pockets and more local food in people's mouths
- Connect, inform and educate consumers, farmers and other food outlets about benefits and availability of local food
- Increase the sustainability of the local food system.

### **Goals specific to food events**

- Increase public awareness of the value of local food
- Showcase locally grown food and drink
- Create new farm/processor – restaurant relationships
- Fundraiser for the food organization

### **Goals for food trails**

- Move people from community to community and business to business
- Market and sell in a co-operative manner a complementary variety of farm fresh products and foods
- Year round promotion of fresh foods, vibrant communities and natural areas
- Offer visitors a way to tour, taste and shop locally.

## Common beginnings

- **Find foodies.** Food event founders often include “foodies”. It seems for these collective efforts to get off the ground it is not enough to be just involved in food production. There also needs to be a passion for food and the story of where food comes from.
- **Inventory, map, assess.** Assessment, inventory mapping, asset mapping and/or database creation are a common first step or an early activity in these collaborative efforts. You need to understand and build on what you already have locally. Events, menus and maps can all be derived from these local/regional databases of where to source food and experiences - farms, culinary artisans and rural attractions
- **Include beverages.** Alberta doesn't have an established backbone of wineries or breweries beware of adapting and adopted formats from wine regions. Consider the wine, mead and brews we do have in our province in driving routes and food events. Our province's cottage wineries are too geographically separated to have a beverage-only type trail
- **Partner or headline with food.** Food can either headline or be a sub category or project of a larger not-for-profit cause or effort. Some examples are: the green belt, heritage trail, biosphere reserve, and tourism (sustainable tourism).
- **Experience counts.** By repeating an event you can gain cost savings and other learning. One way to fast track experience is to partner with a pre-existing event to benefit from their experience (and repeat coordinators).
- **One thing leads to another.** Groups who start with a food event often add a trail/map and groups who start with a food trail use events to launch their trails and often have two special weekends with events, usually one in summer and one prior to Christmas

### Wikipedia defines foodies as:

*Distinguished from gourmet. Although the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably, foodies differ from gourmets in that gourmets are epicures of refined taste who may or may not be professionals in the food industry, whereas foodies are amateurs who simply love food for consumption, study, preparation, and news.[1] Gourmets simply want to eat the best food, whereas foodies want to learn everything about food, both the best and the ordinary, and about the science, industry, and personalities surrounding food.[2] For this reason, foodies are sometimes viewed as obsessively interested in all things culinary.*

## Quality assurance/standards of participation in trails

- Add products and stops to complement, enhance and build on what is already on the themed trail
- Provide a service or event where there is education, entertainment and/or promotion of local food products
- Trail members almost always need to have their own insurance
- Other criteria:
  - payment of a membership fee (\$25 – 600/year)
  - regular business hours
  - food local as possible (75%), merchandise local as possible (original art)
  - adequate visitor parking
  - knowledgeable and courteous employees
  - observe all laws and regulations appropriate to their business particularly those governing the sale of food goods and services
  - comply with all laws relating to employment and health and safety in the

workplace

- display all signage prominently at the gate side and other points to attract visitors
- cross promotion of other trail members.

### **Quality assurance/standards of participation in food events**

- Include restaurants who support the agricultural sector year round
- The collective/organizing body usually has event insurance, a special event license and liquor license if required
- Food handling and food safety is not considered high risk when chefs are doing the food prep and handling. Most organizers just ask for a copy of the chefs' food handling certification.

### **Admissions and ticket sales**

- Taste trails and other driving routes are usually free
- Food event tickets range in price from \$40 – \$80 for an afternoon or evening event
- Sell and distribute tickets through partner organizations or local businesses
- Choose only to pre-sell tickets; this way you know how many you are expecting and it simplifies entrance to the event.

### **Event logistics**

- Use a ratio to get the right mix. For one day food festivals/feasts have a ratio of one participant/vendor (chef/farmer combo, wine/beverage tasting, sponsor/awareness group) for every 15 guests. For example 200 tickets sold needs approximately 14 participant booths or stations.
- Pair food events with another specific interest area such as; photography instruction, local history/exploration of historic locations, instruction on how and where to shop for food, instruction on how to prepare and cook new foods
- Provide frequently asked questions (FAQ) for food events as this gives visitors an idea of what to expect about the format and rules for your event
- Track some statistics about your event (revenue, amount of media/coverage, number of people who attended)
- Supply entertainment. Ideas include:
  - live music
  - farm reports from farmers
  - guess the original purpose of the antique object, lead by an expert
  - storytelling
  - offer a blessing from a First Nations group
  - cooking demos
- Food tours (Incredible Edible Tours and Learn Great Foods) cost the most \$85 – \$95 and include transportation, meals, interpretation/guided experiences on location and may also include a cooking class.

### **Trail logistics**

- Most trails start within an hour's drive of a major urban centre
- Number of stops/operations on self-guided tours and trails is variable from as few as four to almost 50

- Consider different modes of transportation: bicycles, motor bikes, buses and motor homes. Within 50 - 70 kilometres bikes can work; it is more environmental, less parking headaches and is a great experience for visitors
- Give direction and guidance to visitors so they can find their way from all directions and manage their expectations
- Communicate with them about kids, pets and other concerns. Include a FAQ section or checklist of reminders on your website and brochure
- Feature a searchable directory or database and some form of map on the website
- Post printable pdf versions of trail maps online. Most websites also include downloadable versions of other marketing materials such as flyers, brochures, magazines and recipes.

### **Media relations**

- Press releases are a very standard, some use as often as once a month while others are more sporadic
- The radio works for event promotion, especially close to the time of the actual event
- Foster a personal relationship with the media either by buying advertising, offering complementary tickets to events or having the same co-ordinate who comes to know the media personally
- The best press response is generated when the media actually experience the event, tour or trail.

### **Partnerships and sponsorships**

- Partner to fundraise for other not for profits at a food event; you can charge slightly more and it positions you to enhance your ticket sales. Incorporate a cause into the story and promotion of the event. Use wording like “proceeds to go and help support...”
- Include a silent auction to increase the event's revenues and give guests something to look at while wandering and tasting; local artisans and accommodations/restaurants are good partners
- Look across the entire local system to find partners, collaborators and sponsors. For example independent grocers and health food stores have provided cash sponsorships to food events
- Seek sponsorship from either local government, service clubs or associations or food/farm related suppliers and businesses
- Use tracked numbers from prior events to build a case for why sponsors should invest in making your event even more successful and most importantly what is in it for them (positive public relations, media coverage, and exposure to your event's guests).

### **Budget, funding and investment**

- Groups are rarely 100% self-funded or membership funded especially in the first three years of existence, when start up costs are high and experience is low
- Plan for sponsorship and/or grants to be part of your group's formula. Clusters are often eligible for funding because many businesses are working together for a single cause or purpose (eg. preservation of farmland)
- Expect foundations and funders to expect you to become more self or membership funded over time usually through offering services such as marketing and promotion of

an eat local brand or event to members

- Local food events are also used as fundraisers for business alliances and clusters; Feast of Fields in BC is a fundraiser for the organization Farm Folk City Folk
- Sell appropriate merchandise and souvenirs to increase revenues at food and trail events.

### **Marketing strategies**

- Go beyond just the development of marketing material and web design to thinking about the creation and launch of a brand. The goal here is brand recognition. Ideally your brand becomes synonymous with source of local food within the region.
- Hire or partner with a professional photographer to record and capture the beauty and abundance of your event
- Save printing costs by offering flyers, maps and coupons in pdf formats for downloading
- Share enticing photos and short videos so visitors can preview the kind of experience your group is offering on the event/group website
- Use e-newsletters as a low cost, low environmental impact way of keeping in touch with visitors.

### **Tracking success**

- Reward visitors who participate in your tracking/feedback/evaluation process by offering a small give away (free stuff)
- In 2007 Cooperstown Beverage Trail used a pdf coupon on their website. Visitors printed off the coupons and redeemed the coupons at each of the four trail stops for free stuff; if they visited all the sites they received a free drink with a souvenir glass. Through this promotion the businesses knew how many people visited some or all of the sites
- Expect a low response rate from online evaluation forms after an event.

### **Organization structure and human resources**

- The more membership based an organization is (farmers, restaurants and other food outlets pay to play) the more likely it is that they will have paid coordinators
- Burnout is real. Taking on too many events in one year drains enthusiasm and is not sustainable
- Increase revenue generation potential by having the same organizer/coordinator for three or more years
- Share the load. Use volunteers on event day and for more specialized tasks ahead of an event
- Build your event over time.

### **Producer/Chef connections**

- Chefs are better at being famous than are farmers. Chefs are comfortable and keen to headline an event and be featured in promotion.
- Encourage farmers and culinary artisans to step into the spotlight and share their story. Identify those in your group or cluster who are able to do this. Visitors and consumers are interested in both sides of the food story, how the food was grown and how it was prepared.
- Farmers don't always have public relations skills, so when choosing tour stops look for farmers who are welcoming and able to be good hosts and build this element into trail

criteria

- Chefs do a lot of this work pro bono – which means they can be fickle. Much of the work they do with food events is on a volunteer basis
- Consider chefs' off-time and plan your event then; some choose to do their events on Sundays or early in the week so chefs from smaller cafes and restaurants can participate
- Farmers are busy at different times of the year; take into consideration peak times such as planting, calving and harvest when planning events
- Chefs are generally enthused about coming on farm and being offered the opportunity to prepare food with the freshest, in season and unique ingredients available
- Use the terms 'farmers' and 'culinary artisans' rather than producers and processors. The labels 'farmers' and 'culinary artisans' are preferred by participants, and richer in meaning
- Cultivate connections with group members by getting involved and out to the farms; pull on your rain boots and walk the farms with the farmers. Person to person communication works best.

### **Unique aspects of promotion**

- Provide giveaways with samples and marketing materials for visitors to take home
- Find ways to tell your visitors how 'green' you are; some ideas include:
  - feature compostable sugarcane plates, linen napkins and wine glasses, edible containers/serving vessels
  - secure ethical suppliers- sweatshop free t-shirts or 100% organic hemp shopping bags
  - print on recycled paper stock with soy inks
  - do mail outs to supporters electronically to minimize paper usage
  - calculate food miles or food kilometres for menu items
  - offer carpooling or shuttle bus services
- Offer passport programs with rewards:
  - souvenir medallions/coins for purchase at each of the restaurants and an official holder for sales from the society
  - free drink with a souvenir glass for visiting all four stops on the Beverage Trail.

### **Final thoughts**

- Collaborative marketing and working within a cluster requires some shifts in thinking from being a sole proprietor/farmer and doing everything on behalf of an individual business
- A common beginning for food organizations or clusters is for individual farms, culinary artisans and chefs with in a district or region, to work together on a single project or event on a volunteer basis. Making the transition from a project to an organization is a challenge.
- In time the need for an organization/entity emerges, they form an association, society or other not for profit; finally when established there are year round promotions with bigger events and some staff, either a coordinator or contract help
- In some areas food trails and events are very new ideas which are not welcome at first, change is hard for some and not everyone will support new ways of working immediately
- Community support is not guaranteed and may grow overtime.

## BUTTER TART TRAIL

Kenilworth, Ontario, Canada



**Linda Reader – economic development officer**  
Township of Wellington North  
Box 125, 7490 Sideroad 7 West  
Kenilworth, ON N0G 2E0  
519.848.3620

[lreader@wellington-north.com](mailto:lreader@wellington-north.com)  
[www.wellington-north.com](http://www.wellington-north.com)

### Introduction

The Butter Tart Trail began when a group of tourism stakeholders did a visioning session and an asset mapping exercise. Through this process they discovered they have a number of 'scratch' bakeries in this rural area and on-farm sheep and goat dairies with cheese shops. This township is located within an hour's drive of Toronto and had potential as a day trip destination. The first map was produced in 2006 making 2008 its third year.

At the time most cars were driving past Wellington to destinations beyond the township. The total population of this area is 11, 000 people. It has a couple of villages and is mostly farmland without distinctive geographical features such as lakes and/or mountains. The Butter Tart Trail has become a creative theme that captures visitors' imaginations. It highlights two of travellers' favourite pastimes, eating and shopping.

Butter tarts are a unique Canadian confection created by pioneers with easy ingredients from the farm such as butter, sugar or maple syrup, eggs and dried fruit like currants or raisins, if available. The group in Wellington decided to trademark their trail name to protect its distinct identity and be sure they had a case if other butter tart trails started popping up across the nation. They were pleased to learn that no one had ever thought to trademark butter tarts!

The people of this area have begun to really live the trail theme more folks have started making tarts because of the hype, the local arena sells home made tarts, and now at community dinners the desserts are tarts. One business not on the butter tart trail map had a sign inviting visitors to "come try our tarts!" When Linda goes to meetings she is now expected to always bring the butter tarts.

### Purpose/goals of trail

- Tour the award-winning Butter Tart Trail™ and stop at bakeries and Mennonite kitchens for over 14 different types of butter tarts and other fine baked goods
- Taste the tarts where butter tarts still reign supreme in the rural Township of Wellington North just minutes away from the hustle and bustle of Ontario's big cities
- Shop for flea market treasures, artisans' wares and farm-gate surprises

### **Quality assurance/standards of participation**

- Criteria to be included on the map:
  - tarts need to be home baked (Tim Hortons' tarts didn't make the Trail)
  - art needs to be original (artisans)
  - antiques/flea markets are allowed because they offer unique shopping experiences
- Gift shops are excluded from the Trail map. The trademark of the Trail is the butter tart
- It is important for Tart Trail members to be open most days during the busy summer season. Consideration is given to Mennonite Farm participants and visitors are asked to call ahead and respect business hours on the map.

### **Admissions/ticket sales/tracking attendance and revenue**

- The map is free
- Download pdf copies of the trail map at the municipal website [www.wellington-north.com](http://www.wellington-north.com).

### **Trail logistics**

- The Trail covers approximately 70 kilometres and is a self-guided driving tour with two special weekends – July 1<sup>st</sup> and a pre-Christmas event
- The map clearly shows the paved and gravel roads and offers a variety of options besides the main route
- Map recommends alternate routes for cyclists
- One day a year they do a biking event for families with trivia questions along the route. It takes about half a day to bike the whole Trail. It is not a race but they do offer prizes
- The kick-off for the summer season is July 1st/Canada day long weekend.

### **Media relations**

- Because of the unique nature of the event there has been lots of interest from various national media outlets

### **Budget, funding and investment**

- At first businesses were not charged to be on the trail map but now it costs \$100 for each Trail stop and they get additional revenue from selling advertising space on the back of the map
- It takes about \$15,000 to produce the map
- There are lots of in-kind contributions from the municipality including administration support.

### **Marketing strategies and tracking success**

- The July launch is advertised with a flyer. Visitors are asked to celebrate at the “Tart Taste Fest” trail members have special activities and events for this weekend
- They do a special Christmas promotion flyer that Trail members and other businesses pay to participate in. It had a distribution of 55,000 and they won a tourism award for this promotion
- It is hard to accurately measure the impact of the Trail
- One bakery shared that Trail traffic is responsible for ~30% of their summer traffic

- A small farm reported that the Trail brings in ~ 40% of their business.

### **Producer/Chef connections**

- Bakeries factor into the Trail more than chefs. While the butter tarts are a regional, rural Canadian dish, local ingredients do not appear to be part of the criteria for involvement
- Seven of the 17 Trail stops are agricultural producers: farm-gate or markets offering farm direct items, from soap to cheese to maple syrup to bedding plants.

### **Organization structure and human resources**

- The map is pulled together and co-ordinated by the economic development officer at the local township
- There is no official organization behind this collaborative marketing effort
- There is a volunteer committee that meet monthly and advise on activities and promotion of the trail for example they proof advertisements.

### **Unique aspects of promotion**

- This year they plan to have a booth at the Royal Winter Fair with butter tarts and maps to attract a whole new batch of people to their region.

### **Final thoughts**

- This trail seems to be very successful and a gem of a project
- The biggest challenge they had to overcome was the small mindedness and lack of big picture thinking from some members of the community. Some people were very resistant to taking a new approach
- At the same time the trail's biggest strength are the people who have come on board, been supportive and offered ideas.

## COOPERSTOWN BEVERAGE TRAIL

*Otsego County, New York State, USA*



**Bill Micheals – owner Fly Creek Cider Mill**

288 Goose Street, Fly Creek, NY 13337

607.547.9692

[www.flycreekcidermill.com](http://www.flycreekcidermill.com)

[bill@flycreekcidermill.com](mailto:bill@flycreekcidermill.com)

**Ron Mead**

Farm, Apple and Cuisine Trail Designation

Program

518.457.3136

[ron.mead@agmkt.state.ny.us](mailto:ron.mead@agmkt.state.ny.us)

[www.cooperstownbeveragetrail.com](http://www.cooperstownbeveragetrail.com)

### Introduction

Established in 2007, the Cooperstown Beverage Trail is the State's first designated New York State Cuisine Trail. It follows State Route 28 connecting four businesses, Fly Creek Cider Mill and Orchard, Brewery Ommegang, Cooperstown Brewing Company and Bear Pond Winery. They are located within 23 miles of each other and offer sweet cider, hard cider, apple wines, Belgian-style ales, micro-brewed English-style ales, and grape and fruit wines. The trail complements a very successful rural tourism industry with its centre being Cooperstown, which draws over 400,000 visitors annually during the summer season. Historically this region is the major hops producing area of the state, so local agriculture history is intended to be the backbone of the Trail's marketing theme.

### Purpose/goals of event

- A cuisine trail, as defined by the State, is an association of producers that are in close proximity to each other, sell in a co-operative manner a complementary variety of unusual or hard to find fresh farm and food products prepared primarily with such products for on or off premises consumption, including but not limited to, herbs, meats, vegetables, salad materials, wines, cut flowers, mushrooms or fruits. Such trails may utilize a map, other directional devices or highway signs to market their products and direct patrons to their places of business.

### Quality assurance/standards of participation in Farm, Apple and Cuisine Trails

- All eligible trails must contain a sufficient number of producers and incorporate other area attractions or considerations to maximize patronage of the trail
- Trails must not exceed 25 miles, be easy to follow, and not conflict with scenic byways, wine trails or any other existing trails. Trail designations also take into consideration thematic, geographic and historical consistency, as well as economic feasibility. To learn more about the New York State Farm, Apple and Cuisine Trail Designation Program, visit [www.agmkt.state.ny.us](http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us).
- In 2008 the law was amended to allow more producers to participate in the cuisine trails program. It expands the number of cuisine trails from five to ten and the number of apple trails from seven to ten. It also extends the length of the trails to 50 miles. In addition, the

new law addresses the circumstances involved when the routes of two or more agricultural tourism trails or other scenic trails overlap on the same sections of certain roads

- "The State's apple, farm and cuisine trails have been very successful economic and tourism tools for Upstate," says Senator Larkin. "They showcase our superior agricultural products and help preserve the beauty of farmland and open space. I believe this new law will help create even more economic development opportunities for local growers in the Hudson Valley and throughout the State."
- The State department has four more applications on file – they have not happened yet. One includes six orchards with apples, pears and cherries.

### **Admissions/ticket sales/tracking attendance and revenue**

- It is free to participate in the Beverage Trail
- Before the Trail started the four members of the association accommodated an estimated 175,000 visitors annually. In year one of the Beverage Trail (2007) they tracked and attributed an additional 10,000 visitors to the program.

### **Event logistics**

- Self guided driving tour
- Events throughout the season include: Ommegang's Ommefest fall family event – waffles and puppets, Fly Creek's Cider Mill's AppleFest, CiderFest and Taste of Fly Creek Series that offers special sampling weekends that feature Pride of New York vendors
- All of the four participating businesses offer wine, beer or cider tasting and have on-farm retails offering food and gift items from their farms and other New York State producers
- Fly Creek has a restaurant featuring local food on the menu
- During special events Brewery Ommegang offers farmers' market style vending.

### **Media relations**

- In 2007 they used paid media placements
- In 2008 they contracted and paid for Rural News Service – local and county distribution of *QUENCH Magazine* and regional distribution of rack card and New York Press Service – contract to insert *QUENCH Magazine* into local newspapers in Albany and Syracuse markets at a total cost of \$8,650.00.

### **Budget, funding and investment**

- Trail program participants pay for signs and there is a \$250 one-time application fee to the Department of Agriculture and Markets, this doesn't include the signs
- In 2008 the association invested ~ \$50,000 in marketing their Trail and were successful in securing a matching grant program for the development, implementation or expansion of programs, projects, activities or events which will promote New York State food and agriculture through ag-tourism.

### **Organization structure and human resources**

- The association is made up of the owners of the four businesses on the Beverage Trail

**Marketing strategies and tracking success**

- Shared magazine ‘*Quench*’ with coupons for all four businesses
- Place advertising at a popular local destination - Cooperstown Dreams Park is dedicated to baseball for youth and hosting tournaments. This place hosts 6000 visitors per week during the Park's 12 week season. The Beverage Trail chose to advertise in the Dreams Park family guide in the 2008 season
- The four participating businesses market value added food items such cheese spreads, mustards and dressings featuring the Beverage Trail logo/brand. These items are sold at all four stops plus other strategic locations around the state
- In 2007 the plan was to build brand recognition, create a strong web presence and a rack card
- In 2008 they plan to use Hot Spots Map – full-colour characterized area map that highlights the Trail. Five hundred thousand copies distributed in the immediate four-county area
- Coupons are used to track marketing success of the Beverage Trail

2007 Program Results as of September 30th	
Individual QUENCH Coupon Printed redeemed	7129
Individual QUENCH Coupon from the Web redeemed	99
Glass QUENCH Promotion Printed redeemed	1876
Glass QUENCH Promotion from the Web redeemed	49
Revenue Generated from redeemed glass promotion only	\$202,570.00
Sales Tax Generated from glass promotion only	\$16,205.00
Total Number to Travel Entire Trail	1,925.00
Total Number to Travel a Portion of the Trail from coupons redeemed	7,228.00

- The 2008 plan was to create and distribute ‘*Quench*’ magazine, further distribution of rack cards and development of a motor-coach program
- Successful application to the State 2007-08 Ag-tourism Projects (shared completed application with us)
- Project was the 2008 Marketing and Promotion Program - 50:50 matching dollars, total project cost \$50,350.00
- Contracted out the design and production of ‘*Quench*’ Magazine (150,000 copies), a co-ordinated rack card (80,000 copies) and promotional glassware (5,800) units
- Also contracted out distribution of magazine and rack card within the local county and targeted markets of Albany and Syracuse.

**Producer/chef connections**

- The members of the Cooperstown Beverage Trail are all processors of New York Agriculture products and they provide tours of their respective processing facilities. From raw ingredients to finished products, visitors can explore the tastes and aromas of New York
- Increasing the numbers of visitors travelling the Trail will encourage residents to purchase locally produced products within New York. A greater understanding of the

value added processing of agriculture products grown in New York influences purchasing decisions at home.

### **Unique aspects of promotion**

- Special offers = free stuff! Each of the four tour stops offered a coupon for a free promotional item, cardboard coasters, a wine opener and cider slush
- Free Glass Give Away. If visitors hit all four stops (three when the fourth is closed in winter) and had their passport stamped, they were eligible for a free drink and glass to take home at the last stop of the day and could enter to win a \$500 shopping spree

### **Final thoughts**

- According to Ron Mead, “the best trails have some cuisine and/or fine restaurants. Farms need to be respectful and keen to have guests on their sites. There are some great opportunities for ag-tourism in their State. Some farms are very visible and accessible. Image is important and must be a part of the game plan.”
- Amazing what four established, professional and organized ag-tourism properties in close proximity can do when they work together. It is great to have actual numbers from their tracking program
- An awesome example of tracking the promotion program through coupons and then using the information in successful applications for matching marketing dollars from the State.

## **FEAST OF FIELDS**

*British Columbia, Canada*



**Bonita Magee - project manager**

FarmFolk/CityFolk  
1937 West 2nd Avenue  
Vancouver, BC V6J 1J2  
[888.730.0452](tel:888.730.0452)

[bonita@ffcf.bc.ca](mailto:bonita@ffcf.bc.ca)

<http://www.ffcf.bc.ca/feast.html>

### **Introduction**

Feast of Fields - a gourmet wandering picnic harvest festival - is FarmFolk/CityFolk's annual fundraising event. With a wine glass and linen napkin in hand, you can taste the very best of BC from chefs, vintners, brewers, farmers, and food artisans from across the province. Connections are made between producers and chefs, food producers and consumers, and farm folks and city folks. These connections provide an increased awareness of, and appreciation for, local food and agriculture. Feast of Fields is a gastronomic journey towards a sustainable, local food system.

Feast of Fields is an idea originally crafted by renowned Michael Standlandter from Ontario. As part of the organization "Knives and Forks," Michael partnered with Jamie Kennedy to create an event that aimed to get sophisticated urbanites out to the farm. In 1994 the Feast of Fields concept crossed the country to Vancouver's FarmFolk/CityFolk Society. Since 1995 FarmFolk/CityFolk has organized and grown Feast of Fields events in British Columbia.

There are now three annual events. The Lower mainland feast has existed for 14 years and in 2008 broke down into the following categories: 62 food and beverage participants, 10 in the marketplace, 9 community groups, 2 musicians and 27 sponsors. The Island feast is in its tenth year; the venue changes each year to a different farm. This year they had 30 restaurants, 34 beverages, 10 producers, 8 non-profit groups and 6 supporters. The Sea to Sky feast is the newest of the group, 2008 was its third year. They had 35 participating restaurants, wineries and farms and 19 sponsors.

### **Purpose/goals of event**

- This event is a fundraiser for Farm Folk/City Folk programs. FarmFolk/CityFolk is a non-profit society that wants one simple thing: for people to eat local, fresh, seasonal foods grown using farming practices that contribute to the health of the planet. FarmFolk/CityFolk works with farm and city to cultivate a local, sustainable food system.

### **Quality assurance/standards of participation**

- They only invite restaurants that are supporting our agricultural sector year round. It is not an event for a restaurant to participate in, get the promo for the day and then go back

to importing all of their ingredients. They only have BC wine & beer producers (and non-alcoholic beverages, too) and BC artisan food producers

- They cannot control who attends... anyone who buys a ticket is welcome to come.

### **Admissions/ticket sales/tracking attendance and revenue**

- Event is growing each year. The Vancouver Island and lower mainland feast have reached the level where they sell out every year. Maximum attendance for the event varies from year to year depending on the venue/farm where it is being held.
- The Sea to Sky Feast (Whistler), the newest feast, is growing in attendance each year but has not sold out yet. Now in its third year, it has yet to make a profit. The first two years they had it at a farm 45-minute drive north of Whistler... low attendance both years (100-150), but still a beautiful event with 15 participants (not enough). You refer to operator as participant versus paid attendee 100-150. This year it was located in Whistler at a park, and was a better event with 20 participants and more people - but still not enough.
- The community and the number of participants make the maximum number of guests. For example: the Vancouver Island and Lower Mainland feasts are well established (14/15 years) and they have about 1,000 people there (about 700-800 sold tickets; the rest accounts for participants (40 participants = 120 people... 3 per business... about 50 volunteers, 20 staff/board of directors, and comps and media make up the rest)
- A good ratio is at least one participant for every 15 guests. At Whistler events, they've sold about 100-150 tickets with about 30 more unpaid (volunteers, staff etc) and 50 participant.
- Tickets for the feasts cost between \$75 and \$85 each, with a \$5 discount for Farm Folk/City Folk members. Kids are welcome with their tickets at \$15 for ages 7-12 and free for 6 and under.

### **Event logistics**

- Location of the three feasts changes each year. On Vancouver Island, it seems people don't mind driving for an hour or more to get to the feast. On the mainland, people complain (but still come) if it's an hours' drive, both chefs and guests alike. There are some communities in the Fraser Valley (Agassiz) that would love to host the feast, but at a two hour drive, it seems almost impossible
- Sometimes they add a "marketplace" component, except at the feast in Whistler this year as it was on municipal property and "sales" weren't permitted
- Permits and insurance differs in each area, but generally what is needed is a liquor licence, event licence/insurance, and a health permit
- The health permit is generally the most time consuming (advise contacting your health department, find one person to work with, several months prior to the event) and have all participants provide you with their food safe certificates
- A special event license is required for each event site
- It is assumed that food is being handled by chefs and restaurant workers, therefore they are all certified 'food safe' food handlers, Farm Folk/City Folk requires proof of this certification to be faxed to their office prior to the restaurant participating in the event
- Layout of the event is all dependent on the layout of the farm/location
- This year at the mainland feast, they had 70 silent auction items, up from 50 last year and 40 the year before

- Their website features a list of Frequently Asked Questions
  - Can I buy my ticket at the event?  
*No. Tickets are for sale in advance only. Most often the Feast of Fields sells out, so we encourage you to get your tickets early to avoid disappointment.*
  - I'm a FarmFolk/CityFolk member. How do I get the \$5 refund on my ticket price?  
*Visit the FarmFolk/CityFolk information booth at the Feast [please note: a \$5 discount on member's tickets is available for the Lower Mainland and Whistler Feasts.*
  - Can I bring my dog?  
*For health and sanitation reasons, dogs are NOT permitted at Feast of Fields.*
  - Where does money raised go?  
*Every year the funds generated from the Feast of Fields goes towards FarmFolk/CityFolk's work throughout the province.*
  - I purchased a ticket but I was unable to attend, can I get a refund?  
*Unfortunately, given the event logistics and the fact this is a pre-sold event, we do not refund unused tickets.*
  - What happens if it rains?  
*Feast of Fields is a rain or shine event. Regardless of the weather, we encourage our guests to dress warmly (layers are good) and wear footwear appropriate for walking through fields.*
  - Can kids come?  
*Children are always welcome, but please keep in mind, the food and beverages are generally geared towards adults. Tickets for children 7-12 are \$15.00, children under 7 are free.*
  - Where is the host farm?  
*Features written directions and a map.*

### **Media relations**

- "Very good. They love it," says Bonita
- The mainland feast did four press releases, one per month leading up to the event
- Because this is a long running established series of events, with a consistent coordinator, there are established relationships with specific media
- The media are sponsors to this event and receive complementary passes as part of being sponsors – up to 60 passes are given out complimentary to a 1000 person event.

### **Budget, funding and investment**

- This is different for every feast; for example, our Whistler feast doesn't pay for any rentals etc. everything is donated for use, so that feast doesn't cost too much to put on
- The mainland feast can cost around \$25,000 but ~ \$45,000 in income make the event a fundraiser
- Income break down for a mainland feast is as follows:
  - Ticket sales (\$35,000 +)
  - Silent auction sales (\$5,000+) 70 total, mostly gift certificates for food, wine and accommodation at participating restaurants, wineries etc
  - Cash sponsorships (\$5,000+) 28 total, examples include West Coast Seeds, and Choices Markets.

### **Organization structure and human resources**

- FarmFolk/CityFolk itself has one full-time staff member, six part-time staff, and three feast coordinators who are employed about half the year
- Volunteers are critical to the feast. Depending on the size of the event, they use between 15 and 45 volunteers on feast day
- With the mainland feast over the past five years, they have developed an incredible base team that assists with various aspects of the event for several months prior to the event:
  - one solicits all of the silent auction gifts
  - another coordinates volunteers and creates the volley schedule for the day
  - one does promo and writes the press releases
  - someone else is in charge of supplies
- They recruit volunteers through internal networks.

### **Marketing strategies and tracking success**

- In 2008 two of the three events sold out, which means these events are established, get lots of media and are very successful
- The main promoter of the event is Farm Folk/City Folk, sponsors and participating restaurants are supplied with posters and handbills to promote the event.

### **Producer/chef connections**

- The farmers that partner with the chefs on feast day are generally farmers that supply those restaurants on a regular basis
- It benefits the restaurants to show consumers that they have these special relationships with farmers and support our ag-economies and communities
- For the consumer, they get to meet the farmer, taste their products ala chef creations, and it "puts a face to your food" and people tend to look for those farm products at stores, farmers markets, etc., or start to recognize them on restaurant menus
- Wine and microbreweries factor heavily into the offering at all three feasts
- If the host farm has an ag-tourism component to it or farm-gate sales, it really does quite a bit to attract people to go there again and again and tell others about it.

### **Unique aspects of promotion**

- They have a contest as voted on by attendees and announce the winners on their website, the categories are: Best White Wine, Best Red Wine, Best Booth, Best Plate, Best Veggie, Best Meat, Best Seafood, Best Dessert and Best Dish Overall
- The feast locations change from year to year keeping it interesting and fresh
- Incredible Edible Tours is an additional series of events organized by Farm Folk/ City Folk. These tours started in 2004. In 2008 there were two one-day bus tours, each with different themes and tour stops - Sunday, July 20th - Today's Farmers: From An Urban Rooftop To A Rural Island; Saturday, August 23rd - Farming In The Fraser Valley: Diversity At Its Finest. Each tour included:
  - Transportation from/to Vancouver
  - Interesting & Fun Tour Guide
  - 3 In-depth Farm Tours
  - Regional, Seasonal Lunch
  - Farm-Gate Sales Opportunities

- Cost \$80/person.

**Final thoughts**

- They stated funding is their greatest challenge. Revenue from feasts of fields funds about 17% of Farm Folk/City Folk's annual budget. A trend these days is that foundations (funders) really want non-profits to utilize more self-sustaining financial options such as fundraisers, programs that pay for themselves (such as Incredible Edible Tours), and enterprising non-profit ventures. This year they introduced a 2009 calendar ([www.brianharrisphotography.net](http://www.brianharrisphotography.net)). They are moving towards being at least 50% self-sustaining.
- They identified their biggest strength is having the same coordinator year after year. With the mainland feast, they had a different coordinator every year until they hired Sher in 2003. This made the profit from the event grow from around \$10,000/year to about \$35,000 and growing.

**FOOD FANCIERS FORAY**  
*Amish Country, Indianan, USA*



[Jackie Hughes – PR Manager](#)  
[Elkhart County Convention and Visitors](#)  
[Bureau, IN](#)  
[800.262.8161](#)

[jackie@amishcountry.org](mailto:jackie@amishcountry.org)  
[www.amishcountry.org/desinations/food-fanciers-foray](http://www.amishcountry.org/desinations/food-fanciers-foray)

## **Introduction**

Food Fanciers' Foray is a self-guided driving route that features a selection of ten restaurants, bakeries, candy shops and cafes. It is designed to direct visitors to places that offer the food of the Amish people. Eating authentic foods enhances visitor's heritage experience. The Foray is one side trip associated with a broader self-guided driving route called the Heritage Trail. It can also be used as the eating/restaurant guide for the Heritage Trail.

The Heritage Trail is 90 miles long and features centuries of history, thriving communities and tranquil rural landscapes. It can easily be driven in a day. People come to get a glimpse into another lifestyle. Stops help visitors discover the rich and diverse heritage that's shaped Amish Country. They can explore where some 20,000 Amish make their homes and how band instruments, Alka Seltzer, quilts, furniture, RVs and even pie have helped shape the region.

The Heritage Tail was developed over 15 years ago and it has really withstood the test of time. Some minor changes were made over the years. Time doesn't stand still and there were new things happening that they needed to share with the visitor. In 2008 they launched a redo – changing the route a bit and adding new information. They now have a great interactive map that offers custom maps and there is a little car that follows your cursor as you mouse over the map; you are even able to customize the car icon. What didn't change is the overall tone and approach in telling a story about the destination. A very popular addition to the Heritage Trail's offerings is the Quilt Gardens Tour.

## **Purpose/goals of the trail**

- The Trail is the foundation/anchor for the other experiences that have been built into it. It serves to:
  - move people from one community in our destination region to another
  - let people know there is more to the destination than they may have thought
  - highlight communities and businesses
  - drive business, encouraging people to extend their stays and see it all.

## **Quality assurance/standards of participation**

- The Convention and Visitor Bureau ultimately determines who is featured in their

promotions, trails and website

- New product must complement, enhance and build on what is already there
- “We know what visitors are telling us,” says Jackie. The Visitor and Convention Bureau is constantly doing studies backed by the local university to better understand and evaluate their attractions and promotion
- When the CVB gets negative feedback on a business or attraction they do their best to handle it delicately and they usually follow up with an email or phone call. Ultimately if the business isn't delivering it takes care of itself because they aren't in business long.

### **Admissions/ticket sales/tracking attendance and revenue**

- There is no charge for the Heritage Trail or the other associated side trips such as the Quilt Gardens Tour or Food Foray. Again, the purpose is to expand the visitor experience, encourage longer stays and drive business.
- They look at additional groupings within the Heritage Trail such as the Quilt Gardens Tour or the Food Fanciers Foray as a means of better marketing our destination and driving business.

### **Event logistics**

- With the established foundation of the Heritage Trail other experiences and themes are layered in, like quilt gardens, food, and furniture crafting. The themes are meant to keep the destination product fresh and interesting for the visitor to make their experience memorable and to encourage re-visitation. All those added experiences marry into the heritage of the destination
- The Heritage Trail route is inclusive of all the communities (part of the original plan) so it is a planned route that makes sense from any direction
- The clustering of the businesses in the Food Fanciers Foray was done externally by the Visitors Bureau. The selection of suggested side or theme tours include:
  - Down the Road Tours
  - Best-of-Autumn Outing
  - Easy Arts and Crafts Journey
  - Food-Fanciers' Foray
  - Off-the-Beaten-Path Odyssey
  - Shingle Shoppes Tour
  - Super Photo Safari
  - Buggy Lane Tours
- Links from the main Heritage Trail page lead you to the theme side tours where you can download a pdf map of the selected side tour and write-ups of the featured businesses
- Best-of-Autumn Outing, Easy Arts and Crafts Journey and Off-the-Beaten-Path Odyssey group six to nine attractions with two lodging and dining suggestions.

### **Media relations**

- A diner in their region was featured on a Food Network show called “Diners and Dives.” This has created a buzz and interest in dining.
- Life magazine has called the Heritage Trail “One of America’s Most Scenic Drives”
- As with anything, working with the media is relationship building, providing services and delivering on the message.

### **Budget, funding and investment**

- The Convention and Visitor Bureau is a destination marketing organization and is supported through an innkeeper's tax, paid by the visitor, and collected by hotels in our destination that have 30 rooms or more. That tax is governed by very specific legislation.

### **Organization structure and human resources**

- Food Fanciers Foray, The Quilt Gardens Tour, Heritage Trail – do not have paid staff just for those projects
- Everyone on staff is involved in all projects according to their area of expertise
- The Elkhart County CVB has eight full-time paid staff
- Volunteers and community buy in are vital to the success of projects.

### **Marketing strategies and tracking success**

- The download option and interactive Heritage Trail map on our website has proven to be very popular. In fact, year-to-date they have numbered 2,627 downloads.

### **Producer/chef connections**

- Producers are not specifically highlighted in these promotion efforts. There are good listings of restaurants, family restaurants and speciality foods but they are not explicitly telling the story of their local foods or agriculture. There are more references to eating with the locals than local food. Agriculture seems to be missing although there are references to rural scenery and heritage craftsmen.

### **Unique aspects of promotion**

- Visitors can borrow a self-guiding Heritage Trail audio CD from the visitors centre
- There is a downloadable MP3 audio tour for the Heritage Trail available on the website
- This tourism site presents dozens of businesses listed and presented in several different ways and contexts to make them attractive to different interests of visitors
- The Quilt Gardens Tour is a partnership between seven communities facilitated and supported by the CVB. It started in 2008 and featured 12 formal flower beds in the pattern of quilt blocks. Upcoming in 2009 there will 16 gardens, there has been no attrition, everyone who participated last year returned with an increasing complexity of design. They have already posted the proposed designs on the Amish Country website. The review committee's setting of standards and judging has been done by the communities. Visitors were keen to return and see the gardens at various stages of growth. This promotion has been an added bonus and compliment to the Heritage trail. The Trail has gained visitors from the Quilt Gardens' popularity

### **Final thoughts**

- Fantastic to see the use of technology to enhance visitors' experience with the downloadable audio, interactive map, customization and search-ability of the site and the ability to write and post reviews of various aspects of the experience.

**FOOD HAWKE'S BAY**  
*Hawke's Bay, New Zealand*



**Jane Libby – General Manager**  
EIT Campus  
Private Bag 1201  
Taradale, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand  
646.974.8931

[jane@foodhawkesbay.co.nz](mailto:jane@foodhawkesbay.co.nz)  
[www.foodhawkesbay.co.nz](http://www.foodhawkesbay.co.nz)

## **Introduction**

This organization started as a government project partnered with industry dollars to promote the growth of food exports from this region of New Zealand. Early on they realized export for many of the smaller producers, processors and food artisans was very much a stretch goal and that small to medium size firms even needed help with their businesses selling within New Zealand. Some of these businesses employ just one or two people.

Over time funding for and the mandate of this organization has changed to a more local scope. Today they co-ordinate two local farmers markets, the Hawke's Bay Wine Country Food Trail, a regional signature dish competition, hospitality awards and a handful of learning/networking events for its members. Members include approximately 75% of the food manufacturing and processing in the region. One hundred twenty-five members are listed online and are broken down into the following categories: 25 artisan producers, 23 value added/commercial processors, 24 farm-gate, 19 cafes, restaurants and wineries, 11 cellar doors, 7 events and activities, 22 service and support organizations and 1 food online.

In the beginning there was a lot of work done with clustering and round-table discussions with groups of farmers/growers of similar crops. These groups were facilitated at first. The facilitators worked hard to establish what the groups were willing to share with each other and what was deemed 'commercially sensitive' information. The success of these types of groups early on fostered a collaborative culture and has provided a great foundation for working together. The same people who were part of clusters are now hosting festivals including other growers, and the recent Olive Festival is one example.

## **Purpose/goals of the organization**

- Food Hawke's Bay acts as the prime point of connection and information for both local companies interested in food production, processing and buyers wanting to buy Hawke's Bay products
- The four main objectives of the organization are:
  - To meet the needs of the commercial producer
  - To meet the needs of the artisan/farm gate producer
  - Culinary tourism
  - Facilitate research and development needs of producers.

## **Quality assurance/standards of participation**

- Participation and quality is self-regulated
- Restaurants and cafes want to be a part of the organization because of the benefits to their businesses. Jane believes this region has both world class food and wine and there is a need to enhance the level of service in the hospitality industry. Some of the work of the organization has focus on raising the profile and prestige of those working in local food establishments out of recognition that this group has the power to drive and influence local consumption.
- To participate in the farmers market, businesses must be a member of Food Hawke's Bay and follow a list of guidelines that include: must be a farmer/grower or artisan producer, ingredients must be 75% locally sourced with the exception of coffee and baking, and there needs to be a balance of primary producers and artisans
- Hawke's Bay Wine Country Food Trail - Criteria for Food Trail Participation:
  - Be a current full financial member of the Food Hawke's Bay Inc.
  - Genuinely deliver a worthwhile visitor experience that highlights Hawke's Bay produce within one or more of the following categories:
    - Farm-gate - Taste, learn and buy. Trail members in this category have their fresh and delicious primary produce available for visitors to taste and buy. Farm-gate outlets will actively encourage tasting and provide information about the product and its production methods in a style that will ensure a unique food experience. Produce must be fresh and at least 75% locally-grown, pristine and displayed in an authentic manner appropriate for the product.
    - Artisan Producers - Food Trail members in this category have identified a niche market and create a deliciously unique food product that is wholly made in Hawke's Bay. Visitors will be welcomed into the retail side of the factory setting/production facilities. As with the Farm-gate members, there is an expectation to provide education on products, tastings and/or viewing of the production facilities/processes where possible. Examples in this category are artisan small goods, butcher, baker, chocolate, jams, sauces and the like.
    - Culinary/Food Activities and Excursions - Guided Food Experiences. Members will provide a service or event where there is education, entertainment and/or promotion of Hawke's Bay food products.
    - Restaurants Cafes/Bars Winery & Orchard Dining - Food Trail members in these categories will provide dining on and around the Food Trail and be fully committed to showcasing the best Hawke's Bay produce to their guests. Members will actively promote the best local produce, both fresh and processed, on their menus. A changing menu will reflect the seasonal variety available in Hawke's Bay. Staff will be knowledgeable about products and their source.
  - Where relevant and appropriate, menus will name the specific Hawke's Bay produce used. In this case it is expected that a minimum of two menu items should highlight local produce. Otherwise, a general menu note confirming the use of local produce can be made.
  - Comply with the General Food Trail Criteria:

- Sell or use products grown or made in Hawke's Bay (as defined previously)
- Convenient access to site
- Adequate visitor parking
- Knowledgeable and courteous employees
- Staffed throughout at stated opening times
- Reasonable building structure
- Clean, authentic surroundings, with appropriate visitor facilities and services
- Produce/products priced clearly
- Advertising and information/education which is accurate and prominently displayed
- Observe all laws and regulations appropriate to their business particularly those governing the sale of food goods and service
- Comply with all laws relating to employment and health and safety in the workplace
- Provide appropriate insurance coverage for their business
- Display all signage prominently at the gate side and other points to attract visitors
- Pay the Food Trail brochure participation costs.

#### **Admissions/ticket sales/tracking attendance and revenue**

- FHB does not generate a lot of their revenue from tickets sales
- The Food Trail map is free
- Their industry awards, networking and workshops are done on a cost recovery basis
- Their main source of revenue is through their membership fees.

#### **Event logistics**

- They printed 70,000 copies of their Food Trail brochure last year although it spanned 18 months not the normal 12 and these were distributed to all of the visitor centers, hotels, motels and all stops on the Trail
- In 2008 they have printed 50,000 copies to be used over the next 12 months.

#### **Media relations**

- The radio media are great and really seem to be into promotion of the local area
- Jane shared her challenge of building a relationship with the local print media; she is not sure if they recognize the value and overall they don't seem to be looking for good news. Slowly make progress here, reporter by reporter through personal relationships.
- The Hospitality Awards got a lot of coverage – even the paper was interested. Jane felt it was because it was a peer review, chefs voting on other chefs. Consumers are interested and believe them because a chef would know good food and drink.
- What is missing in media coverage of Food Hawke's Bay is stories and interest in the producers, it is much easier for the media to relate to and feature the hospitality industry.

#### **Budget, funding and investment**

- Food Hawke's Bay is a membership funded organization

- There are three levels of membership - Food Sector Member \$275 +GST (companies with turnover under \$250k per annum) Food Sector Member \$400 +GST (companies with turnover over \$250k per annum), Associate Member \$500 +GST (companies not directly involved in the food industry)
- Businesses must be a member to Food Hawke's Bay to participate in the Food Trail or the farmers' markets
- For the farmers' market the stall-holder fee has been set at \$45 (inc GST) per stall per market
- The Food Trail costs an additional \$135 (+GST) for each Trail listing
- Events and seminars are done on a cost-recovery basis
- Future plans include: develop more event services, and ask local government for support because this organization is providing economic development services for the food industry free of charge.

### **Organization structure and human resources**

- In June 2006 Food Hawke's Bay became a member-based industry association with two full-time employees, a General Manager and a Membership Coordinator
- They have a growing membership base of 135 companies
- It is the only organization of its kind in New Zealand. Other regions often ask how they are able to have people work together so easily.
- The board is volunteers; it is hard to keep volunteers engaged because people remember the early days when the project was well funded and they paid people to do what are now volunteer jobs.

### **Marketing strategies and tracking success**

- The map is a real success with people following the Trail around using the map
- The problem they have in their region is too many printed guides; the wine trail, the visitors guide, attractions guide etc – all with their own maps. Jane is trying to get these combined into one, to reduce duplication, make it simpler for visitors and gain cost efficiencies.
- They do not do any statistic collating on the map or other projects as they just do not have the systems or personnel for this, therefore tracking is not done
- A comment from a restaurant about this year's signature dish competition - the feedback has been fantastic with restaurants/cafes noticing and increase in customers and also that the level of public awareness is a lot higher than last year. Front-of-house staff has also embraced the event and are informing diners of the competition, their entry and the opportunities the People's Choice and the loyalty card provide. The loyalty card is driving people to participating establishments to try the signature dish and to ensure they get another stamp on their card so they can put it in the prize draw.
- Food Hawke's Bay Member suppliers are thrilled that the competition has resulted in an increase in business.

### **Producer/chef connections**

- Signature Dish is a yearly competition to promote the use of local ingredients in restaurants
  - It is a six-week competition where mystery judges along with the Hawke's Bay

public will visit the restaurants to enjoy their dish entry. The event expanded this year to include two major categories; casual dining (dish and beverage pairing under \$25) and formal dining (dish and beverage pairing over \$25). The popular people's choice award will have two sections; dish and service. There is a loyalty card which will encourage diners to go to more than one participating establishment; all eligible cards will go in a prize draw

- Loyalty Card Promotion - Dine at any of the participating restaurants, pick up your loyalty card, visit three restaurants over the competition and go into the draw to win a prize package of kitchen appliances donated by Duckworths worth \$1400! There has never been a better time to dine and support our regional produce and local restaurants
- Launch is an industry-only networking event that happens at least a month in advance of the competition. It takes place on a Monday night with free food and drink. The idea is for chefs and restaurant staff from the competing establishments to meet local producers, try their products and select ingredients to help them create their winning Regional Signature Dish
- The winners will be revealed on October 28th at a special function at the HB Opera House hosted by Food Hawke's Bay. The awards evening will be for participating establishments, Food Hawke's Members and other Hawke's Bay dignitaries

### **Unique aspects of promotion**

- Hospitality Awards
  - Industry awards for industry by industry!! The awards are designed to give recognition to the workers, owners and establishments who are really making Hawke's Bay a great place to eat, drink and be entertained! This initiative fits with the FHB's desire to improve the quality of visitor's restaurant experience, and the recognition that an important point of access for regional ingredients and foods is through the hospitality industry
  - Voting is open to all employees/owners currently employed in the hospitality industry (including winery staff). Suppliers to the hospitality industry that are members of the Restaurant Association, Hospitality Association or Food Hawke's Bay are also eligible to vote
  - There are 14 Categories: Outstanding Chef, Outstanding Maitre 'D, Outstanding Waitperson, Outstanding Bartender, Outstanding Barista, Outstanding Cafe, Outstanding Pub, Outstanding Restaurant, Outstanding Supplier, Outstanding Sales Rep, Outstanding Cocktail Maker, Emerging Chef, Best Ambience/style, and Outstanding Hospitality Personality
  - They did a swanky awards banquet for hospitality industry ONLY, workers (including winery workers), owners and suppliers to the industry. Tickets were \$55 (including GST) and include all drinks, nibbles and entertainment for the evening.

### **Final thoughts**

- The strength of Food Hawke's Bay is that they are a credible organization; their members know and trust them. The cluster culture is advantageous, most businesses would rather work together than not.

- The big challenge they are facing at the moment is funding, they do not have enough funds to do all that they have been doing
- An awesome example of great events and promotion. It is interesting that the main thrust of their work is behind the scenes; training and recognizing both the food producers and presenters (hospitality industry). In many ways they have left working directly with visitors and local consumers to the hospitality industry

## **FOOD LINK: TASTE LOCAL, TASTE FRESH**

*Wellington County, Ontario, Canada*



[Peter Katona - Executive Director](#)  
[Foodlink Waterloo Region](#)  
[St. Jacobs, ON N0B 2N0](#)  
[519.513.8998](#)

[katona@foodlink.ca](mailto:katona@foodlink.ca)  
[www.foodlink-waterlooregion.ca](http://www.foodlink-waterlooregion.ca)

### **Introduction**

Foodlink is a not for profit organization that aims to include the whole food chain. It has existed for seven years. It was incorporated as a not-for-profit organization on January 20, 2002. It creates partnerships between food producers, processors, retailers and consumers to promote the sale and consumption of locally grown and produced food. In building a “food localism” movement, Foodlink is expanding and creating new markets for local farms and farm-based businesses while also building a demand for local food products.

Foodlink has emerged as both a marketing tool for regional farmers and an information source for regional consumers. They help producers increase and diversify farm-gate sales - especially those directly to the consumer. They are also helping consumers identify with their food - what is available, how it's produced and how buying locally benefits the local economy, environment and community.

### **Purpose/goals of event**

- Foodlink's goals are to put more dollars in farmers' pockets, and more local food in people's mouths
- Foodlink is the collective marketing arm for local food with a basic suite of services; consumer education, facilitation of new business partnerships and the Buy Local, Buy Fresh map which has been replicated and licensed for use in ten other counties
- Specifically their food event – Taste Local, Taste Fresh has three goals:
  - To create new farm/processor-restaurant relationships (and sales)
  - To increase public awareness of the true value of local food (via media and publicity as well as through attendance)
  - Fundraising for Foodlink as an organization .

### **Quality assurance/standards of participation**

- Foodlink is not into production politics or food activism – they advocate on behalf of all local farms
- Quality is not this organization's jurisdiction – public health takes care of quality.

### **Admissions/ticket sales/tracking attendance and revenue**

- Tickets for their taste event cost \$55
- Attendance at the taste event has grown steadily from 292 in 2004 to 330 in 2005, this year they had 510 guests at their event. Peter states this is probably the maximum capacity for the event in its current format.

### **Map logistics**

- Their first product was the Buy Local! Buy Fresh map. It is free and widely distributed (~ 50, 000 copies/year). The first year was 2002 and it featured 30 farms, 2004 there were 76 listings and in 2005 it included 67 listings
- In 2008 the map revenue was just under \$26,000, \$5,000+ in farm listing fees (\$85 per farm/\$75 “early bird” registration fee), \$10,000 in paid advertising (ads range from \$300 to \$950), \$5,000 in direct “sponsorship” (3 local municipalities contributed \$1,000each + \$2,000 from Community Futures/Industry Can). Map expenses for 2008 were \$16,000. These numbers don’t include coordination costs, which are absorbed by the operating budget. After seven years practice, they have coordination down to about five weeks staff time spread between January and May.

### **Event logistics**

- Taste Local, Taste Fresh is one day of feasting, usually on a Sunday afternoon from 2 – 5 p.m. While the Sunday afternoon timing can work well for chefs it means that most of their Mennonite farms can’t participate. The venue changes from year to year. In 2008 it was held on an island in beautiful Victoria Park in downtown Kitchener
- Taste Local, Taste Fresh was launched in 2004, with participation from 15 farms and 15 restaurants. It has grown to include 20 farm-chef pairings. Over the five-year history of the event about 30 different restaurants/caterer and approximately 25 farms/processors have participated
- A major sponsor for the food event has been the City of Kitchener and they cover some of the details including facility permits
- Foodlink purchases their own event insurance (most insurance companies sell such policies— costs about \$400) and have a liquor license via LCBO (liquor control board)
- They do a lot of work with Public Health/Food Inspectors prior to the event (a lot of paperwork and red tape). In Peter's experience, the Public Health regulations are the most onerous.

### **Media relations**

- In 2005 Foodlink conducted a media launch for their map and became much more targeted as to distribution points for the map
- This group gets the media on board by approaching them with a sponsorship package that has a multiplier effect. Foodlink is willing to pay for some promotions or advertising but expects five times the coverage.
- It takes time to make media connections and build relationships.

### **Budget, funding and investment**

- The first source of funding for Foodlink was in 2002 through a one time grant for \$50,000 from the Regional Council upon recommendation of Public Health
- Core funding has been secured through the Trillium Foundation (an agency of the Government of Ontario) In 2004-2005 they received \$123,800 over two years to develop a five-year business plan for the organization to improve consumer access to local farm-direct food products, creating a more sustainable, community-based food system in the Waterloo Region. In 2006-2007 they received an additional \$162,500 over three years for program, materials and administration costs to continue linking regional food consumers with local farmers, helping to ensure the continuation of a sustainable local food system.
- Funding for the organization's annual budget was estimated to average \$117,000 per year for 5 years in the 2006 business plan
- Foodlink also acknowledges support and assistance from the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation, Region of Waterloo, Agricultural Adaptation Council and the Kitchener-Waterloo Community Foundation
- The map, events and custom marketing are all designed as cost-recovery products, and projections show that each product will break even or better by 2010
- The first map (2002) cost \$ 18,500 to produce and distribute. By 2005 the map cost \$23,500; 61% of which was recovered through fees and advertising.
- This year their taste event generated ~ \$20,000 income for their organization.

### **Organization structure and human resources**

- Foodlink is structured as a not-for-profit corporation without charitable status
- It is run by a full-time Executive Director. The ED reports to a Board of Directors. There is one part-time/ contract employee working on marketing. In addition there is a Local Harvest product team, which includes small contracts for graphic design and writing (several hours per month), and volunteer support. There is also a project coordinator responsible for the Wellington County Buy Local! Buy Fresh! Map
- Peter Katona has been with Foodlink since 2003, first as a coordinator and then as Executive Director in 2004
- The Board of Directors is composed of the following positions. The by-laws state a maximum of 12 director positions are available
  - Chair
  - Vice-Chair
  - Treasurer
  - Directors-at-large (3)
  - Executive Director
  - Region of Waterloo Public Health (currently an ex-officio, non-voting member)
- Given that the staff of Foodlink is so lean the organization relies on its Board of Directors and other volunteer support to assist in carrying out its activities. Volunteer work is run through committees
- Map distribution and promotion of the organization is done partially by volunteers, otherwise, paid overtime would be incredible; as it is, the two staff log a lot of hours.

## **Marketing strategies and tracking success**

- Foodlink provides information to consumers on the importance and benefits of local food and where to find it
- Their strategy for promotion of the map is to have a two-tiered distribution. The first two or three weeks during the launch, maps are made available at farms and “paid advertisers”. To make sure they have good coverage around our region we have copies available at public libraries. It acts as an incentive to advertise as they’re listed as “pickup” points on our website, through media etc.
- The second tier of distribution goes out to anyone else who wants to stock them (they’re quite popular). They’ve noticed that alternative medicine (i.e. naturopath offices, dieting centres, chiropractors) industry loves to hand them to clients, as do all local tourism-related offices/venues. Local businesses (i.e. hardware stores, restaurants, health food stores) also receive copies
- They hand out approximately one-quarter (10,000) of the maps at trade shows, fairs, events and speaking engagements
- Foodlink originally targeted farms actively engaged in farm direct/consumer direct marketing for participation in the Buy Local! Buy Fresh map. Through a 2004 survey of their map membership they discovered that only 25% of the participating farms derived a majority of their income from direct sales. This exposed an upper limit of about 300 of the region's 1,444 farms for Foodlink to work with if they solely focused on farm direct. They chose to broaden their target market to include farmers who are not represented by supply management or other marketing boards and who are interested in selling local at the wholesale level; they now had an additional 300 farms to work with. If local meat or produce can command a premium, Foodlink wants to help their farmers achieve this

## **Producer/chef connections**

- Delivery of local food to restaurants is happening, relationships are happening because of the behind the scenes connecting work of Foodlink
- The 2008 Taste event featured 18 restaurants and 21 farms. The Taste event only appeals to some of Foodlink's farms, as not all farms want to deal with restaurants and vice-versa

## **Unique aspects of promotion**

- Foodlink produces a yearly regional map of where to find local food for their area and for 10 other counties – they have 'franchised' their map process
- Local Harvest is a free monthly e-newsletter for consumers profiling farmers and featuring in-season local products. One ingredient/product is featured per issue with fun titles including pears - Pear-fection, broccoli- Heads up on Broccoli and pork – The Whole Hog. Articles feature producers and other businesses/restaurants using the local products plus recipes for consumers to use the produce or products at home. Subscriptions and back issues are available on the website
- The newsletter costs the organization ~ \$300/issue to produce this newsletter and they estimated distribution to be 1,100 direct readers and an additional 1,200 indirect readers in December 2005. Their goal is to expand distribution of this newsletter to 5,000 readers by 2010
- Other events listings and farm activities have become integrated into the Foodlink

package and website. For example, the last Saturday of September, there is an event in Wellington country called the Rural Romp. It is a self-guided driving tour of 21 open farms (horse logging to alpacas to greenhouses and orchards). Farms are listed alphabetically on the Foodlink website and there is reference made to their location on the Buy Local map, as additional maps are not made for this event.

### **Final thoughts**

- Foodlink is co-located with St. Jacobs Farmers' Market Complex, which increases the presence and connection of this organization within the local food scene
- Local Foods has just exploded with so many different groups getting involved; everyone is cashing in on the 100 mile diet. The same day Foodlink hosted their Taste Local, Taste Fresh there were at least three other groups within their region hosting a local food event/meal. Taste/feast events may have reached a saturation point within their region
- Foodlink's strength is in the buy-in of their producers and stakeholders who are behind it. There is also strength in not putting all their eggs in one basket; their organization connects to health, quality, environment, and food miles. These are all different aspects of a recipe for healthy communities.

## FOOD ROOTS DISTRIBUTORS COOPERATIVE - SUSTAINABLE FEASTS

*Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada*



**Lee Fuge – co-founder and general manager**  
250.686.2395

**Susan Tychie - co-founder**  
250.595.6729

[leefuge@pacificcoast.net](mailto:leefuge@pacificcoast.net)  
[susan@shareorganics.bc.ca](mailto:susan@shareorganics.bc.ca)  
[www.foodroots.ca/feasts.htm](http://www.foodroots.ca/feasts.htm)

### **Introduction**

Food Roots' main business is pocket markets. Their markets connect urbanites in various communities within Victoria to local foods grown on small scale farms. They currently run 15 pocket markets per week in places ranging from a student's centre to a church parking lot to outside a local bookstore, all with an aim to provide more points of connection and access to local food. For those interested in starting or running the pocket market system there is a tool kit available online.

Their distribution network of growers extends to the Cowichan Valley and the Saanich Peninsula. The growers are small, not of the scale or size to sell in the mass markets and others are just starting up so their production is limited. Small amounts of production doesn't trouble Food Roots Distributors, they can sell amounts as small as 12 heads of lettuce. They look for foods that are “organic” and/or natural and if not certified, at least following COABC standards.

Sustainable Feasts has been part of Food Roots since 2006. The feasts are a celebration of local food. They are an educational piece, demonstrating how you can eat local all year. Co-founder, Lee Fuge, has connections to a catering co-operative and realized the potential after catering a local food menu for another non-profit organization. Community gatherings centred on local food fit as an educational and awareness tool. At each feast they partner with an organization working in or connected to food security. It is another way for the community to get involved and learn. Lee shared the observation, “People are not so resistant to learning when they have a good meal.”

The future of Food Roots Sustainable Feasts is questionable. The first feast of the 2008/09 season on October 4 did not have enough people attend to make it a financial success (only 50% sold). As a result they have cancelled the November feast and are looking for suggestions on how to get the word out to other folks. They may try a feast in the spring 2009.

### **Purpose/goals of event**

- Overall Food Roots' vision include:
  - Promotion of a local sustainable food system by creating the infrastructure link between the eaters/consumers and the growers and processors in our region
  - Promotion of sustainable food grown and processed in the region. Sustainable food is grown naturally as close to home as possible. Certified Organic is our first choice
  - Education of eaters/consumers about local agriculture and food security issues.
- Specifically Sustainable Feasts aims to:
  - Showcase locally grown and locally processed foods through a four course meal with a cash bar offering local beer and wine
  - Stimulate lively discussions on farm and food issues
  - Feature a conversation with a farmer to hear what our farmers are doing on the farm and in the community.

### **Quality assurance/standards of participation**

- Prefer foods that are “organic” and, if not certified, at least following COABC standards
- All foods are local as possible but they do use some mainland BC products.

### **Admissions/ticket sales/tracking attendance and revenue**

- Tickets for the Feasts are \$35 – aim to keep the price modest to allow more people to attend
- There are 112 available seats at each feast
- The group has adjusted the total number of feast over the last three seasons. 2006-07 seven feasts, 2007-08 nine feasts (first Saturday of the month excluding July, August and January)
- Attendance at the feasts declined last year. Lee Fuge's explanation was the growth in local food events in their area. With so many others are working at providing local food dinners, there are lots of options out there for eaters
- 2008-09 four feasts were scheduled – with a poor turn out at the first feast, the second feast of the season has been cancelled and the other two are in question
- Susan said, “I think we need new ways to attract new diners to the Feast and just do not have time right now. Many market supporters have attended a feast or two. We assume they would support the Feast as well. I am always surprised how many diners are coming for the first time. Because we have had feasts monthly last year and there is always so much to do in town I think they say - we can go next month. Monthly may have been a mistake.”

### **Event logistics**

- They partner with seven or eight local businesses to sell tickets for the feasts. They are also available at pocket markets but they are not big sellers there. It seems the feasts are attracting a slightly different audience than the markets
- The feasts are held in a local community centre that has a commercial kitchen
- A group called the International Women's Kitchen also works out of this facility and

helps with the feasts

- The liquor license/permit is all they worry about
- Often the meat entrees are brought in catered (pre-prepared from a restaurant)
- They offer both a meat and vegan entree, the appetizer is often local cheeses
- The menus for the winter events have been more challenging, but with forethought, good storage and planning there will be plenty to feast on. This year for the mid-winter feasts they put raspberries away. Getting grains is another challenge because there are very few grain growers on the island.
- The partner organization for the feast has a chance to present or share information about what they are doing. Some examples of past partners are Nature Conservancy of Canada, Haliburton Farm, an urban farm and farmer training centre on Cordova Bay Ridge, City Harvest about SPIN gardening, Vancouver Island Slow Foods Convivium, and Sierra Club.
- The original hope was that the partner organization would share the load of organizing and hosting the feast but it didn't always work out that way.

### **Media relations**

- Media doesn't factor into Food Roots Sustainable Feasts promotions as organizers seem to prefer a more grass roots/community approach and word of mouth
- Free event listings in community papers
- Media does not come out for the event and they don't get coverage
- They do not do press releases.

### **Budget, funding and investment**

- The goal is to break even. The feasts are a not-for-profit event.
- 112 seats available, they need to sell ~ 80 tickets to break even
- It costs approximately \$2,800 to put on each feast
- Farmers/growers are not asked to donate food and they are paid for the ingredients used at the feasts
- They received a grant for \$7,000 from Van City Credit Union towards creating a Pocket Market toolkit.

### **Organization structure and human resources**

- Food Roots is a co-operative and membership costs \$200 per year
- The co-operative itself has general manager and employs several staff, driver picking up foods from farms, staff for the 15 markets/week, and warehouse staff
- Each feast requires volunteers: approximately eight volunteers in the kitchen, at the bar and on the door
- So far volunteers are friends of the organizers and people who like what they are doing (this group of supporters is growing).

### **Marketing strategies and tracking success**

- Marketing efforts are minimal and could be a reason for low attendance. The staff and supporters of this organization are much more focussed on getting pocket markets to work well; launching these two initiatives simultaneously may be taking on too much

- The feasts are promoted through free community events listings in newsletters and papers
- They do about 40 posters per event.

### **Producer/chef connections**

- At each feast the organizers try to have a 'Farm Report' with an actual grower speaking about what is happening on the farm, how their crops are growing and other day-to-day details from rural life. They have tried musicians and other forms of entertainment but have found that guests are most interested in hearing from the farmers.
- They have not had a lot of comments back from the producers who present the farm reports; there might not be a direct benefit to the specific farmer, it is more about heightening awareness of issues
- Information about issues happens at the feasts – it is an opportunity to bring rural issues to an urban table. The more urban people understand the implications of re-classification of agricultural lands the better chance there is of political action on their behalf. We solicit support for local farmers and hope to assist farmers to staying farming – we can still reclaim the food system.

### **Unique aspects of promotion**

- There is more than one feast/year. It is a regular occurrence with lots of elements of community building and this makes it distinct from most other food events.

### **Final thoughts**

- The strength of the Sustainable Feasts is gathering different people around the table to taste and talk about food and agriculture. Their events really connect to issues and food security
- Sustainable Feasts builds and adds momentum to the other work of the co-operative. It strengthens the message that local foods are available. What you see in the supermarket is not totally representative of what is available. The pocket markets offer a list of up to 40 items that are available locally. It is all about getting people to think and then ask themselves and others, “where is the local food: on menus, store shelves, the neighbourhood and in my kitchen?”

## **LEARN GREAT FOOD – CULINARY ADVENTURES**

*Illinois, USA*



**Ann Dougherty - President/Founder**  
Box 182; Mt. Carroll, Illinois 61053  
815.244.5602

contact@learngreatfoods.com  
[www.Learngreatfoods.com](http://www.Learngreatfoods.com)

### **Introduction**

Learn Great Foods is a national touring company. 2008 is their fourth season. They teach about the natural link that exists between sustainable farming, great cooking and the environment. Operating in the mid west, in the states of Illinois/Wisconsin/Iowa and Michigan, they strive to provide excellence in eating and agricultural experiences for their guests. They introduce their guests to family farms, great cooking and the Community Supported Agriculture model of food buying. The whole concept stems from the fact that Anne personally wants management over her own food supply and is willing to share with others how to achieve that for themselves.

### **Purpose/goals of event**

- Privately guided tours of sustainable farms by local growers
- Roll-up-your-sleeves cooking classes with celebrated chefs
- In-depth workshops on food chemistry by visiting academics
- Alfresco dining at one of their Learn Great Foods kitchens.

### **Quality assurance/standards of participation**

- Anne has developed a six-point criterion to be a Learn Great Foods tour stop. Operations must have:
  - aesthetics
  - quality of product
  - ability to communicate
  - knowledge of agriculture
  - knowledge of sustainability
  - the gift of hospitality.
- After looking at approximately 250 farms she has a roster of 50 stops
- For her having a great product or an abundance of product is not enough; not every farm/operation should be a part of tours.

### **Admissions/ticket sales/tracking attendance and revenue**

- One day tour costs \$95

- Retreat cost is \$325 for the weekend or \$95 for the day and evening meal
- They also offer food travel weeks for \$1,495
- A total of 109 classes, tours and retreats were offered in 2008
- In the first two years each guest was buying \$75 worth of products while on the tour. Currently they have a larger volume of guests who have been spending ~\$35 worth of product while on tour.

### **Event logistics**

- There are between 6 and 16 guests on each tour. The aim is for tour groups to have a small-group feeling where everyone can share in the experience together rather than trailing each other around in a line up of 40 people, following the flag to the next site of interest or straining to hear from the back of a large group.
- Each tour includes two food stops and a cooking demonstration of a delicious organic gourmet dinner! The menu varies depending on what is picked up on the tour that day! Guests dine alfresco weather permitting. They enjoy a hands-on cooking class and "dine-inn" at Aspen House Bed & Breakfast in early May (and late October), and on rainy Wednesdays throughout the season
- The company also does weekend retreats. Retreat cost includes a two-night stay, all meals, tours, and a cooking class, which adds up to food, fun, fellowship and relaxation! And if you are too busy to attend a weekend retreat, you can also attend just for the day on Saturday. The retreats are designed for those who want to "dive-in" to natural foods knowledge, practice hands-on learning (classes, walks, and tours), and question everything.
- A sample retreat titles and themes:
  - All Things Chocolate Weekend
  - Wild Foods Weekend - a chance to explore the great outdoors and learn more about delicious wild-crafted foods
  - Go Fish! Retreat.

### **Media relations**

- Learn Great Foods has used press releases at the rate of one every four to six months
- They have received good press in local media
- They know the power of media coverage; in 2008 a writer from the Chicago Tribune attended a tour and wrote a glowing article about their experience. The next week they had more bookings in one week than they did in their entire first year in business
- They have a media page on their website featuring posted articles about their tours.

### **Budget, funding and investment**

- They are an incorporated company, for-profit. The business is not breaking even yet but hope to be in the next three years. She intentionally chose a for profit business model after attending a huge USDA conference and listening in on the organic fruit and vegetable sessions. She observed the really successful cooperatives were the for-profit ones.

### **Organization structure and human resources**

- Anne is the president and founder and has been working full-time for the last five years
- Fifteen months ago she hired a half time administrative support and within the last month she has added a second half-time administrative person
- She usually hires one or two summer students
- She has five to six tour guides on contract – these folks need to be knowledgeable about food and sustainability. It is their job to provide interpretation and encourage the sharing of knowledge among the group
- She spoke about the need for her guides to have theatrical sense and the improv abilities to build on the good and spontaneous things that invariably happen when visiting farms and other stops, while at the same minimizing aspects that take away from visitors having a positive experience.

### **Marketing strategies and tracking success**

- Word of mouth is their best promotional tool
- They get lots of repeat business; people celebrating anniversaries, birthdays or marking other special occasions.

### **Producer/chef connections**

- The tours facilitate connections with producers and chefs; guests are involved in selecting foods and ingredients to be cooked for the meals
- Chefs and farmers alike are expected to educate and hosts guests

### **Unique aspects of promotion**

- “2 Busy 2 Cook not 2 Tired 2 Eat” retreat - three days of tours and cooking, food therapy and great times. This retreat focuses on practical, direct ideas - for buying organically, for finding farmers, for cooking fast and easy - and asking the right questions.
- New for 2008, Learn Great Foods is offering informative Food Books. Topics include: Asparagus, Bison, Fish, Herbs, Tomatoes, Beef, Eggplant, Lettuce, Mushroom and Pumpkin/Squash.
- Sixteen-page, full-colour booklets show off delicious recipes and ideas from their tours  
Each Food Book includes:
  - Health Benefits - the latest medical and health findings written in simple language
  - Delicious recipes - tour-tested and perfect for outdoor cooking featuring soups, salads, entrees, sandwiches, and desserts
  - Storage Ideas - how to keep the "taste of place" from harvest time year-round
  - Buying Ideas from Farmers - tips on how to pick the best product and what to look for.

### **Final thoughts**

- What is unique about the experiences designed by Anne is that she weaves solutions to everyday problems, hands on learning and new skills application into what visitors love to do - eat, drink and shop. She has had people come on her tours tell her later that it changed their food buying and eating patterns forever. Learn Great Foods is taking agriculture and culinary tourism to the next level

## LOCAL FLAVOURS

Lansdowne, Ontario, Canada



**David Bull**  
Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve  
19 Reynolds Rd.  
Lansdowne, ON KOE 1L0  
613.659.4824

[david@fabr.ca](mailto:david@fabr.ca)

[www.fabr.ca](http://www.fabr.ca)

[www.localflavours.org](http://www.localflavours.org)

### Introduction

Local Flavours is a project of a larger organization, the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve. The Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve was designated by UNESCO in November 2002. It is one of over 500 Biosphere Reserves throughout the world. The Biosphere Reserve extends roughly 2700 square kilometres in the south-eastern portion of Ontario and includes nine municipalities. The mandate of any biosphere reserve is to build sustainable communities. They accomplish their work by networking natural and historic conservation organizations, economic and social development groups, as well as the educational and scientific communities located within the Frontenac Arch region. Locally they are known as the Biosphere Network. Collectively the Biosphere Network helps guide the community towards a more integrated and effective approach to living on earth.

Now in its fourth year, Local Flavours' strength is their inventory and established networks. Although totally separate from Local Flavours, a distribution service has started based on the Local Flavours database. This person charges an \$8.00 delivery fee to pick up ingredients from local farms and deliver them to restaurants. She was able to speak and promote her service at networking meetings across the region last year.

This group also has experience in organizing a variety of events with local food on the menu. In 2007 they hosted an events series entitled Parties for the Biosphere (see event logistics). Despite the relative success of these events no events were planned or executed in 2008. They have only continued with the map and directory. Their current challenge is lack of capacity and funding to move Local Flavours to the next level and this has been a real drain on enthusiasm. Generally there is a recent expansion in food education, and local food awareness, as in eastern Ontario alone there are at least five different food organizations. In the future they will look for opportunities to partner with some of these organizations.

### Purpose/goals of event

- The long-term goal of the Local Flavours Project is to build on the strengths of the region by increasing the sustainability of our local food supply and the farmers who produce it.

Our primary task is to bring together local producers and consumers, creating an economic and social partnership that benefits the entire community.

### **Quality assurance/standards of participation**

- In creating Local Flavours they have been as inclusive as possible. Our producers choose their method of production so our list includes conventional, transitional, natural and non-certified organic to certified organic approaches. Our customers choose the type of food they prefer. If you have any questions about growing methods, just ask the producer or outlet manager
- Size of operations and mode of selling also vary. Some large operations include farm shops while others have self-serve farm-gate stands with regular hours. Some need to be contacted in advance. Others sell their products off-farm at farmers' markets. These details are all listed with each producer or outlets' entry in their respective search pages.

### **Admissions/ticket sales/tracking attendance and revenue**

- The Local Flavours producers and outlets map is a listing of regional producers and some were very small backyard producers. The first map was produced in 2005 and brochure participants didn't have to pay. There were 54 listings, and it included farmers markets location and hours plus information on buying local
- In 2006 the map and database were expanded beyond farm producers to include food processors, retailers, restaurants, hotels, inns and B & Bs who buy, use and serve locally-produced food. The map had grown to 71 listings.
- 2007 the printed map had 73 participants, with farmers markets listed
- 2008 there are 78 listings on the map. It was the first full-colour version of the map and included a harvest chart of which fruits and veggies are available when
- In 2006 they started charging to participate in the map and many of the very small scale/backyard producers chose not to participate. It costs everyone \$59 to join and includes an aluminum sign that is \$25/year to renew. Membership includes an online listing, printed listing and 50 copies of the brochure.
- Event ticket prices ranged from \$45 - \$80, with an average price of \$60
- For the events they made some exceptions to the ticket prices, sometimes allowing guest speakers to attend for free and developed a policy where Board members could attend all events for cost rather than paying full ticket price. For most of the events the staff acted as servers and sometimes food preparers.

### **Event logistics**

- In 2007 Local Flavours was really into events. They planned 14 and actually did 11 sustainable tourism events across the region between the months of June and October. The events series was known as Parties for the Biosphere
- Event insurance cost \$332.64 to extend their coverage and was only valid for the duration of the Parties (June to October 2007)
- Details of the 2007 Parties for the Biosphere:
  - *Dinner at the Old Stone Mill* - Price per person: \$50, Number of Guests: 50 (60 attended) Location: The Old Stone Mill, Delta Sponsors: Delta Mill Society- free rental of facility, A National Historic Site. Panaché Bakery donated loaves of

bread. St. Lawrence Parks Commission- costumes and prizes, Mrs. McGarrigle's Fine Foods, mustards. Countryman's Estate Winery- discounted rate, Summum Consultants- cash donation of \$200. Notes: This event was very popular but not a big money maker. Staff were in period costumes (on loan) and everyone went home with a sample of gourmet mustard, a handmade soap and an old-fashioned flour sack full of brochures. There were a few guest speakers who talked about the history of the mill, participants signed a temperance pledge (this went over well), and during dinner there was a type of quiz where a man from the Historical Society circulated 20 objects/antiques and each table had to guess what they were. The table who guessed the most of them correctly won. Of 14 surveys returned all rated the event between 8.5 and 10 on a scale of 1 to 10. Costs for this event included the rental of a port-a-potty, soaps to take home, food and catering costs, costs of wine and liquor license

- *Wine and Cheese Tasting* - Price per person: \$45. Number of Guests: 60 (15 attended). Location: The Cove Country Inn, Westport. Sponsors: Forfar Dairy-cheese. Notes: This event was very poorly attended perhaps because of its timing, and not very well advertised. They did not have a champion volunteer to help with word of mouth. They found this to be key in determining event attendance. Costs for this event were wine glass rentals, fee for the wine consultant and the wine. They were able to return unopened bottles and a few attendees made some cash donations
- *The Spans of Time* - Price per person: \$60. Number of Guests: 24 (21 attended). Notes: Although they didn't make any money on this event it was considered a success as an awareness event. It was a one-time chance to explore a private home and private island. Costs included the charter of a boat to transport guests, beverages, hors d'oeuvres, and the live music. Staff servers also wore period costumes at this event (1930s style)
- *Abuzz over Honey* - Apiary tour and luncheon. Price per person: \$ no charge. Number of Guests: 40 (approximately 40 attended) Notes: They weren't getting a positive response for this event so in the end they just decided to make it an open house where guests could come and have a tour of the farm, learn about bees, honey making and even try extracting some honey. They cancelled the catering and only had to pay our deposit for the tent rental. They didn't charge for this event, but they got great press coverage and honey sales were quite high
- *Dinner at Locust Grove Farm* - Price per person: \$50. Number of Guests: 20 (22 attended). Location: Locust Grove Farm, Lansdowne. Sponsors: Locust Grove Farm; Stoneboat Farm. Notes: This event was hosted by one of our Board members at his home. He donated the use of his home for the event, paid for the cost of food and also prepared the food. The costs for this event were beverages and the purchase of some glassware. Staff served and after dinner there was a quiz game where guests were tested on their knowledge of the region. A presentation on the history of the home and its restoration was also given as well as a tour
- *Sailing the Tall Ship Fair Jeanne* - The *Fair Jeanne* is a replica 18<sup>th</sup> Century brigantine, 115 feet overall, operated by the Bytown Brigantine Foundation for sail training and character building. The Foundation has graciously made the ship

available for this one day special event. We'll sail from the Brockville waterfront, at the eastern gateway to the Thousand Islands and Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve. As crew, you'll learn how to handle the sails and rigging and will feel the grace and power of this majestic vessel. The luncheon, served aboard on the afterdeck, will be an experience in itself. Price per person: \$50. Number of Guests: 24 (24 attended) Location: Tunnel Bay, Brockville, and Sponsor: Bytown Brigantine Foundation. Notes: Also a very popular event! The Bytown Brigantine is set up to take groups on sailing expeditions at no charge it is a matter of availability and participants willing to sign on as crew (read: paperwork and the collection of personal information which was questioned by some). The only costs for this event were food which they prepared to serve on the boat.

- *Thousand Islands Watershed Land Trust Cottage Tour.* Cottage Tour by the Thousand Islands Watershed Land Trust. This year's tour will visit three wonderful cottages in the Admiralty Group of islands, off Gananoque. There are three tours during the day, at 9:00, 11:00 and 3:00 p.m. All leave from the docks of the Gananoque Inn, where lunch – included in the tour – is served. A tour boat chartered for the day carries you in comfort for a very scenic excursion to the cottages, where the owners have very generously donated this incomparable island experience. Price per person: \$80 (a portion receives tax receipt). Number of Guests: 50 for each of three tours. Location: Gananoque Inn, Gananoque. (155 in total attended) Notes: This is not a new event so there are a number of repeat guests year after year making this a less difficult 'sell' to the community. The Land Trust is also a registered charity so tax receipts can be issued for a portion of the ticket price. Costs were the charter of the boat and lunch.
- *Picture Perfect Photography Workshop.* Pete Medcalf will lead an afternoon session that will acquaint you with some photographic basics. Your day includes special instruction, a critique from your shooting session, a light dinner of wonderful tastes from local farm producers, and prizes courtesy of Camera Kingston and Photos by Arlene. Price per person: \$65. Number of Guests: 18 (16 attended). Location: Landon Bay Vacation Centre Sponsor: Camera Kingston; Photos by Arlene; White Pine Studio Notes: This event went very well and drew a large audience with guests coming from Toronto and Ottawa. The location was available at no charge and is the site of osprey nests, vistas etc. that make for great photo opportunities. Our instructors donated their time and they had door prizes. Everyone received a \$10 gift certificate to Camera Kingston, which went over really well. The cost was for food which ended up being quite a bit more money than they had anticipated. There were some communication issues in our negotiation and no contract signed in advance- they learned a lesson about having clarity.
- *Cooking with Class.* Chef Rob Gabbo of the Captain's Table at the Ivy Lea Club takes you from concept to cuisine at the Captain's Table kitchen. Price per person: \$60, cash bar. Number of Guests: 30 (28 attended). Location: Captain's Table, Ivy Lea Club. Sponsor: Captain's Table. Notes: The Chef set up a table at the front of the dining room and gave a demonstration on the preparation of the meal they were about to eat. Some participants were disappointed that it wasn't

more hands-on. Costs here were for the food and gratuities for the servers. Wine was donated from a regional winery for tasting.

- *Ghosts of the River Cruise* - An evening cruise, with a sit-down dinner from a menu of local and farm-fresh foods. Price per person: \$60, cash bar. Number of Guests: 72 (28 attended) Sponsor: Rockport Boat line. Notes: This event had much more potential and perhaps it was burnout or the departure of cottagers/seasonal residents or residents busy with transitions (back to school etc.) in the fall that impacted our attendance. They were given a discounted rate from the boat line; ticket prices were slightly lower than the regular boat cruise price and their Executive Director told the ghost stories as they cruised along the St. Lawrence River.
- *100 Mile Dinner*. Price per person: \$60. Number of Guests: 80 (80 attended) Notes: Most of the money raised here was from the live auction held after dinner and the silent auction. There was also a speaker during dinner; Scott Kelland of New Terra Farm, Merrickville, has won the Premier's Award for Innovation in Agriculture for his Community sponsored agriculture initiative (CSA) that supplies 20 families in this area with weekly baskets of fresh produce. Costs here were for dinner, gratuities and drinks. They gave one drink ticket to each guest.

### **Media relations**

- The media has been calling them and has been a big supporter, they seem to be quite interested in local food. Events are definitely something the media likes to cover and they got great media with their 2007 parties
- Ways to engage the media include, personal connections and don't be afraid to call them and ask them to attend your food event

### **Budget, funding and investment**

- Burnbrae Farms made the improvements to the 2008 map and directory possible with a sponsorship They are recognized and thanked on the main website
- There are some monies coming in through membership fees from farms
- Forty place-settings of dishes and cutlery donated by our local Canadian Tire store, and a volunteer sewed tablecloths and cloth napkins to be used for the events
- Total expenses for parties: \$13,334.55. Total revenue: \$ 15,736.91 Net: \$2,402.36
- The budget given above does not account for in-kind contributions, staff time or the possible positive influence on unrestricted donations made by FABR. This is the reason for no events this year because they leaned too heavily on the FABR for in-kind support
- Another cost was mileage for site visits.

### **Organization structure and human resources**

- Due to the lack of a dedicated staff person many of Local Flavours ideas and sub projects are on hold
- Most of the work has been done on a part time basis through contracts
- There are also lots of in-kind contributions from the Biosphere group
- In 2006 they had an intern for two months hired with funding through Community Futures

- Their volunteer committee/advisory board has also phased out; they used to have monthly meetings but now producers/processor claim they are too busy.

### **Marketing strategies and tracking success**

- Promotion for the Parties - they ran a couple of general ads in the paper for the entire series, and printed 10,000 rack cards for the series. General expenses: \$1,160.20.
- They used a website and email broadcasts to promote the specific events and also relied heavily on word of mouth
- As a heavily networked organization, cross promotion and partnering was the only way events worked; they relied on board members and partner organization for content and promotion with the Parties

### **Producer/chef connections**

- Last winter Local Flavours organized and hosted four networking meetings across the region to encourage and cultivate connections between producers and outlets
- The parties demanded and featured local food, thus proving to restaurants and tour operators that more local food on the menu was more possible than they thought which increased local sourcing.

### **Unique aspects of promotion**

- The online map is searchable; you can zoom in and out and when you mouse over a member's location it gives their name, address and what they grow.

### **Final thoughts**

- Lots of success and creative ideas for events here. Taking too much on in one year can totally drain an organization and leave workers and champions unwilling to take it on the next year.

## NIAGARA CULINARY TRAIL

Niagara, Ontario, Canada



**Magdalena Kaiser-Smit**  
Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance - Project  
Coordinator  
Director of Marketing & Communication NCT  
905.262.6309

magdalena@niagaraculinarytrail.com  
www.savourontario.org  
[www.niagaraculinarytrail.com](http://www.niagaraculinarytrail.com)

### Introduction

This group started with a small group of farmers and a foodie named Lynn Ogryzlo working together to guide consumers to sources of local food at farms within the region. It began at the farm gate and has evolved to include others. With an aim to encourage people to understand all aspects of local food it now includes all parts of the local food system. At the same time the provincial Ministry of tourism identified Niagara as one of five potential regions of Ontario to develop as a culinary tourism destination.

The result was the 2008 launch of the Culinary Trail with its map, press releases, events, promotions and more. It aims to bridge Niagara's Farm to Table Culinary Experience, to be Niagara's best resource for local food, local food products, farm to table culinary events and local restaurants featuring dishes prepared with local foods

The Niagara Culinary Trail links agriculture, tourism and the food community to promote sustainable cuisine by celebrating the joys of local, seasonal, and artisanal cooking. There are seventy-one businesses listed in the interactive map/ online directory (a few are listing in two categories): 3 accommodations, 4 bakeries, 6 cafes, 23 farms, 8 markets, 12 restaurants, 9 local food shops, and 6 wineries.

### DEFINITION OF ONTARIO CULINARY TOURISM

Culinary Tourism includes tourism experiences in which one learns about, appreciates, and/or consumes food and drink that reflects regional or national cuisine, heritage, culture, tradition or culinary techniques.

### VISION FOR ONTARIO CULINARY TOURISM ALLIANCE

Ontario will be the destination of choice for travellers seeking to enrich their understanding of diverse regions and cultures through authentic culinary tourism experiences.

### MISSION FOR ONTARIO CULINARY TOURISM ALLIANCE

Culinary Tourism in Ontario will

- Help build and sustain regional identities and agricultural resources and food supplies.
- Present opportunities to develop new quality tourism products and experiences.
- Become a way in which we share our story and tell it with pride.

View The Ontario Culinary Tourism  
Strategy & Action Plan:  
[http://www.tourism.gov.on.ca/english/IDO/IDO\\_images/Culinary\\_web.pdf](http://www.tourism.gov.on.ca/english/IDO/IDO_images/Culinary_web.pdf)

### **Purpose/goals of the trail**

- Year-round promotion - fresh food, vibrant communities and natural areas in the Niagara region. Niagara Culinary Trail Members:
  - Offer...Niagara-grown produce, made in Niagara artisan products, Niagara Culinary Dishes
  - Invite...Locals and visitors to share in Niagara's agricultural and culinary heritage
  - Believe...Locally-grown food and products are fresher and taste better
  - Guide...You with a map to visit all of our culinary destinations
  - Celebrate...The unbroken arc from garden to table with local culinary events
  - Support...Protecting Ontario's Greenbelt by reducing environmental food footprints
  - Value...Community building and sustainable food systems.

### **Quality assurance/standards of participation**

- Members pay to participate in the map, website and other promotions and are subject to criteria as well
- Criteria is slightly different for each business category and is aimed at ensuring their commitment to local foods
- Membership fees range from \$150- \$600.

### **Admissions/ticket sales/tracking attendance and revenue**

- The first printed map for the trail was launched in June with 80,000 copies
- An additional 10,000 copies were added the same season
- Next year they plan to make even more maps.

### **Event logistics**

- It is a year round promotion that highlights members' events more than staging events of their own.

### **Media relations**

- One press release per month. Link press releases to special events
- The map was enclosed and distributed in the paper "Niagara This Week"
- Public relations and working with the media are essential in the beginning
- They are working hard in the first year to establish their brand and to position Niagara Culinary Trail as a great source of local food.

### **Budget, funding and investment**

- Received a grant from Friends of the Greenbelt for \$200,000 over the first three years
- Membership fee accounts for part of the budget
- They are actively seeking additional sources of revenue and funding and are working towards more sustainable options.

### **Organization structure and human resources**

- They have two part-time staff, an executive director and a director of communications and marketing

- It takes a lot of work to keep all aspects of the trail going especially with the launch of a new website, logo and map
- They have not used volunteers to the extent that they would like
- Internal communication is essential. Need to constantly remind members the value of working together to promote local food and eating and what is being done on their behalf.

### **Marketing strategies and tracking success**

- 2008 they created a print copy of the map/directory with 90,000 copies
- Their goal is to increase consumer awareness and they are tracking it through a number of media stories about trail activities
- Magdalena advises, “When you are starting out try to take an inventory of what you have: do this before planning and creating new events and look at what the membership is doing. Enhance and feature what members are already doing and then start to fill in the gaps with additional events and promotions.”
- So far the response has been very positive; no quantitative results part way through the first year.

### **Producer/chef connections**

- Seventy plus members; almost one-third are farms (23 farms)
- Because the Trail includes the whole food system, restaurants, cafes and bakeries are all included in the Trail. If they are on the Trail they have met the required criteria and are sourcing a certain amount of ingredients locally – this drives demand and increases producer/chef connections.

### **Unique aspects of promotion**

- 100 kilometre kitchen section of the website – includes a specialist who develops recipes and tells her perspective on local foods. For this section they had to develop a definition of a Niagara Dish first and then proceeded with the development of the recipes
- An environmental science student from Niagara College did a project to calculate the food kilometres comparison for the local food recipes
- The Buy, Eat and Drink Local Challenge asks people in the area to consider spending \$10/week on local products. The Niagara Culinary Trail worked with Dr. Lewis Soroka, Ph.D., Department of Economics, Brock University to put together these amazing numbers. If the approximately 435,000 residents of Niagara each spent just \$10 of their grocery budget on local foods each week, there would be a \$226 million influx into the local economy each year. Additionally, if visitors spent \$10 of their dining budget on local food when they came, there would be another \$120 million injected into the local economy. Ziraldo challenges Niagara residents, “let’s spend \$10 per week on local items to replace something non-local on our lists.”
- Recipe section on the site features recipes with local farms named with specific ingredients
- Participating operations advertise individual and seasonal events on the site.

**Final thoughts**

- Beautiful, well laid out website and map
- Magdalena's final thoughts were:
  - The strengths of the organization thus far (in year one) are the printed map and website plus the increase in brand recognition
  - The challenge will be to meet the demand. There is so much to do and so much that could be done; what is the most impact we can make with the resources we have.

## NORTH CAROLINA HISTORIC BARBEQUE TRAIL

North Carolina, USA



**Jim Early – President and CEO**

144 Sterling Point CT  
Winston-Salem, NC 27104  
336.765.NCBS (6227)

[www.ncbbqsociety.com](http://www.ncbbqsociety.com)

[jim@jimearly.com](mailto:jim@jimearly.com)

### Introduction

The historic BBQ Trail was unveiled in February 2007 and has become the darling of food and travel writers because of the authentic nature of the stops on the Trail and the excellent write-ups and interpretation provided by Jim Early. The Trail, society and website all began with Jim Early's extensive research and field study of the BBQ culture and cuisine of his home state of North Carolina. His findings are documented in his book “The Best Tar Heel Barbecue Manteo to Murphy”

NCBS has designed a barbecue trail from Eastern North Carolina to Tennessee. The trail meanders across the state with stops at 25 NCBS Historic Barbecue Pits. These pits were carefully and selectively chosen by the NCBS board as representatives of the distinctive methods and barbecue cooking styles that have made North Carolina the barbecue capital of the world. Each NCBS Historic Barbecue Pit still cooks the old fashioned pit-cooked method.

### Purpose/goals of the trail

- The establishment of the NCBS Historic Barbecue Trail affords visitors to the Old North State an opportunity to sample North Carolina barbecue cooked in the traditional fashion and served by some of the nicest people one could ever hope to meet
- This society and trail have shifted the east versus west rivalry to presenting North Carolina at the birthplace and originators of BBQ aka the '*cradle of the que*'
- Jim says, “Let's unite and promote the diversity of BBQ within our state, I'm here for a wedding not a war.”

### Quality assurance/standards of participation

- Criteria for selection to the NCBS Historic Barbecue Trail include:
  - cook their meat product on pits fuelled by wood or charcoal
  - make their own sauce
  - the pit had operated continuously for fifteen or more years
  - the end product was a good offering and representative of North Carolina Barbecue
  - the pit had earned and enjoyed the high esteem of its community, the barbecue industry and barbecue aficionados
- The board decided to only include pits that provided a sit down dining experience for the

public and to limit the number of pits on the Trail to two per town or city.

### **Admissions/ticket sales/tracking attendance and revenue**

- Free. Maps are available online but there is no printable/downloadable map online. The website is clickable and there is a long list of written directions to all of the 25 spots on the Trail
- Visitors have been known to call the NCBS for recommendations of where to eat while travelling in the state.

### **Trail logistics**

- The Trail stretches across the entire state of North Carolina; approximately 450 miles in length
- Each of the stops profiled on the website has the name, address and phone number, plus a full-colour photo of the business and a 200 to 300 word description of the food and the atmosphere visitors will find at each site
- Each NCBS Historic Barbecue Pit will proudly display a specially-designed emblem depicting old style barbecue cooking that is part of the tradition, heritage and culture that NCBS seeks to preserve.

### **Media relations**

- The BBQ Trail has a tremendous amount of media coverage nation-wide in the USA and around the world
- A stop along the Trail, Grady's Barbecues, was featured in a cover story of USA Today with a distribution of eight million copies across America. Jim says, "These kinds of results make my heart sing."
- Jim's attention to detail and extensive research detailed in the write-ups about each stop means much of the work is done for the travel and food writers. Here is an example from the website:

Grady's Barbecue, Dudley

Gerri (short for Geraldine) Grady states that in early summer of 1986 she discovered she no longer had a job after coming back from rehab for an injury that occurred on the job. Her husband Steve worked at a lumber yard. Steve told Gerri not to worry; he would create jobs for them so that they could work together. Steve bought a family member's interest in a small barbecue operation. Steve had access to wood through his former employer. Steve decided to cook barbecue the old fashioned way with wood over open pits. Steve would run the pits and delivery truck and Gerri would run the kitchen. Grady's Barbecue opened its doors for business on July 4, 1986.

Cooking barbecue over pits with wood is long, hot, back-bending work. Few people in today's society seek the 12-15 hour days of a barbecue man. This is why about 99 plus percent of the barbecue places open today cook with gas or electricity. As Gerri will tell you, a barbecue man's wife's days are no shorter. Gerri works tirelessly in her sparkling stainless steel kitchen. The cleanliness of Grady's reflects Gerri's medical training. The sanitation rating for Gerri's barbecue is 102. It doesn't get much better than that.

Grady's barbecue is rich, nutty, brown, hand chopped pork with a smoky woody taste that only comes from slow smoking over wood on open pits. It is tender and juicy with specks of red pepper peeking out of coarse chopped 'cue that contains bits of outside brown and tiny bits of skin (bark). This 'cue is so good you don't want to swallow it. It is one of the best eastern style 'cues one will ever taste – pure 'cue heaven on earth. The coleslaw is a fresh moderately chopped cabbage with mayo and a hint of pickles that make this garden fresh offering the perfect dinner companion for the rich 'cue.

Grady's sauce is a true Eastern North Carolina bbq sauce with a bit of fire. It is the absolute perfect partner for the smoky 'cue. Add sauce lightly as the 'cue is just about perfect as it comes from the kitchen. A delicious hushpuppy rounds out the fare.

### **Budget, funding and investment**

- The NCBS is a membership funded organizations
- The largest sponsorship level is the Platinum Sponsor – they have one law firm at \$10,000
- Majority of featured restaurants are listed as benefactors sponsoring NCBS \$250 – \$750
- \$35 membership fee for the privilege of belonging to the society, \$25 for students and seniors
- 194 members listed on the website.

### **Organization structure and human resources**

- Jim Early has been able to leave his full time job as a trial lawyer to dedicate himself fully to the NCBS
- There are two other board members listed on the website, one as secretary/director and a director.

### **Marketing strategies and tracking success**

- The impact of the Trail has been very positive, it pulls people into towns by providing enough guidance and interpretation to give visitors the confidence to find and eat at out of the way places
- They have their own bi-monthly newspaper “NCBS Pig Tales™” that features recipes. They will soon be adding “Piglets” news bulletins on alternating months. This is distributed as an e-news letter, but there are 38 seniors who lack computer literacy to receive e-news so they are mailed hard copies.
- They sponsor educational programs at all school levels regarding North Carolina and its barbecue heritage.

### **Producer/chef connections**

- Twenty- five joints/spots are featured, all BBQ pits selected by NCBS, but there are no farms featured. The BBQ joint owners and pit masters are culinary artisans preserving a piece of cultural heritage
- The Historic Trail has been a way to recognize and say thank-you to those who are still doing it the old fashioned way in spite of the following barriers:
  - they have been 'grandfathered' and business expansion is limited if not impossible
  - higher insurance because of their use of fire
  - cost of hardwoods to fuel the fires
  - smoke produced causes environmental concerns and problems with neighbours
  - the challenges of keeping pit masters who work 16 hour days to keep the fires burning
- Connection to agriculture in websites rhetoric - “North Carolina needs a good strong barbecue society to promote our agriculture – nationally and internationally. We are the second largest pork producing entity on the planet. Sampson and Duplin counties are the

two largest pork producing counties in the world. North Carolina is synonymous with great basketball and great barbecue.”

### **Unique aspects of promotion**

- Jim teaches adult education cooking classes at the local community college, and also publishes cookbooks
- They are developing curriculum for elementary, junior high and high school students to educate on alternatives to fast food as well as teach about North Carolina’s cultural heritage and its connections to BBQ
- The society encourages and connects historic BBQ Trail members with opportunities to cook for or cater high profile events featuring politicians
- They participate in films and documentaries regarding North Carolina’s culture and barbecue history
- Future plans travelling the trail with a film crew, and recording for archival purposes
- Interesting glossary of definitions available on their website of words connected to BBQ and pork - “Pork terms from pen to pit to plate”
- Doctors have been known to print off the Pig Tales newsletter and provide it to patients to read in the waiting room
- Plans to produce a custom designed gold medallion to be on display at each stop along the historic BBQ trail. Visitors will be able to purchase replica coins from each of the BBQ joint, the society will sell a special holder for the coins. Visitors will be able to gain “bragging rights” by visiting all of the stops on the trail and completing their collection of coins.

### **Final thoughts**

- This group is about preservation, promotion and awareness of the historic methods of BBQ and are a fine example of culinary tourism. People from all over the world come to this state to participate in the Trail.
- “Trails really work for people because someone has laid it out for them; people are generally like sheep, and they like to have something to follow.”

## SAVOUR MUSKOKA - CULINARY EXPERIENCES

Bracebridge, Ontario, Canada



**James Murphy - General Manager**

111 Manitoba Street  
Bracebridge, ON P1L 2B6  
705.646.7118

[www.savourmuskoka.com](http://www.savourmuskoka.com)  
[info@savourmuskoka.com](mailto:info@savourmuskoka.com)

### Introduction

Muskoka's Culinary Tourism tradition began in the 1800s with the arrival of tourists by steamship and train for summer vacations. About 90 minutes drive north of the greater Toronto area Muskoka is part of cottage country. The price of waterfront cottages on Lake Joseph, Lake Muskoka or Lake Rosseau runs from \$500,000 to \$700,000, and these properties are a magnet for Hollywood stars, hockey players and those seeking some of the most luxurious cottages in Canada.

In December 2004, area "foodies" came together and created a plan to promote the Muskoka and Parry Sound region as a dynamic culinary tourism destination. Today visitors can choose from a wide variety of quality culinary events and experiences to explore Muskoka and Parry Sound. The local food identity of the Muskoka is rustic and outdoorsy featuring maple syrup, honey, and mushrooms.

To ensure product is either processed or grown locally watch for the SAVOUR Muskoka logo at area farmers' markets and retail locations. When you dine at member restaurants, signature items will be highlighted with the logo indicating that they have been made with local ingredients. Currently SAVOUR Muskoka's membership is split between 25 chefs, 31 restaurants/caterers, 18 farmers and 12 culinary artisans.

#### DEFINITION OF ONTARIO CULINARY TOURISM

Culinary Tourism includes tourism experiences in which one learns about, appreciates, and/or consumes food and drink that reflects regional or national cuisine, heritage, culture, tradition or culinary techniques.

#### VISION FOR ONTARIO CULINARY TOURISM ALLIANCE

Ontario will be the destination of choice for travellers seeking to enrich their understanding of diverse regions and cultures through authentic culinary tourism experiences.

#### MISSION FOR ONTARIO CULINARY TOURISM ALLIANCE

Culinary Tourism in Ontario will;

- Help build and sustain regional identities and agricultural resources and food supplies.
- Present opportunities to develop new quality tourism products and experiences.
- Become a way in which we share our story and tell it with pride.

### **Purpose/goals of event**

- SAVOUR Muskoka is for chefs, farmers and tourists. Ultimately it is about more dollars in the pockets of farmers to ensure their long term sustainability and a supply of local food.
- The organization's goals include:
  - Increase revenue for all stakeholders, particularly in the shoulder seasons through the development of a recognizable culinary product
  - Improve cross promotion of regional culinary offerings
  - Market products and services from the Muskoka/Parry Sound region both locally and to the visitor market
  - Provide culinary tourism educational and support services to the partners of SAVOUR Muskoka
  - Improve communication between growers, microprocessors, accommodation stakeholders, restaurants, chefs and the retail sector
  - Be a self-sustaining, non-government organization
  - Have a current ongoing inventory of locally grown/made products.

### **Quality assurance/standards of participation**

- The criteria or guidelines for SAVOUR Muskoka members are:
  - Have some focus on regional culinary tourism
  - Must feature regional ingredients and market such
  - Business and/or food items must be produced and/or made within the six municipalities that make up the District of Muskoka, plus Parry Sound
  - A portion of the workers employed in production must be residents of the District of Muskoka and Parry Sound
  - Must actively promote fellow members and their products
  - Must have regular posted business hours
  - Must be open during the summer months
- James shared that the criteria is what the organization is striving for; they have not refused anyone a membership yet.

### **Admissions/ticket sales/tracking attendance and revenue**

- Events regarding making money are still a bit of an issue because chefs can only donate so much time and money. They are currently working on a cost recovery system and not sure how that will play out. Another revenue stream is sponsorship or associate memberships. This is something that they will discuss further within their board
- This organization runs a few events, two examples are a boat cruise (cost: \$85 per person) with nine cooking stations on board and gourmet getaway with wine tasting, food and accommodation (Cost: \$299 per room per night on a two-night package).
- They also support other pre-existing events such as the cranberry festival.

### **Event logistics**

- SAVOUR Muskoka Autumn Cruise - Lake Muskoka Cruise catered by SAVOUR Muskoka Chefs and Culinary Artisans
- Gourmet Getaways - Deerhurst Fall Flavours Food & Wine Weekend with Henry of

Pelham. Includes: Select accommodation, Friday evening tapas platter with wine, Saturday wine tasting seminar, Saturday evening SAVOUR Muskoka Dinner at Steamers Steakhouse with selected wine pairings, and breakfast daily

- Both events were a success and it was worth the effort. As for events in our community because of the rural nature and clusters of farms, chefs and cottagers a few points are worth pointing out:
  - Events should be small - 100 to 200 people
  - They need to be on a Sunday, Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday; that way chefs with small operations can make it out
  - Silent auctions need to incorporate, as well as complement, artisan groups, like local art groups
  - \$60 - \$80 prepaid ticket price
  - March style, people can graze while interacting with the chefs and farmers
  - Incorporate a cause, “proceeds to go and help support...”
  - Sponsorship of larger companies is important
- Organizations like theirs started by working with other community events that carry clout and have been in place for some time, in many cases, ten years
- They have blanket yearly event insurance running at \$1,200 with Board of Directors liability insurance running at about another \$1,200 (another part of the given overhead)
- As for food handling they submit all the paperwork to the local health department and follow the guidelines; in all honesty food handling is common sense.

### **Media relations**

- The media is much more willing to work with you if you spend money on advertising in their publications
- They pick and choose which newspapers and tourism guides work for them
- There are also some group/joint opportunities through Savour Ontario/Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance
- Promotion of SAVOUR Muskoka at various media events throughout the summer (check website for details)
- WHERE Muskoka magazine had a feature article on SAVOUR Muskoka

### **Budget, funding and investment**

- SAVOUR Muskoka is a not-for-profit organization that received seed money for the first two years
- Have a goal of being totally self-funded by 2011
- Approximate annual budget of \$70,000
- SAVOUR Muskoka is a membership-funded organization with two levels of membership - Silver Fork for \$100/year and available to primary producers targeting restaurants, Gold Fork costs \$250/year any business operator including primary producers who want to promote their products to area restaurants and the general consumer market - in particular visitors and cottagers.

### **Organization structure and human resources**

- One paid staff person, a general manger

- The current general manager has been on the job for five months; he is the third person in this position since its inception
- They have a volunteer board
- Volunteers are important. So far James has relied on family and friends, but awareness is starting to happen so recruiting volunteers might be easier in the future.

### **Marketing strategies and tracking success**

- SAVOUR Muskoka logo appearing on area restaurant menus indicating which items are made with regional product
- SAVOUR Muskoka Members were promoted at Flavours of Muskoka which took place in June 2008 at the Port Carling Community Centre
- [www.savourmuskoka.ca](http://www.savourmuskoka.ca) is for visitors to find information on culinary events, locations featuring local food and drink products, as well as farms offering fresh produce for sale
- SAVOUR Muskoka logo on items at area farmers' markets and retail locations to easily identify regional product. Lobbying is under way to have the Muskoka region designated as an emerging culinary tourism destination by Tourism Ontario
- Local farms are featured on menus throughout the Parry Sound and Muskoka Region
- First Member Chefs to buy product from Member producers include Executive Chef Rory Golden of Deerhurst Resort, General Manager Esa Paltanen of Delta Sherwood Inn and David Freisen of Riverwalk Fine Dining
- Billboard – West side of Hwy 11 northbound
- James did a short survey a few months ago, asking the following types of questions and as an incentive to respond he gave away a dinner for two to get people to sign up:
  - How often do you dine out?
  - Do you have an interest in local food?
  - Do you make an effort to purchase local food? And how often?
  - When you dine out do you inquire about local food on the menu? Why or why not?
  - Are you familiar with SAVOUR Muskoka?
- He has now started re-administering the survey at farmers markets and community events. Although he not analysed the content, at a short glance the results seem to show the general public is starting to get it. That is one way; the second way was just speaking with the members in order to get their feedback.

### **Producer/chef connections**

- Chefs do a lot of this work pro bono – which means they can be fickle
- When organizing events that include chefs think about their off times and plan your event then. It has been a challenge to do SAVOUR Muskoka events on Saturday nights when all the chefs would rather be at their restaurants with a full house
- Farmers don't always have public relations skills; some are miserable to work with
- The best way to cultivate these connections is to get involved and get out on to the farms; pull on your rain boots and walk the farm with the farmer
- Person-to-person communication works best. Show-up at member businesses and talk to people.

### **Unique aspects of promotion**

- Labelling food processors culinary artisans gives cheese making and jam factories a sophisticated twist
- Listing both the chefs and the restaurants gives the chefs more visibility and a higher profile.

### **Final thoughts**

- Development of a culinary trail part of future plans
- There is a challenge of looking at what is being done with culinary tourism with a backbone of wineries and comparing to what is possible in a region without wine. Wineries are designed as tourism destinations and are made to take bus tours. Muskoka and Alberta and similar in the sense that they both lack a critical mass of wineries
- James says, “We all need to open our arms a little bit to make this work”, and “how do I know that SAVOUR or myself is making a difference. Well, honestly I just keep at it, do what’s right and in the best interest of the community, and stick to it and see where the chips fall.”

## **SLOW FOOD CYCLE SUNDAY**

*Pemberton, British Columbia, Canada*



### **Slow Food Cycle Sunday Society**

**Anna Helmer** – co-founder and project coordinator

**Niki Vankerck** – project coordinator

604-894-1631

[www.slowfoodcyclesunday.com](http://www.slowfoodcyclesunday.com)

[slowfoodcycle@gmail.com](mailto:slowfoodcycle@gmail.com)

### **Introduction**

Slow Food Cycle Sunday celebrates local food and farmland. Founders of this event realized there is a great hunger to learn and be in the countryside as well as taste good food. Being on a bike enables this type of exploration. This event is free. It is a 50 kilometre (25km out and back) route along one road. The road is paved, relatively flat and runs north of the town of Pemberton through an agricultural area. It takes place every August and has been running for four years.

It started with a discussion between the co-founders Anna Helmer a local organic farmer and Lisa Richardson, a free lance journalist. They perceived a disconnect between the country and city perception of farmland. The event emerged as an answer to the question - why can't I build housing on those empty looking fields north of town. There is a great deal of development pressure in this valley. Part of the answer is that the fallow field is part of a three to four year potato crop rotation, important for control of insects and diseases. The bigger answer is local food comes from local farmland. How are people from the non -arming community supposed to know these things without getting out on the land, learning from real farmers? Slow Food Cycle Sunday was born.

The whole event is based on the firm belief that there is a lot for the people of the valley to share about what they are doing out on the landscape. Slow Food Cycle Sunday has become a chance to show off the valley. Another way to think of it is a farmers' market turned inside out, where the farmers stay home and the people come to them.

### **Purpose/goals of event**

- See local farms
- Have local farmers see you as an interested participant in food
- Learn why it is important to protect farmland
- Food security and food systems.

### **Quality assurance/standards of participation**

- In 2008 there were seven open farms. Participating farms vary slightly from year to year. Each farm ends up being a mini marketplace/farmers' market. There were approximately 50 vendors with many small businesses from Pemberton participating; anything you could sell/supply/service locally was available.

### **Admissions/ticket sales/tracking attendance and revenue**

- The event is free
- In 2008 there were 2,300 participants; attendance to the event has doubled almost every year
- 2007 attendance was 1100, 2006 attendance was 800 in and 2005 attendance was 400
- At first the founders assumed it would just be people from Pemberton, but in the first year 30% of the participation was from the Vancouver area. In 2008, 40% were from Vancouver.

### **Event logistics**

- Participants (bike riders) are asked to register and sign a waiver at the community centre
- People have joined the event without registering first because they perceived the line up was too long at the community centre or they had been before and knew what to do. This means they missed being tracked and didn't sign a waiver. Event coordinators are looking at how to improve flow at registration or offer multiple points of registration to make things move faster.
- Upon registering participants are given maps and encouraged to find their way
- There is no mass start and no tour guides. You start and stop where and when you want, using your map to find your way. Open farms have signs at the entrance
- The route is on a straight, flat piece of road; it is a through-route and they do not close the road for their event. Closing the road is not feasible; there are farms working and people passing through the valley during the ride. "We need to continue to work to appease the traffic." Drivers in the community and those travelling through the valley on Cycle Sunday need to deal with lots of bikes. There were bikes everywhere for the full day.
- This year someone organized a mini bus for seniors to ride on and take in a few of the stops. Some people brought cars because biking just was not possible and this was allowed too.
- They get insurance through Sport BC; last year it was around \$1,200. This insures against accidents on the road. Farms get their own insurance. They do not ask them to get anything specific. They state everywhere that they are not responsible for rider safety.
- Food permits are acquired for those that need it. When a vendor comes to us to ask if they can vend, they decide if they need to go through the process. They work with the Environmental Health Department to make sure that all is done properly. They have a

chef who helps vendors fill out forms etc.

- Slow Food Cycle Sunday organizers have nothing to do with the actual set-up/take-down on the open farms. They match farms and vendors. They help the vendors acquire food safety permits if necessary. It is up to each open farm and their vendors to figure out logistics. They try to have a balance of food, art and other services available at every stop
- Open farms can charge a fee to vendors setting up at their farm if they wish, although to Anna's knowledge, none do. This could change. There are loose arrangements on each open farm that cover expenses. It is completely up to the host farm
- At Anna Helmer's family farm (a Slow Food Cycle Sunday stop) they try to have a meeting with the vendors prior to the event and they discuss set-up and take-down. They do not charge. They sell their stuff as well so they make money.

### **Media relations**

- This event was co-founded by a freelance writer, there is lots of media savvy within the group
- They have always used press releases; two to three leading up to the event and this has worked well
- Media articles are posted on the website
- It is cool to see 'new' media available on their site, short videos of the ride and people's experiences, plus good photos of past events as well

### **Budget, funding and investment**

- The bare bones/basic event budget is \$12,000 – \$15, 000, which covers insurance, porta-potties and some promotions
- With a budget of \$30,000 they did extras including the production of a beautiful souvenir booklet (38 pages) called the Slow Food Cycle Sunday Almanac – your guide to eating, growing and living in the Lillooet River Valley, Pemberton BC
- Approximate break down of income sources for Slow Food Cycle Sunday: Local government: 15%, Businesses:15%, Fundraising dinner: 20%, Time in lieu donations: 10%, Merchandise sales: 20%, Grants: 20%
- In past years they have done a \$125/plate fundraiser dinner at Helmers' Organic Farm but took a break from this in 2008. They would consider doing it again as the dinners were very popular. They sold around 50 tickets at \$125 each for a total \$6,300. Costs were around \$60 per person (wine, meat and other ingredients, some rentals and 4 servers). Vegetables, chef time, rentals (our lead chef is a caterer) all donated. They could not pay for the chefs
- Slow Food Cycle Sunday is supported by the Pemberton Valley Supermarket, The Community Foundation of Whistler, Village of Pemberton, Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, Horizon Distributors, Whistler Blackcomb Foundation Enviro Fund, and Sea to Sky Community Services. Contributions from Limelight Screenprinting, Sumire Design and Dave Steers Photography.

### **Organization structure and human resources**

- Thus far the event has been organized mainly by Niki and Anna. Anna takes care of the farms and vendors and Niki does almost everything else. They realize they need to

delegate more. When they bill hours to the society they bill at \$25/hour but there are many hours that go undocumented

- Because the event has grown exponentially each year, it ends up being a very different and expanded event each year; they have outgrown things that have worked in the early years.
- They created the society in 2007 and are looking to add to the management team or have team leaders – two likely positions up for grabs in the future are volunteer coordinator and someone in charge of registration. They need to find ways to motivate visitors to register and sign waivers before heading out for the day.
- In 2008 the ride had 50 volunteers. It is hard to get volunteers because everyone is so keen to participate in the event itself. They have been able to entice/encourage volunteers with t-shirts and an appreciation night (featuring beer and pizza).

### **Marketing strategies and tracking success**

- Participants are tracked through registration
- Paperless evaluations were done online through the website. They have not had a great response rate, but did get interesting information from those who did respond.
- There is an e-newsletter available by subscription to Google groups
- The website is clean and current, with an archive of past events and activities
- Other regions have adopted and adapted this idea, creating their own Slow Food Cycle Sundays - [www.slowfoodvancouver.com/index.php/AgassizTour](http://www.slowfoodvancouver.com/index.php/AgassizTour).

### **Producer/chef connections**

- Chefs want to get involved from Whistler; for some chefs it is their dream to cook with ultra fresh ingredients at a farm
- They added a bonus ride down a gravel road to a more remote farm and most people went there too
- Each new farm and especially new vendors need encouragement. Almost every time a new vendor joins the event they under estimate the amount of whatever they are selling is needed and sell out before the day is through
- Another important connection being made at Cycle Sunday is to the region's First Nations People. A highlight in 2008 was a blessing by Martina Pierre at the Helmer farm. She explained why we are honouring the land, the food from the land, and the people who have grown it.

### **Unique aspects of promotion**

- Slow Food Cycle Sunday Almanac featured profiles of all the farms and farmers with photos. It also told the story of the whole year of growing in the valley with a page for each month, telling what is in season, what is happening out in the fields, and with the cattle, offering recipes and tips for the garden. Farm profiles include funky photos of the people and 50 to 70 words about them and their farms.
- The Slow Food Cycle Sunday website features links to other food events, Feast of Fields and other cycle tours. In 2008, four days prior to the Cycle Sunday, there was a food forum called “Anything Grows.” A public forum on the future of food in Whistler and Pemberton featured 12 speakers. Close to 100 people enjoyed listening to the 12

different perspectives on local food and the food system ranging from farmers, chefs, market managers and grocers to special event organizers.

- In 2007 the Pemberton Library hosted 100-Mile Dieters James MacKinnon and Alisa Smith for an inspiring start to the day
- 2007 green initiatives of Slow Food Cycle Sunday:
  - The use of 4,000 compostable sugarcane plates, donated by Slopeside Supply, for riders who didn't bring their own lunch bowls
  - Festival merchandise was sourced from ethical suppliers, and screen printed locally. T-shirts from HT designs were bamboo. The American Apparel shirts are produced sweatshop free. The grocery totes were made from 100% organic hemp
  - The Slow Food Cycle Almanac was printed on recycled paper stock with soy inks by New West Press
  - Mail-outs to supporters were done electronically, minimizing paper usage
  - 90% of pre event meetings for the executive were attended by bicycle
  - Whistler Blackcomb's Enviro fund provided a free shuttle service from Whistler so participants could take part in the ride without getting into cars first.

### **Final thoughts**







- The event has grown and over time it has received more community support
- Overall the rule and guiding principle for event organizers/co-coordinators has been to KEEP it SIMPLE so there has not much energy put into developing rules for the ride with all the other things there are to get done
- It is a day to honour the farmers and farmland for what it is. By riding bikes, being on the rural roads and slowing down visitors get a glimpse of rural life; they experience the sun and the wind, the same elements that are the essential factors of farming and growing good food.
- The strength of the event thus far is the dynamic duo of Anna and Niki. They are farm folk/city folk embodied. Anna is a farmer who goes to the city to sell her family's organic produce at the farmers' market. Niki is a city person with a strong ability to coordinate.
- Together these two women have the capacity to understand and be active within the complexity and diverse views of food systems and agricultural preservation. They were very real about the challenges of local food and the need for systemic change for local food to happen at a larger scale. They know and are making others aware that most farms within their valley are supplying other markets that have nothing to do with supplying local food. They have Whistler in their backyard with white table cloth restaurants and residents who have an interest in fresh and local. Whistler can't grow anything in the mountains; their closest farming area is the Pemberton Valley. The "Anything Grows" food forum, was the start of a conversation that needed to happen, making people aware that all of agriculture is not ready to supply local foods. Just because chefs and city people think it is a good idea to eat local it is not going to happen without farmers and farmland.
- The biggest challenge for Niki and Anna are staying true to their roots and keeping the event as a celebration of local food and farmland. With Cycle Sunday's increasing popularity, there are flashy colours and art. The market and festival atmosphere have

broadened and perhaps the simple message is lost on many. There has already been evidence of short attention spans, the expectation of more stimulation at every stop and around every corner; there have been complaints about not enough food and entertainment at the farms.

- Although eating and shopping are widely available at this event, it is not what the event is intended to be about. It is about people on their bikes, feeling what it is to cycle 50km. It is about being in community, having patience, experiencing the weather and engaging all five senses, just as farmers have always done and hope to continue every day in Pemberton Valley and elsewhere on the planet.

## COMPARISON OF TRAIL TERMS AND CATEGORIES

Different groups use slightly different terminology and categories for organizing trail stops. This table is intended as a quick reference guide to names others have used to describe trail and organization members. What you call your categories does matter, think of the difference between the terms farmers and culinary artisans as compared to producers and processors. Think about what consumers and visitors are looking to find on your maps and directories.

<p><b>Niagara Culinary Trail</b></p> <p><b>Accommodations</b> </p> <p><b>Bakeries</b> </p> <p><b>Cafés</b> </p> <p><b>Farms</b> </p> <p><b>Markets</b> </p> <p><b>Restaurants</b> </p> <p><b>Local Shops</b> </p> <p><b>Wineries</b> </p>	<p><b>Food Hawke's Bay – Food Trail</b></p> <p><b>Map</b>          Farm Gates – taste &amp; buy          Artisans – taste &amp; buy          Dining          Events and Activities</p> <p><b>Members</b>          Artisan Producers          Value Added/Commercial Processors          Farm Gate          Cafes, Restaurants &amp; Wineries          Cellar Doors          Events &amp; Activities          Service and Support Organizations          Food Online</p>
<p><b>Local Flavours</b>  <b>Local Producers</b>          eggs          fruit          herbs          honey          maple syrup          meats          organic          vegetables          by appointment          farmers market          pick your own</p> <p><b>Local Outlets</b>          inns          restaurants          delis          health food stores          grocers          bed and breakfasts          stores</p> <p><b>Local Markets</b></p>	<p><b>SAVOUR Muskoka</b>          Chefs          Restaurants &amp; Caterers          Farmers          Culinary Artisans</p> <p><b>Foodlink</b>          Dairy Products          Fruit and Berries          Farm Fresh Eggs          Country Markets and produce stands          u-picks          Beef, Pork, Lamb and Goat          Fish and Speciality Meats          Flour, Grains, Maple Syrup, Cider and Honey          Poultry          Farmers' Markets          Farmers' Markets Vendors          Community Shared Agriculture Programs          Other Farm Products          Wholesale Producers          Elmira Produce Auction</p>

**Matrix comparison of regional food cluster:**

	<i>Taste event/feast</i>	<i>Brand Program</i>	<i>Searchable directory</i>	<i>Printed Map</i>	<i>Year round Trail</i>	<i>Include Restaurants</i>	<i>Self identify with Sustainability and Environment</i>	<i>Strong link to Tourism</i>	<i>Emphasis on education and awareness</i>
BUTTER TART TRAIL									
COOPERSTOWN BEVERAGE TRAIL									
FEAST OF FIELDS									
FOOD FANCIERS FORAY									
FOOD HAWKE'S BAY									
FOOD LINK									
FOOD ROOTS DISTRIBUTORS COOPERATIVE									
LEARN GREAT FOOD									
LOCAL FLAVOURS									
NIAGARA CULINARY TRAIL									
NORTH CAROLINA HISTORIC BARBEQUE TRAIL									
SAVOUR MUSKOKA CULINARY EXPERIENCES									
SLOW FOOD CYCLE SUNDAY									