

# Food Venture Collaborative

*Enterprise-driven food system building from Yahk to Yaqan Nukiy to Riondel*

The Food Venture Collaborative (FVC) will bring private, public, and community partners together to identify emerging market opportunities and address shared agri-food infrastructure needs.

The remarkable diversity of agricultural production in the Creston Valley encourages creative understanding of what components a potential hub would include to best suit our area.

Current potential needs identified range from grain milling to cheese aging to meat processing to flash freezing for produce. And come from a geographic area that is expansive and remote.

**At this time, Fields Forward is piloting a targeted, enterprise-driven approach to agrifood infrastructure development.**

Rather than attempting to build a centralized "food hub" facility capable of serving the full complement of local food manufacturing needs, the initiative is piloting a targeted, enterprise-driven approach to building local agri-food infrastructure.

The strategy is to build food infrastructure and carry out local marketing and market development in phases across the region.

Each phase would make new infrastructure available to agrifood producers and entrepreneurs in the community. Each phase, as needed, would also develop a community enterprise that would effectively serve as an anchor client for the infrastructure.

In this way, we would not only ensure the financial viability of operating the infrastructure, but would also develop markets, open distribution channels, develop branding, etc. which private sector entrepreneurs could eventually participate in or even take over.

Developing infrastructure to support value-added agri-food production and distribution is consistently identified as a critical lever for stimulating the economy in Creston and District.

Processing

Storage

Labelling

Packaging

Marketing

Distribution



What does this mean in practice?



**Phase 1:** The Mobile Press project illustrates the strategy of the Food Venture Collaborative: locally driven, financially viable, value-adding cooperatively-competitive enterprise opportunities.

Based on Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development estimates for food manufacturing multipliers in rural Canada, the mobile fruit and vegetable press project would stimulate the creation of 9.27 additional local full time jobs (FTE's) and contribute approximately \$775,000/year to the local economy.

The Food Venture Collaborative and the Mobile Press project embody the Fields Forward approach to building local resiliency:

- We facilitate processing, packaging, storage, distribution, marketing, and product and market development. We develop a local co-marketing strategy to serve our communities' diverse primary and value-added producers.
- Stakeholders come together and mobilize their own resources (time, money, infrastructure, relationships, contacts, etc.) to meet a tangible common goal. In this case, the mobile press concept was proposed by a local orchardist and is being supported by a diverse group of stakeholders, including Lower Kootenay Band, Kootenay Employment Services, Creston Valley Farmers' Market, Creston Valley Harvest Share, and local orchardists, food processors, and governments.
- We support stakeholders to form working groups, take on concrete projects, experiment, and scale up or stop shared activities quickly. With the Mobile Press project, we have moved from idea generation through comprehensive business planning to market development in five months. We will launch operations less than a year after the concept was first proposed.

In turn, we expect to generate more of the resiliency gains that Fields Forward has started to yield:

- trust, transparency, and reciprocity among stakeholders;
- transfer of sustainable production and business practices;
- increased market and enterprise literacy;
- new and strengthened public, private and community partnerships;
- greater consensus around development priorities; and
- community building.