

## Why include food and agriculture in economic planning

Presented to the Nelson Economic Development Partnership

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### Food Security defined

- Individual food in-security is most commonly understood – people who do not have enough to eat and who may be served by such agencies as food banks and soup kitchens.
- Canada is amongst the global signatories to a declaration that food security is a basic human right.
- Communal food security is when all residents of the community have access to sufficient food when and how they need it, both now and in the future.

### Food Sovereignty defined

- A community has a reasonable measure of control over how, where and what volume of food is produced and made available to all residents;
- A community working towards food sovereignty aims to feed its own population, now and in the future, by producing as much as possible of its food needs locally but does not close the door on trading for what it can't
- Any jurisdiction that cannot feed itself is at the mercy of those who can.

### It makes economic sense

- Agriculture and food are economic drivers in our communities, even here in the West Kootenays where farmland is scarce.
- Unlike many other sectors, the money generated by agricultural activities circulates many times around the community. In the West Kootenays, the vast majority of the goods and services both consumed and produced by agriculture occur within our regional boundaries.
- Food is a constant – we all need it every day and this will not change

It provides long-term security for our community, because many factors that affect our access to imported food are out of our control:

- Environmental factors
  - global warming is changing the growing climates around the world and may affect our access to imported food stuffs
  - water is becoming increasingly scarce, especially uncontaminated fresh water (California farm production decreased by 20% in 2005 due to a reduction in their water access)
- Peak oil
  - conventional agriculture, which provides the vast majority of our food supply, is heavily dependent on fossil fuels: for fertilizers, farm equipment operation, and food transportation (which, on average, travels 1500km before it reaches our plates)
  - increased cost of imported food is inevitable
- Political factors
  - political upheaval or change in food-exporting countries may jeopardize our supply of imported food
  - food shortage in export-oriented countries may result in a greater focus on feeding their own communities first

### Creating a Food Policy Working Group

- Diverse group of motivated people
- Gather community information and data related to food needs and visions for Nelson
- Work with community and elected officials to craft a vision – can result in a “food policy”, “food charter” or “food vision statement”
- Evolve into a Food Policy Council that guides the community in manifesting this statement/document
- Examples: Kamloops, Vancouver, Toronto, Province of Manitoba.

And most importantly of all: IF YOU EAT, YOU ARE INVOLVED IN AGRICULTURE!



### Additional reading material provided:

- *Kootenay Organic Growers Seasonal Guide*
- *The Importance of Agriculture and Agri-Food to British Columbia*, Ministry of Agriculture Food and Fisheries, 2004
- *Agriculture in Brief – Regional District of Central Kootenay*, Ministry of Agriculture Food and Fisheries, based on 2001 Census data
- *Growing a Community Food System*, by Steven Garrett, Washington State University, and Gail Feenstra, University of California
- *Placing the food system on the urban agenda: The role of municipal institutions in food systems planning*, by Kameshwari Pothukuchi and Jerome Kaufman
- *Economic Multipliers and the New York State Economy*, by Kevin Jack, Nelson Bills, and Richard Boisvert