

Emma Holmes (Ministry of Agriculture)

Introductory Activity

Hello,

Thank-you everyone for participating in the workshop on Sunday! Attached are the notes from the groups and the results of the dotmocracy. Online forum for farmer-farmer-expert support (ie. webinars, printed resources, discussion boards, etc.) was the clear priority, with on-farm support and educational factsheets coming in second and third. Thank-you all for your input!

Based on the feedback from the small groups, I have put together a list of resources that may be helpful to you. Have a look and please don't hesitate to be in touch if you have any questions.

Grants to hire farm help:

- Agricultural Youth Green Jobs Initiative:
<http://www.agr.gc.ca/eng/programs-and-services/list-of-programs-and-services/agricultural-youth-green-jobs-initiative/?id=1459879253586> (Up to \$10,000 per intern)
- Canada Summer Jobs *application deadline is Feb 2:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/funding/canada-summer-jobs.html>
- Get Youth Working <http://www.getyouthworking.ca/employers> (\$2,800 towards internship)
- ECO Canada: <http://www.eco.ca/> (50% of cost of employment, up to \$15,000)

Groups organizing social events for farmers:

- VUFS <http://www.urbanfarmers.ca/category/vufs/>
- YA <http://youngagrarians.org/>

New Entrant Agrologist:

Heather Freeman is the New Entrant Agrologist with the BC Ministry of Agriculture and can help you with support getting started (ie. applying for farm status, accessing business coaching) and is working on projects to make farmland more accessible to new entrants. Heather.Freeman@gov.bc.ca

Organics Questions:

Do you have questions about certification or organic standards? COABC (office@certifiedorganic.bc.ca) or Emma.Holmes@gov.bc.ca can help you.

Accessing Land:

Check out Young Agrarians U-Map and land matching services.

<http://youngagrarians.org/tools/land/>

Farmer-to-Farmer Mentorship

Young Agrarians Business Mentorship Program. <http://youngagrarians.org/2018-farm-business-mentorship/>

Business Support

Farm Business Advisory Services (grant that provides business coach)

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/programs/business-development-programs/business-knowledge-strategic-adaptation/farm-business-advisory-services>

Stay tuned for a free online course offered by KPU's Chris Bodnar on Farm Financial Management (starting in Feb).

Best,

Emma Holmes, PAg MSc | Industry Specialist – Organics

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Dotmocracy Results:

1. Online forum for farmer-farmer-expert support (ie. webinars, printed resources, discussion boards, etc.). **14 votes.**
2. On-farm support with topics like drainage, integrated pest management, seed saving, clover copping, soil fertility, etc. **11 votes.**
3. Developing educational materials, like fact sheets **7 votes**
4. Field days **6 votes**
5. Coordinating farmer-to-farmer mentorships **6 votes**
6. Researching and providing info on organic production, standards, materials, and brand name products. **5 votes**
7. Telephone/email support with topics like pest and disease issues, soil test interpretation, etc. **5 votes**
8. Farmer-to-farmer workshops and seminars **3 votes**

SMALL GROUP NOTES

Biggest Challenges:

- Weeds, pests, and disease issues
- Flooding and drainage issues
- Affording farm help.
- Marketing (which affects distribution and production)
- Lack of connection with distributors and restaurants
- Extreme weather unpredictability
- Year to year land lease, lease relationships unstable
- Getting land, not enough land, not enough space for crop rotation
- Getting \$ to start-up (equipment, infrastructure, etc.)
- Difficult to find resources
- Time management
- Forecasting
- Reliability of staff
- Infrastructure

Did you reach out to SPEC? Who did you reach out to?

- SPEC is new to us
- Need for better understanding of what SPEC can provide, perhaps a website.
- Many people reached out to friends and nearby farmers.
- Yes – took part in field day and soil testing.
- Yes, soil test and the VUFS gathering and symposium.
- No, didn't know about them, need more promotions, community development, networking, and engagement.
- I also looked online (ie. Curtis Stone, Small Business BC, The Lean Farmer, The Market Gardener)
- I reached out to the Ministry

What extension services do you think would be most helpful in growing the sector?

- Some kind of central database for communication and outreach would be useful.
- More events and social gatherings.
- More technical support for farmers (crop experts, soil testing, irrigation, etc.)
- Education of the public on value of healthy, local, organic food.
- More support for new entrants into the sector.
- More locally specific resources.
- Business planning
- Sourcing of inputs (ie. bulk buy and then distribute through a network)
- Clarification of organic process for certification purposes
- Grants (for hiring, land improvement, infrastructure, affordable organic seed, business training).
- Grower resources (ie. flower growing resources)
- Affordable/free integrated pest management (including monitoring) and soil tests.
- Advocate for policies to make farming profitable.
- Support with processing/storage/transportation.
- Support with season extension
- Support producer-to-producer mentorship
- Protecting farmland
- Helping to make small plots accessible
- More cover crop seed service and soil testing (loved this!)
- Support with irrigation systems (and better agricultural water rates)
- How to fill out BC Assessment form (maybe a cheat sheet)
- Mentorship/support around certification
- Q & A for organic standards
- Online list of resources (people and products)
- Emailing Linda re: pest questions (loved this)

- Support getting coops started
- Bulk purchase of season extension materials
- SPEC CSA we can sell extras to
- More networking

Requests?

- Cover cropping site (with specific details about types, timing, etc.)
- More onsite farm help.
- Reach out, remind us we are not alone.
- More events connecting farmers to farmers that are free or very minimal costs.
- More field days.
- Call farmers, emails get lost in high season