



PROJECT OVERVIEW

TITLE: Beyond the Market – Growing the North

Date: October 2010

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of the Beyond the Market: Growing the North project is to work with project partners and communities to build, strengthen, and diversify the produce industry in the Community Futures Fraser Fort George, Stuart Nechako, Nadina, and 16/37 regions by increasing access to information about regional markets and value chain opportunities, building and enhancing networks, encouraging commercial consumers to purchase local foods and encouraging value-added opportunities.

RATIONALE:

Currently there are number of commercial consumers in the region (schools, hospitals, care homes, daycares, restaurants, caterers, etc.) who purchase large quantities of imported produce. While many of these products could be supplied locally there are a number of barriers that make it difficult for local producers to enter this market. These barriers include meeting demand for the volume and consistent supply of produce required, purchasing methods that place a high emphasis on price and ease of purchase, food safety regulations and replacing existing contracts with large food suppliers. Additionally, many large food systems require that produce arrive prepared for cooking. If these challenges can be mitigated, and even a small portion of the food purchased by local commercial consumers be supplied by local farmers and value-added producers, the economic impact to the region could be significant. This opportunity would reduce the leakage of dollars out of the region as well as increase the region's food security, create jobs and build a stronger agriculture and value added industry in the North.

PARTNERS:

OBAC will partner with Community Futures, REDI-BC, Northern Health Authority, and the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George.

TIMELINES:

The project is estimated to start in October 2010 with all activities complete by December 31, 2011.

RESOURCES:

OBAC will contribute \$15,000 and a Director will participate on the project steering committee.

ACTIVITY

- Create an asset inventory and market analysis
- Bring producers and distributors/wholesalers together in each region

OUTPUTS

- Increased access to information about regional markets and value chain opportunities
- Identified potential value added markets
- Feasibility study of a regional food distribution system

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

- Stronger relationships between producers and distributors in the region
- Improved access to local foods for consumers
- Creation of new value-added processing businesses

OUTCOMES

- More local, healthy foods served in local institutions
- Systemic change to the regional food system
- A growing value-added sector
- A diversified regional economy