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A business concern in agriculture and food

Small-Scale Agri-Food

Back to the Land:

Report 2 – Producer Surveys

Community Futures Development Corporation of Thompson Country

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Important Notice

Crane Management Consultants Ltd. and Calissi Consulting, Inc. directed this project under contract to Community Futures Development Corporation of Thompson Country. Human Resources Development Canada funded the project through its Local Labour Market Partnerships Program.

This report was funded and written to produce information on small- and medium-scale agricultural issues and opportunities in the Thompson, Nicola Valley, Upper Fraser Canyon, and south Cariboo areas. The information is intended to be used in the planning processes of agricultural producers, prospective producers, Community Futures Development Corporation of Thompson Country, Community Futures Development Corporation of Sun Country, Community Futures Development Corporation of Nicola Valley, First Nations, BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries and other interested parties.

The authors, administrators and funders of this report accept no liability for any direct or indirect damage caused to any person or organization or property as a result of use of or reliance on this report and its contents. Any parties interested in pursuing or supporting or participating in any of this report's suggested proposals or ideas should undertake or fund their own research and should not rely on this report for definitive information, direction or advice.

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1 Executive Summary

This report presents the results of two surveys.

- ✓ mail survey of small- and medium-scale agricultural producers
- ✓ interviews with First Nation farmers and ranchers

It is report no. 2 of a five report series, that included the production of nine GIS maps. Community Futures Development Corporation of Thompson Country (CFDC-TC) sponsored the "Back to the Land" project and a steering committee of stakeholders guided the consultants' work. Human Resources Development Canada provided project funding.

Mail Survey

A total of 118 surveys were mailed to small- and medium-scale agricultural producers in the region; 51 surveys were returned. Of the 51 returns, six indicated that they were not farming in the region, leaving 45 completed surveys. The questionnaire covered the following topics.

Questionnaire Topics

• Persons working on agricultural operation	• Land area.
• Intent to purchase or lease additional land	• Length of ownership
• Motivations for owning agricultural land	• Products and services
• introduction of new products or services	• Intent to increase production volumes
• Intent to diversify	• Potential stumbling blocks to increased production or diversification
• Importance of marketing outlets	• Geographic share of sales
• Knowledge of and skills	• Effectiveness of approaches for improving knowledge and skills
• Intent to improve knowledge and skills	• Area(s) of desired improvement
• Awareness of government incentive or assistance programs	• Knowledge of government financial assistance and incentive programs
• Preferred ways to create awareness of new agricultural initiatives	• Demographics
• Farm income share	• Computer usage

Some of the highlights are as follows.

- ✓ Half the surveyed producers tapped into many new and interesting niches; traditional items were only cited a few times. The range of products and services suggests a high level of willingness to experiment and assume the risk of marketing a new product or service.

- ✓ A majority (59%) intends to increase production volumes of current products or services within the next two years.

- ✓ The primary stumbling blocks to increased production and diversification are financial in origin, lack of financial resources and inadequate returns. The latter is seen as the primary barrier. Government related concerns were next in importance to this group, lack of government help and over-regulation. Marketing related stumbling blocks carried some importance.

- ✓ The direct marketing channels were most important. Half of the respondents used farmers' markets and half of them sold in more than one market. Direct to small retailers ranked higher than selling to large retailers. Marketing through co-operatives, to restaurants and organic delivery suppliers ranked lower. Marketing agencies ranked the lowest reflecting the low usage of the Interior Vegetable Marketing Agency by small producers.

- ✓ The producers were asked if there are any marketing outlets that they would like to access but can not do so or are having difficulty in doing so. Surprisingly, a fairly low proportion said yes (20%).

- ✓ Producers perceive their knowledge of financial management, risk management, and production and marketing commodities to be fairly good. There is an obvious feeling that knowledge and skills in small-scale food processing and marketing processed foods are weak.

- ✓ Farmers rank interacting with extension officers and other knowledgeable people, either one on one or at field days, to be an effective method of improving knowledge and skills. Trying things out for themselves, i.e. personal trial and error, was most strongly favoured.

- ✓ The levels of awareness about government programs are low, very low in the case of the research funding and farm counseling/ debt mediation programs. Highest awareness was registered for Buy BC, which respondents probably became aware of through shopping in their own food stores.

First Nation Interviews

The following are some of the main themes that emerged from the interviews with First Nation producers and those who are working on First Nation agricultural matters.

- Thin and distant profits make entry for young people unappealing.
- New entries to agriculture, generally, are from people with families in the industry.
- Most reserve lands in the area have marginal (class III & IV) production capabilities – mostly suited for grazing and some forage production. (There are good weather conditions, and some good bottom land, however)
- New entries are deterred from entering the industry because of long hours of work required for production.
- Capital for land, equipment, and livestock production is difficult to obtain for enterprises located on-reserve because of personal property protection for Status Indians. (Credit can be established with a good track record and/or backing from outside sources. As a result, collateral is not always considered at value by financial institutions if located on reserve lands.)
- The need for "hands-on" practical experience / training is crucial.
- Ready markets are available for livestock, but must be developed for most other products.
- Government and Band regulations on-reserve may present problems, but not to the degree of off-reserve producers.
- Reserve lands are limited for expansion and water development is needed in some areas.
- Grazing rights and wider use of Crown lands will need to be included in treaty negotiations.
- Financing rates from aboriginal lending institutions are higher than for commercial banks, and the First Nation institutions often require more security.
- There may be some opportunities in specialized products, which are suited to small holdings.
- The need for business training is crucial.

2 Introduction

This report presents the results of two surveys.

- ✓ mail survey of small- and medium-scale agricultural producers
- ✓ interviews with First Nation farmers and ranchers

The surveys were undertaken as part of a project on small-scale agriculture, which is spearheaded by Community Futures Development Corporation of Thompson Country (CFDC-TC).

This organization has a mandate to facilitate the development of new, small businesses and support the growth of existing, small businesses in its BC Southern Interior service area. Agri-food businesses have comprised a small portion of its lending and other activities. It secured funding from Human Resources Development Canada to identify and promote agricultural opportunities for small agri-food operations in the Thompson-Nicola Regional District and part of the Squamish-Lillooet and Cariboo Regional Districts.

CFDC-TC hosted a meeting in September 1999 to explore new opportunities for further development of agriculture in its service area. Many interested organizations had representatives in attendance: provincial and federal agriculture ministries, transportation concerns, agri-tourism businesses, market gardeners, organic and non-organic produce farmers, ranchers, retailers, First Nations, Interior Science and Innovation Council, University College of the Cariboo Horticulture Program, and economic development agencies. The participants developed the idea of staging a regional forum for presenting information about opportunities, various marketing strategies and available resources for smaller agri-businesses.

Coming out of this meeting, a large ad hoc committee of stakeholders was formed. The committee identified a need for a coordinated review to assess the current state of micro agri-business in the area. It decided that a feasibility study would assist in the development of a strategy for supporting entrepreneurs who pursue small-scale agriculture business ventures. A number of priority areas were identified, such as value-added products, agri-tourism, identifying marketing mechanisms to access new and existing markets, and assessing the current flow of information and support (training and financing).

CFDC-TC has designed a three phase project. This assignment is the first phase, a study that identifies and analyzes agriculture opportunities and the means to support the development of these opportunities. The second and third phases will provide for dissemination of information from Phase 1 and implementation of some support mechanisms for further development of the region's small agri-food businesses.

2.1 Purpose

The purposes of this project are to:

- Explore the history of small acreage agriculture in the area and provide an overview of the changes that have occurred over time and the impact of these changes on the area.
- Review recent literature to identify new and existing agriculture related business opportunities that may be viable on land from one to one hundred acres within the area. Make recommendations for new and alternative opportunities.
- Assess land availability, soil quality, water sources, and climatic conditions used to grow or to process agricultural products within the area. Make recommendations for new and alternative opportunities.
- Assess/identify current marketing strategies that are successfully used by small acreage producers,

processors and agri-tourism operators. Provide suggestions for future marketing strategies.
- Assess current financial and management skills of the operators of existing and future agriculture businesses. Make recommendations for new and alternative financial and management training opportunities.
- Identify sources of financing to assist individuals to establish new or expand existing operations. Make recommendations for new and alternative financing options.
- Review and describe existing information resources for agriculture business. Identify areas that are lacking within this information system. Investigate the viability of an information network that would be primarily used to link area producers, processors, buyers and the public. Provide recommendations to improve the access to existing information.

2.2 Study Area

The study area generally includes the Regional District of Thompson-Nicola as well as a small portion of Squamish-Lillooet Regional District in the Lillooet area and the southernmost portion of the Cariboo Regional District. More specifically the study is confined to valley and plateau areas where the favourable climate provides the most opportunities for the production of a wide range of agricultural commodities.

It includes the following areas:

- Fraser River valley from the vicinity of Pavilion downstream to Lytton;
- Thompson River valley from Clearwater southward to Kamloops and onward to Lytton including the tributary Bonaparte and Nicola River valleys and Deadman Creek valley;
- South Thompson River valley eastward from Kamloops to Chase;
- that part of the Salmon River valley in the vicinity of Westwold;
- and the lower plateau areas in the vicinity of Merritt and south of Kamloops.

Nine GIS maps that show detailed agricultural capability for the study area were also produced for the project.

2.3 Farm Size

There is no widely-accepted definition for small-scale farming. Statistics Canada, in its publication entitled “Canadian Agriculture at a Glance”, defined them as having product sales of $40,000 or less before expenses are deducted. Under this definition half of all Canadian farms are small farms. Almost 80% of BC farms (and in the study area) in the 1996 Census of Agriculture had incomes of less than $40,000. Only a quarter of these BC small farms reported a positive net income. However, the number of BC small farms increased by 14% between the 1991 and 1996 Census years, bucking an overall national decline of 5.6% in farm numbers.

The US authorities set a higher bar for defining a small farm, gross income of $250,000 (US) or less.

Size of farm is another way of classifying farm size but a small grain farm will have many more hectares than a large vegetable or tree fruit operation.

The number of in the study area of less than 10 acres increased by 29% between the two most recent Census years (1996 and 1991). Thirteen percent of farms were ten acres or less in the 1996 Census.

This project’s steering committee chose not to construct an arbitrary definition because, in practise, farmers define themselves. Livestock production was not included in the project because it has been the subject of previous reports and is dominated by ranchers who view themselves as having large or at least medium-scale ranches or farms.

2.4 Project Process

This project has been directed by CFDC-TC and a steering committee that includes agricultural producers and representatives from BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, BC Ministry of Community Development and Cooperatives, CFDC of Sun Country, CFDC of Nicola Valley, First Nation Agricultural Lending Association and Interior Science and Innovation Council.

The consulting team was led by Calissi/Crane, a joint venture of Crane Management Consultants Ltd. and Calissi Consulting, Inc. Kelowna-based Herb Luttmerding and John Vielvoye worked on resource capability issues. Victoria-based Sa Su Services compiled the GIS maps. Gerry Hutchison of Kamloops and Pritchard consulted with members of First Nations. Jodi Houghton of Chase researched and drafted several profiles. Glen Lucas of Kelowna interviewed persons in the retail, wholesale and HRI segments. Jill Brown-John or Horsefly and Kamloops prepared a piece on delivery of organic foods.

The consultants completed the following tasks.

- compilation of BCMAF and Statistics Canada data;
- agricultural resource capability analysis;
- GIS analysis and mapping;
- mail survey of small and medium-scale agricultural producers;
- interviews with members of First nations who are involved with agriculture;
- phone interviews with agricultural extension officers, farmers, food makers, retailers, wholesalers, and institutional food buyers in and outside the study area;
- identification and review of print and internet sources of information.

2.5 Project Reports

Five reports and nine GIS maps were prepared.

Report 1 - Resource Opportunities: study area agricultural statistics; resource capability for agricultural production; and agricultural production possibilities for small- and medium-scale producers in the study area.

Report 2 - Survey Results: presentation of results from a mail survey of small-scale agricultural producers and interviews with First Nations agriculturalists.

Report 3 – Marketing: local market; agri-food products; post-harvest management; marketing channels; collaboration; and branding.

Report 4 – Development Strategies: Organizational development, communications, marketing, and financial strategies for furthering the growth of small-scale agriculture in the study area.

Report 5 – Appendices: information sources and financial programs

The GIS maps use the Canada Land Inventory system for identifying areas of better agricultural potential.

Several profiles of interesting agri-food producers from around BC are included in Report 3. Their business approaches and efforts illustrate the potential for smaller-scale agri-food production and some key operational points.

3 Survey of Producers

3.1 Introduction

A total of 118 surveys were mailed to small- and medium-scale agricultural producers in the region, 51 surveys were returned. Of the 51 returned, six indicated that they were not farming in the region, leaving 45 completed surveys. The mail survey questionnaire is presented in Appendix 1.

There are no comprehensive lists of small- and medium-scale producers in the province. A survey sample population had to be assembled from a few sources for this project. The selection of producers was taken from existing lists of association members and not from a random selection of farmers in the region. Readers should note that this survey is not based on a random sample.

3.2 Land

The farms sizes are small, a third less than five acres and one-half are 15 acres are less. The distribution of farm size for the surveyed group is as follows.

Farm/Ranch Size

Total Owned Acres	%age Distribution
City lot	2%
Less than 5	29
5 to 10	13
11 to 15	7
15 to 20	4
21 to 30	0
31 to 35	7
36 to 50	2
51 to 70	2
71 to 75	2
76 to 100	4
101 to 150	7
151 to 175	9
171 to 300	2
300 to 450	2
450 to 500	4
500+	2

A low percentage (18%) of the surveyed producers had plans to acquire additional agricultural land.

A large majority of the surveyed producers had owned their land for six or more years, indicating few new entrants but substantial agricultural experience, as shown in the next table.

Duration of Farm/Ranch Ownership[1]

Years operating	%age Distribution
Less than one year	5%
1-5 years	19
6 to 10 years	23
11-25 years	42
More than 25 years	12

A large majority (87%) acquired their property from non-family members. Only six out of the 45 respondents obtained their property from either a parent, grandparent or other family member.

The following table presents the results of a question that asked respondents about motivations for owning their property. They were asked to rate a selection of motivations on a scale running from 'no importance' to 'high importance'. They could cite more than one reason.

Motivation for Owning Farm/Ranch (%age distribution)

Ownership motivations	No Importance	Little Importance	Average Importance	Above Average Importance	High Importance
Permanent residence	0%	0%	7%	19%	74%
Agricultural production	5	2	19	23	53
Cottage, summer home	92	8	0	0	0
Tourism business	42	16	26	10	5
Real estate investment	19	17	29	17	19
Conserve green space	15	15	15	29	27
Personal land ownership	5	12	10	37	37
Inheritance for children	22	29	20	17	12

The data suggests that next to personal residence, living on the farm to engage in agricultural production ranks highest, along with conserving green space and personal land ownership. Of little importance is owning the property as a summer home, or running a tourism business.

The surveyed group is dominated by one and two person operations. The distribution of the number of regular workers on the surveyed agricultural operations is as follows.

Farm/Ranch Employment

Number of People	%age Distribution
1	18%
2	45
3	8
4	13
5	10
6	2
10	2
15	2

[1] The percentage distributions were rounded to the nearest single digit so there are a few rounding errors where the total for a distribution will be 101%.

3.3 Products and Services

The surveyed producers were asked to list and rank their top products and services. The items ranked from first to sixth are shown in the next table along with the number of times that each was cited Organically grown or raised items are noted by an “o” in brackets beside the product.

Farm/Ranch Products and Services (ranked by importance)

Ranked first	Men-tions	Ranked second	Men-tions	Ranked third	Men-tions	Ranked fourth	Men-tions	Ranked fifth	Men-tions	Ranked sixth	Men-tions
Apples	2	Alfalfa	1	Carrots (o)	2	Apples	1	Antipasto	1	Apples	1
Bedding plants	2	Basil (o)	1	Cherry	1	Bedding plants	1	Blueberries	1	Breeding stock	1
Bedding plants (o)	1	Brassica (o)	1	Christmas trees	1	Bedding plants (o)	2	Butcher lambs	1	Eggs	1
Beef	3	Buckwheat (o)	1	Cut flowers (o)	1	Beef (o)	1	Dried herbs (o)	1	Herb oils/vinegars	1
Beef (o)	1	Cherries	1	Flower drying & arranging	1	Beets & carrots (o)	1	Dried tomatoes	1	Long English cucumbers	1
Bread-making	1	Dried flowers	1	Garden produce (o)	1	Corn	1	Eating corn	1	Lettuce (o)	1
Cattle	1	Echinacea tinctures (o)	1	Ginseng	1	Green beans	1	Goats	1	Peaches	1
Chickens	1	Garlic (o)	1	Gladioli	1	Hay	1	Lambs - freezer meat	1	Strawberries (o)	1
Echinacea (o)	3	Ginseng	1	Grazing	1	Jams/jellies/pickles	1	Raspberries (o)	1		
Echinacea Purpurea (o) Flowers	1	Hanging baskets/perennials	1	Greenhouse crops (tomato, peppers, cucumbers)	1	Lambs – live	1	Spinach (o)	1		
Eggs	1	Hay	1	Hay	1	Leather mitts & moccasins	1	Stone fruit	1		
Emus	1	Hay production	1	Highland cattle meat (o)	1	Medicinal herb	1				
Flowers	1	Herbs (o)	1	Hothouse tomatoes	1	Raspberries (o)	1				
Flowers, herbs, weeds	1	Honey	1	Lamb meat (o)	1	Salsa	1				
Garden center (o)	1	Horse boarding	1	Market garden (o)	1	Tibetan yak meat (o)	1				
Garlic (o)	1	Lamb	1	Medicinal herbs (o)	1	Verma compost	1				
Ginseng	3	Meat birds	1	Medicinals (o)	1						
Grape vines	1	Medicinal herbs (o)	1	Plums	1						
Greenhouse	1	Milk cow	1	Pork	1						
Hay (o)	2	Mixed vegetables (o)	1	Potatoes	1						
Hogs (o)	1	Ornamentals (o)	1	Potatoes (o)	1						
Honey bee products	1	Outside veg crops mixed	1	Qtr horses	1						
Hort products	1	Pickling won produce	1	Squash (o)	1						
Lamb (o)	1	Rasp u-pick (o)	1	Squash (o), Indian corn (o)	1						
Ranked first	Men-tions	Ranked second	Men-tions	Ranked third	Men-tions	Ranked fourth	Men-tions	Ranked fifth	Men-tions	Ranked sixth	Men-tions
Produce	1	Raspberry	1	Strawberries	1						

				(o)							
Produce (o)	1	Reindeer	1	(Blank)							
Salad greens (o)	1	Salad crops (o)	1								
Seedling for hemp	1	Saskatoons	1								
Sheep milk cheese	1	Sea buckthorn	1								
Spelt (o)	1	Seasonal grazing for four cows	1								
Strawberries (o)	1	Sheep	1								
Strawberries	1	Sheep	1								
Strawberries/ raspberries/ blackberries	1	Sheep milk yogurt	1								
U-pick pumpkins (o)	1	Tomatoes (o)	1								
Vegetables	1	Vegetables (o)	2								
Vegetables (o)	1	(Blank)									
Total	45		36		26		17		11		8

A slight majority (51%) introduced new products in the past five years. The respondents that introduced new products and services were asked to list them in rank order. The results are presented in the table below. Organic items are marked by "o" in brackets.

New Products and Services (ranked by importance)

Ranked first	Men-tions	Ranked second	Men-tions	Ranked third	Men-tions
Antipasto	1	Beeswax/propolis for cosmetics	1	Beef (o)	1
Bread-making	1	Buckwheat (o)	1	Grain	1
Christmas tree sales	1	Farm tours	1	Home grown dried floral arrangements	1
CSA (o)	1	Herb oils	1	Licorice (o)	1
CSA = vegetable box program	1	Indian ornamental corn	1	Medicinal herbs (o)	1
Door to door delivery of vegetables (o)	1	Medicinal herb sales	1	Salad turnips (o)	1
Dried flowers	1	Ornamentals (o)	1	Some new vegetables	1
Emu oil	1	Retail outlet for bedding plants	1	Tomato hanging baskets	1
Farm shop	1	Rhubarb	1	U-pick	1
Gift items based on floral themes	1	Sleigh rides	1		1
Industrial hemp for fibre	1	Strawberry jam (o)	1		1
Lavender (o), golden seal (o)	1	Tomatoes	2		2
Medicinal herbs (o)	1	Velvet antler capsules & sliced	1		1
Propolis natural antibiotic	1				
Salad mixes (o)	1				
Ranked first	**Men-tions**	**Ranked second**	**Men-tions**	**Ranked third**	**Men-tions**

Spelt (o)	1		
Tomatoes	1		
Various sheep milk cheeses	1		
Verma compost	1		
Washed salad greens	1		
Total mentions	21	14	9

The above table demonstrates that half the surveyed producers tapped into many new and interesting niches; traditional items were only cited a few times. The range of products and services suggests a high level of willingness to experiment and assume the risk of marketing a new product or service.

A majority (59%) intends to increase production volumes of current products or services within the next two years.

The following table shows that a majority plans to diversify (e.g. new crops, on-farm processing, etc) their agricultural operations within the next two years. As would be expected, there is a strong correlation between those who plan expansion and and those who plan to diversify.

Diversification Intentions

Diversify	%age Distribution
Yes	53%
No	44
Maybe	3

The producers who plan to diversify are looking at the full range of options. The following table shows the distribution of planned diversification between broad categories.

Planned Areas of Diversification

Categories of diversification	%age Distribution
New crops/livestock	46%
Processed food	31
Agritourism	23

3.4 Barriers

The surveyed producers were asked to rate the importance of a list of potential stumbling blocks to increased production or diversification for their agricultural operations. The results are shown in the following table.

Barriers to Increased Production or Diversification (%age distribution)

Barriers	No Importance	Little Importance	Average Importance	Above Average Importance	High Importance
Financial returns inadequate	5%	5%	20%	20%	51%
Lack of production skills	25	38	10	25	2
Lack of food processing skills	32	25	12	22	8
Lack financial resources	10	12	22	18	38
Lack of market skills	18	26	21	21	15
Difficulty cracking markets	15	31	18	21	15
Local market too small	20	20	29	15	17
Big city market too far away	20	25	15	18	22
Lack of government help	22	18	18	12	30
Over-regulation	10	25	28	12	25
Don't have the time	20	12	22	32	12
Anticipate change in land use and ownership	64	15	8	5	8
Other[2]					

The primary stumbling blocks were financial in origin, lack of financial resources and inadequate returns. The latter is seen as the primary barrier. Government related concerns were next in importance to this group, lack of government help and over-regulation. Marketing related stumbling blocks carried some importance. Most growers do not think there will be a change in land ownership hindering their expansion and diversification plans.

[2] Each of the following were cited by one person: age, customer awareness, insufficient farm managers, lack of good help, neighbors, soil conditions, temporary problem with mite infestations, and very labor intensive and need help.

3.5 Marketing Channels

The surveyed producers were asked to rate the importance of marketing outlets for their operations. The results are shown in the following table.

Importance of Various Marketing Channels (%age distribution)

Marketing channel	No Importance	Little Importance	Average Importance	Above Average Importance	High Importance
On farm/ roadside stand	14%	14%	16%	20%	36%
U-Pick	56	21	10	5	8
Farmers markets	28	2	9	9	51
CSA plan	63	11	5	3	18
Direct to Wholesalers	22	27	20	12	20
Direct to other roadside stands	45	22	18	10	5
Direct to large retailer	34	37	17	3	9
Direct to small retailer	24	10	37	15	15
Direct to cooperative	46	18	18	8	10
Direct to organic delivery supplier	49	15	13	5	18
Direct to restaurants	53	8	26	5	8
Mail order or catalogue sales	70	15	2	8	5
Direct to marketing agency	77	13	8	0	2
Internet	59	15	15	5	8
Other[3]					

The direct marketing channels were cited most often. Half of the respondents used farmers markets and half of them sold in more than one market.

Direct to small retailers ranked higher than selling to large retailers. Marketing through co-operatives, to restaurants and organic delivery suppliers ranked lower. Marketing agencies ranked the lowest reflecting the low usage of the Interior Vegetable Marketing Agency by small producers.

The producers were asked if there are any marketing outlets that they would like to access but can not do so or are having difficulty in doing so. Surprisingly, a fairly low proportion said yes (20%). It appears that growers are not aware of new marketing channel possibilities or else they are satisfied with their existing channels.

The following table shows percentage of sales by location. All sell locally and 60% sell in the region, too. Almost half sell 75 to 100% at the local level. Few sell outside of the province.

Location of Sales

Percent of Sales	Location of sales: Local	Regional	B.C.	Canada	USA	Foreign
1-10%	15%	18%	18%	15%	2%	2%
11-25%	10	20	12	2	0	2
26-50%	12	15	5	0	0	2
51-75%	15	2	5	0	0	0
Percent of Sales	**Locati on of sales**					

[3] Each of the following were cited by one person: direct to manufacturer, direct to processor, friends, family, direct to customers in the Lower Mainland, local personal delivery, tourism events and Valley Auctions.

	Local	Regional	B.C.	Canada	USA	Foreign
76-100%	48	5	0	0	0	5
Some	100	60	40	17	2	12

3.6 Knowledge and Skills

Surveyed producers were asked to rate their knowledge of and skills in agricultural operations. The results are presented in the following table.

Self-Perception About Knowledge/Skill Areas (%age distribution)

Knowledge/skill area	Limited	Adequate	Good	Extensive
Financial management	14%	30%	43%	14%
Risk management	18	20	43	18
Commodity production	16	5	63	16
Marketing agricultural commodities	14	32	39	16
Small-scale food processing	59	15	22	5
Marketing processed food products	66	22	12	0

Producers perceive their knowledge of financial management, risk management, and production and marketing commodities to be fairly good. There is an obvious feeling that knowledge and skills in small-scale food processing and marketing processed foods are weak.

The survey instrument included a question for respondents to indicate their perceptions about the effectiveness of various methods for improving their agricultural knowledge and skills.

Effectiveness of Methods for Improving Knowledge and Skills (%age distribution)

Method of improving knowledge/ skills	No effective-ness	Little effective-ness	Average effective-ness	Above average effective-ness	High effective-ness
Conversation with extension agent	7%	20%	17%	41%	15%
Extension reports	15	20	39	15	7
Personal, trial and error	0	0	14	30	57
Short courses	5	15	33	38	8
Professional management plan	30	22	3	11	11
Reading a how-to book	5	17	38	29	12
Agricultural newsletters	7	29	38	21	5
Field trips	5	7	32	29	27
Internet web site	22	22	37	15	5
Internet online course	31	31	29	10	5
Informal study	2	2	32	44	20
Informal conversations	0	0	19	45	36

Farmers rank interacting with extension officers and other knowledgeable people, either one on one or at field days, to be an effective method of improving knowledge and skills. Trying things out for themselves, i.e. personal trial and error, was most strongly favoured. Reading and informal study also ranked high. Ranking low are professionally prepared business plans, on-line courses and internet web sites.

A specific comment about imparting knowledge about organic production was as follows. *"Reading and talking to other organic farmers has been our greatest resource. Gov't agencies have little info on organic vegetable production nor do they understand the more holistic approach of organic farming."*

The majority of respondents indicated an intent to improve their knowledge and skills through formal means within the next two years. The distribution of responses follows.

Intent to Improve Knowledge and Skills

Expect to increase knowledge	%age Distribution
Maybe	43%
Yes	34
No	23

All the persons who indicated that they were not going to improve knowledge and skills through formal channels expressed satisfaction with them as one reason. They also cited other reasons. The distribution of responses from those who indicated they were not going to pursue formal channels is shown in the next table.

Reasons for Not Improving Knowledge and Skills

Reason	%age mentioned
Am satisfied with my current agricultural skills	100%
Don't have the financial resources to acquire more skills	80
Don't have the time to acquire more skills	50
Will acquire more skills on an informal basis	90
Other - no financial reward	10

The questionnaire included a question that asked respondents to check off the area(s) in which they would like to improve their agricultural skills and/or knowledge. They marked only the operational areas of relevance to them.

Desired Knowledge/skill Area for Improvement

Knowledge/skill area	%age mentioned
Planning/budgeting/cash flow analysis	32%
Risk management	30
Growing crops or raising animals	52
Marketing processed food products	30
Marketing crops and livestock	39
Insect and disease control	52
Small-scale food processing	41
Agri-tourism	32

In addition to the items in the table, each of the following were mentioned once: soil management, human resource management, community eduacation around organic, and Industrial hemp.

The above table shows an interesting result because it runs counter to the producers' stated feelings about shortcomings. Most desired are productionoriented courses, an area where respondents indicated that they see themselves as having good knowledge and skill levels. Less interest is shown in courses on marketing processed items, small-scale food processing and agri-tourism. This same group indicated in an earlier question that they perceived shortcomings in their knowledge and skills in marketing processed food items.

3.7 Government Programs

The producers were asked about their awareness of certain government programs. There is another interesting result because the highest awareness is for Buy BC, which they probably became aware of through shopping in their own food stores. The levels of awareness about the other programs are low, very low in the case of the research funding and farm counseling/ debt mediation programs. The following table gives the percentage of respondents that indicated an awareness for each of several programs.

Awareness of Government Programs

Government programs	%age mentioned
NISA	32%
BC Crop Insurance	39
Buy BC	66
IRAP	4
Whole Farm Insurance	30
Farm Debt Counseling/Mediation	9
Investment Agriculture	7
Technology BC	9

When asked to rate their knowledge of knowledge of government financial assistance and incentive programs, respondents saw themselves as having low levels. The percentage distribution for the sample was as follows.

Self-Perception about Level of Knowledge of Government Programs

Knowledge of government programs	%age Distribution
High	2%
Little	69
Somewhat	29

An interesting comment about government programs was offered in a returned questionnaire.

"Programs and information and procedures change so often it is hard to connect with the right programs or people sometimes. Because we are in a fairly "new" crop the gov't hasn't even been able to keep with what is happening on a monthly basis."

To try to understand how small- and medium-scale producers would prefer to be informed about new agricultural initiatives (government or otherwise) they were asked to rate several choices on a five point scale. The rating results are shown in the next table.

Ranking of Communication Methods

Method to inform about new agricultural incentives	No. of 1st rankings	No. of 2nd rankings	Total number of points[4]
Media story or ad	8	2	66
Pick up information at a government office	0	0	12
Trade show	2	6	56
Community meeting	2	4	33
Newsletter	2	10	65
Receive information in the mail	18	5	131
Internet web site	0	2	26
Conversation with agricultural extension agent	3	2	50
Conversation with family member/friend/neighbour	1	2	34

This question elicited a sharp preference for receing information through the mails. Far back in preference were newsletters, trade shows and conversations with extension agents. Unfortunately, the most efficient and comprehensive medium for delivering information, the Internet, is not popular with small-and medium-scale producers.

A majority of the respondents belong to an agricultural association, 64%. Only two persons cited membership in more than three associations. There is neither a direct marketing association nor a multi-commodity agricultural institute or association in the region.

3.8 Demographics and Income

The majority of the sample was older than 50. The age distribution of the sample is shown in the next table.

Age

Age Bracket	%age Distribution
20 to 30	2%
31 to 40	11
41 to 50	29
51 to 60	42
60+	16

There was a large number of primary occupations given by the respondents, 26 in total; farmer was the only one cited more than once or twice. Thirty-nine percent of respondents gave farming as their main occupation.

Results from the sample indicate that small-and medium-scale producers in the region are a fairly well-educated group. Over half had at least some college or unviersity education. There is an expectation with a mail survey that the better educated are more likley to respond. The distribution by highest education level achieved is shown below.

4 A 1st received 5 points, a 2nd received 4 points, etc. The ratings points were summed for each method to arrive at a point total.

Highest Education Level

Education	%age Distribution
Some high school	9%
High school	18
Trade certificate or diploma	7
Technical	13
Some college or university	18
Bachelor	24
Post grad agricultural leadership studies	2
Masters or PhD	9

Over half of the the surveyed producers allocated half or more of their working hours to their agricultural operations. This result is expected because of the high proportion that identified farming as their main occupation.

Time Devoted to Agriculture

Percent of time spent farming	%age Distribution
0%	2%
1 to 10%	2
11 to 25%	20
26 to 50%	10
51 to 75%	25
76 to 100%	41

A good portion of household income is earned from farming, but the time spent farming is not well correlated to earnings. This could partly be due to low farm revenues or high off farm revenues. The distribution by percentage of income attributable to agriculture for the sample is shown in the following table.

Share of Income from Agriculture

Percent of income from agriculture	%age Distribution
0	11%
1 to 10	18
11 to 25	18
26 to 50	14
51 to 75	7
76 to 100	32

3.9 Computer Usage

A majority of the respondents own a computer, 70% and three-quarters of the computer owners use e-mail. The following table indicates that these computer-owning agriculturalists also access the Worldwide Web for information or other purposes at least a few times per month.

Worldwide Web Usage

Web site visits	%age Distribution
Few times per month	46%
Few times per week	35
Not at all	4
Several times per week	15

4 First Nations Survey Results

4.1 Introduction

A snapshot of small-scale agriculture within First Nations from the study area was developed in a different fashion than was done with non-First Nation, small-scale agriculturalists. A Kamloops-based consultant having extensive work experience with First Nation organizations, ***Gerry Hutchison***, interviewed several First Nation agriculturalists and prepared short items on their impressions about opportunities and challenges for themselves and fellow First Nation farmers and ranchers. As well, he interviewed persons who are knowledgeable about agricultural activity by First Nation members in the study area. Mr Hutchison's research and findings are presented in Sections 4.2 through 4.6.

4.2 Common Themes

The following are the common themes that arose out of the interviews:

- Thin and distant profits make entry for young people unappealing.
- New entries to agriculture, generally, are from people with families in the industry.
- Most reserve lands in the area have marginal (class III & IV) production capabilities – mostly suited for grazing and some forage production. (There are good weather conditions, and some good bottom land, however)
- New entries are deterred from entering the industry because of long hours of work required for production.
- Capital for land, equipment, and livestock production is difficult to obtain for enterprises located on-reserve because of personal property protection for Status Indians. (Credit can be established with a good track record and/or backing from outside sources. As a result, collateral is not always considered at value by financial institutions if located on reserve lands.)
- The need for "hands-on" practical experience / training is crucial.
- Ready markets are available for livestock, but must be developed for most other products.
- Government and Band regulations on-reserve may present problems, but not to the degree of off-reserve producers.
- Reserve lands are limited for expansion and water development is needed in some areas.
- Grazing rights and wider use of Crown lands will need to be included in treaty negotiations.
- Financing rates from aboriginal lending institutions are higher than for commercial banks, and the First Nations institutions often require more security.
- There may be some opportunities in specialized products, which are suited to small holdings.
- The need for business training is crucial.

4.3 Case Interviews with Producers

Fred Fortier (Horticulturist)

Fred has a small acreage at the North Thompson Indian Reserve (NTIB). He has assisted in the establishment of the NTIB community garden. He also has been affiliated with the Western Indian Agricultural Corporation (now called First Nations Lending Association). He has some tomato crops at the Cook's Ferry Reserve in Spences Bridge and has been an organic grower for over 10 years.

He suggests that micro-agriculture with holistic use and diversification can be a successful way to engage in food production. Large amounts of capital may not be necessary, but examples such as good greenhouse management, the ability to use waste materials as compost and fuel, as well as value-added products are essential to having a year round income.

Skills required are varied, but most start with business planning and good ability to market. Marketing training and experience can develop a good mind-set. He reiterates that there must be some short-term financial gain to allow people entering agriculture to gain confidence. Following are some of the opportunities that Fred offers up from his experience:

- Willow and other plant tree stock (whips) for bank stabilization for fish habitat reclamation. Presently stock is brought in from the Okanagan.
- Cray fish – some of the ponds and old mine sites may be used for Cray Fish and other fish. By being self-contained, disease is prevented. He indicates there is a market and similar operations on Vancouver Island.
- Some areas for grapes and wines might be viable in the Spences Bridge / Savona / Cache Creek areas.
- The garlic market may still be viable, but competitive.
- Portable processors for slaughtering of poultry, fish, and other small animals can be a seasonal option to augment summer farming.
- Tours of organic gardens and workshops in organic methods (on-site practical experience).
- Mushroom growing might be viable in some of the wetter regions of the Shuswap Nation.
- Use of Fir and Spruce mill bark and sawdust can be sold if packaged and is often free or low cost from First Nations sawmill projects.
- Developing organic materials for bug control (supplier) using some traditional plants may be viable.

He reinforces that a holistic approach can improve micro-agriculture profit. Diversification is a must.

Joe Jules (Horticulturist)

Joe Jules is a member of the Kamloops First Nation, and has grown crops since the 1960's. He has a 49.8 acre piece of land, of which 25 is in hay; the remainder is fallow or in truck crops. He has two greenhouses. Recently, he scaled down his operation to several acres and uses the greenhouses to sell bedding plants. He grows potatoes, peppers, tomatoes, and cucumbers. His land is silt river bottom and he has good irrigation from a community irrigation system that feeds from the North Thompson. He employs one other person from time to time.

Joe finds no regulatory problems on the reserve, but has some concerns about future taxation. He is well established and has little need for financing, but his observation is that the cost of money is too high with Aboriginal financial institutions and he is better off financing equipment though an equipment supplier.

Local stores, markets, and retail outlets, as well as off-farm sales have always met his production. He does not view selling to wholesalers as profitable.

Some young people, in his view, are eager to get into agriculture, (as more of a way of life) but the requirements of capital (borrowing power), adequate experience and lack of training, and 14-hour days discourage many. Motivation and immediate profit are also barriers.

Training needs identified by Joe are the following.

- Practical experience (especially machinery operations / purchasing, and maintenance).
- Financing knowledge and bookkeeping.
- Proper planning of crops, field layout and irrigation programs. (Computer skills can be useful.)
- Short cuts and cost-savers, e.g, proper use of cost-saving labour.

One of the barriers for Interior reserves is good soil from Joe's perspective. Large horticultural programs are difficult to establish because of soil types in some areas.

Joe comments that every year, he learns something new that cuts costs. "You can't be too set in your ways; you're never too old to learn", he says.

Ron Matthew (Hay Grower)

Ron Matthew is a First Nation rancher who lives on the North Thompson Indian Reserve near Barriere. Ron is a graduate of Northern Lights Agricultural College. He has 600 acres of land available to him, of which 120 is in hay crops. He and his family operate an organic operation, which will be expanded to 200 acres of forage by 2002. At that point, they will have reached the point of critical mass to employ one full-time person. The land held by Ron and his family has been in the family for generations.

Ron has had extensive experience with various types of beef cattle, and has not found them profitable. He is, however, experimenting with a few Longhorn cattle at present, and thinks it may be a more lucrative market. His market, at this point, is local beef eaters and rodeo stock. The product is a lean meat variety and the Longhorns are efficient browsers, eating bushes, as well as grass, making better use of some of his land, which has marginal production potential. He plans to expand his herd, but first must develop the market. Ron has established local hay markets.

Ron sees barriers to First Nation people starting out in the business as the following.

- Land purchase (not a lot of land is available for purchase on reserves).
- Costs for off-reserve land are too high.
- Forage operations are marginal because of heavy capitalization for equipment and operations.
- Hay prices have not moved upward in 15-20 years, yet costs have increased.
- Borrowing power is difficult for young people to acquire, as they have no track record (First Nation financial institutions have a higher interest rate on loans.)
- Motivation by younger people is low (long hours, not a lot of money, and have to have an outside job).
- If a young person has grown up in the business, s/he may be more inclined to carry on.
- Training, especially in farm safety and machinery operation, is extremely important, as it may save a life and will help reduce costs.
- Experience (practical) is essential, but young people should have a good knowledge of finance matters.

For the future, Ron sees that expanding grazing and farmlands must be a part of any treaty process. He also sees a future in specialized crops for ethnic markets.

Clyde Sam (Rancher)

Clyde Sam is a member of the Lower Nicola First Nation and lives and operates on reserve lands. He has a degree in business administration. Clyde has a cow-calf operation of 85 head. The land for the operation has been in his family for several generations. Although much of his acreage is pasture and hay land, he has adequate access to range between his ranchlands and the band grazing permit on BC Crown Lands. He reports that a lot of the quality of his ranch land is poor, as it is largely marshland.

Clyde also reports that his operation is not large enough to support him, so he has to find outside employment from time to time. Regulation of reserve lands present no barriers to expanding his herd. Markets are not a problem as he sells through Kamloops and Vernon auctions. He provides his own transportation.

He says that the main areas of blockage for the development of a similar operation are available land, business training and skills, practical skills (experience), impatience to get rich quickly, and to some degree, financing. While financial assistance to Native people through Aboriginal lending institutions exist, these are short-term as interest rates are high and a one-time forgivable loan is limited to 50% of up to $75,000.

Clyde says, “I love the lifestyle”, that is his main motivation. He says, “hands-on experience is essential”.

Archie Denault (Rancher)

Archie Denault is a member of the Skeetchestn First Nation. He has a diploma in agriculture, and has a successful business and is a Band Councillor. He has other business interests in Kamloops. Archie was brought up on a large ranch near Pritchard.

Archie has approximately 20 acres of land and leases another 85 acres from the Band for grazing and hay production. In addition, he has access to approximately 12,000 acres of grazing land located in the Skeetchestn Reserve and a 100 head grazing permit held by the Band on Crown Lands. He has good water supply and approximately 35 acres in hay production. He intends to expand hay production on his leased land.

Archie purchased 18 head of cattle this spring and hopes to expand his operation as a cow-calf operation over the next 4-5 years.

He thinks the right combination of skills and financing to make a successful operator come from the following.

- Financing without equity; accessing loans for Aboriginal people living on-reserve is difficult because of Indian Act regulations.
- Business knowledge and training for new entries is a must. Even though he has a sound background, he says, ”there still are things I don’t think of when I did my business plan”. He says training for new entries is needed in this area.
- Practical experience: getting back into the cattle business after being away from it entails that new techniques, new machinery, new markets, and new skills have to be learned. (He sees job experience for new entries as needed in this area.)

Adequate land is a barrier on some reserves. At Skeetchestn however, there is a ranching culture. In addition, the Band Members hold very few Certificates of Possession and the Band is flexible and supportive in starting a new enterprise such as this. The Band will not provide financial assistance, but is willing to lease land to Band Members.

Markets do not seem to be a problem for Archie, as he sells through the co-op in Kamloops.

Saul Terry (Berry Farmer)

Saul is a member of the Bridge River First Nation, but lives off the reserve, near Texas Creek with his wife Joanne Drake-Terry. Together, they own a 15.7 acre farm which grows hay, raspberries, currants, and some soft tree fruits. They meet their own needs plus operate a small u-pick operation for local residents. Their water is supplied from a local community irrigation system. They are certified organic growers.

Joanne and Saul have explored several markets for their products; special focus was given to the black and red current market. The feedback from a trade show and talks with some juice producers from the Lower Frazer Valley indicated to them that there is a market for currents and juice. An operation of 5-13 acres would be the largest in Canada. The stumbling blocks would be the following.

- local storage
- transportation
- harvesting (needs to be mechanized)
- financing start-up costs

Saul reports that the skills of drying and preserving of fruits and vegetables has given way to frozen foods among his people at Bridge River. They still dry and smoke salmon extensively, so there is a skill base to expand upon to other products if desired.

Bridge River Band has ample water and land. Some extensive work would be needed to develop water resources. Ditch irrigation was used in the past and is no longer viable (due to high maintenance demands). He reports that there has been a growing interest in large backyard gardening for family and extended family use. This may indicate a revival in growing truck crops. The main stumbling block appears to be, according to Saul, interest and exposure to farming and motivation to become farmers. Co-operative efforts for storage, possible cannery and marketing skills need to be developed.

4.4 Overview of Agricultural Focus of Tribal Councils

Nicola Tribal Association (N’Kaplamaux)

The Nicola Tribal Association (NTA) does not operate an agriculture support program for aboriginal people. The NTA Executive Director, Harold Aljim is a director of the First Nations Agricultural Lending Association (FNALA). In the Merritt areas, he has supported 4H programs and other community-based projects. He reports the following barriers (stumbling blocks) for new entries and experienced First Nation persons:

- Few short-term rewards.
- Poor availability of land if it is not handed down through the family.

- Profit margins are narrow and it takes time to recoup investment.
- Some difficulties in raising capital for an on-reserve start-up or upgrade because of the protection of personal property under the Indian Act (collateral located on the reserve land has limits).
- Some limiting problems in the Merritt area for truck crops; transport measures need to be developed.
- There may be some opportunities in small animal husbandry (sheep, rabbits, etc.) for specialized markets.

Shuswap Native Tribal Council (Secwepmic)

The Shuswap Native Tribal Council (SNTC) provides no specialized support to agricultural ventures. On the other hand, farmland, crown leases, and water rights are on their list of priorities for future treaty negotiations and land claims. Land in the Shuswap Nation has marginal agricultural use because of soil types. Some forage crops and grazing lands are available.

Lillooet Tribal Council (Stl'atl'imx)

Larry Casper (Natural Resources Director) of the Lillooet Tribal Council (LTC) reports that LTC provides no specialized support to farmers / ranchers in the upper Stat'lmix Nation. He reports that land is very marginal as they are in a mountain area, but there are some aboriginal producers of vegetable and beef on off-reserve lands. Root crops and small orchards have been tried and were a major source of revenue in the 1940's and 50's. Community gardens are encouraged for Elder use, but have not been too successful. The Lillooet Band, through Paul Scotchman, has had an organic greenhouse and garden for a number of years.

4.5 Financial and Training Resources for First Nation Agriculturalists

Aboriginal Business Canada (ABC)

ABC does not provide monies for agriculture. On the other hand, it provides monies for youth starting small businesses. This financing can be in the form of grants, and loan security. It does not provide operating lines. The ABC regional offices are located in Vancouver.

Shuswap Training & Educational Programs

The Shuswap Training and Educational Program (STEP) represents an outlet for HRDC monies that can be directed toward First Nations and Non-status persons. Other Tribal areas have different arrangements for administration of HRDC monies. While not specifically focusing on agriculture, monies are available for EI transfers, some limited training for persons who wish to undertake job entry activities.

Central Interior First Nations

Community Futures Corporation

Kamloops-based Central Interior First Nations Community Futures Corporation provides counseling, business training, and general information for business start-ups.

First Nations Agricultural Lending

Kamloops-based First Nations Agricultural Lending Association (FNALA) provides loans to aboriginal borrowers. It also administrates the BC Government First Citizens loan fund, which is a 50% forgivable loan program (one-time only with a $75,000 limit). It provides some support for training and mentoring and focuses on young people who wish to enter agricultural careers. Interest rates are comparable to banks. (Under special circumstances, operating lines may be available.)

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada provides grants through its Gathering Strength Program. The sections most applicable to agriculture are the resource management and joint venture programs. It focuses on reserve projects for Status Indians. It will make a contribution of up to 40% for capital acquisition, providing other federal funding is not available. It does not provide operating lines. The program is administered through Community Economic Development Offices (Kamloops – All Nations Trust Corporation).

4.6 Summary of Potential Opportunities

There appears to be a number of opportunities where the quality and limited land resources of First Nations may be the springboard for new agricultural initiatives.

Option #1 - Ethnic Market

Specialized ethnic markets are growing. For example, the Islamic market is a significant destination for poultry, goat, sheep, rabbits, and other meat products. They must be grown organically or in transition to organic, and may be sold on the hoof or slaughtered. "On the hoof" products can be sold thorough brokers at Tappen or Valley Auction in Armstrong. Slaughtered animals must have a facility for "kosher" killing, which requires a blessing from a certified mullah; the slaughter facility must be very clean. While there is a limited Islamic market locally, there is a considerable shortage of these products in Vancouver. Costs for slaughter, storage, and transport would have to be arranged. Other ethnic opportunities may include crayfish and bottom fish.

Option #2 - Local Slaughtering of Poultry

There are three known slaughterhouses for poultry in the Kamloops / Merritt / Lillooet areas. There are backlogs of 3-8 weeks for slaughter. The cost of setting this up, according to Rod Novak of Pritchard, (who just retired) is about $30,000. It requires a good water supply, and about ½ acre of land, which is very suitable for limited reserve lands.

Option #3 - Organic Foods (Produce)

In Kamloops, there are three, and possibly soon to be four, retail outlets, plus two major chains (Safeway and Overwaitea) that will sell organic produce. Most local producers focus on field crops that are seasonal. Greenhousing for off-season produce is a possibility. It has been attempted by the Neskonlith First Nation in the late 1980's (they focused on traditional use plants). Expertise and fuel costs may be a problem. All retailers (including supermarket chains) are purchasing locally and would continue to do so if supply was available.

Option #4 - Specialized Aboriginal Foods

A First Nation producer in the Nicola Valley produced wild berry preserves and dried Salmon packaged "snack" packs. These specialties were well received, but marketing, labour, and a supply of berries depended upon variable seasons and weather. This might be revised and the scale of production re-examined. Local markets are now more available to tourists as First Nations expand into eco-tourism ventures. A benefit of berry collection is that it reinforces aboriginal claims to traditional use of lands.

Option #5 - Black & Red Currents

There are several markets for currents. They are off-farm sales, juice, dried products, and processed products, such as cans. Preliminary reports are that the berries travel well and there may be some juice markets in BC and Ontario. The drawback to current production is harvesting. Mechanized methods are required as labour costs would be too high. Storage facilities are also needed, but easily attainable.

Option #6 - Whips

There is a large demand for willow, poplar, and other types of tree rootstock. They are in demand for band stabilization, and salmon enhancement projects. Aboriginal fisheries commissions have long-term contracts with provincial and federal governments for bank stabilization.

Appendix 1 – Mail Survey Questionnaire

Survey of Small & Mid-sized Agricultural Producers in the

Thompson, Nicola Valley, South Cariboo & Shuswap Regions

Please answer the following questions if you own or manage an agricultural operation.

1. **How many persons are regularly involved in working on your agricultural operation?** _______

2. **Please indicate your land area.**

Total owned acres	_____	Owned grazing or cultivated acres	______
Total leased acres	_____	Leased grazing or cultivated acres	______

3. **Are you seriously considering the purchase or lease of additional land for agricultural purposes?**

☐ yes ☐ no

3 (a) If you answered yes to question no.3, within how many years do you expect to undertake the purchase or lease? ____
and what type of agricultural production would be undertaken on the new property?
____

4. **How long have you owned your agricultural operation?**

☐ Less than 1 year ☐ 6 to 10 years ☐ More than 25 years

☐ 1 - 5 years ☐ 11 to 25 years

5. **Has any of your agricultural land been owned by a previous generation of your family? (e.g. parents, grandparents, other family members)**

☐ yes ☐ no

6. **Please rate the motivations for owning your property. Rate each motivation.**

Motivations	**No importance**	**Little importance**	**Average importance**	**Above average importance**	**High importance**
a) Permanent residence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b) Agricultural production	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c) Cottage, summer home	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Motivations	**No importance**	**Little importance**	**Average importance**	**Above average importance**	**High importance**
d) Tourism business	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e) Real estate investment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f) Conserve the land as green space	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g) Personal satisfaction of owning agricultural land	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h) Inheritance for my children	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. **Please list the products and services of your agricultural operation. Include any packaged or processed food products that you make. List the top three revenue generating products or services (such as agri-tourism) in rank order. If any products are organically grown or raised, please put an O in brackets bedside the product name, for example, carrots (o).**

1. ______________________ ______________________ ______________________
2. ______________________ ______________________ ______________________
3. ______________________ ______________________ ______________________

______________________ ______________________ ______________________

______________________ ______________________ ______________________

______________________ ______________________ ______________________

8. **Did your company introduce any new products or services in the past five years?**

☐ yes ☐ no

8. (a) If you answered yes to question no. 8, please list the products or services? List the top three in rank order. If any products are organically grown or raised, put an O in brackets bedside the product name, for example, carrots (o).

1. ______________________ ______________________ ______________________
2. ______________________ ______________________ ______________________
3. ______________________ ______________________ ______________________

9. **Do you plan to increase production volumes of current products or services within the next two years?**

☐ yes ☐ no

10. **Do you plan to diversify (eg.,new crops, on-farm processing, etc.) your agricultural operation within the next two years?**

☐ yes ☐ no

10. (a) If you answered yes to question no. 10, in general, what are your diversification plans?

☐ New crops/livestock ☐ Processed food products ☐ Agri-tourism ☐ Other (please specify) ________________

11. **Please rate the potential stumbling blocks to increased production or diversification for your farm or ranch. Rate each stumbling block.**

Stumbling blocks	**No importance**	**Little importance**	**Average importance**	**Above average importance**	**High importance**
a) Financial return would not be adequate	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b) I don't have the needed crop growing or livestock raising production knowledge and skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c) I don't have the needed knowledge and skills for small-scale food processing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d) I don't have the needed financial resources	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e) I don't have the needed marketing skills and knowledge	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f) Difficulty with cracking into marketing outlets	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g) Local market is too small	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h) Big city markets are too far away	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i) Lack of government help	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j) Over-regulation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k) Don't have the time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
l) Anticipate change of land use or ownership	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
m) Other (please specify) ________________	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12. Please rate the following outlets as to their importance for marketing your products. Rate each marketing outlet.

Marketing outlets	**No importance**	**Little importance**	**Average importance**	**Above average importance**	**High importance**
(a) on farm selling or own roadside stand (excluding U-Pick)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(b) U-Pick	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(c) direct to wholesaler	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(d) direct to roadside stand owned by another	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(e) direct to large retailer (such as Safeway)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(f) direct to small retailer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(g) direct to cooperative	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(h) direct to organic delivery supplier	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(I) direct to restaurants / hotels	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(j) farmers' market, which one? ____________________	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(k) CSA plan (community supported agriculture)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(l) mail order or catalogue sales	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(m) direct to marketing agency (such as Interior Vegetable Marketing Agency)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(n) Internet	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(o) Other (please specify) ____________________	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(p) Other (please specify) ____________________	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. Are there any marketing outlets that you would like to access but can not do so or are having difficulty in doing so?

☐ yes ☐ no

If you answered yes, please name the marketing outlets that you would like to access.

____

____

14. Please estimate the percentage of your agricultural operation's total sales by location:

‣ in your local community (such as Kamloops)	______	%
‣ in the region (but excluding your local community)	______	%
‣ in the rest of BC	______	%
‣ in other provinces	______	%
‣ in the US	______	%
‣ in other foreign countries	______	%
Total	100	%

15. How would you describe your knowledge of and skills in agricultural operations? Rate each operational area, please.

Operational area	**Limited**	**Adequate**	**Good**	**Extensive**
(a) Financial management	☐	☐	☐	☐
(b) Risk management	☐	☐	☐	☐
(c) Commodity production	☐	☐	☐	☐
(d) Marketing agricultural commodities	☐	☐	☐	☐
(e) Small-scale food processing	☐	☐	☐	☐
(f) Marketing processed food products	☐	☐	☐	☐

16. Please rate the effectiveness of each of the following approaches to improving <u>your</u> agriculture knowledge and skills. Rate each learning approach.

Learning approaches	**No effectiveness**	**Little effectiveness**	**Average effectiveness**	**Above average effectiveness**	**High effectiveness**
(a) Conversations with an agricultural extension agent	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(b) Brief report provided by a agricultural extension agent after a site visit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(c) Personal experience / trial and error	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(d) Short courses or workshops	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(e) Professionally prepared management plan	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(f) Reading a how-to handbook	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(g) Agricultural newsletter	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(h) Field trip to view other farms	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(I) Internet web site	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Learning approaches	No effectiveness	Little effectiveness	Average effectiveness	Above average effectiveness	High effectiveness
(j) Internet on-line course	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(k) Informal reading or studying	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(l) Informal conversations with knowledgeable persons	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(m) Other (please specify) ___________________	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(n) Other (please specify) ___________________	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

17. Do you intend to increase your agricultural management skills and knowledge through formal consultations, courses, workshops or seminars within the next two years?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ maybe

18. If you answered NO to question no. 17, please check off the reason(s) for *not* furthering your agricultural knowledge or skills.

☐ (a) Am satisfied with my agricultural skills and knowledge

☐ (b) Don't have the financial resources to acquire more knowledge and skills through formal channels

☐ (c) Don't have the time to acquire more knowledge and skills through formal channels

☐ (d) Will acquire more knowledge and skills on an informal basis

☐ (e) Other (please specify) ____

19. Check off the area(s) in which you would like to improve your agricultural skills and/or knowledge. Please mark only the operational areas of relevance to you.

☐ (a) planning/ budgeting/ cash flow analysis

☐ (b) marketing crops and livestock

☐ (c) risk management

☐ (d) insect and disease control

☐ (e) growing crops or raising animals

☐ (f) small-scale food processing

☐ (g) marketing processed food products

☐ (h) agri-tourism

☐ (i) other (please specify) ___________________

☐ (j) other (please specify) ___________________

20. **Which of the following government incentive or assistance programs are you aware of?**

- ☐ (a) NISA
- ☐ (b) Whole Farm Insurance
- ☐ (c) BC Crop Insurance
- ☐ (d) Farm Debt Counseling / Mediation
- ☐ (e) Buy BC
- ☐ (f) Investment Agriculture
- ☐ (f) IRAP
- ☐ (g) Technology BC

21. **How would you rate your knowledge of government financial assistance and incentive programs?**

☐ Highly knowledgeable ☐ Somewhat knowledgeable ☐ Little knowledge

22. What are the best ways to make you aware of new agricultural initiatives (government or otherwise) in your region? Please indicate the top five by marking the boxes in rank order – 1,2,3,4,5.

- ☐ (a) Media story or ad (i.e. newspaper, radio, TV)
- ☐ (b) Receive information in the mail
- ☐ (c) Pick up information at a government office
- ☐ (d) Internet web site
- ☐ (e) Trade show
- ☐ (f) Conversation with family member/ friend/ neighbour
- ☐ (g) Community meeting
- ☐ (h) Conversation with agricultural extension agent
- ☐ (g) Newsletter
- ☐ (h) Other (please specify) ________________________

23. Do you belong to any agricultural associations?

☐ yes ☐ no

23 (a) If you answered yes to question no. 23, which agricultural association(s) do you belong to?

____

____

24. What is your age?

- ☐ 20 - 30 years old
- ☐ 31 - 40 years old
- ☐ 41 - 50 years old
- ☐ 51 – 60 years old
- ☐ 60 + years old

25. **What is your main occupation?** ____

25 (a) If you have a secondary occupation, what is it?

____

26. What is your highest level of formal education? (Please check one box)

☐ (a) elementary school	☐ (b) some high school	☐ (c) high school graduation
☐ (d) some college or university	☐ (e) trade certificate or diploma (e.g. journeyman)	☐ (f) technical, vocational or community college diploma or certificate
☐ (g) Bachelor degree	☐ (h) Masters or PhD degree	☐ (i) other (please specify) ____________________

27. **What percentage of your income earning time is spent on farm operations?**

☐ (a) 0%	☐ (b) 1 - 10%	☐ (c) 11 - 25%
☐ (d) 26 - 50%	☐ (e) 51 - 75%	☐ (f) 76 - 100%

28. What percentage of your household's 1999 income was derived from your agricultural lands?

☐ (a) 0%	☐ (b) 1 - 10%	☐ (c) 11 - 25%
☐ (d) 26 - 50%	☐ (e) 51 - 75%	☐ (f) 76 - 100%

29. Do you own and use a desktop computer?

☐ yes ☐ no

29 (a) If you answered yes to question no. 29, do you exchange e-mail messages via the Internet?

☐ yes ☐ no

29 (b) If you answered yes to question no. 29, how often do you access web sites on the Internet in search of information?

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ A few times per month
- ☐ A few times per week
- ☐ Several times per week

30. Please use the following space if you would like to put forward comments or ideas about furthering the development of small and mid-scale agricultural operations in your area? We look forward to hearing from you and may phone you to follow-up on your thoughts, or you can phone us (collect) at 250-763-6309. (The ideas could be drawn from potential commodities or potential processed food products or novel marketing approaches or new infrastructure, such as cost-sharing a cold storage facility, or new assistance programs, etc.)

YOUR IDEAS

____
____
____
____
____
____
____-
____
____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST AND ASSISTANCE