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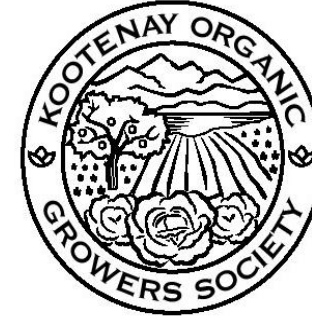
~ and ~

Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia
through the
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Agri-Food Futures Fund

Compiled by Abra Brynne, July 2003 for

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Kootenay Organic Growers Society

Presents

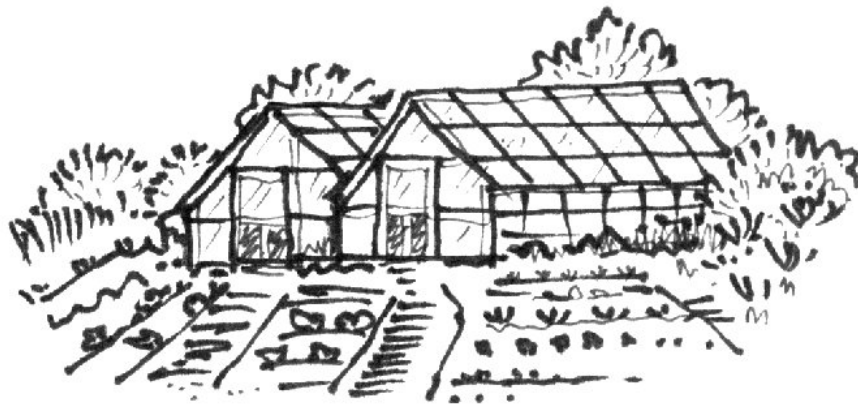
**A Marketing Guide
for Farm Product**



Notes

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*Last but not least:
Don't forget other, less conventional outlets
for your products: caterers, golf clubs,
conference organizers, Good food box programs
(generally run by local social service clubs).*

Resources

In addition to the print resources available for members through KOGS and COG (contact them/us for lists), there are many valuable resources on the internet. If you don't have internet access but would like to read any of these resources, contact the KOGS office for assistance.

Direct Marketing Resources:

<http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/economic/mgmt/diversification/dm.html>
Excellent site from Alberta Agriculture Ministry with lots of direct marketing links and models.

<http://attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/business.html>
ATTRAs marketing and business series—oodles of practical and useful information (Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas)

Post Harvest Handling

<http://postharvest.ucdavis.edu/Producefacts/index.shtml>
University of California at Davis postharvest website - recommended conditions for storage, compatibility charts etc.

Pricing

<http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa/services/prices.html>
COABC's cyberhelp price lists, regularly updated and BC-based

<http://www.newfarm.org/opx/grassrootsopx.shtml>
Rodale Institute project that supplies prices for organic produce at farmers markets in various locations across the USA.

And in case they ask why buy local:

Locally grown produce is the freshest, tastiest, and most nutritious food
It helps small family farms stay in business
Local farms preserve rural areas for future generations
Buying locally grown food supports ecological diversity
It Provides long term security and safety
It burns way less fossil fuels.

Marketing is an essential part of any farm where income is derived from farm product. There are those who feel that marketing is, in fact, more important than growing or producing product when it comes to the viability of the farm.

This Marketing Kit is intended to provide basic information about marketing but also includes suggested wholesale prices and potential markets, primarily in the region served by Kootenay Organic Growers Society (the West Kootenays) as well as larger markets outside the area.

There is an ever-increasing demand for food raised on small local farms as consumers demand better quality and taste and also embrace the social and environmental justice issues associated with farming and food production. However, most of them still want convenience and aesthetically pleasing product and these priorities must be considered whether you are selling farm-gate, through wholesalers, at the farmers market, to restaurants or retailers.

The Basics

- Don't go to a buyer cold – always call ahead and set up an appointment when first introducing your product and farm to a new buyer.
- Investigate the competition and larger markets (including chain grocers): what is selling, what are people willing to pay, how does it look, how is it packaged.
- Be aware of any regulations that can affect your product – marketing boards, food safety regulations, certification. Don't underestimate the importance of food safety – a sick customer will never buy anything from you again!
- Be aware of the packaging needs of your buyer: this can range from waxed boxes to sticker and bar codes to labelled plastic bags to no packaging at all – know what your market wants.
- A personal relationship with whomever buys your food is important for the return customer, especially if that person will also be the one eating it. This is how you develop loyalty.
- Word of mouth is the most effective and least expensive way of getting new customers which means you have to keep your established customers happy.
- Factor in the time and skills needed to do your marketing; it is labour intensive and demanding, requires creativity and people skills. If you don't have what it takes to do your own marketing, consider having someone else do it either – payment options can include a percentage of sales, barter, cash or food trade.
- And don't ever forget: the two things that will most effectively kill a market are inconsistent supply and poor quality product – we all know what mother nature can do for and to a product but the consumer won't tend to take that into account unless it is for the better!

Access and Availability

- Once you have set up a connection or contract with a buyer, make sure you contact them well in advance of your growing/production season (if you aren't year round) and then regularly (weekly if appropriate) through the season to ensure that they have all the product they can move
- Make sure the buyer knows how and when they can get a hold of you. If there isn't someone who can answer the phone during the hours your buyers usually work (this will vary depending on if it is a restaurant, retail outlet or wholesaler), make sure you have an answering machine and that you check it regularly (at least daily!)
- Have a regular delivery schedule that works for both you and the buyer.

Education and Promotion

- Don't forget promotional materials. Urban people love images of farms. Associate great product with your farm name and images. Consumers can then start to ask for your product by name, encouraging the buyer to carry more.
- Be prepared to educate those who buy your product – from wholesalers to the walk-by traffic at the farmers market. Education will help ensure a long-term commitment to buying from local farmers. Know that some of your consumers will be well educated so don't try to fool them – when they ask if the sugar has come on in the cherries yet, make sure you know. You will also build loyalty if you let the buyer know how you raise your product and why you make those choices, the impact of weather on crops and other realities of farming.

Product Characteristics

- The appearance of a product is the first thing a customer notices. For “aesthetically challenged” products education and taste tests can help; if your buyer is just going to be processing your product the look will not matter so much.
- Taste can only sell your product if people get to try it – do samples where you can and be able to describe the taste yourself (i.e. juicy, sweet, crispy, bright, tart, melt in your mouth etc. – be enthusiastic but always truthful)
- Size can matter: a single person will never make it through a 5 pound cabbage while the family of 6 will happily use it for borsch or coleslaw!

*“Monopoly Crops”
If you are able to supply the crops that few others are,
such as strawberries, broccoli, cauliflower,
green beans and fresh herbs,
you can have more say in setting the price.*

Au Soleil Levant/The Rising Sun Bakery
(Raymond or Hélène)
281 Herridge Lane
Nelson, BC V1L 6E4
250.352.2030

Edo Japan
116C-1150 Lakeside Dr.
(Chako Mika Mall)
Nelson, BC V1L 5Z3
250.352.3364

Ellison Enterprises
523 Front St.
Nelson, BC V1L 4B4
250.352.3181

Endless Harvest Organic Food Delivery (Velvet)
RR1 S23 C6
Nelson, BC V1L 5P4
250.825.4636
1.866.825.4646

Kootenay Bakery Cafe Co-op (Ian or Deborah)
377 Baker St.
Nelson, BC
250.352.2274

Kootenay Co-op
295 Baker St.
Nelson, BC V1L 4H4
250.354.4077

Producer Buyer: John
Grocery Buyer: Jacquie
Deli Buyer: Susan
Warehouse Co-ordinator: Cindy

Nature's Health Products
461 Josephine St. Nelson, BC
V1L 1W4 250.352.7557

Overwaitea Foods
1200 Lakeside Drive (Mall)
Nelson, BC V1L 5Z3
250.352.3444

Stanley Baker's Cafe (Nick)
101-402 Baker St. Nelson, BC
V1L 4H8 250.354.4458

Twisted Spoon Cafe (Katt)
608 Lake Rd,
Nelson, BC
250.352.2688

Wild Nectar
602B Josephine Nelson, BC
250.352.1988

The Only Bakery
522 Victoria St.
Nelson, BC
250.354.1200

Oso Negro (dairy, milk substitutes, honey - Jon)
#8-512 Latimer St.
Nelson, BC
250.352.7761

The Rice Bistro
301 Baker St, Nelson, BC
250.352.0933

Redfish Grill
479 Baker St.
Nelson, BC
250.352.3456

Max & Irma's Kitchen
515A Kootenay
Nelson, BC
250.352.2332 fax: 352.2378

Quality Produce
(Uli Lehnert, Sales Manager)
79 Government Rd
Nelson, BC V1L 4L9
250.352.7241

Supportive Businesses Outside the Boundary/ Kootenay Area:

Capers Community Markets
Vancouver
Grocery purchasing:
Bob Morisseau
604.739.6640 extension 206
email:
bob_morisseau@axion.net
Produce/bulk purchasing:
Bruce Ashley 604.739.6640
ext: 207
email: bruce_ashley@axion.net

Pro-Organics
4535 Still Creek Ave.
Burnaby, BC V5C 5W1
604.353.6549
1.800.461.1122

Wild West Organic Harvest
2120 Van Dyke Place
Richmond, BC V6X 2R2
604.276.2411
email: wildwest@wpnet.com

Choices Markets, Vancouver
(Rob)

Thrifty's Markets, Vancouver
Island (Christine Janson)

Discovery Organics, Vancouver
(Annie Moss)



Businesses Receptive to Local Producers

New West Trading Co. 278 Market St. Grand Forks, BC V0H 1H2 250.442.5342	Slocan Valley Co-op 3024 Hwy 6, Slocan Park, BC V0G 2E0 250.226.7433	Silver Spoon Bakery & Cafe (Anne & Malik) 301 Front St. Kaslo, BC 250.353.2898
Giant Foods (Rick) 7370 4 th St. Grand Forks, BC 250.442.5560	Hungry Wolf Cafe 5709 Highway 6 Winlaw, BC V0G 2J0 250.226.7355	Crawford Bay Store 16050 Hwy 3A Crawford Bay BC 250.227.9322
Overwaitea Foods (Jim) 441 Central Ave, Grand Forks, BC 250.442.2778	Ann's Natural Foods 805 Kildare St. New Denver, BC V0G 1S0 250.358.2552 fax: 358.7757	Dandelion Market 16072 Hwy 3A, Crawford Bay, BC 250.227.9232
Moon Beans 9A Johnson Road Christina Lake, BC V0H 1E2 250.447.9591	Eldorado Market 402-6th Ave, New Denver, BC V0G 1S0 250.358.2443	Straight From Earth Deliveries 2230 Hwy 3A, Creston, BC 250.428.5889 / 1.866.345.7333 www.straightfromearth.com sharla@straightfromearth.com
The Butcher Block (Dale & Brenda) 1885 Hwy #3 Christina Lake, BC 250.447.9559	Huckleberry Natural Foods 86-4th Ave. Nakusp, BC V0G 1R0 250.265.4744	Vital Health (very small) 127-10th Ave. N, Creston, BC 250.428.7700
Red Mountain Market 2104 Columbia Ave. Rossland, BC V0G 1Y0 250.362.5556	Re-Awakening Health Centre Broadway St, Nakusp, BC V0G 1R0 250.265.3188	Salmo Foods (Jim) 323 Davies St, Salmo, BC V0G 1Z0 250.357.9922
Mother Natures Pantry (Mickey) 276 Columbia Ave. Castlegar, BC V1N 1W4 250.365.7750	Cornucopia 422 Front St, Kaslo, BC V0G 1M0 250.353.2594	Wild N Woolly Ymir Store & Café, 7108 1 st Ave, Ymir, BC 250.357.2587
Kootenay Market 635 Columbia Ave, Castlegar, BC 250.365.1011	Mountain King 333 Front St, Kaslo, BC V0G 1M0 250.353.7788	All Seasons Cafe (Tracey) 620 Herridge Lane Nelson, BC V1L 6A7 350.352.0101
Evergreen Natural Foods (Greg - Manager; Kit & Dave - Owners) 1290 Highway 6, Crescent Valley, BC V0G 1H0 250.359.7323	Sunnyside Naturals 404 Front St./PO Box 662 Kaslo, BC V0G 1M0 250.353.9667	Alligator Pie Catering (Patrick & Erin) 1801 Hall St. Nelson BC 250.352.6115
	Crooked Cafe/Meteor Pizza 302 4 th St., Kaslo, BC 250.353.7361	

Pricing & Getting Paid: while the Kit includes suggested wholesale prices (based on 2003 local stats) it is important to know how to set prices. Some factors to consider.

- Know how much it costs you to produce a product: these costs include field prep, seeds and amendment costs, harvesting, packaging, marketing and shipping costs as well as general farm overhead such as **your salary (!)**, equipment maintenance and depreciation, property taxes, mortgages etc.
- Once you know the cost of production, factor in the profit needed beyond the break-even point. This profit margin then needs to be examined in the context of your specific market and what it will bear. Direct sales to consumers generally means that you can mark the price up higher as they would normally be buying it from a retailer with a markup of up to 100% who in turn may have bought it from a wholesaler with a markup of 50%. A 40% markup is common among those who direct market – hence the appeal for the consumer.
- Try not to get into price wars with other farmers – no one wins a war. Some farmers deliberately try to have the most expensive produce at a market and while this may discourage some it also conveys the message that your product is worth it.
- Consistent prices encourage consistent consumers. If they know from year to year and throughout the season that your prices will always be reliable, your buyers can factor that into their own budgeting, whether they are a restaurant or an individual.
- When working with wholesalers or retailers (larger markets) have a clear contract and understanding of delivery, volume, quality, packaging and payment arrangements.
- If you contract grow for a business of any sort, make sure the contract is with the business and not with individual staff members (such as chefs) who may leave.
- Don't forget that you may have returns – have a policy for dealing with this.

Market Specifics

- Restaurants are most interested in fresh produce, followed by dairy, eggs and then fruit (some demand will depend on changing menus through the seasons). Restaurants that actively support locally produced food are generally willing to pay a 10% premium over imported goods but price is a big factor for their profitability as well. Build a direct and personal relationship with the restaurant chef and/or owners in order to create the willingness to pay what you need for your product.
- Farmers Markets: make sure that your display is abundant, colourful and creative; have clear farm and price signage. Offer samples.
- Wholesalers will need consistent packaging and supply and tend to work better with less perishable products. Properly sized and graded products are essential.
- Retailers: packaging and label requirements can often be the most stringent and may require bar codes on some products. For the so-called staples such as potatoes, onions, carrots etc, visually appealing, properly sized and graded products sell a lot better. Consistent and high quality supply is necessary to foster a long-term relationship.

Item	Dates Available	Gap in local supply	Wholesale Price (est)	Comments	Farm Notes
Arugula	Year round	Minimal demand	\$1.45-\$2/ct	Novelty crop with limited sales	
Asparagus	Late May - late June	Quite high demand	\$3.50-6.50/#	Not enough local supply for demand	
Beans	Early July - beg Sept	Quite high demand	\$1.30-2.60/#	Main supplier to the Kootenay Co-op is no longer farming	
Beets	Mid July - early Apr	Low demand	\$0.80-0.85/#	Most large markets are well supplied from long-time growers	
Beets bunch	July - beg Oct	Low-med demand	\$1.20-1.30/ct		
Bok Choy family	Beg May - beg Oct	Low demand	\$1.20-1.50/#	Novelty crop with limited sales	
Broccoli	Mid Jun - beg Nov	High demand	\$1.40-2.10/#	Can be hard to grow but no local supply so market is wide open	
Burdock Root	Year round	Low demand	\$4.00/#	Supplied by long-time grower	
Cabbage green	Early Jun - mid Feb	Low-med demand	\$1.20-2.50/#	Supplied by long-time growers, but smaller markets available	
Cabbage red	Early Jun - mid Feb	Low-med demand	\$0.80-1.20/#	Supplied by long-time growers, but smaller markets available	
Cabbage savoy	Early Jun - mid Feb	Low demand	\$2.25/ct	Novelty item, Restaurants better market but take only small volumes	
Carrots bulk	Late Jul - beg April	Medium demand	\$0.80-0.90/#	Large volume of supply - market open late in winter if can store well	
Carrots bunch	Late Jul - late Sept	Low demand	\$1.00-1.65/ct	Better market at beginning and end of season	
Cauliflower	Mid Jun - beg Dec	Medium demand	\$0.95-\$2.00	Can be hard to grow but no local supply so market is wide open	
Celery	Beg Jul - beg Nov	Medium demand	\$0.75-\$1/ct	Not a hot item among the staples but no local supply	
Chard	Early Jul - beg Nov	Low demand	\$0.70-1.15/ct	Most large markets are well supplied from long-time growers	
Chard greenhouse	Year round	Medium demand	\$1.00-1.65/ct	Year-round popular veggie if can figure out the greenhousing	
Collards	Mid Aug - early Oct	Low demand	\$0.88/ct	Novelty crop with limited sales	
Corn	Late Aug - late Sept	Medium demand	\$0.35-\$50/cob	Very short season but very popular crop	
Cucumbers LE	Early Jul - beg Oct	Low demand	\$1.35-1.40/ct	Most large markets are well supplied from long-time growers	
Cucumbers Field	Early Jul - beg Oct	Medium demand	\$0.87-1.10	Most markets are happy to get field cukes	
Dandelion	Mid Jun - early Oct	Low demand	\$1.00/ct	Novelty crop with limited sales but no local supply	
Eggplant	Mid Aug - late Oct	Low demand	\$0.75-\$1.15/ct	Doesn't really grow well here	
Garlic bulbs	Early Jul - beg Feb	High demand	\$2.00-\$3.50/#	Good storage garlic does well for sales post Xmas when supply is down	
Garlic Greens	Late spring-Early Jul	Low demand	\$2.00/#	Novelty crop with limited sales	
Herbs, Basil	Early Jun - early oct	Low demand in season	\$1.50-\$1.75/2oz	Year round in greenhouse would have monopoly on market	
Herbs, Cilantro	Early Jun - early oct	Medium demand	\$0.50-0.75/ct	Consistent seller throughout the year - greenhouse operation potential	
Herbs, Parsley	Early Jun - early oct	Low-med demand	\$0.50-1.00/ct	Consistent seller throughout the year - greenhouse operation potential	
Kale	Early Sept- late Dec	Low-med demand	\$1.00-1.25/ct	Year round in greenhouse would have monopoly on market; not as popular as chard	
Leeks	Mid Aug - late May	Low demand	\$1.00-2.00/#	Solid local supply in large markets; smaller markets available	
Lettuce	Early Jun - late Oct	Medium demand	\$0.74-1.66/#	Early and late lettuce needed; overabundance during peak season	
Mizuna	Early Jul - mid Sept	Low demand	\$1.40/ct	Novelty crop with limited sales	
Mushrooms Oyster	Year round	Low demand	\$1.00/100g	Most markets are well supplied	
Mushrooms Shiitake	Year round	Low demand	\$1.95/100g	Most markets are well supplied	
Onions Green	Early May - mid Oct	Medium demand	\$0.60-1.00/ct	Main supplier to the Kootenay Co-op is no longer farming	
Onions Red	Oct - Feb	Low-med demand	\$0.90-1.00/#		
Onions White	Mid Aug - late Sept	Low demand	\$1.00-1.50/#		
Onions Yellow	July - mid March	Low demand	\$0.70-0.90/#	Solid local supply in large markets; smaller markets available	
Pasnips	Early Sept - late Mar	Low demand	\$1.50-\$2.00/#	Solid local supply in large markets; smaller markets available	
Peas English	Mid June - mid Sept	Low-med demand	\$1.40-\$2.70/#	Short season popular crop	
Peas Snap	Mid June - mid Sept	Low-med demand	\$1.40-\$2.85/#	Short season popular crop	
Peas Snow	Mid June - mid Sept	Low demand	\$1.40-\$2.70/#	Short season popular crop	
Peppers Green	Late July - early Oct	Low demand	\$1.35-\$2.25/#	Hard to grow well in most of our region - Similkameen supplies in season	
Peppers Red	Late July - early Oct	Low demand	\$2.00-2.25/#	Hard to grow well in most of our region - Similkameen supplies in season	
Potatoes	Year round	Low-med demand	\$0.80-1.00/#	Most markets are well supplied; well graded and sized potatoes always sell well	
Radish	Mid April - late Oct	Low demand	#0.80-\$1.00/ct		
Rutabaga	Mid Jun - late March	Low demand	\$0.85-1.15/#	Most large markets are well supplied from long-time growers	
Salad Greens	Year round	Low-med demand	\$1.75-\$2.25/100g	Most markets are well supplied by year-round greenhouses; small markets may need supply in off season	
Spinach	Year round	Low-med demand	\$0.75-2.20/ct	Overabundance during season; farm supplying Nelson area markets just sold	
Sprouts Deli	Year round	Low demand	\$1.25/ct	Most markets are well supplied	
Sprouts Sunflower	Year round	Low demand	\$1.25-1.30/ct	Most markets are well supplied	
Sprouts Mung	Year round	Medium demand	\$0.20-0.25/100g	Only current source is from out of area	
Sprouts Mixed Bean	Year round	Low demand	\$1.18/100g		
Sprouts Pea Shoots	Year round	Low demand	\$1.40-1.70/100g	Most markets are well supplied	
Summer Squash Patty Pan/Sunburst	Early Jul - mid Oct	Low-med demand	\$0.70/#	Short season novelty item; no real local supplier	
Summer Squash Zucchini	Early Jul - mid Oct	Medium demand	\$0.65-0.80/#	There is a glut at the height of the season; inadequate supply the rest of the time	
Sunchokes	Mid Aug - early Mar	Low demand	\$1.50-1.90/#	Novelty crop with limited sales but does well here and can be a long season crop	
Tomatoes	Early July - late Oct	See comments	\$0.80-2.00/#	Hard to have hot enough growing conditions to compete with quality out of the Okanagan	
Tomatoes Cherry	Early July - late Oct	See comments	\$2.00/ct	Hard to have hot enough growing conditions to compete with quality out of the Okanagan	
Winter Squash	Early Sept - early Feb	Low demand	\$0.65-0.75/#	Good local supply combined with high quality product from the Similkameen	