




## Building an Agricultural Community: Culinary and Agritourism

Presentation to:  
AVICC Annual conference 2010  
Powell River, BC

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### and tastings




[www.comoxvalleyshellfishfestival.ca](http://www.comoxvalleyshellfishfestival.ca)







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## Overview: 2000-2010

- Agriculture Plan – Feb 2001
- Vancouver Island Economic Analysis – Sept 2003
- CV Ec. Dev Strategy Development Strategy Phase I - Dec 2004
- Ramp Up: Sustainable Economic Roadmap – Dec 2004
- Proprietary Economic Modeling and Impact Analysis – CSRD – April 2005
  - Assessment of Economic Opportunities within the Framework of a Ten Stage Regional Economic Development Model
  - Measuring the 'Implementation Readiness' of Opportunities
- CV Economic Development Strategy Phase II – Aug 2005
- Implementation – Launch of the "plan"
  - Branding website
  - Ad campaign/Publications – profiles/direct farm marketing guide
  - Tradeshows
  - A-Channel
  - Business case/site visits/research
  - Site Criteria Matrix (opportunities) Dec 2005
- Inventory and Gap Analysis – March 2008
- Training and Development – Canadian Farm Business Management (Agritourism)
- Media Awareness – Canadian Farm Writers AGM
- Agritourism operators (International Farms - Rendezvous)
- Comox Valley Permanent Farm Market
- Taste Comox Valley Olympic Media Kit –Producer Profiles
- Olympic events – Federal Ag Ministry Buyers Tradeshaw
- Canadian Trade Commission and Consular Support – ag immigration/succession

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## Community Agricultural Plan

Specific Actions and suggest Tactics:

- Establish an Ag. Dev Commission to promote opportunities
- Improve access to information, training etc for producers
- Expand food marketing opportunities/awareness of agriculture.
- Conduct market research into advantages, gaps, new potential product niches
- Conduct marketing campaigns/increase product recognition
- Support centre for innovations and small scale processing
- Integration of agriculture in regional economic development strategies/
- Conduct local public relations campaign and increase farmers market awareness
- Support agritourism opportunities

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## Comox Valley Economic Development Strategy Phase I - 2004

- Trends analysis
- Economic base analysis, to highlight the sectors of the Comox Valley economy that are the drivers of growth
- Sector profiles update & analysis of employment growth (or decline)
- Target industry evaluation/targeting for source of external investment in the Valley



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## Planning – Comox Valley Economic Development Strategy Phase II - 2005

- Prioritization of target sector
- Ag working groups
- Formation of Advisory Committee
- 5 year targets set



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## Cluster Implementation

- Increase Ag production & food processing operations
- Strengthen production & market profile of higher value niche market products, such as fruits & vegetables (including berry production) & organics & associated processing
- Enhance aquaculture production on the Island
- Promote development of a Food Sciences Centre for Innovation working towards development of an appropriate food processing shared laboratory/kitchen, freezing & dehydration facility



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## The Opportunity

- Easy Access To Local Markets
- International Air Connections
- Available Land – 1/3 ALR in use
- Exceptionally Mild Climate and competitive growing conditions
- Strong consumer demand



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## Create the Brand

- Workshop sessions with business & community leaders to gain consensus around the need for branding & the key attributes of a potential brand
- Work with business & community stakeholders to develop the actual brand
- Launching the new Comox Valley brand in the marketplace
- Applying the Brand to key industry sectors



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**Comox Valley targets agri-food cluster for development**

AGM features tips from ag marketing expert by PETER VAN DONGEN

COMOX: The Comox Valley Economic Development Society (CVES) has a new five-year economic development plan and a thriving food and beverage sector is at the top of its priority list.

"The board has identified agriculture as the prime sector to be targeted," outgoing CVES president Darryl Pippin reported to a packed audience at the organization's annual general meeting in Comox, May 4.

"Opportunities exist for new and expanded operations on our farmable lands, ensuring not only a more viable local food source, but protecting agricultural lands and maintaining the rural feel of the Comox Valley."

The decision to pursue a food and beverage cluster in the region follows an extensive strategic planning process involving the three neighbouring Oyster and Estuary Synopses, A committee of Comox, Courtenay and Cumberland. The process began in 2004 and wrapped up with a final report in August 2005.

"We're at a turning point in some in marketing and business. If you want to succeed at something, put yourself in the place where you can put the pick in the net. That's positioning."

With McCoswell's background, you might also add to that list. Let's make sure we market it."

As president and CEO of Adiform, a Calgary-based advertising and public relations firm dedicated solely to the agriculture industry, you might say McCoswell knows a thing or two about getting the message out. In addition, the company was recently named one of Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies and was ranked as the third-best place to work in the country by Canadian Business magazine.

McCoswell offered these five keys on how to market your business or region:

- First, be known for something. Position your firm, business or region in a way that distinguishes you from your competition. "It's easier to score a goal when you stand in front of the net than it is when you stand in the corner," McCoswell explained. "That's much the same in marketing and business. If you want to succeed at something, put yourself in the place where you can put the pick in the net. That's positioning."
- Second, promote your position. Make sure people know what you're going. You might make great beer sprays. You might make great cheese. But if no one knows about it, they aren't going to buy it.
- Third, be recognized as a winner. People like to be associated with winners. "In what region does somebody want to put their new plant or new business?" he questioned. "Is a region that's a winner?"
- Fourth, McCoswell shouldn't guess slightly and stress the importance of leadership. "I honestly think the biggest crisis in agriculture today is not financial - it's leadership. It's not 'Are you showing the leadership in your organization?' And as an organization, are you doing things to get the best leaders, support the best leaders? Because leadership counts."
- Fifth, take time to have some fun. "It's not that we don't have enough fun, we're working so damn hard," he said. "When you have some fun, from the creative juices flow a little bit, and it's more fun to be able to be involved."

"I encourage you to do as partners," McCoswell concluded. "What is the picture that you're wanting to create? Communicate that picture. Get people behind it. And every once in a while, pause and celebrate."

**Ad impact on Cumsac raufior questioned**

**COMOX VALLEY Growers Guide 2005**

**COMOX VALLEY GROWERS GUIDE 2006**

**A Guide to Discovering Agriculture, Fresh Foods & Value-Added Products from the Comox Valley**

**Your Guide To Discovering Agriculture, Fresh Food, & Locally Produced Products from the Comox Valley**

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**You can spend a year in Provenge. Or a lifetime here.**

Like Provenge, we're blessed with fertile land, richer soils, cleaner air and water, short wet winters and dry Mediterranean summers. Ours is one of the most diversified growing regions in British Columbia, with over 40 different agricultural commodities - including specialty items like asparagus, spinach, walnuts, mushrooms, cranberries and maturing barley. Our dairy, beverage processing and shellfish industries are also thriving.

**Two thirds more available farmland.**  
Only 13% of our available agricultural land is being used right now, compared with 40% in other regions. And the price is right. Provenge is selling for much less than other growing regions like the Fraser Valley.

**Watch your Ag sales take off!**  
With a rapidly growing population and over 90% of Vancouver Island's food requirements met locally, you can sell directly to the public. If you choose, the International Comox Airport handles bulk flights to Vancouver, Calgary and Seattle, beyond.

**AGRIFOOD COMOX VALLEY**  
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www.agrifood.comoxvalley.com

The Comox Valley on Vancouver Island is the perfect environment for growing your agribusiness.

**BC Business Magazine**

**THE RAINMAKER**

Often it's said that every province has its own version of the 'rainmaker' - a person who can get things done. In Vancouver Island, it's definitely the 4x4 driving farmer Patrick Evans. Evans' truck is loaded with leftover hay that covers the sides and there's the distinct aroma of cow manure. He appears more than ready to get the truck with his hand-dirt-covered jeans, Carhart work jacket and a five-o'clock shadow on his neck, empty fuel at 11 a.m. "There are very clean clothes," he says with a laugh. © By O'Malley's Hands

When it comes to the rainmaker, there are a lot of people out there. The rainmaker is a person who can get things done. In Vancouver Island, it's definitely the 4x4 driving farmer Patrick Evans. Evans' truck is loaded with leftover hay that covers the sides and there's the distinct aroma of cow manure. He appears more than ready to get the truck with his hand-dirt-covered jeans, Carhart work jacket and a five-o'clock shadow on his neck, empty fuel at 11 a.m. "There are very clean clothes," he says with a laugh. © By O'Malley's Hands

**Comox Valley wants you, if you farm**

Sat Apr 14 2007

LAURA RANCE - RURAL REVIVAL

SPEND a few days wandering around a trade show and you grow accustomed to seeing some oddball marketing premises -- everything from water-filled balloons on an elastic string, to the gadgets that are supposed to make being in the kitchen fun, to the gotta-haves for households and properties.

But there was one booth at the recent Royal Manitoba Winter Fair in Brandon that gives new meaning to offbeat -- a colourful display promoting, get this, farming as a business opportunity. Not only that, but it was actively recruiting farming entrepreneurs to set up business on Vancouver Island, in the Comox Valley to be exact.

If you're a Prairie farmer who has grown a little tired of commodity agriculture's trials and tribulations, the Comox Economic Development Commission wants you.

"We are looking for people to move in and set up operations; people that are looking for a change of pace or change of lifestyle, looking to move out of the commodity farming industry and start up with something is a specialty product adding value to what they do," says John Watson, executive director and leader of the Comox Valley's "economically unconventional, wildly sophisticated" agri-food initiative.

Comox is reviving a concept that's pretty much been drummed out of conversations about farming in Prairie culture -- lifestyle. Imagine having both the opportunity and the reward to enjoy what you do for a living.

Watson says the region has just completed a three-year process identifying and analyzing its opportunities for economic growth. It determined that value-added agriculture and agri-food processing aimed at providing food to the 500,000 people living on the island is its best bet, even beating out tourism.

**Tradeshows & Marketing**

- World Food Processing Expo
- Royal Manitoba Winter Fair
- Island Farmers Alliance AGM
- China International Trade & Investment Forum
- Process & Packaging Expo
- Edmonton Farm Fair International
- Western Canadian Agribition
- Pacific Agricultural Show
- EAT Vancouver
- Royal Highland Show, Scotland
- Canadian Trade Events
- Immigration

**INVEST Comox Valley.com**  
VANCOUVER ISLAND, BRITISH COLUMBIA

**EXPERIENCE OUR LAND    ENJOY OUR CLIMATE    INVEST IN OUR GROWTH**

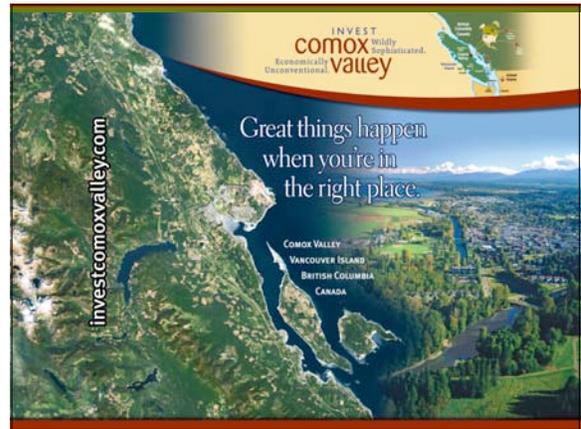
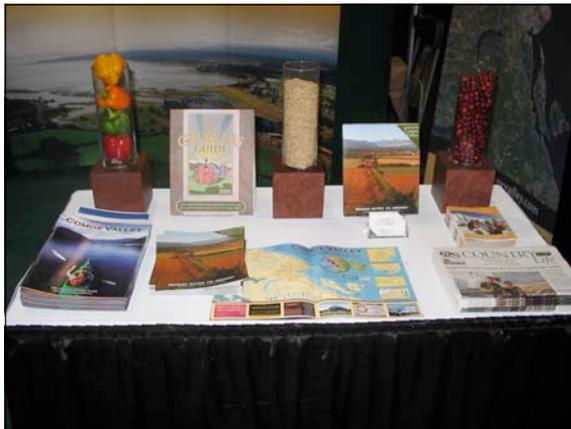
**FERTILE LAND**  
"The Comox Valley is unique in the world for the quality of its soil, it can provide a farmer producing on the land while enjoying a healthy lifestyle."  
Edgar Smith  
National Research Council Canada

**STRATEGIC LOCATION**  
"Having been born, raised and lived in the Comox Valley, I can attest to the quality of life and the beauty of the area. The Comox Valley is a beautiful area with a rich history and a vibrant future. It is a place where you can enjoy the best of both worlds: a beautiful landscape and a vibrant community."  
Lynn and Sharyn  
Comox Valley

**NATURAL BEAUTY**  
The Comox Valley is a beautiful area with a rich history and a vibrant future. It is a place where you can enjoy the best of both worlds: a beautiful landscape and a vibrant community.

**COMOX VALLEY**  
VANCOUVER ISLAND • BRITISH COLUMBIA • CANADA

**discover**



**Processors wanted here.**

"The Comox Valley's location and excellent transportation facilities has allowed us to expand our international reach for exports and imports."

**AGRIFOOD** Multi-Industry Development  
**comox valley**

**Higher yields here.**

"The Comox Valley's superb environment and climate make us one of the best high-yield regions in the world for growing crops and raising livestock."

**AGRIFOOD** Multi-Industry Development  
**comox valley**

**Producers prosper here.**

"With a rich land, higher yields and proximity to large population, the Comox Valley offers producers a significant competitive advantage."

**AGRIFOOD** Multi-Industry Development  
**comox valley**

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## FARMERS WANTED

By Tom Rutten, CO Editor

It's got thousands of acres of unfarmed fertile soils, plus a hungry influx of upscale families and wealthy retirees. Now, B.C.'s Comox Valley is ready to burst onto the North American ag scene as the Canadian version of Provence, France. All it needs are the farmers, sort of.

Like other commodities, the Comox region has had an economic development office for over a decade. When formed in 1996, the office's mandate was to attract investment from private companies, rather than the government. The office's mandate was to attract investment from private companies, rather than the government. The office's mandate was to attract investment from private companies, rather than the government.

It's got thousands of acres of unfarmed fertile soils, plus a hungry influx of upscale families and wealthy retirees. Now, B.C.'s Comox Valley is ready to burst onto the North American ag scene as the Canadian version of Provence, France. All it needs are the farmers, sort of.

## Results

- Awareness – Media generation and enquires
- Site visits, farm tours - testimonials
- Business case presentations
- Government & NGO interest
- Real Estate supportive to development
- Berry processing facility

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## Key Learning's

- Be relevant – enrich community
- Succession is critical
- Land base under production must increase
- Small lot ag - works!
- Food = \$\$\$ (National FM are estimated to provide over \$3 Billion in economic impact)
- The future of local food consumption is not a guarantee

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## Next Steps

- Increased focus on ag real estate
- Tie between agriculture Ec dev and tourism marketing
- Earned media program
- Taste the Comox Valley – 2010
- Permanent Farm Market
- Wholesale Buyers



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