



1. Participants

Approximately 15 people joined in this teleconference presentation and discussion session. Participants included several economic development officers, representatives of various organizations including the provincial Federation of Agriculture, community groups from across the province, Poverty Reduction Strategy (Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment), as well as several individual citizens with personal interest.

Participants were from both rural and more urban communities throughout the province, including:

St. Anthony	Corner Brook	Burin
Ferryland	Parsons Pond	St. John's
Hollyrood	Carbonear	

2. Introduction

After a round of introductions of all on the line, Kristie Jameson of the Food Security Network provided some introductory comments and information on the theme of 'Buying Local: Supporting Local Producers'. Key points included:

- **A summary of the Food Security Network NL (FSN)** as a membership based not-for-profit organization with the mission to actively promote comprehensive, community based solutions to ensure physical and economic access to adequate and healthy food for all.
- **The importance of Buying Local** for reasons such as the food is fresher as it makes it to the consumer quicker, it supports local farmers and the local economy, you can have confidence in your food, it reduces your carbon footprint as the food travels less, and it is more agriculturally and economically sustainable.
- **Our Current Situation**, as identified in a 2007 report by Agri-Foods, we only produce approximately 10% of fresh vegetables available in major wholesalers, meaning that approximately 90% is imported.
- **Great Work Happening in the Province** such as farmers markets, community gardens, young interest in farming, community supported agriculture programs, just to name a few...

3. Key Presentation

Stephen Moss from the Kittiwake Economic Development Corporation provided a brief overview of their 'Keep it in Kittiwake!' campaign. Key points from the presentation included:

- **The Kittiwake Economic Development Corporation (KEDC)** is one of 20 zone boards in the province and works closely with government and communities in their region to develop projects that will strengthen the region. KEDC is funded by department of Innovation Trade and Rural Development, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and Service Canada.
- **'Keep it in Kittiwake!' Campaign Phase 1** started in 2007 with the goal to promote local produce through linking farmers to retailers. The campaign provided promotional materials,

such as signs, displays, posters, stickers, and brochures, to 21 stores in the first year and engaged close to 20 farmers.

- **Phase 2**, in 2008, expanded into the restaurant sector by creating the connection between farmers and restaurant owners or managers so that restaurants could offer fresh and great tasting local products in their dishes. This allowed for a true Newfoundland and Labrador experience for the consumer as well as tourists. Marketing materials, such as signage, placemats, and table tents, were created to highlight local products and encouraged consumers to demand local food, which was indicated to increase by restaurant owners. Thus raising awareness about the benefits of buying locally.
- **Phase 3**, starting in 2009, is intended to fill the identified gap that restaurant owners and retail grocery managers are not aware of the abundance of available local products. This phase includes creating a supplier database of supplier information that is made available to local retailers and restaurants in the region. It has just been distributed to nearly 170 store owners, managers, restaurant owners, etc. KEDC will be following up to evaluate the successfulness of this tool in the fall. The database can be accessed at <http://www.kittiwake.nf.ca/documents/buy-local-supplier-database.pdf>
- **Identified Issues** through this process include: franchisees having limited capacity to buy locally because of all their products needing to be approved by their head offices, insurance and liability issues, policy legislation, and standardized packaging and labeling requirements.

4. Key Themes/Information from Following Discussion

Following Stephen Moss's presentation on the 'Keep it in Kittiwake!' Campaign, participants had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss issues important to them. Some key themes that emerged from this dialogue include the following:

Reasons to Buy Local food in Newfoundland & Labrador

- University of Toronto alumni magazine article **What's the Ideal Distance from Field to Fork?** (<http://www.magazine.utoronto.ca/summer09.pdf>); this article suggests that buying local may not always be the most environmentally sustainable. For example, a producer from far away may be using more environmentally friendly methods of production, so this could outweigh the distance travelled, in terms of overall benefit.
- However, we have **Tradition** of sustainability in this province where we can supply ourselves with our own food needs. So while the environment would be a factor in our decision making around buying local, it may not be the only or the most important one when we consider sustainability of rural communities or of the province. For NL it may not be so much Environmental but more focused on **Economic, Sustainability, and Quality Reasons**.
- We need to **Support** farmers so they can make a livable income doing their work.

Individual Opportunities

- **Purchase Directly from Processors** many shrimp and fish processing plants across the province do allow consumers to purchase directly on-site but many people aren't aware of this. Some processing plants have 'storefront shops' or stalls, but others don't, so consumers would have to visit or call to inquire about this

Gaps

- **Making the Connection** between consumers and producers either because consumers aren't aware of local options (as in above example), cannot locate local producers, or because of policy restrictions that are holding producers back from marketing themselves or their product

Policy Restraints to Buying Local Food – Many of these are also deterrents for new-entrants into agriculture or aquaculture

- **Retailer Order Volumes** are difficult to be filled by individual farms, yet if retailers inform farmers earlier, farmers could produce accordingly
- **Head Office Policies** of major retailers requiring stores to purchase majority of food from selected major wholesalers
- **Insurance & Liability** issues when selling food from several different smaller suppliers and for legislated industries such as fish, chicken, eggs.
- **Packaging & Labeling** requirements of retailers
- **Long Term Export Contracts** for fish processing plants takes away the freedom for local products to go back into the community
- **Processor and Inspection Regulations** limit the possibility of fish, eggs, and chicken products from being purchased directly from producer by consumer
- **Required Federal Inspection** for meat producers to supply major retailers across the province, Bidgoods, Colemans, Belbins are exceptions

Producer Opportunities

- **Value Added Products** NL exports a lot of raw materials instead of processing it into value-added products right here – which is where the profit margin lies
- **Producer-Processor Partnerships** where they work together to supply local consumer market
- **Co-op Model** as a way to collectively work for improved marketing and other collaborative activities, as well as in response of several policies, such as insurance, labeling, etc. The co-op model is being supported by government as a business model, and there are training sessions and financial supports available for any who want to pursue this route (available through Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development).