

Dear local food lovers,

Thank you so much for taking the time to answer our survey about a new local food delivery service. Almost 450 of you responded which has given us great motivation in proceeding with the idea and has filled our business plan with mountains of incredibly useful information. We have also completed a survey of local producers interested in the project which has helped articulate the details of getting local food delivered to your door. Based on responses from both consumers and producers, we are confident that we can supply a very satisfactory array of local goods augmented by a full grocery supply of pantry items through the Ontario Natural Food Co-op and other sources.

The range of products that we could provide from local producers is impressive: all kinds of meat, fish, eggs, yogurt, milk, cheese (also from goats and sheep), bread, jams, preserves, honey and maple syrup, all kinds of seasonal veggies and fruits, flours, grain products, and even frozen meals chef-made from local ingredients. Our goal will be to provide the best quality food, deliver it conveniently to you, and offer you expertise in making healthy, local food choices. We will be providing a financially viable option for local producers to sell directly to their customers at fair prices and will create two full-time and three part-time fair-wage jobs here in Grey Bruce.

We envision a co-operative, not-for-profit model with both producer and consumer members. We will focus on naturally grown foods – *not exclusively* organically certified but with very clear labelling about how each product was produced, and a strong commitment to improving their production practices continuously. As a co-op member, you will help shape the business and also make critical decisions: Do we want to offer strawberries in winter? What about mangoes from a co-operative in Mexico? How seasonal do customers want to go, if seasonal means much better taste and health?

You are a passionate group, excited about eating better, fresher, and more local food. You believe very strongly in local food, yet based on your responses many of you, often pressed for time, still spend a large share of your weekly average \$150 grocery bill in large grocery stores, especially for produce, dairy products, bread, snacks, flour, and pantry items but even for meat and eggs. Survey results showed that more than saving you time with local food delivered to your door, we would be allowing you to make the local food choices you care about even quicker and easier than the grocery store option often chosen in a pinch.

Many of you raised concerns about this service meaning you wouldn't get to see your food before buying it or miss catching up with your farmer at your local farmers market. We recognize this concern and have some fun ideas to make sure you don't miss out on the social aspects of procuring your local fare. We will offer seasonal recipes, and a website where customers can exchange their own recipes. There are many more exciting ideas - workshops, cooking and canning groups, farm food parties, and an annual market to meet and greet. The possibilities are endless, and partners could be many.

And is it feasible financially? In short yes, if we get sufficient buy-in from the start. In our surveys, some of you raised concerns about affordability and distribution costs. Our business study and plan are pretty clear. We can operate on a very low mark-up to customers if the scale is right. In other successful examples, the sweet spot for efficiency is 500 customers ordering an average of \$60 per week. That is not

even half the weekly grocery bill of the average respondent which leads us to believe we have bushels of potential with this service. But there still is a mountain to climb. Getting started. The enterprise breaks even at around 325 boxes per week. In order to reach this scale, we have made a decision *not* to start small and makeshift, but rather go full scale right away providing up to 500 weekly customers with a wide range of products. This means we will need to raise money for start-up investment of around \$175,000 for storage, cooling, an assembly line, software, a refrigerated delivery vehicle, insulated delivery containers, and more.

To do so, we will be launching a kick-starter campaign and hosting a harvest gala fundraising event this fall where customers can become members and sign up for the 2016 season. Also this harvest season we will launch a one-time sale, to do a test delivery run using rented equipment. This will act as a dry-run for an intended full-scale service for 2016.

Thank you again for all your enthusiasm about this project. We hope this update fills you with anticipation! We will follow up with details about the Harvest Gala and kick-starter campaign as we sort out the details.

Kind regards,

Jenny, Mathias, Anita, Kelsey, Greg, Brenda, Kristine, Thorsten

The collaborators that initiated the project are:

- Jennifer and Mathias Seilern - biodynamic organic farmers close to Kincardine who produce a wide variety of grains and pulses, as well as beef and pork
- Anita DeJong from DeJong Acres, who sells her lamb products at the Warton and Lion's Head Farmers' Markets and also runs a local food store from her farm in Lake Charles, near Warton
- Greg Stewart, who grows vegetables and makes preserves, and is getting increasingly involved in greenhouses
- Kelsey Carriere from Rising Sun Bakery, who makes organic bread

The Grey Bruce Centre for Agroecology consultants include:

- Thorsten Arnold and Kristine Hammel, who operate a vegetable CSA in Park Head
- Brenda Hsueh, who grows Asian greens and other vegetables on Black Sheep Farm, Chesley

Everyone involved has a great commitment to a healthy environment, healthy food, and a vibrant community. Together, we cover a great range of experiences that prove essential.

We would also like to thank the folks at Plan B Organics in Hamilton, and Fresh City Farms in Toronto for sharing their expertise with each of their successful local food distribution models.

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