



Summary 2008 *TLC* Agriculture Projects, 2008-09

A mandate of *TLC* is to “protect farmland for farming”. As a farmland trust, *TLC* helps to protect farmland in perpetuity, facilitate affordable access to the land for farmers, build local food systems, and protect the ecological integrity of the land. The following issues are grant-funded research projects currently being carried out by *TLC* to protect farmland and support farming in BC. The results and final documents will be available online at www.conservancy.bc.ca and www.communityfarms.ca and www.ffcf.bc.ca.

Farmland and Futures: Local Government Toolkit for Agriculture

Status: In process, completion scheduled for spring 2009

A goal of the *TLC* Agriculture Strategic Plan is “to work to support public planning and policy changes that protect farmland in BC”. By expanding on a previous draft of a toolkit originally designed for Central Saanich, *TLC* in partnership with other food and agriculture organisations will influence planning and policy at the municipal and regional levels. This project will provide options for local governments to create a favourable environment for agriculture and to take leading roles in encouraging and supporting agricultural production in BC. By supporting sustainable agriculture, local governments will create a system where farmland is valued and protected for farming and the other services it provides to communities (ecological, social).

This project is intended to complement the tools provided in *Protecting the Working Landscape of Agriculture: A Smart Growth Direction for Municipalities in British Columbia*, by Deborah Curran and West Coast Environmental Law (2005).

Affirmative Agriculture Covenants

Status: In process, initial report scheduled for December 2008

According to Section 219 of the *Land Title Act* covenants can contain both restrictive and positive language in regards to land usage. *TLC*, in collaboration with the UVic Environmental Law Center (ELC), is considering covenants as one tool to ‘protect farmland for farming’. *TLC* has asked the ELC to explore the potential of using covenants to guarantee that farm and ranch land are kept in sustainable agricultural production. The ELC report, to be finished in December 2008, will address three questions: What are the opportunities and barriers to using covenants to keep land in agricultural production? What structures and processes have been used to ensure agricultural production in other jurisdictions? Are there case studies of affirmative covenants being used to keep land in production or require ecologically sustainable management practices?

Succession Planning for Farms and Farmland

Status: In process, booklet and resources scheduled for spring 2009

A goal of the *TLC* 2008 Agriculture Strategic Plan is “to serve as BC’s farmland trust by providing resource information and expertise for the public and land trust community”. By developing a booklet on succession planning and making related web resources available, *TLC* will support landowners, land trusts, estate planners, notaries, and lawyers in protecting farmland forever. For a landowner, succession planning means deciding how farmland and associated capital and labour will be transferred to someone else, be they immediate family, extended family, or others such as a new farm owner or a land trust. The transfer can be at any point in time. This project will provide information on necessary succession planning considerations and options for farmland owners who are concerned about the long-term protection of their land.

Whole Farm Planning

Status: In process, completion scheduled for February, 2009

Since its inception in 1997, *TLC* has owned, managed, arranged farm leases and set up farming co-ops to protect farmland and get farmland into food production. There is a need to have ‘Whole Farm Plans’ (WFP) for these agricultural properties to deliver the overall aims of The Land Conservancy’s agricultural strategy at the farm level. WFPs are working documents that aim to assist the enhancement of the farm business and agro-ecological features by identifying objectives for the farm or ranch. They are drawn up collaboratively by *TLC* agricultural staff, the farm lessee or tenant, neighbours, and selected community members.

Farm Access Agreements

Status: Completed, waiting legal review

TLC’s farmland trust strategic plan speaks to providing information on farmland access agreements to landowners, farmers, and communities. By developing and sharing this information, *TLC* will be providing support to keep farmland in production. This project will explore options for, and contents of, farmland access agreements. The resulting information will be used to develop working templates for such agreements as: leases, profits a prendre, licenses, rental agreements, and MOU’s.

Farmland Trusts: Capacity Building

Status: In process, completion scheduled for spring 2009

A goal of the *TLC* Agriculture Strategic Plan is to “serve as BCs Farmland Trust providing resource information and expertise for the public and land trust community”. This goal will be met by “developing [*TLC*’s] capacity to be a Farmland Trust”. To develop *TLC*’s capacity, information on the operations of farmland trusts throughout Canada, US and UK will be compiled and analyzed. This information will be used to inform *TLC*’s Farmland Trust goals, activities, governance and financial structure.

This project is being carried out in collaboration with Dr. Hannah Wittman of Simon Fraser University.

Community Farms Feasibility Study

Status: Completed

TLC and Farm Folk/City Folk are working in partnership to develop a Community Farms Program for BC. www.communityfarms.ca The Community Farms Program aims to expand local food production in BC by helping farmers to access affordable land under a collective model, compiling best management practices from existing shared farms, and creating a network of farmers, landowners and community organizations. This feasibility study addresses the legal opportunities and barriers faced by BC community farms.

Farm Holidays – Capacity Building

Status: In process

TLC Farm Holidays are an engaging triage of agricultural/conservation work, agroecological education and fun. Farm Holidays allow people to experience BC's farmland in an authentic, responsible, and intimate way. The 'hands on' activities are integrated with learning about environmental stewardship, farming practices and the farmer's philosophy. It is *TLC*'s hope that through this personal contact with farmland, the people growing our food and the like-minded individuals that come on the holidays, participants will be more engaged in creating a sustainable food system in BC. Our goal is to increase our capacity and efficiency in delivering Farm Holidays with a consistent high quality. Further development of our educational materials and activities will assist in engaging and teaching people about BC's agricultural community.