



## **PEI ADAPT Council Agri-Newsletter**

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### **PEI ADAPT Council Annual General Meeting: “What Does Local Really Mean?”**

Over the years the PEI AGM/Conference has grown to be one of the Island’s most anticipated agricultural events of the year; sure to present progressive ideas, leadership values and new, positive directions in response to emerging issues and opportunities for the agriculture and food sectors.

This year, the conference will prove to be more than a discussion. It will be a real opportunity to network and make the kind of connections that may transform the way many farmers market what they produce. The PEI ADAPT Council invites you to our combined annual general meeting and conference on Friday March, 16, 2006 at the Slemon Park Convention Centre, Summerside, Prince Edward Island.

This year’s theme ‘What Does Local Really Mean?’ will highlight special keynote speaker, Mark Winne, of the Community Food Security Coalition, New Mexico Governor’s Anti-Hunger Task Force, the New Mexico Food and Agriculture Policy Council, and the Southwest Grass-fed Livestock Alliance plus other invited guest speakers including:

Chantale Courcy, Director, Adaptation Division, AAFC  
Patrick O’Neill and David MacKay, Agri-food Value Chain Consultants  
Kevin Murphy, Murphy Group of Restaurants  
Laurie Jennings, Masstown Market, Nova Scotia  
Marc and Christa Schurman, Spring Valley Farm Market, PEI and  
Chris Moreland, Food and Beverage Manager, Delta Prince Edward Hotel

The format will include a formal, yet brief, early morning business meeting followed by stimulating presentations and discussions on getting down to business with local jobs, sales and economic development.

Once again, we are planning a mid day showcase which will highlight a few projects ADAPT has provided financial support to over the past year. We are also inviting farmers who sell to local/regional markets to set-up a display featuring the products coming directly from the farm. This will be an excellent opportunity to network with chefs, buyers and other local producers and to help bring forth a new vision of our agricultural future. If you would like to set-up a booth please notify us as soon as possible.

REGISTRATION IS FREE and is open to anyone with an interest in the future of the Island's agriculture and agri-food production.

To register call: (902) 368-2005 or email: [adapt@pei.aibn.com](mailto:adapt@pei.aibn.com)

### **Local Farmers and Chefs Want to Add More Local Food to Halifax Menus**

by Austen Gilliland, The Coast (February 15, 2007)

The dining room at Saege Bistro is crowded, voices rising above the sound of an indoor waterfall. Early-afternoon sun highlights a basket of artisanal bread, a plate of cheese, an arrangement of dried herbs. People are tasting food, trading business cards, listening intently.

But this isn't an ordinary lunch at Saege. In fact, it's not lunch at all. The people in the room are local farmers and local chefs.

They're here for a farmer-chef meet-and-greet, organized jointly by the Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network, the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Agrapoint, an agricultural consulting service. The networking opportunity, inspired by similar events organized by Ecotrust in Portland, Oregon, has been designed to allow farmers and chefs to put faces—and produce lists—to names, and it's part of a growing movement to foster connections between the people who grow the food, those who cook it and those who eat it.

Co-organizer Jamey Coughlin, of the NSDA, says it's about building on what farmers and chefs already have in common. "Food producers and chefs share both a love of good food and a desire to differentiate the food that they produce or serve as food that's great quality," he says. "Building good relationships between farmers and chefs gives that food a value beyond price."

Like any good relationship, the farmer-chef dynamic requires hard work and open communication. It can also take a greater effort to match supply and demand. Unlike major grocery stores or wholesale food suppliers, which can supply a wide variety of local and imported food year round, independent organic food producers can't always provide what a chef wants, when the chef wants it.

"Finding a consistent, reliable supply of produce is definitely one of the major challenges of dealing with organic farmers," says Saege chef Geir Simensen. "It's much easier to buy produce from Pete's Frootique or habit to break." Developing a close working relationship with farmers means that chefs are better able to plan menus around the seasonal availability of local produce and by planning, make the most of what's available. "I might call a lamb farmer and ask for 60 racks of lamb," he says, "and be met by silence on the other end of the line. The farmer is thinking, 'What am I going to do with the rest of the lamb?' Now, I try to work that into my order."

One such relationship Simensen has worked to develop is with Dave and Nancy Roberts of Four Seasons Farm in Maitland. The Roberts sell much of what they grow at the Halifax Farmers' Market, and also sell greens and vegetables to Saege. They speak several times a week to co-ordinate menus with crop availability. It requires a long-term commitment on both parts and a careful analysis of the financial realities, says Dave Roberts. "Chefs who are well-established need to have a good reason to replace suppliers they've been working with for a long time. As a farmer, you need to meet with them, find out what they need and show them exactly what you can give them. It's a lot of work."

Lil McPherson of the Wooden Monkey has also learned to work within the constraints of dealing with small local suppliers—she works with almost 40 local organic food producers. "If the chicken farmer's truck breaks down, then you don't serve chicken that night," she says, "but it's still worth it."

It's a workload many farmers seem interested in taking on too, especially as a means of diversifying—at the Saege event, farmers outnumber chefs roughly three to one. Many at the meet-and-greet are familiar from the Halifax Farmers' Market: Others have their own stores, or sell to local vendors.

Jeanita Rand, of Foxhill Cheese in Port Williams, sells her cheese to several local restaurants such as Saege and Fid, as well as at the Farmers' Market and at a store on the family farm. She sees lots of opportunity in an event like this. "I'm hoping to solidify and build upon the relationships I already have with chefs," she says, but she also echoes a sentiment voiced by McPherson, "Local people eating local food prepared by local chefs...it's win-win for everyone involved."

### **Global Warming is Unstoppable and Humans are to Blame, says UN Report**

The long awaited report by a United Nations group of international scientists confirms that the consequences of global warming are no longer avoidable and that human activity has been the primary cause of rapid global warming for more than half a century. This Q&A-style article answers some of the most immediate questions about the report's conclusions and what must be done--and soon--to lessen the impacts of global warming. Learn more about the link between human activity and global warming.

[http://environment.about.com/od/globalwarming/a/ipcc\\_report.htm](http://environment.about.com/od/globalwarming/a/ipcc_report.htm)

### **Global Warming Puts Organic on the Front Burner**

By Wayne Roberts (adapted from NOW Magazine, February 15-21, 2007)

Global warming deniers, their credibility shot down to the level of flat-earthers by the release of the U.N.-sponsored science report on climate change, have morphed from climate skeptics into economic skeptics, who simply oppose the big tough expensive job of Communist-style government interventions to force the economy into carbon-free ways.

The skeptics don't have a leg to stand on here either, according to recent findings on local and organic farming - one of the lead candidates for government incentive and infrastructure programs designed to stabilize the climate. Without wishing to give any readers an unfair leg up in the global competition to win Sir Richard Branson's \$25 million prize for the best gimmick for taking global warming gases out of the atmosphere, the answer's right under Sir Richard's feet - in carbon- or tilth-rich organic farming measures that store more carbon in the soil. Soil is the global warming gas

storage motherlode, a "sink" (as the wonks call it) that can hold about three times more carbon than all the world's plants and trees, as long as soil is not disturbed by heavy industry-style farm equipment and methods.

Aside from disturbing soil stability, the modern package of agribusiness and corporate-processed and transported agri-food products is a major energy pig, accounting for about a third of all global warming gases. By contrast, support for local and organic farmers can profitably take food-related global warming emissions from this sector back to 1990 levels required by the Kyoto treaty, while also yielding improved increased incomes for farmers, enhanced community vitality in rural areas, and improved health among eaters.

Looking at agricultural change through a global warming lens provides a win-win deal for everyone at lower costs than today's bail-outs and subsidies of schlock food, says Rod MacRae, leading international policy wonk in the area of organic transition policies, and author of a newly-released report that provides gruesome detail on simple measures that could give Ontario farmers a foothold in the booming billion-dollar-a-year organic market at the farmers' doorway.

MacRae's many publications (available free at the website of the Organic Agriculture College of Canada) make the case that the organic changeover is pain-free, with early incentives and supports paying for themselves through other free benefits and reduced costs over the course of 15 years. Pain-free, save for ag bureaucrats and obsolete input suppliers (fossil fuel-intensive fertilizer and pesticide producers, for example) whose ox gets gored in the changeover. There's the rub. To say something works, save for the vested interests, is a bit like saying my mom could be a car, save for the fact she doesn't have four wheels and a motor. But that's where the problem is, in outdated privileges, not in the economics, two different factors that should not be conflated as one.

As for the eco-nomics, check out a publication on organic agriculture and climate change from the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization's sustainable development department. Based on a review of 400 publications, it concludes that organic methods of diverse cropping (planting many species together so the soil is always covered), composting and crop rotation (switching fields so the soil can be restored and pests don't get to know where their grub is) - all alternatives to fossil-fuel fertilizers and pesticides -- "are protecting the fragile soil surface and may even counteract climate change by restoring the organic matter content." A hectare of well-managed organic land can store nine tonnes of carbon, almost making it eligible for payouts from emission-trading and guilt-trading (my fave flight tickets that include a cost for measures to offset fuel pollution) schemes. The FAO report notes that the Kyoto treaty specifies "protection and enhancement of sinks" in agricultural soils as worthy measures, however much neglected by energy wonks who've narrowed their attention to building and transportation changes.

With all the attention going to carbon dioxide in the standard global warming discourse, little attention is paid to on-farm emissions of methane (about 22 times more potent than carbon dioxide) and nitrous oxides (about 200 times more potent than carbon dioxide), both of which are whittled down in organic systems. A little reduction of either goes a long way, and organic delivers that by its signature composting techniques, which keep animal manure aerated during composting so it doesn't give off methane, and then apply the composted manure in the soil so it doesn't give off nitrous oxides the way chemical fertilizers do.

Environmental challenges such as global warming challenge conventional government farm-support programs, MacRae writes, because government farm-think is locked into incentives that support "niche markets," not public benefits. Public benefits don't exist in the thin air occupied by ag economists - who seem smitten with former Brit PM Margaret Thatcher's infamous comment that "there is no such thing as society," only individuals. Once the public benefit of keeping the world from suffocating in its own fossil fuel vomit is acknowledged, then organic farming deserves taxpayer support because it provides public benefits, not just because it's a market niche. Organic farmers don't get a premium at the cash register because their carrot stored more carbon in the soil or because the local carrot traveled less miles to the store. Some customers will pay more for a healthier or tastier carrot, but unless they're really putting on politically correct airs, they won't dig deep to pay for extra worms, composted manure and tilth.

This is what MacRae calls a "market failure," which the ag and food scene is laden with, thanks to the fact that so many of its unseen and untasted but fundamental inputs and outputs aren't captured in the retail sticker price. Economists call these market failures "externalities," a phrase which betrays an obsolete assumption that there's some cliff way out at the end of the flat earth where pollution can be tossed without any species ever noticing or paying the price. Europeans long ago dumped this notion, and instead provide government farm supports on the basis of what's called "agricultural multi-functionality," a fancy way of saying you get what you pay for, and if you want clean air and water and lots of tourists swooning over local strawberries, you have to pay for it through taxes.

If farmers are to be rewarded for their environmental contribution, MacRae argues, the bonus points - anti-air miles, we might call them - must come from taxpayers, who reap the rewards of a robust local farm community and an unpolluted climate-stable environment. Government money funds the incentives and supports for conventional farmers to make the organic switch, MacRae painstakingly shows, and then the government saves money on environmental cleanups and bailing out farmers.

If successful, it's not just farmers who avoid being bailed out by the government, but entire cities that could otherwise get swamped by the stormy weather coming from an overheated atmosphere.

### **People's Grocery Delivers More than Just Groceries**

(From Foodfirst.org)

The mission of People's Grocery, located in West Oakland, California, USA, is simple: "Healthy food for everyone!" The folks at People's Grocery subscribe to the belief that when food access is addressed, then other problems such as diet-related diseases and self-sufficiency are also being addressed. The number one cause of death in West Oakland is not violence, but heart disease which is attributed to almost one in three deaths.

In West Oakland's community of 40,000 residents, there are 42 liquor stores, but there is only one grocery store. Brahm Ahmadi, co-founder and executive director of People's Grocery states that they are "building an independent food system and a local economy grounded in community partnerships and a local knowledge base."

People's Grocery programs include a mobile market to distribute fresh food and produce that is purchased from local farmers markets and organic industries. The

People's Grocery educational program aims to teach adults and children in West Oakland how to eat and cook healthier, and live healthier. At the Food and Justice Camp for low-income youth, they learn about local food systems, sustainable agriculture, healthy eating, nutrition, and physical activity. Adult education includes a nutritional cooking class, a garden nutrition program, a Peer-2-Peer education program, and the Be-Heal-Thy Team.

People's Grocery currently operates five urban gardens in West and North Oakland. Their newest project is the 15-acre Agriculture Park in Sunol (Southern Alameda County). This farm provides land for People's Grocery and three other community groups who are growing food for their communities. Five young people will be hired and trained in sustainable agriculture, the food system, and healthy eating and nutrition. The food produced will be distributed to residents in West Oakland.

People's Grocery is making plans to open a grocery store in 2008. This, along with their other projects, will provide jobs, education, and healthy food to many people in the West Oakland community. To find out more about People's Grocery please visit their website at [www.peoplesgrocery.org](http://www.peoplesgrocery.org)

### **Additional \$10 million for Biofuels Opportunities for Producers Initiative (BOPI)**

The Government of Canada is committed to requiring five per cent average renewable fuel content in transportation fuels by 2010 and intends to regulate a two per cent requirement for renewable content in diesel fuel and heating oil by 2012. Environment Canada is leading the development of the strategy to reach this goal, with support from Natural Resources Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC).

AAFC wants to ensure that these targets are implemented in ways that result in the greatest possible benefit to the agriculture sector, including ownership of biofuels production facilities by agricultural producers.

On July 17, 2006, Minister Strahl announced \$10 million in funding for the Biofuels Opportunities for Producers Initiative (BOPI), which is delivered through the regional industry councils that administer AAFC's Advancing Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food (ACAAF) Program. The councils undertook this expanded role as it is consistent with their mandate to position the sector at the leading edge to seize new opportunities.

Due to the high demand of producers and industry, up to \$3 million of the additional BOPI funding will be made available immediately under ACAAFF to fund approved projects. Another \$7 million will be provided in 2007-2008 fiscal year for round two of BOPI funding.

Funding is provided for agricultural producers in the following key areas:

1. hiring technical, financial, and business planning advisors to assist in developing sound business proposals  
to support the creation and expansion of biofuels production capacity with significant ownership by agricultural producers;
2. undertaking feasibility and other studies required to support business proposals;
3. investigating the pre-commercialization of biofuels related research; and
4. gathering information to help identify opportunities and provide necessary input to generate industry involvement in biofuels capacity building.

Individual project funding will be capped at \$300,000 and at least 25 per cent of the project cost must be provided by the industry.

Opportunities for greater involvement in biofuels production facilities will allow agricultural producers to become participants in the value chain and increase their share of the benefits from renewable fuels production beyond delivering feedstock.

For more information on BOPI, the ACAAF program and the councils, please visit the web site at [http://www.agr.gc.ca/acaaf/bopi-imbp/index\\_e.php/](http://www.agr.gc.ca/acaaf/bopi-imbp/index_e.php/).

### **Atlantic Agricultural Leadership Program Fund Raising Dinner**

Class 7 of the Atlantic Agricultural Leadership Program invites you to a fund raiser dinner and auction in Sussex, N.B. On Thursday, May 3, 2007

Location: Sussex Golf and Curling Club, Picadilly, N.B.

Time: Reception: 6:30pm      Dinner: 7:00pm

Guest speaker :Jacques Laforge, President of Dairy Farmer's of Canada

Topic: Dairy Industry in the next 10 to 15 years relative to W.T.O. trends and negotiations.

Meal catered by Timberland : Prime Rib Roast beef Dinner with Yorkshire Pudding, fresh mushrooms, mashed potatoes and garden fresh vegetables

Desert: New Brunswick delight (vanilla ice cream topped with pure maple syrup, amaretto liqueur and walnuts) or chocolate mousse

Tickets: \$50/person available from Janice Tait work 506-432-1630 or home 506-432-6624 and Jennifer Vanoord 506-463-8357

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<http://www.gov.pe.ca/af/agweb/index.php3?number=69584&lang=E>

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