

November 10, 2002



Sound Bites

The newsletter with a vision of regional food sustainability

Volume 1, Issue 1

The first Annual General Meeting (AGM) Nov 17, 2002 By teleconference

The Small Scale Food Processor Association (SSFPA) incorporated on June 4, 2002, as a federal non-profit organization with a vision of creating regional food sustainability.

This form of organization allows the SSFPA to have two classes of membership. The primary constituent is the food processor with less than 26 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees. The processors value their suppliers, like the growers, and their markets, so a second membership is represented as 'supporter' members.

The SSFPA further extends the 'supporter' membership to all the goods and services required of a successful food processing enterprise.

Specific outreach for 'supporter' members is active with growers, farmers markets, linked associations, food and business technical service providers, processor mentors, educational planners, economic development groups, organic and nutraceutical organizations, food brokers, distributors and retail partners.

Details of the teleconference will be e-mailed to all members by November 15, 2002.

AGM AGENDA

1. Call to order by chair:
 2. Additions to the Agenda:
 3. Report from Founding Directors: Kathleen Gibson, Godfrey Ferguson, and Michelle Nicholson.
 4. Report from Project Coordinators: Frank Moreland and Sandra Mark
 5. Membership Report
 6. Nominations Report
 7. Election of Directors to the Board
 8. Motion for Review
 - Engagement report to the members by the association accountant for fiscal 2002-03
 9. Other Business.
 10. Set date for Board teleconference to set Director's terms and elect Executive
 11. Adjournment
- (Items 3,4,5,6 are included in this Sound Bites issue)

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- The Market Scoping Report has specific recommendations for processors and for the SSFPA.
- 'Field to Table' workshops, coming to a region near you, or you can request a regional one-day membership development and Living Inventory workshop.

Report on Membership and Director Nominations

As of today there are 21 processor members and 9 supporter members. There are 10 possible processor members that said their membership application is in the mail. There are 3 possible supporter members that said their applications for membership are in the mail.

All participants in the Field to Table partnership project workshops will become members, with the membership fee included in the workshop fee. The people nominated for processor Directors, as of today are:
Fred Burton (Sheep Show Case)

Gail Briggs (Briggswood Country Preserves)
Godfrey Ferguson (Warmland Gourmet Foods)
Donna Denison (Little Creek Dressing)
Pat Reichert (Salt Spring Flour Mill)
More nominations are expected to be received in the next week.

Report from the three Founding Directors

When we signed up for the job of carrying the responsibility to move the organization from incorporation to full operation, we counted on the Steering Committee to continue in its role of discussing issues and guiding our actions. We are pleased to say that this process worked and we are now in a strong position to launch our organization. Our chief claim to fame has been that we are close together and can get together to sign documents on behalf of the SSFPA. We have not taken a policy or decision-making role beyond expediting the wishes of the Steering Committee. We have however, done a lot of housekeeping that is all part of getting a new organization going. We have learned some important things and would like to share this experience with the incoming fully constituted Board of Directors:

We know a lot more now than we did when we started this organization. The people gathered at our founding conference in 2001 provided clear directions. We have discovered that there are a lot of other organizations out there that are just starting up in the field of agri-food. We have an opportunity to take our place in what could be seen as an emerging, small-scale but powerful agri-food sector in BC and Alberta.

We were interested to see that our emergence appears to be part of the motivation sparking Investment Agriculture Foundation (IAF) to support a process to create 'an umbrella' food processor's association. Your



*Godfrey Ferguson,
the third Founding
Director*

Founding Board made a big effort to get small-scale food processors out to an IAF meeting held in October in Surrey, and as a result we have a strong voice from our sector on the planning committee. SSFPA members Godfrey Ferguson from Warmlands Gourmet Foods and John Duncan from Pzazz Pizza will bring our voice forward in the discussion. At this point we are not sure what it will mean to have an 'umbrella association'. The IAF is providing secretariat services so this helps solve a major problem that we have only been able to handle by having a volunteer secretariat and a lot of volunteer effort. We have had to move slowly due to inadequacy of funds available to support our work. However, we feel that it is important for us to continue to move forward on behalf of small-scale food processors if for no other reason than to make sure that the support needed for our sector is recognized in any future organizational constellation. It is interesting to see that the large-scale processors that we have been speaking to, share many of the same issues that small-scale processors do, but there are some important differences. Even though the vast majority of people involved in food processing are small-scale food processors, the economic impact of our part of the food processing business is not well documented, and without our own voice our issues would continue to be invisible to 'the big players'. On the housekeeping front, the Founding Board set up bank accounts, a GST account (we get 100% back) and has developed a relationship with an accountant/bookkeeping service on a piecemeal basis. We have been

Report from Secretariat

I have been entrusted with overseeing the administrative duties for the SSFPA for the last three years because of one main qualification, I volunteered.

I have volunteered because I recognize the importance of mutual aid that the SSFPA can provide, so that the individual self-interests of growers and processors can be realized.

My background includes eight years of high-volume retail grocery, six years farming ginseng and specialty crops, and two years developing value-added products.

My future holds some kind of enterprise with a specialty food. This is why I have

volunteered; like you, I need a strong infrastructure to ensure success in my future agri-food enterprise.

I am looking forward to when the SSFPA can sustain its own office, and hire a successor.

I feel honoured to have contributed to the SSFPA with the hard working and dedicated Steering Committee, and since the incorporation June 4, 2002, the Founding Directors.

I say "Welcome to the members of the SSFPA, let us celebrate our vision of regional food security."

Frank Moreland

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involved in helping vet proposals and in signing contracts from funders. With the backing of the Steering Committee, we negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding with Community Venture Development Services (CVDS). Frank Moreland has been our primary worker bee mostly on a volunteer basis. He says he is doing this because he wants to return to the farm and create a new small-scale Agri-Food business, but knows from his previous experience, that without dealing with some of the barriers it might be too difficult. Having faced these barriers, he is very motivated to 'take them on'. Sandra Mark supports his efforts and has assisted in fundraising and in



*Two Founding
Directors,
Kathleen Gibson and
Michelle Nicholson*

providing support for the Founding Board and Steering Committee. The MOU establishes an agreement that CVDS will have 1st refusal of development contracts of the SFP, for which CVDS has done the proposal writing/fundraising. This agreement is time limited and is to be renegotiated by the new Board at the conclusion of the Field to Table Project. This arrangement has been important in helping the association move forward in spite of having few resources.

The resources we do have are the people out there that have been willing to participate in our activities and give their time and ideas to help us along. We have also been very lucky to have the support of Harvey Glasier who has expedited our ability to meet via teleconference when needed.

We are pleased to see that people that we have been working with are responding and joining the association. It is great getting to know all the people that are making such tasty bites all over the province.

We can see that there is huge potential for small-scale food processors to find a commercially viable scale that provides a sustainable livelihood—we think that we will have to learn/invent new ways to work together to contend with the common issues that we face if we want to really reach that goal. We hope that the association becomes a powerful tool



*Frank Moreland
getting ready to
eat.*

for processors and their supporters to be able to help realize this dream. We have enjoyed being part of creating such an interesting organization and look forward to a continuing relationship.

MN, KG, GF

Report from Market Scoping Project (MSP)

The Market Scoping Project (MSP) was the first project for the newly formed SSFPA.

The MSP was supported by the Conservation Financing Technical Assistance Program, an initiative of VanCity, Ecotrust Canada and the Province of BC. The program wants to develop an understanding of general trends and markets.

The work for the MSP was conducted in July and August 2002, with a completion date of August 30, 2002. This rigid time schedule created expected challenges in reaching small-scale food processors, as this time of year is their busiest.

Over 600 phone contacts were made, and 70 interviews were conducted. Fifty processors were interviewed and asked how they sell, where they sell, what are the challenges, and what are the barriers. There were 20 brokers/distributors/retailers that were asked what criteria they use for accepting new products. The interviews are reported verbatim, in graph form and in a table with observations and recommendations.

The MSP is also supported with a literature review from 1995 to the present. The Appendices for the literature and web site resources are annotated to allow deeper understanding and to show all the material that informed the main part of

Report from the 'Living Inventory' (LI)

The benefit to all members of the SSFPA is the 'Living Inventory.'

The LI has been designed to address some of the processor's issues that have been raised from all parts of BC and Alberta.

Processors want to find regional resources for their enterprises when available, whether it is for transportation, business assistance, creative financing, education, food safety or peer mentoring. If resources are not available regionally, they want to know

where they are available.

The LI is sustainable because each member has a user name and password and enters their own data; there is no need to hire an administrator. A SSFPA Membership Committee will have the administrative task of enabling a member user name once annual fees are received.

The LI will be on the SSFPA web site mid December 2002.

Report from Field to Table Partnership Project

The SSFPA's goal to support regional development as a major strategic pillar has resulted in the design of an outreach across the province scheduled to occur between January and March 2003. The funders, BC Investment Agriculture Foundation (IAF) and the Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program (CEDTAP) have signed contracts with the SSFPA. We await the response from the Rural Development Initiative (RDI) federal funding to complete the plans.

The purpose of the outreach is to bring small-scale food processors together

with key players in their regional supply chain and in their communities to create a regional food security community economic development plan. This plan will consider how the barriers that small-scale food processors have in commercializing their products can be addressed through community planning and organizing. The goal is to create immediate benefits for the participants as well as to bring forward to the provincial level issues that cannot be effectively dealt with locally. We hope to create maps, linkages, relationships and plans in communities that will increase the productivity of

the report.

The final document is still being prepared, with logos from the participants to the interviews being added to *Appendix C: The Respondents*. All documents prepared for the SSFPA, including the final MSP, will be placed on the SSFPA web site mid December 2002.



Sandra Mark
Encouraging Community
Recipes for Sustainability

local food production and processing. We hope to provide support to regional innovative initiatives and encourage their participation in upcoming funding and financing possibilities. We hope to gain interest and membership in the SSFPA in order to attract participants in the Living Inventory. We feel that these efforts will help to demonstrate that although small, there is a huge potential for small-scale food processors to have economic and social impact in rural BC and that our efforts warrant support and encouragement.

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1702 Ash Rd
Victoria, BC
V8N 2T6

Phone: 250-370-5167

Email: ssfpa@pacificcoast.net

www.????.org
By mid Dec/02

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Mission

The Mission of the SSFPA is to represent the interests of small-scale food processors by:

- Establishing an industry identity
- Supporting regionally based small-scale food processor systems
- Providing relevant and timely information
- Advocacy for supportive policies
- Creating programs to support development and growth of small-scale food processors.



SSFPA Values

Project by project, viability will be determined on the basis of the following Values of the SSFPA:

Food safety

The right to a living wage

Food security for all

Regional capacity

Collaboration and co-operation

Sector support

Best nutritional quality possible

Local community sustainability

Celebration to mark milestones

One Big Thank-You to the Steering Committee, past and present

The hard working and dedicated Steering Committee planned the April 2001 Sectoral Consultation Event in Richmond, created the vision, mission and values for the SSFPA, and prepared one-year and five-year plans to guide the first Board of Directors. The Founding Board of Directors allowed seamless operation from the point of incorporation June 4, 2002, to November 17, 2002. We thank all those Steering Committee members, past and present, for their volunteer time in creating an infrastructure that will benefit us all.

Pamela Vipond	Maureen Macdougall
Glenda Olson	Godfrey Ferguson
Linda Chase-Wilde	Donna Gross
Michelle Nicholson	Abra Brynne
Harvey Glasier	Andrea Turner
David Philips	Herb Thiessen
Brenda Hotte	Donna Tookey
Jodi Koberinski	Catherine Kleinsteuber
Anna Kirbyson	Kathleen Gibson