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SMALL SCALE
FOOD PROCESSOR
Association (SSFPA)



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The newsletter with a vision of regional food sustainability

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Snapshot of the Small Scale Food Processor Association (SSFPA)

In the late 1990s, Community Economic Development (CED) workers in BC became aware of a growing number of value-added food ventures being organized by small-scale processors. In working with them, it became clear that several initiatives across the province were emerging, that most groups were facing the same challenges, and that some structural barriers to success of these enterprises were common. It was also clear that

there is a lively and growing market for value-added food products in small-scale niches—niche markets that larger processors find uneconomic.

In order to share experiences and clarify the issues, a workshop was planned for April 2001 and was held in Richmond, BC. This meeting resulted in a strong consensus from the seventy-five people present that an organization to support the in-

terests of the small-scale processor would assist members to reach their goals. The April 2001 Outcome Report of the Sectoral Consultation Event is available upon request.

A Steering Committee was formed and met many times over a two plus years for planning and to submit an application for incorporation.

The SSFPA was incorporated on June 4, 2002 as a federal non-profit corporation.

Strategy developed to date

One-Year Goals

Develop a strategic plan; Conduct baseline industry research; Establish an information clearinghouse; Develop a communications plan; Define geographic food cultures; Build strategic partnerships; Develop and promote commercial kitchen incubator support program; Develop

advocacy strategy regarding regulations.

Five-Year Goals

Develop communications strategy; Plan for a sustainable industry association; Achieve name recognition; Develop a web portal or equivalent; Develop institutionalized partnerships; Pro-

vide support for industry training; Plan pro-active relationships with regulators; Develop Provincial marketing system strategically linked with regional systems; Offer ongoing training and mentoring; Name a development finance source; Establish gastronomic regions; Open regional development offices and staff.

Current Activities:

- ❶ Membership drive.
- ❷ 'Market Scoping Project' completed Aug 30, 2002, provides information regarding issues facing small-scale food processors in their interaction with the market.
- ❸ 'Field to Table Partnership Project' is a community-planning project, to be launched in November 2002, that will work with four regions to develop agriculture and agri-food community economic development plans.
- ❹ Registration and help desk for SSFPA members that are using the Living Inventory. The Living Inventory is a tool for SSFPA members, so it is in the members' only part of a secure website. There are development plans to have a non-member page that will direct both members and non-members to associate and strategic websites. There are many specific types of websites that have the consumer as the audience and the

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- SSFPA does not wish to duplicate efforts; the SSFPA's plan is to support the processor, so the processor is the audience of the Living Inventory and the website that supports the tools.
- ❶ Preparing for a SSFPA Spring 2003 conference on Innovation, Vertical & Horizontal Integration, Cluster Strategies and Networks in agriculture and agri-food development.

The SSFPA Vision is to create regional food sustainability.

SSFPA Values

Project by project, viability will be determined on the basis of the following Values of the SSFPA:

Food safety
The right to a living wage
Food security for all
Regional capacity
Collaboration and co-operation
Sector support
Best nutritional quality possible
Local community sustainability
Celebration to mark milestones

SSFPA Mission

The Mission of the SSFPA is to represent the interests of small-scale food processors by:

- ❶ Establishing an industry identity
- ❷ Supporting regionally based small-scale food processor systems
- ❸ Providing relevant and timely information
- ❹ Advocacy for supportive policies
- ❺ Creating programs to support development and growth of small-scale food processors.

What does the SSFPA bring to the community?

- ❶ Documented knowledge from small-scale food processors about small-scale food processors and their interests.
- ❷ Data from the Market Scoping Project, which includes recommendations for the processors, the SSFPA, government and all other parts of the food value chain.
- ❸ Regional information collection and strategic planning are in process. The process is designed to facilitate community control.
- ❹ A platform to grow a network of agriculture and agri-food resources in BC and Alberta, which could increase the processors' products ability to reach the market.
- ❺ Current network of contacts, especially in community economic development.
- ❻ An accessible Internet Technology platform is developed, which is ready for SSFPA future needs that are to be identified during the Field to Table workshops in 2003.