



## Peace Value Added Food & Ag Association

10805 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Dawson Creek, BC V1G 2X7  
Phone: (250) 782-5745  
Fax: (250) 782-5448  
Email: [psp@pris.bc.ca](mailto:psp@pris.bc.ca)

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Peace River Agriculture Development fund  
Box 6641  
Fort St. John, BC V1J 4J1

Re: Agri Food Awareness Expense Breakdown

Saskatoon – Western Canadian Conference of the Food Industry	
Total Expenses	\$ 970.31
Olympia – Farm to Table Conference	
Total Expenses	<u>1086.05</u>
	\$2056.36
80% PRAD Portion	<u>\$1645.08</u>
	\$ 411.28

This is the breakdown of the two projects. All receipts are included. Materials collected from these seminars will be kept in the Peace Value Added Food & Ag Association's office and will be available to anyone who wishes to review them. A written report from both members is included and will be submitted to PRASPS for the Peace Prospects newspaper.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank PRAD for their support of the Peace Value Added Food & Ag Association with past and future projects.

Sincerely yours;

Fred Burton  
President  
Peace Value Added Food & Ag Association

Visit our Website at [www.pris.bc.ca/psp](http://www.pris.bc.ca/psp)

## Western Canadian Conference on the Food Industry

March 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup>. I attended the Western Canadian Food Conference on the Food Industry. in Saskatoon Saskatchewan.

There was the annual general meeting of the Saskatoon Food Processors Association, followed by presentations on Food industry trends and developments. Several studies were presented based on Food Trends in Canada, US, and Europe. Also, there were presentations done by Livingston International Inc. on export issues at the Canadian/US borders.

This was followed by a Trade show of suppliers, manufacturing companies (of processing equipment), government support and research information, Label companies and the like. Brochures and information at the office at the Enterprise Centre, ask for Donna Tookey

Presentations of the trends in the food industry was very interesting. The overall perspective was that we are becoming a stronger society of better informed consumers, increased competitiveness, and the demand for accountability of food manufacturing companies. Changes in trends include:

- A Knowledge based economy
- Changing consumer expectations,
- Consumer driven changes in the industry
- Population growth eg. \* aging - medium age in Canada being '40'
  - \* ethnic diversity
  - \* disappearance of traditional families
  - \* health related food products (functional foods)
  - \* Niche markets will become the norm
  - \* Global sourcing
  - \* e-commerce

Other food industry research indicated:

- 70% of shoppers eat out once a week, young shoppers and men being the highest.
- People are learning less cooking skills
- Meal solutions include:
  - Value added
  - pre-cut
  - pre-cooked
  - frozen
  - Ready-to-eat

- Food spending in Canada/US consumers are spending less of their disposable income at the grocery stores, but more at fast food restaurants. The average person takes 2.2 trips per week to the grocery store.
- Demographic changes
  - aging but affluent population
  - working women
  - ethnic diversity
  - health, wealth, safety, security is what consumers seek
  - 58% of women work outside of the home
  - convenience products
  - multi lable packageing
  - quality, taste, convenience
  - we are suffering from time poverty
  - service driven economy
  - and most of all for Canadians is health care.

For further information contact Donna Tookey. She will have a copy of the presentations made at this conference in the office.

Livingston International Inc. Presented on issues of trade at the boarder. There were few people attending this presentation who were in fact exporting goods at the boarder. However, this company seems to have offices at boarder crossings across Canada. They covered basic information regarding rules and regulations. They will take care of regulatory information and requiriements when food companies are ready to export. Making these inquiries before getting to the boarder may be helpful. You can contact Geoff McFarlane (Key Account Manager) at (403) 509-2083 or toll free at 1 888-853-9599. He is located at 2100 -78<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, Suite 201 Calagary Ab Canada T2E 6W6

Jerry Bauman presented of Value Chains, A strategic tool for the Canadian Agri-Food Sector.

Overview:

Value chain is a strategic linkage of producers, processors, retailer and service providers.

Issues that must be addressed by all include:

- Food safety
- quality and consistency,
- improved, innovation of new products,
- ability to respond,
- effective strategic alliance to improve the bottom line,
- new vision,
- skilled third party management can greatly improve success. (Someone as enthusiastic as Donna Tookey)

Forming an alliance with other manufacturing companies, federally inspected processing centers, and marketing expertise seem to be the popular suggestions made by all.

For more information contact Jerry Bouma Value chains in Edmonton (780) 433-5946 e-mail [gbouma@infostream.ab.ca](mailto:gbouma@infostream.ab.ca)

Watch for Bill C-80 Changes in the rules and regulations of Canada Food Safety and Inspection Act. For more information call Larry Gronner at (780) 831-0335.

## Farm to Table Conference

### Growing Healthy Foodsheds and Community

"The food that makes up the bulk of our diets today is produced, processed and distributed in a manner that often disconnects people from the source of their sustenance. The increasingly powerful and complex global food system often undermines family farms, healthy ecosystems, rural communities food security and sometimes even the nutrition, safety, and palatability of food itself. In response to these concerns, many people are calling for the establishment of alternative food systems that are more local in scope, and which incorporate issues of importance to them: healthy communities, social justice, and environmental quality."

On March 24th - 26th 2000, Washington State University sponsored a conference entitled "Farm to Table - Growing Healthy Foodsheds & Community". With over 300 delegates, the conference attracted a diverse spectrum ranging from professors to soup kitchen chefs, prairie farmers to inner city farmers, co-ops to corporations. The purpose of the forum was to gather, share ideas and learn together about what it takes to create healthy, community based "foodsheds" that benefit everyone involved with food from "farm to table".

The sustainability of our present food system was a concern shared by all presenters. Most agreed that the earth is quickly losing its ability to sustain itself. Wes Jackson, President of the Land Institute (a research institute dedicated to sustainable agriculture) offered this analogy: Consider the past 750 million years of life on earth summarized into just one year. In the third month lichens appear. Around mid-June we start to see insects, dinosaurs in late August which are headed for extinction in November. In mid-December mammals appear and human-like figures show up on December 31st. In the last 5 minutes of December 31st (15,000 - 8000 years ago) agriculture appears and the face of the earth starts to change drastically. In the last 3 seconds before midnight oil starts to flow and out of it, fossil fuel that had been forming for eight months of our telescoped year, was discovered and was about to be used up in six seconds.

Dr. Jackson went on to say that farmers/food producers have shifted from a total dependence on the soil to an increasing dependence on fossil fuels. "It is now being used not only for transportation but for feedstock for chemical fertilizers, for pest control, and in energy for traction in the fields." For every calorie of food we produce as North American farmers we must use 10 calories of energy to grow it.

The Land Institute seeks to develop an agricultural system that will save soil from being lost or poisoned while promoting a community life which is prosperous and enduring. Wes Jackson said "When the people, lands and community are as one, all three members prosper, but when they relate not as members but as competing interests, all three are exploited."

Other presentations revolved around similar viewpoints and concerns as evidenced by this collection of statements:

- 78% of our topsoil that has vanished have been over the last 50 years
- 46 acres per hour of farmland is lost to urban sprawl (in the US)
- the farm population in the States has dropped from 30 million in 1940 to 4-5 million in 1992 to around 2 million today
- the average American farmer is 63 years old
- our food cost may have dropped to 10% of our average income but our health care costs have risen to 10%
- Diabetes have increased 6X since 1958
- 25% of meals in America are now eaten in the car
- only 2 out of 5 children eat with their parents on a regular basis
- 15 species represent 90% of all food.

Jean Dye Gussow, Professor Emeritus of Nutrition at Columbia University in her presentation said we are eating more thoughtlessly than any civilization in history. "What will we do when the planet destroys its capacity to sustain itself?" In our need to change she said we must start looking to local production to feed ourselves. "We must each eaters not to want what the season cannot provide." We must shift our food dollars away from industrialized transnational corporations and direct our focus to healthful, sustainable communities. "Food is a generous collaboration between our species and the rest of nature"

Michael Ableman is an urban farmer. The 12 acres he leases in the suburbs of Santa Barbara employs 20 - 22 people and feeds 400-500 families. As the farming community around him sold out the urban community moved in. All of a sudden his chickens were involved in a legal battle - "for disturbing the peace!". His compost pile gave off "offensive odour" and had to go. Tensions became very high between his new neighbours. Michael's vision for agriculture included community and he was able to turn the situation around. Through tours, classes and outreach programs, his farm has become an important education center and a national model for urban agriculture and farmland preservation. "Farmers have to realize they're not raising food, they're raising people!"

Although industrialized agriculture seems to be taking us the wrong direction the enthusiasm of the conference delegates highlighted a different path. The concept of Community Shared Agriculture (CSA's) is not a new one but like organics it is new to our way of thinking. All over North America an awareness of food issues are starting to consume our attention. We are beginning to realize that the globalization of food production and trade are not sustainable. The answers may be as close as our own communities.

When we choose who to support with our dollars, is local a priority? Does our produce have to come from Central America or California while our local producers struggle for markets? Are our Farmers Markets growing or in danger of shutting down? Neighborhood gardens, community shared agriculture, and local processing are ways we can relocalize and preserve our food supply. We have many advantages here in the Peace that our southern neighbours only dream of. Let's not wait to follow. Through our foresight and independence, let's take the lead!