

(For those of you that participated in the 13 activities below, thank you, and look for your quotes.)

SSFPA Summary of Products and Services Requested by small-scale food processors since 2001

Various studies have been done to discover the needs of small-scale food processors to assist them to meet their business goals.

1. Seventy-seven people in the food system of BC met in Richmond April 6 & 7, 2001 and decided to:

Test the feasibility of a provincial marketing co-operative network that can increase rural capacity in skills development, leadership and knowledge base. Build community links with new or existing co-ops. Document a development that can be of assistance to economic development groups interested in incubating this industry in their local area. Identify specific learning objectives. Provide opportunity for networking and avenues for marketing for rural participants from small communities.

The main consensus was that there is a vibrant market opportunity waiting and that investment in building the infrastructure to support small-scale food processors could meet social, environmental, and economic goals.¹

2. The Market Scoping Project, August 2002, contacted three hundred BC small-scale food processors and interviewed forty-seven. Also, seventeen wholesalers, distributors and retailers were interviewed. The small-scale food processors' requests were for:

- a. Training and Technical Assistance (TA) re: compliance with new labeling regulation, Food safety and HACCP compliance.
- b. Business-planning services to members.
- c. Prizes for articles and 'success stories' prepared for media.
- d. Brokering product development and testing services.
- e. Reports for members on marketing costs so processors are aware of the costs/benefits for these functions.
- f. Help define Trade Show participation for the SSFPA.
- g. Facilitate definition of 'gastronomic regions' and revive the pride of the 'Buy BC' program.
- h. Provide label design/production services.
- i. Provision of group buying/purchasing services for business supplies and agricultural products
- j. Brokering development finance services to members in partnership with regional community development finance agencies
- k. Brokering relationships with the independent grocery/organic/natural food stores in each region, with mutual benefits.
- l. Coordinating a Provincial level of supplier driven marketing services for members to document market demand for products.
- m. Advocate with box delivery programs for regional products inclusion.

¹ 2001. Shepherd, Colleen. & Frank Moreland *Outcome Report Small Scale Food Processing Consultation Event* CVDS p. 21. <http://www.ssfpa.net/Documents/April%202001%20Food%20processor%20report.pdf>

- n. Brokering regional 'plan-a-gram' service to members for retail sales as a business undertaking
- o. Brokering barcode services
- p. Set up a demonstration commercial kitchen and commercialization program in at least one locale.
- q. Design and implement a sophisticated information system to overcome communication and information sharing and business challenges.
- r. Feasibility study regarding the potential for facilitating e-commerce solutions regionally and provincially.²

3. The Field to Table workshop in Lillooet Feb 10-11, 2003 produced input from fifty-five workshop participants that included many small-scale food processors. Their requests are:

- ❶ To design and create a step-by-step plan for starting a small-scale food processing operation.
- ❷ Educational workshops on business planning, growing, processing, and marketing that is delivered in the rural area, with a need-to-know training flexibility.
- ❸ To partner with the Certified Organic Association of BC (COABC) to coordinate their educating SSFPA growers and processors that are interested in organics.
- ❹ General consensus is for the SSFPA to provide a marketing service to members.
- ❺ General consensus is for the SSFPA to organize a buying club for members.³

4. The Field to Table workshop in Mission March 7-8, 2003 produced input on needs from twenty-nine workshop participants that included many small-scale food processors. These needs were documented as follows:

- ❶ Create a finance program for small scale food processors and growers (collaborate with members)
- ❷ Identify import replacements
- ❸ Work with Health Canada to build services members will need for the new nutritional labelling
- ❹ Develop a marketing and distribution network through SSFPA
- ❺ Develop collective purchasing arrangements on a regional basis
- ❻ Save farm land by showing viability of small-scale food processing
- ❼ Develop a provision for inactive land to be protected with land trusts as partners
- ❽ Facilitate Supplier Driven Marketing (taste sample tables in high volume retail setting)
- ❾ To develop links with other organizations and to develop an events calendar⁴

5. The Field to Table workshop in Victoria Jan 21-22, 2003 produced a list of needs from twenty-two workshop participants that included many small-scale food processors. Their requests are:

- ❶ Investigation of the possibility of a regional collective or cooperative marketing company through SSFPA and/or provision of brokering and distribution services that reflect the needs of small-scale food processors

² 2002. Moreland, Frank. Chris Evans, Sandra Mark *Market Scoping Project* CVDS. P. 49.
<http://www.ssfpa.net/Documents/SSFPA%20Market%20Scoping%20Project%20Nov29.pdf>

³ 2003. Direct participant quote *Field to Table partnership project with the regional host—Lillooet Learns* CVDS. p
3. <http://www.ssfpa.net/Documents/Vol2%20Iss5%20Lillooet%20SB.pdf>

⁴ 2003. *Field to Table partnership project with the regional host—Community Futures Development Corporation of South Fraser* CVDS p. 3. <http://www.ssfpa.net/Documents/Vol2%20Iss6%20Mission%20SB.pdf>

- ❶ Investigation of possibility for co-ordination/ provision of affordable lab services on the Island.
- ❷ Further development by the SSFPA of the Living Inventory web system to make it more user friendly and to include more material
- ❸ Develop links on SSFPA website to other association databases. Establish events calendar.
- ❹ Coordinate flow of information through web site.
- ❺ Outreach to growers and producers to get them involved
- ❻ Develop marketing and business planning workshops at market rates with member discounts.
- ❼ Training and collaboration regarding UPC codes
- ❽ Facilitation of programs that assure access to finance that is appropriate to small-scale and agriculture.⁵

6. The Field to Table workshop in the Peace region January 16-17, 2003 produced a list of needs from twenty-four workshop participants that included many small-scale food processors. Their requests are:

- ❶ To build and provide, on a service-for-fee, goods and services which support regional marketing organizations
- ❷ Make a simple 'generic' presentation about the economic, social and environmental benefits of regional food systems, for directors and members to use to explain about the values of the SSFPA
- ❸ To seek resources for an outreach program to list more providers of goods and services, for the benefit of growers and processors, on the Living Inventory
- ❹ To put together information about sources for appropriate technology in relation to needs, to facilitate group buying, renting, or purpose designed technology⁶

7. On June 9th, 2003 small-scale food producers and processors, as well as representatives from organizations committed to regional food security and community economic development came together at the Consultation Meeting supported by Coast Capital Savings Credit Union. A Saanich Peninsula Working Group was established to work together to address the following issues:

- Coordinating business support services to small-scale food producers/processors
- Coordinating access to finance services
- Considering the feasibility of establishing a regional identity of shared services (bar codes, laboratory services, marketing, etc.)⁷

8. The SSFPA organized and facilitated the Access to Finance meeting held at the VanCity Credit Union Head Office in Vancouver on June 11, 2003. The purpose of the meeting was for participants to gain insight on how to overcome access to finance problems for small-scale producers/processors. Twenty-nine representatives from financial and Agri-food organizations, as well as small-scale producers/processors themselves, attended the meeting. The next steps identified for the SSFPA are:

⁵ 2003. *Field to Table partnership project with the regional host—LifeCycles Victoria* CVDS p. 3.

<http://www.ssfpa.net/Documents/Vol2%20Iss7%20Victoria%20SB.pdf>

⁶ 2003. *Field to Table partnership project with the regional host in the Peace region Of BC and Alberta: The Peace Value-Added Food & Ag Association (PVAF&AA)* CVDS p. 3.

<http://www.ssfpa.net/Documents/Vol2%20Iss8%20Peace%20SB.pdf>

⁷ 2003. *Saanich Peninsula Outreach and Consultation* SSFPA Sound Bites Volume 2 Issue 9.

<http://www.ssfpa.net/Documents/June%209th%20Vol2%20Iss9.pdf>

- Facilitate a working committee to plan next steps on access to capital and supportive business technical services for small-scale producers/processors.
- Prepare a report for small-scale producers/processors regarding existing programs and services.
- Build tools and infrastructure to support the small-scale agri-food industry to grow.
- Approach Community Futures Development Corporations and other organizations to work with SSFPA to develop a program(s) for small-scale agriculture and processing that could be offered through Community Futures Development Corporations.⁸

9. The “Co-operation and the Small Producer: Creating Regional Food Economies” forum in partnership with the BC Co-operative Association (BCCA) gave SSFPA a strategic opportunity to put forward its vision for small and regionally based food economies. Participants included food producers, processors, and technologists; representatives from First Nations; people from various levels of government, non-profits, the co-operative movement, and the financial sector. They recommended that a marketing co-operative be established. The recommended next steps are:

- Work from a vision, a solid business foundation, marketing knowledge.
- Specialize in what we have developed skills in and connect with others that like to do the other things in value chain.
- Develop partnerships and use existing local infrastructure
- Start with benefits (i.e., buying/selling clubs) for shelf-ready goods.
- Form regional partnerships of producers and processors.
- Develop federal certified, community kitchens coordinated with farmers markets.
- Develop inventories of existing kitchens.
- Build relationships with Western Diversification and Community Futures Development Associations.
- Focus on just-in-time processing and regional in-season products.⁹

10. On May 29-30, 2003, a partnership investigated rural sustainability with Non-Timber Forest Products & Small Scale Food Processing. The West Coast Learning Network (WCLN) and the Bamfield Huu-ay-aht Community Forest Society sponsored a three-day symposium on non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and small-scale food processing business opportunities for Bamfield residents.

The participants agreed that there are many opportunities for community economic development. Developing NTFPs and small-scale food processing enterprises are certainly options. However, before specific projects are undertaken, work has to be done to build the relationships and capacity in the community to support entrepreneurship. People who are already doing things in the community need to be supported. Economists call these very important people ‘human capital’, and their participation increases success rates in community projects. The community plans to take the following actions:

- plan a community dialogue about why community economic development should be happening and the benefits to individuals

⁸ 2003. *Access To Finance For Small Scale Food Processors* SSFPA Sound Bites Volume 2 Issue 10. <http://www.ssfpa.net/Documents/June%2011%20Vol2%20Issue%2010.pdf>

⁹ 2003. *Co-operation and the Small Producer: Creating Regional Food Economies* SSFPA Sound Bites Volume 2 Issue 11. <http://www.ssfpa.net/Documents/June13Vol2Iss11.pdf>

- engage the community through various forms of communication (e.g., listserv, pamphlets)
- encourage entrepreneurship
- inventory community assets
- create a database of community resources
- conduct a critical assessment of opportunities
- prepare information on business support services
- create a business incubator:
 - small group of people for discussion
 - inventory community capital
 - identify needs to move forward
- build a co-operative business centre
- identify how to support initiatives
- WCLN - provide business skills training
- bring a friend to the next meeting¹⁰

11. The community economic development technical assistance providers for the SSFPA, Community Venture Development Services (CVDS), were invited by the BC Farm Women's Network to share what is happening around the province with producers and processors, describe the agribusiness side of co-operatives, and facilitate an examination of what might apply to the BC Farm Women's Network and its members. This group was asking, "What can we do about issues threatening Survival of the family farm?"¹¹

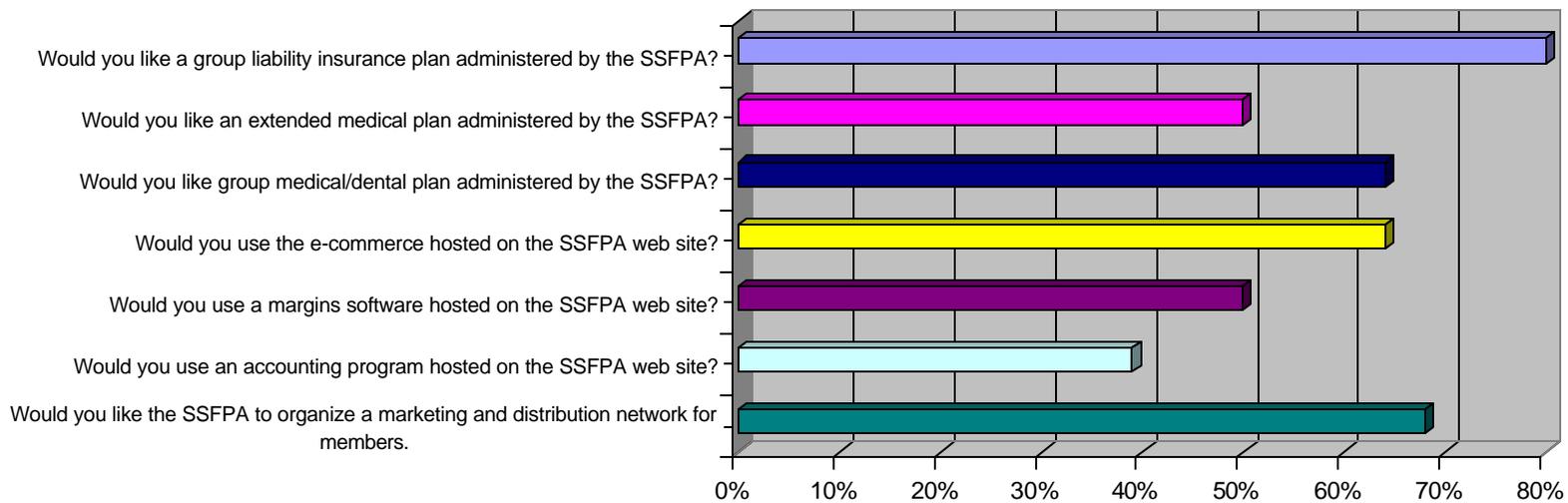
12. A survey of what members wanted for benefits was completed by the SSFPA Member Development Coordinator, Mary Murphy, in April 2003, and includes forty-four responses. See the chart on the following page.

¹⁰ 2003. *Symposium Report: Non-Timber Forest Products & Small Scale Food Processing* SSFPA Sound Bites Volume 2 Issue 12. <http://www.ssfpa.net/Documents/Vol2%20Iss12%20Bamfield.pdf>

¹¹ 2003. "Seeds for Survival Rural Seminar" SSFPA Sound Bites Volume 2 Issue 15. http://www.ssfpa.net/Documents/Farm_Women_Vol2%20Iss15.pdf

Member Benefits Survey

Results from 44 interviews of SSFPA members, conducted in April 2003



13. A compilation of small-scale food processor requests that they posted on the SSFPA's Living Inventory was compiled November 2003.

44 Processors and their needs from the Living Inventory Nov 2003

