

**The Apple Shouldn't Fall Far From the Tree:  
Extending Local Food Purchasing**

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AGSC 450

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**Abstract**

It is evident that disconnection between people and their food is increasing; however, public support for local food initiatives is growing continually. One such initiative, the University of British Columbia Food System Project (UBCFSP), strives to relocalize the UBC food system through its collaboration with various partners and stakeholders, such as UBC Food Services (UBCFS) and the Alma Mater Society Food and Beverage Department (AMSFBD). Relocalization is not only integral to all aspects of sustainability, but also is critical to any community's food security. As a microcosm of Canada, UBC has the potential to change perspectives by using the UBCFSP to provide positive evidence that relocalization is feasible, thus reinforcing UBC's role as a worldwide leader in sustainability.

Scenario One of the UBCFSP focused on "Extending Local Food Purchasing." Our group focused on local produce, as suggested by Dorothy Yip (UBCFS) and Nancy Toogood (AMSFBD). The primary concerns expressed by UBCFS and AMSFBD regarding relocalization were adequate volumes and availability, followed by quality and price. We investigated five possibilities: new distributors, the UBC Farm, a food cooperative, current distributors, and Small Potatoes Urban Delivery (SPUD). To acquire pertinent information, we conducted face-to-face, email, and telephone interviews with partners, distributors, producers and other stakeholders. Numerous barriers arising for the first three possibilities include: inadequate and/or inconsistent volumes, availability, and quality; as well as concerns with distribution methods, purchasing procedures, and exclusivity contracts. As a result, the direction of this project shifted from a focus on the UBC Farm, to investigating local food purchasing through current UBCFS and AMSFBD distributors: Allied Foods and Central Foods, respectively. The interest expressed by these distributors regarding providing more local produce warrants further investigation by future colleagues. Correspondence with SPUD, which is currently expanding into corporate deliveries, should continue in order for us to assess potential collaboration with the UBC Food System Project.

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**Introduction**

With food often travelling between 2,500 and 4,000 kilometers (in the United States) from farms to consumers (Halweil 5), the increasing disconnection between people and the food they consume seems like an inescapable condition. Yet, as shown by the growth of public support for local food initiatives such as local farmers' markets and box-food programs, people genuinely seem to want a re-invigoration of their local food systems (Stephenson & Lev 211). Relocalization of food sources is not only integral to all aspects of sustainability, but also is critical to any community's food security. So, relocalization is an empowering process that stimulates community building.

As part of an ongoing collaborative project, our group has had the opportunity to help increase the feasibility of our transition towards a sustainable food system at the University of British Columbia (UBC). The teaching team of Agricultural Sciences 450 (AGSC 450) has envisioned and supported this project with the support of the accumulated knowledge of past AGSC 450 colleagues. Originally a five-year plan, the University of British Columbia Food System Project (UBCFSP) takes the form of community-based action research (CBAR). Since its inception, the teaching team has extended the UBCFSP to build on cumulative knowledge and efforts, as part of our ongoing process of working towards a sustainable food system at UBC. Partners include: UBC Social Ecological Economic Development Studies (SEEDS), UBC Campus Sustainability Office, UBC Food Services (UBCFS), Alma Mater Society Food and Beverage Department (AMSFBD), UBC Farm, UBC Waste Management, UBC Sage Bistro, and Sauder School of Business.

In contributing to the 2006 UBCFSP's scenario one, "Extending Local Food Purchasing", we contacted UBC food providers and their produce suppliers, as well as local producers, with hopes of creating stronger relationships. Our ultimate goal was to facilitate a transition toward increasing the amount of local produce available to campus consumers. Our paper will begin with our definition of "local" food, a problem statement, a discussion of our connections to campus sustainability; followed by our vision statement, biases, and value assumptions. Next we will describe our methods, results, and discussion. Finally, we will address barriers

and challenges particular to our project, recommendations for our future colleagues, and our reflections on the project.

### **Definition of 'Local'?**

There are endless number of definitions for 'local' food: ranging from a quote from Gussow, "within a day's leisurely drive from our homes" (Halweil 58); to stricter distance requirements, such as within a certain kilometer radius from the consumer; or within political boundaries, such as 'from within BC'. Locality, defined as markets that are "expressions of proximity based on familiarity with and commitment to nearby place, community and environment," represents a more theoretical understanding of this concept (Hinrichs 297).

Initially, our group decided to define local produce as "grown in British Columbia (BC)", as this definition was used by our colleagues in past years (2005 UBCFSP Report 31). Dorothy Yip of UBCFS also supports this definition of local (Yip 22 March 2006). Our decision to define local as BC-grown is appropriate given our intention to focus on produce that is available readily within BC (Hague et al. 5). We feel that our use of a political boundary is justifiable because of the argument that spending in BC will benefit the provincial economy, strengthen the tax base, and support jobs in the agricultural sector (Pretty 1). Also, we felt a BC-grown definition could help influence local policy towards supporting BC purchasing initiatives.

In retrospect, we realized a bioregionalism view – where human communities are grounded within their natural regions – has merit as well. Bioregionalism would link BC to Washington State because of its close proximity and ecological similarity. In an era where trade disputes and nationalism are ever increasing, it might be beneficial to strengthen our connections to natural neighbors within our foodshed (Jason 226). Because we propose to discuss prospects of relocalization with large-scale international distributors, we need to recognize that they may be more interested in convenience and economics than ecological sustainability. Perhaps it would have been wise for us to encourage these distributors to consider producers that are closer geographically to UBC than their current sources, as opposed to limiting our search to within our political boundary.

**Problem Statement**

Our main focus was “to implement measures collectively deemed necessary to facilitate transitions towards UBC food system sustainability” (2005 UBCFSP Report 19). Scenario One, as described by the 2006 UBCFSP, originally suggested that we focus on extending local food purchasing through the UBC Farm. Because three other groups were looking at that prospect, we slightly altered our focus to the purchasing practices of UBCFS and AMSFBD. We communicated our intention to pursue a different path to the AGSC 450 teaching team with a letter. Please see Appendix A for a copy of this letter and the subsequent response from the AGSC 450 teaching team.

Our review of group 2’s report from the Summer 2004 UBCFSP revealed that “re-localizing fresh produce at UBC is feasible since 83 percent of the produce ordered by UBCFS and AMSFBD can be obtained from a BC source. However, due to the price and quality concerns, only 23 percent of the produce purchased by the AMS is obtained from a BC source” (Chai, Hadiwidjaja, & Soon 3). As a result of this report, we decided to focus on facilitating an increase in local produce purchasing by the UBCFS and AMSFBD through food distributors. The idea that targeting distributors is essential reinforced our idea; as they are often the link in the supply chain that is least concerned about food origins (McNair 5).

Our research question is based on the determination of feasibility as outlined by Group 17 from the Spring 2004 UBCFSP (Hague et al. 9-15). This group suggested that future colleagues ought to focus on assessing the current commodity prices paid by UBCFS and AMSFBD, outlining which commodities could be purchased locally, and assessing whether UBCFS and AMSFBD would be interested in supporting local food purchasing (Hague et al. 13-14). Group 2 from Summer 2004 researched which commodities are available from local sources (Chai, Hadiwidjaja, & Soon 17-24), so we decided to focus on building relationships with UBCFS and AMSFBD to determine their needs and interests with respect to extending local food purchasing.

**UBC: Microcosm of a Larger Food System**

Are Canadian Farms in crisis? According to CBC's Cross Country Check Up, the answer is yes, Canadians believe that the family farm is disappearing, and people want solutions (CBC). The UBCFSP is a timely project that can contribute substantially to this discourse. By assessing the various aspects of UBC's food system, and actively shifting campus policies and activities towards achieving our goals of sustainability, we have the opportunity to serve as a model for other communities. This leadership role is vital for any forward-thinking university.

We recognize that there are limitations to the analogy of UBC as a microcosm of other communities.

Discrepancies include:

- The fact that only a very small percentage of the 'population' actually resides on campus (though this is rapidly changing)
- The population is highly transient, with undergraduate students flowing through and leaving after four years, making it hard to develop 'civic pride'
- Food purchases are primarily ready-to-eat, given the fact that the campus is more of a working location, like a downtown.

**Leadership**

As a university we have a responsibility to our community to adopt a leadership role. Carnes and Karsten (180) state that "without broad support from citizens and community leaders markets for local food [will] not thrive." Just as institutional support has existed historically for large-scale business, now these alternative systems need support in order to promote their growth (Stephenson & Lev 210; Halweil 10; Pretty 1). As a campus of 40,000 people, UBC is in the position to make a small but significant difference in demand for local products.

## **Why Local Food? A Review of the Literature**

Buying local food is a central aspect of creating a sustainable food system. As descriptions of sustainability usually depend on three fundamental pillars, we will demonstrate the value of local food to each of the following issues:

Environmental: The primary argument for local food is often due to its lower food miles. Less transportation of food directly results in less consumption of electricity, fossil fuels, and less packaging (Halweil 14). Local farms can contribute also to watershed and habitat protection, which can have a positive impact on consumers (Halweil 14).

Social: Local food availability gives consumers confidence regarding health and the environmental conditions, as well as the food security of their region (McNair 3). Food is fresher and more nutritious when consumed closer to its production point (McNair 3). As only 2% of BC's population works in agriculture, support of local agriculture is imperative to the protection of job diversity and rural communities (McNair 3).

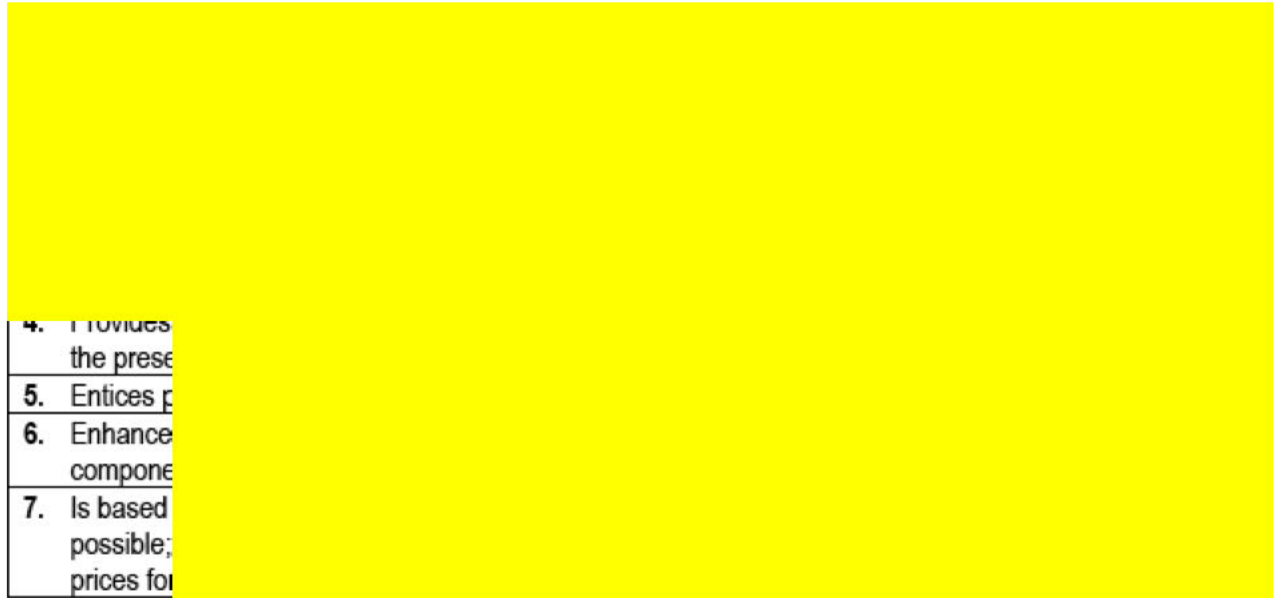
Economic: A recent study in England found that money spent on local food generates approximately double the amount of money spent in the supermarket (New Economics Foundation). The multiplier effect of local spending is critical to economic development, along with the fact that a higher percentage of food costs will go directly to farmers (Pretty 5). In addition, predictions are growing about dramatic increases in fuel prices accompanied by stricter penalties on companies causing environmental damage. Moreover, information provision requirements are on the horizon, where companies are going to have to state their air, water and land emissions (Portney 2001; Robertson et al.1922). These increased costs and restrictions will heavily discriminate against long-distance food; therefore, it is economically wise to develop buying systems that will be more dependent on local foods.



**Vision Statement, Group Biases, and Identification of Value Assumptions**

Collaboration between former UBCFSP colleagues and partners to ensure the sustainability of the UBC Food System has led to the development of a vision statement, as shown in Figure 1 (2005 UBCFSP Report 27).

*Figure 1: Vision Statement as Presented in the 2005 UBCFSP Report (27)*



As a group we agree that the overarching goal of a sustainable food system is to protect and enhance the diversity and quality of the ecosystem and to improve social equity. However, we also believe that in order to address our problem statement fully, we must place an emphasis on the economy. Everyone in the group has taken a weak anthropocentric stance in addressing our problem. In attempting to meet the needs of UBCFCS, AMSFBD, and UBC Farm, we approached our issue from a human-centered point of view. We assumed that we would strive to provide locally grown, produced, and processed food as much as possible. At the same time, we wanted to ensure that options were ethnically diverse, affordable, safe, and nutritious; and that fair prices would be provided through the supply chain to the distributor level. As a result of working with various distributors, producers, UBCFCS, and AMSFBD, we assumed that we would be working towards enhancing community, increasing networking, and promoting communication at all levels.

We were aware of environmental impacts and believed that local choices from established reputable farmers would ensure that the project would address environmental needs. Our main focus, however, was to maintain purchasing standards (i.e. price, quality, volume, availability) established by UBCFS and AMSFBD.

Our analysis of the three pillars of sustainability (social, economic and environmental) presented in the UBCFSP (2004 UBCFSP Report 20-21) led us to believe that the project had not addressed adequately the economic aspects of sustainability. We felt this way because we found that buyers tend to make their purchasing decisions based on food economics (price, quantity, quality). Social and environmental concerns are simply aspects of economic considerations applied to purchasing decisions. Even the UBC Farm, as part of the UBC food system, must demonstrate economic viability (cost recovery) to be successful. We feel that economic viability should be a principle on its own.

We agree with all seven guiding principles (2005 UBCFSP Report 27) of the UBCFSP Vision Statement. Our group addressed principles one, three, five and seven directly. With respect to principle seven, we believe that we could use this to illustrate the importance of economic viability as well as the use of economics as a communication tool across paradigms. Our main goal was to work within the system and improve it; we found that economics is quite a large part of decision making within that system. We also assumed that principles two, four and six were emergent. We believe that by working with local producers and reputable distributors who are willing to adapt to consumer preferences, we would address the principles of local compost, education, and nutrition indirectly. For example, both local farmers and UBC already compost food waste. Ethical distributors can participate in UBC educational initiatives – promoting the community and health benefits of local foods during events such as Responsible Consumption Week (<http://www.ubc-rcw.org/>).

UBC Campus is a microcosm of the world food system. In addition to our varied life experience, our group is ethnically diverse: representing European, Asian, Middle Eastern, North American, and Southeast Asian perspectives. This diversity, while helping us understand the world food system (where we all make

decisions based on our needs and ethnic backgrounds), also provides us with a “wider lens” for use in assessing food systems.

### **Methodology**

Our methods were based on our intention to conduct action-based research. Our literature review included past findings from AGSC 450 students, scholarly peer-reviewed journals, books, and public policy reports from non-governmental organizations. The focus of our literature review was to generate project ideas as well as to learn more about the benefits of food relocalization. As part of our needs assessment, we conducted interviews with project partners at UBCFS (Dorothy Yip) and AMSFBD (Nancy Toogood) to ascertain food ordering and purchasing patterns of individual retail outlets throughout the year. We also asked these partners for input regarding project ideas and preferences with respect to both current and potential distributors.

We formulated lists of questions to ask B.C. produce farmers and food distributors (see Appendix B) to assess their willingness to participate in the UBCFSP project. We decided to contact these producers and distributors by email at first and followed up with phone calls if we were able to find phone numbers. Our list of producers was derived from a list of vendors that participate in local farmer’s markets (Your Local Farmer’s Market Society) and our list of distributors was based on information from UBCFS and AMSFBD. For a list of the producers and distributors we contacted, please see Appendix C. Finally, to ensure that our email and phone interviews met ethical guidelines for this project, we sent copies of a project introduction letter from the teaching team and an ethics consent form with all emails.

### **Findings**

As indicated in our problem statement, we decided to focus on conducting a needs assessment with respect to increasing the amount of local produce available through UBCFS and AMSFBD. Our findings are a direct result of our correspondence with Dorothy Yip (UBCFSP) and Nancy Toogood (AMSFBD); along their respective produce distributors, Allied Foods and Central Foods. As local companies, Allied Foods (Yip 22

March 2006) and Central Foods (Central Foods 13 April 2006) have expressed an interest in extending local purchasing.

### UBC Food Services

UBCFS is already moving towards extending local food purchasing. Much of its meat and egg supplies come from local producers (Yip 22 March 2006). Dorothy Yip wanted us to focus on produce with respect to sufficient volume and product availability, as we could address quality and financial costs later (Yip 15 March 2006). UBCFS also stressed the necessity of year-round produce availability. UBCFS is reluctant and unable to order seasonally; seasonal purchasing could potentially complicate purchasing procedures and interfere with current exclusivity contracts (Yip 22 March 2006).

### *Statistics*

Dorothy Yip was able to provide us with annual purchasing information organized by retail outlet (specific commodity, number of units ordered, and food origin). Monthly data, indicating purchasing distributions of specific commodities, and percentage figures were not available (Yip 15 March 2006; Yip 22 March 2006).

### *Purchasing Procedures*

Each retail outlet orders food independently from Allied Foods (Yip 22 March 2006). Outlet managers stamp and sign the invoices and send them to UBCFS Administration for processing in accordance with UBC Financial Services (Yip 22 March 2006). The amount of local food available depends on quality. For example, if produce does not meet the quality standards set by UBCFS and Allied Foods (i.e. as a result of poor harvest and weather conditions), Allied Foods will present UBCFS with two options (Yip 22 March 2006). UBCFS can choose to either purchase local foods at a higher price, because good quality produce will be less abundant, or purchase non-local produce (Yip 22 March 2006). More often than not, UBCFS will choose the latter option to ensure quality at a price that fits their budget (Yip 22 March 2006).

*Contracts*

Currently, UBCFS holds an exclusivity contract with Allied Foods for all produce items. UBCFS has established contracts for other commodities with a number of other distributors. Typically, contracts last two years with the option of extending the contract for another year. When the contract ends, UBCFS opens contract bidding to all interested distributors. Bidders must be able to guarantee quality, quantity, price, service and specific commodities for UBCFS (Yip 22 March 2006).

AMS Food and Beverage

AMSFBD has an interest in becoming more sustainable by offering locally produced foods. As it stands, 15 of their top 20 most used products are from local producers already (Toogood 8 March 2006). The majority of these products are meat products and eggs (Toogood 8 March 2006). In moving towards local food, adequate volume is the primary focus, followed by financial costs (Toogood 8 March 2006).

*Statistics*

We acquired comprehensive data from Nancy Toogood regarding all food purchases with respect to unit size, unit price, total monthly expenditures, and total weekly purchases. Unfortunately, we did not receive any information regarding food origin. Though the data was nearly exhaustive, we received information only for three months of the year: September, February, and July 2005. These months are reflective of seasonal variation in availability and sales.

*Purchasing Procedures*

AMSFBD currently orders its produce through Central Foods and the remainder of its products through SYSCO (Toogood 8 March 2006). The AMSFBD Purchasing Manager makes orders for all retail outlets and the AMS processes all financial transactions. The AMS keeps delivered food in a storage unit in the basement of the Student Union Building and redistributes products to retail outlets each morning (Toogood 8 March 2006). AMSFBD would like to maintain a simple ordering and purchasing procedure, preferring to

work with one or two distributors who can provide local produce, rather than with a large number of individual producers (Toogood 8 March 2006).

### *Contracts*

Currently, AMSFBD does not hold contracts with any distributors except for Coca-Cola (Toogood 8 March 2006). This arrangement allows AMSFBD more flexibility in working with other produce distributors than UBCFS, which must honour its exclusivity contracts (Toogood 8 March 2006). Nancy Toogood does not expect Central Foods to respond negatively to AMSFBC orders from local produce distributors because, due to seasonality, most local food ordering would occur during the slow summer months and would have a minimal effect on annual purchases from Central Foods (Toogood 8 March 2006).

### **Discussion**

Based on our findings, it is clear that both UBCFS and AMSFBD have an interest in ordering more local food on campus. According to Dorothy Yip and Nancy Toogood, both operations already buy a large proportion of their meat products and eggs from local sources. Both wanted us to focus on relocalizing produce, with a particular emphasis on finding an approach that will ensure sufficient volume and availability, followed by a quality and financial cost assessment.

In general terms, our group needed to determine how to get produce to campus and how UBCFS and AMSFBC could order this produce. From here, we took a number of directions: we investigated the potential for new distributors, the UBC Farm, the possibility of forming a food cooperative through a network of local producers, current distributors, and Small Potatoes Urban Delivery (SPUD).

### New Distributors

We attempted to contact distributors that UBCFS and AMSFBD do not currently work with, such as B&C Food Distributors, Aramark Canada, Wallace & Carey Inc., and Neptune Food Services. For a list of distributors we contacted, please see Appendix C. Aramark Canada did not respond to our inquiry. We learned that B&C Food Distributors deals with mainly with meat products and a small amount of produce that

is not locally grown (Miskulin). With respect to Neptune Food Services, we made email contact with a representative named Jennifer Martin, but were unable to converse on the telephone due to her busy schedule (Martin).

### UBC Farm

Because of its locality and its direct connection to the university, the UBC Farm seemed to be an ideal produce source for UBCFS and AMSFBD. Even though AMSFBD is interested in buying UBC Farm produce (Toogood 22 March 2006), both UBCFS and AMSFBD found that the UBC Farm does not produce sufficient volume to meet their needs (Parr; Toogood 22 March 2006). Also, the UBC Farm does not have the capacity to increase production to meet variety and volume needs for UBCFS and AMSFBD (Bomford). The UBC Farm does, however, serve as an educational model for local, sustainable food production (Bomford).

### UBC Farm Food Cooperative

A UBC Farm Food Cooperative would provide a network linking UBCFS, AMSFBD, the UBC Farm, and local producers. The cooperative would be based at the UBC Farm; however, ordering and transactions would occur online through a website. This website would run on a members-only basis where local producers who meet specified parameters (including quality, volume, price, availability, distribution) are eligible for membership. Members could post information – such as farm location, distribution capacities, and types of commodities available along with volume, price, and quality – to allow potential buyers, such as individual UBCFS and AMSFBD food retail outlets, to receive categorized information. Purchasing would occur via secure internet transactions and members would participate in weekly Farm Markets (other UBCFSP groups are investigating Farm Market initiatives). Producers could deliver food outlet orders to coincide with these weekly Farm Markets; acting as a distributor, UBC would be responsible for distributing the produce to appropriate retail outlets.

We contacted a number of local fruit and vegetable producers (Appendix C) to determine whether or not they would be interested in collaborating with such a website. Though few producers responded to our

inquiry, those who did respond expressed interest (Driediger; Ritson; Planting Seeds Project). As for UBCFS, internet transactions for purchasing are not in alignment with current procedures governed by UBC Financial Services and are in violation with their current contract with Allied Foods (Yip 28 March 2006). Dorothy Yip believes that Allied Foods may be flexible with UBCFS purchasing some commodities from alternate sources, provided they grant full consent (Yip 28 March 2006). With respect to AMSFBD, Nancy Toogood felt that Central Foods would benefit from having access to a local purchasing website, but when we asked Central Foods about this possibility, we realized that a website may not be useful for this distributor (Wong).

### Current Distributors

Perhaps the best option for extending local food purchasing is the most practical option. UBCFS and AMSFBD have existing relationships with Central Foods and Allied Foods. Both distributors have expressed interest in accessing more local foods. It would make sense for us to work within the current system rather than searching for ways to change it.

While a website for online purchasing may not be feasible, a website may be useful as a vehicle for describing potential local producers that Central Foods and Allied Foods could work with. Central Foods stated that websites do not allow them to assess produce quality and Allied Foods did not respond to our website inquiry. We do not feel that this precludes Central Foods and Allied Foods from learning more about potential producers and meeting with these producers for direct quality assessment. However we decide to find local producers, these producers will need to meet selection guidelines set out by our distributors. Allied Foods has provided us with a brief overview of their quality assurance standards and producer requirements (see Appendix D). Central Foods did not provide us any specific quality guidelines, stating only that they choose to work with “reputable” distributors (Wong).

Before we can expand the network of local producers that our distributors work with, we need to know which producers they are working with currently. Upon receiving this information, we could cross-reference lists of producers working with our distributors with other lists (such as Your Local Farmer’s Market) to



identify the potential for new relationships. Central Foods claims to be purchasing as much local produce as possible, but was unable to provide us with a list of current local producers because it “all depends on what is available” (Wong). Allied Foods has provided us with a list of their current local producers (Appendix D).

### Small Potatoes Urban Delivery (SPUD)

Late in our research, SPUD presented us with an exciting opportunity for collaboration (Nichols). Currently, SPUD is investigating the possibility of expanding into corporate deliveries, beginning with Simon Fraser University and UBC (Nichols). This development merits further investigation. SPUD may be well suited to our goals: they already provide a large proportion of organic and/or local produce; have a fully functional, user-friendly website; and have the capacity to package, transport and distribute all orders (Nichols). Erin Nichols, Promotions Supervisor at SPUD, welcomes continued dialogue with future AGSC 450 colleagues and has requested a copy of our final report (Nichols).

### Barriers and Challenges

Throughout our project, we were challenged by a number of barriers:

1. Through talking with Allied Foods and Central Foods, it seems apparent to us that, due to economic concerns, these distributors may not share our bias towards the relocalization of our food system. This may make collaboration difficult.
2. Current distributors are market-driven and constantly seek competitive prices. It is necessary, and challenging, to find competitive local farmers who are able to guarantee quality and quantity.
3. When contacting distributors and producers, we did not receive swift responses to our emails and phone calls. In many cases, we received no response at all.

### **Recommendations**

According to the above findings and discussions, our group has proposed some suggestions to provide guidance for future research:

1. To acquire an understanding of pertinent background information, and to define clear project goals and objectives, read the following reports thoroughly: Group 17's Spring 2004 paper (Hague et al.), Group 2's Summer 2004 paper (Chai, Hadiwidjaja & Soon), the 2004 UBCFSP Report and 2005 UBCFSP Report.
2. Start early and collaborate with other scenarios – determine information needs immediately and contact the appropriate stakeholders as soon as possible to increase opportunities for making connections.
3. Continue correspondence with Allied Foods and Central Foods, the current UBCFS and AMSFBD distributors.
  - a. Determine whether or not they would be interested in collaborating with us and/or becoming partners in the UBCFSP.
  - b. If they would like to collaborate, complete a needs assessment with the distributors to determine what direction and approach future colleagues should take in trying to assist them in incorporating more local foods.
  - c. Investigate the quality standards supplied by Anna Wong from Allied Foods and obtain the similar information from Central Foods.
  - d. Determine whether or not an informational website (as described in our paper) would be an appropriate method for introducing potential local producers to these distributors.
4. Continue correspondence with SPUD and stay up-to-date on their progress with expansion into corporate deliveries.
5. Investigate opportunities for potential partnerships between SPUD and Allied Foods or Central Foods.
6. Analyze and review the data we acquired from UBCFS and AMSFBD to assess approximate volumes required to meet needs of respective food retailers.

7. As previously mentioned, distributors may not hold the same attitude toward relocalization as we do, largely because of economic considerations. Future colleagues should collaborate with the Sauder School of Business to investigate how to make relocalization economically feasible and marketable to distributors.
8. Explore the possibility of establishing a distribution centre on through the UBC Farm. This distribution system would provide educational opportunities for students, while working towards relocalization and a sustainable food system at UBC.
9. Continue to promote local food and sustainability on campus.
  - a. Encourage UBCFS and AMSFB to offer more local foods in retail outlets in hopes of gradually changing consumer eating habits and preferences.
  - b. Look into establishing mandatory first-year courses on sustainability and food localization for all faculties.

## **Conclusion**

Through our research, our primary concerns and targets for relocalizing produce in the UBC food system are achieving adequate volume and consistent availability. Smaller scale operations, such as a proposed UBC Farm food cooperative, cannot meet these targets at this time. We have been unsuccessful in finding distributors whose primary focus is to provide as much local produce as possible. Because UBCFS and AMSFBD have formed strong relationships with their respective distributors, Allied Foods and Central Foods, future colleagues should continue to investigate a possible collaboration and/or partnership with these distributors in the UBCFSP. An alternate route to relocalization may involve potential collaboration with SPUD, as they appear to be interested in expanding into corporate deliveries. We are confident that continued work on this project by future AGSC 450 colleagues will result in positive outcomes that will further the goals of the UBCFSP.

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**Appendix A: Correspondence with Teaching Team**Email response from Teaching Team to Group 19

From: Alejandro Rojas [REDACTED]  
Date: 21-Mar-2006 11:57  
Subject: RE: Agsci 450 Scenario 1 project  
To: [REDACTED]  
Cc: [REDACTED]

Hi Adrienne: Thank you for your careful consideration of the Scenario and the detailed proposal for a slightly new direction. Please go head with it. Tomorrow we can talk about it. Either me or Liska will visit your group in the third our. Cheers!

Alejandro

Dr. Alejandro Rojas, Agroecology Program,  
Faculty of Land & Food Systems,  
University of British Columbia,  
Chair, Advisory Committee Graduate Program in Integrated Studies in Land & Food Systems.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Group 19 Email to Teaching Team

From: Adrienne Montgomery [REDACTED]  
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2006 9:00 AM  
To: Alejandro Rojas [REDACTED]  
Subject: Agsci 450 Scenario 1 project

Hello Alejandro and Liska, our group has come to a bit of a block, given that we have realised that the direction we are moving may not be what you had originally intended. We have composed a letter outlining what we would like to do and why, and we would really like to discuss this with either of you, if possible.

Thanks so much,  
Group 19  
Juliana, Bianca, Gita, Marybel, Mark, Ashley, Adrienne

Group 19 Letter to Teaching Team

March 19, 2005

RE: Group 19, Scenario 1; "Extending Local Food Purchasing"

Dear Alejandro and Liska,

We would like to discuss our project direction with you, as, after some discussion, it appears to us that our project goals may differ slightly from your interpretation of the Scenario 1 outline.

Given our initial group discussions and review of the previous year's projects (with particular reference to the report by group 2, Summer, 2004) we came to the decision that our goal would be to work with AMS Food and Beverage and UBC Food Services to facilitate their goals of buying more local produce (we are currently defining local as "from within BC"). The reasons for this are;

- both parties have already expressed interest in purchasing local produce
- some research has already been done with regards to supplying local produce to these parties
- our group is very enthusiastic about trying to work on a project that could have tangible and widespread effects on large-scale campus consumption

From our understanding of the issue, both AMS F&B and UBC FS order the bulk of their produce from two separate distributors, and are generally unwilling to deal with a larger number of distributors. Furthermore, from data collected by Group 2 (Summer 2004), it appears that the AMS F&B supplier is currently supplying UBC with mostly non-local produce, although cheaper local produce may be available, particularly in the summer months.

Thus what we would like to do would be to try to work with the current distributors to provide useful information about local producers (such as a list of local producers who could supply adequate quantities at acceptable prices), with the aim of facilitating a switch to more local buying practices. If the current distributors are completely unwilling to consider altering their buying practices, we would like to research alternative distribution companies, and do any research required that would facilitate UBC F&B and UBC FS's transfer to ordering from these other companies.

Ultimately, what we as a group would like to achieve, is a contribution towards campus food-providers' ability to use more local produce in their food services. Although we recognize that a large amount of produce currently used is not locally available year-round, we believe that given the scale at which these parties are operating, a shift in purchasing of even a few items for a few months of the year would be a substantial change. Even this small step would still be a positive contribution to UBC's sustainability goals, in reducing food-mileage and supporting our local economy.

Now, we realize that in heading in this direction, we are, in effect, veering in a slightly different direction than that which is outlined in the UBCFSP Scenario 1 Description. From our understanding of the outline, you are interested in a program which would be centered around the UBC Farm, using it as a locus for a network of local farmers who could supply local products on campus. We are interested in this approach, however we do not think that it is entirely as relevant a direction as the above suggestion, for a variety of reasons;

- As one group of four who are working on Scenario 1, we would like the opportunity to try a slightly alternative approach to "Extending Local Food Purchasing". From our understanding, the other groups are designing projects about developing and enhancing Farm Markets at the UBC Farm,

which would ultimately be the first step in forming the networks described above. Thus, we think that this approach is already being investigated, and we feel that our approach could be complementary to this one.

- Mark Bomford, in his presentation about the UBC farm on Wednesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, seemed to be clearly stating that the UBC Farm can not, and does not wish to be seen primarily as a food supplier for the UBC campus. Its scale is simply too small, and its mandate as an educational and research facility means that it is moving more in the direction of diversifying its outputs, from a variety of products to diverse learning opportunities. Thus from our interpretation of his presentation, the UBC Farm should be seen more as a model, than a central supplier of produce for UBC food suppliers. We think that the current direction that the Farm is taking, supplying small quantities of special products, to particular locations on campus is ideal, as it could increase awareness about the Farm itself, and local food in general.
  - Our group's aim would be to complement this, by helping AMS F&B and UBC FS to obtain more local produce at a scale that is more amenable to their total production.
  - In so doing, UBC could potentially meet some numerical value (X% Local) which could be applied generally to menu items.
- Having considered an option more in line with the original Scenario 1 Description, we had an alternate idea of trying to form a network of local farmers to help the UBC Farm meet some target of production (as described in Greg Rekken's quote), which could be formalized in contracts with particular outlets on Campus (ie, Sage Bistro, Café Perugia). However, our concern with this alternative is that it is only viable at a small scale. Such transactions would only ever be considered for a couple locations on campus, and would not contribute to a broader target of increasing local purchasing for the campus as a whole. Further, we expect that the network that would emerge with the growth of a Farmer's Market are already being pursued by the other groups, and direct marketing through the farm to single outlets is already underway.

We recognize that our approach is likely more complicated than we fully realize right now, however given the cumulative nature of the UBCFSP, we think that setting the groundwork for a transition in buying practices of UBC's two main food providers would be a valuable contribution to enhancing the sustainability of the campus community. As the UBC Farm works to promote local food awareness, and to act as a supplier of specialty items for specific menus, we would hope that this awareness will translate into an interest by the community in knowing that the food they purchase is as "local as possible". This will be a matter of working with the current buying practices of UBC F&B and UBC FS (such as ordering through large distributors) to help direct them towards such products.

We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this idea further, and hope that we would have your support in taking our project in this direction.

Thank you very much for your attention,

Group 19



**Appendix B: Questions for producers and distributors**Letter to Producers

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

We are a group of students from the University of British Columbia Faculty of Land and Food Systems who are working on a class project regarding produce purchasing on campus. (Please refer to attached UBC Letter of Introduction and Consent Form.)

Our focus is investigating the possibility of integrating more BC produce into campus food services. We are striving to help AMS food & beverage and UBC Food Services to obtain local produce. We are talking to their distributors to see if they can/will increase the percentage of local produce. We were hoping you would be able to help us by answering a few questions about the production from your farm.

1. What types of produce do you grow?
2. Of the produce you grow, which types of produce are available throughout the year and which items are available only seasonally?
3. How much do you produce of each product on an annual, seasonal and monthly basis on average?
4. If the university were interested in purchasing large quantities of BC produce, would you be willing and/or able to supply it?
5. What are your prices?
6. How do you currently market your products? (i.e. your current marketing status, do you sell all produce on your own directly to consumers or to retail market? or do you sell the products to any distributors in B.C.?)
7. Would you be interested in becoming part of an online network of B.C. producers? This would take the form of a website which allows producers to regularly update produce that they have available (volumes and prices). Retail outlets would be able to view what products are available and by whom, and place orders accordingly. Retail outlets may also have the option of posting what products they need (volumes) on average.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our questions. We will follow-up with a phone call in a few days if we have not received a response.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_

Letter to distributors

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am a fourth year student from the University of British Columbia in the Faculty of Land and Food Systems who is working on a class project regarding produce purchasing on campus with a group of fellow students. Our focus is investigating the possibility of integrating more local BC produce into campus food services. We are working towards recommending a food distributor, that is able to supply BC produce at competitive

prices, to supply the campus food services. We were hoping you would be able to help us by answering a few questions about the services provided by your company.

1. Of the produce that you supply, what percentage comes from BC and how does this vary by season?
2. If produce is not available from BC, what geographical areas is it likely to come from?
3. Which types of BC produce are available throughout the year and which items are available only seasonally?
4. For produce in general, typically how much fluctuation occurs in pricing from year to year (in percent)?
5. If the university were interested in purchasing large quantities of BC produce, would you be willing and/or able to supply it (we can also provide specific quantities of produce that is required, if need be)?
6. Would you be interested in expanding the types of BC produce you carry if there were sufficient supply?

Thank you for taking the time to consider our questions.

Sincerely,  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix C: Contact list of producers and distributors**

<i>Producers</i>		<i>Distributors</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Albert's Herbs &amp; Nursery</li> <li>• Greenhill Acres</li> <li>• Apple Lane Orchard</li> <li>• Snowy Mountain Organics</li> <li>• Stein Mountain Farm</li> <li>• Beckmann Berry Farm</li> <li>• Mount View Greenhouses</li> <li>• Stoney Paradise Produce</li> <li>• Harvey's Orchards</li> <li>• Osprey Orchard &amp; Vineyard</li> <li>• The Fruit Guy</li> <li>• Dikeside Farm</li> <li>• Vista D'Oro</li> <li>• Helmers' Organic Farm</li> <li>• Paul's Produce</li> <li>• Edible Fungus, The</li> <li>• Hill Top Farm</li> <li>• Peerless Plants</li> <li>• Waslen Farm</li> <li>• Hoo Doo Ranch</li> <li>• Klippers Organic Acres</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Richmond Specialty Mushroom Growers</li> <li>• Langley Organic Growers Association</li> <li>• Golden West Farms</li> <li>• Ritson Family Orchards</li> <li>• Lowland Herb Farm</li> <li>• Salt Spring Flour Mill</li> <li>• Green and Greener</li> <li>• Sapo Bravo Organics</li> <li>• Planting Seeds Project</li> <li>• Yarrow Ecovillage Farm</li> <li>• Poplar Grove Arbour</li> <li>• Forbes Family Farm</li> <li>• Pure Farming Organics</li> <li>• Forstbauer Family Natural Food Farm</li> <li>• Rai Farms</li> <li>• Reimer's Appleberry Patch</li> <li>• Glen Valley Artichoke Farm</li> </ul>	<p>Current</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Foods</li> <li>• Sysco</li> <li>• Allied Foods</li> </ul> <p>Potential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B&amp;C Food Distributors</li> <li>• Aramark Canada</li> <li>• Wallace &amp; Carey Inc.</li> <li>• Neptune Food Services</li> </ul>

**Appendix D: Email Correspondence with Allied Foods**

Ming Jung <MingJung@Pacific-Produce.com> wrote:

Subject: Questions for AGSC 450

Date: Mon, 10 Apr 2006 18:11:28 -0500

From: "Ming Jung" [REDACTED]

To: <awan3@yahoo.com>

CC: "Dorothy Yip \ (UBC\ )" [REDACTED]

Hi Ashley,

I'm not quite sure what you are looking for. Allied Foods is a leading food service produce distributor. We are a division of Pacific Produce who services the retail sector. Our company has been servicing the lower mainland for over 60 years.

We do purchase products from local farmers but the majority of our products come from the States. Who we deal with locally is based on their quality consistency, pricing, reputation and relationships.

Our controls for receiving can be found in our Standard Operation Procedures attached.

I will try to answer some of your questions.

1 Breakdown of volumes organized by season/month and commodity.

This would be time consuming to obtain and not sure how our volumes would provide useful information for your research. Our volumes alone is a small representative of the overall industry in Vancouver. In addition, volumes would include both local, US and import products.

2 Information about their food quality assurance measures/standards/scales

Again, our SOP for receiving can be found attached. Because the majority of our staff have been in the industry for quite some time our quality checks are visual along with temperature checks. Technically we refer to the "The Blue Book" [www.bluebookprco.com](http://www.bluebookprco.com) and Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Inspection Manuals [www.inspection.gc.ca/english/plaveg/fresh/ffvflfe.shtml](http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/plaveg/fresh/ffvflfe.shtml)

3 Are you interested in further increasing the extent to which you purchase locally?

We use a limited number of local products. The local season is relatively short and we have found through experience that quality and shelf life is inconsistent.

4 How would/do you select local producers? How do you usually assess the quality of the product?

In addition to the information above, local suppliers must provide us with Hold Harmless Agreements, Letters of Guarantee and Certificate of Insurances. These documents provide us with some assurance that we are dealing with reputable companies that follow SSOP (Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures) GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) and GMP (Good Manufacturing Practices).

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any more questions.

Thanks,

Ming Jung

Manager, Sales & Administration

Allied Food Services

Office: [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

"Yip, Dorothy" [redacted] wrote:  
Subject: FW: Receiving SOP & Local Farmers  
Date: Mon, 27 Mar 2006 16:14:10 -0800  
From: "Yip, Dorothy" [redacted]  
To: "Ashley W." [redacted]

Hi Ashley,

Hope this help you a bit more.  
Dorothy

From: Ming Jung [redacted]  
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2006 4:01 PM  
To: Yip, Dorothy  
Subject: Receiving SOP & Local Farmers

Hi Dorothy,

I hope you are doing well. Ben has asked me to forward some information on to you. The attached file is our Standard Operating Procedures for Raw Material Receiving. We actually have an SOP audit scheduled for sometime next week.

Local Farmers we deal with are as follows.

Chu Lin Farms	Lettuces, Chinese Vegetables, Parsley, Cilantro
Evergreen	Baby Vegetables
International	Baby Vegetables
All Seasons	Mushrooms
Misty Mountain	Specialty Mushrooms
Emperor	Baby Squashes, Specialty Mushrooms
BC Hothouse	Tomatoes, Peppers, Long English Cucumbers
David Oppenheimer	HH Butter Lettuce
Sandu Farms	Snap Peas, Green & Yellow Zucchini, Regular Cucumbers
Rainbow Gardens	HH Peppers, L.E. Cucumbers
South Alder Farms	Berries, Currants
Western County	Blueberries
Lucky Sprouts	Sprouts
Premier Pacific	Sprouts

If there is anything else I can do please don't hesitate to contact me.

Thanks,  
Ming Jung  
Manager, Sales & Administration  
Allied Food Services

[redacted] [redacted] [redacted]