

September Monthly Report / Agri-Food Research Deliverables

1. Through consultation with the Advisory group and the Report Design and Research Methodologies Consultant, validate the plan for primary research

- Met on several occasions with the Methodologies Consultant, Keith Elwood and the research Advisory Group.
- **It was determined that we were not ready to create the specific tools for primary research**
 - The advisory group felt this was pre-mature and that I should audit the sector for a general sense of what is going on and to get feedback from the stakeholders (Farmers, wholesalers, restaurants, educators) about what how to best approach data collection.
 - This was a very good choice of action; I spent the month interviewing farmers, educators, organizers, and associations to see what is happening on all levels in the sector, and learning about what means would best achieve the goals of the research.
 - I have a good understanding of the programs, research, and sector organizing that is happening right now in the CRD and in the province.
 - I also explored various approaches to methodology and research tools that might best be applied to this research.
 - Now that we have this information we are in the process of developing and implementing the tools and methodology for primary research.
 - These include surveys to the sectors, which will be followed by personal interviews with interested parties.

2. Undertake the research to establish base line market demand information on employers (retailers, wholesalers, restaurants, etc..)

- Personal interviews of the above occurred in September. They will be followed up with a survey that is being developed to answer baseline questions.

3. Continue Literature Review

- Lit review is ongoing

Other work accomplished:

- **Data-base has been created for the contact list. A template can be made available for researchers in other sectors to use.**

Discussion Topics

Septembers Research:

- **Some challenges that have presented themselves**
 - Feedback from farmers and organizers interviewed in September, when presented with our research goals, suggested that other groups are doing similar work and People are feeling over researched.
 - However, there was general support for the research from most people I spoke to.
 - We need to differentiate our research, not to duplicate and to considering the busyness of those in the field how can our research be perceived as beneficial?
 - It is a very busy time of the year and it's very difficult to get farmers to dedicate any time to answering surveys or meeting with researchers. This busyness is across the board with box programs and restaurants. They are suggesting late October when they will have more time freed up. (September – late October = no time)

- **What other research is going on in this sector?**
 - COABC / Rochelle Eisen ... learning technologies in the workplace – learning needs and gaps of BC organic farmers. A survey of farmers re: labour / learning needs / business development / value added, with the goal of setting up programs and services to fill the gaps.
 - Rochelle had agreed to send me the results of the survey, there are some interesting findings around perceived need for training in business or growing = 0, most don't want to expand their business, do not require labourers.
 - Rochelle thinks we will find much of the same is true on the island however,
 - She says that the island has its own unique economic and social reality & although farmers share similarities across the province, Island farmers have different issues and concerns.
 - Linking to information & service networks (farm extension programs, government farm development, marketing information) and understanding ways to access capital & business investment \$ was the biggest need noted,
 - Also, web/net access and learning needs, how to use the web as a tool to make the farm business more efficient.

- **Need for a well planned methodology**
 - Being a researcher I was pushing for the development of well-planned research tools and methodology to head into the field for sept.
 - The advisory group felt this was pre-mature and that I should audit the sector for a general sense of what is going on and to get feedback from the

stakeholders (Farmers, wholesalers, restaurants, educators) about what how to best approach data collection.

- This was a very good choice of action; I spent the month interviewing farmers, educators, organizers, and associations to see what is happening and where this research can fit in.
- I have a good understanding of the programs, research, sector organizing that is happening right now in the CRD and in the province.
- I also explored various approaches to methodology and research tools that might best be applied to this research.
- Now that we have this information we are ready to create to the research tools.
- **FARMERS:** I suggest we start by adapting the survey that was developed in the Kamloops region for **CFDCTC LLMP research**, (use it as a template)
- It was a very successful study and there is no reason why we can't adopt a similar approach
- It could be distributed as a over the phone, or in person survey and should be endorsed by SIOPA
- I suggest that a well known SIOPA organizer be the interviewer in order to increase the surveys credibility and the likelihood that farmers will take the time to complete the survey. I have a potential research assistant who could do this.
- Follow up in-depth taped interviews with lead researcher where it's identified that the farmer would be interested and would be able to share information that would be useful to the study
- **RESTAURANTS / WHOLSALERS / RETAILERS:** Separate survey for restaurants distributed by Melanie Banas of Farmfolk Cityfolk. Melanie organizes Feast of Fields and is well known by the Chefs
- Survey for Wholesalers and Retailers done in person with assistance of David Friend