

Agroforestry *Update*

December 2008

*British Columbia
Agroforestry
Industry
Development
Initiative*

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Forest Farming Workshop Puts Integrated Options in Focus

Courtenay, in the heart of Vancouver Island, was host to a workshop on October 16th, highlighting the opportunities and challenges of advancing the forest farming of berry crops. Forest farming is the intentional integrated management of a forest to produce a non-timber crop in conjunction with silvicultural activity such as thinning and harvesting. This latest workshop in a series of regional workshops sponsored by the BC Agroforestry Industry Development Initiative was designed to serve a growing interest in emerging production and product development opportunities from native shrub crops. It focused on accessing niche markets for specialty foods and natural health products from 'wild' berries. Workshop participants were provided a balance of practical information on production methods, harvesting and processing technology, product development and marketing with a focus on good

agricultural practices, quality and safety procedures. Four themes emerged and form a focus for development to advance forest farming in BC.

1) There is strong consumer interest in berry products highlighting the opportunity for industry growth. Challenges relate to obtaining planting stock, propagating native species and optimizing production in forested systems. Managing labour costs is also vital to enterprise success, as that is the single largest expense in a berry production enterprise.

2) Product quality and safety assurances are needed to access and maintain markets. Good agricultural practices involve a systemized approach to assessing risks, worker training and supervision and good record keeping at all stages of production.

3) Land access is a very important issue on Vancouver Island given the high proportion of land held by the Crown

and in large private land holdings. Agroforestry production can have an important role in 'wild' berry production, as an option to take pressure off increasingly overused wild harvest sites, and as a means to integrate production and conservation practices.

4) Detailed information on production methods and markets are often lacking and are a key barrier for new industry entrants. In order for the industry to develop, better access is needed to existing information as well as new research and development on forest farming methods.

Full details on the workshop, including presentation summaries, panel discussions and participant feedback is available for download from the Agroforestry Initiative website:

www.woodlot.bc.ca/agroforestry/pdf/2008_Forest_Farming_Workshop_Report.pdf

Shop the Wild 2008

*Contributed by
Holly Caine &
Tim Brigham*

Shop the Wild 2008 was a tremendous success and a fun-filled weekend for everyone who came out to Royal Roads University to learn more about BC's wild products sector. The public were welcomed to the festival by the toe-tapping fiddling of 'The Twisted String' and the younger crowd revelled in the forest fairy-themed face painting. The "Urban Beekeeping" presentation by John Defayette created a huge buzz for city folks interested in setting up hives in their backyards and Andy MacKinnon's presentation of "The Ethnobotany of Sasquatch" was standing room only. An estimated 2,000 people visited the 40 exhibitors over the two days of the festival.

Exhibitors loved the ambiance of the indoor festival and commented on the positive energy of the crowds who came out to see the rich variety of products coming from BC's forests and farmlands. As one attendee stated: *"It was one of the best markets that I have been to...a great opportunity to see the diversity of wild products and learn more!"*

Vancouver Islanders had been anticipating this once-a-year event and came to stock up on wild foods, natural products and to find unique gifts for friends and family. According to a survey of participants at the event, over 80% had purchased a wild product or service in the past year, and 78% purchase local products on a weekly basis.

Even more telling, is that 80% of the consumers surveyed reported to have both purchased wild products in the past year and had shopped at a

farmers' market. Of those, 57% shopped at farmers markets 10 or more times this past year. This indicates a niche consumer segment ready to explore new products from the wild and agroforestry sector. These consumers are already aware of the benefits of buying local – health, economic, environmental and social. Additional results of this consumer survey will soon be available on the...

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"It was one of the best markets that I have been to...a great opportunity to see the diversity of wild products and learn more!"

Quote from a 'Shop the Wild' Attendee



Shop the Wild *continued*

The next edition of the Buy BC*wild* Directory is scheduled for release in June 2009

...Buy BC*wild* website at www.buybcwild.com

The goal of this annual event is to provide an opportunity for BC's wild products sector to showcase their 'goods from the woods' and share their passion and knowledge with the public. The festival provides a great opportunity to educate the public and more than 500 Buy BC*wild* directories and Agroforestry brochures were handed out over the two days. Additional copies of both the directory and brochure are being distributed through Thrifty Foods locations throughout BC.

The Centre for Non-Timber Resources extends its sincere thanks to the volunteers, staff and sponsors who helped make this event a *wild* success! Partial funding for the public market and directory were provided by the BC Agroforestry Industry Development Initiative as part of meet-ing its goal of improving the market connections for agroforestry producers in BC.

The next edition of the Buy BC*wild* Directory is scheduled for release in June 2009 – and listings remain free. It's worth noting that 56% of the producers currently listed

in the directory have a direct connection to a farm or woodlot production; we would like to see the number of agroforestry related businesses increase even further in the next edition. You can view the Buy BC*wild* Directory at www.buybcwild.com/buy-bcwild-directory.

If you are interested in listing your business in the upcoming edition of the directory or hosting a Shop the Wild event in your community, please contact Jenny at bcwild@royalroads.ca



An estimated 2,000 people visited the 40 exhibitors over the two days of the 2008 Shop the Wild festival.

Announcements and Upcoming Events

Bigleaf Maple Syrup Festival

Saturday
February 7, 2009
 10:00 am to 4:00 pm
 Duncan

The Second Annual Bigleaf Maple Syrup Festival will be held at the BC Forest Discovery Centre in Duncan. The festival features mini-workshops on maple tapping and syrup making, maple syrup tasting, a maple syrup competition judged by celebrity chefs, maple product vendors, free maple tea and live entertainment. Entries for the maple syrup tasting are due in January. For more information please contact Aimee Greenaway, Program Coordinator, BC Forest Discovery Centre, 250 715-1113 ext 25, education.bcfdc@shawlink.ca or visit www.discoveryforest.com

West Coast Maple Syrup Education Program

Friday,
February 6, 2009

The BC Forest Discovery Centre and the Vancouver Island *Sapsuckers* will be hosting a West Coast

Maple Syrup education program for students in grades 4-7. The program educates students on the maple tapping industry using hands-on activities and demonstrations. The education program is expected to attract schools in the south/central island region.

2009 Agriculture Industry Gala

February 18, 2009
 Ramada Inn, Abbotsford.

Enjoy an evening celebrating the food and wine industry and recognizing leadership in the agriculture industry in BC. Emceed by Gloria Macarenko, CBC News Vancouver-Jack Webster Award Winner for News Reporting. Guest Speaker- Dr. Joe Schwarcz- award winning scientist and author who demystifies the science of health and food for the public, media and students. The Awards Program, presented by the BCAC, BC Outstanding Young Farmer Program and Investment Agriculture Foundation of BC. Valuable networking opportunities with over 450 agricultural industry, farm organization leaders and agribusiness

representatives. Silent Auction! Great new raffle initiative! Support for the Abbotsford Food Bank. For tickets or sponsorship opportunities call the BCAC office at 250-763-9790 or susan@bcac.bc.ca For more information visit: www.bcac.bc.ca

Maple Sugaring Workshops

January/February 2009
 Ladysmith

Learn how to tap and make syrup from Vancouver Island's native maple trees. Workshops include a classroom session with a PowerPoint presentation, and then the group moves outside for a hands-on tapping demonstration. Workshops also include a visit to the Backlund's evaporator to smell and taste maple syrup being made.

2009 workshop dates to be announced, sponsored by The Land Conservancy - Wildwood. For registration, contact Jay Rastogi at 250-816-1816 or jay@conservancy.bc.ca

Email blmaple@shaw.ca for more information.

Continued next page

Announcements and Upcoming Events *continued*

A reminder that the **deadline** for written submissions for the development of the British Columbia Agroforestry Industry Strategic Plan is **Wednesday, December 24, 2008**

2009 Food Safety Workshops

January 19, Courtenay
January 23, Vancouver
January 26, Quesnel
January 30, Langley

Food safety is on everyone's mind. Food safety workshops provide a valuable education tool and an opportunity to network and gain access to information that could enhance your bottom line. You'll get a 'one stop shop' for information on opportunities; a forum on current and incoming labelling regulations; and direct access to organizations that will be onsite:

- 1.) Small Scale Food Processors Association - Food Safety Program Manager will answer questions about the education and funding available through the Food Safety Initiative.
- 2.) Robert A. Arthurs, Procurement and Business Opportunities for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.
- 3.) BC Food Processor's Health and Safety Council - an industry sponsored organization that is committed to improve workplace safety.
- 4.) Healthy Food and

Beverage Sales representatives for three initiatives in BC reflecting a global trend for healthy food and beverages. New guidelines and programs create business opportunities for food producers, processors and distributors.

5.) Canadian Food Inspection Agency will answer questions about product labelling regulations.

Workshops are free and lunch is provided. To confirm a seat please register ASAP for a workshop in your region. For more information or to register call toll free:

1-866-619-7372

11th Annual Pacific Agriculture Show

February 19 – 21, 2009
 Tradex Center,
 Abbotsford
 9:00am - 4:30pm
 Admission \$9.00 at the door

The Pacific Agriculture Show will showcase the latest and most innovative equipment and technology for the agriculture industry. Join thousands of agri-food producers in comparing and investigating what over 200 dealers and manufacturers have to make your

operation more efficient. The Show will feature important meetings and conferences from many sectors including:

- BC Dairy Expo
- Horticulture Growers Short Course
- Livestock Shows
- Ag Zone and Mini Circle Farm Tour

For more information call (604) 291-1553 or email: info@agricultureshow.net

BC Land Summit

May 20 - 22, 2009
 Telus Conference Centre
 Whistler

A Better Future: Adapting to Change. The Land Summit will be an interdisciplinary conference organized by six professional organizations, all of whom share ties to land use in BC and who will combine their 2009 annual conferences into this exciting joint venture. The Summit will build on the success of the 2004 Land Summit, and will provide opportunities to learn, share ideas, collaborate and network with others working in diverse land-related fields. For more information visit:

www.bclandsummit.com.

Agroforestry Update

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All back issues of Agroforestry Update are available for a free download:

www.woodlot.bc.ca/agroforestry/news

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Contact Us

George Powell,
Agroforestry Initiative
Facilitator
agroforestry@uniserve.com

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- 3) Organization or interest in agroforestry (optional)

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If you have suggestions for future editions of the *Update* or know of an event that should be included, please let us know.

The **Federation of British Columbia Woodlot Associations** administers the BC Agroforestry Initiative.



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The logo for Canada, featuring the word 'Canada' in a serif font with a small Canadian flag to the right.



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